

The London School of
Economics & Political Science

***Rethinking War/Rape
Feminism, Critical Explanation
and the Study of Wartime
Sexual Violence, with Special
Reference to the Eastern
Democratic Republic of Congo***

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Relations of the London School of Economics & Political
Science for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

It is today commonly acknowledged that rape is a weapon of war. This consensus has been achieved in significant part through the efforts of feminist scholars and activists. Yet the consensus hides a multiplicity of ways in which weapons of war might function. This thesis uncovers and critically explores that variety.

First, it turns to questions of what makes a form of inquiry specifically feminist, the better to understand the foundations for claims about rape as a weapon of war. Having offered a critique of existing divisions of empiricist, standpoint and postmodern feminisms (and of the distinction between feminism and gender theory), the thesis proposes a view of feminism as critical explanation: as at once explanatory, political and ethical inquiry. This view is expanded on through a framework of modes of critical explanation: styles of reasoning that provide analytical wagers, narrative scripts and normative orientations for feminist inquiry.

Second, the thesis explores three such modes of critical explanation in relation to wartime sexual violence. It argues that the modes of instrumentality, unreason and mythology implicitly structure feminist claims about war rape. Each is examined in turn, with particular attention to how the forms of explanation mirror debates found in war studies and in social theory more generally. Each mode is clarified and expanded on, resulting in sets of propositions for each mode and in a clearer sense of where modes contradict each other and where they may combine.

Third, this meta-theoretical and theoretical framework is applied to the specific case of atrocity in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Working through several kinds of empirical material (studies of sexual violence, histories of conflict in the Great Lakes, data on economic dimensions of violence and testimony from combatants and ex-combatants on the topic of sexual violence), the thesis shows how 'the rape capital of the world' is best understood in terms of themes derived from the modes of unreason and mythology. It explores retaliatory atrocity, extractive sexual violence and fragmented sexual aggression as three situated dynamics of violence. This part thus critiques a narrowly instrumentalist idea of wartime sexual violence as a strategy of profiteering, whilst also attending to how economic dimensions matter in the war complex as a whole.

The conclusion draws out consequences for further work, especially in relation to a comparative project for the critical explanation of wartime sexual violence.

I know you have reasons
A rational defence
Weapons and motives
Bloody fingerprints
But I can't help thinking
It's still all disease

Fugazi, 'Argument'¹

¹ From Fugazi 2001.

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All human achievements can be traced back to parents, and this thesis is no exception, whatever kind of achievement it turns out to be. My mother made me a feminist, although I don't think I ever heard her use that word, and I received no political lectures. Perhaps the closest she ever came was in introducing me to Theodor Seuss Geisel's *The Butter Battle Book*, from which I can trace my fascination with exclusions and their violence: *Every Zook must be watched! He has kinks in his soul!*¹ My instruction came from her intelligence, her warmth, her insight and her constant encouragement. She was the first woman in our family to attend university (with all the struggles that entailed) and navigated the peculiarities of colonial Portuguese catholicism-patriarchy so that we would not have to. She survived a widowing, being stranded on cold English shores with two young boys, and completed her own PhD on vulnerability and the pathologies of modern bureaucracy into the bargain², emerging less damaged than anyone I have ever met. The equality of the sexes was thus always obvious to me, and any alternative has always seemed ludicrous. And so too for dad, who taught me so much about masculinity and violence, if not in ways he intended or could have expected.

Having exhausted the description of debts, convention dictates that all remaining errors - whether conceptual, empirical or grammatical - be attributed to me, and me alone.

¹ Seuss 1984.

² Kirby 2000.

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THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION

The center of the scene is occupied by a suffering body, a body reduced to a totally available object or, rather, a thing objectified by the reality of pain, on which violence is taking its time about doing its work. Death may come at the end, but it is not the end in view. The dead body, no matter how mutilated, is only a residue of the scene of torture. The special form of the horrorism of which the torturer is the featured protagonist actually prefers to consummate itself on the living body, to prolong the suffering inscribed in the vulnus, bring the vulnerable one to the limit of bearability of pain and offense. As every torturer knows, the vulnerable is not the same as the killable. The latter stands poised between death and life, the former between the wound and healing care.

Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism*¹

This thesis is about horrific acts – acts which can induce a sudden nausea – and our ways of accounting for them. Specifically, our ways of accounting for them *as feminists*. Which is to say: as people who claim that human social relations are currently saturated by gender; who identify a conjoined history of hierarchical orderings promoting the 'male' (however understood) and denigrating the 'female' (however understood); who hold that this state of affairs demands transformation; and who engage in some political work (variously interpreted) towards that end.² Although my animating interest is in feminism so understood, what follows sometimes goes quite beyond that, into conceptual foundations and sometimes into theoretical side-streets. My attention is not only on what feminist theory is, but also what it can do, and consequently to the objects of a feminist curiosity, which are many. What, after all, does it entail to talk of horror as a feminist, and what variety does the talk hide?

1 Cavarero 2008:31–32.

2 I propose this as a sufficient minimal definition of feminism, one which very many self-declared feminists would share. There are other definitions, and strictly unifying principles are likely impossible. Here, as elsewhere, the language of a 'family resemblance' is helpful, but this articulation has the virtue of uniting differing strands of feminism (which might disagree over terms like 'male', 'female', 'transformative', 'hierarchically', 'political work' and so on) whilst separating them from *gender theorists* (who may not recognise the same degree of hierarchy nor accept the need for transformation), *non-feminists* (who do not agree that gender is a central dynamic of human affairs or do not recognise the political claims of critical theorising) and *anti-feminists* (who may agree with the diagnosis but see in this a most welcome ordering). More on those positions later.

The principal variant of horror examined is that of war rape, which has always been of particular interest for feminism, and which will sometimes be referred to in what follows as wartime sexual violence, sexual brutality or sexualised aggression.³ Atrocities of other kinds will also be attended to, not least because it is often so hard to separate the 'sexual' from the not. The naming is difficult, and the reason lies in the ontology of violence itself (and maybe in the ontology of everything). As Elaine Scarry once showed, acts of torture and war have to convert violence into discursive sensibility: to appropriate physical suffering away from the body and render it as evidence of sovereignty, authority, power.⁴

The act of theory is also a transubstantiation of the unspeakable into a regime of truth. A practice of naming and embalming in abstraction. For post-structuralists and others, this has often indicated the violences of theory and of language itself. In the case of sexual violence, the traumatic dimension of theorising can be quite literal. Many studies approach the question of rape by trying to engage with women (and very occasionally with men) subjected to the most intimate of violations, and to build upwards from a fidelity to their suffering. A particular way of 'thinking from women's lives'. There is something almost reassuring about proceeding in this way: of grounding understanding in the truth value of direct experience. The difficulty, as always, is that the events and the pain is very soon layered in discourse; the academic-activist accounting always already mediated in thought, which is itself embodied, relational, empathetic, held in common, and gesturing towards the wider field of knowing and doing. And there is always also the problem of interpellation: of how the researcher will be read and understood by others, perhaps especially if he is a man writing about rape.

3 *Sexual violence* refers to the range of violence that includes sexual torture and humiliation, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization and forced pregnancy (this definition follows that of Wood 2009:133). *Rape*, which is defined as the forcible penetration of the anus or vagina with any body part or object or the penetration of any body part of the victim with a sexual organ, is perhaps the major example of sexual violence, but does not exhaust its many varieties. Importantly, sexual violence is only one part of a wider range of practices called *gender violence*. I take these definitions to be relatively unproblematic in the context of war and the feminist analysis of rape in war, but an overview of the relevant conceptual issues is provided by Reitan (2001) and in Bourke (2007) A more complete list of forms of sexual violence that intersect with political violence is provided by Enloe (2000:109–110)

4 Scarry 1987.

This thesis does not reveal a truth about wartime sexual violence. It seeks instead to open and examine the multiplicity of feminist accounts about rape in war. The most basic constitutive element of what is to be discussed – war rape – is itself in sore need of scrutiny. It is indeed instructive to observe just how different the history of peace rape has been (if we can tempt oxymorony with such a formulation). In spite of considerable progress, rape in the 'domestic' sphere remains mired in many familiar clichés, from victim-blaming and demonisations to divisions amongst 'progressives' and 'radicals' over certain cherished male figures.⁵ By contrast, there are few who would today deny that rape is a phenomena of war. Louise du Toit suggests some reasons why: because consent is not an 'issue' in war rape; because rapes gain visibility through political expedience; because war rape is deliberate and systematic, while ordinary rape is isolated and random (a view we will have some grounds to challenge); because there is relational, communal damage in war rape as a kind of genocidal hate crime; because rape is a form of communication among men and so has more weight in war; and because rape in distant war zones is 'othered' so as to appear exotic and problematic, thus fostering a view of peacetime rape as free of political significance.⁶ Of course, many scholars do not let the admission that war rape matters interfere with the conduct or content of their research, and it is still not granted the policy resources of such rivals as terrorism or nuclear proliferation. But in the field of discourse at least, war rape is no longer hidden as it once was. Moreover, its acknowledgement now takes a common and instantly recognisable form. That of *rape as a weapon of war*. A curious visibility.

It is the interrogation of rape as a weapon of war that is the running theme of the thesis. An interrogation both of the language of that phrase in feminist accounts and what it means (we might say, of the *construction* of rape as a weapon of war), but also of the practices of war/rape. An inquiry both into talk about war rape and into war rape

5 In the course of writing up this thesis a whole series of such stories took centre-stage, from the case of Julian Assange (in which one strategy of his defenders has been to pour scorn on the rape charges against him and to question whether the acts he admits to engaging in count as 'real rape' at all) to that of Todd Akin (the Republican Representative who suggested that women could not get pregnant from 'legitimate rape').

6 du Toit 2009:291–292.

itself.⁷ Does the formulation of 'rape as a weapon of war' merely assume that war itself is a weapon of something else, a tool, the 'Clausewitzian' cliché of politics by other means? Is it a reduction to the economic or the military? The answer developed here is that 'weapon of war' means many things, all of them feminist (some, perhaps, not quite so feminist). Each is a way of rendering rape *political*, and of making it into the kind of object that cannot be either ignored or integrated within an otherwise patriarchal paradigm. The divisions that emerge are over just what is entailed in the political, over just what kinds of uses weapons can have, and over how those weapons are apprehended in thought by the people who go about using them.

This entails the bleeding together of a series of constitutive and causal questions. What is rape? What is war? What kind of composite thing is war rape and how does it work? After all, just how important is the 'war' framing in which sexualised aggression is enacted? This thesis is a *critique* (to deploy a much over-used term) not because it seeks to overturn or refute the feminist position (it indeed accepts it as an analytical baseline and as an indispensable political-analytical achievement), but because it works at it from within, revealing its contested margins, cautious of its affinity with certain other ways of conceptualising war, and attentive to the complexities of its simultaneously explanatory, political and ethical character. An empathetic questioning. And an attempt to hold on to troublesome concepts.⁸

The thesis is built on three layers of reinterpretation – first of feminist inquiry in IR, then of modes of critical explanation for wartime sexual violence, and finally of the dynamics of war and rape in the Eastern DRC. It progresses in three parts, each dedicated to a different layer.

7 I will use the term *inquiry* over its rivals – theory, paradigm, hypothesis, method, epistemology, ontology – to be purposefully vague. These are all ways of framing in thought, but too often they suggest a formality of hypotheses, or a definitive edge, that they lack in practice. That, or they try and fix conceptual problems at a certain level (for example, ontological rather than epistemological). Unlike Patrick Jackson, I do not accept the desirability of speaking in terms of 'science'. Like Jackson, I seek a term adequate to the differing ways in which the world is thought. Inquiry, then, designates a form of thought marked by a certain consistency of form, a problem or phenomena which it addresses, and the possibility of critical discussion on both those fronts. It therefore includes within its remit normative thinking, as well as empirical claiming, conceptual categorisation, model making, theory testing, ideal typification, and so on. For the more restricted view of inquiry as science, see Jackson (2010).

8 This was the advice given to the room by Barry Hindess at ISA 2011 in Montreal: don't just take the things you like from a theorist. Hold on to what troubles you, critique and expand it.

Part One deals with the problem of war/rape (or, rather, what I find problematic about it) and with questions of knowing and method in feminist IR. It settles some questions and opens up others. Chapter 2 in particular seeks to move beyond one common framing of the feminist contribution – that of the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern triptych – and one false debate – that between feminist and gender studies. Chapter 3 builds on this by trying to show that feminist analysis has always been explanatory *and* political *and* ethical. Moreover, that the explanatory dimension of feminism is inescapable, at least so long as inquiry into practices of sexual violence is proposed as one of its dimensions. Borrowing from some debates in the philosophy of social science, it advances the case for feminism as critical explanation, and sets out the framework of modes of critical explanation.

It is this framework that enables Part Two, which distinguishes three modes of critical explanation in feminist accounts of wartime sexual violence: modes of instrumentality (largely rationalist, materialist and orientated towards military and economic reasoning), unreason (principally concerned with fracturing, desire, trauma and the psychoanalytic), and mythology (the site of collectives, cultures, symbolism and behaviours of ritualism and habit). These styles of reasoning animate feminist inquiry, although they are usually only implicitly present, and each produces a complex picture of how rape happens. A close reading of each yields three sets of propositions which guide research into given cases of wartime sexual violence.⁹

Part Three takes this enlarged framework and seeks to use it to make sense of an apparently singular case: that of war rape in the DRC over the last decades. Rather than testing the modes one by one, as if they were theories, it examines different dimensions of conflict in the DRC. Having provided an overview of what we know about war rape there, and of the related dilemmas of interpretation, Chapters 8-10 each fix a different aspect – respectively, regional histories of violence, the 'resource curse' thesis of some activists, and the discourses of combatants themselves – as the site for a close examination. The result is not a clear endorsement of one mode over the

⁹ Some of the material presented in the first two Parts has appeared in a separately published journal article (Kirby 2012a).

other. Instead, a combination of associated logics emerges, and supports an argument for the relative disconnect of patterns of war (which often involve collective identities, and rely on access to economic goods attained through violence) from those of war rape (which have a much more fractious character, only sometimes related to strong cultural senses, but more often emphasising themes of need, frustration and revenge).

These moves – from meta-theory to theory to empirics – successively concentrate the thesis.¹⁰ As in all serious attempts at inquiry, the theoretical and meta-theoretical debates occasionally struggle for purchase amongst the dense detail of violent histories. One way to avoid this is to reduce one part of the argument to the others, to decide the questions in advance through theoretical or empirical fiat. Viewed thus, what gaps do emerge are not signs of success so much as evidence of a fraught reckoning. Or, as Theodor Adorno once put it, “the splinter in your eye is the best magnifying-glass”.¹¹

¹⁰ This is, of course, a simplification. Part Two is both meta-theoretical and theoretical (and draws on empirical examples in setting out its case), while Part Three continues to draw on, and in turn informs, theoretical issues.

¹¹ Adorno 2005:50.

Part One

lootpillagelandrape

Rape...shocks. It shocks, but then it loses its distinctiveness. Typically, when rape happens in the midst of war, no individual soldier-rapists are identified by the victims, by their senior commander, or by the media (if there). The women who suffer rape in wartime usually remain faceless as well. They merge with the pockmarked landscape; they are put on the list of war damage along with gutted houses and mangled rail lines. Rape evokes the nightmarishness of war, but it becomes just an indistinguishable part of a poisonous wartime stew called 'lootpillagelandrape'.

Cynthia Enloe, 'When Soldiers Rape'¹

A Poisonous Wartime Stew

These words, with which Cynthia Enloe begins her influential discussion of war rape in *Maneuvers*, are followed by a caution against two related traps: first, that “women must be listened to, but with an awareness that their stories are likely to be complex” and second, that “exposing militarized rapes does not automatically serve the cause of demilitarizing women's lives”.² A warning, then, about both the complexity of feminist inquiry and the myriad intimacies of gender and war. It is with these two questions that Part One is concerned. Beginning with a survey of war/rape, it sets out the existing challenges and distinctions that mark feminist inquiry, before trying to understand what it is that that kind of inquiry consists of. Dealing with dominant paradigms and alternative views of explanation drawn from the philosophy of social science, it proposes an understanding of feminist IR as at once explanatory, political and ethical, and shows how this can translate into a framework of modes of critical explanation, to be applied to the substance of accounts of wartime sexual violence in Part Two.

¹ From Enloe 2000:108.

² Enloe 2000:108, 109.

WHAT WAR/RAPE IS

When they start falling
Executions will commence
Sides will not matter now
Matter makes no sense
How did a difference become a disease?
Fugazi, 'Argument'¹

'Weapon of war' could be many explanations...I'm not sure of any of them.

UN official, Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, June 2010²

Goma

Arriving in what the international humanitarian/media community has labelled 'the rape capital of the world' in June 2010, I was struck by a number of things, each of which could yield a thesis on global politics. The first was the humanitarian segregation of Goma. As the Eastern DRC has become subject to increasing international attention over the decades, so too has Goma. Although MONUC, the world's largest peacekeeping force, is formally headquartered in Kinshasa, many of its employees live and work here. So too do the UN agency and NGO workers who travel Goma's streets in clean 4x4s, inhabiting an air-conditioned intervention space as they bump along roads rendered nearly unrecognisable as such by neglect, conflict and the volcanic detritus of Mount Nyiragongo. Together these intervening subjects sustain the local hotel economy, keep the specialist supermarkets afloat, and patronise the high-quality local restaurants (occasionally mingling with war crimes indictees).³ Humanitarian business is conducted behind barbed wire, giving the whole place the feeling of two completely different forms of life rubbing uncomfortably against each other (Figures 1 and 2). I passed one Sunday afternoon playing tennis on a private court in a large and gated property on Lake Kivu, tranquil but for the happy sounds of playing children inside. It was owned by a European, the only licensed dealer of those much demanded 4x4s in the region.

1 From Fugazi 2001.

2 Interview with UNHCR official, Goma, 2 June 2010.

3 McClelland 2011.



Figure 1: The gate to the UNICEF compound, Goma, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, June 2010



Figure 2: UN Attack/Power Hero: A toy for sale at one of Goma's more up-market stores, June 2010

The second was the contrast between Eastern Congo and Rwanda. Goma is in reality territorially contiguous with Gisenyi, the major city on the Rwandan side, and the only impediment in moving from one to the other is the queue at the border. Both sit on the northern tip of Lake Kivu, and I had travelled to the Eastern DRC by driving through Rwanda from Kigali airport because it was easier than making my way from distant Kinshasa. But geography aside, Goma and Gisenyi could not be more different: the former dishevelled, the latter pristine. It was not unusual to see MONUC troops on their day off at the border, waiting to pass across the invisible line to a place where they could relax. Goma for work; Gisenyi for leisure. A reality at total odds with the persisting Western imaginary of Rwanda. One of the other homes that I visited was on the Gisenyi side, shared by a married international NGO official and a Congolese think tank chief. It was stunning, and the party was splendid. During conversation, I discovered that there were some legal disputes over the home, which had apparently previously belonged to a high-ranking *genocidaire*.

The third impression, and the most relevant to the substance of this thesis, was of the frustration, and the frequent despondency, of those I interviewed.⁴ Few thought that much could be done about sexual violence, nor about violence generally (a point dealt with at greater length in Chapter 7). I had asked each what they made of the idea that rape was a tool of war in Congo, but few had given it much thought. None could draw on an organisational line which expressed the place of sexual violence in conflict theoretically. Each worked to some extent on programmes tackling sexual violence and were to varying extents themselves *producers* of representations of sexual violence (Figures 3 and 4). Yet most, especially the international agency respondents, stressed the degree to which day-to-day logistical issues took precedence over conceptual coherence. A substantial proportion of those I spoke to not only recognised this as a problem, but expressed a strong desire that things be otherwise, and saw the lack of theoretical clarity over wartime sexual violence as something likely to undermine efforts to end it.

This conceptual messiness is not restricted to those intervening in the DRC. Rape may be used in war in a variety of ways, just as it may be deployed by authority figures, family members, partners or strangers in times of peace. Nor is the point to resolve conceptual difficulties so that the forces of 'policy relevance' can better achieve their ends. The trouble is, at least in part, with the idea that 'war rape' is any sense a stable and solid object. The issue, then, is how to think war rape. This chapter provides an initial survey of these problems, moving through existing feminist debates about the (in)visibility of rape, issues around analysis - including male rape - in feminist accounts, before moving on to an assessment of how to apprehend both war and rape as co-implicated processes of violence.

4 The full list of interviewees is provided in the appendix. The results are expressed most clearly in International Alert 2010, the report for which the interviews were undertaken. Consequently, I deploy the interviews impressionistically throughout the thesis to concretise analysis, but not as definitive evidence.



Figure 3: Representing Sexual Violence/Recycling Rape Myths: A public awareness poster on rape produced by a Congolese NGO in Goma. The mother is warning her daughter of the possible consequences of leaving the house dressed provocatively.⁵

⁵ This was the message as clarified by Sage Mulinda of the NGO *Alpha Ujuvi*, Goma, 3 June 2010.



Figure 4: The Constant Danger of Rape: A child's view of sexual violence. The young girl has been surprised by an attacker whilst collecting water, the jerry can of which has fallen to the ground.⁶

⁶ Part of a project by *ActionAid* to get children (all between the ages of 10 and 12) to express their view of violence against children through drawing. The best pictures are then collected for advocacy work and for collection into a book. Interview with Dr Muteho Kasongo, *ActionAid* Education Rights Coordinator, Goma, 2 June 2010.

An Obscured Object

Sexual violence is marked by silence. Just as experiences and individuals judged properly 'feminine' have been historically placed outside the political sphere in discourses on collective violence, rape and its brutal avatars have barely featured in legal judgements on correct behaviour in war.⁷ And while the 'peacetime' extent of rape has been obscured by the fears of victims and the public mythologies that sustain them, wartime sexual violence has been rendered mute by appropriation into the language of property rights, with women considered part of the rewards due to the victor, along with cattle and land.⁸ In both cases, sexual violence has been located within a private domain, a conceptual move which itself suggests the operations of power – the shifting public-private distinction which might be read as the primary mechanism for the organisation of political authority.⁹

Silence has also been a central motif in feminist critiques of IR. An early diagnosis that women had been 'hidden' from international politics; curiosity about how the workings of gendered power are made invisible to analysis; and persistent charges that feminism is marginal within the academy¹⁰ – all speak to the historical obscurity of sexual violence as a topic of scholarly concern:

Realists do not deny that women suffer in wartime and that they suffer in particular ways. Off the record (not in print, not at the podium) a realist may acknowledge the common use of rape as a weapon of war. But the realist will not go further. He or she will not accept that the construction and articulation of gender identity, or sexual identity or racial identity, might play an important part in the causation, enactment and continuation of war. The actors who matter to the realist, the people the realist thinks it is worth watching and listening to, are only that handful of people – usually

7 Although rape has been a crime of war in some military codes since the 14th century, and in modern standards like the 1907 Hague Regulations, charges were seldom brought and available sanctions almost never imposed, not even at the Nuremberg Tribunal. A prominent exception is the conviction of Japanese officers for the war crime of rape at the Tokyo Tribunals after World War II (see Meron 1993:425; Brownmiller 1975:61). On gender and the private/public divide and its relevance to politics see Elshtain 1995.

8 Bourke 2007; Brownmiller 1975:31–35.

9 See, for example, the discussion in Owens 2008:979.

10 Examples are multiple, but see Halliday 1998; Enloe 1996, 2001; D'Costa 2006; Sylvester 1994b; Tickner 1997.

male, usually members of the dominant ethnic group – with enough power to steer a state. *They* are the causal factors. Everyone else is a mere consequence, or coincidence.¹¹

War in the DRC is another context in which the notion of silence has featured strongly. Given the general absence of public discussion of, and scholarly attention to, the conflict, and (contested) estimates of some 863,000 to 2.83 million excess deaths from conflict-related causes there since 1998, it is not surprising that it is often described as a 'forgotten war', especially where advocacy and media coverage lag so far behind that devoted to Darfur or Iraq.¹²

Today, such silences are openly challenged, if not broken. Within social science, the growth in work on gender and conflict suggests that the 'taboo' on these issues has finally dissipated. 'Mainstream' IR journals publish articles not only on rape but also on more general issues of women's (in)security.¹³ Not coincidentally, feminist IR has also attained a firm enough hold for itself in the discipline's self-image to be considered 'beyond marginality' by some.¹⁴ And in the DRC, vivid reports of sexual violence have made rape the most (internationally) recognised aspect of the conflict, which conforms in its own way to the historically imagined 'truth' of the Congo as a metonym for chaos and brutality.¹⁵ In each case, silence no longer seems to be the greatest problem.

Marysia Zalewski suggested once that feminist IR is the work of persistently asking two questions: 'what about women?' and 'what work is gender doing?'¹⁶ In the case of wartime sexual violence women are everywhere. At least, they appear to be everywhere. Because

11 Zalewski and Enloe 1995:295.

12 5.4 million excess deaths is the more familiar figure and comes from International Rescue Committee estimates which were widely accepted for years. More recently, considerable doubt has been cast on those figures by the Human Security Research Project. I use the best estimates of the two sides as the low and high figures here (see International Rescue Committee 2008; Human Security Report Project 2011:123–131). On DRC as a 'forgotten war' and the comparison with other conflicts, see Oxfam UK 2000; Mamdani 2007.

13 Skjelsbæk 2001; Carpenter 2003b; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009; Hudson et al. 2008.

14 Squires and Weldes 2007.

15 See L. F. Jackson 2007. Journalistic dispatches from the DRC have also emphasised that 'Silence = Rape' (Goodwin 2004) and agencies like UNICEF have used similar motifs (UNICEF 2008). For a brief account of recent depictions of the DRC, see Dunn 2001.

16 Zalewski 1995:341.

international political inquiry hid war rape from itself, the place of both women and gender in it once went unacknowledged. But in the wake of what we might call the feminist insurgency, gender too is everywhere. This does not simply 'solve' the problem, since women and gender are together made present in a particular way. Hence the need for attention to Zalewski's second question: to the work that gender is doing, both as narrative and as reality. What do we know about war rape? Who do we see in sexual violence? What assumptions underly ideas of perpetrators and perpetrated upon? And to what uses is such rape discourse put?

A Hideous Ubiquity

The view of rape as a historically obscured object sits uncomfortably alongside the success since the mid-1990s in establishing sexual violence as a major concern of the security-development nexus. We know now that rape is a weapon of war. Such is the refrain of practically all contemporary academic research, political advocacy and media reporting on wartime sexual violence. At the highest levels of global governance, it is now acknowledged as a war crime and a constituent act of genocide to the extent that some talk of achieving the “international criminalization of rape”.¹⁷ US Secretaries of State speak publicly of rape as a “tactic of war” as they pledge to make its eradication a strand of foreign policy.¹⁸ Press accounts deal not only in the terminology of rape itself, but also in sexual violation as a powerful metaphor for the full range of suffering attendant on contemporary collective violence.¹⁹

Sexual violence strikes us as extreme. Like the mutilation of bodies or the language of racial supremacy, it can promote outrage over inquiry.²⁰ In an age where much is written on virtuality and violence, on dismemberment at a distance, war rape appears as the primal horror, as the original penetration on which all those accumulated metaphors of sexual

17 Engle 2005. See also Bergoffen 2009. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, passed on 19 June 2008, describes wartime sexual violence as “a tactic of war” and as “widespread and systematic”. Statements in support of the Resolution referred to sexual violence as “a weapon of war” no less than nine times (see United Nations Security Council 2008).

18 See Clinton 2009.

19 Examples abound but see Smith-Spark 2004; BBC 2006; le Carré 2010; Bleasdale 2009; Kristof 2010; Goodwin 2004.

20 Kalyvas 2006:24–26.

dominance rely.²¹ Its raw physicality exposes the Real; it is the ultimate co-presence in war.²² The representation of certain crimes as 'unimaginable' in their brutality, particularly in the popular imagination, risks reducing organised violence to these expressions, sacrificing any analysis of interests and causes to a vague psycho-pathology of war.

Yet academic investigation commits its own kind of error when it conceptualises sexual violence as unrelated to the character of a war itself, as Véronique Nahoum-Grappe warns:

When the terms 'excesses', 'blunders', and 'errors' are used to describe certain violent incidents arising from political action, the term has to be understood as containing a dual injunction to ignore what has to be mentioned. The 'excesses' correspond to some extreme act which, however, adds nothing. The 'blunders' are minor 'slip-ups', as if someone had merely slipped or stumbled under the pressure of events – so that the meaning is already cleaned up by the choice of words. And the 'errors' are an unfortunate mistake on the mathematical path to truth, as if they could be easily erased and then corrected at a stroke.²³

Feminist scholars have long acknowledged that matters are more complicated. But there may yet be reasonable grounds for doubting the special character of sexual violence. If we reject simplistic journalistic accounts of extreme violence, should we not also try and discover the instrumental and rational sources of such behaviour?²⁴ That kind of analysis might allow us to separate our moral outrage from our analysis, and even show us that 'extreme' violence is strangely normal after all. There is substantial value in this view. But there are some *prima facie* reasons to doubt the 'normality' of sexual violence. Sexual violence does not occur everywhere to the same extent. Nor does it follow any simple association with governments or armed groups. It is 'extreme' not just because it violates (some) ideas about acceptable means in war but also because it is not attendant on other apparently extreme

21 On virtuality, distance and war see particularly Der Derian 1990; Bousquet 2009. On metaphors of the phallus in organised violence, see Cohn 1987.

22 'Co-presence' is a play on the discussion of Baudrillard, technology and the decoy in Shapiro 2011.

23 Nahoum-Grappe 2002:555.

24 The infamous example of simplifying is Kaplan 1994. For a classic example of revealing the apparently mad as rational see Pape 2003.

behaviours. It seems to operate according to its own causes.

It is a standard feminist claim that sexual violence is not 'natural' in any biological sense.²⁵ Rape is “not a sexual act, it is a crime of power, a mark of fascism”; “not an aggressive manifestation of sexuality, but rather a sexual manifestation of aggression”.²⁶ But to say that sexual violence is not a consequence of genetic coding is not to say that it is a simple result of rational action. As will become abundantly clear, 'weapon of war' can mean many things, and only some of them fit the idea of means-ends rationality, or what I will call *instrumentality*. Several recurrent features of wartime sexual violence indicate a kind of excess that sets it apart from other acts of violence and which consequently require analysis. First, there is the intimate character of rape just mentioned: as an act often involving the direct forcing of bodies into other bodies (and in some definitions requiring it).²⁷ The body is often strangely erased in accounts of collective violence in IR, but here it is almost excessively clear: overwhelming in its corporeal proximity.²⁸

Second, there are those acts of mutilation and 'extra insults' on the bodies of victims, violations carried out *in addition to rape*. Some US Marines in Vietnam inserted flares into the vaginas of North Vietnamese Army nurses after raping them, and many ex-servicemen reporting not only that they were encouraged to rape but shown how to drive objects into the female genital organs by their instructors.²⁹ The stabbing of the victim's genitals after rape was also widespread in East Pakistan and many rapes were 'concluded' by the insertion of sticks into vaginas in the Japanese attack on Nanking.³⁰ It is hard to see what humiliation, purpose or sexual satisfaction is achieved here not already produced by the rape itself. Nor is it clear why attacks like this are so often followed by mass murder, a practice so widespread that it apparently has its own heroic term in military jargon, where to rape and then kill your victim is to become a 'double veteran'.³¹

25 Brownmiller 1975; Bourke 2007; Enloe 1998. While Brownmiller frequently speaks of rape as fundamentally and inherently associated with men (1975:12, 15), her actual use of evidence suggests much more variation.

26 Wilden 1985:39; Seifert 1994:55.

27 Recall from the introduction (footnote 3) that rape can involve penetration with an object.

28 On bodies and violence in IR, see particularly Muppidi 2012; Brighton 2004; Sylvester 2012.

29 Bourke 1999:188, 190.

30 Sharlach 2000:95; Brownmiller 1975:59.

31 Wilden 1985.

Third, there is the co-occurrence of war rape with public atrocity, where sexual violence is enacted in a display before family or community members. At Nanking, fathers were forced to rape their own daughters at gunpoint. And in Darfur, women were frequently raped in front of other village members who were forced to clap and cheer as militia members took turns.³² Again, such public performances are often followed by the murder of all those involved. It can be hard to ascertain just how common such incidents are, and what the display is intended to achieve. For whose satisfaction are such scenes enacted?

Fourth, and relatedly, sexual violence often appears as a kind of performance. If the clichéd view of it as an act in peace is of furtive and hidden assaults, accomplished by known abusers or by opportunistic strangers, in war it is often accompanied by explicit messages, as when *janjaweed* militia members shouted phrases indicating a sense of religious omnipotence during attacks involving sexual violence: “Slaves! Nubas! ... We are your God! Your God is Omer al-Bashir”.³³ This can lead to views of rape as something that “reveals the male psyche in its boldest form, without the veneer of 'chivalry' or civilization”.³⁴ Alternatively, it may stress social or emotional aspects: rape as “a form of social performance...highly ritualized” which can become “an integral part of youthful common sense and self-respect”.³⁵

Each feature foregrounds a dimension of rape too easily written off as irrelevant, suggests even an obscene enjoyment. This catalogue of horrors conforms vividly to Primo Levi's diagnosis of 'useless violence': “an end in itself, with the sole purpose of creating pain, occasionally having a purpose, yet always redundant, always disproportionate to the purpose itself”.³⁶ These dimensions do not settle the problem of war rape in advance; cannot show that it is not instrumental, but instead something else (the alternatives this thesis develops are that of *unreason* and *mythology*). Instead, they suggest that there is a problem with how we understand sexual violence as a form of extreme violence, a problem deserving of further

32 Brownmiller 1975:59; Human Rights Watch 2005b; Physicians for Human Rights 2006.

33 Cited in Amnesty International 2004:23. See also (Human Rights Watch 2005b:16.

34 Brownmiller 1975:33.

35 Bourke 2007:6; Bourgois 2003:343.

36 Levi 1987:83.

inquiry. Perhaps techniques of extreme brutality *are* chosen to instil fear across populations and just enough victims are left alive to speak of their experiences to others. And expressions of sexualised hate may be just that – *expressions* – having little to do with underlying causes and patterns of who gets targeted for rape.

The extreme features of sexual violence are not simply different patterns of atrocity within wars. They are also distributed unequally *among* wars, both in character and incidence, and this diversity has not yet been satisfactorily explained.³⁷ As is almost always recognised, problems of under-reporting and social taboo that have contributed to the historical silence around rape make comparative work difficult.³⁸ Moreover, that scholars have only recently taken an interest in sexual violence in itself is reflected by the fact that “war casualty figures...are not known to include 'raped women' and 'sodomized children’”.³⁹

But existing studies of wartime sexual violence, however partial, do suggest sufficient variance to establish sexual violence as an area for study in its own right. Different wars are marked by different patterns of sexual violence – not only how many victims are raped, but which kinds of people are considered appropriate targets and what kinds of sexual violence they are subjected to. This empirical evidence would seem to support constructivist thinking about social behaviour, especially given research on sexual violence outside war. One anthropological survey of 95 band and tribal societies found that 47% of them were relatively free of rape.⁴⁰ The absence of any self-evident links between the intensity of war and the intensity of sexual violence is suggested by the sketch of selected wars in Table 1 below.

37 Wood 2006:308.

38 Brownmiller 1975:40; Lindsey 2002; Seifert 1994; Swiss and Giller 1993:613.

39 Sylvester 1994b:36.

40 Sanday 1986:85.

War (Duration)	Combat Deaths⁴¹	Rape Level	Perpetrators⁴²
Nanking (1937-1938)	1,000,000 ⁴³	20,000-80,000	Invading forces only.
El Salvador (1979-1992)	69,000	Limited.	Government forces only.
Sri Lanka (1983-2009)	50,000	Almost none.	Some by Government.
Bosnia (1992-1995)	250,000	10,000-60,000	Majority by Serb forces.
Sierra Leone (1991-1996)	20,000	Extensive. ⁴⁴	Indiscriminate, but particularly RUF.
Rwanda (1994)	500,000	250,000-500,000	Majority by Hutu forces.

Table 1: Death and Rape in Selected Wars⁴⁵

A Curious Visibility

But not all wars are marked by massive sexual violence. It seems from general reports and the testimonies of kidnapped women that Viet Cong forces raped little, if at all, despite their extensive use of other terroristic methods.⁴⁶ Elisabeth Wood has explored the general absence of sexual violence in both Sri Lanka and El Salvador. In the former case, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been responsible for the forcible displacement of tens of thousands of civilians, as well as for attacks on Mosques during services and for a high number of suicide bombing operations. Yet there are no reports of the use of sexual violence by the LTTE except in a few instances of the sexual torture of

⁴¹ Data on wars (and their duration) and total combat deaths all from the Correlates of War Project (see Sarkees and Schafer 2000).

⁴² Data for total rapes and main perpetrators for Nanking, Sri Lanka, El Salvador and Sierra Leone from (Wood 2006). Data for Bosnia and Rwanda from Sharlach 2000.

⁴³ This figure is for the entirety of the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1941). There are no separate combat death data for the battle of Nanking but it is widely reported as the major occurrence of rape during that war.

⁴⁴ No total data available but Wood cites one survey of nearly 1,000 women estimating that 9% had suffered sexual violence. See Wood 2006:314-315.

⁴⁵ This is not intended to be a comprehensive accounting, merely a suggestive view of variation on the basis of current figures.

⁴⁶ Brownmiller 1975:90-92.

male prisoners.⁴⁷ In the latter case, there was some use of sexual violence by government forces, although it was low in comparison to other contexts, but almost no reports of such acts by the Frente Farabundo Martí para Liberación Nacional (FMLN), either unofficially or through the post-war Truth Commission.⁴⁸ These characteristics of sexual violence indicate that “rape is not just 'one atrocity among others', which results, like violent crime, from the character of combat”.⁴⁹ Rather, there are dimensions of sexual violence which adhere to patterns but do so according to apparently different causes and drivers. Just as rape is not just one atrocity among others, it does not conform easily to one explanatory paradigm, to one logic.

And yet, for all the difficulty in establishing precise numbers, and for all the marginalisation of gender research in the academy, war rape is also curiously visible. This is sometimes the case on purely statistical grounds. It now seems clear, for example, that the number of rape victims of the Liberian war were seriously inflated – it had been common to claim that 75% of women were raped in the civil war, when the proportion is likely closer to 10-15%.⁵⁰ On the other hand, there are also reasons to think that the scale of sexualised suffering has been *under-estimated* in the case of the Rwandan genocide, where a low calculation of pregnancies resulting from rape means that the common figure of 250-500,000 may be only half or a quarter of the true number.⁵¹ There are perils in inferring too much from human rights reports too, since in addition to the usual issues of reporting, selection and taboo, there are also questions of resources and advocacy and how those imperatives shape what facts are highlighted and how.⁵² These perverse incentives can apply to those who have survived wars too. In the wake of the Rwandan genocide, for instance, 'accusation cooperatives' were founded for the purpose of selling denunciations of Interahamwe killers and rapists for profit.⁵³

47 Wood 2006:147-149.

48 Wood 2006:316-317, 2009:152.

49 Morris 1996:672-673.

50 See Cohen and Green 2012.

51 Palermo and Peterman 2011.

52 Wood 2009:133; Cohen and Green 2012.

53 Prunier 2009:3.

But issues of visibility go beyond accounting. As several important interventions have argued, making rape visible in particular ways can co-opt feminism. The 'discovery' of rape was, as Susan Brownmiller observes, closely connected to the evolution of propaganda as a tool of war itself.⁵⁴ The British used rape in Belgium in 1917 to cast German troops as uniquely repugnant and the Nazis later relied on similar acts by Soviet troops for their own mass literature on the tendencies of the 'Asiatic Mind'.⁵⁵ The infamous 'Rape of Nanking' too was quickly turned to anti-Japanese purposes. Despite some feminist ideas of a conservative and rural Muslim Bosnia in which rape was a terrible familial burden, if there was a common element in the representations of rape in the Croatian and Serbian media it seems to have been that of women standing in for the collective body of the nation, a nation that either had to be defended or asserted.⁵⁶ A whole collection of representational materials bear out this function (see Figures 5 and 6). Awareness of rape on its own, as Enloe warned, does not not necessarily de-militarise. And is not necessarily feminist.

In the aftermath of the Bosnian and Rwandan genocide-wars, feminists raised similar concerns about the uses of visibility. For Doris Buss, one reason that activists were so successful in foregrounding gender crimes in both the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia and for Rwanda was because they were tied to ideas of ethnic war.⁵⁷ Because the Tribunals focused principally on this 'ethnic' dimension – on an understanding of rape as resulting from a specific mythology, to use the language of this thesis – they also turned rape into a mark of distinctly Serbian evil. In the Rwandan case, rape similarly became a question of Tutsi (female) victims and Hutu (male) perpetrators, rendering invisible other gendered atrocities. On Karen Engle's account too, war crimes in the Former Yugoslavia turn on a division amongst feminists, with some seeking to retain attention to all sexual violence, whilst others wanted to focus on genocide, and not 'everyday' forms of rape. Rather than standing as a major achievement for gender justice, this approach merely rendered those raped, once again, as 'womenandchildren'.⁵⁸ In other words, the Tribunals and their feminist allies subsumed rape within race.

54 Brownmiller 1975:41.

55 Brownmiller 1975:40–70.

56 Žarkov 2007:114, 85–116.

57 Buss 2007.

58 Engle 2005:779–780.

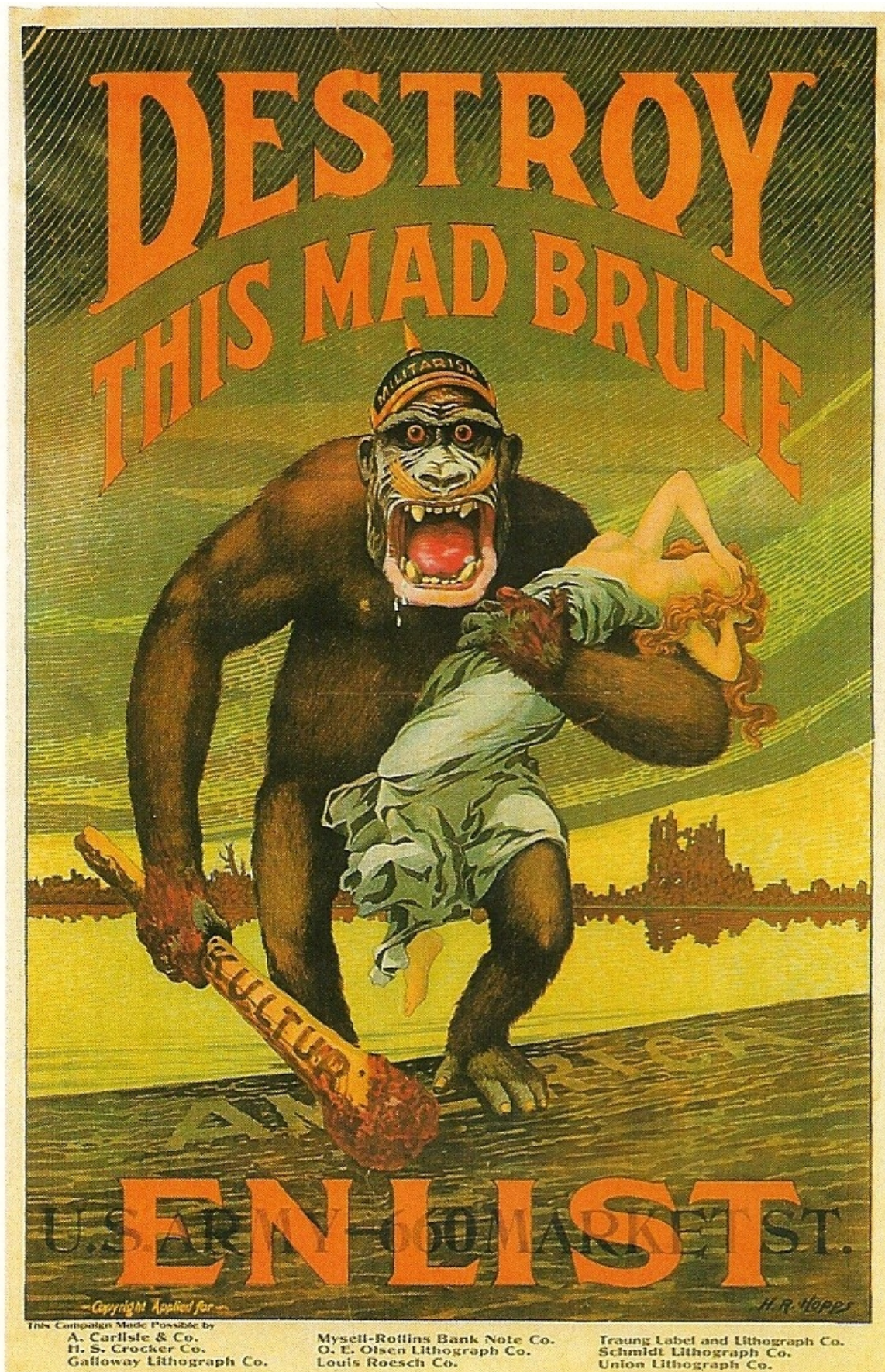


Figure 5: *Enlist!*: 'Destroy This Mad Brute' (1917): H.R. Hopps' World War I Army recruitment poster depicting Imperial Germany as a great ape with a stereotypically German moustache, his helmet reading 'Militarism', one hand holding a club labelled 'Kultur'; the other an ivory pale woman, presumably taken to represent Western civilization, as he lands on the shores of America, a ruined Europe visible on the horizon.



Figure 6: *Back Up Our Battleskies!*: 'Keep This Horror From Your Home (1940s): A World War II poster, seeking bond investments from the public with this depiction of a rapacious Japanese invader.

In the context of wars in which there are agendas to foregrounding a barbaric enemy, rape can therefore become “an all too visible and malleable justification for militarization”.⁵⁹ And rape has also been useful in more apparently domestic struggles. The figure of the rapacious negro, for one, has been mobilised again and again to shore up white masculinist supremacism. In contrast to some views of *Against Our Will* as simplifying or essentialist, Brownmiller in fact demonstrated a considerable sensitivity to this issue when showing the ways in which rape has been projected outwards onto racial others.⁶⁰ The politics of looking at rape is always loaded, especially as the terms of feminist discourse become more successful, and therefore more useful as tools for other ends.⁶¹

A Monstrous Masculine

If some forms of war rape can be too visible, others remain almost as invisible as ever. This is especially the case with male rape (meaning, usually, the rape *of* men). There is now some debate on the extent to which 'women' are the primary victims of sexual violence, particularly in contexts of 'gendercide' where perpetrators attempt to eradicate all the males of a given community.⁶² This is not because feminists deny that men suffer rape. Many do indeed stress both that men can be victims and that women can be perpetrators whilst maintaining that the balance is starkly unequal.⁶³ But this point is also frequently made in passing without a major change in the form of inquiry undertaken.⁶⁴ Although the leading assumption of female victims is often implicit, it occasionally manifests more obviously, as in a recent sexual violence campaigning site called, simply, *Women Under Siege*, despite their attention to boys and men suffering sexual violence in concrete mapping work.⁶⁵

For professionalised agents in Eastern DRC, the terminology is more neutral. During interviews, officials and NGO workers spoke continually of 'SGBV' – Sexual and Gender-

59 Buss 2007:22.

60 See Brownmiller 1975:210–256. Remarkably, this text also stood until very recently as one of the few book-length studies to advance a feminist treatment of war rape in any depth.

61 This is part of a more general critique of the co-option of feminism into projects of militarism, one expressed well in Eisenstein 2007.

62 Jones 2000. See also Carpenter 2003b.

63 For a discussion of depictions of female violence see Sjoberg and Gentry 2007.

64 This point is made particularly strongly in Shepherd and Grey 2012 (see also Kirby 2012b).

65 See *Women Under Siege* n.d. The Syria Crowdmap (<https://womenundersiegesyria.crowdmap.com/>) includes metrics tracking male victims.

Based Violence. But this did not translate into serious provisions of funding, or even into a clear sense of the scale of the problem (Chapter 7 includes a dedicated discussion on this point). Interviewees can sometimes assume that the rape of women is all that anyone is interested in, and so leave out corresponding cases amongst men.⁶⁶ This in spite of increasing attention in research on the DRC itself with the issue of male rape, and at least one serious statistical analysis illustrating the scale of the problem.⁶⁷

However, although the topic is relatively neglected, there is evidence of rape against men as a tool of war. In instances from the Crusades to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and violence in the contemporary DRC, men are recorded as having suffered rape, genital harm, enforced masturbation, coerced nudity and similar shaming.⁶⁸ Whether or not they were recognised and named as 'rape' by perpetrators and victims, such incidents have also found their way into the visual record (see Figures 7 and 8). Chris Dolan found that in the case of Uganda, sexual violence by men against men was understood as increasing the masculinity of the perpetrator by subtracting from that of the victim. Or, as a doctor put it to him in Gulu: “[male rape] was used by the Government soldiers as a weapon. The anger goes very deep, the men cannot talk about it, it is the women who bring it up. Male rape is a major cause of people's anger against the army”.⁶⁹ In many ways, male victims suffer problems familiar to feminists, such as doctors who simply do not believe that men are a group at risk.⁷⁰

66 This anecdote was told to me by Chris Dolan while we were working on the interviews for *International Alert* 2010. He had gone to interview a prominent human rights defender, had spent several hours in conversation, and was on his way to leave when he raised the issue of male rape. It quickly became clear that the activist did have stories of this kind of sexual violence, but had not shared them in the formal interview because they had not thought it was a subject that Dolan would be interested in.

67 That analysis is Johnson et al. 2010, and is subject to extensive discussion in Chapter 7.

68 Sivakumaran 2007. Sivakumaran makes note of cases of sexual violence in El Salvador and Sri Lanka, both of which this chapter has just discussed as cases of low rape in war. The examples provided are too scattered (or, as in the example of male torture rape below, possibly excluded from her categories) to cause a substantial revision of Wood's characterisation, but there is clearly an issue here with records of violence, and the conclusions drawn from them by scholars.

69 Cited in Dolan 2005:310.

70 Sivakumaran 2007:256.



Figure 7: *The Sexually Dismembered Enemy: The penile evisceration of the enemies by the soldiers of Outina, as found in Theodoricus de Bry's America (1591), an illustrated text describing the discovery and subjugation of 'the new world'.⁷¹*

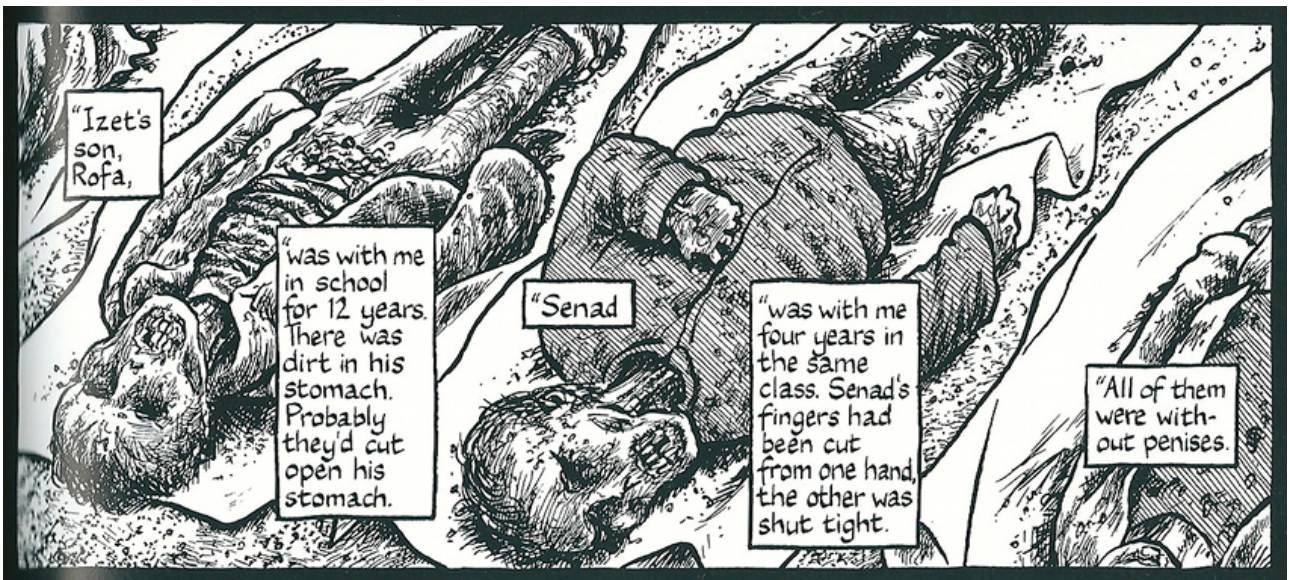


Figure 8: *Etching Male War Rape: A fragment from Joe Sacco's Safe Area Goražde (2000).⁷²*

⁷¹ I first discovered this image in Trexler 1995:69.

⁷² Sacco 2000:93.

The invisibility of male rape is surely in part reflective of a fear that attending to it will dilute the feminist project. This is a view shared by those who would prefer not to speak in terms of a feminist IR at all, seeking instead the purportedly neutral tones of 'gender theory' (a topic turned to in the next chapter). But acknowledging sexual violence against men is compatible with many (if not quite all) versions of feminist inquiry. At least, this is so if we adopt a common feminist explanation for the efficacy of sexual violence. Understood as an act of humiliation, rape against women is spoken of as a way of shaming men, and therefore particularly effective in societies ridden with patriarchal norms.⁷³ Similarly, male rape may be taken as a further form of emasculation, which is largely synonymous with transformation into the feminine.⁷⁴ Closely related is the idea of rape as a coercive performance of homosexuality. For both perpetrators and victims, the 'taint' of homosexuality may be essential to the act: for the former because it conforms the un-masculine nature of whoever is being raped (recall the common phrase "it's only gay if you take it") and for the latter because it may prevent reporting (since "only gay men are raped") (a point to some extent taken up in the discussion of mock sexual violence in fraternal initiation rituals in Chapter 6).⁷⁵

Feminists may also be in danger of neglecting male rape not because they haven't looked for it in war, or because they don't want to see it, but because it may often take place in different circumstances from female rape. For example, by far the highest estimates of male rape come not from combat situations or associated violences, but from the sexual torture of men detained in prisons or war camps. Some 76% of male prisoners in El Salvador reported having been subjected to sexual torture during the 1980s (when the civil war was ongoing), and 80% of concentration camp detainees (from a sample of 6,000) said the same of their experiences in the Sarajevo Canton during the Bosnian war.⁷⁶ And yet there is little question for most advocates of further attention to male rape that it will ever rival the scale of female victimisation.⁷⁷

73 This is perhaps the most common idea in feminist literature on war rape apart from the 'weapon of war' claim, but see, for example, the persuasive discussion in MacKenzie 2010.

74 Sivakumaran 2007:270-272.

75 See Sivakumaran 2005.

76 Stemple 2008:612-613.

77 See Sivakumaran 2007:260.

For the purposes of this thesis, male rape will be discussed where it offers a special case or problem for the forms of feminist inquiry under discussion, but will not be treated as an analytical object in its own right. Such a treatment is long overdue, especially within the social sciences. However, because the concern of what follows is largely with how feminists have thus far conceptualised war rape, it will only be as part of that scrutiny that the gendering of rape perpetrators, and the connections and the disjunctures between perpetrators, enablers and refuseniks – and between men, masculinities, and gender orders – might become more fully apparent. It proceeds on the understanding that both men and women can be raped and that the construction of categories of 'male' and 'female' and 'masculine' and 'feminine' are of great consequence in this process. Acceptance of the idea that the rape of women and girls is much more common means that they will be mentioned more often. Men will become more visible where there is a specific question around the character or extent of violence experienced by them.

What Kind Of An Object Is 'War Rape'?

Wartime sexual violence is a practice, but so is accounting for wartime sexual violence. In other words, descriptions are not innocent. Making this kind of observation in IR is increasingly a way of invoking Michel Foucault to uncover submerged histories or produce genealogies of certain identities in global politics.⁷⁸ This is in many ways an eminently feminist way to proceed. For example, calling into question standard categories of 'pathology' and 'deviancy' around sexual violence shows how deeply infused they are with pervading social norms.⁷⁹ After all, homosexuality, fetishism and transvestism were formally defined as 'disorders' at a time when rape itself was not.⁸⁰ Discourses of psychiatry, criminology and sexology have surely shaped the narratives produced of rape and its causes.⁸¹ By the same token, the framing of rape, its very visibility, is wrapped up in the networks of feminist advocacy and the openings allowed by global politics.⁸²

78 See, for example, Bartelson 1995; Der Derian 2009; Vucetic 2011; Evans 2010; Howell 2010; Shilliam 2011.

79 Cameron and Frazer 1987:7-8.

80 Lalumière et al. 2005:106; Groth 1979:2-4.

81 Cameron and Frazer 1987:21-22.

82 Enloe 1994.

The forms in which sexual violence has been patterned and thought across time are thus at stake. 'Rape' has at points been an *impossible* object (taken as axiomatically inconceivable within marriage or as the result of consensual orgasm if pregnancy resulted).⁸³ Feminist thought and activism has made it not only socially real but political. This is not only a question of making private experience public, although this is surely part of what happened. It is also a matter of constituting it, of bequeathing a form of knowing sexual violence by virtue of having assembled it in a particular way: as a symbol of patriarchal domination. Certainly, other ways of knowing rape – as property invasion, as demonic possession, as a right of domesticity, as metaphysical punishment – are possible. The contest over forms of knowledge is hardly settled, but the politicisation of sexual violence has successfully produced a kind of object. One, for example, adoptable as a standard of civilization on the global scene.

The caution for feminists faced with this relative malleability is partly that talk of murdering sex beasts (whether as heroic masculine or as medical deviant) detracts from the social character of rape and sexual murder and misses the place of such acts on a continuum of gendered violence including much putatively normal behaviour.⁸⁴ That is, that it constrains analytical vision. But more than this, accounts of sex and death can also have the quality that most interested Foucault, and which Ian Hacking terms the *looping effect of human kinds*.⁸⁵ *Human kinds* because it matters to people how they are labelled, described and studied, and *looping* because the labelling changes the kind. It is not just an act of naming, since apprehending the name given to it changes the kind, requiring new knowledge, leading in turn to new behaviour: “The greater the moral connotations of a human kind, the greater the potential for the looping effect”.⁸⁶ Crucially, this makes human kinds causal and the effect is principally found in those kinds marked as deviant or abnormal (kinds like 'child abuser', 'suicide', 'murder' and, we might add, 'rapist').⁸⁷

83 The former claim comes from Sir Matthew Hale's 1736 judgement that rights to bodily pleasure were surrendered in the marriage contract, a contract that the wife could not thereafter retract; the latter is traceable to Onesiphorous W. Bartley's 1815 *A Treatise on Forensic Medicine or Medical Jurisprudence*, which argued that conception “must depend on the exciting passion that predominates”. See Bourke 2007:307–308, 53.

84 Cameron and Frazer 1987. See also Kelly 1988:74–137.

85 Addressed most closely in Hacking 1995, but see also Hacking 1999.

86 Hacking 1995:370.

87 Hacking 1995:364.

Carol Harrington has traced the discursive strategies employed in bringing sexual violence into the political arena, and so illustrates a looping kind in relation to sexual violence. Having adopted a strategy for combatting sexual violence based on the success of abolitionist campaigns, feminist strategies of politicisation cast the issue of rape in terms of bodily violation and individual freedom, both of which played on existing discourses of female innocence.⁸⁸ In the context of the Cold War and the utility of consciousness-raising through testimonies of suffering, sexual violence became heavily associated with psychological trauma and susceptible to techniques of quantification such that, when human rights discourse became intertwined with the rhetoric of interventionism over the former Yugoslavia, the visibility of sexual violence entailed a view of “the post-conflict zone as a site of mental health emergency”, one particularly conducive to the new military humanism.⁸⁹

What such an account foregrounds is the co-constitution of sexual violence and *accounts of* sexual violence. Strategies to eradicate sexual violence changed the way it was perceived, but not in a way that could escape more general discourses of legitimate (medical) knowledge. A politicisation negotiated in webs of interacting kinds.⁹⁰ Following Harrington, such constructions make a difference because they change the ways in which both victims and perpetrators of rape perceive themselves (and so act), and because they exclude and obscure forms of challenging patriarchy that involve collective political subjects and the agency of those who have experienced rape and abuse.⁹¹ Alongside the critiques levelled by Karen Engle and Doris Buss, this requires of a feminist account that it be particularly sensitive to the power of narratives and to the constitutive role of theorising, matters taken up more forcefully in Chapter 3.

88 Harrington 2010:23, 25.

89 Harrington 2010:126. On techniques of quantification see pp. 117, 128, 130.

90 Indeed, two of Hacking's most loaded examples are 'race' and 'gender', but he refrains from examining them too closely as looping kinds because “[o]ur thoughts about them are so redolent of ideology that I shall leave them on one side” (Hacking 1995:355).

91 Harrington 2010:191, 196; Buss 2007; Engle 2005.

*Surfacing War Rape*⁹²

There have been few attempts to characterise difference within feminist accounts of war rape. Those that exist have usually offered a brief set of forms that rape can take, without much further discussion of theoretical issues raised by this variety. So Cynthia Enloe lists eleven kinds of sexual violence, several of which could have a similar explanation.⁹³ Patricia Rozée, by contrast, organised her cross-cultural survey of rape by identifying a number of differing forms of rape that meaningfully distinguish between a variety of gender orders: marital rape; exchange rape; punitive rape; theft rape; ceremonial rape; and status rape.⁹⁴ These are all forms of condoned rape, which is to say that there are moral codes, forms of legitimation and punishments attendant on them found in peacetime.⁹⁵ The variation is instructive, both for undermining assumptions that rape is something that is everywhere the same, and for developing a parallel to accounts of variation in war rape. For example, of those societies where rape was significantly present, some 70% had a coherent conception of 'exchange rape', where coercive sex constituted a part of bargaining relations, as when sexual access to female family members is offered as a gesture of goodwill or as a stake in games. By contrast, only 14% of the same societies legitimated 'punitive rape': as a punishment for inappropriate gender behaviour or for errors committed by husbands.⁹⁶ Anticipating the argument to come, we can say that these are all forms of mythological rape, in that they are bound by norms of community and culture.

But perhaps the most prominent distinction between forms of war rape in feminist IR, and one which explicitly differentiates between forms of feminist argument, is that of Inger

92 A nod to Copelon 1994 and Carpenter 2000.

93 The list runs as follows: 1) rape by male soldier of a woman he thinks of as a foreigner; 2) rape by a male soldier of a civilian woman of the same nationality when he is 'off duty'; 3) rape by a male soldier of a woman in the same army; 4) rapes of women held in military prisons by male soldiers guarding them or acting as interrogators; 5) rape of captured women by soldiers of one group with purpose of humiliating those of other groups; 6) rape by men of one group of men from an 'enemy' group to humiliate them by making them 'mere women'; 7) rapes of women by male soldiers as part of a system of morale building rewards authorised by senior officers; 8) rapes of women taking refuge in camps by men taking refuge in the same camps or be men assigned to protect those women; 9) rapes of women by prostitution procurers to prepare them for service in brothels; 10) rapes of women in wartime by men of same community acting out of misogyny licensed and nurtured by militarised atmosphere; and 11) rapes of women who publicly oppose militarisation by men of their community who support it. See Enloe 2000:109–110.

94 See the summative table at Rozée 1993:507.

95 Rozée also considers 'nonnormative rape', i.e. rape without a socially defined status.

96 Rozée 1993:507–508.

Skjelsbæk. Skjelsbæk suggests three conceptualisations of the relationship between sexual violence and war: *essentialist*, focusing on all women as victims in the assertion of militaristic masculinity; *structuralist*, focusing on targeted women as victims in attacks on particular groups; and *social constructionist*, focusing on targeted men and women with women victimised in order to 'masculinise' perpetrators and 'feminise' men.⁹⁷ On this account, the differences are not only in empirical attention, but in underlying epistemologies.⁹⁸ In this the differences are said to map on to more general distinctions amongst feminists (distinctions to be examined in Chapter 2), and such differences certainly exist.

Some feminists, Skjelsbæk included, are more inclined towards particularist accounts of war rape which attend to constructions of masculinity rather than emphases of continuity in war rape over time. But the conflation of empirical foci and epistemology also means that case-specific conclusions are confused with philosophical commitments. After all, that feminists find 'structure' in cases of genocidal rape need not mean that they deny a constructivist account of identity and knowledge. It entails only that they think those who perpetrated the rapes had a structural and community-orientated understanding of their actions. The apparent dispute between an account of wartime sexual violence in which all women are targeted and one in which men *and* women are targeted may tell us much more about contingent historical factors (different wars and differing contexts may display different patterns of rape) or analytical distinctions (between acts that are essential to a strategy and those that are peripheral to it) than they do about the philosophical foundations of research. As the coming chapters will make clearer, philosophical foundations orientate research and explicate the 'link-up' between worlds and knowledge of them, but do not themselves generate substantive theories. It is not philosophically schizophrenic to say, for example, that war rape in Bosnia was community-orientated whilst similar forms of violence in Iraq are more fragmented and sexual violence in the Second World War targeted women in general. Such a claim of diversity in violence *may* suffer from conceptual deficiencies, but the claim itself is possible whilst still being 'constructivist' about knowledge, or 'essentialist' about the ontology of gender.

⁹⁷ Skjelsbæk 2001. This differentiation is tracked closely by Leatherman 2011:11–20.

⁹⁸ Skjelsbæk 2001:214–215.

Repertoires Of Violence

Where feminists have examined war in their analyses, this has usually been as the larger context for rape and gender norms, rather than as a particular field in itself. Several accounts link rape in war to areas of the social usually thought to sit outside of war, such as the media, or to political phenomena like nationalism.⁹⁹ Yet there are no studies which relate the ways of explaining sexual violence to ways of explaining war, and behaviour in war, generally. The causes of this neglect may have to do with the historical development of feminist theory, which has focused mainly on dismantling a series of myths about rape in 'peacetime'.¹⁰⁰ Work on wartime sexual violence, which already largely subscribes to the general claims of feminism as to what rape is, has concentrated on showing that rape is not about sex but about power. It has paid much less attention to the different ways of thinking about power and its effects. In short, there is a literature on gender *and* war, but not much of one on gender *in* war.

Linking sexual violence explicitly to the study of war does not suggest that the former should become a sub-field of the latter. Rather it argues against any tendency for feminist scholarship to be assigned to the private sphere, to be domesticated.¹⁰¹ Moreover, it recognises that the neglect between thinking about sexual violence and thinking about war is two-way. Despite increased institutional and academic attention to gender, the major works on violence in war have little, if anything, to say about sexual violence. For example, many articles that *specifically address* extreme violence in war either ignore sexual violence altogether or mention it as an example in a catalogue of other crimes.¹⁰² One recent book on violence in civil war, which concentrates on 'intimate' violence, seems to contain only two vague references to rape.¹⁰³ Even those who have produced rich work on both social behaviour in war and sexual violence in war have tended not to link their research projects.¹⁰⁴

99 See Žarkov 2007; Elshtain 1991; Peterson 1998.

100 See the discussions in Bourke 2007; Mardorossian 2002; Reitan 2001.

101 Youngs 2008:691.

102 In the former category see Azam and Hoeffler 2002; Downes 2006; Kalyvas 1999; Kaufman 2006; in the latter McDougall 2005:126.

103 Kalyvas 2006:20, 108.

104 Compare Wood 2003b, 2003a with Wood 2006, 2009.

Critical security scholars, who have forged a space for themselves in the discipline analogous to that of feminists, have done so by tending to focus on practices usually considered outside of war: issues such as the construction of enemies, the intersection of foreign policy discourses of violence, the language of sovereignty and the codification of war memory in film.¹⁰⁵ Many of these interventions have been invaluable, and have cast critical light on core concepts and figures of war.¹⁰⁶ But the distinction between 'war' and 'security' has begun to harden to the extent that attempts to be critical about the former can lead to accusations of returning to a hegemonic IR.¹⁰⁷ Other strands – postcolonial, constructivist, and so on – have all taken some interest in the question of war, with varying success, but have simultaneously tended to ignore gender.¹⁰⁸ Paradoxically enough, the field may have become so caught between policy-orientated projects of military sociology and critical approaches to the not-quite-war, that it may have found itself without any actual discipline of war.¹⁰⁹

By considering practices and explanations of war alongside those of rape in war, this thesis will seek to advance the understanding of gender *in* war. It follows from the variation in war rape, and from the different forms it takes when it is found, that the two dynamics are in a complex relation. Attending principally to rape risks making war not much more than the empty background – the opportunity structure – for elements internal to sexual violence. And looking only at war makes rape just another tactic, effacing both its own special character and the splayed tissues weaving into broader gender hierarchies. Reductions of this kind, which simply push together the varieties of violence, can lead to some apparently contradictory claims about war rape, such as that it is both the 'engine of war' *and* simply an intensification of the gender relations that exist in 'peacetime'.¹¹⁰ Isn't war rape all those things, and more? Perhaps, but merely combining claims together with no sense of contrast or contradiction repeats the error of “lootpillagelandrape”. Atrocity becomes undifferentiated, homogenous. Unquestionably hideous, but with no sense of why *this* kind

105 The literature is by now vast, but see, as representatives of each of the examples given here, R. Jackson 2007; Campbell 1998b; c.a.s.e. collective 2006; Weber 2005.

106 As in Der Derian 1993; Shapiro 1993.

107 This is the subject of the recent debate over Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton's 'critical war studies'. See Aradau 2012; Barkawi 2012; Barkawi and Brighton 2011.

108 Consider in this regard the critique of the c.a.s.e. collective in Sylvester 2007a.

109 Barkawi and Brighton 2011.

110 Copelon 1994.

of aggression, manifested *this* way, in *this* place, against *this* person. The point is instead to reveal the connections between war and rape in their variety and their specificity.

This is the task of examining *repertoires of violence*, those subsets of Charles Tilly's repertoires of contention: “a set of practices that a group routinely engages in as it makes claims on other political or social actors. A particular group may include in its repertoire any or all of the following: kidnapping, assassinations, massacres, torture, sexual violence, forced displacement, and so on”.¹¹¹ Repertoires are clusters of violent practices applied in similar situations with similar kinds of people subjected to violence.¹¹² They are consistent, without an implication that they are either consciously-chosen or habitual. But they are also subject to historical and social variation, and it is partly this variation that poses a problem for inquiry. Repertoires offer a non-deterministic way of naming patterns without embarking on the assumption that the violence we are looking at is simply madness.¹¹³

How are we to account for this variation? It is frequently stressed that sexual violence can have many motives.¹¹⁴ There is no reason why rape cannot serve multiple ends in practice, no particular requirement of parsimony that would single out tactics, ritual or sexuality as *the* cause of sexual violence in war (or, at least not as the only one for all times and places). There exist manifold proofs for each theorem, anecdotes and data-sets for each style of atrocity. And yet wartime sexual violence is “too widespread, too frequent and seemingly too calculated and effective [to] *not* to be part of a larger political scheme and hence a weapon of war”.¹¹⁵ But the political has many forms and weapons can serve many purposes. Primo Levi, who provided that concise identification of 'useless violence', once recounted the message given to him by a concentration camp guard: “there is no why here”.¹¹⁶ This thesis suggests instead that there are many whys, if no ethical explanations. It seeks not necessarily to adjudicate between them, but to examine their foundations and implications, and to put them to the test against the actual practices of war and of sexual violence.

¹¹¹ Wood 2009:133. See also Tilly 2006:30–59.

¹¹² Tilly 2006:35.

¹¹³ Tarrow 1993.

¹¹⁴ Card 1996:9; Seifert 1994:56.

¹¹⁵ Skjelsbæk 2001:213.

¹¹⁶ Levi 1987:35.

WHAT DO WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT GENDER?

The epistemological problem for feminism is to explain an apparently paradoxical situation. Feminism is a political movement for social change. But many claims, clearly motivated by feminist concerns, made by researchers and theorists in the social sciences, in biology, and in the social studies of the natural sciences appear more plausible - more likely to be confirmed by evidence - than the beliefs they would replace. How can such politicized research be increasing the objectivity of inquiry? On what grounds should these feminist claims be justified?

Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*¹

Conclusion: neither science nor the methodology of research programmes provides arguments against anarchism. Neither Lakatos nor anybody else has shown that science is better than witchcraft and that science proceeds in a rational way. Taste, not argument, guides our choice of science; taste, not argument, makes us carry out certain moves within science (which does not mean that decisions on the basis of taste are not surrounded by and entirely covered by arguments, just as a tasty piece of meat may be surrounded and entirely covered by flies). There is no reason to be depressed by this result. Science, after all, is our creature, not our sovereign; *ergo*, it should be the slave of our whims, and not the tyrant of our wishes.

Paul Feyerabend, 'Theses on Anarchism'²

The Tyrant Of Our Wishes

The feminist insurgency in International Relations, from its earliest manifestations to the present, has fused questions of representation and emancipation with those of knowledge and method. Not satisfied with 'making women visible' within the discipline's already established parameters, feminists have also forced a revisiting of ontology, epistemology and methodology.³ These interventions have generated both anxiety and enthusiasm, and might today still be characterised in terms of a misunderstanding.⁴ A familiar kind of impasse has emerged in their wake. On the one hand, there is a continuing commitment to feminism as

1 Harding 1986:24.

2 In Lakatos and Feyerabend 1999:117–118, emphasis in original.

3 On the history of feminism and gender studies in IR see Enloe 2001; Halliday 1998; Squires and Weldes 2007; Hutchings 2008a.

4 Tickner 1997.

problematising exclusions, combating silences, and exploring the shift, blur and return of identities in our disciplinary field.⁵ Alongside other self-consciously critical lineages, a feminist space, albeit narrow, has thus been secured in terms of syllabi, publications and careers.⁶ On the other hand, elements of the initial feminist programme have been taken on and adapted within more mainstream parts of the discipline, but in a way that distances themselves from the category of 'feminism' and its implications. So constructivists might now use beliefs about sex and gender in their explanations of decision making, or the experiences of female labourers may contribute to an analysis of the everyday in international political economy, without the resulting works being thought of as distinctly politicised in the way feminism is often taken to be.

The reception of feminist ideas in IR has been framed almost exclusively by two related sets of distinctions. Firstly between *empiricist*, *standpoint* and *postmodern* positions within feminism itself, and secondly between *gender* and *feminism*. Invariably used to classify legitimate and illegitimate disciplinary identities, these distinctions have also worked alongside broader binaries (quantitative/qualitative, explaining/understanding, positivist/post-positivist, empirical/theoretical and conservative/radical, amongst others) to define appropriate ways of *being feminist* in IR for advocates and skeptics alike. For some, the repetition of narratives of marginality has reinforced a tendency to see research in terms of identity rather than content, and arguably also led to an excessive focus on what separates feminists from non-feminists.⁷ It is against this background that 'gender' has lately taken on a somewhat separate life from 'feminism', often because it is seen as more amenable to the mainstream standards of the discipline and by some as better suited to an account of masculinities.⁸ The impact of these meta-theoretical questions on feminist inquiry into war and sexual violence has been substantial. The identities bequeathed by the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern

5 See recently Stern and Zalewski 2009; Soreanu 2010; Hansen 2011.

6 This is obviously a relative and contestable claim. Only 2% of all respondents to the 2011 Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) survey self-described as 'feminist' scholars, the same percentage as for the 2008 survey. Moreover, this level was fairly consistent across contexts, rising to a high of 11% for New Zealand, but remaining between 2% and 4% for the US, UK, Canada and Australia. See Maliniak, Peterson, and Tierney 2012:27; Jordan et al. 2009:31. Recent detailed analysis of the UK context has also established that although elite Politics and IR Departments contain an average of 3.9 gender specialists each, this expertise is not reflected in undergraduate course provision on feminism, gender or sexuality. See Foster et al. 2012.

7 Squires and Weldes 2007:198–199.

8 Squires and Weldes 2007:190–192. See also Mary Caprioli's agenda for 'neofeminism' (which retains an emancipatory agenda but encourages quantitative methods) and Charlotte Hooper's pitch for the 'gender variable' (Caprioli 2004:266; Hooper 1999).

triptych and by the gender/feminism binary offer immediate guidance on method, politics and audience. Sedimented into cognitive shortcuts, they thus threaten to constitute the very camp structure they purport to describe.⁹

Because feminist IR has so frequently been defined in terms of its approach to knowledge, attempted contributions to that project must position themselves accordingly. If feminism is more than 'add gender and stir' (more, in other words, than incorporating a new variable within existing models without troubling their foundational assumptions), then a feminist inquiry into wartime sexual violence *cannot but* incorporate the discussion of method, epistemology and ontology. Usually this is done in passing, providing the reader with a general orientation (critical, post-structuralist, occasionally 'policy-orientated'). We have seen that Inger Skjelsbæk, one of the few feminist IR scholars to attend to the different possible ways of conceptualising wartime sexual violence, herself adapted a form of the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern triptych. That detail is rare, but foundational (and anti-foundational) positions are commonly deployed as part and parcel of a given feminist theoretical account of war rape.¹⁰

But revisiting the history of these debates within IR over the form of feminist knowing will reveal that they are not as instructive as often supposed. This chapter first returns to the two frames which have so persistently set the terms of debate about feminism in IR. In both cases the separations - between empiricist, standpoint and postmodern feminisms and between feminism and gender - are shown to be less stark than is commonly supposed. Having in part shown why these familiar camps are more open to each other than we might think, I turn to more recent disciplinary debates about the foundations, methods and the philosophy of social science, debates which are in many ways the successors to the fraught discussions of feminism's means and ends in IR. This sets the stage for the examination of feminist critical examination in the next chapter.

9 The language of 'cognitive shortcuts' is borrowed from Hutchings 2008b; the language of IR's camps comes from Sylvester 2007b.

10 See, for example, the discussion of standpoint in Cockburn 2010.

Denying The Possibility Of Social Science¹¹

It was Robert Keohane's initial engagement with feminist IR that popularised the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern distinction. Drawing on Sandra Harding's original definition, read through Christine Sylvester, Keohane both adopted and circumscribed the possibilities of *a* feminist contribution.¹² In brief, he characterised *feminist empiricism* as "observ[ing] that states and the interstate system have been fundamentally gendered structures of domination and interaction", *feminist standpoint* as offering perspectival critiques from the periphery that "contain valid insights into the complex realities of world politics" and *feminist postmodernism* as difficult to pin down but essentially a resistance to singular narratives.¹³ Seeing feminism as a potential ally for liberal institutionalism against neo-realism, Keohane sought a standpoint engagement with mainstream IR theory, warning against "happily accept[ing] the existence of multiple incommensurable epistemologies" in a way that might lead "ultimately to a sort of nihilism" and to "intellectual and moral disaster".¹⁴ In this vision of theoretical aggregation newly accumulated facts about the relative positions of men and women (including perspectives from 'the margins') which illuminated 'core' problems were to be welcomed, even as the destabilising effects of a certain kind of theory were to be kept at bay.

While at one level drawing on and finding worth in feminism, this assessment also located any contribution firmly on the plane of inter-state relations, traditionally conceived - the content of sovereignty, institutions, economics and war - and validated by a particular view of scientific adequacy based on Imre Lakatos's criteria of 'new facts' and 'continuous growth' in knowledge.¹⁵ The subsequent reaction within feminist IR took the form of both stiff resistance and cautious engagement. On the one hand, there was strong criticism of

11 Keohane 1989:250.

12 In making my case, I draw extensively on the work of Sandra Harding for two reasons. First, Harding is the source of Keohane's influential characterisation, with consequences for the discipline that I will attempt to elucidate. Second, Harding is by far the most prominent scholar of both standpoint theory and feminist critiques of science outside of IR. A quick GoogleScholar search lists a combined total of 11,388 citations for her five highest-ranking interventions on feminism, method and science. This is not to say that Harding's theories are incontestable, only that returning to the content of her work usefully clarifies issues of interpretation and understanding.

13 Keohane 1989:245 following Harding 1986.

14 Keohane 1989:250, 249, 250.

15 Keohane 1989:246-250.

Keohane's dismissal of postmodernism and of his separation out of good feminists from bad.¹⁶ On the other hand, the terms set by Keohane remain operative, and continue to frame interventions on the character and value of feminist IR. They have continued to shape the conversation such that papers on gender and feminism in IR continue to deploy the empiricist-standpoint-postmodern series as a framing device.¹⁷

The effect of the distinction was to anchor the early diagnosis of feminism in IR, separating out its varieties and appearing to expose fundamental differences between them. Those committed to standard research procedures but interested in the varied experiences of men and women could identify with feminist empiricism. Scholars who engaged the world through normative and political projects of transformation could find in standpoint feminism an epistemological licence for the autobiographical and the personal as legitimate knowledge forms. And those wishing to undo prominent academic categories – categories like 'truth' and 'experience' - could find allies in deconstruction amongst feminist postmodernists. The split mapped neatly onto more general subject positions: positivist, critical and poststructural as well as quantitative, qualitative and conceptual. Gender rendered respectively as *fact*, *perspective* and *illusion*.

In the case of feminist accounts of war, the triptych has found influence in a number of ways. For one, the terms are common in introductions to the feminist/IR intersection.¹⁸ In one of the earliest feminist interventions on security, J. Ann Tickner framed the contribution in terms of contrasting liberal, radical and postmodern variants.¹⁹ These terms track the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern distinction closely, since liberal feminists are usually thought of as wanting formal equality on the same grounds (analogously to the empiricist desire for normal science done properly), radicals as advancing a new politics from identities of difference (in the same way that standpoint produces a successor science through its situated knowledges), and postmodernists as destabilising and fracturing politics and knowledge.²⁰ Skjelsbæk's division of essentialist, structuralist and social constructionist

¹⁶ Weber 1994.

¹⁷ For example, see Hutchings 1994; Sjöberg 2006:906–908; Blanchard 2011:858–861.

¹⁸ See, for example, Hansen 2010; Blanchard 2003:1295.

¹⁹ Tickner 1992:14–17.

²⁰ Indeed, the two parallel triptychs are explored together in Sylvester 1994b.

approaches to sexual violence has also had a similar impact.

In more recent dialogues, both Keohane and J. Ann Tickner have continued to speak in terms of the tripartite division, but the conversation has also tilted in telling ways. Against his original identification with standpoint, Tickner now identifies in Keohane a feminist empiricism in a particularly restricted sense, neglecting feminist politics in favour of mere data about women.²¹ Keohane's own more recent views again identify feminist potentiality and limit in uneasy measure, this time suggesting *both* that the binaries of critical/problem-solving, hermeneutic/positivist and social constructivist/covering law should be seen as part of a continuum of science *but also* that feminists can only be accepted when they formulate testable hypotheses, and that this could easily take the form of variables within a neopositivist model.²² A strange confluence thus emerges, since Tickner, in a similar vein, *both* rejects the idea of 'gender as variable' *but also* offers largely empirical examples from feminist security analysis, herself subscribing to the ideal of "testable, generalizable claims about the gendering of the discipline of international relations".²³

The primary statements on the relation between gender, feminism and the nature of inquiry thus weave disparate and apparently contradictory strands, at times seemingly separated by antagonistic world-views, at others to speak only in a different language about the same procedures and ends.²⁴ To unpick these knots, it is worth looking again at the origins of the feminist triptych. Sandra Harding's motivating interest was in the critique of science offered by feminists and others investigating scientific legitimacy as a social project and product. It was the stark separation between unimpeachable scientific method and extra-scientific prejudice which needed destabilising, but not, as the general impression would have it, in the service of some mere anti-science.

Most crucially, the distinction between empiricist, standpoint and postmodern was from the beginning understood as unstable and laced with tensions. At the most basic of levels, the

²¹ Tickner 2005:2.

²² Keohane 1998:194, 197.

²³ Tickner 1998:208, 1997:628, 615 (fn. 9).

²⁴ As an indication of the influence of these discussions, consider that the two short pieces by Keohane and Tickner's two full articles and short rejoinder account for some 430 citations on GoogleScholar (as of August 2012).

triptych is not intended as a menu of self-contained scholarly trajectories. For example, on Harding's account, feminist empiricism is partly self-refuting, since it simultaneously seeks to hold on to the old methodological rules (but put them to better use) and acknowledges that a particular group (historically subordinated women) are more likely to be able to reveal the relevant facts than their colleagues. In other words, the procedures of scientific inquiry cease to be neutral and unrelated to the identity of the inquirer *at the same time* that the apparent quality of the corpus of objective knowledge increases. Hence the paradox of "empirical inadequacies in empiricist epistemologies".²⁵ A pure position of empiricist feminism was thus rendered impossible for Harding since it spilled eventually into standpoint-style understandings of *who* is best placed to offer certain truths. A less biased factual truth intermingled with, *and in important respects dependent on*, a truth of perspective.

Feminist empiricism and standpoint feminism are thus contiguous, with the latter picking up and developing the core dimensions of the former by further stressing a) the social identity of the observer; b) biases in hegemonic scientific norms; and c) politics as something which can - in pushing for emancipatory agendas - *increase* the objectivity of science.²⁶ What Harding actually foregrounds is a kind of *militant empiricism*: the paradoxical way in which the critical attitude undermines the mythologies of criticality and enlightenment themselves, against "the defensive belief that science itself should not be examined in the same ways science proposes to examine everything else in the world around us".²⁷ And so this critique deploys the grammar of science against its own abstractions, as when standpoint feminists argue that "the social world in effect provides a kind of laboratory for 'experiments' that can enable one to observe and explain patterns in the relations between social power and the production of knowledge claims".²⁸

Standpoint in its most general manifestation is not, then, a replacement of careful objectivity with the subjectivity of identity politics, a position that would itself reflect a naive empiricism of experience. Even in the case of participatory research alongside informants, the particular role of the theorist as the generator of definitions and distinctions remains,

25 Harding 1986:26.

26 Harding 1986:162.

27 Harding 1986:200.

28 Harding 2004b:257.

with the 'standpoint' of those involved becoming less the substantive content of the work and more "a critical check on the adequacy of their constructs".²⁹ Subject positions are not taken as innocent but instead require critical interpretation.³⁰ Tickner's phraseology for what makes research feminist - namely 'starting thought from women's lives' - often means starting thought from *other* women's lives, and so is not a kind of permission slip for substituting one's own views as the equivalent of careful analysis.³¹ Standpoint is thus more than *revaluing* marginalised perspectives. It is also the practice of *re-evaluating* them.³²

The postmodernist critique of standpoint works from the fracturing of actual identities, which are always multiple and situated in ways that proliferate difference and intersected experiences upon closer examination. Yet, as with empiricist and standpoint feminisms, continuities are also obvious in the cultivation of an oppositional consciousness that destabilises dominant views, and which maintains an intensely political sense of what inquiry is for.³³ All three moments similarly share an interest and cognisance of how experience is mediated and turned into larger categories and identities.³⁴ For standpoint-orientated theorists, this is to say that the subjects included in analysis are already recognised as multiple, heterogenous and contradictory.³⁵ Hence the possibility of *standpoint as a postmodern strategy*, mirrored in IR feminist discussions of what we mean by 'women' and 'men'.³⁶

This is not to say that gender as fact, perspective and illusion are synonymous for feminist critics, nor that frequently-cited divisions amongst feminists have no purchase. Tensions indeed persist between reformist epistemologies (those 'successor sciences' which carry out

29 Wylie 1994:614.

30 Haraway 2004:88; Sylvester 1994b:43.

31 Harding 2004a:129. It is also this criteria that opens up the feminist standpoint to men: "Women cannot claim this ability to be uniquely theirs, and men must not be permitted to claim that because they are not women, they are not obliged to produce fully feminist analyses. Men, too, must contribute distinctive forms of specifically feminist knowledge from their particular social situation. Men's thought, too, will begin from women's lives in all the ways that feminist theory, with its rich and contradictory tendencies, has helped us all - women as well as men - to understand how to do" (Harding 2004a:135).

32 Wylie 1994:620.

33 Harding 1986:194.

34 Hirschmann 2004:324-327.

35 Harding 2004a:134, 128-136; Hekman 2004.

36 Hirschmann 2004; Sylvester 1994b.

standard procedures better) and counter-epistemologies (which seek to replace androcentric procedures with new ones³⁷) but for Harding the overlap of empiricist, standpoint and postmodern moments is to be embraced:

...I propose that we think of feminist epistemologies as still transitional mediations upon the substance of feminist claims and practices...we should expect, and perhaps even cherish, such ambivalences and contradictions.³⁸

This emphasis on the multi-perspectival quality of a feminism adequate to its own task remains a major theme of Harding's work.³⁹ A similar view is taken by Donna Haraway, who characterises the relationship between deconstructive and reconstructive (or radical constructivist and critical empiricist) feminisms as a 'necessary multiple desire':

my problem and 'our' problem is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings, *and* a non-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world, one that can be partially shared and friendly to earth-wide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness.⁴⁰

Read through this history, the compulsion to choose between kinds of feminism is rendered somewhat artificial. The transposition of the empiricist-standpoint-feminist triptych into IR has consequently lost both some *content* and some *context*: content in posing the choice within the familiar frame of competing paradigms, rather than moments of a more unified project, and context because Harding's primary target was not the self-understanding of social science, its physics envy notwithstanding. Feminist critics of science have instead been more interested in its uses and purposes (as a tool for control, as increasing inequality in capitalist societies, as unable to respond to pressing social questions requiring political action rather than general laws), than about the internal procedures of the activity itself. 'Science' stood here as a restricted category to be opened out so that it could mean more than what happens

37 Harding 1986:106.

38 Harding 1986:141.

39 See, for example, Harding 2008.

40 Haraway 2004:85, emphasis in original.

in the lab.⁴¹

Indeed, to interpret the feminist critique of science as an attempt to unseat *a method* per se is to miss the point, since it is precisely the distinction between pristine inside and messy outside which is being troubled. The issue at stake in the original distinction was not whether knowledge was possible or not, but whether the *idea* that knowledge leads necessarily to social progress is the residue of Enlightenment truth or political power. Since the history and politics of science shows that there is no 'pure' inquiry, feminist philosophy of science explored "the suspicion that science is *both more and less* than any possible definition of scientific method", suggesting instead that some values may indeed *increase* the reliability of research, giving rise to a *reformulated* account of objectivity.⁴² Contra fears of apocalyptic relativism, there have indeed been quite extensive discussions among feminist philosophers of the possibilities and limits of reliable knowledge, discussions drawing on a richer and wider account of epistemology and ontology that most accounts in IR allow for.⁴³

Impervious To Nuance Or Paradox⁴⁴

Similar questions of epistemology and identity haunt the other major operative distinction between feminists from non-feminists in the discipline. Where earlier debates set the choice between kinds of feminism, 'gender' has come to be formulated as an explicit alternative to feminist analysis. As a category and variable, it has proved easier to adapt and to fit to existing research projects, and less contentious in its political ramifications. Although frequently coupled in complementary fashion - 'feminist and gender theory'⁴⁵ - a distinct line of argument seeks to set aside feminism, the better to mainstream gender. The proposition, in other words, that all feminism genders theory, but that not all gender theory

41 Harding 1986:136-137. See also the account of early feminism's reasons for suspecting the authority of 'science' provided in Walby 2001:488-489.

42 Harding 1986:42, emphasis added.

43 This is partly a reflection of an elision between science (the practice which Harding and others were originally concerned with) and social science (which traditionally has a somewhat different pattern of ontological, epistemological and methodological problems). Those rare attempts within IR to grasp the question of the feminist critique of *science* and its implications for global politics have thus far been rather neglected. See Barry 1998.

44 Jones 1996:423.

45 This joint formulation is my preference, and is common amongst those working in these areas. For reflections on the complimentary between gender and feminism see also Squires and Weldes 2007; Carver 1998.

is feminist. For war rape, the consequent view is that feminism in some sense obscures analysis, and that the methodological commitments of gender theory (generally constructivist, more hesitant in political identification, examining the suffering of men as well as women) will provide a more comprehensive view of how violence works in practice, and will also be more palatable to those who see in feminism the submission of an intellectual project to a political one.

Indeed, this second framing distinction has been particularly noteworthy in the analysis of sexed and gendered violences. So, for Adam Jones, feminism requires a singular attention to the suffering of women, thus marginalising the ways in which men are exploited *as men* in international politics, and so evinces “in its way, a new logocentrism”.⁴⁶ On this account a reworking of feminist theory becomes necessary, one that to some extent allows for a normative project, but better ‘balances’ contemporary realities of gender.⁴⁷ Charli Carpenter, whilst preserving a space for legitimate feminist IR, nevertheless recommends that non-feminists “recognize and appropriate gender as an analytical instrument”, separating out normative commitments to allow for a ‘gender constructivism’ more suited to causal analysis and to gendered issues that affect men and children.⁴⁸

Addressing equivalent issues of disciplinary identity to those highlighted by Keohane, Jones and Carpenter thus also provide reasons for shifting to apparently improved standards of inquiry.⁴⁹ These views have been convincingly challenged, particularly for their (mis)reading of feminists and characterisation of them in one-dimensional terms to imply that all, or even most, are essentialist and maternalist advocates of a naive *pax femina*.⁵⁰ Most importantly, the substantive empirical work that flows from the gender/feminism distinction, in which Jones and Carpenter track and map the distinct forms of harm that are visited on men in war, is easily read as compatible with feminism.⁵¹ The apparent trouble lies in not recognising that feminists, especially in their early disciplinary manoeuvres, were not seeking to provide

46 Jones 1996:420.

47 For a clearer commitment to the normative dimensions of this argument, see Jones 1998.

48 Carpenter 2002:158, 164–165.

49 See Caprioli 2004:257 on which more below.

50 Carver, Cochran, and Squires 1998; Carver 2003. On the integrity of feminism to gender studies, see Sjoberg 2006.

51 See particularly Carpenter 2003b; Jones 2006.

complete accounts of war, but to uncover the gendered dimensions of war that had been thus far *absent* from the discipline. That men - and especially male combatants - suffer in war has never been a marginal claim, and is in itself no surprise for war studies, even if further research may illuminate new examples of male subjection. Indeed, the attempt to foreground how war affected women in a discipline that had traditionally stuck to the high politics of statesmen is exemplary of Harding's view of the intimacy between standpoint and science: putatively biased and politically-motivated work on gendered violence has in fact enriched and extended the true picture of war.⁵²

As with standard uses of the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern triptych, the gender/feminism distinction tends to reinforce the view that feminism is either against, or incapable of, explanations that do not begin from a given identity. If 'women' are the only relevant category, and their hardship in any given situation beyond question, how can there be anything but a circular, internal conversation masquerading as research? For Jones, the critique seems to be that feminism cannot be objective - that its prior political commitment to the emancipation of women and epistemological commitment to women's perspectives is what constrains it. Others more sympathetically see a great variety in feminism, and so focus on gender as a way of narrowing their research question.⁵³ Carpenter's point, for example, is directed more closely at the reception of ideas in the academy. Although she does hold that there are lacunae in feminism, and shares with Jones the sense that men and masculinities are one such gap, her concern is more that ideas of gender are made sufficiently amenable to "engage the mainstream".⁵⁴

The arguments of feminist philosophers of science are again instructive. As well as seeing empiricist, standpoint and postmodern feminisms as in a complementary tension, Sandra Harding also stressed explanation as what the method of looking at science from the perspective of women was *for*:

52 Of course, this is not all that early IR feminists did, but even on Jones' characterisation the issue of 'objectivity' is misspecified.

53 Goldstein 2003:34-58.

54 Carpenter 2003a:300.

The leading feminist theorists do not try to substitute one set of gender loyalties for the other - ‘women-centered’ for ‘men-centered’ hypotheses. They try instead, to arrive at hypotheses that are free of gender loyalties. It is true that first we often have to formulate a ‘woman-centered’ hypothesis in order even to comprehend a gender-free one. But the goal of feminist knowledge-seeking is to achieve theories that accurately represent women’s activities as fully social, and social relations between the genders as a real - *an explanatorily important* - component in human history. There is nothing ‘subjective’ about such a project, unless one thinks only visions distorted by gendered desires could imagine women to be fully social and gender relations to be real explanatory variables. From the perspective of feminist theory and research, it is traditional thought that is subjective in its distortion by androcentrism - a claim that feminists are willing to defend on *traditional* objectivist grounds.⁵⁵

This should not be taken to suggest that feminists are agreed on the role of objectivity and explanation, or on the exact balance between the imperatives to rethink men and women and masculinities and femininities. Certainly, there are many ways in which the debate around feminist epistemology has left Harding behind.⁵⁶ Moreover, as Carver, Cochran and Squires stressed at the time, one prominent tactic of IR critics has been to actively represent contested questions *within* feminism as monolithic doctrines to serve their narrative.⁵⁷ But the relationship between political positionality and explanation developed here is crucial. For many, the standpoint criteria sketched above indicate the need for ‘strong objectivity’, that way of combining the facts revealed by partial perspective with a reflexivity requiring that “the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge”.⁵⁸ Far from marking a step away from the ideals of sound knowledge articulated by Keohane and others, this move is demanded because conventional objectivity is “*not rigorous or objectifying enough*”.⁵⁹

55 Harding 1986:138, some emphasis added.

56 This is one of the criticisms of the feminist epistemology debates levelled in Sylvester 2013.

57 Carver et al. 1998:283–288.

58 Harding 2004a:136.

59 Harding 2004a:128, emphasis in original.

So standpoint is not a singular method, and is not a synonym for the subjective. It is more akin to a crisis, or perpetual wound, over which feminists worry. It is this which makes so many IR responses to feminist epistemology infuriating, since they take as definitive in feminism precisely what it finds so problematic. Subjectivism haunts contemporary feminism.⁶⁰ Although feminists are generally *concerned* with positionality, this can just as well mean that they problematise it to the point where it can do little analytically. Thus 'experience' can be as much a constraint on feminism as that which constitutes it.⁶¹ Sylvia Walby, for example, sees science as a complex and internally divided practice, and one in which deep and critical feminist engagement has been able to force new awareness of the scale of gendered violence and the extent of wage gaps, but without leading to a successor science model.⁶² On this account, since science mirrors neither nature nor culture, criticisms of dominance legitimised in scientific language cannot easily invalidate the social practices associated with science. Rather than this meaning simply that we should adopt science rather than non-science (or anti-science), it instead suggests that knowledge is produced in networks which communicate via shared standards *across* a science/non-science divide.⁶³

Nor do feminists who see value neutrality as unsustainable require that 'objectivity' is therefore abandoned. The constitutive goals of a politicised practice still require subsidiary standards, openly known, against which progress towards gender justice is assessed.⁶⁴ Rather than meaning that there must be some bedrock Truth, this is again founded on communities and networks of participants: "[a]ll that is required is that there be an intersubjectively accessible way of identifying the state of affairs which is given in evidence and that there should be agreement about this description in any theoretical dispute".⁶⁵

So as varied as feminist perspectives on objectivity and method may be, they are nevertheless

60 The phrase is from Zerilli 2005:132.

61 See for example Grant 1987.

62 Walby 2001:493-494.

63 For Walby this indicates a failing of standpoint theorisation, but, as we have seen, the possibility of knowledge outside of communities of the oppressed, and of the construction of fuller understandings through this exchange, is already part of several prominent conceptions of standpoint method.

64 Barwell 1994.

65 Barwell 1994:85.

closer to each other, and more engaged in a serious debate over the possibilities of inquiry, than the caricatures of IR critics would suggest.⁶⁶ For example, Harding repeats that the point is not to *replace* objectivist science with subjectivist standpoint, but to introduce *some* kinds of ethics and politics (those distinguished as ‘pro-democratic’) and then only as *part* of evaluation, “not as criteria sufficient in themselves”.⁶⁷ Consider the congruence between these sentiments and those of a prominent feminist postmodernist in IR:

Feminist theorising offers...the possibility of less biased, less partial understandings of the world, the possibility of greater justice in theory and practice, the possibility that we discover, through the binoculars of gender research, that our very categories of identity and attachment are habits rather than realities.⁶⁸

There is indeed much within feminism to satisfy requirements of evidence, theoretical consistency and responsiveness to counter-argument. Questions of theoretical commensurability, contexts of discovery and justification, and protocols for validity remain, as do issues of how analysis links to ethics and politics. But these are not the special province of feminism, but belong to the problem-fever of inquiry itself.

The feminism/gender distinction is further troubled by the apparent equivalency of its terms. ‘Gender’ as not only something that we can opt for *instead of* ‘feminism’, but also in important respects its opposite: neutral where feminism is politicised, balanced where feminism is perspectival, open where feminism is closed, and universal where feminism is particular. Here, too, attempts within contemporary IR to delineate disciplinary identity have tended to ossify categories the better to produce an array of choices. Carpenter, for example, suggests a need for ‘gender’ rather than ‘feminism’ so that we can analytically separate and clarify the difference between biological sex and cultural gender, apparently

⁶⁶ It is also worth noting here that turns towards reflexivity in the analysis of global politics intersect strongly, but not always, with feminist concerns. Perhaps unsurprisingly, such reflexive moments reveal the position of the researcher (and so like Harding reject a traditional scientific epistemology) but often do not proleptically or extend the relation of that position to knowledge as a whole (so do not go nearly as far as Harding on the character of strong objectivity). See, for a reasonable range of engagements, Conway 2008; Higate and Cameron 2006; Eagleton-Pierce 2011.

⁶⁷ Harding 2001:512.

⁶⁸ Sylvester 1994a:316.

unaware that this is already a long-running conversation within feminism, and that the sex/gender distinction was itself an early feminist innovation.⁶⁹ To use Harding's terms, advocates for gender theory *contra* feminism basically propose an empiricist agenda which they set against a standpoint/postmodern combination (which they call 'feminism'), taking as possible a straight-forward encounter with the realities of gendering unencumbered by political distortions.

The Apartheid of Paradigms⁷⁰

Neither the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern triptych nor the gender/feminism distinction provide sufficient grounds for understanding the methodological-epistemological status of feminist IR. Within the disciplinary camp war, they have been taken up too readily as secure positions from which to proceed, and as legitimising given modes and methods of inquiry (always implying that some other way of inquiring is de-legitimised). The consequence for concrete study (including into war and sexual violence) has been *both* to make feminist/non-feminist the main analytical fault-line *and* to reduce discussions within feminism to some version of the tripartite contest (if not empiricist/standpoint/postmodern then essentialist/constructivist/postmodern or liberal/radical/postmodern).

And yet the more expansive debate over the contribution of the philosophy of social science to the study of global politics is of only meagre assistance. To be sure, the last years have witnessed a burgeoning interest in questions of philosophical foundations and anti-foundations. A series of interventions have challenged the taken-for-granted IR version of 'explanation' that has traditionally elided variegated concepts of cause, data selection, testing, fact/value distinctions and methods into an often monolithic, and also confused, version of 'science'. Hidemi Suganami, for example, has convincingly argued that the usual separation between formally explanatory theory and the more narrative approach emblematic of history is a false one, and that both are a way of 'rendering intelligible'.⁷¹

69 Carpenter 2002:163-164.

70 Wight 1996:292. A useful metaphor not only for the shock value, but also because IR's camp structure reproduces the idea that different forms of inquiry are 'separate but equal', whilst in practicing denigrating some to the advantage of others.

71 Suganami 2008; Lawson 2012.

Ways of distinguishing normative and explanatory stories are similarly complicated, especially when accounting for the reasons individuals hold for bringing about certain events, which is often what is at stake in social science discussions.⁷²

Working in a slightly different register, Milja Kurki has revealed the ‘inadvertent Humeanism’ of many IR scholars who dismiss questions of causal explanation because of a narrow conception of what that entails (observable phenomena, linked by regularity-deterministic efficient causes), and who – despite their disavowals – also sometimes reproduce those very kinds of explanation in their own research.⁷³ Along with work by Colin Wight, Jonathan Joseph and others often aligned with critical realism, this reconceptualising of explanation and cause has suggested a range of possible ways in which scholarly practice might ‘explain’ without having to satisfy the kind of shifting restrictions outlined by Keohane in his diagnosis of feminism.⁷⁴

For Patrick Jackson, the kinds of disciplining moves associated with the rhetoric of ‘science’ - of which the positions taken by Keohane, Jones, Carpenter and even Tickner are all varying examples - blind us to the necessarily pluralist character of inquiry. Proposing a more expansive definition of science - systematic reasoning open to criticism and improvement that produces worldly knowledge - Jackson outlines four methodologies as appropriate ideal types for the disciplinary field: a) neopositivism (mind-world dualist and phenomenalist); b) critical realism (mind-world dualist and transfactualist); c) analyticism (mind-world monist and phenomenalist); and d) reflexivity (mind-world monist and transfactualist).⁷⁵ Seeking to progress beyond a war over single sources of scientific authority or one-size-fits-all ontological and epistemological warrants, this model gives each approach its due, such that debate takes place in relation to the procedures appropriate to each

72 Suganami 2011. The question of the connection between causal and moral stories is a significant theme of the next chapter.

73 Kurki 2008.

74 See for example Wight 2007; Joseph 2007; Kurki 2007; Chernoff 2007. In each case, there is much that could be said about the possible understanding of feminism. However, I focus below principally on Patrick Jackson’s pluralist account of inquiry in IR, partly for reasons of space, and partly because it offers the broader discussion of how we may locate different philosophical approaches.

75 Jackson 2010. *Mind-world dualism* is the idea of the knower as importantly separate from the world. *Mind-world monism* is the view of the knower as part of the world in a way that changes the possibilities of knowing itself. *Phenomenalism* holds that knowledge is always significantly restricted to experience, existence, and the position of the knower. *Transfactualism* instead proposes that experiences can be generalised in a more substantive way, even if the position of the knower remains important.

different methodology. It is the responsibility of scholars to make these commitments explicit, not to conform to a master narrative of legitimacy.

Yet even here, feminism is subsumed too easily into an unwieldy opposition to explanation, instead of being seen as capable of including it. Acknowledging that feminist concerns have been too easily co-opted by neopositivists⁷⁶, Jackson foregrounds feminists as reflexivists, the prime exemplars of locating the researcher within structures of power, and of contributing to emancipatory agendas by uncovering these locations. But this inclusion comes with a caveat. IR's intellectual margins have been too quick to border their spaces through a rejection of method itself:

[D]issidents...have spent considerably more time criticizing the methodological approaches that they do not adopt than they have spent articulating an alternative methodology. Not that such scholars have not produced intriguing insights; it is simply unclear precisely *how* they have done so... None of this is to say that reflexivists should have to demonstrate that their work makes the kind of difference that can be easily slotted into a neopositivist hypothesis about systematic connections between variables across cases; rather, it is to say that reflexivists have to articulate *their own* set of methodological standards and then pursue them as consistently and rigorously as neopositivists (and critical realists and analyticists) pursue theirs.⁷⁷

Feminists, like other methodological refuseniks, posed not as engaging in *alter*-method, but as proponents of *non*-method. Although the point is somewhat overstated, this framework at least moves matters beyond the knotted conflict of the empiricist/standpoint/postmodern triptych and the gender/feminism dichotomy.⁷⁸ But it also threatens to seal feminism (and

76 Jackson 2010:42–43.

77 Jackson 2010:186, emphasis in original.

78 See, for example, the contributions to Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006. Most of the essays reflect the history of IR feminism as characterised above, tending to reject positivist methods, stressing the need to unsettle hegemonic assumptions, and providing a narrative of the power relations of a given research experience. In this sense, they may be taken to confirm Jackson's point. Nevertheless, explicit discussion of *methodology* does take place.

other criticalities) into the reflexive loop alone. The incommensurability implied in Jackson's pluralist framework not only *protects* the methodologies from each other, but also appears to *prevent* them from entertaining either challenge or hybridity.⁷⁹

In Jackson's hands feminism thus reduces to something resembling standpoint alone. Although there is a recognition here that this goes beyond individual experience to broader claims about marginalised groups (the transfactualism that allows feminism to claim 'worldliness'), this placement also misses those aspects of feminism which have a more strongly phenomenalist character - as in attention to specificity and the unsettling of categories like 'woman'. So methodologies bisect the distinctions *within* feminism. Feminist empiricism might be said to belong to the phenomenologists, but also to the critical realists in its attention to an obscured reality; standpoint to the reflexivists but potentially also to the analyticists and to the critical realists; and postmodernism predominantly to the camps of monism.⁸⁰ Because in Jackson's framework a social constructivist ontology moves quickly into Weberian ideal typification, these latent possibilities go unnoticed.

Consider the example of a feminist inquiry into sex-trafficking. A set of standpoint or reflexivist conceptual questions would doubtless play a major role, incorporating the experiences and self-understandings of participants, in this example likely trafficked women. Such a project may also substantially unsettle the image of 'the trafficked woman' itself, by addressing the variety of trafficking experiences, by challenging the beliefs of trafficked persons or by unpacking the conceptual categories that stabilise 'sex-trafficked women' as a singular object of inquiry in the first place. Yet only some parts of feminist work should be expected to attend to these issues exclusively. Further sets of questions may well arise (around financial flows in trafficking economies, around the reasons for failure by governments, around prevalent attitudes towards trafficked persons in society at large, and so on) in which the subject position of researcher and researched may contribute little. Indeed, the motivations for trafficking would seem central to many feminist accounts, but

⁷⁹ In this I share the criticisms levelled in Wight 2013.

⁸⁰ Kurki, for one, sees feminism as compatible with critical realist claims. Wight further argues that critical and scientific realisms can, and have, accommodated reflexivism within their programme, such that there is no conflict between the two. See Kurki 2008:219–230; Wight 2013.

may bear only tangentially on a located reflexivity.⁸¹ Moreover, the practice 'sex-trafficking' does not stand alone. It is imbedded in, and implies an account of, fields like 'economy' and 'state', ideas like 'person', 'sex' or 'money' and legal-normative distinctions like 'legal/illegal', 'free/unfree', 'consent/coercion'.

In both the programme offered by Jackson and in the divisions over the status of feminism, the implication appears to be that preferred philosophical orientations cover all of these areas: that they go *all the way down*. In these terms it is not possible to be a critical realist about the currency used in trafficking *and* a reflexivist about the meaning of trafficking for those who participate in it *and* an analyticist about the role of ideal types in theory-construction. If we cast philosophical questions either in terms of multiple incommensurable methodologies or as the search for a single foundation to proper inquiry, we cannot accommodate these different registers. Amongst diverse epistemological warrants and differing social ontologies, we are thus compelled to exclusive decision unless we conclude that the original questions are in some way misconceived.

The Promiscuity Of Gender

One answer would be to see a world composed of multiple objects and processes, with different philosophical-methodological assumptions appropriate to each one, an idea that can also be applied to 'real' science.⁸² This has not generally been the path taken by advocates, who pose the choice as one between different programmes.⁸³ Nor is it the answer offered by Jackson, since the irreducible pluralism he proposes means that research agendas only make sense within methodologies, and not across them. Consider instead the possibility of gender as a field of ontological and epistemological promiscuity. Not just that gender can

81 'Reflexivity' may be reframed so that inquiry into men's motivations for trafficking may form part of a standpoint approach, even where the researcher is not a man, is not a trafficker, and is not otherwise 'inside' the practice of trafficking, but this would seem rather to dilute the specificity of a standpoint beyond standard usage.

82 Cartwright 2004.

83 Colin Wight, by contrast, argues that by virtue of rejecting a singular scientific method, scientific realists understand that "it must be the case that differing phenomena will require differing modes of investigation and perhaps different modes of explanation". See Wight 2006:19. As well as fostering opportunities for theoretical hybridity, this also points to a counter-solution to that offered by Jackson in which philosophical positions are not arranged side by side as incommensurable options, but are capable of being embedded within each other, such that certain programmes can contain others, but not vice-versa. This intriguing possibility is eschewed here in favour of a more concentrated focus on feminist IR as currently understood.

be studied from many perspectives – which is true for all of the subject-objects of social inquiry – but that any concrete examination of gender *combines* different perspectives, and that this is *desirably* so (indeed, strictly necessary under certain iterations). That the possible ways of accounting for gender co-exist in an overlapping geometry.⁸⁴

Recalling again the moves between empiricist, standpoint and postmodern epistemologies, the point is more than that Harding offers a richer view of feminist epistemology than her IR interpreters suggest. It is also that many IR feminists *already* practice Harraway's 'necessary multiple desire'. Although it is common for scholars to present themselves as one or other of the relevantly separate feminist identities, most combine conventional empirical detail (challenging a dominant interpretation); a situated critique (the view of particular women or the reflexive positioning of the author); and a deconstruction of what has come before (to extend the empiricist-standpoint claims or to enable new thought and future action).

Moreover, this multiple desire becomes constitutive if we recognise feminist theorising as always both an attempt to reveal gender orders as currently constituted, and to show (*create*, even) the conditions of possibility for going beyond them. A way of thinking *and* unthinking gender. Seen differently, this could also mean that there is a confusion in our ways of talking about feminism, a mixing together of ideas of situatedness, politics and social ontology. Feminism thus appears to operate as both a very general method of study (asking certain questions about gender and women, as Zalewski put it), one nearly synonymous with the phenomena studied (gender), and as a deeper set of philosophical-methodological dispositions.

This is a dilemma not only for characterisations of feminism by those somewhat outside it (such as Keohane and Jackson)⁸⁵, but also a question of exclusions within feminism itself. Mary Caprioli's charge, that “conventional IR feminists appear to discriminate against

84 The phrase is borrowed from Garfinkel 1981:1.

85 'Outside' only in the sense that their preferred programmes (an institutionalism borrowing occasionally from standpoint and an analyticism, respectively) are differentiated from feminism on their own terms, not in the sense that they are anti- or non-feminist in political disposition.

quantitative research”, serves as one example.⁸⁶ Rather than accepting, in the manner of Adam Jones, that a proper scientific study of women means doing gender (and not feminism), Caprioli instead wants to maintain and celebrate the political dimensions of inquiry. Although she seeks to rebrand a ‘quantitative’ emancipatory project as ‘neofeminism’ she also clearly sees the inter-disciplinary divide that has developed as “artificial”.⁸⁷

What, after all, are we saying if we claim that more gender equal societies are less prone to collective violence; or that those with gender conservative attitudes (emphasising differences between men and women) are more prone to sexual violence?⁸⁸ It is not enough to classify these attempts as minority feminist pursuits (and therefore irrelevant) without replaying the same games of disciplinary power in a new direction.⁸⁹ We are clearly close to ‘proper science’ in one of the senses used by Keohane: hypotheses that hold across different cases, supportable and challengeable by evidence, with plausible mechanisms by which the effects make themselves felt. Indeed, a clear conjunction appears possible between Tickner’s view of feminism as “both less biased and more universal than conventional research” and Caprioli’s claim that “[f]eminist theory is rife with testable hypotheses that can only strengthen feminist IR scholarship”.⁹⁰ Whether this is enough for gender to be a clear-cut variable in a neopositivist model is up for dispute: this kind of explanation can just as easily be critical realist or analyticist in orientation. Reflexivists, too, often gesture at the possibility of such claims (recall Kurki on ‘inadvertent Humeanism’). To say that similar events happen in different places for a similar constellation of reasons is not automatically to be a neopositivist, although this is often how the term is used in IR.⁹¹

86 Caprioli 2004:257.

87 Caprioli 2004:266. I place ‘quantitative’ in quotes here because Caprioli’s project goes far beyond quantitative data, and is instead about establishing relationships between empirical observations in a conventionally ‘rigorous’ sense. That broadly neopositivist assumptions reduce to simple quantitative methods in this account is itself reflective of the slippage in terms characteristic of the interventions already surveyed. Indeed, the distinction deployed by Caprioli between the research work itself (carried out according to conventional strictures) and its purpose (a radical feminist critique of global politics) is more reminiscent of Weber than IR’s neopositivists.

88 See, for example, Caprioli et al. 2009; Hudson et al. 2008.

89 See the dismissal in Sylvester 2013.

90 Tickner 2005:4; Caprioli 2004:257.

91 This point is subject to further discussion in the next chapter.

There are ontological and epistemological questions at stake in all research, but much disagreement arises also at the levels of substantive theory (particular explanations for phenomenon citing particular actors and processes) and of politics (the framing of the research - who it is for, what it seeks to accomplish) regardless of its foundations. Indeed, for the political dimensions of a theory to be problematic, there is usually implicitly a view that its meta-theoretical and substantive grounds are fairly secure and accurate, which is what allows it to be instrumentalised for destructive ends in the first place.

One way to look at this tension is to distinguish between the *depth* and *seriousness* of a problem. The misunderstandings that have so thoroughly plagued feminist theory and IR (and the two are frequently posed in this way, as if always already external to each other⁹²) are indeed serious in their content and consequences, but their philosophical roots may not go very deep. It is logically possible for there to be historical patterns of inquiry so vile and oppressive in their forms, their purposes and their effects that we wish to banish them forever *without* this meaning that we require a new picture of ontology and epistemology. A ‘merely’ methodological requirement to include marginalised voices in research may have wide-ranging and transformative effects without actually requiring a foundational revision of social ontology. By the same measure, research can remain confined to the analytical level of the state, even if the ontological basis of the social has been completely reconstituted.

Apparently stringent differences may then be revealed as functions of our *vernacular* (whether we speak of variables or not, even if the same point can be articulated in multiple ways), *register* (the pitch and tone of our projects, how open they seem to transformation and critique, how they summon and interpellate fellow travellers) and *purpose* (the uses those projects are to be put to in the world). Two projects with identical methodological groundings may find themselves directly opposed, and vociferously so, on this model, without it threatening ontological stability. Indeed, this *political grammar* of our work is strangely neglected given the discipline’s purported objects of study.⁹³ Knowledge is produced, or critical intellectual work carried out, in communities which are the locus where identities and affiliations circulate, and where there are consequences to the views we

92 Keohane, Tickner and Caprioli all speak of debate ‘between’ feminists and IR theorists, and rarely of feminist IR theorists, or even of constructivists, realists, liberals and others who are feminists in their political practice.

93 Which is not to say that these issues have not been addressed. See in particular Kurki 2009, 2011.

attribute to ourselves and others. The disciplinary identities associated with the distinctions between feminist and non-feminist thus take on a renewed salience, not because the common distinctions made between them are accurate, but because their rhetorical separation has effects in itself.

A Tasty Piece Of Meat, Surrounded By & Entirely Covered By Flies

The question, then, is at least as much one of disciplinary identities as of philosophical disputes. But the attempt to stabilise a certain feminist history and identity is bigger than IR. As Clare Hemmings has so aptly shown, many feminists have themselves constructed a just-so story of different waves (empiricist, standpoint, postmodern, but especially essentialist, difference, postmodern), each replaced by a more sophisticated and politically astute variant, constantly legitimising the present state of theory.⁹⁴ This narratology of feminist theory – an exposition of its political grammar – uncovers how shifts in feminist theory are *euphemistically temporalised*. For example:

“The past few years” remains obscure, the phrase's function less to explore the past than to reassure its reader that the present is a time of proliferation. So accepted is this view that neither the past nor its transitional phase need citation or discussion: once the business of reiterating the credentials of the present is out of the way, we can move to more controversial considerations.⁹⁵

The credentials of the present. The task of providing the necessary legitimation for inquiry, even whilst resisting the discourses of legitimacy: a historicism held in place by citation and affect.⁹⁶ Given the dual character of feminism as explanatory and normative-political, the injunction to “think from women’s lives” can also be read as primarily *political*, rather than an epistemological straight-jacket. Making any kind of distinction between the political and the 'merely' explanatory is risky, although here it signifies only the difference between emancipatory action (intended to overcome certain barriers and oppressions) and

94 Hemmings 2011.

95 Hemmings 2011:39.

96 Hemmings 2011:20.

conceptual reflection (which may be directed by political imperatives, and laden with political issues, without therefore being the same thing as emancipatory action). In a sense this political requirement, raised by Tickner as the unifying link between the variety of feminist projects, is both minimal and transformative, since acknowledging situated privileges and marginalities does change research, often in a way that reconfigures our idea of what it is to be a scholar, but does not straightforwardly commit us to a singular, pre-prepared ontological-epistemological-methodological package.

FEMINISM AS CRITICAL EXPLANATION

Method is not...a more or less successful set of procedures for reporting on a given reality. Rather it is performative. It helps to produce the realities. It does not do so freely and at whim. There is a hinterland of realities, of manifest absences and Otherness, resonances and patterns of one kind or another, already being enacted, and it cannot ignore these. At the same time, however, it is also creative. It re-works and re-bundles these and as it does so re-crafts realities and creates new versions of the world. It makes new signals and new resonances, new manifestations and new concealments, and it does so continuously.

John Law, *After Method*¹

The Problem-Fever Of The Body Of Political Science²

Another way to comprehend feminism, the way pursued in the remainder of this thesis, is as a particular convergence of explanation, ethics and politics. This understanding repeats ideas about feminism already encountered – that it is internally differentiated; that it is part politics and at least part science (depending on definition) but not reducible to either; and that it shares features with other forms of critical or emancipatory thought and praxis. In setting out how feminist IR has this character, and in showing how it links to the idea that there are different feminist modes of critical explanation for sexual violence, the demarcation lines predominant in contemporary IR discussions of feminism are largely eschewed. This is not meant as a rejection of, nor as an opposition to, the validity of those questions. It merely takes the matter of feminism and gender, and looks at them askew.

Responding to philosophical quandaries – of which the feminist standpoint and gender/feminism debates are but two examples – critical IR theorists have overwhelmingly attended to a set of epistemological questions framed in terms of discourse, perspective, consensus, community, truth and anti-truth.³ What can be made of the 'inter' in inter-subjective reality

1 Law 2004:143.

2 “[E]xperiments do not overthrow theories...but only increase the problem-fever of the body of science” (Lakatos 1968:161-162)

3 See variously Linklater 1992; Neufeld 1995; Milliken 1999; Campbell 1998a; Wight 1999; Campbell 1999; Hutchings 2005; Hansen 2006; Robinson 2011.

has, for example, been one major dividing line within critical perspectives.⁴ This has displaced the closely-related, but also somewhat different, idea of *explanation*. Although the idea of explanation rubs up against that of truth, and requires a sense of confirmation through dialogue, it has only recently been resuscitated as a topic amongst critical theorists, and even then usually only those of a critical realist stripe. But what is usually thought of as explanation in IR (positivist understandings of determinist covering laws drawn from observable and strict regularities)⁵ is but one understanding of cause; causes in turn being only a part of what falls under explanation; and explanation being a component, but not the only one, in general ideas of truth.⁶

This situation is partly discipline-specific, traceable at least to the point when explanation was separated from understanding in IR's philosophical imaginary. In the hands of Hollis and Smith, explanation is that kind of social science story that looks in from outside, formulating laws and marking structure, rather than attending to meaning, contingency, agency and belief. Despite their caution that it is only ever half the story, explanation is still generally presented as a separate and closed kind of activity.⁷ Much the same could be said about the distinction between 'critical' and 'problem-solving' theory. Just as Hollis and Smith desired to distinguish two stories whilst still allowing them to operate together, so too Robert Cox argued that whilst critical theory was the more desirable of paths, it nevertheless contained elements of problem-solving theory within it.⁸ It could thus be both descriptive and political, even if these elements were in some state of tension.⁹

But like associated divisions, such as that between rationalists and reflexivists, the contrast between explanation and understanding has become one of the easiest dichotomies for

4 See, for example, Fluck 2012.

5 These conditions follow the Humean conception of cause outlined and critiqued in Kurki 2008.

6 This is a rough sketch, so I will not belabour the point, but non-explanatory forms of truth might include, for example, aesthetic, moral or logical kinds of truth.

7 Hollis and Smith 1990.

8 Cox 1981. For an important statement of the relationship between knowledge and ideology critique in critical theory, see Geuss 1981.

9 Hoffman 1987. See also Whitworth 1989.

locating methodological-theoretical commitments.¹⁰ In practice, explanatory theory seldom proceeds in the way imagined.¹¹ But suspicion of explanation is also a resistance to attempts to limit the possibilities of feminist politics on the grounds of putatively scientific claims about social realities. Classically, Judith Butler:

There is no ontology of gender on which we might construct a politics, for gender ontologies always operate within established political contexts as normative injunctions, determining what qualifies as intelligible sex, invoking and consolidating the reproductive constraints on sexuality, setting the prescriptive requirements whereby sexed or gendered bodies come into cultural intelligibility. Ontology is, thus, not a foundation, but a normative injunction that operates insidiously by installing itself into political discourse as its necessary ground.¹²

A rejection, then, of explanation understood as the revelation of an ontological truth of women's actual – and necessary – place in the social order. Not only explanation, but all craving for theoretical *and political* generality, can thus be thrown into dispute:

Barely concealed in the category of women debates is the unspoken wish that feminist theory can, and ought to, give an exhaustive account of gender relations and provide a kind of 'super-idealized guidance' on how to change them. We might think of this wish as a desire for solace, a desire that would be satisfied by, and thus incessantly searches out, the perfect theory.¹³

Yet politics persists – desirably so – in spite of much feminist caution over its sometimes tidy categories. So too should explanation, not least because of the inadvertent reliance on

10 Keohane 1988. 'Reflexivism' has in many ways merged into 'constructivism' since the 1990s. These distinctions blur methodological and substantial commitments, which leads to some confusion as scholars mix ontological and epistemological assumptions (for example, about the need to get 'inside' a process to understand it interpretively) with a substantive research focus (for example, human rights norms rather than military procurement).

11 See in particular the fascinating discussion in Humphreys 2011

12 Butler 2006:203.

13 Zerilli 2005:35.

explanatory truth in accounts which claim to eschew it. However circumscribed, explanatory claims in the sense unravelled below are no more detachable from feminist politics than political and ethical considerations are from attempts to name and plot a neutralised 'gender'.¹⁴

This chapter is an attempt to show how such explanation works, and how it can be examined in turn. It is not in itself about substantive kinds of explanation – rationalist, economic, constructivist, Realist, and so on – nor about given focuses of study – war, norms, diplomacy, state action – but about what explanation is, and what it can be, *within* a substantive kind of explanation – that of gender-feminist theory.¹⁵ Moreover, explanation not as some over-arching or under-lying guarantee of validity, but variously as *a multiple term*, allowing for wide variation in form; as *articulated alongside politics and ethics* in critical feminism; and as *an actually existing practice within feminist IR* (if an ambiguous and disavowed one).

Incommensurability Makes The World Safe For Critical Theory¹⁶

Resistance to explanation comes, in part, from the view that feminists are concerned with the broadly interpretive dimensions of global politics: the ways in which meanings are fixed, the rules of language and ideology through which gender makes itself known and felt, the discursive associations which align 'woman' with 'nation', and so on. As a result, feminist work is taken to be thickly descriptive rather than explanatory, or more generously constitutive rather than causal. Causal questions are about 'why' and 'how' while constitutive ones ask 'how-possible' or 'what'.¹⁷ The assumption is that 'causal' is synonymous with 'explanatory', but, following Alexander Wendt, constitutive questions are also explanatory. 'What' questions reveal the capacities and structure of social kinds, and so

14 Bernard Williams puts the point well: "It is remarkable how complacent some 'deconstructive' histories are about the status of the history that they deploy themselves. A further turn is to be found in some 'unmasking' accounts of natural science, which aim to show that its pretensions to deliver truth are unfounded, because of social forces that control its activities. Unlike the case of history, these do not use truths of the same kind. They apply the social sciences, and typically depend on the remarkable assumption that the sociology of knowledge is in a better position to deliver truth about science than science is to deliver truth about the world". See Williams 2002:2-3.

15 I push the two terms together here to underline their common explanatory ground – social relations understood by reference to gender – rather than to overlook some of the distinctions in their assumptions about hierarchy/difference or the preferences about politics.

16 Wight 1996:298.

17 Wendt 1998:104-108.

are inferential. This is *explanation by concept*.¹⁸ ‘How-possible’ questions go beyond classification to give a ‘morphological’ account of the internal and social characteristics of a social kind, which is to say the properties of an entity (what is it that makes something a state?) and the relational characteristics that define it in a field (what social structure sets states in ‘the international?’).¹⁹

So to speak of the differential social placement of humans assigned ‘male’ and ‘female’ is already to give a constitutive explanation of gender power. There is then no reason not to think of gender and feminist theory as including this capacity for explanation. Indeed, one of their major contributions is to provide constitutive explanations of gender that are superior to those offered by other forms of inquiry. The persistent internal arguments of feminism – such as the idea that feminism discovered the multiplicity of ‘woman’ whilst in search of a stable feminist subject – indeed *require* that explanation in this sense is a major element of feminist theorising; the ‘discovery’ cannot be wished away by virtue of its possible political inconvenience.²⁰

But we can go further. Feminist and gender theory also offer *causal* explanations. Wendt distinguishes causal questions of the form ‘does X cause Y?’ as assuming: 1) the independence of X and Y; 2) that X precedes Y in time; and 3) that but for X, Y would not have occurred.²¹ Terms such as ‘independence’ can generate considerable dispute, but need only mean that two phenomena are not identical (for example that ‘misogyny’ and ‘rape’ are different in the banal sense that they do not *necessarily* entail each other). The independence of two elements within an explanation does not commit one to the idea of mind-world dualism, or to a total split between fact and value, or to covering laws. Similarly, dispute may arise as to regularity of the X-Y connection, but explanations ranging from particularist historical to covering law will include some kind of counterfactual, implicit or not, in their explanations.²²

18 Wendt 1998:110.

19 Wendt 1998:111–113.

20 On these tensions between feminism as a paradoxical praxis and the status of “women's studies” as an academic discipline see Wiegman 2002; de Lauretis 1990; Brown 2005.

21 Wendt 1998:105.

22 Conceding the existence of counterfactuals does not entail that we embrace social laws, since we may regularly use counterfactuals in explanatory reasoning without being able to tie them down with the appropriate specificity to parallel formal laws in the hard sciences.

In this sense, common feminist claims, such as that patriarchal attitudes in society increase the likelihood of rape, are clearly *causal* forms of explanation. A pre-existing situation (social attitudes defined as ‘patriarchal’) gives rise to an event (rape), albeit in a general and perhaps probabilistic way. At the level of the individual, this requires only that perpetrators held patriarchal views before they raped, and can be combined with a constitutive perspective which acknowledges that ‘rape’ and ‘patriarchy’ are of course linked phenomena with contested histories, the meaning of which is retroactively set by the practice of theorising about them ('linked' not meaning that they are the same thing). We may even provide a simple model in which decreases in one independent variable (patriarchal attitudes) is predicted to lead to some corresponding decrease in a dependent one (the incidence of rape).

To speak of patriarchy, misogyny and sexism as processes shaping wartime sexual violence is thus to engage in 'common sensical' causal description. As Kurki expresses it, feminism indeed “depends on making some causal claims about the nature of patriarchal societies and global structures”.²³ Again, the ‘political’ dimension of feminism (seeking to dismantle patriarchy) to some extent requires that the causal sequence (the explanatory inference) be valid. Dispute may quickly arise as to measurement and to the character and contingency of this link, but this only challenges the *scope* of causal explanation, not its existence. Because feminists tend not to be positivists, and since non-positivists are sceptical of formal modelling with large collections of abstracted data, inquiry is unlikely to be operationalised in terms of variables, and attention will often turn to historical specificity and political theoretical interpretation. But beneath the genealogy, the model lurks:

A moral philosophy...characteristically presupposes a sociology. For every moral philosophy offers explicitly or implicitly at least a partial conceptual analysis of the relationship of an agent to his or her reasons, motives, intentions and actions, and in so doing generally presupposes some claim that these concepts are embodied or at least can be in the real world.²⁴

²³ Kurki 2008:139, 142.

²⁴ MacIntyre 2007:23.

By incorporating both constitutive and causal questions, feminist IR can accomplish different *kinds* of explanation. In addition (assuming again a general disposition against fully positivist inquiry) differing *specific models* of explanation link together ontological and epistemological assumptions with preferred methodological styles.²⁵

We have already briefly encountered Hidemi's Suganami's combining of explanation and understanding as the process of historical sense-making and reason-giving, as well as claims by critical realists about the deep causal structure of the social. There are other models of explanation, but consider just two highlighted by Jason Glynos and David Howarth. In the case of *contextualised self-interpretations*, a hermeneutic method explains via normatively-informed descriptions: making sense of social events from within, and combining that thick description with critique.²⁶ By contrast, *causal mechanisms* in the sense proposed by Jon Elster allow for the retrospective identification of certain patterns. We do not predict in advance how social relations will work out (there is too much contingency for that), but we can trace commonalities after the event: so if C1, C2, C3, then *sometimes* X (where Cn represents different possible causal mechanisms and X the relevant outcome). We might then identify causal mechanisms as feminists simply by substituting 'hierarchical gender relations' or 'patriarchal history' or 'misogynistic norms' for C1, C2, and C3 and say then that *sometimes* this leads to gender-based violence in the relevant situations.²⁷

At a more mundane, but no less challenging level, there is simply a wide variety in possible explanations dependent on *what questions are posed*. As Alan Garfinkel put it, explanations do not merely aim at particular objects, but at something “more like a state of affairs together

25 Patrick Jackson, amongst others, argues that there is no necessary link between philosophical foundations and substantive theories. One can, for example, apply large n-quantitative datasets to constructivist questions. But this does not mean that there is not a close connection between methodologies and methods, since some approaches to inquiry only really make sense within that methodological framing. A reflexivist may be able to apply the kinds of methods usually associated with neopositivists, but given their suspicion of generalisations and the rejection of laws, the return on effort would seem rather minimal. Hence the vague phrase 'methodological styles'. In any case, in practice ontologies, epistemologies and methods are put to work as part of a more-or-less joint package. See Jackson 2010:205–206.

26 Glynos and Howarth 2007:49–82.

27 Glynos and Howarth 2007:83–102. Ultimately, Glynos and Howarth reject both options, seeing contextualised self-interpretations as too specific to generate a useful purchase, and causal mechanisms as exhibiting a 'residual positivism' by measuring themselves in comparison to the ideal of laws, but both suggest ways of explaining that are compatible with feminist suspicions of social science.

with a definite *space of alternatives* to it”, alternatives rooted in what stands as problematic.²⁸ Feminist accounts of war rape, following this logic, introduced a new contrast space in their questions. They made it possible to ask “given war, why rape?” or “why is there wartime sexual violence, given any of the possible alternatives to it during war?”.²⁹ This alone does not require a change in *kinds* of explanation (which remains causal in this example) or even one of the *model* of explanation (explanations before and after feminist interventions may be of a historical, or a critical realist, or a positivist, kind). Embedding explanation within political and ethical sensibilities (or constituting the social itself in political and ethical terms) may then not so much change the *validity* of claims (whether a given statistical representation of opinion is accurate) so much as shift and problematise their *status* (results accurate to what ends, for whom, to the exception of what else, and assuming what about the future).

Because ultimately all explanations depend on other prior explanations and assumptions, we operate with a sense of “limited negation”, of what can reasonably count in the set of alternatives.³⁰ These can be challenged in turn but usually are not for the purposes of substantive theorising.³¹ One way of translating this into our existent disciplinary language is to say that critical theorising (including feminism) entertains a wider set of contrast spaces than problem-solving ones. This applies to causal and constitutive questions, but also to normatively-directed inquiry. So instead of just asking “how can the United Kingdom be made safe from the terrorism of Al Qaeda”, critical theorists might ask “how do practices of 'making-safe' operate” (a different causal question), or “what is it to think of a 'state', a condition called 'security' and a distinct political violence called 'terrorism'” (a different constitutive question), or “what power does it serve to frame the question in this way” (a normatively-informed question).

28 Garfinkel 1981:21, emphasis in original. In Garfinkel's example, an imprisoned thief and a priest are both dealing with the question “why rob banks?”, an apparently simple kind of question, but one which reveals their different purposes. For the priest, the space of alternatives includes an honest life and not robbing anything. But for the thief, major alternatives include, for example, robbing grocery stores or gas stations. Which is why he answers the question “why rob banks?” with “because that's where the money is”.

29 The structure of these questions follows the general formula given by Garfinkel 1981:29.

30 Garfinkel 1981:30.

31 In this they come very close to the idea of an analytical wager, to be discussed in greater depth below.

Renegade Knowledge³²

Multiplicity in explanation is both frustrating and banal. We do not know what to make of all the possible questions that could be asked, and of the many possible explanatory answers that could be given to them. But it is ultimately unsurprising that there should be such variety, and that it persists. Yet we proceed as if this situation is to be overcome, somehow. In the case of feminism, self-consciousness about ethical and political dimensions of inquiry add to the problem-fever. One way to resolve the apparent conflict is to formally separate the explanatory, the ethical and the political, such that they inform each other without seeping across a separating boundary. In such a model, scholars can quite consciously move from 'science' to 'politics' and engage in the later without renouncing a special claim to the former.³³ But although some aspects of explanation, ethics and politics are conceptually distinct, there is always a risk that in foregrounding explanation, ethics and politics become subsidiary categories, activities to be pursued *after* the underlying issues have been settled by explanation.

But values infect our construction of an explanatory contrast space. Because explanations are instances of practical reasoning, orientated towards something that strikes us as problematic, they exclude and suppose much. But the grounds for this exclusion are not easily settled by the objective structure of the situation, but instead rely upon the accumulated history, interests and values of the inquirer. Explanation that can render practicable advice (that can enable us to actually understand anything in its specificity) requires exclusion. This is how even 'laws' come to have values, since explanations that adopt a smaller contrast space implicitly make value judgements by taking non-necessary elements of the social field *as if* they were necessary in the formation of a given, practicable, explanation. This is especially so because of the contestability of very many core concepts in social theory.³⁴ Assuming the laws of physics as given in the explanation of how someone was tortured to death is not equivalent to assuming the legitimacy of the state in the same example. Ian Hacking puts it wonderfully:

³² Wiegman 2002:18.

³³ For a particularly interesting example, including a useful discussion of the role of value for Weberian scholarship, see Jackson and Kaufman 2007.

³⁴ Classically, MacIntyre 1973.

It is the shibboleth of science that is value-neutral. Throughout the history of the social sciences there has been a strident insistence on the distinction between fact and value. That is a give-away, for the natural sciences have seldom had to insist upon this distinction. On the contrary, elderly natural scientists regularly regret that there are not more values to be found in the natural sciences.³⁵

Hence the novelty, *at once* explanatory, political and ethical, of making questions about war rape possible.³⁶ Yet for some, feminism is primarily political, rather than primarily epistemological, which means that it cannot be reduced to the validity of a set of knowledge claims, even though some feminist debates have proceeded in that way. As a practice of freedom, it is concerned with the potentiality for *world-making*, for politics as unboundable and precarious action.³⁷ This is so, but does not detach feminist politics from feminist explanation. It means only that because feminism is concerned with creative and emancipatory futures, its explanations are often retroactive, tracing the forms and constraints of gender orders to the present. Explanation that is contingent, genealogical, historical, reconstructive, and so on, rather than an *anti*-explanation. To respond to feminism's politics by jettisoning feminist epistemology indeed only reproduces the sharp division between the two, but now from the other side: knowledge claims reduced to the validity of political claims. It is to adopt the rhetorical style of the *enthymeme*: implying a premise in the formation of argument, without setting it out explicitly.³⁸ The normative and activist politics at stake are usually very clear, so clear that they sometimes threaten to overwhelm the question of what particular account is being given of sexual violence as a phenomenon. The 'concealed' or 'implied' premise is not a political one, but one regarding the proper conception of social action in analytical terms.

35 Hacking 1995:366.

36 Garfinkel 1981:147-151.

37 Zerilli 2005:38-39.

38 Pearce 2003:154.

To reintroduce explanation to discussions of feminism is not an attempt to banish the vertigo induced by scepticism about truth (in Linda Zerilli's channelling of Wittgenstein).³⁹ Post-positivisms in general seek to preserve that vertigo. Nor, given the character of explanation already set out, is the assumption that talking about explanation will enable a new certainty: a definitive diagnosis of the *real* causes of sexual violence across all cases. Rather, the claim is that explanations (of varying degrees of contingency) are *already present*. Even the most throw-away comment on the link between patriarchy and rape is riddled with muted explanatory content. The task is to reveal that content, and to explore clearly how it matters: for discourses of gender power; for the structuring divisions between war and peace, military and economy, male and female, violence and desire, and more; and for the concrete political actions undertaken now – often in the name of feminism – to end rape.

The ambiguity is in how the explanatory elements connect to the ethical and political elements. Do they strongly restrict possible futures, broadly contour them, or admit of the possibility of a radical break? These are better grasped as questions of imagination rather than of adequate concepts, and within the social sphere there may be no definitive limit on freedom so understood.⁴⁰ Yet even this strong view mingles with the explanatory: a conception of the possible based on an assessment of what it is.⁴¹ In relation to rape as a weapon of war we might here adopt Louise du Toit's phrasing (channelling Cornelius Castoriadis) and say that feminist accounts of rape are accounts of dominant meanings and acts within an *instituted* social imaginary which they attempt to disrupt in the name of a new practice or *instituting* social imaginary.⁴² Conceived of in this way, feminist analysis is constituted by its explanatory-ethical-political tensions, advancing both an account of

39 Zerilli 2005:43–45.

40 Zerilli 2005:145, cf. 64–65.

41 At the risk of belabouring the point, this explanatory dimension is visible immediately in the separation of the 'social sphere' from any other (presumably natural). It is this looping back of politics into explanation which enables a separation of the future claim "women can earn as much as men" from the future claim "humans can fly into space unaided". Even the admission that there is *some* difference in probability between the two would seem to restrict the conception of freedom (and of feminism) on Zerilli's terms, but identifying the comparison as ridiculous requires us to distinguish "fly into space" as a different kind of action, bounded by different rules and causes, than "earn as much".

42 du Toit 2009.

current conditions and a ethico-political critique of them.⁴³

It might be said that the ambiguity over explanatory referents and politically-charged claims is precisely what the early positivists wanted to eradicate by fixing relations in strict and exclusive form. The difference lies ultimately in a radically different view of social ontology. Because critical theorists consistently identify in the world the possibility for change (in particular the possibility for change that can be understood as emancipatory), they cannot rely on as many structural presuppositions as other social scientists. Whether in constitutive or causal registers, this problematising, this calling-into-question, underlines the *non-necessary character of social relations* for critical theorists. Like Butler, they identify an openness in the social field that mitigates against any strong fixing of properties, both because of the complexity of what is studied and because of the positionality of the one doing the studying.

Method Always Works Not Simply By Detecting But Also By Amplifying A Reality⁴⁴

At the substantive level of critical explanations for wartime sexual violence, clarification is thus needed in terms of kinds of questions, models of explanation and the relevant contrast space of specific problems posed. For my purposes, the question is not 'why is there war rape?'. This thesis involves no comparison of cases of extreme rape with those of low or no rape.⁴⁵ The orientating question is closer to 'what is war rape?' and 'how is war rape?'. In this it combines constitutive questions (what are the available concepts and axioms and where are their limits? Where are the boundaries of 'war' and 'rape'? What are 'war' and 'rape'? How is gender *in* rape?) and causal ones (what led to *these* atrocities, *here*? What variable grasp do our theories provide? What assumptions must be abandoned in the face of evidence?). In practice, existent feminist and gender theory implicitly deploys a range of explanatory models (sometimes indeterminately), but the broad outlines of most feminist inquiry is subsumable within the idea of modes of critical explanation.

43 See also in this regard Bell 1999; Soreanu 2010. My continual uses of both 'politics' and 'ethics' may seem unclear, but is intended to preserve a possible distinction between them, in which the former is the work of organisation and contestation in world-making, and the latter is a process of reflecting and discussing the status of the ought.

44 Law 2004:116.

45 This is the current project of Elisabeth Jean Wood. See Wood 2006, 2009.

Like other ways of talking about the world (perspectives, paradigms, ideal types, logics, discourses or conducts of inquiry), modes frame and name causal or constitutive relations and mark them as involving a pattern of process or outcome, a way of distinguishing explanations which gives rise to claims about the underlying reasons for behaviours, events and social phenomena. If explanation is one purpose and sub-set of the larger enterprise called 'theory', modes are packages of explanations united by common themes and assumptions, differentiated from other modes by the distinctive way in which they assemble and cohere accounts of the social world. In this sense modes are close to *styles of reasoning*: “the grammar of assumptions and concepts that informs a particular approach to the social world: a way of formulating problems, addressing them, and then evaluating the answers that have been produced”.⁴⁶

In defining critical explanation, Glynos and Howarth propose a view of logics (in general) but then specify three thicker logics of explanation (social, political and fantasmatic) which they see as generally operative in human affairs.⁴⁷ By contrast, the idea of modes of critical explanation does not *settle* differences in feminist accounts of war rape by reference to the philosophy of social science, but establishes an interpretive framework for understanding them in their *variety*. The explanatory-ethical-political character of feminism, and the intersection of these dimensions with epistemological debates on the one hand and with shifting and complex gender objects of inquiry on the other, mean that feminist modes are not best understood as merely competing theories (still less 'hypotheses'). When modes *assemble*, they negotiate the retroductive relationship:

[Assemblage practices] both receive *and* they transmit. Picking up on a faint pattern, they make it stronger. They condense and manifest a version of reality, but as they condense it they re-enact it, they re-confirm it. *Method always works not simply by detecting but also by amplifying a reality*. The absent hinterlands of the real are re-crafted – and then they are there, patterned

⁴⁶ Glynos and Howarth 2007:8. Although the quote is from Glynos and Howarth, 'style of reasoning' is Ian Hacking's term. Glynos and Howarth themselves use this background to elaborate an approach to *logics* of critical explanation. Modes can also be read in this way, but I have chosen not to term them logics to avoid misunderstandings or complex comparisons with the ways in which that term is already discussed in IR. See, for example, Müller 2004; Pouliot 2008; Hopf 2010. These more common senses of logic do play a role within modes, but do not exhaust them.

⁴⁷ Glynos and Howarth 2007:157–161.

and patterning, resonating for the next enactment of the real.⁴⁸

Feminist modes of critical explanation are thus particular ways of understanding social phenomena that depend on conditions that are distinctly feminist in character. Different feminist modes will supplement these conditions with further layers of analytical, political and normative content. A feminist mode of accounting for wartime sexual violence is, then, a distinct form of feminist critical explanation applied to the phenomena of war rape, transferring or developing further arguments from the perspective of a particular grammar of assumptions or style of reasoning. The claim that there are multiple feminist modes in the study of wartime sexual violence attempts to show how these forms of critical explanation are differentiated from each other and how their respective assumptions give rise to particular kinds of stories about rape in war.

Different epistemological traditions demand different standards of fit between these two kinds of activity, but all approaches which seek to clarify, explicate, understand, explain or diagnose wartime sexual violence will deploy implicit or explicit criteria for what makes a set of claims persuasive. Modes are ways of assembling the social world in theory, of sorting through the mess of evidence and experience by foregrounding certain realities while ignoring or suppressing others.⁴⁹ Identifying and naming modes is thus an interpretive and ideal-typifying act. Modes are arrived at by extrapolating from themes and patterns found in our articulations of research and our analytical claims.

Modes And Models

Modes of critical explanations are composed of a number of elements, which cohere together as composite forms to provide the substance of a critical explanation. Conceptualising how we study wartime sexual violence (or other phenomena) in this way better reflects the processes involved than a neat division of different feminist epistemologies or ontologies. Again, this is not to say that epistemology and ontology as usually understood are irrelevant. But we can discover something important about the modes taken by feminist

⁴⁸ Law 2004:116, emphasis in original. I do not linger on Law's account of assemblage, but see Law and Urry 2004. And, for a somewhat more simplified application of similar ideas to IR, Büger and Gadinger 2007.

⁴⁹ See Glynos and Howarth 2007:133-137; Law 2004; Hacking 2004:1-26, 99-114.

accounts of war rape by looking at them through the lens of modes and their elements, and we may be better able to understand their contributions and lacunae by doing so.

Patrick Jackson identifies philosophical wagers as crucial to forms of inquiry: “Wagers constitute worlds, in that they quite literally set the stage for the kinds of empirical and theoretical puzzles and challenges that a scholar takes to be meaningful and important”.⁵⁰ At a minimum, wagers specify: 1) the researcher; 2) the world to be researched; and 3) the character of their relationship.⁵¹ Instead of philosophical ones, we can speak of *analytical wagers*, which are the commitments within modes to certain claims or assumptions. Like philosophical presumptions in general, they reflect basic beliefs about the make-up of the world – making them claims of social ontology – and thus reflect the commitments scholars bring to inquiry. They may be explicit or implicit, meta-theoretical or substantive, but are in whatever case the basic axioms at the (imagined) modal core. Rationality may be one such wager for the mode that we will come to identify as instrumentality. This is not to reject Law's observation that there is something arbitrary about assemblages, and therefore no reason why they should be considered internally consistent, since analytical wagers may be problematic or fatally flawed. Their use may vary wildly in scholarly practice or even recognised as contested terrain. Nevertheless, it is through analytical wagers that an approach is given coherence.⁵² Feminist scholarship in its broadest sense is based on the wager of gender, and could not function in the absence of it as a category (although of course feminism is *more* than the claim that gender matters). Others do not recognise gender as a significant dimension of the social world, or hold that it is too unstable a category to be of use, or say that there is no point in looking at gender as a variable because it is natural. Feminists disagree, and a particular take on the wager of gender (one with emancipatory intent) is the core commitment distinguishing them from non-feminist scholars. The analytical wager of gender may be specified many different ways, but its inclusion in our conceptual and explanatory vocabulary generates certain forms of explanation.⁵³

⁵⁰ Jackson 2010:62.

⁵¹ Jackson 2010:63.

⁵² On the distinction between coherence and consistency, see Law 2004:42–50.

⁵³ See the attempt to set this out provided in Cockburn 2010.

As well as considering analytical wagers, the coming chapters will also focus on the *narrative scripts* of each mode. If analytical wagers frame what might concern us at the level of historical ontology, scripts populate the stories we tell about sexual violence. Between them, wagers and scripts yield a “catalog of objects, processes, and factors that a given line of scientific research expects to exist or has evidence of the existence of: ontology as *bestiary*, so to speak”.⁵⁴ Narrative scripts are both the set of scholarly commitments enacted in the process of elaborating a mode (as in the idea of oneself as 'doing' anthropology) and, more importantly for this analysis, the stories told about objects of inquiry (as in the idea that someone chooses to rape to advance progress towards a particular aim).⁵⁵ On the basis of partial evidence, and a minimal conception of events as they happened, narrating as making sense is a process of filling in. Filling in connective tissue, if you will, to give the sporadic and divergent scraps of the archive their meaning. Which is not the same as claiming that narratives are inventions.⁵⁶

Narrative scripts convert wagers into a plot located in space and time, peopled by a determinate cast of actors. It is through narrative scripts that the narratives of utility-maximisers, symbolic exchangers or irrational compulsions are written. So if gender frames an explanation, and if 'military' designates a crucial component of the social, then narrative scripts will provide stories about how and why people join and stay loyal to the military, and how that lived experience leads to the actions which a particular account is interested in. This most literal dimension of social science as a kind of story-telling draws on imagination, empathy and chronology to flesh out the abstractions of wagers in a communicable human drama.

Finally, *normative orientations* are the ideas of responsibility, blame and possible political action implicated in the wagers and scripts that characterise a particular mode. Where wagers and scripts construct agents as motivated by ends or moved by imperatives, orientations add the quality of judgement, often by seeking explanation in terms of right and just conduct.⁵⁷ They might indicate which institutions or practices we may appeal to as solutions to wartime

54 Jackson 2010:28, emphasis added.

55 This is also a way of stressing that narratives are performative. See Wibben 2010:69–81.

56 This point draws on Williams 2002:241–269, which is also the source for the terminology of 'filling in'.

57 See Suganami 2011.

sexual violence, or they might challenge whether we can even apply such normative categories to a social situation of such complexity at all. As the normative content of modes, orientations are particularly important to the political aspects of theorising and are directed towards imperatives of action, whether in terms of consciousness-raising, global campaigns, state action or military and cultural reform. In the case of an individual involved in the military as a site for the operation of gender, normative orientations will render judgement, for example by attributing blame not to individual soldiers but to an institution or society guilty of inculcating gendered norms in those individuals.

We can, and frequently do, contest some elements by reference to others. For example, we might say that a particular set of assumptions about agents in IR leads to an overly narrow focus on individuals as evil.⁵⁸ This is a way of saying that an analytical wager (individualism) has given rise to a focus on isolated actors (the ontological bestiary) and thus to a narrative script (atrocities are committed at the behest of individuals) which bequeaths us an impoverished normative orientation and restricted view of politically-meaningful subjects (combating atrocity means prosecuting evil individuals in international tribunals). An alternate set of wagers and scripts will lead us to challenge international law as an adequate forum for prevention and deterrence and draw our attention back to the underlying claims implicated by given modes of explanation.

Modes constrain the range of ways in which we might 'fill in' the elements, but do not determine them. More than one mode may see international legal institutions as the appropriate ethical-political space for challenging wartime sexual violence. More than one mode may make claims across elements based on an understanding of action as individualistic. Taking gender as an analytical wager and the military as a site of its power does not require that a *particular* story about soldiers be told, only that there is a space, even a pressure, set by the analytical wagers for *some* story about how the category of gender in the military is experienced over time. A different narrative gap would exist if our account focused on a culture or civilisation instead of an institution. We would then have to tell stories about particular peoples and societies, rather than about particular people in particular organisational contexts.

⁵⁸ Ainley 2008.

*The Ratification Of Evil*⁵⁹

The implied sinews binding wagers and scripts to normative orientations can knot in ways that deserve some discussion. Conceptions of responsibility – for protection, for impunity, for rape itself – are increasingly appealed to in action against atrocity, especially given the focus on legal instruments of global politics in the last decades. For a number of feminist activists, success has come in the shape of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which in 2000 acknowledged and mandated action against the gendered violences of war.⁶⁰ Building on feminist arguments developed in earlier war crimes tribunals, legal responsibility for rape thus became more clearly visible both in UN policy and in the cases brought by the nascent International Criminal Court (ICC).⁶¹ Preventing impunity for direct perpetrators and military commanders continues to be a major theme in NGO activism on issues of peace and gender, and at least some activists initially confident that important provisions around prior sexual conduct and expert testimony in the Rome Statute would mean that international law would not be as selective, nor serve the interests of power as egregiously, as it had in the past.⁶²

But, as we have seen, moral and legal judgements can also have unwelcome global political consequences. The actual pattern of war rape cases pursued by the ICC, for instance, indicates attention to only some sexual violence in some places, and so perpetuates colonial tropes of African barbarism.⁶³ And, although the lines of influence are by no means straightforward, questions around the politics of the 'responsibility to protect' can become muted in academic-activist accounts of how to make it *work*.⁶⁴ But paradoxes can arise not only in operationalising responsibility judgements, but in the connection between *causal* and *moral* judgements within modes themselves.⁶⁵ Feminist theory tends overwhelmingly towards

59 The phrase is from Card 2010:65, citing Christopher Kutz. It comes from an argument that one can be complicit in, and therefore responsible for, a moral wrong even if one is not causally connected in any necessary way and even if one could not prevent the act by acting.

60 United Nations Security Council 2000; Hill, Aboitiz, and Poehlman–Doumbouya 2003; Shepherd 2008.

61 Laviolette 1998.

62 Spees 2003:1248–1249; Ainley 2011b.

63 Sagan 2010; Ainley 2011b:319–329. The ICC is currently investigating cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and Libya. Rape features as a war crimes charge in all country situations except Libya.

64 For example, Dharmapuri 2012; Skjelsbæk 2012.

65 This section draws significantly on a longer argument set out in Kirby 2012b.

a structural accounts of rape – accounts which variously emphasise historical legacies of gender hierarchy, society-wide misogynistic attitudes, patriarchy as a system, sexism as learned and frequently-reinforced behaviour, and so on. At least one significant attempt to understand men's collective responsibility for rape thus sees “rape [as] deeply embedded in *a wider culture of male socialization*” and holds that although “[r]ape is normally committed by individual men...[it] is not best understood in individualistic terms”.⁶⁶

However, moral judgements about rapists also frequently focus on the need to end impunity, the role of courts and laws in prosecutions, and the 'law and order' procedures which allow rape to continue. But if men are the products of patriarchy (and masculine gender orders more generally) which constrain their freedoms and sense of self through what amounts to a gender indoctrination, appeals to their choice and responsibility with respect to rape and other gendered behaviours become rather complicated. So, although responsibility attributions are often presented as self-evident, there is no way for them not to entail a constructed and imagined agent, often one that conforms to individualist and rationalist criteria.⁶⁷ It is not hard to see how an analytical wager (for example, that rape is importantly social) might rub up against a contradictory, or at least paradoxical, political-normative injunction (that individual perpetrators must be the ones legally punishable for rape). Resolving the tension may suggest that patriarchy is responsible for rape *but that men in patriarchy are not*. Structural accounts of rape illuminate the social sources of violent misogyny, and so guard against reductions of rape to individual pathology or lust, but therefore demand a more sophisticated account of who to hold responsible for rape in the wake of feminist analysis, or risk eradicating the question of guilt altogether.

As Alasdair MacIntyre expressed clearly more than a decade ago, ideas of moral agency and responsibility are undermined when we think about the effects of social structure on action. Occupying certain social roles requires a fidelity to their rules and standards and when a particular moral exclusion is written into those roles – as in MacIntyre's example of a prison train driver in Nazi Germany or in ours of a war rapist in conditions of extreme patriarchy – fulfilling them becomes synonymous with *not* being aware of the effects of our actions, and

⁶⁶ May and Strikwerda 1994:148, 137, emphasis in original.

⁶⁷ Ainley 2011b; Hoover 2012.

not being able to predict that certain wrongs will result.⁶⁸ The usual preconditions for moral agency (and therefore moral responsibility) “can be satisfied only within social orders in which there exist milieus, spheres of activity, which *sustain* the relevant kind of understanding of the self, the relevant kind of critical discourse and reflection, and the relevant kind of accountability” required to challenge harmful social roles.⁶⁹

In other words, the more patriarchal the context, and the less space for challenging patriarchal attitudes and behaviours within it, the less morally responsible actors are for their behaviour within their assigned social roles. It is precisely in the most brutal social structures of war rape, then, where the moral responsibility of individuals will have the least traction. Part of the legacy in IR of separating out the normative from the explanatory, of confining feminism to understanding/reflexivity, is that these questions are relatively muted. Connections and contradictions are thus elided. An insistence on the explanatory-political-ethical character of feminist inquiry, and of the criticality of modes of explanation, redirects attention to this shared space.

68 MacIntyre 1999:315–321.

69 MacIntyre 1999:321.

PROGRESSIVE / RESEARCH / PROGRAMMES

Having traversed several – but far from all – debates in the philosophy of social science, feminist IR now appears less antithetical to explanation than commonly supposed by advocates and critics alike. Not because it can merely be folded into dominant paradigms (the famous “add women and stir”) but because it has always carried in it its own forms of explanation, forms which are usefully specified in terms of modes of critical explanation. Explanation in this expansive sense is simply a way of showing why *this* and not *that*. The differentiation between forms of explanation lies in *how* they show, what they take to be a *sufficient why*, and how they *draw the boundaries* of the this and the that. Different feminists will cash out these explanations differently. The triad of wager, script and orientation does not require explanation in the same way, or for the same reasons. It is a way of showing how feminist critical explanation works, not of specifying what its content must be in advance. Again, this is not an exercise in prescribing what feminist IR *should* do (to meet the standards of some external authority), nor of saying that critical explanation is the only valid form of explaining, but an elaboration of a framework for analysing what feminist inquiries into war rape *very often already do*. The coming chapters will show how this is accomplished, and also indicate why the *variation in the explanations* proposed by various feminist perspectives are of such consequence.

Another consequence of the view elaborated here is an inversion of Robert Keohane's problematique. Rather than feminism failing by the standard of progressive research programmes (or of failing except in a limited empiricist/standpoint variant), it is revealed as always having been progressive, research and a programme on its own terms.¹ 'Progressive' in being politically emancipatory and knowledge-generating; in 'research' of the inner and outer (exploring both the situatedness of the self and the transfactual quality of gender orders); and as a 'programme' of praxis as well as accumulation, direction and purpose in inquiry. Or, to return to Sandra Harding:

¹ This glosses over the various misunderstandings in IR of the Lakatosian criteria for a progressive research programme, matters discussed at length in Elman and Elman 2002.

I am not proposing that humankind would benefit from renouncing attempts to describe, explain, and understand the regularities, underlying causal tendencies, and meanings of the natural and social worlds just because the sciences we have are androcentric. I am seeking an end to androcentrism, not to systematic inquiry. But an end to androcentrism will require far-reaching transformations in the cultural meanings and practices of that inquiry.²

Part One has established the challenges for a feminist account of wartime sexual violence, deconstructed some common framings for how such an account should proceed, and reconstructed and elaborated a sense of feminism as critical explanation. War rape has been subjected to considerable feminist scrutiny, and yet remains somewhat under-theorised. Chapter 1 suggested reasons for focusing on war rape without losing sight of the need to theorise war, and addressed the stakes in relation to male rape, the constitutive act of naming rape, the political uses to which feminist accounts of rape might be put (often against their will) and the variation of the violences of war and rape across situations. Despite much rich work on these matters, the available distinctions amongst feminist approaches too closely track a particular narrative of feminist theory. That narrative – of waves of empiricist, standpoint and postmodern theorising – has been influential in IR alongside a distinction between feminism and gender theory, but both tend to a reification of *moments* of inquiry into ghettoised disciplinary identities. One consequence of this has been a rejection of 'explanation' even as feminists in fact regularly practice critical variants of explanation. Moving from some standard distinctions to the idea of modes of critical explanation reveals new commonalities and differences, and without losing sight of the distinctive character of feminism as at once explanatory, political and ethical. The wager is that this framework will cut feminist knowledge about war rape in a new way, and that this will prove intellectually (and perhaps politically) productive. Filling in this framework, and dealing with the complexities it throws up, is the task of Part Two.

2 Harding 1986:10.

Part Two

The Cunning of Reasons

We cannot grasp what connection such circumstances have with the actual fact of slaughter and violence... To us, their descendants, who are not historians and are not carried away by the process of research, and can therefore regard the event with unclouded common sense, an incalculable number of causes present themselves. The deeper we delve in search of these causes the more of them we find; and each separate cause or whole series of causes appears to us equally valid in itself and equally false by its insignificance compared to the magnitude of events, and by its impotence – apart from the co-operation of all the other coincident causes – to occasion the event.

Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*¹

So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do.

Benjamin Franklin²

Telling Stories About Sexual Violence

The coming chapters turn to the content of feminist modes of critical explanation. Progressing through accounts of sexual violence, war studies (critical or otherwise), and debates within feminist and social theory, they attempt both a conceptual typology and a progressive argument. The typology is that of *instrumentality*, *mythology* and *unreason* (a chapter on each) and the argument connecting them concerns crucial questions about the nature of rationality, the divide between the psychological and the social, and the functions of identity and belief. So the chapters are: a) *diagnostic*, in identifying feminist modes and showing their logic in existent accounts of wartime sexual violence; b) *expansive*, in connecting these themes and theses to wider controversies and forms of explanation in social theory and the study of war generally; c) *clarificatory*, in distinguishing different versions of these theses and showing what binds and separates particular accounts; d) *critical*, in identifying major points of

¹ Tolstoy 2010:648.

² Franklin 1909:30.

tension or difficulty which may undermine or lead to the revision of the modes or their logic; and e) *hypothesising*, by setting out plausible ways in which we may identify the dynamics of a particular mode in concrete cases of rape at war.

These chapters think war *around* the locus of sexual violence, pulling out from specific brutalities to the patterning of collective violence, and then to the character of human action. Feminist modes explicitly address such issues as the harm done by wartime sexual violence; the importance of recognising it as a political phenomena; the gendered tropes and justifications that exist around rape in context; the empirical evidence for certain forms of brutality and wrongdoing (rape camps, mutilation, specific groups of perpetrators and victims and/or a lack of intervention by local or international agencies); the depiction of events in the media; and the need for local and international collaboration to end rape. But they usually only implicitly address questions around the appropriate grounds for certain kinds of explanation; the possible debates and disputes over ideas of agency or cause; the relation of feminist explanations to social theory; and the impact of these issues on interventions designed to prevent or end sexual violence.³ These are the questions opened up by an investigation of particular modes of critical explanation.

Each mode carries its own analytical style in its elements, articulated through a focus on particular empirical regularities and a corresponding characterisation of instances of sexual violence (see the typology offered in Table 2 below). All have a plausibility when dealing with particular examples. However, the shifting nature of both the modes and of the phenomena under analysis resists any easy preference for one mode over others or reduction of them to three separate and wholly incommensurate hypotheses of sexual violence. The modes are coherent but not in the sense of being directly competing paradigms. They are partly overlapping, and ambiguous at the margins, but also apparently contradictory on a range of key analytical problems. As we will see, these slippages turn out to be very important.

3 This is a general statement, with exceptions, and is intended to apply mainly to work on sexual violence within the ambiguous category of 'feminist IR'. I make no strong claims about the treatment of these issues in feminist political theory, feminist philosophy, feminist sociology, and so on.

	Instrumentality	Unreason	Mythology
<i>Analytical</i>	Rationality	Affect	Symbolism
<i>Wagers</i>	Materialism	Psychology	Identity
	Individualism	Sexuality	Collectivism
<i>Narrative Scripts</i>	Calculating	Angry	Habitual
	Soldier-Strategist	Soldier-Sadist	Soldier-Ritualist
<i>Narrative Script</i>	<i>Geopolitical Commander</i>	<i>Sexual Predator</i>	<i>Sexual Exterminationist</i>
<i>Stereotypes</i>	<i>Obedient Foolsoldier</i>	<i>Frustrated Power-Seeker</i>	<i>Communal Enforcer</i>
	<i>Class Warrior</i>	<i>Brother-in-Arms</i>	<i>Gendered Member</i>
	<i>Economic Survivor</i>	<i>Disorientated Victim</i>	<i>Liminal Subject</i>
<i>Normative</i>	Self-Interest	Trauma	Beliefs
<i>Orientations</i>	(Dis)Incentives	Therapy	Education
<i>Logic</i>	Consequences	Drive	Appropriateness
<i>Victim/Women as...</i>	Object	Abject	Subject
<i>Primary Thematic</i>	Material	Expressive	Symbolic
<i>Foci</i>	Scarcity	Trauma	Difference
	Greed	Desire	Inter-Subjectivity
	Accumulation	The Unconscious	Meaning
<i>Examples of Relevant</i>	Military Units	Individual Soldiers	Militarised Discourse
<i>Relevant Actors</i>	Political Elite	The Family Unit	Cultural Institutions
	Businessmen	Opportunists	National Communities

Table 2: Feminist Modes of Critical Explanation for Wartime Sexual Violence

Where instrumentality trades in incentives, interests, dispossession and accumulation, unreason speaks of desire, bonding, esteem and sexuality and mythology conjures symbols, imaginaries and collective identities. These are not only different registers, but also differing ways of conceiving of power and the channels through which it manifests in the social, whether as political economy, libidinal economy or symbolic economy. Crudely put, patriarchy is made solid for instrumentality through the material benefits accrued to men by the subordination of women; for unreason through the persistence of a gender aggression either closely approximating sexual difference or unconsciously repeated in the processes of

psychic cohesion; and for mythology through the perpetuation in cultural and social systems of norms and rituals of behaviour.

The victims of rape thus appear as instrumentalised *objects* (used and discarded in the pursuit of other ends); the *abject* bodies of unreason (defiled as sources of deep and disgust for rapists) or mythologised *subjects* (others with an imagined group identity antagonistically opposed to that of the perpetrators). The views of violence implied are for instrumentality an act judiciously applied, necessary, protective, rational; for unreason frustrated, expressive, unpredictable, directed at psychic (rather than real) threats; for mythology an act of community, symbolic, boundary-making, generative, legitimated and differentiated. In each mode, the actors are emplotted in different ways according to the underlying analytical wagers. So instrumentality's focus on rationality, materiality and economy gives rise to the calculating soldier-strategist, who can take the stereotypical form of a geopolitical commander, an obedient footsoldier, a class warrior or an economic survivor. Unreason's attention to affect, sexuality and trauma produces the angry soldier-sadist, rendered variously as a sexual predator, a frustrated power-seeker, a brother-in-arms or a disorientated victim. And mythology, with its wagers of symbolism, identity and collectivity, narrates a habitual soldier-ritualist, whether as a sexual exterminationist, a communal enforcer, a gendered member, or a liminal subject.

As intimated in previous chapters, these differences in feminist accounts of war rape do not directly correspond to debates between positivists and constructivists or between qualitative and quantitative approaches to data. Nor do they merely map onto feminist empiricist, standpoint feminist or feminist postmodernist strands of theory. Again, it is not that such questions are unimportant, merely that the contrasts between instrumentality, unreason and mythology operate at another level. Instead, we should look to the *kinds of research questions asked*, the ways in which *the answers are variably constructed* and the *emancipatory political commitments* built into them. There are manifest and latent stories about what feminist analysis does, just as there are manifest and latent stories about how feminism takes on and transforms categories inherited from elsewhere.⁴ Further, as Mary Caprioli argues, there is a

4 On manifest and latent stories, see Soreanu 2010:383. On conceptual borrowing and ambiguity in feminism, see Wiegman 2002.

real risk of feminism being seen — by both proponents and detractors alike — through the Popperian ‘Myth of the Framework’, where it is assumed that real differences in approaches are projected ‘all the way down’, such that there can be no commonality or communication with paradigmatic others. These chapters are a step towards such an opening.⁵

How Modes Matter

As we have seen, claims made by different feminist modes have typically been united under the proposition that rape is a weapon of war. This phraseology, although politically potent, covers for significant ambiguity in the understanding of what a weapon is and how it can be deployed. When considered in terms of instrumentality, unreason and mythology, the tensions between different possible explanations are distributed in a new way. In some cases the modes are straightforwardly contradictory and thus force a choice between political options. So it has been argued both that rape happens because the militaries in question are extremely hierarchical organisations in which troops obey specific orders to rape (instrumentality) and that sexual violence is opportunistic, occurring because the militaries in question are *insufficiently* hierarchical, leading troops to ignore orders and carry out their own wishes (unreason). In the latter example, efforts to strengthen and train militaries in conflict zones will decrease rape. In the former, such efforts will only increase the effectiveness of the masculinised war machine.⁶ And viewing the military as a site of mythology may require neither increases nor decreases in levels of hierarchy but instead point to the necessity of shifts in institutional culture. More generally, military solutions might decrease sexual violence or increase it, depending on the underlying assumptions of the mode in question.

More commonly, different modes of critical explanation will not crystallise as distinct policy options. Rather, understanding sexual violence in terms of one or other form of critical explanation will shape the priorities and forms of political intervention adopted. This is Engle’s point when she criticises some feminist activism for contributing to an understanding of war rape in terms of ethnicity and sex in a way that diverts attention from wider patterns of gender oppression. But, although distinct, instrumentality, unreason and mythology are

5 Caprioli 2004:256–257.

6 Of course, it is possible that both explanations are valid in different circumstances. For an example of rape as targeted repression and a discussion of different uses for rape see Leiby 2009.

not straight-forwardly incompatible. Modes meet at common borders: instrumentality and unreason share an interest in questions of desire, (ir)rationality, interiority and control; unreason and mythology both require an analysis of the psychosocial divide and the complex relations of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity; and mythology and instrumentality both recognise the functional and collective aspects of violence. These overlaps are at least partly a consequence of the kind of 'rational reconstruction' necessary to set out the three modes as doing unacknowledged work in feminist explanations.⁷ Moving between the ideal-types of the modes and the specific, detailed accounts of how particular feminists have constructed their work highlights those areas in which elements bind together and those in which overlaps are more complicated.

But the resultant ambiguity is not simply that of an intellectual menu from which aspects can be chosen at whim, since the kinds of amalgamated modes of critical explanation that result differ in politically and analytically consequential ways. The overlapping yet coherent character of modes means that specific examples of rape in war can be made amenable to more than one mode of critical explanation. This poses a problem common to theory, scientific or otherwise, of how to determine which pattern of reasoning provides the most plausible account of sexualised aggression in conflict. This is the problem of the gap between modes of inquiry and forms of action, between discourses of explanation and the behaviours to which they refer, however closely they may be linked in the process of interpretation. Evaluating feminist accounts of wartime sexual violence will thus require further stages of contention and articulation. But this is no more challenging in the case of rape than it is when we discuss the character of the nation-state or the role of democracy in global politics. As in other subfields of IR, determining how things happen and why evades any easy resolution.

7 On 'rational reconstruction', see Jackson 2010:38–39.

INSTRUMENTALITY AND THE CALCULATING SOLDIER-STRATEGIST

[W]hile the concept of utility in economics is the foundation that makes possible a rational, calculable world, the utility itself stands for desire, an incalculable and irrational force that can overtake and disrupt the most carefully calculated actions. An element of irrationality, of something not quite human, inhabits the rational, human core of the economic.

Timothy Mitchell, *Rule Of Experts*¹

The *purely* economic man is indeed close to being a social moron.

Amartya K. Sen, 'Rational Fools'²

Kissi

In May 1998, soldiers of the Rebel United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone brought a group of captured women to the town of Kissi.³ They had been caught along with civilian men some time before. All had been mutilated with a razor-blade – the letters 'RUF' carved into their backs – but the men were released. The women, by contrast, were forced to carry rice for the soldiers. On arrival in Kissi, they were distributed as 'wives'. In the experience of one victim what followed was 15 months of slavery in which she was required to perform domestic work (cooking, cleaning, washing) in the settlement, and to submit to daily rape. She was kept in a home of sorts, assigned to a man who made palm wine for the RUF. More civilians would occasionally be brought to the town following each RUF raid. Other abductions and rapes in the Kono area followed a similar pattern, sometime accompanied by forced sex between captives, mutilation of genitals and the firing of guns into vaginas. Those captives who could not manage the work assigned them were shot to prevent them from passing intelligence to the RUF's enemies.⁴

But what did it mean to be a 'wife' in this context? A witness in the trial of Charles Taylor explained:

1 Mitchell 2002:299.

2 Sen 1977:336, emphasis in original.

3 The following paragraphs draw heavily on Special Court for Sierra Leone 2009:paras 1209–1214.

4 Special Court for Sierra Leone 2009:paras 1207–1208, 1216.

The women who I knew that they brought were women whom the men will see and somebody who was a man, or a combatant, would say, “I’m taking this away, she is my wife”. He will bring her...she will stay with him where he was staying... He will bring her to the base and turn her into his wife. Like they would sleep together, the woman would work for him *just like a woman would work for her husband in the home...* If you were captured at a front line, like it happened to us, they were not going to ask you if you love them, or do not love them. The person who captures you and brings you, you will stay with that person.⁵

So-called 'bush wives' were a mark of the Sierra Leone war and the majority of those abducted and designated as such by RUF appear to have been raped.⁶ Moreover, as the testimony just quoted indicates, the creation of RUF rebel villages reflected the sociological structure of 'peacetime' arrangements: a pseudo-family structure with commanders at the head of a number of 'bush wives', subordinate males and occasionally elderly residents. The forms of labour assigned to women also followed the patriarchal imperatives of reproduction: fetching water and firewood, cleaning, and preparing food.⁷

Traditional roles like the 'mamy queen', who would look after young girls and prepare them for marriage, were also replicated within the camp structure. These arrangements were stable, to the extent that hierarchies among bush wives also emerged, with the favoured wives of powerful commanders themselves taking on responsibilities for distributing arms and ammunition and holding power over other wives and children within the camps.⁸ 'Wives' in the camps were spared sexual abuse (at least from men who weren't their 'husband') and often had several 'unmarried' girls working for them in a domestic capacity. Those without 'husbands', however, were vulnerable to continuous abuse and rape. And so it has been suggested that women's productive labour was the “principal reason” for abduction

5 Special Court for Sierra Leone 2008: paras 12195–12196, emphasis added. I am grateful to Kirsten Ainley for her help in finding these testimonies.

6 Coulter 2009:95.

7 Coulter 2009:102–103. The difference being that women and girls were often guarded by soldiers in the process of carrying out these activities.

8 Coulter 2009:106–110.

in the first place, since it was required by the RUF to sustain the war system.⁹

The Sierra Leone example is of rapes that were systematic and planned for a particular purpose. They were not random acts, but were of a piece with the logistics of the RUF war effort. Rapists maintained tight control and put the abducted and brutalised to work. This happened not only at Kissi, but throughout the war zone: an iterated system of labour, established by sexualised aggression, and an apparently compelling instance of instrumentality. That is the subject of this chapter, which will examine instrumentality as a mode of critical explanation for feminist IR, as dependent on certain ideas of rationality and interest, and as involving shifting conceptions of materialism.

Rape Is Cheaper Than Bullets

Instrumentality signifies self-conscious means-ends reasoning at its purest. Broadly speaking, its analytical wagers are materialist, individualist and rationalist; its ontological politics that of scarcity, greed and accumulation; its narrative scripts those of the calculating soldier-strategist who self-consciously chooses to rape, and its normative orientation that of an agent unconstrained by ethical boundaries, one thus susceptible only to direct disincentive. For instrumentality, rape is a weapon of war because it is in the direct interests of perpetrators to use it for other ends. Or, as Amnesty International put it in a recent campaign, 'Rape is Cheaper Than Bullets'.

The view of sexual violence as instrument is strongest in accounts which foreground the material benefits of rape. Given reigning ideas of rape as a private sexual act it is perhaps not surprising that much feminist research has stressed how it facilitates material appropriation through terror. Doing so establishes the analytical and political connections between violent sexual politics and the processes of military strategy, economic interest and political domination more conventionally placed within the field of high politics. A great deal of feminist work has thus taken an instrumentalist approach in the sense of identifying sexual violence as central, rather than tangential, in the practice of war, as having a

9 Coulter 2009:116, 112–113. It seems that the usefulness of female labour in the Sierra Leone example was not restricted to traditional domestic roles as, infamously, girls and women also participated as fighters with various forces, “but many admitted to having fought only intermittently, in between serving as spies, laborers, bush wives, or sex slaves, making the definition of who was a fighter more complicated” (Coulter 2009:126).

functional or intentional component.¹⁰ War rape so defined is a rational technique and a calculated tool: “Torturers are trained – in military doctrine, chain of command, social psychology, and anatomies”.¹¹



Figure 9: *Sex as Instrument: Amnesty International's poster for a campaign to end violence against women, 'Rape Is Cheaper Than Bullets' (2009)*¹²

Empirical support for the material benefits thesis is drawn from the kinds of plans that embody a certain idea of masculine ruthlessness. In Liberia, reports of massive rape appear to have been sufficient to instil fear throughout local populations, while others have suggested that rape may even be a “shrewder military tactic” than others since it is hard to prove and seldom prosecuted in war crimes tribunals.¹³ Military documents set out the uses of sexual violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and observed that “[Muslim] morale, desire for battle, and will could be crushed more easily by raping women, especially minors and even children”.¹⁴ Certainly, the cheapness of wartime sexual violence for an economic strategy of resource accumulation in the DRC is central for feminist campaigners like Eve Ensler, who has commented that “rape is a very cheap method of warfare. You don't have to buy scud

¹⁰ Buss 2009:148–149; Tickner 1997:626.

¹¹ Enloe 2000:129.

¹² Amnesty UK 2009. See also Sydney Morning Herald 2009.

¹³ Cain 1999:284; Sharlach 2000:90.

¹⁴ Quoted in Salzman 1998:35.

missile or hand grenades”¹⁵. The centrality of military objectives and economic goods brings these claims close to ideas of 'greed' as the fuel for civil war, with rape the weapon of choice in the struggle for diamonds or coltan.

The Object

Rape is a weapon of war in the instrumentalist mode for the simple reason that it is the most effective tool for the aims pursued. Accordingly, instrumentalism can accommodate a number of possible ends which rape serves. What it maintains is the idea of a conscious and goal-directed strategy. In practice, this almost always means an economic end. This may amount to a claim that individual soldiers rape for money or goods and so fit the kind of model common in rational choice economics. But, as this chapter will seek to show, instrumentality is also conducive to thinking in terms of the class basis of sexual violence, with men acting in more collective economic interests to extract wealth, or maintain unequal economic relationships, over particular groups of women understood as a productive resource. Rape thus becomes a weapon for the maintenance of a particular kind of material power, with other dimensions being secondary, if visible at all.

The figure that embodies instrumentalist logic is the calculating soldier-strategist. When we narrate instrumentally, we think of the combatant as responsive to the demands placed on him, as purposeful, as confident and capable, as in many ways embodying the ideal of the soldier as an agent in war, if now turned to repellant ends. This idea of calculation can unfold in several ways according to the level at which he soldier operates and according to what ends he is calculating his way towards. In purely military terms, our imagined soldier is interested in besting an enemy, and sees in the population an opportunity to hasten his victory. Perhaps an area needs to be cleared or materials seized. Alternatively, civilians may be providing the enemy with support (food, shelter, information) and brutalisation may be the quickest way to discourage them.

Depending on the strategic environment and the tactics available, our soldier will then decide on action. The important point is that his decision is contingent, that it is a response

¹⁵ National Public Radio 2009. See also Ensler 2009.

to a changing situation in which he must win or die, and in which rape is one tool at his disposal. It obeys, in the standard formulation, the logic of consequences. This is as much a question of restraint as it is of violence: at times our soldier will choose not to rape. This military version of the soldier-strategist comes in two stereotypical forms: the *geopolitical commander* and the *obedient footsoldier*. The geopolitical commander takes a wide view, weighing the situation of war and the opportunities for progress. He may not rape himself at all, but decides when atrocities of all kinds are required. The obedient footsoldier is on the other side of the military hierarchy, and receives the order to rape. In an instrumentalist vision, he treats this as no different from the command to lay siege or to dig trenches. There is an order, and he and his comrades must enforce it. Sometimes this obedience is secured by the threat of force, sometimes simply by the smooth functioning of the military machine. In either case, the obedient footsoldier rapes because he is instructed to, not because it expresses his true desire.

But instrumentality's economic dimension yields two other stereotypes: that of the *class warrior* and the *economic survivor*. Like the geopolitical commander, the class warrior is interested in the balance of power. He too is at war, but battle is not his only concern. Instead, he fights to maintain and extend a division that approximates that of class: some produce so that others may consume. Communities are selected for rape not only because of the requirements of force doctrine, but also so that profits may be realised. The accumulation may be instant, as in loot and pillage, and rape the way to enable it. Or, as in the Sierra Leone example, it may be part of a more sustained system of exploitation. For the economic survivor, money is also at stake, but rape is contemplated more because of the sense of a desperate need than for great wealth. After gruelling months fighting the enemy, he may find himself starving, or with no prospect for substantial pay. Coming upon a village, the opportunity presents itself to attack and loot, and sexual violence appears as the quickest and cheapest way to secure the goods. In all cases, victims of rape are the detritus in projects aimed at other ends, just so many objects to be made use of.

Patriarchal social orders are the background condition necessary for these acts: they are what tend to make the men the soldiers, and which render women vulnerable to treatment as objects. But the calculating soldier-strategist does not rape because he is a misogynist, at

least no more so than any other man. He does so because he has considered the consequences and decided that this is the necessary, or the optimal, act. With a different balance of incentives (if he may be prosecuted, if he considered attacks on civilians may be counter-productive, if there was more profit to be made in enslaving other men) he would act differently.

Talking about rape in instrumentalist terms “has certain ontological and epistemological effects...[and] limits the types of questions that are asked about sexual violence”.¹⁶ It establishes certain understandings of how social action is carried out, of who the relevant sides are in a situation of war and/or genocide, and who gets to count as an audible or legible witness.¹⁷ For example, structuring explanation around the aim to acquire material benefits would seem to involve a certain view of exteriority in that it is particular *situations* which create incentives, which in turn shape behaviour. An interior space remains, but this scripts the subject as an instant analyst, a mechanism for interpreting the data of the world, rather than the source of affective charge. The accompanying materialist social ontology posits actors driven by imperatives of accumulation and so invokes an ethical imaginary of males as rational beings who may respond more credibly to military force, the threat of prosecution or institutional constraints than to education about the experience of rape and its long-term effects on survivors.

The Machiavelli Theorem

The logic of instrumentality, as characterised here, bears a striking resemblance to ways of explaining violence in civil war that bear no apparent relationship to the feminist project. In the post-Cold War period, accounts of the causes and character of collective violence turned their attention to economic dimensions. Rather than viewing conflicts, and the strategies used in them, as the product of great power politics, irrational chaos or merely disruptions to peaceful economic growth, a spate of scholarship and policy identified a rationality at play: “War is not simply a breakdown in a particular system, but a way of

¹⁶ Buss 2009:160.

¹⁷ I concur largely with Doris Buss’ view of the ‘instrumentality’ argument that developed in feminist analysis during the 1990s. However, Buss is here tying the instrumentalist argument to the ascendancy of a certain kind of argument in international law, and not to it as one complex theme among many in feminist analysis.

creating an alternative system of profit, power and even protection”.¹⁸ Subsequent debates, usually summarised as a contest between 'greed' explanations and 'grievance' explanations, generated a range of propositions and critiques that clarify and perhaps undermine an instrumentalist logic of wartime sexual violence.¹⁹

The turn towards economic aspects was never uniform. Its most politically successful version built on models of behaviour and methods common to the economic mainstream.²⁰ The fundamental claim was that the incidence of civil war was driven by primary commodity resources targeted by rebel groups.²¹ The link was established through proxy indicators and regression analysis, with little attention to micro-theoretical foundations beyond a commitment “to infer motivation from patterns of observed behaviour”.²² Despite the focus on quantitative evidence, this particular line of thought is commonly traced to the assumptions of neo-classical economics and the positing of rational, strictly self-interested and materialistic individuals aiming at maximising own-income.²³ In line with a greater focus on the role of crime and profiteering in 'new wars', this suggested the modelling of behaviour in war as a form of market behaviour, as 'muscular economics': “conflict interactions, like all economic interactions, involve equations of *optimisation* on the decision-making level and of *equilibrium* on the society-wide level”.²⁴

Most succinctly, this was put as the 'Machiavelli Theorem': “no one will ever pass up an opportunity to gain a one-sided advantage by exploiting another party”.²⁵ Others have used similar assumptions to look more specifically at civilian victimisation in war. In particular, formal models of war exploring the dynamics of violence frequently postulate the acquisition of economic goods as the ultimate aim and correspondingly assume clear and efficient instrumental rationality on the parts of actors.²⁶ Take, for example, Stathis Kalyvas'

18 Keen 1998:11.

19 For a summary of these debates, see Berdal 2005.

20 World Bank 2003.

21 Collier 2000:97; Collier and Hoeffler 2004.

22 Collier 2000:92.

23 Hirshleifer 2001. See the critique in Cramer 2002.

24 Hirshleifer 1994:8, emphasis in original; Kaldor 2006.

25 Hirshleifer 1994:3.

26 Grossman 1991:912–913; Azam and Hoeffler 2002:461–463; Kaufman 2006.

instrumentalist narrative of brutality in late-1990s Algeria:

Because their access to army-held villages and towns (and hence their ability to inflict punishment) is declining, insurgents will seek *compensation* through brutality: they will want to *signal* that although death at their hands might be less certain than death at the hands of the army, it will definitely be more brutal: more painful (through the use of knives and axes), more comprehensive (including entire families), transgressive of taboos (mutilation of dead bodies), etc.²⁷

Such approaches are clearly sex/gender-blind in that their characters are abstracted from actual social conditions.²⁸ While reference may be made to rape as one tactic of brutalisation, there is no real attention to gender as a dynamic that may impact on predictions or specifics. This is not, however, to say that feminist and economically instrumentalist approaches to brutality are fundamentally different at an explanatory level. Given a different 'scientific ontology' of actors (militarised men instead of rebels and women instead of the state) the causal narrative appears strikingly similar. These emplotments establish rape as a tool or weapon in a narrow sense: a way of signalling intention and transmitting information from a distinct group of attackers to a defined group of recipients to be influenced. Wartime sexual violence also comes to count as instrumentally rational in a particularly economic sense, in that the objectives of groups using rape are frequently conceived of in terms of material (financial) benefits, with political control a stage towards that end.

This neo-classical strand of the 'greed' thesis has not gone uncontested. As well as challenges from anthropological and psychological perspectives (to be examined in the coming chapters), there have been attempts to maintain a focus on economic dimensions of violence without a reliance on either the language of 'greedy' rebels or the contested assumptions of economic theory. Economic *benefits* were still seen to arise from opportunities for a range of activities during war, namely: pillage; protection money; trade; labour exploitation; land;

²⁷ Kalyvas 1999:270, emphasis added.

²⁸ Consider also the feminist criticism of Marxism's inability to explain why it is that *women* specifically occupy certain roles within the economic structure. See Hartmann 1979:8.

stealing aid supplies; and benefits for the military.²⁹ Rather than theorising violence as a choice made by individuals in the face of free-rider dilemmas or self-interested calculations, we may instead turn to an examination of processes that benefit particular groups and sections of society. Doing so retains a focus on accumulation and exploitation, but in a more collective register linked to, for example, the historical development of capitalism or a peculiar 'sell-game' agreed by two sides *cooperating* in a war.³⁰ Against the individualist focus of neo-classical economic studies, this introduces a collectivist, even class, lens to analysis.

For some, even where economic ends have been posited as one among many, purposiveness remains central to the conception of violence offered: “violence is *intended* to shape the behavior of a targeted audience by altering the expected value of particular actions. Put otherwise, violence performs a *communicative function* with a clear *deterrent* dimension”.³¹ This is a way of excluding the non-instrumental by force of definition alone: once all violence is conceptualised as a rational-chosen means to an end, any other possibility – affective, expressive, symbolic, irrational, transgressive – becomes invisible.³² For others, the talk of 'greed' or economic objectives as the cause of war is over-simplistic and ignores the entanglement of the economic with the political and the social. Instead of speaking of motives or covering law generalisations about the causes of civil war, this view proposes a focus on specificity and on the variable *functions* of behaviour in war.³³ We can understand war economies as functional and material and as crystallising interests, even if there are not two clear sides, or one group of men ‘doing’ sexual violence while a different group suffers it: “*No matter who shoots whom, certain power elites make a profit*”.³⁴ The issue for an instrumentalist account is thus to show that this is somehow a *greater* profit than would be the case without war and specifically without sexual violence.

29 Keen 1998.

30 Cramer 2006:199–240; Keen 2008:32–33.

31 Kalyvas 2006:26, emphasis added.

32 Kalyvas does mention that instrumentality may not be the only aspect of violence, but it is the central one, and the one his work is devoted to dealing with (Kalyvas 2006:28).

33 Keen 1998:71–74.

34 Nordstrom 2004:33, emphasis in original.

The critique of neo-classical approaches has been well summarised by Chris Cramer:

There is no discussion of where the 'players' come from other than as the product of relevant economic calculation... Typically, they are driven by the urge (this seems to be the only occasion where compulsion is relevant, all else being decided in the realm of choice) to maximise power or windfalls from victory (or just from conflict itself).³⁵

Instrumentalist *feminist* accounts are not susceptible to the first element of this critique (since the players are identified as the enforcers of a particular historical socio-political system of patriarchy) but do remain open to the second charge, which is to say that having specified an end or goal desired by men in war (productive and reproductive labour or access to resources) the process of choosing sexual violence as a weapon is rendered clear and uncomplicated. Where neo-classical theories of war postulate an originary accumulative drive grounded in universal self-interest, instrumentalist feminist accounts identify patriarchal self-interest as the source of exploitative behaviour. But in both cases a general individual or social property is manifested in clear preferences pursued by purposeful strategic actors. This reduction of war to economics by other means has in one sense progressed analysis beyond simplistic attributions of 'cultural' causes of violence, but can just as easily be used to lament the collapse of moral orders and pose a *rational* barbarian rapist:

It is this economic rationale that makes warfare in much of Africa not only endemic but also inhumane, because it is disproportionately aimed against civilians... Looked at in this light we can conclude that war is inhumane in much of Africa precisely because it is so 'rational'. Inhumanity serves a purpose.³⁶

³⁵ Cramer 2002:1847

³⁶ Coker 2001:124.

The Soldier-Rapist As Social Moron

Challenges to this understanding of purposive social action arise not only from counter-arguments within civil war studies, but also from social theory in general terms. The 'rationality postulate' has come under various kinds of attack. Rational agents tend to be characterised as possessed of 1) fully-ordered preferences; 2) perfect information; and 3) accurate information processing.³⁷ Moreover, their interests are conventionally taken (as with Hirschleifer on conflict economics) to be wholly self-interested.³⁸ Since these assumptions are often deployed for heuristic purposes, it is useful to distinguish between the *strong rationality hypothesis*, which holds that these assumptions do in fact account for observed behaviour, and the *weak rationality principle*, which suggests instead that rationality is a general, and sometimes purposively vague, approach to understanding behaviour.³⁹

In the case of the strong rationality hypothesis, it is now widely accepted as empirically false, which is to say that individuals do not respond in the expected ways even in laboratory conditions.⁴⁰ The weak rationality principle is more successful, but is also strangely empty. Deprived of claims that utility must be economic, that actors are necessarily self-interested, that preferences are always distinct and well-ordered, or even that whatever is desired is 'maximised' rather than merely 'satisfied', 'rationality' then comes to stand as an "almost empty principle" in the sense that actors simply follow their particular idea of 'appropriateness' within a 'situational logic'.⁴¹ Hence:

The rationality principle is not in need of any defence. *It cannot be disputed.* For every conceivable action, including the most bizarre, there are purposes and beliefs (also very bizarre) conceivable that make it consistent.⁴²

To avoid unsustainable claims about internal mental states, economic theory adopted the

37 Hollis and Smith 1990:75.

38 Zafirovski 2000.

39 See Vanberg 2004.

40 Arrow 1987; Sen 2004; Vanberg 2004.

41 Popper 1983. See also Hopf 2010 for a discussion of Weberian rationality and appropriateness, habits and consequentialism.

42 Vanberg 2004:8, emphasis added.

concept of 'revealed preference', in which the unknown utility of actors was understood by reference to their acts. If people sought to purchase certain goods, or to acquire them through violence, then this indicated a preference for them. But this repeats the problem, since behaviour is explained by preference, and preference by behaviour.⁴³

In actual conflict situations, these issues are exacerbated. One particular ambiguity in instrumentalist accounts is in this understanding of war rape as an act that produces a desired outcome, which is central to the “*effectiveness* of rape as a weapon of war”.⁴⁴ Rape is spoken of not only as a thing that is chosen, but that is also consistently *successful*. This combines two ideas: a) that attackers have a particular end beyond the rape itself in mind (sexual violence is a means to another end); and b) that this appraisal is generally realistic (rapists do in some sense actually benefit from the consequences of their actions). Instrumentalist logics thus open themselves to criticism on both conceptual and empirical grounds.

Conceptually, the assumption of purposively directed action risks circularity. It begs the question of how we know that rape was directed at a particular goal. That the particular goal came about is insufficient, since this simultaneously explains the outcome on the basis of a preference on the part of the actor and 'proves' the preferences of the actor because a certain outcome resulted. Similarly, instrumentalist approaches are also tempted to reduce the social to a set of individual decisions, making acts appear as the rationally constructed decisions of the cunning male(s), rather than the complex product of multiple processes and trajectories. Empirically, evidence of command directives seems rare, and in general leaves an incomplete picture. Does it show that generals give orders which are followed and which benefit all men involved in the military exercise (who act according to self-interest); that commands are obeyed, but benefit those at the top at the expense of those who (perhaps unwillingly) carry out their instructions; or that elites seek to shape and control processes of sexual violence, but without success (since the complications of war frustrate their efforts)? The risk for instrumentalist feminist accounts is that they perpetuate a thin conception of power and reproduce assumptions of economistic or utilitarian desire as swallowing other

⁴³ Sen 1977:325.

⁴⁴ Bergoffen 2009:313, emphasis added.

aspects of the social. A general diagnosis of complex gender constructions and identifications which in practice reduces to the assumption of calculating man machines.⁴⁵

Patriarchal Dividends

And so to the internal political economy of masculinity itself. Feminists, in studies of peace no less than in war, have correctly identified the pervasive and systematic benefits of attributions of manhood, of a status providing a “gilt-edged platinum card for life” in Terrell Carver's memorable formulation.⁴⁶ As seen in Chapter 2, it is now in fact very common for feminist work to stress multiplicity and difference within male experiences, although there is still to some extent a flattening of the category of man.⁴⁷ This can certainly occur when it comes to attributing responsibility to men in general for benefitting from rape.⁴⁸ But the question of just *which* men benefit, *how* they benefit, and to *what extent* becomes particularly salient for an instrumentalist account of war rape.

Conceptualising masculinity in terms of relations of hegemony and subordination and marginalisation and authorisation, R. W. Connell famously proposed that men receive a dividend as participants in patriarchy, and that this takes the form of status, command and material assets.⁴⁹ On this account gender inequality on the scale observable in contemporary societies is “hard to imagine without violence”, which is taken to have an important enforcement role both in terms of maintaining men's power over women through acts like rape and in setting patterns among men.⁵⁰ Extending this reasoning to the practice of war, it is plausible to see rape (whether at similar or heightened levels relative to 'peacetime' roles) as an instrument of this enforcement, protecting or extending the patriarchal dividend. Soldiers in this sense become the frontline troops for the collective of men, just as domestic violence, street-level intimidation and rape fulfil the same functions outside of the war system.

45 See the fascinating discussion in Carver 2008.

46 Carver 2006:450.

47 See Hooper 2001 and Carver 1996 for useful discussions.

48 This is the critique I develop of May and Strikwerda 1994 in Kirby 2012b.

49 Connell 2005:76–81, 82.

50 Connell 2005:83.

There are, however, arguments around the relationship between violence and the benefits received by men which pose problems for an instrumentalist feminist account of war rape. Following an instrumentalist interpretation, the hegemonic masculinity thesis can be read as a claim that “male violence is the brutal core of a *politico-cultural strategy* that is deployed to sustain an illegitimate position of dominance”.⁵¹ But if there is a 'patriarchal dividend' accessible to all men, despite internal differences, then:

it must be possible for lower-class men to *cash them in* for some of the real privileges and benefits enjoyed by those men who – alongside many women and 'subordinated masculinities' – inhabit the higher class or occupational echelons. If profitable exchange is infrequent rather than routine, then, in the case of violence, the personal is quite possibly *not* very political.⁵²

We might also expect that active believers in masculine ideals receive greater benefits than others. Yet it has been claimed that violence is more common among lower classes marked by crude, aggressive masculine norms while the means of cultural production are controlled by a pseudo-pacified elite. So to demonstrate a connection between the patriarchal dividend and violence as an act of privilege, Connell's three patriarchal groups “must be shown to have common interests”.⁵³ But if studies of all kinds repeatedly show a connection between violence and socio-economic marginality, might we not conclude that men's interests have never been united under a common patriarchal flag but that subordinate masculinities are exploited by elite ones?⁵⁴ If these distributed masculinities are not part of the same project, then assuming an *instrumental* decision by those men who carry out violence but who will not themselves benefit from the results of that violence, becomes unsustainable.⁵⁵

The answer may depend on how we view violence and class. For Connell, this critique focuses on stereotypically 'lower class' violence *between men* (in bars, at football matches and on the streets of deprived neighbourhoods), rather than on the more widespread practices of

51 Hall 2002:37–38, emphasis added.

52 Hall 2002:39, emphasis in original.

53 Hall 2002:40–41.

54 Hall 2002:42–47.

55 In this respect, consider also the claim that talk of *masculinities* itself acts as a kind of legitimation by distracting attention from the practices of actual *men*, as suggested by McCarry 2007:409.

domestic violence and rape.⁵⁶ Moreover, the hegemonic masculinity thesis itself acknowledges that class positions can lead to men 'losing out' on the patriarchal dividend.⁵⁷ This rejoinder is supported by evidence that men from 'lower' classes (understood in income terms) are no more likely to be rapists, although higher arrest and conviction rates can project a misleading statistical picture. But low-income women *are* more likely to experience sexual violence, suggesting that there might be an economic relationship in terms of predation, with attackers correctly identifying that victims will not have resources to respond.⁵⁸ In terms of an account of wartime sexual violence, this transfers the locale of causation. Instead of holding that men rape because they are poor we might say that they rape particular women because they are unable to resist. But this moves the explanation away from instrumentality, since it ceases to be clear what economic or material benefit is to be gained from those with the least to offer.

Whatever answer is given to these questions by particular empirical studies, a fundamental conceptual problem remains. Even if we accept Connell's account, a more fine-grained analysis of the process by which men benefit from patriarchy seems necessary. How is it that men 'cash out' the benefits of patriarchy? And what is the relationship between the role of enforcer and the freedom to enjoy the fruits of violence? As with the debate within civil war studies, the relationship between individualist and collectivist assumptions becomes important. If we narrate war rape as the consequence of soldiers seeking goods for themselves (as, say, economic survivors in war), we may expect a certain pattern, characterised by a failure or gap in command structures allowing for relatively autonomous accumulation through violence.⁵⁹ On the other hand, if soldiers are working on behalf of interests which they struggle to access, as the obedient footsoldiers for class warriors or geopolitical commanders, this would suggest that some other way of forcing their obedience is necessary. Perhaps they are themselves subjected to violence as a marginalised masculinity. Or perhaps a more 'positive' identity is nurtured to encourage participation in a joint patriarchal project.

56 Connell 2002:200.

57 Connell 2005:116.

58 Phipps 2009:669-671. In terms of the three modes, this contrasts with the idea that someone may be attacked because they are a high-status representative of the nation (mythology), or merely because they are an easy target in an opportunistic attack (unreason).

59 For a version of this kind of thesis (or a 'principal-agent' issue), see Butler, Gluch, and N. J. Mitchell 2007.

Rape Factories

While these parallels with issues in civil war studies and social theory trouble smooth narratives of strategic instrumentality by marauding soldiers, they only partially address another central wager of instrumentalist logics: that of materialism. The salience of individualist and collectivist perspectives arises again here, although the role of narrow 'rationality' recedes into a more functionalist analysis of patriarchy as a system. The parallels with debates in civil war studies and in social theory both clarify and challenge the implicit assumptions of purposive behaviour in the instrumentalist feminist mode. The question of materiality and redistribution in feminist theory itself likewise both refines and undermines by setting the materialism of patriarchy (and hence of sexual violence as a tool to achieve or protect material benefits) as a problem, rather than a self-evident assumption.

Although now rather displaced by 'post-socialist' politics and the success of discourse-based theories of gender, materialist and socialist feminists devoted considerable theoretical resources to elaborating an understanding of patriarchy that can serve as an elaboration on the logic of instrumentality. For Nancy Hartsock, Marx's two levels of social life (exchange and production) required a feminist supplement in the form of *reproduction*.⁶⁰ Writing against contract and exchange theories and their view of communities in instrumental terms as markets for interests, she also critiqued existing Marxist analysis for its blindness to non-wage labour.⁶¹ The possibility for a distinctly feminist standpoint in these historical materialist terms arises from the sexual division of *labour* and this standpoint is informed by the experience of *material* life and *material* relations of domination, understood in terms of relations of production and reproduction.⁶²

A materialist feminism offers an expansive conceptions of women's work and labour as “variable practices that are *constitutive* of ever-changing forms of existence and modes of subjectivity”, which is to say that labour produces subjectivity to the degree that we can speak of an *ontology* of labouring practices and labour as an 'immanent ontological dynamic'

60 Hartsock 1983:10.

61 Hartsock 1983:44-45, 147-150.

62 Hartsock 1983:231-232.

in history.⁶³ The role of women as a collective with a particular relationship to exploitation and gender hierarchy (and a particular insight into it) is hence analogous to workers as a collective with a particular relationship to economic hierarchy (and their particular insight into it).⁶⁴

Indeed, the perspective of women is “more thoroughgoing than that available to the worker” in the sense that stereotypical male labourers are only involved in one 'circuit of capital' while women are caught up in four since: 1) women can possess labour power like men; but 2) women are more involved in the production of use values directly consumed rather than first exchanged; and 3) women are the major producers of labour power itself. Their labour produces labour power (through caring, cooking and child-bearing). Finally, 4) women are also themselves commodities exchanged for pleasure and money in patriarchy, thus reproducing androcentric sexuality and power.⁶⁵ This is one way in which the intense overlap between 'objective' forms of exploitation (lower wages, different work, profits from female labour) can be seen as of a piece with 'subjective' forms of aggression (domestic violence, physical harassment, rape).⁶⁶ A gender-class-instrumentalist vision of war identifying reasons for the particularly victimised status of women in situations which are not just violent, but also economies.

Of particular relevance to instrumentality as a mode of critical explanation is the role of materialism in such an account not just as a characterisation of social relations at a particular point, but as a means for “*explaining* the relations and factors that structure women's lives” which can take us “toward a theory of the extraction and appropriation of women's activity and women themselves”.⁶⁷ This is not to say that a materialist account in Hartsock's terms only recognises economic dimensions of the social. Ideas of

63 Weeks 2004:185, emphasis added, 186, 188.

64 See the discussion in Jameson 2004.

65 Hartsock 1983:234, 2004.

66 The distinction between objective and subjective forms is borrowed from Žižek 2009.

67 Hartsock 1983:150, 233. For Simone de Beauvoir, this focus on production made historical materialism inadequate to the challenge of patriarchy: “..it is impossible to regard woman simply as a productive force: she is for man a sexual partner, a reproducer, an erotic object – an Other through which he seeks himself.” It is, however, interesting that de Beauvoir ultimately felt this account to be insufficiently materialist in orientation (de Beauvoir 1997:90; Mitchell 1966:16) See also Brenner 2000; Barrett 1984 for discussions of the role of household labour in the materiality and ideology of capitalism and patriarchy.

virility, potency and sexuality (*eros*) play a role in power itself, just as the character of desire forces a more direct conflict of the ruling gender with the ruled than need be the case in the sphere of rational production.⁶⁸ It is, however, the relations of women to men as *classes*, with the former's labour extracted and exploited by the latter, which does the analytical work and sets the ontological politics in such an account.

Rosemary Hennessy also adopts a materialist feminist, although here discourse itself also counts as materialist. Moving away from an understanding of that wager in narrowly economic terms, discursive materialism retains an “interest in Marxism as a problematic which *explains social relations causally*”, whether through a focus on crisis or the category of capitalism.⁶⁹ A view of gender violence as instrumental to a class relation need not subsume feminism into Marxism. *That* requires that we hold that the class relationship in question is one established under capitalism, or under some distinct mode of production. If, instead, we hold that a gendered division of labour, with men (however defined) benefiting at the expense of women (however defined), which is to say that they appropriate and dispose of value created by women's work, then we are speaking of gender as a class relationship. We might say that Marxist class analysis is interested in women's relationship to a particular economic system, while feminist class analysis is interested in women's relationship to men.⁷⁰ Such a perspective both recognises the multiple character of oppression and promotes a particular account of its emergence, since ideology, mythology and discourses remain of analytical interest, but not as themselves primary causal forces.⁷¹

For materialist feminism then, exploitation depends on extracting value produced by one class for another, and gender enters as a class distinction. Sexual violence thus becomes a

68 Hartsock 1983:155, 178.

69 Hennessy 1993:6, emphasis added.

70 Hartmann 1979:2–3.

71 This conjunction is important, since it is possible to acknowledge elements of unreason and mythology and yet still see class as of underlying importance. This is even so for the more expansive views of class as a social relation rather than a more or less determined superstructure and determining base. So, for example, the apparently symbolic language of 'respectability' among women might ultimately reflect class distinctions among different women in a society, rather than itself being a generative force. See Phipps 2009:673–674. Meanwhile, while Hennessy recognises contested discourse, historical placement, the difficulties of standpoint, and the impossibility of speaking of a material essence not structured by discourse, it is nevertheless not at question that discourses are following the dictates of capital, and that the relationship is an exploitative one. Although these terms (labour, capital, exploitation) are not explicitly justified on their own terms, they are the implicit structuring *analytical wagers*.

tool for the process of securing productive and reproductive assets in the context of war. The 'bush wife' system of Sierra Leone being a compelling example. Such an account aligns with a more general analysis similarly seeing systematic rape as a strategy for seizing women's assets, primarily productive and reproductive labour and only secondarily personal possessions or access to land.⁷² As well as providing empirical support for a logic of instrumentality, these elements of a materialist feminism also indicate what a more complex account of the economic functions of wartime sexual violence may look like, although we will come to see that some of these same events are readable in terms of ritual and pornographic indoctrination not so amenable to calculation or accumulation. For example, the role of forced marriage and the 'wife' designation has so far been neglected, and stands as a remainder somewhat at odds with a direct interest in captive labour insofar as they indicate a desire or need for symbolic legitimation.

Noting the absence of a relational analysis of different economies in the study of war, V. Spike Peterson has proposed a three-part typology of reproductive, productive and virtual economies.⁷³ Working from this framing sets three kinds of economy relevant to a gendered understanding of war. *Coping* economies are those centred on sustaining family and social life. The experience of the 'bush wives' of Sierra Leone fit most closely to this context in replicating a kind of domesticity in the midst of collective violence. This sphere is the most stereotypically 'feminised'. *Combat* economies are generally 'masculinised' and sustain fighting itself through direct supply, for example in capturing primary commodity resources. *Criminal* economies are the province of profit-seeking and are more indirect in their effects, perhaps by providing black market goods or transporting 'conflict minerals' to international markets.⁷⁴

All three economies may be related to war rape in an instrumentalist account. Rape followed by sexual slavery and general servitude to armed groups is a product of coping economies. Rape to induce fear and therefore clear areas for the seizure of valuable resources which then sustain armed groups is a product of combat economies. Rape as a tool for the kidnap of women later traded as commodities (for example in sex trafficking) is a

⁷² See Turshen 2001.

⁷³ Peterson 2008:9-10.

⁷⁴ Peterson 2008:14-17.

product of criminal economies.⁷⁵ All three economies direct attention to the uses of labour controlled through violence, and therefore suggest the materialist purposes to which sexual violence can be put, whatever model of intentionality we opt for.

The Figure Of The Psychopath

These are some of the conceptual ambiguities within instrumentality, ways of posing it economically, militarily, as obedience, as agency, with gender as a class and rape as exploitation, and as sensitive to the functions and benefits of violence. The dangers are of evacuating any concept of personhood thicker than that of a cog in a patriarchal machine, and the problem is how to cash out the specially gendered profits of violence. Returning to the question of rationality, there is also a zone in which instrumentality becomes less clear, and where it bleeds into the categories of unreason. Not an issue of the specifics of means-ends calculations, but of the boundary between rationality and madness.

There is a revealing moment in *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, perhaps the World Bank document most associated with 'greed' theses of war, one nominally committed to a rationalist and economic account of civil war, in which a footnote mentions that 3% of any given population can be classified as psychopathic and that this in itself is enough to recruit the foundations of an army and to explain why people fight.⁷⁶ In clinical assessment measures, psychopaths are distinguished by their short tempers and strong feelings of anger and desire for retribution for perceived wrongs, characteristics clearly identifiable with trends in unreason. But they are also manipulative, lacking in guilt and motivated by self-interest, features that would seem to better suit the calculating soldier-strategist.⁷⁷ They come close to Sen's view of purely economic man as a social moron: one with only a single preference set, orientated only towards themselves.⁷⁸

The two sides of the psychopath – anger and self-interest – appear in contradiction because we are so used to the association of rationality with cool calculation. Yet, as Timothy

75 Mazurana 2005:34–36.

76 World Bank 2003:68.

77 Hare 1999.

78 Sen 1977.

Mitchell comments, the 'utility' of economics disavows but requires desire. Consequences matter where agents want something. Saying that they want power or money or survival defers the question: if they want those things consistently and intensely and plan their lives around ways of acquiring them, they are not just rational, but *driven*. And the concept of the drive ultimately tempts us with ideas of passion, hunger, and sex. The soldier-strategist, adjudicating on the field of battle, finds that his mask has slipped a bit, and that his pleasure is showing through. The minute we stop abstracting the rapist, it becomes much harder to think of him as someone who 'just' chooses to rape, as if selecting the cheapest product in a store. *That* kind of method is madness. The pervasiveness of violent accumulation and violation in war is suggestive of it as a space of insanity, where psychopathy becomes the norm, a familiar enough trope. *War is hell*.

The psychopath thus stands for the existentialist connection between sex and death. When it comes to modes of critical explanation for sexual violence, the analytical claim of rationality is thrown into some disarray. It is possible to see all instances of rape as uses of a tool applied to different ends (money, culture, lust). But as well as subduing a whole set of contexts and circumstances under one term, this also undoes the major contribution of 'weapon of war' claims in the first place. If the instrumentality of rape can apply to *any* chain of events and *any* motive or utility, there is no reason not to return to the prior idea of it as 'just something men do', as unrelated to war aims at all, or as peacetime desires writ large. There must be some additional content to the instrumentalist diagnosis, both to specify what perpetrators are being 'strategic', 'systematic' or 'rational' *about* and to make these claims feminist, rather than just generically rationalist.

If the aims are domination in a specifically gendered form, or the expression of a gendered desire, then where does this content come from? It is common to give an answer in terms of the social construction of identity, of the pervasiveness of certain gender norms, but introducing these elements of symbolic structure, belief and ideology takes us back to the problem of rationality, which is that if it is structured by these standards (or a *bounded* rationality), then forms of violence may not be so freely chosen or calculated toward military

or economic gains at all.⁷⁹ The imagined soldier-strategist thus might on one side become the gendered member acting in accordance with a militarised social structure that specifies his legitimate and illegitimate action and on the other the practitioner not of a carefully judged violence but of the covered-over imperatives of lust and anger that drive him.

Instrumentalist Propositions

Beneath the instrumentalist account of wartime sexual violence – the one that most obviously substantiates 'rape as a weapon of war' thesis – we have encountered a series of complexities. One result has been to clarify the different possible strands of the instrumentalist mode. Far from implying merely an individualist and economic understanding of agency in war (a charge that sticks more to 'greed'-based approaches in war studies), the tradition in feminist and social theory concerned with materialism, power and exploitation is rich and suggestive. It draws our attention to issues of class and distribution, to the intersection of economics of war and those of peace, and to an attendant range of analogies of war-labour, killing-fucking machines and combat as the brutal securing of a political economy. But tracing out the possible forms of the calculating soldier-strategist has also left a conceptual remainder. We are left with fundamental conceptual issues around the nature of rationality (and its circularity), the benefits of violence within masculinity, and the borders of the rational and the irrational.

However, we are able to advance some broad propositions which, if not quite firmly testable hypotheses, at least indicate what kind of observations and events might support the claims of the instrumentalist mode. They are intended to both accommodate the range of instrumentalist inflections surveyed *and* to provide a distinct basis for instrumentalism, thereby allowing for comparison, contrast and possible co-explanation with the logics of unreason and mythology surveyed in the coming chapters.

79 This reflects a prominent debate in feminism over materiality and its connection to culture, and the relative prominence of the two sides in explaining women's oppression. As discourse-orientated and post-structuralist versions of feminism have flourished in the academy, there have suggestions that the brute economic-political dimensions of inequality are being eclipsed by a focus on difference and identity. The overlap with accounts of sexual violence comes because the borders between culture and economic, like those between instrumentality, mythology and unreason, prove to be conceptually unstable. I do not explore this in greater depth here because the literature tends to focus on questions of feminism activism within capitalist societies at times of peace, and so involve other kinds of violence and exploitation than are at stake in the analysis of war rape. See for example Fraser and Honneth 2003; J. Butler 1998; Phillips 1997; Fraser 1998; Young 1997.

Proposition 1

Following the narrowest of assumptions about rationality, we might conclude that wartime sexual violence follows an instrumentalist logic if we find clear evidence of orders, either in written form or evidence given by troops (for example in international tribunals), that armies, militias or groups were *instructed* to rape for *an identifiable purpose*. This latter element is important since a mere discussion of rape or the prevalence of discourse around will not show instrumentality. To identify the work of a geopolitical commander or class warrior requires that we discern a chain of command, or at least an atmosphere of impunity which is more than permissive, but actually encourages violence. We are searching, in other words, for orders for the obedient footsoldier to follow. To ask for such evidence of instrumentality demands a significant amount of proof, and one unlikely to be furnished within the contexts of uncertainty and inadequate information characteristic of war. As with more general discussions of economic rationality, one solution is to read intentionality and instrumentality through the evidence of material or functional benefits for particular actors, which opens up a range of materialist propositions.

Proposition 2

If we find that rape is generally accompanied by kidnapping and sexual slavery for ‘domestic’ work or other kinds of labour within a war economy, then this would support an account based on the invisible role of ‘reproductive’ and ‘non-wage’ labour in sustaining the war machine. The class warrior and the obedient footsoldier are primarily implicated here. Moreover, it may suggest the relevance of gendered notions of appropriate and inappropriate labour to sustaining that system and leading to the perception by soldiers that this was an appropriate tactic to secure female labour.

Proposition 3

If we find that rape is generally accompanied by theft or appropriation of particular resources, then this would also support an argument about the gendered exploitation of female labour, although here it would not be a sustainable exploitation in the form suggested by Proposition 2, but merely a forceable appropriation of labour value already created by gendered economies. Following the theoretical discussion above, a tendency towards this

kind of accumulation rather than a more regularised pattern of exploitation may yet invoke instrumentalism, but in a more restricted capacity as the short-term seizure of assets to facilitate certain aims which may have little to do with labour or economics in a fundamental sense (likely invoking the economic survivor more than any other stereotyped soldier-rapist).

Proposition 4

If we find that rape accompanies acts which fall within the sites of war economies (more so than in situations not so linked to war economies), then this would support an argument about its role as materially-beneficial and instrumentally-rational aid to processes of international profiteering. Here the actors involved may not be benefiting a domestic constituency or even their immediate military superiors, but instead lubricating a transnational flow of material resources. This is again the sphere of the class warrior, although now in a more global sphere of exchange. Since all economies are to some extent linked to globalised others, the mere existence of transnational flows cannot justify a conclusion that an instrumentalist logic is victorious over its competitors. More attention is required to a comparison of existent flows with those characteristic of non-war and non-rape situations. In addition, an empirical investigation of these issues will need to examine the closeness of the link between rape and transnational economic flows. That a civil war is marked by both cannot establish their connection at an explanatory level.

These four propositions are not mutually exclusive, and may well be combined with evidence supporting others in any concrete case. Whether their prevalence is clear enough to support a specifically instrumentalist reading, and whether an instrumentalist reading can be sustained as distinct in theoretical terms, will become clearer once we have considered the wagers, scripts and orientations of unreason and mythology.

UNREASON AND THE ANGRY SOLDIER-SADIST

Sometimes it seems that we're merely Constructions made out of yarn, paper and wood with threads rising from our toes and fingertips. We pretend to talk and act as though we were alive but actually we don't have any choice in the matter. Some secret power directs us.

Evan S. Connell, *The Diary Of A Rapist*¹

War is not only the Great Educator, it is the Great Revealer. Its marches and bivouacs, its battles, its commonplaces and surprises, its trials and its triumphs, are a singular school of experience. The various impacts upon man's psychological anatomy produce strange results. They seem like the blows of some Invisible Sculptor, producing out of commonplace material a hero and it may be a demi-god. The opening orchestra of shot and shell braces up the mind of the soldier and attunes it up to receive new sensitiveness. The bullets play strange dirges on the strings of life before they break them, and each dirge has its theme, some song of spiritual things. His gaze is towards the sky line and he sees strange things, a whole battery of lights each of which is in its way a revelation.

Forbes Phillips and R. Thurston Hopkins, *War and the Weird*²

[I]f it's violence not sex why didn't he just hit her?

Catharine A. MacKinnon, 'Sexuality, Pornography and Method'³

My Lai

On 16 March 1968, US soldiers from Charlie Company descended on the village of My Lai in South Vietnam. It was to become the scene for perhaps the most infamous war crime in the second half of the 20th century. More than 500 people were killed, all unarmed, all without provocation, on the orders of Lieutenant William Calley, who in turn claimed to be following orders to “kill everything in the village”.⁴ Whatever the truth of that Calley – described by one of his subordinates as “a kid trying to play war” - oversaw the rounding-up, the execution, and the desecration of bodies, elderly villagers and young children among

1 Connell 2004:68.

2 Phillips and Hopkins 1916:17.

3 MacKinnon 1989:323.

4 Hersh 1970:63.

them.⁵ Some men wept, and could not complete the slaughter. Others refused to cooperate at all.⁶ One soldier may have shot himself in the foot to avoid participating. Another, the helicopter pilot Hugh Thomson, was the only person to actively resist, threatening to shoot on other American soldiers if they participated.

Amidst the slaughter, some twenty women and girls were raped, according to army investigators. Some were as young as 11 and 12, and they were generally raped and then shot.⁷ Some had had their genitals cut open.⁸ A photographer came on soldiers attempting a rape of a 15 year-old girl, one declaring “let's see what she's made of” and enjoying the desperate attempts of an older lady to fight them off.⁹ If there were orders to commit atrocity, there were not to commit rape, and Calley was eventually charged and convicted of murder, not sexual violence. Attempts to make sense of the killings have stressed the combination of fear, frustration (at the recent death of a commander) and racism.¹⁰ The scene deteriorated quickly into confusion, or as one participant put it, “this wasn't no organized deal”.¹¹ Nevertheless, there were reports of joyful shouting and laughter: “The boys enjoyed it. When someone laughs and jokes about what they're doing they have to be enjoying it”.¹² As a G.I. involved in the massacre explained:

We were all psyched up, and as a result when we got there the shooting started, *almost as a chain reaction*. The majority of us had expected to meet VC combat troops, but this did not turn out to be so. First we saw a few men running...and the next thing I knew we were shooting at everything. Everybody was just firing. After they got in the village, I guess you could say that *the men were out of control*.¹³

5 Hersh 1970:57.

6 Olson and Roberts 1998:77-78, 83-85.

7 Olson and Roberts 1998:99-102; Hersh 1970:71.

8 Cookman 2007:156.

9 Cookman 2007:158; Hersh 1970:69.

10 Cookman 2007:155-156.

11 Cited in (Hersh 1970:66.

12 Hersh 1970:67.

13 Cited in Hersh 1970:65, emphasis added.



Figure 10: 'My Lai : We Lie : They Die', a 1970 satirical poster by Jeff Kram. The text reads: "We as R.O.T.C. cadets know that tomorrow's business, governmental, and professional activities need top men who have the ability, will, and opportunity to prepare for positions of responsibility, and leadership. R.O.T.C. cadets are those superior men. Our motto and solemn oath: My Lai We Lie They Die. Support our program; as you can see, we have a lot to offer" and is signed 'Committee for the Promotion of Selective Youth In Asia'.

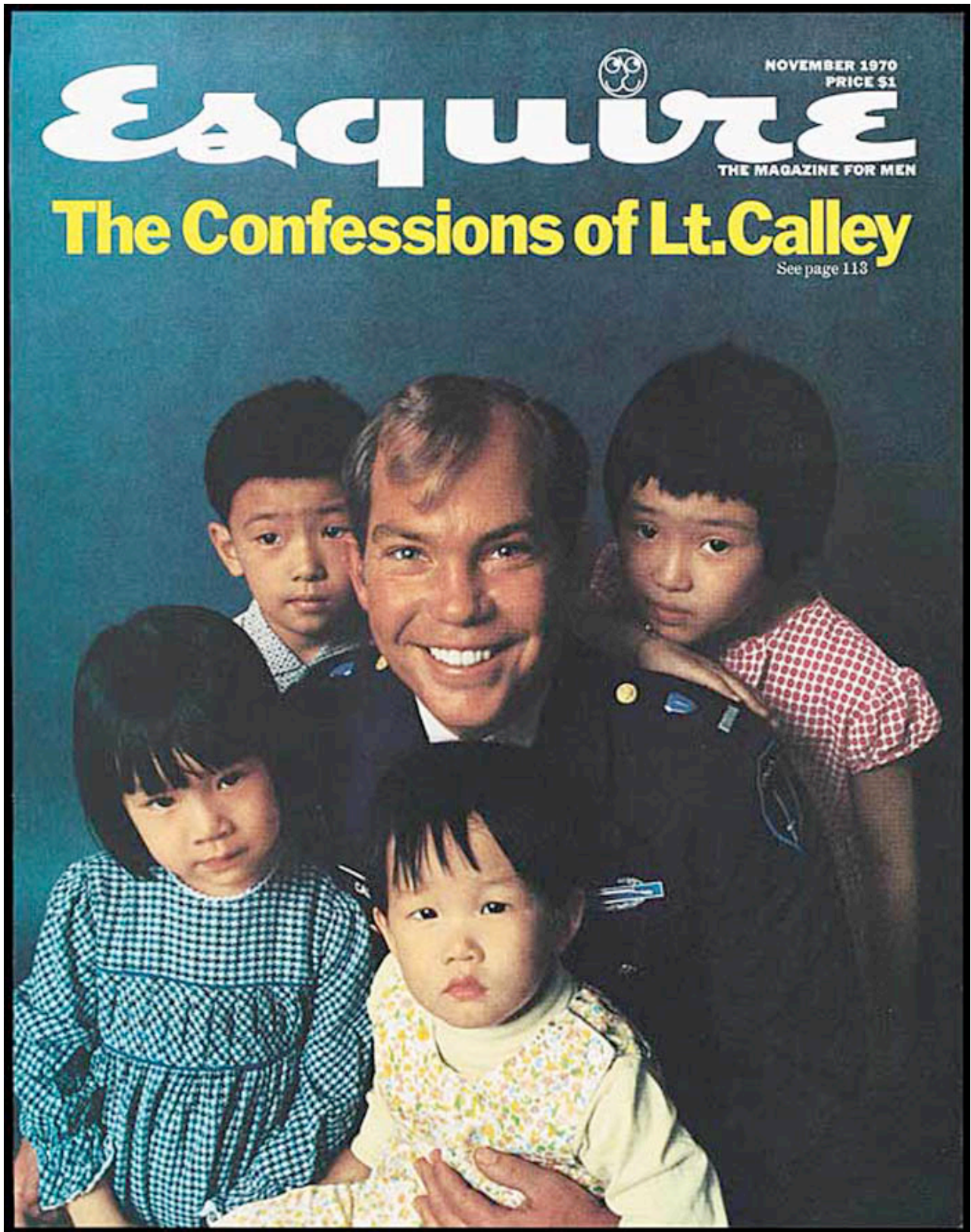


Figure 11: 'The Confessions of Lt. Calley', cover of Esquire: The Magazine for Men, November 1970

My Lai may have been extreme, but it was not unique. Indeed, on the same day US troops had massacred 90 people at My Khe, just a mile away, but it never got the same attention, perhaps because there were no photos.¹⁴ It became a hallmark for critique of military masculinity, and for the crass affinity of the phallus and the cannon (see Figure 10). But it also revealed a thick deposit of complicity and justification in American society – in one poll 79% of respondents disapproved of Calley's life sentence – and produced its own nauseating reactions, as in the November 1970 *Esquire* cover showing Calley smiling amongst Vietnamese children (Figure 11).¹⁵

Attempts to write My Lai off as exceptional were, of course, strategies of denial. Yet the characteristics of atrocities of the My Lai kind do set them somewhat apart from the sexual slaveries of Sierra Leone. For one, there is little sense of a plan that either originates higher up the command chain than Calley or his immediate superior, nor of one which serendipitously coincides with those of other commanders operating nearby. Moreover, the war time of My Lai is condensed. A day is a long time to engage in sexualised slaughter, but it is not the kind of disciplined violence needed to maintain a terrorised labour force, to run a concentration camp, or to elucidate an army-wide plan.

In other words, it is marked more by unreason than by instrumentality. This chapter explores that mode through themes of pleasure, emotion and excess in both studies of war and in the less explicitly feminist literature on 'peacetime' sexual violence and sexual abuse. Particular attention is then paid to psychoanalytical feminism and to the analytical wager of sexuality, showing how sexed bodies remain relevant even after essentialist conceptions of gender identity have been jettisoned.

¹⁴ Cookman 2007:154. On rape in Vietnam and the vagaries of historical memory, see in particular Weaver 2010.

¹⁵ Cookman 2007:161.

The Satisfactions Of Conquest, Like A Boot In The Face

Unreason signifies that which lies outside the realm of the self-conscious sovereign individual and his coherently-plotted, goal-directed action. It can imply irrationality in the sense of actions that do not benefit, or even harm, an actor, but it is not chaotic or random. Unreason posits causes and patterns for sexual violence, but finds them in a complex space of subjectivity and sexuality. It suggests the dimensions of behaviour that escape self-reflection and which defy incentives. Sexual violence in these accounts takes the form of a drive or a bond, biological or social psychological. Where instrumentality focuses on the space of conscious individual reasoning and mythology on the production of group processes and rituals, unreason seeks understanding via the convoluted shifts of our frequently repressed or obscured desires. It expresses the logic of drive, rather than of consequences or appropriateness. Wartime sexual violence emerges, then, not from *interest* or *obligation* but from the doubled impetus of *pleasure/disgust*.

Unreason's analytical wagers are those of emotional and expressive being and of variegated and contested internal mental states. This gives rise to a focus on themes of trauma, affect and the (perhaps collective) unconscious. The relevant actors thus become not so much institutions or organisations as individuals and informal groups led to certain acts by a confluence of events and internal urges. Its narrative scripts revolve around a psyche opaque to itself. Consequently war rapists often appear to unreason as confused, frustrated or angry. Unreason's normative orientation addresses the conditions that perpetuate such psychological states. At the limit, this implies that rape cannot be changed by policy but must be accepted as a kind of persistent eruption. This can include essential accounts of male desire which come close to non-feminist explanations for rape, although, as we shall see, most accounts from unreason establish a more subtle interpretation of psychology and its link to biology and corporeality. For unreason, rape is a weapon of war because it is the result of desire and fear faced by perpetrators in brutalising situations of affect and trauma. Wartime sexual violence is here politicised in the sense of combating a divide between apparently 'private' desires (such as lust) and 'public' events (the systematic destruction wrought by war) and in seeing emotions as causes and consequences of political processes.

Unreason is purest in work which stresses the expressive role of sexual violence. This is rape

as an over-flowing of frustration. Among its motifs is the idea of sexual abuse as an act of group cohesion among men.¹⁶ It notes the frequent presence of alcohol in rape as well as racist abuse, all “typically conducted in a hands-on orgy of bloodletting”.¹⁷ Related justifications based on the logic of inevitable expressive unreason ('this is just what soldiers do') have been critiqued by Susan Brownmiller but have also been implicated in her much-quoted view that rape is “one of the satisfactions of conquest, like a boot in the face”.¹⁸ The most brutal and shocking acts associated with wartime sexual violence – the severing of body parts, mutilation and 'extra insults' in addition to rape – seem to fit with the mode of unreason, especially where they are accompanied by evidence of pleasurable release for perpetrators.¹⁹ These details evoke rape as carnivalesque 'laboratories in total domination'.²⁰ Unreason assembles narratives of celebratory and transgressive violence, psychopathology, perverse homo-sociality and the kind of criminal opportunism that can find no justification in a financial reward. It is a force of undoing, not only for perpetrators but for their victims:

[T]he raping of a girl (or a boy, for that matter) *in the presence of her father*, forced to witness the affair – is bound to set in motion the vicious cycle of guilt: the father – the representative of authority, of the big Other – is exposed in his utter impotence, which makes him guilty in his own eyes as well as in those of his daughter; the daughter is guilty for causing her father's humiliation; and so on. The rape thus entails, besides the girl's physical and psychic suffering, the disintegration of the entire familial socio-symbolic network.²¹

Unreason also resonates particularly with common views of rape in 'peacetime' contexts. Although there is an overlap with mythological explanations in the sense that such behaviour is supported by cultural beliefs and rape myths, unreason promotes a narrative script of the

16 Bourgois 2003; Goldstein 2003:365–366.

17 Boose 2002:74. See also Ehrenreich 1997:11–12.

18 Brownmiller 1994:181.

19 Bjørnlund 2008:18–26; Bourke 1999:188–190; Sharlach 2000:95.

20 The phrase, following a previous use by Hannah Arendt, is from Bjørnlund 2008:24.

21 Žižek 2005:74. The connection between the dissolution of the family order and the effectiveness of rape can be made, although there is again considerable ambiguity, since the perpetrator must be posed as fully understanding and desiring the outcome, standing sufficiently outside the normative system to find its Archimedean point and to break it open. See MacKenzie 2010.

rapist as a certain type of individual, one empowered to sexual violence by elements of their personality, including entitlement, violence, control and anger.²² The sexed body and affective states are centre-stage, as are the emotional transitions which escape the calculating logic of instrumentality, for example in diagnosing violence as the result of grief mobilised as rage.²³ Although the mode of unreason need not imply any trans-historical sexual essence, it does invoke a particular view of rape as related to sex and sexuality, as in the claim that “[r]apists possess a subconscious knowledge about human vulnerability acquired through the centrality of our sexuality to our personhood”.²⁴

This may be a directed heterosexuality (lust as an efficient cause) or a more amorphous homosociality (the production of masculine sexuality through processes of male bonding). In the case of unreason, sexual violence can be a tool, and a weapon in and of war, *without* it serving instrumentalist ends:

When a victorious army rapes, the sheer *intoxication of the triumph* is only part of the act. After the fact, the rape may be viewed as part of a recognizable pattern of national terror and subjugation. I say 'after the fact' because the *original impulse to rape* does not need a sophisticated political motivation beyond a general disregard for the bodily integrity of women. But rape in warfare has a military effect as well as an impulse. And the effect is indubitably one of intimidation and demoralization for the victims' side.²⁵

So sexual violence remains political, collective and fundamentally linked to war as a practice, but the apparently instrumental benefits are now rendered not as causes, but as consequences and afterthoughts. Rape is still about power, but now in a sense which includes the dimension of sexuality and its attendant taboos in a much clearer way.

22 Bourke 2007:21–88; Rozée and Koss 2001:299–301.

23 Ehrenreich 1997:139.

24 du Toit 2009:298.

25 Brownmiller 1975:37, emphasis added.

The Abject

In contrast to the exteriority of instrumentality, unreason relies on a fractured interiority. Unreason contains both the joys of war (war as game; war as the profession of the psychopath; war as festival) and behaviour in war as trauma or psychological coercion (drugs as an enforced lubricant to sexual violence; kidnapped and brutalised children; the fearful lashing out of men with guns). Consequently, its normative orientation becomes similarly fractured between an outright condemnation and palpable disgust at the pleasure taken by protagonists in sexual violence on the one hand, and a pitying recognition of trauma on the other, directing us to move away from a model in which the actors themselves feature so prominently to one which asks questions about how any human being could become so damaged as to enact these fantasies on the bodies of others.

Unreason's figure is the angry soldier-sadist. Where the soldier-strategist responds to pressures from outside (economic or military), the soldier-sadist is driven by pressures from within. These may have been forces which led him to join an armed group, or which emerged in response to experiences of combat itself. Writings from soldiers turned scholars show that decisions to enter and participate in militaries may have little to do with a conscious plan to attain either money or status. Instead they appear as shaped by limited options, family histories, ambiguous feelings towards military culture, significant changes in mind and body as part of the militarising process, and feelings of loss after leaving.²⁶ The soldier-sadist is not a lunatic, but has adapted to the conditions of war, or sought them out. He responds emotionally as well as rationally. There is no reason to think that this makes him a bad soldier: his ability to actualise a certain rage may even keep him alive.

Professional soldiers feel as well as calculate. But the role of affect and trauma is most pronounced in the situation of the child soldier. Kidnapped in often bloody circumstances, it is not unusual to hear of children forced to kill their own families or neighbours, to be forced to be heavily drugged before combat, and to be initiated into their new military family through brutalisation. The connection between brutalised children and the brutalising soldiers they go on to become is an unsettling one, and accounts do not linger long on the

²⁶ See for example, Paul Higate's short autoethnographic reflections in Higate and Cameron 2006 and the analysis in Brighton 2004.

transition from innocence to monstrosity. Yet the numbers are not insignificant (sources from the early 2000s mention 300,000 child soldiers worldwide).²⁷ What does it mean to operate only with a rationalist view of war, and *not* to think about the trauma, suffering, confusion, anger and pain attendant on these experiences? Together with aspects of mythology, this kind of figure raises clear questions of liminality and soldier-making unbroached in narrations of the soldier-rapist as already full formed.

Unreason yields four stereotypes from the figure of the soldier-sadist. In the most lustful iteration there is the *sexual predator*, who takes the opportunities provided by war to fulfil his desires (the designation of his desire as sexual is complex, as we shall see). Although sex is taken by force, the attitude of the sexual predator is both menacing and playful, as when soldiers at My Lai joked “let's see what she's made of”. For the stereotype of the *frustrated power-seeker*, by contrast, the apparently sexual element of rape is less important. His interest is in demonstrating domination, and in receiving emotional rewards in the process. Rape in war gives him a power he otherwise lacks, and those he rapes provide the fleshy material for his anger. Where examinations of My Lai stress the failure of Charlie Company to find and engage the actual enemy in the run-up to the massacre, they identify the same kind of dynamic: there was no question of tactical necessity or material benefit, and no real ideological programme (although there was a lot of ideological buttressing). Instead the civilians who were there stood in for the punishment – for the 'real' combat – that the soldiers had been deprived of inflicting on the Viet Cong.

Affect is not only a matter of lust and anger. It is also a way of binding men together, of uniting them by virtue of that which they collectively destroy. Hence the stereotype of the *brother-in-arms*, he who commits atrocity as a way of being included. Creating community in this way requires that other men know, and participate, and later validate the actions jointly committed. The continuities with mythology are important here, since the bonding of soldier-sadists together parallels in a more contingent moment the bonding and the combat motivation of the military at large. An event like gang rape, seen thusly, is not just useful for overpowering the victim, but because it brings men together in complicity. Finally, the *disorientated victim* stands as the most traumatised of the stereotypes of unreason. He is much

²⁷ See, for example, Derluyn et al. 2004.

less in control than the predator or the power-seeker, and is past the reassurance of the group. As the victim-who-victimises, he is also re-enacting a trauma, but receives less confidence from it than does the power-seeker. He is more likely to feel disgust and shame towards himself, and not to be able to say why he acted as he did. Some soldiers prosecuted for rape appear in this mode, perhaps because they are trying to show remorse, perhaps because they no longer operate in a culture which sanctions sexual violence. For all forms of the soldier-sadist, those subjected to rape are unsettling presences, things of horror to be expelled and extinguished: victims as abject.

The space of unreason is that of fracture, which tends to mean that rapes occur not so much because they are structured by situations or ideologies, but because the opportunity for them arises. Where both instrumentality and mythology contain some conception of restraint, unreason foregrounds its absence. It can therefore suggest the play of impunity and freedom to carry out what was always desired. But to say that rapes occur when the opportunity for them arises is only to push the question back. Opportunity, by definition, allows for many courses of action. For opportunity to result in a particular kind of violence suggests that there is a pre-existing desire for that action, which has in other situations been restrained. 'Impunity' will not cause a soldier to rape, it will only make him feel that he can get away with a rape if he wishes to perpetrate one. And it is by no means obvious that soldiers, or men in general, consistently want to perpetrate rape.²⁸ So there is also in unreason a sense of the randomness, or the arbitrariness, of rape. Not because it is natural or acceptable, but because it cannot be plotted according to military plans or social incentives.

²⁸ This is a contested question for rape in general. In one classic study, researchers found extraordinarily high levels of *self-reported* willingness to rape among male university students. In brief, subjects demonstrated an awareness of what rape was (by distinguishing between stories of consensual, ambiguous and forced sexual encounters) and were then asked to indicate in which scenarios they would themselves enact sexual violence (if they were confident they would not be discovered). 1/3 of the respondents said they would rape in the scenarios presented. Of the men who showed high levels of stereotyping (who believed that men and women were very different) 44% reported some likelihood *that they themselves* would rape if they could. That figure was 'only' 12% for low sex stereotypers. The implications are significant for any study of wartime sexual violence, although there is much more to be said about contexts and causes. See Check and Malamuth 1983.

The Excess Of Violence

Although thinking in terms of 'rational violence' or the greed thesis has been a major trend in conflict research over the last decades, there have also been a number of critiques of those positions which have explored the role of unreason. David Keen, although initially associated with a kind of functionally instrumental account of civil war violence, has more recently explored the experiences of individuals and how they challenge these narratives. The force of shame and humiliation seems deeply linked to the traumatic experiences of combatants who, in contexts of extreme violence like that of Sierra Leone, attempted a reversal of the 'loss of face' they had suffered by passing on the humiliation to others.²⁹

The instrumentalist narrative script of soldiers as calm and clear-headed accumulators neglects the manifold ways in which they themselves suffered through recruitment, whether in kidnap at a young age and/or in being forced to kill loved ones.³⁰ On this account civilians were not attacked so much because of anything they had but because they could serve as a canvas on which the anxieties of war could be played out. This is the two-sided character of soldiering frequently addressed by unreason – the ways in which the trauma and difficulty of becoming a warrior ('professionalised' or otherwise) transforms into a pleasure taken in the new identity and in killing itself.³¹

This dimension is brought into sharp relief by Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton, who seek the ontology of war and locate it in the transformative effects of *fighting*, which is given the status of an unstable event and not as a behaviour that can be adequately instrumentalised, in spite of attempts to do so.³² Not war as an expression of the social order, as mythology may suggest to us, but as a terrible undoing of such certainties:

Always in excess of the strategic or juridical duration of fighting, war stands beyond the discrete ontology that fighting evidences to take on an elemental function within “peace.” Orders of peace thus consist in significant measure

29 Keen 2008:52–53. See also particularly Keen 2002.

30 Keen 2008:55–58.

31 Bourke 1999; Grossman 1996.

32 Barkawi and Brighton 2011:135–136.

of veiled traces and effects of fighting—an order of battle traduced through civic transformation, but an order of battle nonetheless.³³

There is a particular status given to uncertainty in war in such a vision, an uncertainty that always escapes the intentions of policy makers who seek to harness its destructive power for other ends. Whether this is a character of all war, or just wars which fundamentally upset a pre-existing symbolic structure is unclear (if it ever could be settled), but the European experiences of World War I present at least one stage in which such a crisis was manifested for the soldiers who fought it:

[W]ar experience is nothing if not a transgression of categories. In providing bridges across the boundaries between the visible and the invisible, the known and unknown, the human and the inhuman, war offered numerous occasions for the shattering of distinctions that were central to orderly thought, communicable experience, and normal human relations. Much of the bewilderment, stupefaction, or sense of growing strangeness to which combatants testified can be attributed to those realities of war that broke down what Mary Douglas calls “our cherished classifications”.³⁴

The force of the boundary crossing suggested by such an ontology is exacerbated when acts of violence are accompanied by the consumption of drugs and the release of tensions. The dynamics of such events invoke a particular excessive pleasure, as in cases of genocide where “momentary participation in legitimised killing takes place in heightened emotional conditions, akin to sustained orgasm, which recall the sexual licence of the festival (and which in turn are recalled by the mass rapes that occurred during the Bosnian war and the ferocious mutilations that characterised the Rwandan genocide)”.³⁵

33 Barkawi and Brighton 2011:139. For more on some of these themes see also Brighton 2011.

34 Leed 1979:21.

35 Stone 2004:54–55.

In examining the continuum from massacres to genocide, Jacques Semelin gives particular prominence to the imaginative space of killing and the importance for political leaders to tap into the desires of their subordinates. Projecting outwards onto an enemy in a clear dichotomy in which the other must be eradicated feeds on the 'paranoid-schizoid' position of Kleinian psychoanalysis, a disposition towards others which is said to account for the intensity with which representations of the foreign intruder are saturated with negative feelings.³⁶ Along with the mechanisms of differentiating between a putative purity on the one side and a disgusting filth on the other (with different parties to conflict imagined as corresponding to the two poles), these psychological processes form the foundations in which acts of extreme brutality in war build.³⁷

Although directing attention to a range of expressions and experiences otherwise neglected in instrumentalist studies of war, these resonances raise questions of their own. Most crucially, what is the precise relationship of internal psychic dynamics to social processes? Recalling the difficulties of accounting for variation in the extent and character of rape, how does unreason address differences in rape across context? And, at a more specifically conceptual level, just how is sexuality relayed to power?

An Unspeakable Delight³⁸

The question of the connection of sex to sexuality and eroticism, and of how the experience of pleasure is then related to rape, has dominated discussion between feminists and others in the context of 'peacetime' sexual violence. For some, rape is best explained by an 'adaptationist' view (rape is the legacy of an evolutionary reproductive strategy).³⁹ Although this broad explanation is opposed to the overwhelming majority of feminist accounts, the detail of rapist characteristics concurs in significant ways with the narrative scripts of

³⁶ Semelin 2007:20.

³⁷ Semelin 2007:33–34.

³⁸ The phrase comes from one of an early testimony indicating the eroticised power of sexual murder. The Italian criminologist Lombroso cites the 1873 case of Vincent Verzeni, guilty of mutilation and murder, who explained: "I had an unspeakable delight in strangling women, experiencing during the act erections and real sexual pleasure...much greater than I experienced while masturbating" (cited in Cameron and Frazer 1987:18).

³⁹ Lalumière et al. 2005:29–30.

unreason.⁴⁰ Specifically, rapists are considered in this literature to be impulsive, callous, irresponsible, manipulative, violence, promiscuous, lacking in remorse and to display 'shallow affect' (meaning a difficulty in relating emotionally to others rather than a lack of emotion). These 'anti-social' traits are taken to be strongly correlated with both hyper-masculinity and 'Machiavellian' attitudes to social interaction.⁴¹ It is hard to avoid the overlap with the figure of the psychopath that we have already encountered.

Other psychological research has clarified the association of eroticism with rape and thus undermined a simple appeal to reproductive desire as a driver of rape. In many ways supporting feminist arguments about patriarchal power, this work has specified that “[r]ape is a pseudosexual act, complex and multidetermined, but addressing issues of hostility (anger) and control (power) more than passion (sexuality)”.⁴² Intended to counteract myths of rape as the result of sexual need, such studies have stressed both that rapists are often married and sexually active and that the act of rape is often a failure in narrowly sexual terms.⁴³ Studies of convicted rapists shows on the basis of self-reporting that around a third of offenders experienced sexual dysfunction (failure to achieve erection, premature or delayed ejaculation) during the rapes themselves and that this was secondary impotence (meaning that they could and had successfully achieved erections in other situations).⁴⁴ Extensive histories of abuse in the personal histories of convicted rapists also suggest a link to psychological trauma rather than lust interpreted as an uncomplicated sexual desire.⁴⁵

A drastic gap thus appears between a view of rape as sexual and a view of it as some other dimension of power *masquerading* as sex. Put otherwise, rape has the character of the sexual but is not sex. Or, as Cahill puts it, we can say that the rapist has sex with his victim, but not

⁴⁰ This is not the place for a thorough-going review of adaptationist and evolutionary psychological accounts of rape, but note that the predictions supposedly distinctive for an adaptationist theory (that rape will be overwhelmingly male behaviour; that rapists will be disproportionately young males; that rape will seldom prevent conception and birth; that rape will be more common in situations where the costs are lower relative to 'alternative mating tactics') are not opposed to feminist predictions in any straight-forward way. See Lalumière et al. 2005:29–30.

⁴¹ Lalumière et al. 2005:69–71.

⁴² Groth 1979:2.

⁴³ Groth 1979:5; Lalumière et al. 2005:102.

⁴⁴ Groth 1979:84–85. The picture may have changed in the intervening years, but more recent studies did not seem to address this issue, although it has clear implications for any understanding of rape as primarily 'sexual'.

⁴⁵ Groth 1979:99–100.

vice-versa.⁴⁶ But despite claims regarding the non-sexual nature of rape in some psychological studies, the relationship between sex and rape is rather complicated. In Groth's typology, sexuality is implicated in different ways in the three basic patterns: 1) *anger rape*, in which sexuality is a hostile act; 2) *power rape*, where sexuality is an expression of conquest; and 3) *sadistic rape*, where anger and power are eroticised together.⁴⁷

Anger rapes are characterised by extreme physical brutality, involving much more force than is required merely to over-power the victim, with additional humiliation and brutalisation often added to the act (urinating on the victim, for example). Perpetrators of this kind often do not report sexual arousal but rather achieve their satisfaction through the discharge of anger. Finally, assaults are often identifiable responses to particular triggers or precipitating stress in the lives of perpetrators.⁴⁸

In the case of power rape, physical violence is less prominent, and the goal is sexual possession as a way for compensating for underlying feelings of inadequacy. As with the anger rapist, perpetrators are often dissatisfied with the experience, finding that it does not live up to their fantasies, and so go in search of further victims – their activity often takes on a repetitive and escalating pattern. Power rapists experience many forms of sexuality as threatening, but it is important for them to believe that the victim is experiencing pleasure and finds the rapist suitably virile. Rapists of this sort have been known to offer dinner and drinks following an assault and to engage in inquisitive sexual questioning before rape.⁴⁹

Sadistic rape involves extreme physical violence and eroticised elements, brought together in a particular, often ritualised, symbolic form that gives the perpetrators a feeling of omnipotence. The body of the victim is often a special site for violence (victims may not survive the attack) and seems to stand in for a wider agenda or group of others to be destroyed, such as prostitutes or allegedly promiscuous women. Since arousal for sadistic rapists is a function of aggression, attacks often escalate in their levels of brutality, and are

46 Cahill 2001:140.

47 Groth 1979:15.

48 Groth 1979:13–16.

49 Groth 1979:25–30.

always fully premeditated.⁵⁰

These studies give a mixed picture of the role of sex and eroticism in 'peacetime' rape. Their distribution indicates that power rapes are most common (55%), then anger rapes (40%), with sadistic rapes relatively rare (5%).⁵¹ The character of the anger and sadistic rapes bears striking resemblance to reports of brutality associated with wartime sexual violence, especially in terms of 'extra insults', mutilation and further degrading treatment. The features for all kinds of rape resonate strongly with the figures of the power-seeker (and to a lesser extent sexual predator) more than with disorientated victims or brothers-in-arms (types which seem more clearly linked to contexts of war). In all cases, rape appears neither as a tool chosen towards some material end nor as an act of explicit cultural identity, but as the product of intense feelings of frustration, anger and revenge. That attempted penetration – the distorted stand-in for sex – is the mode for these feelings seems significant, although the ways in which eroticisation take place remains obscured (more on which below).

In a more psychoanalytical register, themes of unreason parallel investigations into the anatomy of human destructiveness.⁵² As is often acknowledged by feminist interpreters of this tradition, Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* had already begun to bring together a theory of psyche and of society.⁵³ In his work on group psychology, identification came to play a central role in explaining the apparent combination of egalitarianism and obedience to a father-like figure in the church and the army, from which we can speculate on how the state maintains authority through the psychic capacity of human beings to *internalise* coercion and compulsion.⁵⁴ When the notion of the 'death drive' was introduced to psychoanalysis in the 1920s, it was specifically in response to Freud's observation that

⁵⁰ Groth 1979:44–57.

⁵¹ One particular difficulty with this typology is that it is drawn largely from work with convicted rapists. Given the difficulties of securing convictions in the first place, and widespread attitudes towards differing degrees of rape, it may be that the patterns manifested by these perpetrators represent the most extreme end of the spectrum of rape behaviour. For example, Groth reports that victims of anger rapes are more likely to be believed since they often show extensive evidence of physical assault when they present to authorities. Similarly, it is plausible that the extreme character of sadistic rapes more often leads to convictions, suggesting that they may be over-represented even in a sample of convicted rapists.

⁵² The term is from Fromm 1997.

⁵³ Freud 2002; Chodorow 2002:236.

⁵⁴ Freud 2004; Balibar 2007.

soldiers kept returning psychically to scenes of trauma.⁵⁵ This identification with groups and leaders and the compulsion to a kind of sadism could be seen as the formative foundations for the force of unreason. Moreover, the early development of children as seen by psychoanalysis suggests a deep link beyond the formation of material interests or socialisation within a community, as the beating fantasies of children mark an unsettling parallel with the brutality of acts of rape:

Among these *imagos* are some that represent the elective vectors of aggressive intentions, which they provide with an efficacy that might be called magical. These are the images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body.⁵⁶

And from this lineage, filtered through feminist critique, emerges something like a theory of war itself as unreason:

We project on to the alien, or other, the destructiveness we fear in the most intimate relations or parts of ourself. Instead of trying to repair it at home, we send it abroad. War makes the other accountable for a horror we can then wipe out with impunity, precisely because we have located it so firmly in the other's place. This saves us the effort of ambivalence, the hard work of recognizing that we love where we hate, that, in our hearts and minds at least, we kill those to whom we are most closely and intimately attached.⁵⁷

55 Freud 2003.

56 Lacan 2001:13; Freud 1979.

57 Rose 1993:18–19.

*The Desire To Possess Her Is A Wound*⁵⁸

But in one sense, unreason seems an unlikely category as a distinct feminist way of interpreting wartime sexual violence. As we saw in Chapter 1, the looping effects of psychological discourses of deviancy have been a consistent target for feminists and Foucauldians alike, and there is a corresponding risk of replicating ideas of 'madness' in war which obscure the social, political and economic background to acts of rape. All this means that working through feminist approaches to affect and sexuality requires some care. But, although perhaps the least distinctively feminist of the modes, the categories that adhere to unreason (the body, the psyche, sex, sexuality and sexual difference, pleasure, and so on) have taken on a particular resonance with several strands of feminist thought: in the rethinking of the relation between sex and violence, in the return to role of psychological development in creating (violent) gender identities, in the unsettling example of the abject, and in the role of affective bonding in creating a community of men.

In justifying the view that rape is not a sexually-motivated crime, Groth mentions that many offenders were already in consenting sexual relationships and that in no case was the rape their first sexual experience.⁵⁹ This was taken to show that rape is not motivated by sexual desire. But others use the same data (here rendered as the promiscuity of the archetypal rapist) to suggest that sex (or 'high mating effort') is a major reason for rape.⁶⁰ In both cases, definitions of 'sex' are being used which reduce it to a regular need normally dissipated by conventional relationships or to a reproductive drive. Both sever sexuality substantially from an understanding of power, and even emotion, and so conceptually under-specify the ways in which acts of violence can be sexual or erotic in some dimension. In particular, the idea of rape as an 'expressive vehicle' for feelings of power and anger remains open to Catharine MacKinnon's challenge: "if it's violence not sex why didn't he just hit her?"⁶¹

58 The phrase is from 'From Her To Eternity', in Cave 1984. As Mark Fisher so aptly comments: "That's forensically precise: it's not *her* that's causing the pain, but the desire to have her... Desire emerges here as a miserable, humiliating pressure, a mocking throb as unrelenting and unforgiving as migraine; a dulling intoxicant that overwhelms sense...only loops round in interminable purgatorial circuits...screams for some kind of release, even if that means (self)destruction." (Fisher 2009).

59 Groth 1979:28.

60 Lalumière et al. 2005:88-90.

61 MacKinnon 1989:323.

The view that rape is about power rather than sex is a commonplace among feminists. A frequent conversational intervention in discussions of lust and sexuality, it marks the important break from naturalising justifications of masculine needs and the attractiveness of (and therefore blame supposedly appropriate to) victims of sexualised assault. But power and sex, and sex and violence, cannot be so easily separable in conceptual terms, let alone in the mess of actual case histories. As the discussion of Groth and others show, the border between 'sex as violence' and 'violence as sex' can be a difficult one to maintain. As Ann Cahill argues, this is the binary that has for too long defined feminist discussions of rape. On the one hand, a view of rape as a form of violence (associated with Susan Brownmiller) and on the other, a view of rape as a form of sex (associated with Catharine MacKinnon). These two reductionist positions are set up in an opposition which in the former case obscures gender and in the latter pathologises sex itself.⁶²

To consider rape as 'sex-neutral' (as an act of violence which happens more to women but is not in itself sexual) misses that it is in the character of rape to have a sexually-differentiating social function, which is to say that rape and the threat of rape is *sexing* on both individual and collective levels, embodying and sedimenting sexual identities.⁶³ On this account rape should be conceived of as an embodied experience: "Rape is an assault on a person's embodied sexuality using eroticized weapons, whether or not they are body parts".⁶⁴ Sexuality is thus restored to rape without narrating an evolutionary 'battle of the sexes'. The body is the site for the inscription of gender, and bodily experiences of desire, pleasure and suffering are therefore as 'real' as anything else, but this reflects not genetic determinism but the materiality of the body as *the locus of power*, so that the process of embodiment over time sediments and makes concrete gendered identities.⁶⁵

In similar terms, what Cameron and Frazer term the 'lust to kill' is a fuzzy category intended to capture the ways in which violence and killing is *eroticised* but without being reducible to

62 Cahill 2001:47–50, 33. Although I do not think that the positions are as simply expressed in Brownmiller and MacKinnon as Cahill suggests, the polarity between the two views does reflect real tensions in arguments over rape.

63 Cahill 2001:120–123. See also Cahill 2000.

64 Cahill 2001:139.

65 Cahill 2001:88.

mere sexual desire.⁶⁶ They draw attention to perpetrators' fixation on genitalia and sexual objects in 'womenslaughters' that did *not* involve rape and to the self-reports of sexual pleasure and excitement from men involved in these acts. Starting from the problem of why there are no female lust-murders of this kind, they argue that many forms of murder and assault that do not involve penetration deserve the title of 'sexual murder' because of the centrality of an eroticised imaginative space and identity to the acts and their meaning, a pattern that recalls the character of sadistic rape explored by Groth. Sexual murder is not explainable merely in terms of misogyny but instead follows from a more specific masculine identity based on transcendence and the freeing of the self in an existentialist register. This gives rise to an understanding of sexuality heavily orientated towards motifs of performance, penetration and conquest.⁶⁷

The Pattern For Every Form Of Domination

Viewed in terms of psychoanalytical dynamics of projection, wartime violence in general takes on a strange ambiguity. Against the conscious control implied by instrumentality and the enactment of social norms implied by mythology, unreason unbalances the relationship between fantasy and reality in the minds of martial protagonists.⁶⁸ For Jessica Benjamin, it is through the 'twisting' of the fundamental psychological dynamics that fantasies can become enacted realities of domination.⁶⁹ As Winnicott put it, fantasies of violence are ways of developing a sense of self and other: "Destruction, in other words, is an effort to differentiate".⁷⁰ Thus violent behaviour can be read as the failure to limit such boundary-making exercises to early development or to the realm of the imagination. Since the body plays such an important role in the emergence of a discrete self and an acceptance of the denial or deferral of immediate physical needs and wants, it takes on a special meaning for eroticised violence: "...the violation of the body is a transgression of the boundary between life and death, even as it breaks through our discontinuity from the other".⁷¹ Recalling Freud and Lacan on the destructive behaviours of children, erotic domination can thus be thought

66 Cameron and Frazer 1987:17.

67 Cameron and Frazer 1987:166-169.

68 Rose 1993:28-30.

69 There is a complexity introduced by Benjamin's interest in *voluntary* submission to domination. But her more general model of the development of love and of aggression applies in a wider sense.

70 Cited in Benjamin 1990:38.

71 Benjamin 1990:63.

of as “a basic differentiating tendency that has undergone a transformation”.⁷²

As with a trope of transcendence in sexual murder, these 'private' dynamics take on a social aspect because they become persistently associated with socially-defined roles: “The difficulty lies in the fact that *the power of the liberator-father is used to defend against the engulfing mother*”.⁷³ The oedipal model, socially sustained, does not produce mothers as subjects with which children can identify as they are expected to with fathers, but instead posits mothers as *belonging to* fathers, even as they are expected to fulfil the role of nurturer.⁷⁴ A ‘paranoid-schizoid’ functioning may then develop in which there is persecutory anxiety and therefore a pressure to attack or ‘retaliate’ first.⁷⁵

This 'psychic splitting' is productive of *gender difference itself*, turning bonds of love into forms of violence in “the pattern for every form of domination”.⁷⁶ This is the 'hallmark of masculine power' and is the mechanism by which internal subjectivity and sexuality is repeatedly formed in a way that links male identity to violence and violation, although the locus of this identification is social rather than natural in the sense that it is not given by genetic heritage but by lessons learned in the contexts of family life. This regressive character may account for what Chodorow identifies as “something peculiar” in the psychodynamics of extreme violence: rape, killing and torture are direct and physically aggressive, not exchanges “inside the head”:

[P]erhaps more importantly, the consciously articulated cultural ideologies that tend to justify such behaviour seem directly, and without much symbolic transformation or elaboration, to express exactly what psychoanalysts describe as the individual unconscious motivations and internal constructions that lead to aggression.⁷⁷

72 Benjamin 1990:68.

73 Benjamin 1990:133, emphasis in original.

74 Benjamin 1990:162–165. See also Balbus 2002.

75 Chodorow 2002:241. This point in particular bears examination in relation to psychoanalytically-inspired views of extreme violence and genocide as in Semelin 2007.

76 Benjamin 1990:218.

77 Chodorow 2002:244.

In the case of rape, this leads to a view that perpetrators, at least in the kinds of empirical cases focused on by unreason, act in accordance with heavily internalised and emotionally invested ideas about good and bad objects, ideas which may have their origins in a generalised socio-symbolic order (the world of father figures that is patriarchy), but not in the sense of being mandated or explicitly legitimated by institutions and discrete collectives. The earliest experience of attachment and bonding is thus played out on the social stage. Where the process of recognition breaks down, it develops into a power struggle where the child uses aggression in place of a healthier dynamic of reciprocal assertion.⁷⁸ The threat to identity that results from war and conflict produces a violent reaction. As Nancy Chodorow explains it:

Paranoid-schizoid gender, based projectively on split off images of repudiated women and feminized or boylike men, fuses with paranoid-schizoid splitting of good self and hated bad object. The enemies are constructed as part objects without subjectivity; at the same time, destroying their subjectivity helps provide the sadistic pleasure of violence. This rigid, projective splitting and expulsion, both of bad objects and bad aspects of gender identity at the same time, seem to involve a disintegrative flooding of self-object boundaries and drives, so that the projected object and threatened aggression not only return in paranoid fantasy but also overwhelm the subject and lose their linkage to organized fantasy. When social wholes fracture, and identity, via conscious and unconscious concepts of peoplehood, nation, or ethnos, is threatened, for men, especially, gender identity seems to fracture along similar lines. This reinforces the threat to selfhood and leads to reactive, hate-filled violence.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Benjamin 1990:28.

⁷⁹ Chodorow 2002:256.

Abjection Is Above All Ambiguity

It is a commonplace that enemies in war are dehumanised. In the case of extreme violence, however, there is both a way in which enemies are thought to feel and suffer, “so that there is an identificatory joy in torture or rape”, and a sense in which they are thought to have no feelings at all, but are just objects to be expelled or destroyed.⁸⁰ This ambiguity unites the expressions of unreason thus far surveyed and foregrounds the doubled character of pleasure and disgust at work in this way of understanding social behaviour.

The object is precisely that which cannot be encountered in the “detached and autonomous” register symptomatic of instrumentality.⁸¹ As with the corporeality designated as so essential to the understanding of rape as embodied practice in Cahill's analysis, in the psychoanalytical interpretation of mutilation, and in the data of homosociality, abjection is closely related to corporeality. Fluids and flows mark the “fragile container” of skin separating inside and outside.⁸² It is corporeal waste in particular which represents “the objective frailty of symbolic order” and so becomes a focus of abjection.⁸³ Excrement and menstrual blood have an especially polluting connotation, which may account for the focus of sexualised brutality on the vagina and anus.⁸⁴ The feminine itself as thus unsurprisingly a site of abjection, not in terms of 'essence' but as “an 'other' without a name, which subjective experience confronts when it does not stop at the appearance of its identity”.⁸⁵

Crucially, the thing being expelled in abjection, the thing found horrific, is psychoanalytic in the sense that it is not external, but a rejection and expulsion of something within us.⁸⁶ In other words, we are faced once again with a split and fractured *internal* state for perpetrators which drives their behaviour. On this account, rapists do not act clearly against a well

80 Chodorow 2002:248, 249.

81 Kristeva 1982:1.

82 Kristeva 1982:53–57.

83 Kristeva 1982:53–55, 70.

84 Kristeva 1982:71. However, it is interesting to note here that 'sperm' is not taken by Kristeva to be a polluting form for the object, but that mutilation of penises is often important in acts of rape and aggressive sexual assault on men, as the brief discussion in Chapter 1 showed.

85 Kristeva 1982:58–59.

86 Kristeva 1982:3.

defined enemy, since “[a]bjection is above all ambiguity”.⁸⁷ Pleasure is taken in expelling these disgusting elements (these bad objects), a process especially applicable to rape in times of war because of the transgression of barriers.⁸⁸ The acts of eradication embodied in violation and sexual murder take on the character of *jouissance*: “a time of oblivion and thunder, of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth”, sacred in their intensity, but not limited within the confines of formal doctrine or institutional purpose.⁸⁹ On the contrary, the *breaking* of prohibitions is essential to the pleasure of abjection.⁹⁰

This is a view of *excess*, of something troubling and somehow heterogeneous, which for George Bataille meant the spectre of fascism as a distinctly anti-instrumentalist force. In Bataille's terms, the realm of economics and calculation is that of homogeneity, while the unconscious and attendant categories such as the sacred and the taboo, are part of the heterogeneous character of life that cannot be captured by science. Heterogeneous objects thus provoke reactions of disgust and attraction, elements are charged and are characterised by violence, excess, delirium and madness.⁹¹ This poses abjection as completely opposed to the rationales of instrumentality:

The vision of the ab-ject is, by definition, the sign of an impossible ob-ject, a boundary and a limit. A fantasy, if you wish, but one that brings to the well-known Freudian primal fantasies, his *Urfantasien*, a drive overload of hatred or death, which prevents images from crystalizing as images of desire and/or nightmares and causes them to break out into sensation (suffering) and denial (horror), into a blasting of sight and sound (fire, uproar). Apocalyptic vision could thus be the shattering or the impossibility not only of narrative but also of *Urfantasien* under the pressure of a drive

87 Kristeva 1982:9.

88 Diken and Laustsen 2005:123.

89 Kristeva 1982:9.

90 Diken and Laustsen 2005:124. There is clearly room for a discussion of Lacanian and Žižekian categories, but I have eschewed this for reasons of space and clarity.

91 Bataille 1979:69–70. The explanation for militarism itself here recalls Freud on group psychology: “*Human beings* incorporated into the army are but negated elements, negated with a kind of rage (a sadism) manifest in the tone of each command, negated by the parade, by the uniform, and by the *geometric* regularity of cadenced movements. The chief, insofar as he is imperative, is the incarnation of this violence negation. His intimate nature, the nature of his glory, is constituted by an imperative act that annuls the wretched populace (which constitutes the army) as such (in the same way that the slaughter is annulled as such)” (Bataille 1979:78, emphasis in original).

unleashed by a doubtless very 'primal' narcissistic wound".⁹²

Homosociality And Fratriarchy

The devaluation of women in the development of masculine sexual identity is accompanied by a potent, if also ambiguous and threatening, space for other men: the arena of homosociality. Take Catharine MacKinnon's well-known argument that the saturation of Yugoslavia with pornography before the outbreak of war meant that "a whole population of men [was] primed to dehumanize women and to enjoy inflicting assault sexually".⁹³ This is a script of almost automated mimesis, in which watching pornography produces rapists through a psychic infection, passed on celluloid and video tape.⁹⁴ MacKinnon is particularly interested in the way that pornography *changes desire itself*, a process that appears to take place outside of the conscious realm of men. Relying on psychological studies, MacKinnon argues that men exposed to violent pornography come to enjoy it, even if they initially found it distasteful. Hence, "[m]ale sexuality is apparently activated by violence against women and expresses itself in violence against women to a significant extent".⁹⁵ Although other works by MacKinnon cast sexuality in less apparently natural terms, the idea here of an unbidden process of eroticisation which marks male sexual identity in particular resonates strongly with the view from unreason that there is something very deeply personal about the act of rape for perpetrators. In the case of Bosnian rapes, the mimetic urge to reproduce the acts and film them – *so that they can be consumed by other men* – reminds us that these private desires rely also on a public theatre, and on the doubled placement of the imagined self as both actor and watcher, subjecting acts to a masculine gaze.

Recent work on 'hazing' and rituals of group membership suggests a similar analysis. As part of the process of inducting new members, soldiers frequently undertake activities with heavily sexual, and often homoerotic, content, such as drinking alcohol that has run down the buttocks of other soldiers, dancing together naked around a fire, and displaying genitalia in acts of vulnerability and celebration. Importantly, such acts are far from forced, and are

92 Kristeva 1982:155.

93 MacKinnon 1994:77.

94 See also MacKinnon 1989; Schauer 1987.

95 MacKinnon 1989:334.

conducted with all the evidence of pleasure and release by the participants.⁹⁶ Rather, such acts and the border-making they represent seem to steer a careful symbolic line between the homoerotic and the homosexual and so form some bond of trust and unity of men together in a fratriarchy – a band of warrior brothers. Through these acts hierarchies are established, but they also seem to provide a sense of freedom and becoming which recalls the existentialist tone of views on sexual murder as transcendence and reports of group participation and pleasure in public acts of rape.

For Klaus Theweleit, the bonding of men together in hostility towards women was the central problem in understanding the ways in which proto-Fascist Freikorps soldiers expressed themselves in fictions and in reality in inter-war Germany. Drawing on a range of novels and memoirs, Theweleit's puzzle was that although the men exhibited all the signs of misogyny familiar from our discussion, and although they engaged extensively in fantasising about and acting out the murders of women, they do *not* seem to have chosen rape as a vector for this gendered aggression. Despite clear arousal from certain images of women and of their destruction, including explicit discussion of great emotional satisfaction and also regularly focused on eroticised parts of the female body (the mouth, the buttocks and the genitals), the desire mutated into one to kill.⁹⁷

The distinctive character of this homosociality lies in the relation and combination of an association of hated women with a particular class threat and in a deep fear of boundary transgression. The love of the men in these scenarios are not directed at women as symbolic stand-ins but at uniforms, other men in hierarchical role placements (as fellows, leaders or subordinates), weapons, animals, killing, particular places (usually local) and the idea of the fatherland while female sexuality was associated with vulgar, unfeeling women and then with the barbarous mass of the proletariat, and hence communism.⁹⁸ The women attacked, and the politics they represented, embodied a destruction of older orders and a blurring of barriers of identity. They invoked floods – of the lower classes, of autonomous sexuality, and of bodily fluids.

⁹⁶ Higate 2012.

⁹⁷ Theweleit 1987:155, 191.

⁹⁸ Theweleit 1987:61, 70.

In all three cases, gendered violence is associated closely with the boundary-making needed to bring men together and to separate them clearly from women and from the feminine. In all cases, this reflects not a conscious desire to achieve certain ends, and does not require merely that the men conform to established identities, but reveals a process of becoming and expression, asserting affective selves against threatening sexual others.

And Every Smile That Marks A Lie, Passed In Code As Real Desire⁹⁹

As Jacqueline Rose observes, sociological accounts of gender have tended to hold that norms are internalised *successfully*, whereas for the psychoanalytical tradition it is always a question of the *failure* of identity.¹⁰⁰ This is the crux of the distinction between accounts founded on mythology and their counterparts in unreason, but also highlights the potential overlap between these two modes of understanding wartime sexual violence. Attachment and object-relations traditions in psychoanalysis have largely superseded a narrowly internal and family-based model of early psychology with a more social frame emphasising the active engagement of children in a world of adults.¹⁰¹ Its critical variants reach more ambitiously for the directly political aspects of 'private space' and the consequences for social theorising about violence and oppression.¹⁰²

So unreason and mythology blur in the psycho-social space where culture (broadly understood) fills in the objects of identification, and psyche contributes the attachment to those objects, and desire with which the social works.¹⁰³ Disorientated victims struggle to make sense, as do the liminal subjects of mythology. And the brothers-in-arms, united in their moment of conjoined brutalism coalesce as gendered members. Ann Cahill stresses both the intersubjective character of embodiment and the collective social effects of fear of rape.¹⁰⁴ For Benjamin, the intra-psychic and the inter-subjective are two complementary ways of understanding our psyches, unified by the common element of *recognition* as a

99 'F/D', from Fugazi 1998.

100 Rose 2005:90–91.

101 Benjamin 1990:16–17.

102 See particularly Frosh and Baraitser 2008; Frosh 2003; Hook 2005, 2006.

103 This is clearly a large topic, the many aspects of which cannot be rendered faithfully here. For a more comprehensive account see Moore 2007.

104 Cahill 2001:126–127.

reflexive and essentially human response to interactions with others.¹⁰⁵ Homosociality both requires and troubles group norms and rules. And for Kristeva, abjection can even be seen as 'productive of culture', just as the sacred is a 'two-sided formation', one side “defensive and socializing” in border creation, the other full of “fear and indifferentiation” in border undoing.¹⁰⁶ More strongly, abjection *requires* a social setting.¹⁰⁷ However, abjection does not enforce or follow rules, but takes that symbolic order of law and rules (the domain of mythology) and “turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them”, which is why for Kristeva the abject is closely related to perversion, which returns us again to overtures of sexuality.¹⁰⁸

It is not that instrumentality and mythology ignore emotional investments altogether, anymore than unreason denies the possibility of goal-directed behaviour. Rather it is a question of the space given to the domain of affect. An instrumental reading will allow that the *fruits* of brutality are enjoyed, that they give attackers pleasure or, more prosaically, some comfort or satisfaction. But this emotion will not penetrate into the realm of immediate causes, or of the constitutive form of rape as an act. At best, affect emerges as a kind of vague background or baseline, allowing for a modicum of group cohesion so that the real business of collaborative extraction through violence can proceed. Reflecting a familiar debate around the respective contributions of agency and structure, sadism can be shown as an expression of the latter in a typically Foucauldian epochal identification of mythological discourse¹⁰⁹:

Sadism is not a name finally given to a practice as old as Eros; it is a massive cultural fact which appeared precisely at the end of the eighteenth century, and which constitutes one of the greatest conversions of Western imagination: unreason transformed into delirium of the heart, madness of

105 Benjamin 1990:20–21.

106 Kristeva 1982:45, 58.

107 “...abjection is coextensive with social and symbolic order, on the individual as well as the collective level. By virtue of this, abjection, just like *prohibition of incest*, is a universal phenomenon; one encounters it as soon as the symbolic order and/or social dimension of man is constituted, and this throughout the course of civilization. But abjection assumes specific shapes and different codings according to the various 'symbolic systems'” (Kristeva 1982:68, emphasis in original).

108 Kristeva 1982:15.

109 See particularly McNay 2000.

desire, the insane dialogue of love and death in the limitless presumption of appetite.¹¹⁰

To define rape-conducive attitudes as *anti*-social is not to say that they are *a*-social. Existentialist accounts are thus connected to social conditions as the background against which acts are taken to be rebellions.¹¹¹ For unreason, the pressures of drives and their ilk may be social in origin or formation, but they are nevertheless *experienced as* individual and follow a distribution which suggests marked individual difference, a kind of *statistical* deviance. Rape may be an act that enforces a group right, but it has specialist implementers and there is no reason to assume that rape behaviour is a defining feature of all men. Even the most terrifying psychological statistics still suggest that most men don't rape. This disjunction between the variation in individual propensities and a visible social character to the processes repeats the problem of the patriarchal dividend already encountered: who is it who acts for the collective?

Speaking of the psychoanalysis of murderers, Jacqueline Rose touches on the fundamentally unsettling effect: “the more you identify the aberrational and extravagant in the most fundamental workings of the mind, the harder it becomes to use those categories to secure a social classification – to secure the social itself”.¹¹² Put otherwise, the identification of male fantasies linked to sexuality and expressed in times of trauma through rape and sexual violence threatens to extinguish the idea of a 'normal' condition in which men don't rape or in which rape is sufficiently constrained for the label of 'peace' to seem to apply. This is a precarious line, since the political commitments of feminism require an attention to just these dimensions, the socio-cultural props for gendered violence, but must still be capable of differentiating enablers from perpetrators, and for accounting for variations of form and content.

110 Foucault cited in Cameron and Frazer 1987:56.

111 Cameron and Frazer 1987:60–61.

112 Rose 1993:55.

The Propositions Of Unreason

Following these parallels and resonances, we are closer to specifying the content of a logic of unreason in relation to wartime sexual violence. Unreason is not reducible to the essentialist or the sexual, but instead explores the fields of desire and affect that undergird the social. They direct us to attachment, identification and enjoyment, and show how pleasure sits paradoxically alongside horror in war. War itself viewed not as a space like that of politics or economics, but as a space of undoing, trauma and transgression. Given the repeated centrality of ambiguity to the motifs of unreason, there are likely to be contradictory elements in the different propositions and in particular a more subjective and interpretive dimension to parsing data than may be the case for the more measurable dimensions of instrumentality.

Proposition 1

If accounts that privilege deviance, psychopathy or the social marginality of rape perpetrators are correct, we should expect to find that identified rapists conform to similar psychological 'profiles' and/or express themselves in ways which parallel accounts of rape given by 'peacetime' perpetrators. In particular, this would suggest that detailed accounts of rape by both victims and perpetrators will report high levels of sexual dysfunction in the form of 'failure' to satisfactorily complete sexual acts, and a pattern of behaviours and attitudes familiar from the 'peacetime' psychological literature. Following the patterns suggested by the analysis of anger, power and sadistic rapes, consistently high levels of additional brutality and/or expressions of sexual conquest would seem to support a thesis from unreason.

Proposition 2

The character of rape as an act of psychological pleasure/disgust suggests that it is not the direct product of an institutional setting. We would therefore expect that rape is not confined to military operatives, but is found to be carried out by a range of actors, including civilians, in a range of scenarios. If we find that rape is distributed in this way, and is not as focused in the theatre of war as other accounts might suggest, this will tend to support an argument from unreason.

Proposition 3

If rape is one part of an expressive landscape that brings together men in groups, we would expect to find evidence of homosociality and bonding in relation to acts of sexual violence. This may take the form of a distinct proportion of group rapes or of a group association in relation to rapes, such as the production of rape pornography for the consumption of other men. However, care will have to be taken to address the persistence of these groupings after the acts, since the coming together of men to participate in rape without longer-term bonding may indicate an instrumentalist dimension (making it easier to achieve other ends), a looser and more chaotic sense of unreason (as in the characteristics of the anger rapist), or the micro-level coherence of socio-cultural structures (as in mythology).

Proposition 4

Given the particular weight of abjection for unreason, reports of contradictory expressions of pleasure and disgust associated with rape are likely to indicate the play of unreason. In particular, perpetrators may exhibit both great pleasure and great shame in their actions. If reports from victims suggest a quasi-ritualised character of rapes or a particular obsession on the part of perpetrators with bodily parts made meaningful in abjective terms (the places of flows and barriers between inside and outside), this will also tend to support the analytical wagers and narrative scripts of unreason.

MYTHOLOGY AND THE HABITUAL SOLDER-RITUALIST

The ritual reminds the brothers of their sexual dominance of women and at the same time it gives each a heterosexual stamp. The sexual activities have the flavour of a bathhouse orgy, with the difference that multiple sexual activity is directed towards a single female victim rather than turned within the group. However, by sharing the same sexual object, the brothers are having sex with each other as well.

Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Fraternity Gang Rape*¹

It was a society onto itself, demanding total commitment to its doctrine and values, rather like one of those quasi-religious military orders of ancient times, the Teutonic Knights or the Theban Band.

Officer candidate's observation on the culture
of the training camp (US army, c. 1960)²

Foča

Like My Lai, but unlike Kissi, Foča is infamous. Since before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia opened a case directly focusing on war rape it has been a byword for the atrocities committed against civilians in the Bosnian War. Serb forces established rape camps – in hotels, schools, old town halls – where they imprisoned victims for long periods.³ Although the exact camps were quickly moved upon discovery and were largely secluded from the Red Cross at the time, the systematic use of rape was known of by local authorities and allowed to flourish.⁴ As in the Sierra Leone example, victims at Foča were kept together, within the control of their captors, and often forced to perform domestic chores.⁵

But at Foča, people were targeted *as Muslims* in a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Once the

1 Sanday 2007:124–125.

2 Cited in Cameron 1994:52.

3 Stiglmayer 1994.

4 Stiglmayer 1994:85–86.

5 See, for example, International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia Since 1991 2001:paras 63, 68.

Serb forces gained control of the area and had congregated the Muslim population, the men and boys were separated from women, girls and the elderly. The boys and men were killed; the women, girls and elderly sent to rape camps (Figure 12).⁶ Military action and focused assaults on their homes and bodies had reduced the Muslim in Foča population from its 1991 population of over 20,000 to only about 10 people at the close of the war.⁷ Women and girls kept in a hall would be selected, often daily, for gang rape by soldiers and civilians, some of whom had previously been their neighbours. As became grimly clear, *pregnancies*, rather than simply rapes, became the major weapon of a genocide in progress.⁸

One victim, who was also force to eat pork and drink alcohol, was also told during her rape “You should have already left this town. We'll make you have Serbian babies who will be Christians”.⁹ Another women subjected to gang rape recollected: “They told us we were going to give birth to Serbian children and they would do everything they could so we wouldn't even dare think of coming back again”.¹⁰ Another was shouted at while she was forced to clean: “Fuck your Turkish mother... Death to all Turkish sperm”.¹¹ A survivor of rape at a camp in Sokolac described the taunts of her Serb guards:

They told us how much they'd like to see us raise their kids, they sang rhymes with words like, “A mother raises a baby, he's half a Muslim, half a Serb”...[They said] “Look what your Muslims are doing, they're fighting against us and killing our people. We have to get revenge, and we can't let any Muslim get away”.¹²

6 Barkan 2002.

7 International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia Since 1991 2001:para 47.

8 Allen 1996:91.

9 Human Rights Watch 1998:199.

10 Stiglmayer 1994:109.

11 Stiglmayer 1994:109.

12 Stiglmayer 1994:132.



Figure 12: Representing Foča: Panels from Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Gorazde* (2000)¹³

13 Sacco 2000:118-119.

"We spent two more nights in the hospital, and then we were driven to the front lines."



"We were sent on our own down a road."



"Our soldiers picked us up...and we were taken to Gorazde."

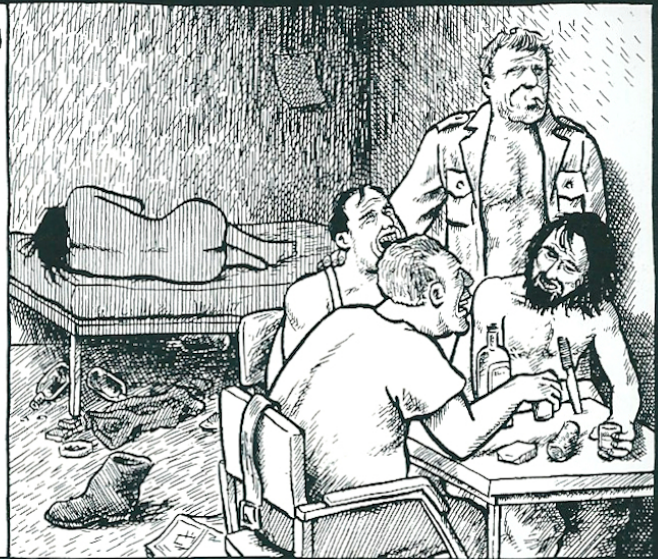
I'D SPENT EIGHT MONTHS IN FOCA. I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MY HUSBAND AND OTHER CHILDREN.

I TOLD MYSELF, IF I DON'T FIND MY FAMILY, I'LL KILL MY CHILD AND MYSELF.



Munira was reunited with her family in Gorazde.

The story of the women in the pregnancy ward was not unusual. Scores of Muslim women were held for months in Foca and raped repeatedly by Serb soldiers and para-militaries.



By the end of 1992, Gorazde's population had swollen to 60,000 by refugees. Many brought with them stories like Rasim's and Munira's.



The Gorazde pocket, which still included a narrow swath of the Drina Valley, tied down Serb forces and blocked the main road between Serbia proper and a large area captured by Bosnian Serbs in the south. As the Serbs made preparations to eliminate it, Gorazde's Muslims were under few illusions about their likely fate should their town fall.

What was the character of the Foča camps? Certainly they constituted part of a systematic attempt to wipe out a community, one either ordered or encouraged by senior Serb politicians and commanders and some have seen in the patterns of camps a clear correlation with military requirements.¹⁴ And soldiers surely benefitted in some way from the labour they extracted. But gender in Bosnia-Herzegovina was also layered intensely with ideas of ethnicity, and women had themselves become ethno-markers, set apart in 'sexual geographies of ethnicity'.¹⁵ The character of beliefs about rape, impregnation and genetic heritage hardly seem within the scope of rational self-interest, but are also too sustained and ideology-laden to reflect opportunistic expressions of anger and lust (although anger and lust there was). Structured by communal imaginaries, this was the site for sperm as a biological weapon.¹⁶ These are the motifs of mythology. Following the outline of mythology as a feminist mode, attention turns to anthropological insights into rape in all-male groups, to symbolic logics of war fighting, to complexities within military initiation rituals, and finally to how group identities may be turned to instrumentalist purposes.

Programmed By Culture

In some senses, mythology is a mediating term between instrumentality and unreason, curtailing profit maximisation within socio-cultural bounds and providing a symbolic framework for drives. But it is also much wider, embracing discourses, collective belief systems and ideologies. It includes not only doctrines and religion, but the background assumptions that are constructed through human communities, even of "rape as an identity-producing practice".¹⁷ This is the view of sexual violence as shaped by cultural idioms, embodied in a *habitus* of masculinity or the expression of long-standing schemas of the body and of gender.¹⁸ Not the logic of consequences, or of drive, but of appropriateness.

Mythology's analytical wagers are those of collective identity and the primacy of human communities. Thematically it concentrates on socially meaningful difference and subjectivities grounded in the imperatives and limits of a community or a particular

14 Sharlach 2000:97.

15 See Meznaric 1994 and Žarkov 2007:116-143.

16 The phrase is from Card 2010:287-293.

17 Hansen 2001:60.

18 Bourdieu 2001; Taylor 1999.

institution, which then become the relevant objects and actors. Narrative scripts here frame rapists not as self-interested or as acting out personal desires, but as performers of socio-cultural ritual. Ethical and political options are thus shaped to suggest solutions in terms of changes made to the communities or institutions in question, for example through political campaigns contesting collective misogynistic beliefs or transformations in the forms of recruitment and training undergone by soldiers. For mythology, rape is a weapon of war because it is selected as appropriate behaviour by a social group which sets the self-understandings of perpetrators. Wartime sexual violence is a continuation of political power in a more dispersed and collective sense, designating some as legitimate and others as illegitimate depending on their circulation within the rules and norms of the group. Rape is an extension and manifestation of the political unconscious.¹⁹

Mythology embodies that feminist concern well articulated by Simone de Beauvoir when she argued that the 'othering' of women was not only about economic interest but also 'ontological and moral pretensions':

Once the subject seeks to assert himself, the Other, who limits and denies him, is none the less a necessity to him: he attains himself only through the reality which he is not, which is something other than himself.²⁰

For Andrea Dworkin, the word 'mythology' itself was central to any dissection of patriarchy: "We are *programmed* by the culture as surely as rats are programmed to make the arduous way through the scientist's maze, and that programming operates at every level of choice and action".²¹

The view of wartime sexual violence as a symbolic reflection of masculinist mythology is strongest in those accounts that stress the ways in which women are treated as signs exchanged among men. Just as there is a persistent patriarchal view of women as 'beautiful souls', sexualised aggression can be related not so much to the particular material rewards of the act as to the imaginary role of certain women as representatives of a nation to be

19 The term is from Jameson 2002.

20 de Beauvoir 1997:171.

21 Dworkin 1974:155.

destroyed or a community to be punished, and of rape as a violation that only counts as a violation in some collective sense because of patriarchal norms of family and custom.²² Ruth Seifert, for one, accepts institutional explanations of sexual violence but also introduces culture both as that which rape aims at destroying and as the 'background' to rape orgies, a set of ideas which generate their content. On this account, women may be raped "because they are the objects of a *fundamental hatred* that characterizes *the cultural unconscious* and is actualized in times of crisis", bodies on which a particular intersubjectivity acts itself out in carnivalesque form.²³

Just as women can function as symbols within a war system, so too can sexual violence serve to reproduce systems of patriarchy. As a way of acting that reflects the socially symbolic place of women, rape's fundamental function in this trend of explanation is perpetuate a system of collective being beyond the bounds of mere interest or desire. The mythological mode is, then, distinguished from a material benefits explanation by the role of ideology, which suggests that individuals and communities are targeted not for their resources but *because of their identities*, even if such attacks can result in political or material advantage for perpetrators. A similarly strong way of thinking about wartime sexual violence in mythological terms links it explicitly to culture, where brutalisation mirrors culturally specific tropes, such as impalement and crucifixion in Bosnia or the systematic cutting of tendons and violation of bodily 'flows' in Rwanda.²⁴

Mythology need not condemn whole cultures in a way that buttresses retrograde ideas of patriarchal others or inherently misogynistic civilisational constellations. It may just as well refer to specific institutional contexts and the particular practices hegemonic there.²⁵ For example, in the mid-1990s Madeline Morris examined what she termed the 'rape differential' (the gap between civilian and military crime rates) between the actions of American soldiers in times of peace and in times of war. While she found that rates of military violent crimes were lower than civilian ones in peacetime, the propensity of soldiers to rape in wartime leapt to 260% of the civilian rate (the comparative rate of other crimes

22 MacKenzie 2010; Elshtain 1995; Anand 2008; Žarkov 2007.

23 Seifert 1994:57–66, 55, emphasis added.

24 Boose 2002:75–89; Taylor 1999.

25 As in Cohn 1987.

remained lower than that of civilians).²⁶ Morris rejected the idea that all-male groups were automatically implicated in higher rape rates and further argued that higher rape rates in wartime conferred no strategic benefit in military terms, preferring instead to see the higher levels of rape as a consequence of the particular masculinist practices characteristic of the US military.²⁷ In other words, she decoded military rape as the product not of instrumentality or unreason, but of mythology. The institutional culture, not resource pressures or suppressed lust, inculcated a set of beliefs that led to heightened levels of wartime sexual violence.²⁸

The Subject

In the mode of mythology, rape is again a weapon and a tool, but not one that belongs to individuals or which is used for accumulation or to release sexual frustration. Instead, it is a tool for a particular *community*. It obeys the internal requirements and limits set by a particular socio-symbolic order. Resources matter in sustaining and reproducing a group, but that does not mean that all acts in war are orientated towards that end or even that violence should be understood as an accumulatory strategy in any setting. Indeed, following the norms of a group may be counter-productive in terms of material well-being, and may involve *restrictions* on pleasure as well as the licence to carry out particular socially-sanctioned acts. Rape is a tool of power again, but now in a more variable sense, requiring attention to the legitimacy of certain actors in context and to shared ideas of appropriateness and taboo.

In identifying context-specific systems of belief and practice, mythology moves to a set of analytical wagers based on the community (whether political, social or institutional) and the particular acts it legitimates. Consequently, explanation does not rely either on the external situation or the personal traumas of rapists but on the collective and its rules. Mythology's narrative scripts thus focus on symbolic authority, whether in terms of a kind of demand made on actors to enact certain tropes or because it identifies an external community to be destroyed via the example of its feminine embodiments. It thus suggests not a soldier-strategist or a soldier-sadist, but a soldier-ritualist. As before, this figure comes in a number

²⁶ Morris 1996:666.

²⁷ Morris 1996:678, 762.

²⁸ See also Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009.

of stereotypical variants.

Closest to the geopolitical commander and class warrior of instrumentality we find the *sexual exterminationist*. The kind of ideologue who might otherwise write racist tracts, in times of war he is able to implement an internally-coherent, if wholly horrific, plan for cleansing. In this scenario – as in the case of Foča – the enemy is attributed a definitive lineage, and the gender order poses men and women within that vision in a vivid contrast, one usually projecting the patriarchal-heterosexist family onto the screen of the nation/state. Thus women become the mothers of a whole race, and the men the fathers and battle-aged sons. To dominate the father, violate the mother. This does not mean that only women are victims of the exterminationist. Men, too, suffer gender-specific death, and sexual mutilation too.²⁹ But the imaginative place of the womb tends to be potent in such ideologies, and so is the prime target for symbolic and real desecration.

Like the exterminationist, the *communal enforcer* sees himself as representative of a people. But where the exterminationist has a crafted, and quite explicit, cosmology for his violence, the enforcer is a rule-follower. If the instrumentalist works according to his own conscious needs, and the sadist of unreason according to urges to transgress, the enforcer of mythology is a rule-follower, enacting the habits of a community. He rapes because women and girls have been denigrated in the daily norms of community life, and because everybody else is doing it. The act is ritualised, and so likely garlanded with justifications and rationales, but this is less a question of true belief as going through the learned steps of appropriate manhood.

For the *gendered member* (the pun is intended) the pressures are less intense. He is institutionalised into a (usually military) group, and his initiation schools him in certain behaviours. As we will see, these are often rituals that encourage and celebrate the denigration of the feminine, and which teach men to dominate, but which do so for ends other than ethnic cleansing or gender war. Ends like 'combat efficiency' or 'group cohesion' or 'esprit de corps'. He corresponds to the soldiers in Morris' account of the rape differential: not so much instructed in hatred of enemy women as learning the game of manhood and war, and so acquiring the aggressive dispositions that go along with it.

29 As is well stressed for the case of Bosnia in Carpenter 2003b.

For the last stereotype, that of the *liminal subject*, the success of inculcation – whether into a military, a culture, or a genocidal identity – is very much at stake. Precariously related to the brother-in-arms, he experiences the group both in terms of its meaningfulness and its threatened collapse: collapse in the face of war or his own trauma. He rapes, unsure about what the group requires of him. The group, indeed, may be the source of the trauma itself. For all aspects of the soldier-ritualist, where instrumentality poses the victims of rape as mere objects, and unreason sees them as a horrifying abject, mythology recognises in them a subject: the bearer of another code or symbol of another order to be encountered and dominated.

The Silencing Of The Feminine

Developed along feminist lines to counter assumptions of historically constant and 'natural' propensities to sexual violence, early attempts to synthesise ethnographic evidence found that rape in up to 59% of societies for which information was available could be classified as either absent or rare.³⁰ Within these examples, the character of rape varied too, with some societies legitimising it in certain ceremonial periods, or allowing it as a distinct practice of war in others.³¹ Additional anthropological studies suggest that rape is not an invariant feature of violent encounters between polities: both male and female North American colonists commented with surprise that captured women were not raped by the native 'Indian' tribes.³² 'Rape-free' societies appear to be separated from 'rape-prone' ones by the degree of sexual equality and beliefs regarding the complementarity of the sexes.³³ The 'all-male group', when given a mythologised status, thus emerges as “invariably” associated with the degradation of women.³⁴

And in some cases, the notion of rape seems to make no sense at all:

Among the Guajiro of South America, rape is considered a heinous crime.

³⁰ Sanday 1981:9.

³¹ Sanday 1981:13–15.

³² Ablner 1992:13–14.

³³ Sanday 1981:16–18; Watson-Franke 2002:602–603.

³⁴ Sanday 2007:48.

It took years before some of my informants admitted to me that rape occurred. Discussion about violence against and abuse of women indicated that our definitions – theirs and mine – differed. One woman told me that she had been raped during her puberty ritual while being inside the seclusion hut. It is, however, unthinkable by Guajiro standards that a rape could occur under such circumstances. As I kept asking her to explain this to me the woman described how a young man had been looking at her through the walls of her hut. Clearly, this was a grave breach of privacy. But it would not be called rape in many places.³⁵

Such measures of rape presence and absence are open to contestation, and questions persist as to the reliability of testimony, problems of conceptual translation, and the validity of inter-societal comparisons of gendered violence.

But anthropological perspectives on rape have also been applied to distinctly 'modern' settings. Peggy Reeves Sanday's landmark *Fraternity Gang Rape* in particular offers a close reading of local mythologies and their role in sexual violence. Following a 1983 case of fraternity rape at the University of Pennsylvania, where she was a faculty member, Sanday began an investigation of the male culture of the American frathouse. Although careful in specifying that not all were rape prone, Sanday characterises all-male fraternities in particulars as specific rule-bound spaces separate from wider campus standards, and indeed often inverting them.³⁶ In this setting, women are treated primarily as symbols amongst the men, used to show their virility, their power, or their ability to withstand attachment and feeling. As a female student who had dated a fraternity brother explained to Sanday, one common house ritual involved assembling in a circle and dancing to music before repeatedly miming sexual acts – often meaning homosexual intercourse – in front of the others.³⁷

For Sanday, the juxtaposition in the fraternity community between homoeroticism and

³⁵ Watson-Franke 2002:601–602.

³⁶ Sanday 2007:6–7, 68.

³⁷ Sanday 2007:78.

homophobia reveals the 'logic' of gang rape:

[T]he answer seems to lie in homophobia. One can suggest that in the act of 'pulling train' the polymorphous sexuality of homophobic men is given a strictly heterosexual form...In group sex, homoerotic desire is simultaneously indulged, degraded, and extruded from the group. The fact that the woman involved is often unconscious highlights her status as a surrogate victim in a drama where the main agents are males interacting with one another... The expulsion and degradation of the victim both brings a momentary end to urges that would divide the men and presents a social statement of phallic heterosexual dominance.³⁸

Mythologised male communities act to bind men together (in homosociality or fratriarchy) but only through a displacement and denial that affirms brotherhood at the expense of women. As one of the brothers themselves explained:

I also think that [oral sex] is important in frat culture because it is a fantasy which can be easily applied to men and women. In other words, there is more homoerotic potential in sharing a fantasy about a woman performing a blowjob than about having heterosexual intercourse, because the blowjob given by a woman can stand for a blowjob given by a brother, whereas intercourse is more specifically heterosexual... [Humorous] references to blowjobs express and manipulate a variety of themes, including sexual dominance, violence, and degradation, as well as a certain amount of real affection and attraction (at least between the males) while also sharing the enjoyment of the shared humor and irony of the references within a normally heterosexual (in practice) environment.³⁹

Objectifying discourse was unsurprisingly common in the fraternity.⁴⁰ The most articulate of Sanday's male informants, a fraternity member, explained that 'gang bangs' were the result

38 Sanday 2007:42.

39 Sanday 2007:137-138.

40 Sanday 2007:87-89.

both of men's insecurities and pressure to impress and of women's sexually subordinate status: "Sex, he continued, is a way for men to dominate women. A gang bang is an assertion of dominance because the woman is objectified and dominated socially in a gang bang".⁴¹ Women here are the symbolic offerings in a communal, homosocial ritual, even in the defensive account provided by those involved. Frat brothers offered their own moral coding of acts, in which 'rape' was given a negative valence but restricted only to brute force, whilst everything else, including drugging, pressure and the clear threat of force in group situations, was labelled 'seduction'.⁴² Although commonly from wealthy backgrounds, and attending a prestigious university in a time of peace, fraternity brothers commonly described sexuality in terms of a 'war' between 'armed camps' in which the objective was to take as much as possible from the enemy.⁴³

Brothers are initiated into this code, into the mythology of the fraternity, via acts of considerable violence and degradation. Abuse in the process of 'pledging' creates them anew, shedding old identities in favour of a properly masculine role within the new 'family' of the fraternity. Reading initiations anthropologically, Sanday draws attention to the manipulation of conscious states and identities through symbolism to enable a restructuring of self.⁴⁴ The transition of boys to men in the fraternity can thus be read as homologous with other rituals of manhood and of severing dependency from mothers and others. In the rituals, would-be-brothers are forced to engage in dirty and degrading practices which are reinforced again and again as 'feminine' so that they may be cleansed and emerge properly 'masculine'.⁴⁵

Consider two tales of initiation given to Sanday by participants. In the first, pledges would arrive at the fraternity seeking membership. There they would be "hosed with red, sticky liquid...made to wear diapers...[and] then physically and verbally abused".⁴⁶ Senior brothers would call them 'girls', 'pussies', 'pampered' and 'pansies' before forcing them to clean the

41 Sanday 2007:93.

42 Sanday 2007:133.

43 Sanday 2007:135-136.

44 Sanday 2007:153-154.

45 Sanday 2007:165.

46 Sanday 2007:167.

house. As they cleaned brothers made still more mess:

Next they were told to remove their diapers and expose their genitals. Those who tried to cover themselves with their hands were made to do more push-ups. Their diapers were then replaced, and makeup and perfume were applied to the pledges, resulting in more laughter and embarrassment... The pledges were given glasses of milk and jars of baby food to drink and eat...and then buckets of feces mixed with water were thrown onto them. Some proceeded to vomit.⁴⁷

Pledges who did not vomit were forced to drink hydrogen peroxide-laced milk. Pledges were then forced to clean the vomit and faeces. Bound and gagged, they were taken to a basement and subjected to mock castration and execution as tests of their trust in the older brothers. Finally, they were told that they had passed the pledge test and were now 'new men' and 'new brothers' in a 'new life'.⁴⁸ As in the case of unreason, this account is saturated with transgression and affect, but the institutionalised nature of the ritual pulls the participants back, granting them a new membership and identity: inclusion in a community for which they are now expected to act.

In the second account, pledges were met by brothers who appeared to be covered in blood who called them “scum, wimps, fairies, shitheads, worthless, die”.⁴⁹ Forced to run from phone box to phone box in promise of a call, the pledges returned to the house, where they had to crawl amongst brothers who kicked and spat on them. Made to strip, their genitals were mocked and then basted in a burning balm. Paddle-whipped, they were forced to drink a vomit-inducing concoction and then subjected to both mock-castration and mock-faeces eating.⁵⁰ As Sanday summaries:

The ritual inducts pledges into the brotherhood by first producing and then resolving anxiety about masculinity. The ritual produces anxiety by

47 Sanday 2007:168.

48 Sanday 2007:169–171, 171.

49 Sanday 2007:172.

50 Sanday 2007:173–177.

representing the feminine to the pledge as both dirty and as part of his subjectivity. The ritual then resolves the anxiety by cleansing the pledge of his supposed feminine identification and promising him a lifelong position in a purified male social order.⁵¹

The connection between such a masculine identity and rape then seems vividly obvious. What Sanday calls the 'mythologies' of the polluting woman and the engulfing mother are expelled through ritualised brutality.⁵² The fraternity takes on the role of the father and promises some level of control over anxiety, ambiguity and infantile fantasy.⁵³ Since this security and identity depends so strongly on the silencing of the feminine, women easily become the outlets for sublimated homoerotic desire and group bonding through violence. This much is reinforced by studies suggesting that fraternities where brothers more regularly denigrate the feminine and strongly emphasise gender differences are more dangerous for women.⁵⁴

What thus emerges from a close reading of *Fraternity Gang Rape* is a clear sense of the denigration of feminine in all-male environments; the precarious and meaning-laden frontier between homophobia and homoeroticism in male bonding; and the ritualised practices of entry and membership distinctive of the fraternity as a form of communal belonging. The model of the fraternity is connected to wartime sexual violence in two ways: first, by a suggestion of scaling, in which whole nations or societies act according to similar codes; and second, in a militarised register, where combat units and army training camps reproduce the rituals of membership and ideas of appropriate gender found amongst the fraternity brothers.

51 Sanday 2007:177.

52 Sanday 2007:181.

53 Sanday 2007:183-185.

54 Boswell and Spade 1996.

Political Violence Is Itself Ritualistic

In the study of war, mythologies have sometimes been introduced as alternatives to strategic and economic theories of violence, generally in terms of broad ideas of 'culture', 'race' or 'ethnicity'. For example, in opposing rationalist theories, Stuart Kaufman instead suggests that symbolic politics best explains ethnic violence, which follows the pattern set by a group's 'myth-symbol complex', directing emotional responses and opening historical enmities to elite manipulation.⁵⁵ These pre-existing fears, under the right conditions, drive leaders to engage in ethnic cleansing and genocide, even when this would not make sense on the grounds of material or political self-interest.⁵⁶ This question – of the productivity of extreme violence – is crucial, since instrumentalist arguments require that actors are indeed seeking the most efficient method, even if clashing incentives ultimately lead to 'sub-optimal' outcomes.

In the case of the Sierra Leonean and Liberian conflicts, attention has been drawn to the role of Poro secret societies and the ways in which rituals of witchcraft were believed by combatants to protect them, for example in creating bullet proof vests out of ordinary shirts.⁵⁷ Cult-like societies conducting initiation rituals stress the passage from boyhood to manhood through pain and place a premium on metaphorical and actual sacrifice, as in the eating of organs and of flesh.⁵⁸ Far from only affecting the least educated combatants, there is strong evidence that rituals of cannibalism and blood drinking were practiced by the highest commanders.⁵⁹ This is not enough to say that violence is *caused* by rituals, and both conflicts involved extraction, looting and trade on a large scale, but it does reveal important dynamics in the performance and character of violence. Hence overlaps with the bonding dynamics of unreason's brothers-in-arms, experiencing solidarity as “the group believes

55 Kaufman 2006:51–55.

56 Specifically Kaufman sets out three preconditions (that widespread group myths exist on both sides justifying hostility; that fear of extinction is strong on both sides when violence begins; and that both sides have a territorial base and the opportunity to mobilise) and three processes driving mythological violence (extreme hostility in the media for the goal of domination or resistance; chauvinist elites appeal to myths to mobilise groups; and predation-driven security dilemmas increase radicalisation). Note too that for Kaufman, these explanations may be compatible with more rationalist ones, but only if they begin from a symbolist base (Kaufman 2006:58, 84).

57 Peters and Richards 1998:189–190, 199.

58 Ellis 1995:188.

59 Ellis 1995:192.

because it acts together".⁶⁰ So the undeniably materialist character of war economies (they are networks for the circulation of goods, after all) need not require an instrumentalist characterisation:

They fashion economic possibilities, they broker *political* power, and, importantly, they constitute *cultures*, for these networks of power and exchange are governed by *rules* of exchange, *codes* of conduct, *hierarchies* of deference and power – in short, they are governed by *social principles*, not merely the law of the jungle.⁶¹

Killing itself may be ritualised in specific ways, but all war can be viewed in the same light, as a collective performance and reshaping.⁶² Anthropological accounts of war thus offer a further conception of mythology than simply a contrasting causal mechanism to rational choice in a given case. Rather than distinguishing 'ethnic' war as a special type, or 'new wars' as a paradigm of especially ideological contestation, they theorise all violence as symbolic practice.⁶³ Conventional social scientific wisdom that 'primitive' war was more brutal and more culturally-determined is undone by an examination of the historical record (it is 'modern' violence that is extreme) and of current practice ('our' war making is also symbolic).⁶⁴ Taking the view that "political violence is itself ritualistic", some have sought to extend a Durkheimian framework of the sacred/profane distinction to show how acts of war are made meaningful.⁶⁵ Yet understanding violence as 'coded' in a cultural sense does not mean seeing it as the mere product of a pre-existing order. Rituals of war are less fixed than those of religious ceremony, and the practitioners less anointed by a set relation to the sacred.⁶⁶ In wartime discursive formations, then, the ambiguity of 'culture' is heightened.⁶⁷

60 Richards 2006:652, emphasis added.

61 Nordstrom 2004:107, emphasis added.

62 Richards 2005:398–400.

63 On the case against 'new war' diagnoses, see particularly Kalyvas 2001.

64 Whitehead 2007.

65 Smith 1991:107.

66 Smith 1991:108.

67 It is worth stressing that these concerns are not completely foreign to contemporary IR. Constructivism has allowed for some consideration of the bounding of practices of war. Here it appears as regulated activity, including for example norms around the use of weapons of mass destruction. See Farrell 2005.

Since anthropologists may not have integrated the *conduct* of war (especially the forms of extreme violence that concern this thesis) in a sufficiently theoretical way, readings of myth at war tend to apply to the wider social level.⁶⁸ Philip Smith's reading of the Falklands war, for example, focuses not on the experience of soldiers themselves, but on how the government and its constituencies were able to frame, initiate and consolidate the meaning of war. Although this involved active propagandising on their part (and therefore an instrumentalist dimension), social meanings are “relatively autonomous” and to some extent pre-existing. Seen through this framework, British commitment to a distant war against a capable military foe for vanishingly little in the way of material benefit was made possible by a series of symbolic associations. Under the category of the *sacred* were aligned such closely linked notions as 'British', 'moral', 'democracy', 'free', 'liberators', 'law-abiding', 'law-enforcing', 'rational' and 'strategic', whilst under the *profane* were linked 'Argentinian', 'immoral', 'dictatorship', 'unfree', 'aggressors', 'law-breaking', 'criminals', 'irrational' and 'emotive'.⁶⁹ Importantly, this was in the face of events and evidence which reversed and undid these links, meaning that they had to be renewed in an ongoing process of cultural coding. In this way they were able to constitute the war itself and transform into a morality tale.⁷⁰

In a gendered register, the association of ideas of the nation with those of the symbolic female are a common way in which mythologies may lead to extreme and systematic sexual violence. Both eugenicist and Malthusian variants of nationalist discourse create a special role for women as the biological substratum of their political projects.⁷¹ Far from existing as a separate kind of violence, as might be suggested by debates in civil war studies over 'ethnic' war, racialised identities depend on constructions of masculinity and femininity, and thus have a direct impact on the forms taken by gendered violence. In the same way that Sanday's fraternity informants expressed dichotomous and stark understandings of gender difference, so media representations in a time of nationalist crisis oscillate between depictions of the Mother and the Whore.⁷² Yet these discourses are again not set. In the case

68 This is the charge levelled by Whitehead 2007:44.

69 Smith 1991:117.

70 (Smith 1991:118) This perspective also aligns with post-structural and discourse-orientated trajectories in IR, perhaps best summarised in Campbell 1998b.

71 See for example, Yuval-Davis 1997:26–66.

72 See Žarkov 2007:37–42.

of post-war Yugoslavia, motherhood had to be variously put to use as victimisation, as militancy and as justification for violence.⁷³ The result for representing sexual violence was that “the raped female body is always ethnic”.⁷⁴

These frameworks account for the impact of mythologies at a social level. The discursive homology between terms (such as 'mother', 'nation' and 'home') places really-existing persons within a symbolic order that indicates their appropriate fate. As in Sanday's account, the community establishes the logic of appropriateness, and symbolic otherings of the feminine set the scene for its eradication, casting “bodies as instruments in the nationalist cause”.⁷⁵ This is the consequence of belief and identity, not of rational self-interest. And yet such perspectives may also miss the micro-political details of extreme violence. Like the class-based and strategic versions of instrumentality, they may fail in accounting for the specific experiences and ambiguities faced by combatants and perpetrators.

A Peculiar Kind of Social Structure⁷⁶

A more detailed look at war as a practice reveals the specificity of violent acts, and shows how they spread and combine in concrete situations. Within the frame of mythology, this means identifying conditions of restraint (taboo even) and of permission, and noticing where they blur and shift. So, in one example, the particular ritualised combat practice of scalping diffused from the native 'other' into the practices of colonialists themselves.⁷⁷ This was despite the fact that *formal* cultural codings forebode such acts. The deviancy of acts used by the enemy other can thus both confirm belief systems through disavowal, but also become incorporated in practice through emulation. This complexity of war as practice is easily missed by assumptions that social beliefs align cleanly with acts in battle. As Simon Harrison suggests in relation to British practices of skull collecting in the Victorian age, there was no question of trophy-taking being civilised behaviour. Instead, soldiers themselves distinguished between wars against other civilised peoples and against savages:

73 Žarkov 2007:69–82.

74 Žarkov 2007:153.

75 Price 2001:221.

76 The phrase is from (Leed 1979:24.

77 Abler 1992:6–7.

The difference...between a civilized and a savage combatant is that a savage is only able to fight savage wars, while a civilized soldier can choose to wage either type of war. To put this differently, the civilized soldier imagined that within himself a second, savage, soldier was encompassed and subsumed. This encapsulated savage could be released in appropriate contexts, above all when fighting other savages.⁷⁸

Against a monolithic image of the loyal cultural combatant there thus emerges a more negotiated passage through ritual and codes. Romanticised and horrified constructions of cultural others give way to hybridity.⁷⁹ Hybridised conducts of extreme violence themselves mix together mythologies, and can function as crossing points between the 'primitive' and the 'modern'. Harrison, for one, argues that skull collecting was not merely an adoption of what was understood as 'primitive' warfare, but allowed officers to both engage in a certain nostalgia (the display of severed heads had only ended in England a century before) and to pose themselves as appropriately modern in collecting scientific specimens (for example by tasking military surgeons to collect important heads after battle).⁸⁰

As Patrick Porter stresses, the reality of military conduct is one of continual borrowing and improvisation regardless of explicit ideology.⁸¹ Moreover, as comparative work on Orientalist discourses of the 'warlord' in imperial encounters suggests, constructions are malleable and shift emphasis (from the bravery to the cowardice of enemies, from ingenuity to feckless parasitism) as the strategic situation requires.⁸² This raises issues which may threaten the mythological perspective. To what extent is mythology a cover, a story that combatants tell themselves regardless of the actual determinants of their action, and to what extent is it an actual generative force? As cover, mythology retains an importance, but is the reactive deployment of tropes in the face of the disintegration of certainties and value systems wrought by war. This is precisely the anarchy of meaning which resonates with conceptions of unreason.

78 Harrison 2008:291.

79 Porter 2009:55, 32-37.

80 Harrison 2008:294, 295-299.

81 Porter 2009:60-68.

82 See Stanski 2009.

On the other hand, mythology as generative force need not imply a simple enforcement of monolithic cultural norms. Instead, conceptions of appropriateness may bind and guard participants in the face of panic, providing the schemata needed to respond without thought. There need be nothing essentialist about such a view, especially if we regard norms as malleable and as the object of elite manipulations. Lee Ann Fujii pursues this point with reference to the Rwandan genocide. Seeing ethnic myth as more historically malleable and ambiguous than Kaufman suggests, she nevertheless identifies an active process by which 'norm entrepreneurs' spread genocide-supportive attitudes on the back of existing tropes. Their attempt to mould history to lethal ends worked because of our dependency on simplified schemas in times of crisis.⁸³ Perpetrators responded to cues not as rational actors, but as subjects offered “a vision of the world that would drown out all others, a hegemonic tale that would reign supreme”, supported by the rehearsal of killing and the collective effects of targeted media.⁸⁴

So combatants can be the agents of a hybridised war practice and can find themselves as enforcers of norms moulded for them. But they can also turn to mythology in response to traumas of combat and identity. For Eric Leed, the structure of war experience was that of 'making strange'.⁸⁵ Focusing on European participants in the First World War, Leed rejected the 'cultural patterning' model that suggested that troops acted in accord with the already-existing values of the society for which they fought.⁸⁶ Instead, war was a space for the *creation* of identities. The rituals and symbol systems of the warrior therefore frequently focus on liminality:

They are merged with sacred figures or animal categories, becoming like gods or beasts, often taking on the raiment and habits of animals – feathers, wolf skins, bear skirts, and so forth. In combat their change of state has been conventionally represented as a drastic alteration of temperature, intoxication or lust. Upon his return to society, the man who has killed is

83 Fujii 2004:100.

84 Fujii 2004:101, 103–108.

85 Leed 1979:4.

86 See also the discussion of 'culturalism' and war in Porter 2009:55–85.

often considered to be dangerous, polluted or stained until he has undergone a ritual cooling and cleansing.⁸⁷

Even the most banal of militarised rituals – such as taking 'two steps forward' from line – perform in ceremonial form the sense of a separation before war.⁸⁸ Both training and war itself normalise the bizarre for the initiate and abstract them from their previous life world into a new social setting.⁸⁹ In contrast to ideas of war-making as defined method that could be taught, the 'knowledge' of combat is instead better seen as something written on the body, “a part of the individual's very potency”.⁹⁰ This spurs Leed to a telling comparison:

The best analogy to the knowledge acquired in war is perhaps to sexual knowledge, a knowledge that transforms the character and condition of the knower from that of an innocent to that of a bearer and administrator of a potent wisdom.⁹¹

Initiation and combat thus tread a line between making strange and making anew: “As long as training and propaganda are successful, the soldier operates within a moral and ethical structure and his acts can be experienced as confirmations of his *identifications*, his identity”.⁹² Yet World War I was of interest to Leed precisely because it *failed* in inducting its subjects into their social roles: instead, a generation experience disorientation and dislocation in the face of a mechanisation and a totality of violence that they had not anticipated.⁹³ Although bourgeois volunteers had hoped to encounter authentic community, they instead underwent a 'militarized proleterianisation', in which war exposed the gap between them and their comrades in battle.⁹⁴ The labyrinth of the trenches was suffocating, and nationalists were able to redefine their experiences as communal national bonding only after the fact.⁹⁵

87 Leed 1979:13.

88 Leed 1979:16.

89 Leed 1979:29, 32.

90 Leed 1979:74.

91 Leed 1979:74.

92 Leed 1979:105, emphasis added.

93 Leed 1979:73.

94 Leed 1979:94.

95 Leed 1979:80, 86.

Mythologies of war have a power both in initiation and in moments of trauma. Yet this is not only a question of legitimising and mandating certain kinds of violence, but also of restricting, even forbidding others. Far from meaning a surrender to lust, communal rules thus bind and channelled aggression in a particular way.⁹⁶ For instrumentality and unreason, anything is in principle permitted, either because actors will adapt their actions to the economic and military demands of the situation, or because desire and aggression escape combatant's control. For mythology, even in the face of opportunity and trauma, the schemas offered by codes of culture, nation and military identity constrain and shape what can be done and to whom. Whether in success or failure, mythologies articulate combatant experiences.⁹⁷ If we retain the view of sexual violence as having a particular form in war, a particular connection to collective violence manifested in and around combat, then we would do well to attend to what mythologies articulate about permitted and forbidden violations.

Symbolic Penetrations

Recall Madeline Morris' diagnosis of the 'rape differential' as the product of military culture. Since the difference between soldiers' propensities to rape in war and to commit other crimes was so large, and since the patterns of rape seemed to serve no explicit military purpose, Morris turned instead to the habits and rules learned by troops, and expressed on occasion in the open, for example on t-shirts bearing the legend 'Women Are Property'.⁹⁸ Read alongside anthropological investigations of all-male groups and the silencing of the feminine, this would appear to account for a significant amount of the observed brutality. Men together designate what is masculine as that which destroys the feminine, and the real embodiments of that mythologised gender difference pay the price. We may even begin to sketch a general theory of war rape: the combination of certain practices of induction and training (a variety of mythology) alongside group-bonded eruptions of extreme violence in

96 Consider here Philip Smith on the restriction of violence in the Falklands war: "Although Britain was a nuclear power and Argentina was not, nuclear threats were not made. Not only would such threats have brought about international condemnation – they would also have constituted a *semiotic absurdity*" (Smith 1991:120, emphasis added).

97 Leed 1979:116. Indeed, this is the reason that Leed considered 'mythology' a much more appropriate term than 'fantasy', which implied some escape from reality, rather than a framework for interpreting it (Ibid., 118).

98 Cited in Morris 1996:717.

the combat zone (the mythology-bordering moments of unreason).

But this analysis also raises further questions. Most importantly, in understanding the connection between a fraternity and military, is the issue of function and purpose. Is rape the side product of these homosocial cultures, or what they are *designed* to do? Viewed mythologically, military existence requires a ritualised induction and the production of a new self. The themes of penetration, female degradation and dominance identified in many of the accounts surveyed here suggest a collective mentality which incubates rape-prone attitudes. Yet the purpose of the rituals (or, rather, their function) is to produce *warriors*, not rapists. Rape may not be 'accidental'. After all, it is supported and encouraged by a military masculine identity. Yet it can also be viewed as something that militaries do regardless of their conscious objectives, as the ugly surplus of inculcated beliefs and habits. In other words, where instrumentality would suggest a focused and self-conscious choice of rape as a tool, and where unreason reveals a localised act driven by desire and aggression, mythology opens to us a bounded, although *often ambiguous*, set of practices, of which the rape of external victims is only one facet.

Moreover, where some mythological themes suggest a relatively straight-forward posing of the feminine in negative terms, and a consequent denigration of women resulting in violence, Aaron Belkin identifies a more complex relation. In becoming military men, there is a need not only to disavow femininity, but also to become intimate with the 'unmasculine' and the 'queer'.⁹⁹ Rather than identifying a direct *alignment* of the masculine with the military, or seeing gender norms as *accidental* in their intersection with the military, there is instead a constitutive *tension* between the masculine and the unmasculine.¹⁰⁰ Basic training relies on a traumatic ambiguity, continually casting initiates as masculine and unmasculine, so that no soldier could ever be sure that they were sufficiently on the 'right side' of the line.¹⁰¹ As one Marine put it: “The opposite of feminine? No. To me, what is masculine? I don't know. [pause] And I've worked so hard at being it”.¹⁰²

99 Belkin 2012:24.

100 Belkin 2012:29.

101 Belkin 2012:34. These themes can be suggestively pursued alongside Paul Higate's recent work on patriarchy (see Higate 2012).

102 Quoted in Belkin 2012:38.

Alongside more familiar forms of indoctrination such as discipline-as-surveillance and discipline-as-punishment, Belkin introduces the idea of discipline-as-collapse.¹⁰³ Importantly, given Sanday's discussion of degradation, boundary crossing and bodily flows, he also uncovers a submerged history of military initiation:

I discovered that in the latter decades of the twentieth century, male American service members penetrated each other's bodies 'all of the time'. They forced broom handles, fingers and penises into each other's anuses. They stuck pins into flesh and bones. They vomited into one another's mouths and forced rotten food down each other's throats. They inserted tubes into each other's anal cavities and then pumped grease through the tubes. And parallel to these literal penetrations, they subjected each other to constant, symbolic penetrations as well. Penetrating and being penetrated have been central to what it means to be a warrior in the U.S. armed forces.¹⁰⁴

Historically, such rites of passage have tellingly covered not only initiates but also victims. The torture inflicted on colonials captured by indigenous North American warriors itself also manifests the patterns of sadistic ceremony, although the consequences in this case could be fatal: "it seems to be a symbolic birth canal, through which the captive is reborn as a member of a new society".¹⁰⁵ Captives deemed not ready for this new existence would then be subjected to 'the long torture ritual', in which they were burnt with hot irons, sometimes fed their own cut body parts, forced to sing a personalised death song, and then scalped before having their heart torn out.¹⁰⁶

In the last chapter, the abjection of rape victims was located within patterns of unreason. But the abjection experienced by recruits themselves in their training – a training which both degrades and transforms – are rehabilitated in the making of military men and

¹⁰³ Belkin 2012:41.

¹⁰⁴ Belkin 2012:80.

¹⁰⁵ Abler 1992:9.

¹⁰⁶ Abler 1992:10.

recoded as normativity, as an internal other to struggle with and overcome.¹⁰⁷ Although he does not investigate the rape of 'enemies' and others, Belkin does provide an account of male-on-male rape within the US military. Soldierly discourse about these rapes reproduces the constitutive ambiguity identified in training. To be the 'bottom', or the man violated (often by a group of comrades in arms), is in these accounts *both* to be submissive *and* to be the 'real man', just as attacks and forced sex are understood as sources of both pleasure and pain.¹⁰⁸

For the study of sexual violence, this raises a number of issues. If soldiers can rape each other without framing it as victimhood, may their perpetration of sexual violence against external others also have a different character to what is commonly assumed? Moreover, if a military masculine identity contains warring elements of the masculine and the unmasculine, should we read the expressive *function* of rape in a different light? In surveying unreason, we saw that sexual violence could be the expression of frustration and trauma, and Belkin's reading of discipline-as-collapse suggests a similar liminal aggression. That fearful coincidence of order and chaos, rationality and psychopathy, purity and danger, to which the mythological frame seeks to give form, but which threatens continually to escape the bounds of the intelligible.¹⁰⁹

Mythology, Instrumentalised

So mythology shares a boundary with unreason, one not unlike the boundary between the hyper-rationality of instrumentality and the psychopathy of unreason surveyed in Chapter 4.¹¹⁰ But mythology may also be subjected to instrumentality. Reflexivity and rationality allow for codes to be turned to purposes that may lie outside them. In prominent cases of systematic war rape, as in Bosnia or Rwanda, this may indeed account for the combined character of brutality that appears both ideological (in its focus on ethnicity, organicism and conspiratorial others) and rational (in its planning, execution and beneficiaries). Kaufman,

107 Belkin 2012:61.

108 Belkin 2012:86–102.

109 The unity of ritualised inductions into military masculinity indeed suggests a possible general theory for the occurrence of wartime sexual violence. For Belkin and others, the subject of research is the Western military and its familiars, which demands some analytical caution. After all, not all war practice is the result of careful indoctrination in total institutions. Nevertheless, the parallels are suggestive.

110 See also the analysis provided in Cavalletto 2007.

Fujii, Smith and Leed all also suggest a link between rationality and mythology, pointing to elites as manipulators of symbolic order.¹¹¹ But the transformation is a precarious one.

The intersection of instrumentalities and rationalities of war and its underlying images and myths were the prime concern of Craig Cameron in *American Samurai*, a study of the First Marine Division between 1941 and 1951.¹¹² On this account, it was the myths that *enabled* the destruction wrought by US forces in the Pacific War.¹¹³ As with reports of initiation already examined, the institution of the Marine Corps fostered emotional separation from the peacetime world and degraded external others.¹¹⁴ Moreover, in the context of wartime mobilisation, with many inexperienced young men entering the Corps, hazing and harassment became more brutal, the better to mould soldiers.¹¹⁵ Men were denigrated in the now familiar ways, with ceremonial entry into the mythologised status of the Marine Corps:

The exaggeratedly all-male atmosphere of recruit training was part of what Theweleit labels the 'crucial transformation' of eros. As psychogenic fantasy, this transformation created an antagonistic view across a gender line not unlike the race line that separated Americans from Japanese. The transformation of eros fostered the objectification of women...Women also became objects of danger and disgrace in classes on sex hygiene...Once begun this indoctrination continues until either the man received his discharge from the Marine Corps and returned to civilian life or he suffered serious injury or sickness that at least temporarily stripped him of his self-sufficiency and isolated him from the male group.¹¹⁶

More than standing for nation, women also came to stand in for nature in the mythologies of the Pacific War, and it was nature that was dangerous and which needed to be penetrated for

¹¹¹ For example, Smith 1991:127–128.

¹¹² Cameron 1994:2.

¹¹³ Cameron 1994:5.

¹¹⁴ Cameron 1994:49.

¹¹⁵ Cameron 1994:59.

¹¹⁶ Cameron 1994:66.

victory.¹¹⁷ As the war progressed, so the character of combat changed, and mythologies with it. Moving from the more closely fought and 'thrilling' Peleliu to the dominance of Okinawa, Marines adopted a mentality of 'processing' to code the strategic 'necessity' and realities of new situations.¹¹⁸ For commanders, these tropes had to be put to work and properly stimulated to make men fight. Mythologies of the Marine Corps were consciously promulgated before and after the war to encourage recruitment. Beyond this, the experience of combatants – their expectations of race and gender, the frustrations of war, the reality of an enemy that did not conform to their assumptions – was continually filtered through a sense of communal self that had to be managed into strategic and rational pathways.

The problem is familiar, if this time on the border between the geopolitical commander or class warrior and the exterminationist. Seeing mythology as something that can be turned to instrumental purposes requires that the instrumentalist not only stands sufficiently 'outside' the belief system to recognise it and see its potential, but also that the content of the beliefs are themselves malleable to any ends. In many accounts, this manipulation is presented as if it self-evident: an entirely cynical exercise on the parts of elites to get what they want. As Kaufmann stresses, this perspective is inadequate where decisions backfire on the leaders and communities in question. But the issue is more fundamental: in spite of the ambiguity and hybridity of codes of war, there seems no a priori way to determine whether belief is true or false. An accomplished manipulator will pass, and a true believer may profit from war in spite of himself. The risk again is of naturalising a rationalist account, such that every outcome is retrospectively read as if it occurred because somebody wanted it so, and was able to put the pieces in place. Apart from jettisoning contingency and struggle, it also suggests a one-dimensional view of power, and so sets to one side the very discourses and constructions of gender order that feminists have done so much to highlight.

¹¹⁷ Cameron 1994:73. These frameworks also clearly shaped attitudes to women soldiers met on leave and in non-combat situations. See for comparison Moon 1997.

¹¹⁸ Cameron 1994:171–191.

Mythological Propositions

It remains to specify the content of a mythological perspective on wartime sexual violence. Although united by a focus on how communities are made, mythological perspectives may differ on a variety of more fine-grained issues: what the scale of the community is; what the relation is between its 'peacetime' norms and its 'wartimes' one; how soldiers conduct war in an ongoing symbolic exchange with an imagined enemy as well as a real one; whether the initiation of warriors produces clear enforcers of misogynistic power or more ambiguous, even fragile, combinations of aggression and restraint; whether soldiers together bond through rape or whether it signals their disintegration; and how commanders and others seeking power are able to transform and manipulate mythologies to their own ends.

Proposition 1

The prevalence of ritualised behaviours within given institutional and social contexts suggest that a mythological explanation may be validated by evidence of particular forms of rape and accompanying practices which are explicitly linked to an overarching symbolic significance or resonance with the group in question. The task will be to show that those really are group-specific practices and to fill in the content of the group mythology that leads to rape.

Proposition 2

Accounts of military masculinity have stressed that rape can occur in these contexts as a kind of group identity or bonding without there being instrumentalist benefits directly flowing from them. This coincides with explanations of group pleasure found in unreason, but the stress here is more clearly on the creation and reinforcement of a fraternal identity over time, rather than enjoyment shared within a given rape incident. Following the discussion of ritual, it would also be expected that such behaviour in a mythological context has a formal or repetitive pattern, for example in the regular use of particular induction rites.

Proposition 3

Mythology might also be indicated by the distribution of acts suggesting particular confinement to a given group in cultural rather than institutional terms, as in the idea that certain practices of gendered violence have traditional roots in political or ethnic communities and are therefore reproduced according to a logic of socialisation and habit rather than as a result of conscious planning or emotional confusion. Again, this would suggest that such acts are clearly spoken of in terms of permitted and forbidden acts, taboos and the like. In a wider register, this could include ideologies of hetero-nationalism which combine apparently 'personal' sexuality with collectivised identity, as when perpetrators stress different community loyalties during rape.

Proposition 4

Rape might conform to mythological expectations as part of process of ethnic cleansing or genocide. The debate around the rationality and functionality of mass murder continues, but it is plausible to see these processes as dependent on the formation of a considerable sense of group identity over-riding either individual interests or individual passions, instead harnessing affect to a joint project of extermination based on complex but powerful ideologies of fear, hate and social pollution. This is the collective side of unreason's focus on the abject, and is differentiated from it by the clearly collective and organised character of rape aiming at some greater mythological purpose.

Proposition 5

Finally, a mythological perspective on group identity may be combined with an instrumentalist account where there is evidence both of more general codes of behaviour and combat and of conscious manipulation of these codes for given purposes. This indicates a more complex picture of allegiance, indoctrination and behaviour in war, but may also reveal how mythologies of violence were always already available as the material through which a more narrow rationality could work.

THE MADNESS IN METHODS

This thesis began with a sense that there was something more to be said about what it means to provide a feminist account of wartime sexual violence, something not yet captured in the major interventions made against androcentric, 'problem-solving' and high political theory. The work undertaken in Part Two to unpack instrumentality, unreason and mythology as distinct modes has both advanced and complicated that agenda.

Advanced because in place of the singular statement that rape is a weapon of war, we now have a sense of the various ways in which it can be so, and of the somewhat hidden variety of ideas of war and weapons at play. Instead of proposing *a* feminist theory of war rape, the task of Part Two was to develop and explore latent (and sometimes not so latent) feminist claims, and especially to consider them alongside debates within war studies and social theory. The result is 13 relatively distinct propositions, bound by differing underlying analytical wagers and narrative scripts, and normatively orientated in different ways towards the possibility of change.

Complicated because the process of moving beyond simplistic ideas of motive and cause ('rape is cheaper than bullets', 'rape is the desire for sex/violence', 'rape is caused by culture') has shown both that each mode contains a degree of variety within it and also that ambiguities of interpretation and evidence in each case indicate a zone where different modes blend, whether because hyper-rationality blurs into psychopathy, because apparently 'private' desires turn out to be made of social and cultural stuff, or because structures of meaning can be manipulated towards instrumental ends. Importantly, these have been primarily addressed as problems of explanation, which is to say problems of accounting for why certain forms of atrocity are manifested (rather than other forms or no forms at all) within a contrast space of expectation. In each case there is ethics and politics too, although they discussed in more muted terms in the name of reclaiming a certain sense of the explanatory in feminism.

The explanations elaborated in Part Two reflect the initial concern with variation and

complexity within rape itself, as well as Cynthia Enloe's caution against collapsing sexual violence into an inchoate mass of horror. Why was rape so connected to slavery and labour in Sierra Leone? Why did US troops at My Lai experience their own sexualised brutality in terms of confusion, trauma and affect? And why were the violations of the Bosnian war so soaked in discourses of ethnic supremacy? Across cases, to what extent does rape reflect economic imperatives understood clearly by political and military elites? How should we relate the frustrations and aggressions of 'peacetime' rapists to the frustrations and aggressions of embattled soldiers? And if we see occurrences of rape as themselves reflecting a wider socio-cultural order, at what level of community are rape-supportive beliefs inculcated, and do they serve distinct purposes for those communities at all?

It may be objected that such problems are the product of the framework itself: that a spectre of explanatory failure haunts feminist inquiry, but that it is a spectre of my own imagining.¹ Does it matter at all that, when arranged in a certain way, particular strands of feminist thought appear to be in tension with each other, or conform ambiguously to non-feminist debates about war? There are several ways to answer that challenge. First, as I have tried to show (and as many have indicated before), this kind of ambiguity is a problem for all inquiry. It is a commonplace today to say that facts are not found and do not speak for themselves, which means that there is always a conceptual framework doing hidden analytical work. Strictly speaking then, all problems are the result of a set of conceptual assumptions, and all attempts to address what we find problematic will embroil us in further sets of concepts.

Second, although the way I have developed the distinction between instrumentality, unreason and mythology is new to the literature on war rape, they are not categories without antecedents. In some ways they gesture to whole disciplinary traditions: to economics (instrumentality), psychology (unreason) and anthropology (mythology). The analogy is not perfect (for example, anthropologists also consider economic and material factors) but the styles of reasoning are not my creation, even if my rendering of them has not been wholly convincing.

1 I am grateful to Meera Sabaratnam for pushing me to clarify these points, and for the phrase 'spectre of explanatory failure'.

Third, at least some of these propositions are regularly said to be the key to understanding wartime sexual violence. In recent years this has been the case especially for instrumentalist propositions, principally the idea that rape is consciously chosen as a strategy by commanders who give direct orders (instrumentalist proposition 1) and that the aim of that strategy is the direct seizure of material resources, usually through terrorising local populations (instrumentalist proposition 3). We will see very clearly in the case of some advocacy related to the DRC that these ideas reduce a whole range of social conflicts to private profiteering. In other quarters, rape is thought of as primarily a question of quite specific cultural norms (rather than widely distributed ones mingled with frustrations or of consciously-chosen tactics of accumulation). So it is said that some communities are more rape prone than others because of historically-ingrained misogyny (mythological proposition 3).

When put this way (whether by feminists or not), some propositions come into occasionally stark contradiction with others, as the introduction to Part Two intimated. Unreason's second proposition (that rape is widely distributed and fragmented across different institutions) is, for example, in conflict with instrumentalist proposition 1 (that rape is the result of orders passed down hierarchically within a single organisation) and mythological propositions 1 and 3 (that practices of rape are confined to particular institutional cultures or particular social groups). So *in any given case*, one or other mode will offer the most purchase, and this will be specifiable at a more fine-grained level, even if there is ambiguity about how to interpret evidence. Part of the purpose of the last three chapters has been to enable such a focus, to show the presence not just of, say, instrumentality, but of class extraction, or military injunction, or whatever. And *in any general case*, the distribution of atrocity can in principle be examined to determine which mode best fits the reported experiences of sexual violence.²

Moreover, this work has not been intended as an exercise in highlighting failure. I take it as given that honest and attentive inquiry is difficult, and that clarifying the conceptual and

2 It might be objected that 'the DRC' or 'the Rwandan genocide' cannot be innocently bordered as solid single cases, and that there can be many different events, with different causes, all within the same war. I do not disagree with this point, but it also assumes that there is some way of assessing what that distribution is, and to see whether forms of violence do indeed cluster according to patterns or not. In other words, it already concedes that there is a way of explaining the observed spread of brutality.

political stakes of that inquiry, and relating them to a given problem in the world (such as an ongoing crisis of gender security or a historical case of war rape), is complex. The complication is no sleight on feminism. Where difficulties arise (as in the definition of rationality or in how to conceptualise the psycho-social divide) these are often problems that have long troubled social theorists, and which themselves stand in need of sustained attention. At the risk of repetition, the point is not that feminist IR must learn from these external projects, like some hitherto inattentive schoolchild, *but that it shares a set of problems with them*, a commonality of conceptual struggles that can be obscured when the most salient question is that of feminism or anti-feminism.

As Chapters 2 and 3 suggested, appreciating the explanatory dimension of feminism orientates inquiry towards concrete cases, just as its moral and political dimensions presuppose such an account. The more seriously we take the 'critical' element here – understood in terms of the non-necessary character of social relations and the multiplicity of logics within the social world – the more necessary it becomes to turn towards situated instances of sexual violence. Conceptual analysis of the kind undertaken in Part Two opens up a range of theoretical insight, but will not determine a singular answer applicable across all examples. Part Three thus elaborates one cluster of war rape – that of the Eastern DRC in the last decades – within that general framework of explanations. As a case, it both provides empirical material on the overlapping dimensions of conflict and sexual violence and offers a perspective from which modal claims may be rejected or modified. It is illustrative in the sense of substantiating some otherwise abstracted ideas of motive, cause and structure, but not because it merely proves what has already been posited theoretically. Events, whether past or unfolding, also resist concepts, and throw their own bloody mess back in the face of the inquirer.

Part Three

A History of Bad Men

Tell me how will we know they can't hear us coming?
It's easy for me, I got a head start running away
Keep up or your disease spread quick
So how did you learn to be sick, so cunning?
It's easy to sing but you just keep on humming along
Did you hear that? I got a real bad feeling
Don't make a sound: they're not dead, just sleeping
The Melvins, 'A History Of Bad Men'¹

Periodising Atrocity

Eastern Congo is still at war. Despite a formal conclusion to hostilities in 2003, a decade long peacekeeping mission by MONUC/MONUSCO, and a recent rapprochement between Kinshasa and Kigali, violence still plagues the Kivus and its environs.² The populations of these territories indeed still prefer to name their condition as that of war.³ The 'post-conflict' label so often applied by the international community may indeed itself be a factor in perpetuating the violence.⁴ A number of armed groups, including major perpetrators of rape like the Mai Mai and CNDP remained proactively involved in conflict throughout the decade, as did FARDC and MONUC forces seeking to disrupt the deeply embedded troops of the FDLR (see the chronology on pg. 194 for more details). During the writing up of this thesis, a new rebellion was sparked in the Kivus, this time apparently

1 From Melvins 2006.

2 MONUC (the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) initially deployed in November 1999 as a ceasefire observing mission, but had its mandate expanded to more than 5,000 troops in 2000 and then to over 22,000 'uniformed personnel' in July 2007, making it the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world (the UNAMID Darfur deployment is larger, but is a joint operation with the African Union). In July 2010 it was renamed MONUSCO (the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

3 International Alert 2010; Autesserre 2010:192; Vinck et al. 2008:24.

4 Séverine Autesserre lists it as one of the elements of 'peacebuilding culture' which has failed to properly grasp the character of violence in the DRC. See Autesserre 2010:28.

involving former CNDP elements under the command of Bosco Ntaganda.⁵ It has recently become clear that this insurgency by the M23 group has the backing of Rwanda.⁶

Although one research strategy would be to approach the material chronologically and to explore each conflict separately, the overlaps of armed groups and violent processes since at least 1994 prevents any easy periodisation of sexual violence. The following chapters therefore treat the period since the Rwandan genocide as one of general conflict in Eastern DRC, and make distinctions in terms of particular groups and strategies in that context.⁷ Consequently, while they draw on material from the First and Second Congo Wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2002), the focus is predominantly on the last decade, which is the period in which we can distinguish several general features, including the persistence of 'war without war' in eastern DRC; the major deployment of MONUC and other international agencies; the relative shift to understandings of the Congo war as 'civil' rather than 'regional' (a complicated diagnosis, as we shall see); and the major increase in international attention to the issue of wartime sexual violence in the DRC.

The approach adopted is necessarily shifting: between periods of war, between locations of violence, and between actors. Where particular atrocities are explored in depth, the intended effect is to provide an episodic detailing of the wider questions posed. This is a function both of the complexity of events themselves, but also of the relative uselessness of conventional boundaries. For example, many putatively 'rebel' fighters are also now officially FARDC fighters (and the same may even have once been Rwandan army fighters). Repertoires of violence and exploitation may remain very similar regardless of whether an individual or unit was 'CNDP' or already 'FARDC' at the time of an incident, especially given the continuation of parallel command structures (a phenomenon illustrated by the M23 rebellion). Similarly, generic ethnic labels are often bad guides to identity and subject location without further detail and several countries continue to be involved to some degree in violence in Eastern DRC despite peace agreements specifying otherwise.

5 I do not deal with the M23 at any length in what follows, but see IRIN 2012a; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2012; Stearns 2012b.

6 Wallis, Manson, and Steinglass 2012.

7 One consequence is that the chapters deal very rarely with Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has principally been active in Orientale Province as part of a somewhat distinct conflict system. For material on the LRA and sexual violence see Human Rights Watch 2009.

The coming chapters attempt to account for sexual violence and its relation to war in Eastern Congo. But it is worth first stressing what is not at stake in them. Congo is not the test case for a general theory of war rape, and conclusions drawn from it are not expected to map neatly – if at all – onto other conflicts. An assessment that wartime sexual violence in the Great Lakes is fundamentally driven by instrumentality, for example, will in some sense validate insights drawn from that mode, but will not mean that unreason and mythology do not also have analytical purchase, or that there are not cases where they may prove equally insightful. Instead, the question is how general logics of war rape play out *in this case*. What concatenations of instrumentality, unreason and mythology can be discerned, put into effect by which actors, and with what consequences for our understanding of this case? The underlying orientation is one of scepticism towards the possibility of direct comparisons between cases. Instead, ideal typical frameworks such as that developed in Part Two, serve as guides in understanding the detail of *varying and complex situations*, rather than as unified theories: “the surface of history affords, therefore, no certain principles of decision”⁸

There is a danger that this will reinforce an impression of Congo as a place of special barbarity, especially where questions of identity, genocide and resource extraction are concerned. As previous chapters have hopefully made clear, this is not my belief. After all, European histories of blood identity and racial transgression are hardly inconsequential.⁹ The issues arising are not so much 'African' – although the colonial legacy does set ethnicity and race in a certain general way – as specifically related to the Eastern Congolese scene.¹⁰ A single case was chosen because theoretical work suggested a need to pick apart literatures and look in an altered way at existing situations; and DRC was chosen as that case because of the relative scarcity of academic material on rape there (compared to the extent of feminist work on Bosnia, Rwanda or Darfur) and because the complexities of violence in the region posed an analytical challenge for modes of critical explanation.

8 This was James Mill's reprimand against the covering law generalisations of Thomas Macauley, as related in MacIntyre 1971:270.

9 See Jackson 2007:482; Dunn 2009.

10 I address these colonial dimensions only in their contemporary impact. For longer views, see Ascherson 1999; Dunn 2003.

The Argument

The contours of the coming argument are complex. Unavoidably so, since they must both convey the range of factors in the successive wars of Eastern DRC (wars regularly discussed as an 'alphabet soup' of armed groups and allegiances) and develop an analysis of the relationship (and in some ways surprising disjuncture) between war and rape. As the chapters progress they explore forms of the following arguments about rape in Eastern DRC: that it is now principally carried out by civilians; that it is overwhelmingly carried out by rebel groups (rather than the FARDC); that it is the result of practices imported with the Rwandan genocide; that it is an expression of ethnic hatred; that it results from conflicts over land in the Kivus; that it is directed by the geopolitical aims of Rwanda, Uganda and other powers; and that it is a tool used in the extraction of natural resources. Each of these hypotheses is found somewhat wanting, although insights from several prove indispensable to a fuller understanding.

The four chapters build a case for seeing war and rape in the Eastern DRC as awkwardly articulated. Not because rape is not a part of the system of war, but because it does not appear to fit within common instrumentalist explanations. Moreover, there is an analytical gap between the dynamics of war and the dynamics of sexual violence. War is characterised by a number of features, principally:

- forms of proxy warfare conducted in Eastern DRC according to the dictates of regional geopolitics. Many armed groups over the decades have to a significant extent been sponsored by other countries, and these strategies are closely related to the extraction of mineral wealth from the region, especially during the Second Congo War, but continuing to today;
- militia formation within the Kivus and Eastern DRC in response to a constellation of issues including pressures on land, ethnic clashes, attempts to maintain autonomy from the central government of the DRC and from communal fears of marginalisation and annihilation;
- enrichment strategies undertaken by armed groups for the personal gain of commanding individuals, for the profit of sponsoring nations and to enable the continued funding of political movements and their armed wings, including in line

with the dynamics of fear and identity just described;

- the frequent shifting of allegiances between armed groups, apparently explainable primarily by reference to changes in the immediate political and military situation. Because of the complexity of economic, identitarian and traumatic dimensions of violence (or of instrumentality, mythology and unreason), interpretation of these shifts is challenging.

On the other hand, sexual violence is characterised by a number of features, most importantly:

- a relatively stable form of sexual violence, with the majority of attacks taking the form of gang rapes and a significant minority involving additional brutality and/or periods of sexual slavery;
- highly inconclusive and sometimes contradictory evidence about the identity of the major perpetrators of sexual violence. In general, rape appears to be carried out by small groups, usually seeking to hide their affiliations, with a degree of pre-planning but rarely orientated towards the subsequent seizure of specific goods;
- some evidence of increasing civilian involvement, but within an overall context where armed groups of uncertain identity are the majority perpetrators;
- an apparently wide distribution of sexual violence across different groups and targeting different communities, without strong evidence that rape is being waged against a given community in spite of evidence that much of the violence in general is related to inter-communal conflict;
- strikingly little evidence of military and political commanders ordering their soldiers to perpetrate sexual violence to achieve strategic economic or military ends. Indeed, some testimonial evidence instead suggests that certain armed groups consider rape to be forbidden, and punishable, even if they nevertheless engage in it;
- a common factor of 'revenge' in atrocities, raising significant problems for modes of critical explanation in determining whether these are driven by conscious calculation, symbolic mimesis, or extreme frustration in a situation of prolonged conflict;
- strong themes of stress, frustration, anger and lust in perpetrator and combatant discourse, with some specific groups (the Mai Mai in particular) showing evidence of

a more specifically mythological understanding of rape, and an attendant cosmology of identity and violence. These are pockets of mythological intensity that co-exist with more diffuse and less explicitly ideological forms of military culture.

As we will see, in some cases the connection between the dynamics of war and of rape appears clear. But in most cases problems of interpretation and evidence arise which together amount to a view that sexual violence cannot be reduced to the war context, and that the influence of the general situation of conflict and militarisation in the region has highly complex, and sometimes even paradoxical, effects in terms of rape. There is instrumentalism at work, but it seems either not to result in sexual violence (compared to situations where instrumentality does not seem to be in play) or is connected to it only in a partial and tangential way: what we might term an *ad hoc instrumentalism*. Despite the claims of some activists, the chapters find no compelling evidence of a hierarchically-organised campaign of rape on a scale that could account for the levels of sexualised aggression recorded in the Eastern Congo.

Approached through a series of layers, the situation can then be stated as follows. At the level of politics, the historical link between land and identity is repeatedly exploited to foster power in certain areas. A political-economic motive (the system of patronage) combines with a somewhat under-stated genuine crisis of identity (histories of persecution, genocide and variable oppression before, during and after colonialism). The result is a shifting arrangement in which political groupings (and their military wings) rise, fall and collaborate to maintain status and security. These ends are contested and sometimes contradictory, as leaders exploit their own communities at the same time as they speak of common destiny. The pattern of politics so described can only be understood historically, but are also subject to medium- and short-term shifts, depending on pressures from above (the involvement of regional powers, the Rwanda-DRC rapprochement) and from below (land pressures, migration and displacement, economic conditions).

At the level of the war, this dynamic – essentially one of instrumentalised mythology and historical political economy – is both heightened and combined with a more direct set of economic expropriations, both for personal accumulation and for the funding of military

campaigns. However, these various military components cannot be understood as merely ‘greed’ based, nor as the local implementation of a global system in a functionalist sense (although there are, of course, global connections). Instead, militarised accumulation is again a combination of identitarian and economic aspects. Even if we assume that commanders are cynical in their statements, participants in violence and their supporters clearly understand war in mythological and political-economic terms as being about the relative positions and defence of communities and their resources. Together, politics and war reflect the constellation of land, ethnicity and community that makes up a multifaceted Great Lakes conflict system.¹¹

Finally, at the level of wartime sexual violence, there is considerable fragmentation. On the one hand, it is very clear that rape is overwhelmingly carried out by armed groups. However, with some exceptions, it is neither strongly linked to ethnic mythology nor to direct accumulation. Instead, the character of sexual violence is best understood as the nexus between military masculinities, feelings of anger and frustration amongst combatants and the dynamics of the revenge attack (dynamics which exceed a narrowly military-strategic consideration). Within this there is some scope for instrumental need arguments, as looting is common, yet the association between arbitrary taxation, forced labour and natural resources and sexual violence specifically is not as strong as often assumed. In fact, there is evidence of economic exploitation dependent on a combination of violence and protection (armed groups as protection rackets) *without* sexual violence being a major element.

Three general forms of violence thus emerge from Part Three. First, a form of mythological (and ambiguously instrumental) violence founded on motifs of violation, taboo transgression and revenge in the form of *the retaliatory atrocity*. Second, a more limited instrumentalist violence deployed as part of resource extraction strategies, and co-existing in war economies with parallel structures of taxation, relying partially on rape as part of a package with other forms of violence to coerce civilians into cooperation: *an extractive sexual violence*. Third, rape as the consequence of feelings of acute frustration and need experienced by combatants in war, but not heavily related to the ethnic identities of the victims: *a fragmented sexual aggression*.

11 The term is from Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:149.

In propositional terms, the evidence provided in the coming chapters indicates significant evidence of group bonding in relation to rape (unreason proposition 3) as well as contradictory expressions of pleasure and disgust on the part of perpetrators (unreason proposition 4). The spread of sexual violence across armed groups does not suggest that only some engage in it, although the ritualised form of Mai Mai rape does indicate some place for this kind of military culture argument (mythological proposition 1). There also appears to be a ritualised form taken by revenge attacks (mythological proposition 2), although this may sometimes be explainable in terms of intended signals to enemies (instrumentalist proposition 1). Violence in general is often linked, by some measure, to economic need and greed, and rape can play a role in this (instrumentalist proposition 3), although this does not appear to occur often enough to account for the scale of rape. In other words, while elements suggested by all three modes of critical explanation can be found in the case of the DRC, it is significantly weighted towards propositions on the border between unreason and mythology and to the more fractured micro-level of violent repertoires: to the distributed actions of soldiers and small groups rather than to the plotted strategies of commanders.

The chapters proceed via a shifting focus, moving from rape to war and then back again. Chapter 7 sets out the evidence on war rape in the DRC, surveying studies of violence and its forms, attributions of responsibility to particular armed groups and suggests why any theory of rape in the Congo Wars may have to be 'un-unified'. Chapter 8 steps back from the example of war rape to explore wider conflict dynamics. In particular it looks at the legacy of the Rwandan genocide and civil war on Eastern Congo, investigates the case for land conflict as a source of sexual violence, and addresses the major theme of retaliatory atrocity before considering regional geopolitical dimensions of war. Chapter 9 picks up on this theme but focuses in on the argument that rape is a tool of resource extraction in the Kivus. Providing a detailed analysis both of general patterns of militarised resource extraction and of specific cases, it concludes that while resources are a major dimension in the conflict system, they cannot explain levels of sexual violence. Finally, Chapter 10 turns to the discourses deployed by combatants and perpetrators themselves in accounting for war rape. It finds little evidence of hierarchical commands to rape, instead developing a view of combatants self-understandings principally derived from the intersection of unreason and mythology.



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Map 1: The DRC, showing Provinces and International Borders

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, TERMINOLOGY

ANR	<i>L'Agence Nationale de Renseignements</i> Civil intelligence services of the DRC Government
Banyamasisi	The name given to Banyarwanda (usually Hutu) living around Masisi in North Kivu.
Banyamulenge	The name given to Banyarwanda (usually Tutsi) living in South Kivu, developed to stress location ('Mulenge' is a place) rather than origins in Rwanda.
Banyamulenge War	Name sometimes given to the First Congo War, based on idea that it was caused by Tutsis and that Banyamulenge living in Congo are essentially Rwandan Tutsis.
Banyarutshuru	The name given to Banyarwanda (usually Hutu) living around Rutshuru in North Kivu.
Banyarwanda	Literally “those ancestrally belonging to Rwanda”. The blanket term for Hutu and Tutsi living in Eastern DRC.
AFDL	<i>Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire</i> Group formed under Rwanda impetus in 1996 which aided in the RPF's victory in Rwanda and were then backed by Rwanda in the First Congo War. Led by Laurent-Desire Kabila.
CNDP	<i>Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple</i> Armed group active in Eastern DRC after 2006, often associated with Tutsi ethnic groups, formally becoming a political group in 2009. Created by Laurent Nkunda and originally mobilising some 4,000-5,000 combatants. More recently led by Bosco Ntaganda, indicted by the ICC but now a general in the FARDC. Formally transformed into a political party in February 2009 after some 5,800 of the 7,000 CNDP fighters were integrated into the FARDC.
DRC	<i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i> The name given to the territory formally known as Zaire after the overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997.
FAC	<i>Forces Armées Congolaises</i> The formal name for the official DRC army before 2003. Many soldiers who served in the FAC continued on in their roles in the reconstructed FARDC.
FAR	<i>Rwandan Armed Forces</i>
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> The official DRC army, reconstructed substantially after the formal end of the Second Congo war in 2003, now incorporating elements of former rebel factions through a process known as 'brassage'.

FDD	<i>Forces de Défense de la Démocratie</i> Armed group active in the Burundi civil war.
FDLR	<i>Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda</i> Rebel group active in Eastern DRC, initially comprising Hutu combatants fleeing aftermath of 1994 Rwandan genocide. The prime target of post-2003 efforts to secure Eastern DRC for the government.
FNL	<i>Forces Nationales de Libération</i> Rebel group active in the Burundi civil war on behalf of Hutus.
FPLC	<i>Forces Patriotique pour la Libération du Congo</i> Armed wing of the UPC, led by Bosco Ntaganda.
Interahamwe	Generic term for rebels in Eastern DRC, usually taken to designate FDLR. Sometime used specifically to mean Hutu militia during the Rwandan genocide.
Kinyarwanda	A dialect of the Rwanda-Rundi language and an umbrella term sometimes given to Rwandaphone communities in Eastern DRC.
LRA	<i>Lord's Resistance Army</i> An armed group founded in 1987 and led by Joseph Kony, active in Northern Uganda and across Sudan and the Central African Republic, but also active in the North East of DRC, particularly around Orientale Province.
M23	A rebel movement emerging in Eastern DRC in April 2012, likely under the leadership of Bosco Ntaganda. It largely consists of former CNDP soldiers seemingly encouraged to mutiny in response to new pressures for the arrest of Ntaganda or because of moves by the DRC government against CNDP parallel command structures inside the FARDC. Evidence has recently emerged that the rebellion is backed by Rwanda.
Mai-Mai	Sometimes rendered as 'Mayi-Mayi', meaning 'Water-Water', the name given to local militias from the Kivus formed in 1997-1998 in resistance to the 'foreign' rebel and other forces active in DRC. There are many Mai Mai groups with different compositions, but the term tends to denote particularly brutal methods.
MONUC	<i>United Nations Organisation Mission in Congo</i> UN mission in DRC, established in 1999.
MONUSCO	<i>United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo</i> The UN mission in DRC, renamed from MONUC in July 2010.
PARECO	<i>Coalition des Résistants Patriots Congolais</i> Mix of North Kivu tribal militia including a significant Hutu faction, collaborating with FLDR against CNDP from 2007.
PNC	<i>Congolese National Police</i>

- Rasta** Criminalised militia made up of ex-Mai Mai and FARDC deserters alongside local criminals, originally founded by Commander Koffi, an FDLR deserter. Notorious for brutality and widely considered to be interested only in profit.
- RCD** *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie*
The Congolese Rally for Democracy, a rebel group based in Eastern DRC during the second Congo War, splitting into several factions and becoming a political party after 2003.
- RCD-Goma** *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma*
The faction splitting from the RCD with the support of Rwanda and constituting the 'militarist core' of Banyamulenge Tutsi, former Mobutists and elements of FAC.
- RCD-ML** *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération*
Also known as RCD-Kisangani, the faction split from the RCD in May 1999 under the leadership of Wamba Dia Wamba with the support of Uganda
- RPA** *Rwandan Patriotic Army*
The armed wing of the RPF, becoming the official Rwandan army in 1994 after the defeat of the Hutu power regime.
- RPF** *Rwandan Patriotic Front*
Political movement created by Rwandan exiles in Uganda in 1987, involved in an insurgency against Habyarimana's rule in Rwanda since 1990 and constituting the main element of Rwanda's elite after the genocide.
- UPC** *Union of Congolese Patriots*
Organisation formed by Thomas Lubanga Dyilo and active in Ituri after Lubanga's split from the RCD-ML in July 2001. Said to be largely backed by ethnic Hema interest groups.

A PARTIAL CONGO CHRONOLOGY

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1971	Congo renamed Zaire.
1 October 1990	Rwanda Patriotic Front attacks Rwanda from Uganda.
6 April 1994	Juvenal Habyarimana's plane shot down over Rwanda.
July 1994	Rwandan genocide.
October 1996	Rwandan forces invade Zaire under cover of 'homegrown' rebellion, beginning the First Congo.
May 1997	Mobutu toppled, ending the First Congo War. Zaire becomes the DRC.
1997-1998	Mai-Mai militias begin to form in the Kivus in resistance to the foreign connections of rebel forces.
August 1998	The Second Congo War begins, with Rwandan-backed RCD forces and Uganda-backed MLC forces seeking to overthrow Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who was supported by other African states, including Zimbabwe, Chad, Angola and Namibia. Sometimes referred to as 'Africa's World War'
2 August 1998	10 th Brigade of the Armée Nationale Congolaise deserts along with the 12 th Brigade, forming the military wing of the anti-Kabila rebellion and beginning the Second Congo War
4 August 1998	James Kabarebe commands Kitona Airlift.
20 August 1998	Political wing of the anti-Kabila Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) formed in Goma.
26 August 1998	Zimbabwe dispatches forces to Kinshasa to defend Kabila.
May 1999	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération (RCD-ML), also known as RCD-Kisangani, splits from RCD with the support of Uganda. Rwanda supports the other major faction, RCD-Goma, which has a more militarist agenda.
November 1999	First MONUC observers deployed, but limited to rebel territory.
January 2001	Laurent-Desire Kabila assassinated. Joseph Kabila takes power.
April 2002	Agreement arising from the Inter-Congolese Dialogue signed by DRC government and MLC at Sun City, South Africa.
December 2002	Inter-Congolese Dialogue participants sign the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement.
May 2003	Last regional army leaves the DRC.

February 2006	International Criminal Court (ICC) issues arrest warrant for Thomas Lubanga Dyilo on charges of child conscription on behalf of the Forces Patriotique pour la Libération du Congo (FPLC)
July 2006	Laurent Nkunda creates the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP).
August 2006	ICC issues arrest warrant for Bosco Ntaganda on charges of forcible conscription, rape, sexual slavery and other war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out on behalf of the FPLC.
January 2008	Conference on Peace, Security and Development in the Kivus launched in Goma, beginning the Amani Peace Process.
May 2008	ICC issues arrest warrant for Jean-Pierre Bemba on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out by the MLC in the Central African Republic. Bemba arrested the next day.
November 2008	DRC-Rwanda Nairobi agreement on joint military action against FDLR.
January 2009	4,000 Rwandan troops re-enter eastern DRC in Operation 'Umoja Wetu' ('Our Unity').
22 January 2009	Laurent Nkunda arrested in Rwanda.
March 2009	'Kimia II' ('Calm') operations begin with FARDC supported by MONUC forces.
23 March 2009	CNDP Integration Agreement specifying that CNDP troops will become part of DRC army and police and that the CNDP will become a political party. Date referenced in name of M23 rebellion launched in March 2012.
December 2009- January 2010	'Kimia II' operations end and are replaced by a new FARDC-MONUC mission named 'Amani Leo' ('Peace Today')
September 2010	ICC issues arrest warrant for Callixte Mbarushimana on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity (including torture and rape) carried out by Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR). Mbarushimama is arrested in October 2010.
December 2011	ICC drops charges against Mbarushimana.
March 2012	Thomas Lubanga Dyilo convicted of war crimes.
April 2012	M23 rebellion begins in Eastern DRC.
May 2012	ICC issues second arrest warrant for Bosco Ntaganda on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out on behalf of the FPLC/UPC in 2002-2003.

SEX AND DEATH IN THE EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Atrocity cannot be its own explanation. Violence cannot be allowed to speak for itself, for violence is not its own meaning. To be made thinkable, it needs to be *historicized*.

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*¹

Kasika

In August 1998, troops from the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) passed through the village of Kasika with Rwandan soldiers on their way to overthrow Laurent-Désiré Kabila.² After a formal welcome from the traditional Nyindu tribal leader, they went on their way. But when they passed back through Kasika the soldiers came under attack from a Mai-Mai militia led by a dissident chief from a nearby village.³ The ambushers managed to kill the RCD commander, and the surviving soldiers spent the remainder of the day hunting for them, to no avail. The next day, RCD troops returned to Kasika at dawn. Entering the church during Mass, the soldiers tied up the worshippers, separated out the nuns – who were raped and then killed – and the priest – who was forced to hand over money and then made to kneel in prayer before being shot in the head. They then turned on the village inhabitants: “[t]he soldiers began by using their hatchets to bludgeon the worshippers to death – so as not to alert the village, some of the villagers I interviewed said. Others said it was to save bullets”.⁴

Those who had fled and survived returned to further horror. The chief's heart had been removed and his pregnant wife's genitals cut out (her foetus cast by her side). Inside the church a grim tableau had been arranged for them:

1 Mamdani 2002:228–229.

2 These paragraphs draw heavily on Stearns 2012a:251–257.

3 'Mai-Mai' literally means 'Water-Water' and is a blanket term for local militias organised in the Kivus in the late 1990s in resistance to various 'foreign' occupiers.

4 Stearns 2012a:256.

They disembowelled one woman by cutting her open between her anus and vagina, then propped up the dead body on all fours and left her with her buttocks facing upwards. Another corpse was given two slits on either side of his belly, where his hands were inserted. “*Anavaa koti* – they made him look like he was wearing a suit”, the villagers told me. Another man had his mouth slit open to his ears, was put in a chair and had a cigarette dangling from his lips when he was found.⁵

Perhaps Kasika was a rare kind of atrocity exhibit. In the most comprehensive catalogue of violence in the Congo – the so-called *Mapping Report* – it features as just one more passing example of retaliatory violence in South Kivu. Mentioned with contemporaneous attacks nearby, there is none of the intimate terror conveyed by Jason Stearn's informants, although we do learn of “[b]rutal rapes, disembowelling and rape with sticks of wood...suffered by an unknown number of victims”.⁶ One incident among 600.⁷

In Congo itself Kasika has apparently attained a mythical and special status. Its residents took to calling it 'Kosovo', reaching for a parallel that could perhaps express what they had suffered to an international audience.⁸ But, excepting the origami of corpses, Kasika is in many ways stereotypical of atrocities in the Congo wars.⁹ The targeting of a civilian population; looting at gunpoint; the desecration of symbolically important spaces; rape; summary execution; evisceration; anger; a confusion of identities (the RCD soldiers assumed that the Kasika villagers supported the Mai-Mai); a simultaneous reliance on powerful collective labels (the villagers and Mai-Mai are 'Nyindu'; the RCD soldiers and Rwandans are identified by villagers as 'the Tutsi'); claims of violence as 'retaliation'; and a level of care and detail in the carrying out of atrocities, all congealed together.

5 Stearns 2012a:257.

6 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:304.

7 The *Mapping Report*'s comprehensiveness comes from its insistence on at least two independent sources for each incident. The material amassed across its 545 pages builds on the testimony of some 1,280 witnesses. See United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:6.

8 Stearns 2012a:251.

9 'Origami of corpses' is paraphrased from Stearns 2012a:257.

In this event alone we can detect the possible traces of instrumentality (a signal to military enemies, an opportunistic seizure of small cash sums), unreason (the transgression of the corpse arrangement, the spontaneous rape of the nuns), and mythology (the salience of putatively ethnic identities; the forum of the church). Here are the calling cards of the geopolitical commander and the obedient footsoldier, massacring because strategic logic and chains of command require it. There is the communal enforcer, writing his identity on the bodies of those others from an alien place. And in the church, the work of the frustrated power-seeker and his brothers in arms, exorcising their failure to track down the Mai Mai by contorting eviscerated flesh.

The Rape Capital of the World

From such admixtures of horrorism, manifested again and again in the warzone dispatch, comes the foregrounding of a particular kind of atrocity: the commonplace of Eastern DRC as the 'rape capital of the world'.¹⁰ Journalists, analysts, intervening agencies and human rights activists operate within this conflict frame, at once documenting its reality and reproducing it as a one-stop designation. Like 'genocide' for Darfur or 'sectarian war' for Iraq, the idea of Congo as *rape capital* animates activity. Within the benevolence industry itself, opinions have a more cynical tone; sometimes even sour.¹¹ Sensitive to the duplication of humanitarian effort, to the short-sightedness of donors, and to the complex social embeddedness of gender, officials complain about the sluggish progress of MONUC and MONUSCO and express doubt that anything can really be done.¹² There is resentment, and exhaustion, and distaste at some of the techniques of international advocacy (a flavour of which can be found in Figure 13).

¹⁰ See, for example, BBC 2010; Lloyd-Davies 2011; Wairagu 2012; Kahorha 2011; Gettleman 2009. 'Horrorism' is Adriana Cavarero's term (see the opening quote of the introduction).

¹¹ The term 'benevolence industry' is borrowed from Poplak 2012.

¹² This is an impressionistic gloss from interviews carried out in Goma and Bukavu in May-June 2010. See the Appendix for further details.



Figure 13: Imagining Congo, Consuming Congo: 'Love and Theft (Rosario Dawson)' (2011), Richard Mosse's Aerochrome Infrared of actress Rosario Dawson using an iPhone to photograph herself with a security guard near Bukavu at the inauguration of the City of Joy.¹³

Several informants complained of the swathes of agencies descending on the region, lured by the promise of funds associated with projects on war rape, regardless of objective needs or their qualifications to deliver.¹⁴ For one prominent activist, rape had “become a huge

¹³ In Mosse 2012:97. Mosse's rationale is worth reproducing: “Like Marlow on the steamer, I was pursuing something essentially ineffable, something so trenchantly real that it verges on the abstract, at the very limits of description. I needed to find an appropriate form to better describe this sinister resonance. In December 2009, Kodak officially discontinued their color infrared film, Aerochrome. The film was developed during the Cold War, in collaboration with the US military... [A] unique window through which to survey the battlefield of eastern Congo. Realism described in infrared becomes shrouded by the exotic, shifting the gears of Orientalism” (Mosse 2012:130).

¹⁴ In one case, two local implementing partners of the same UN agency were working in Lubero delivering the same services for a year. The agency itself had not spotted the duplication. It was also reported that NGOs were taken an insufficiently nuanced view of training members of the Congolese armed forces. By restricting training to those under a certain age and insisting on literacy and fitness requirements, they missed many of the soldiers who required sensitisation most. It has become common for senior soldiers to receive the same training several times, training which takes place at expensive resorts, but which is often delivered in English or French, languages in which those being trained are often not fluent or even basically competent. Interview with UN official, Goma, 1 June 2010, and EU Gender Officer, Goma, 3 June 2010.

business for people... [survivors] become like merchandise".¹⁵ The link between sexual violence and exploitation has become solidified in another way too, one that risks reinscribing a space called 'Congo' in the perpetual shadow of violence. Not just a geopolitical repetition, but a geosocial and geocultural one. A savage recycling. It can be found in the phraseology of the benevolent as much as in the colonial imagination: *Rape of a Nation*, *Rape of the Congo*, 'Stop Raping Our Greatest Resource', 'Peace Violated' (see Figures 14, 15 and 16).¹⁶

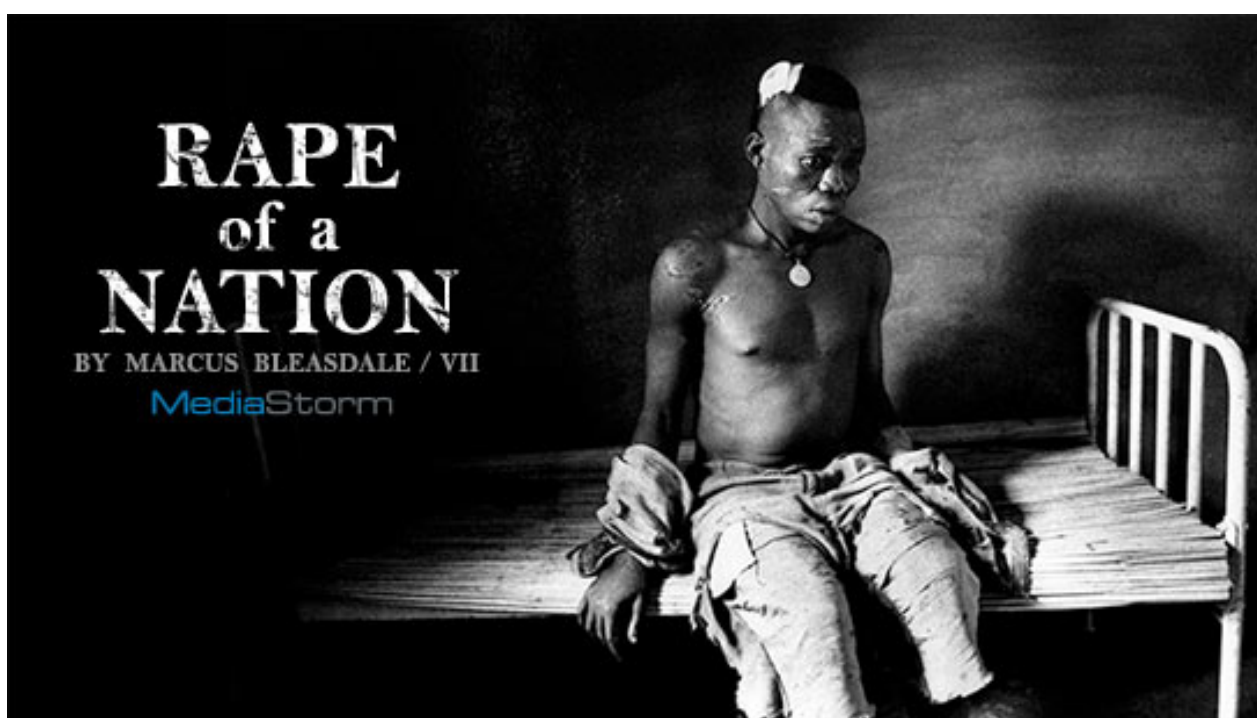


Figure 14: 'Rape of a Nation' (2008): The cover photo for Marcus Bleasdale's extended photo essay on the connections between violence and resource extraction in the DRC.¹⁷

¹⁵ Interview with Christine Schuler-Deschryver of V-Day, Bukavu, 8 June 2010.

¹⁶ Bleasdale 2009; Hochschild 2009. 'Stop Raping Our Greatest Resource' is the slogan of V-Day's campaign in the DRC (<http://drc.vday.org/home.html>). 'Peace Violated' is the title given to a France 24 iPad report on the DRC, the first such interactive documentary produced especially by for iPad (see <http://www.france24.com/en/20100802-france-24-launches-worlds-first-ipad-documentary-democratic-republic-congo-kivu-rape>).

¹⁷ See <http://mediastorm.com/publication/rape-of-a-nation>.

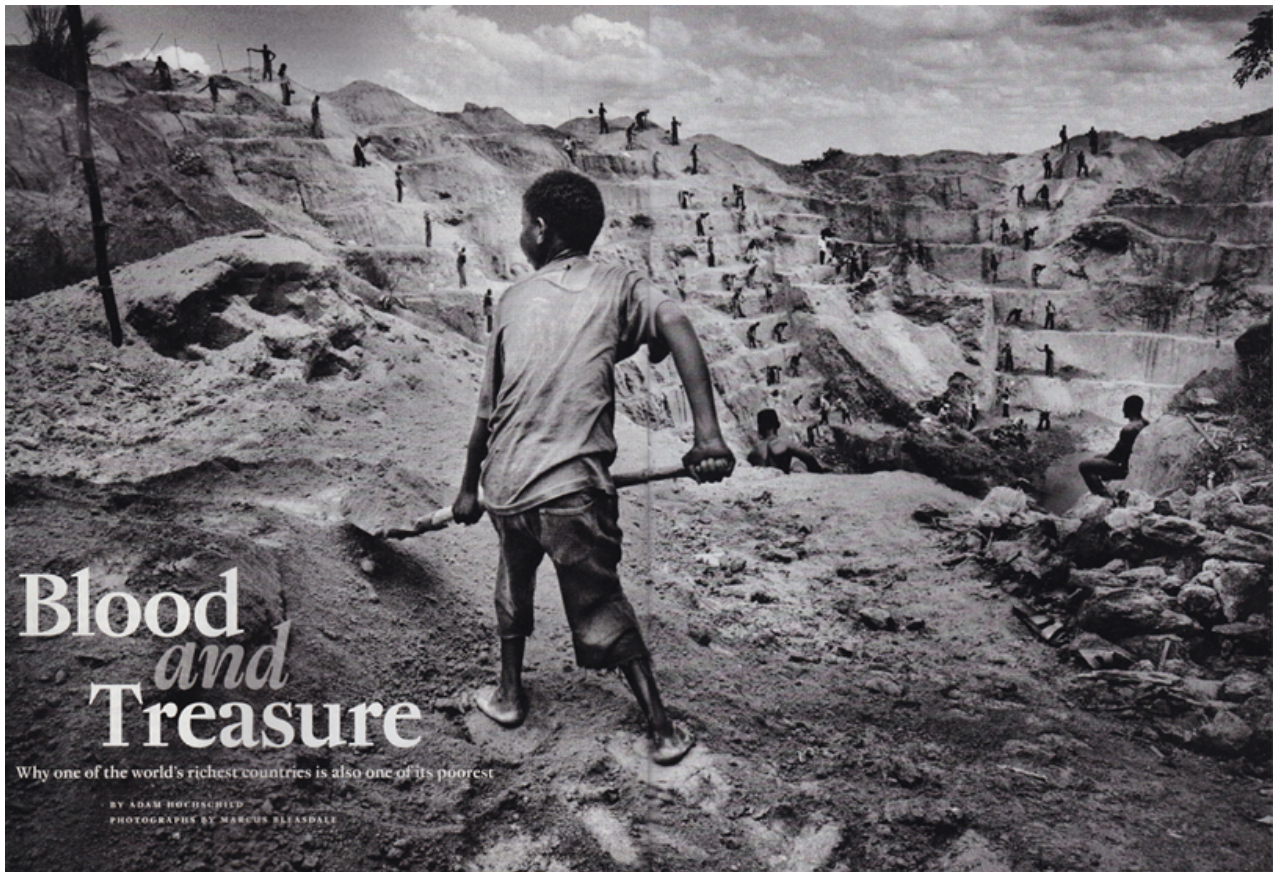


Figure 15: 'Blood and Treasure' (2010): Another Marcus Bleasdale shot, this time for an article in Mother Jones written by Adam Hochschild.¹⁸

There is no doubt that rape is a major aspect of conflict in Eastern DRC. Victims have been recorded as young as 3 and as old as 80.¹⁹ Yet rape is only one feature of a generalised terror. Civilians fear travelling to markets, fields or nearby towns, especially in North Kivu. And for good reason. On average, residents of North Kivu have been displaced 3.7 times each, 3.3 times in South Kivu, and 2.5 times each in Ituri during since the early 1990s. 81% of people in one survey of Eastern DRC reported having been displaced at least once since 1993.²⁰ As Table 3 indicates, sexual violence has in some senses been less of a consequence of conflict that has forced labour, physical beatings and general persecution.

¹⁸ Hochschild 2010. The shot is from Bleasdale 2009, the first 24 pages of which are dedicated to similar scenes of mining.

¹⁹ Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International 2010:9.

²⁰ Vinck et al. 2008:26, 29.

Have you experienced any of the following as a consequence of the conflicts in Eastern Congo since 1993?

	North Kivu	South Kivu	Ituri	Total
Interrogation/persecution by armed group	54.6	60.2	50.7	55.3
Forced to work	50.8	58.1	50.3	52.9
Forced to carry loads	50.8	57.7	50.4	52.8
Beaten	46.6	50.7	40.5	46.2
Tortured	34.0	38.8	34.8	35.7
Abducted for at least a week	30.8	39.8	31.2	33.7
Being sexually violated	13.4	22.4	11.6	15.7
Being sexually violated multiple times	8.5	18.4	8.7	11.6

*Table 3: Varieties of Human Rights Violations Experienced in Eastern Congo, 1993-2007*²¹

How are we to make sense of sexual violence, and its place alongside war and suffering in the region? To begin with, we must understand the scale and character of sexual violence in the Congo Wars. Yet, for all the attention to the sheer quantity of rape, comprehensive estimates are rare. One report suggested a total of 40,000 rapes between 1998 and early 2004 in South Kivu, Maniema, Goma and Kalémie alone.²² Subsequent specific regional reporting suggests that the overall figure must be much higher and that rape has continued on much the same, if not a greater scale, since the formal end of the war in 2003. For example, MONUC recorded 13,000 rapes just in South Kivu during 2006, although other UN estimates appear to have placed the number closer to 27,000.²³ Médecins Sans Frontières admitted 7,482 rape victims to its health centres in Ituri alone between 2003 and 2007 and treated 6,700 victims in DRC during 2008.²⁴ The UN recorded 7,703 new cases of sexual violence in North and South Kivu during the same period and one recent UN document claimed that some 1,100 rapes are documented every month, mainly concentrated in the Kivus.²⁵

²¹ Vinck et al. 2008:33–35. The survey was of 2,620 individuals between September and December 2007.

²² Human Rights Watch 2005a:7. The study was carried out by the Joint Initiative on the Fight Against Sexual Violence Towards Women and Children, made up of NGO, UN and Congolese Government representatives and also including input from the World Health Organisation.

²³ United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:7; Wakabi 2008:16.

²⁴ Médecins Sans Frontières 2009:9.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch 2009b:6, and United Nations Security Council 2009b:14.

A photograph of a woman in profile, wearing a vibrant, multi-colored headscarf and a dark jacket. She is looking towards the right. In the background, several other people are seated in what appears to be a courtroom or a public hearing. The text "RAPE IN CONGO" is overlaid in large white letters.

RAPE IN CONGO

Reported by Zoé Lamazou and Sarah Leduc

PEACE VIOLATED

Figure 16: 'Rape in Congo: Peace Violated' (2010): the lead image for a France24 report on sexual violence in the DRC, specifically for iPad.

These rough estimates have recently been replaced by a more serious statistical accounting, now suggesting levels of sexual violence up to 26 times higher than previously suggested.²⁶ Working from household survey data, rather than rapes reported directly to authorities, Peterman, Palermo and Bredenkamp infer a total of 1.69 to 1.8 million women who would have reported rape during their lifetime (and over 400,000 in the preceding twelve months), allowing for “translat[ion] into approximately 1,150 women raped every day, 48 women raped every hour, and 4 women raped every 5 minutes”.²⁷

Without large-scale systematic studies like this, tracing changes in levels of sexual violence over time becomes extremely challenging. The most commonly-cited difficulty is that of stigma. A study by MONUC of South Kivu province showed that between 2005 and 2007, less than 1% of the cases identified by health facilities were reported to the justice system.²⁸ Other estimates suggest that less than 50% of those who are raped are actually able to access health centres, a figure which would suggest an immediate doubling of the figures compiled from sources like Panzi Hospital.²⁹ Impunity, often cited as a reason for the perpetration of sexual violence, also limits resources for investigation. At least until 2004, there was only one gynaecologist available part-time for the whole of Maniema province, an area in which nearly 58,000 women are estimated to have experienced sexual violence in their lives.³⁰ In one case, many military justice officials simply refused to travel to Kabare to investigate the alleged crimes of the Congolese Army's 14th Brigade, citing the collapse of internal military control over the brigade and consequent risk to life.³¹ And of 287 cases of rape reported to authorities in South Kivu between 2005 and 2007, only 64 cases had actually been tried and 58 convictions secured by 2008, with more than half the cases still

26 Peterman, Palermo, and Bredenkamp 2011; Palermo and Peterman 2011.

27 Peterman et al. 2011:1064–1065. See also the coverage of this research in Gettleman 2009; Pflanz 2011; Adentunji 2011.

28 MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007a:18.

29 Human Rights Watch 2009b:14. Panzi Hospital near Bukavu in South Kivu is the major site for sexual violence treatment in the Eastern DRC, and its founder, gynaecologist Dr Denis Mukwege, has been a major advocate on behalf of survivors and is prominent in many news stories about rape in Congo. He has been awarded the UN Human Rights Prize (2008), the Olof Palme Prize (2009) and has been spoken of as a potential Nobel Laureate. Many organisations thus draw on Panzi for information and statistics. See, for example, the method adopted in Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International 2010.

30 Pratt and Werchick 2004:15; Peterman et al. 2011:1064.

31 Human Rights Watch 2009b:51.

under investigation.³² Those cases reported made up less than 1% of the number recorded in hospitals in the period.³³ Put otherwise, less than 0.002% of recorded rape cases resulted in a conviction in South Kivu.

Our statistical picture may even be the inverse of reality. As one UN official explained it, the data collected by any study is directly related to the geographical coverage of the research team. In times of high insecurity, when rape is assumed to be extensive, the coverage of teams is restricted to the safest areas. Their estimates are therefore based on samples which will be unusually secure from sexual violence, resulting in a headline figure that indicates that rape is going down precisely when violence and insecurity are at their highest levels.³⁴ By contrast, research teams are able to conduct their most comprehensive assessments when violence has receded, meaning that the higher levels of rape reported will reflect periods of past atrocity, or reporting which is 'batched' together (for example, individuals reporting all the sexual violence experienced over the last years in one statistical push). When UN and other agencies bring figures together to give officially-sanctioned estimates of rape, these coverage issues, as well as sometimes significant differences in research method, are elided.³⁵

32 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:16.

33 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:294.

34 Interview with UNOCHA official, Goma, 15 June 2010. Something along these lines was held by some to have occurred in 2009, and, for them, the idea that there had been a drop in sexual violence during that year was "impossible"

35 Interviews with UNOCHA official, Goma, 15 June 2010; UNFPA official, Goma, 17 June 2010; UNICEF official, Goma, 1 June 2010; Alpha Ujuvi official, Goma, 3 June 2010; and Adèle Safi Kagarabi, COFAS/CPLVS, Bukavu, 8 June 2010. Several interviewees explained that measurements of the extent of sexual violence were carried by a large number of organisations, from local charities to international agencies. These agencies often had differing methods, but 'final' statistics bearing the UN stamp were arrived at merely by aggregating the figures received from associated agencies. Rigorous statistical analysis is not carried out on these figures because of resource pressures on UN organisations. Following the implementation of the DRC Government-led National Strategy, different agencies are now responsible for different Clusters at the National and Provincial levels. Each cluster has adopted its own set of indicators for its issue area, generally based on a range of reporting forms for psycho-social, medical and legal aspects of SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence) created by UNFPA under previous coordinating arrangements. However, the use of these forms varies considerably in practice, creating significant problems with the primary data. For example, some implementing partners interpret a 'new' incident to be one in which an attack took place that week and the victim received services while, for others, a 'new' incident would be one that took place that month. Others recorded all cases where the victim as already in the system as 'old', even if the incident itself had not previously been reported. Some local NGOs had created their own exceptionally detailed systems for recording SGBV incidents, but also reported that international actors had ignored their data in collating global figures. Moreover, the tendency of some major actors, particularly MSF, to only provide their data occasionally was also held responsible for confusing the data, in one case creating the impression that there had been a major spike in the incidence of SGBV during two months in 2008, when this had simply been the result of MSF providing its data for the months in question.

One humanitarian official who had been involved with the creation of the original case forms was particularly scathing about the way in which locally-collected data was compiled for the Eastern DRC as a whole: “I was responsible for psychosocial data and I would cringe when I saw these presented as nationally-validated statistics”.³⁶ The empirical picture that emerges in the face of these difficulties is complex, but nonetheless provides some grounds for analysis. Four large sample studies in particular give strong indications of the distribution and form of sexual violence in Eastern DRC for a range of territories at multiple points in the Congo Wars.

International Alert and partners' study of sexual violence in South Kivu from 1996 to 2003 drew on 492 informants who had suffered rape during that period (Figure 17).³⁷ Victims reported that the majority of rapes were both 'isolated' and 'planned', meaning that they had been conceived by perpetrators in advance and took place some distance from public spaces. At the same time, a significant proportion (almost 40%) of rapes took place in public. The overwhelming majority of rapes were carried out by multiple assailants – were, in common parlance, gang rapes – and most were accompanied by some torture or additional brutality. Around 10% involved sexual slavery, and more than 12% were accompanied by the insertion of objects into genitals. Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) study of violence in Ituri during the shorter period of August 2004 to January 2005 arrived at very similar conclusions. 807 patients at MSF clinics reported on acts accompanying sexual violence they had suffered (Figure 18).³⁸ The vast majority of rape was coerced by armed fighters and was usually gang rape. A similar sub-group of victims experienced either additional violence or sexual slavery. A similar follow-up study published recently arrived at similar conclusions.³⁹

36 Anonymised respondent, Goma, June 2010.

37 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif, Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et la Paix, and International Alert 2005.

38 Médecins Sans Frontières 2005. See footnote 40 above on Panzi.

39 Duroch, McRae, and Grais 2011.

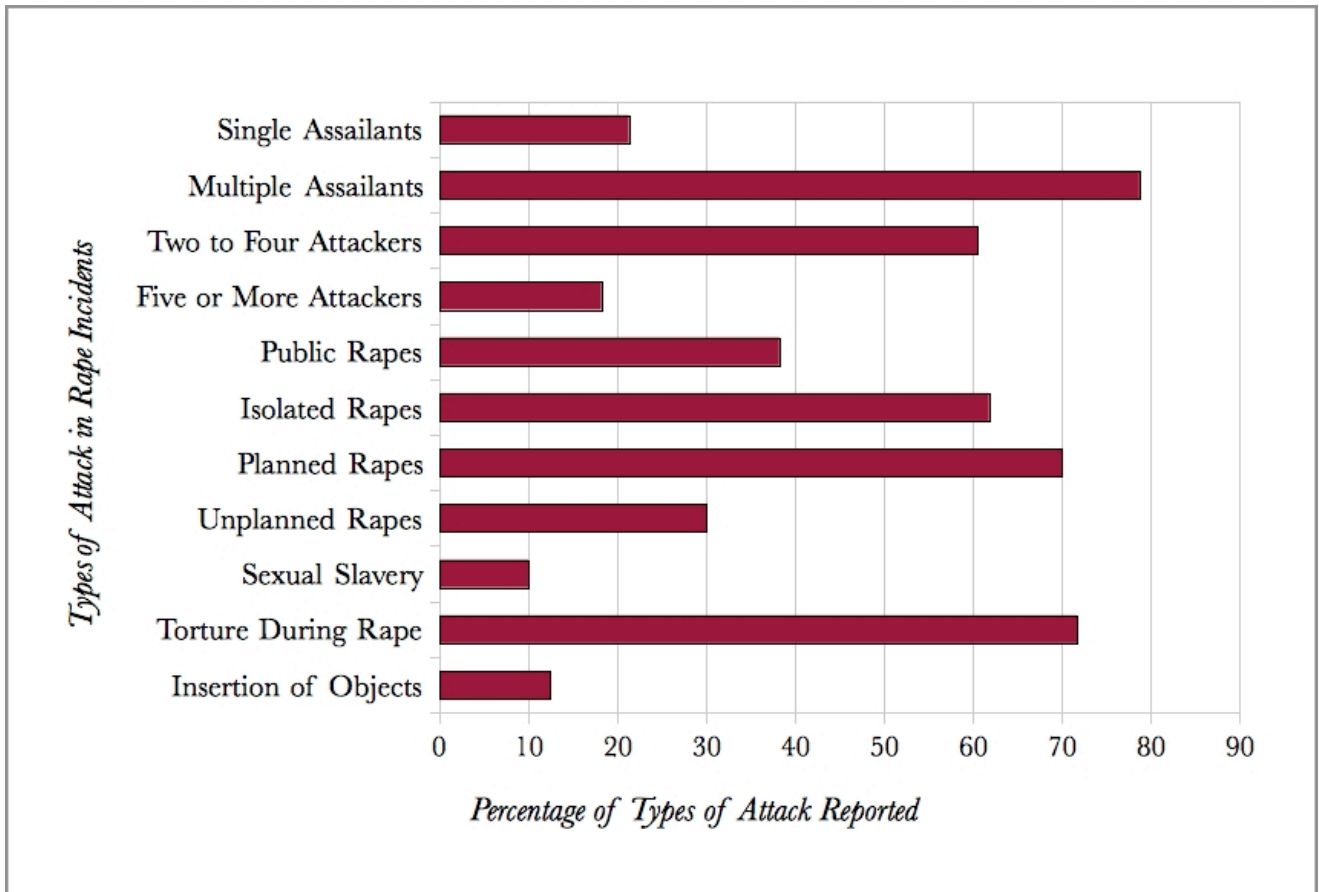


Figure 17: Types of Attack in Rape Incidents, South Kivu, 1996-2003 (492 respondents)⁴⁰

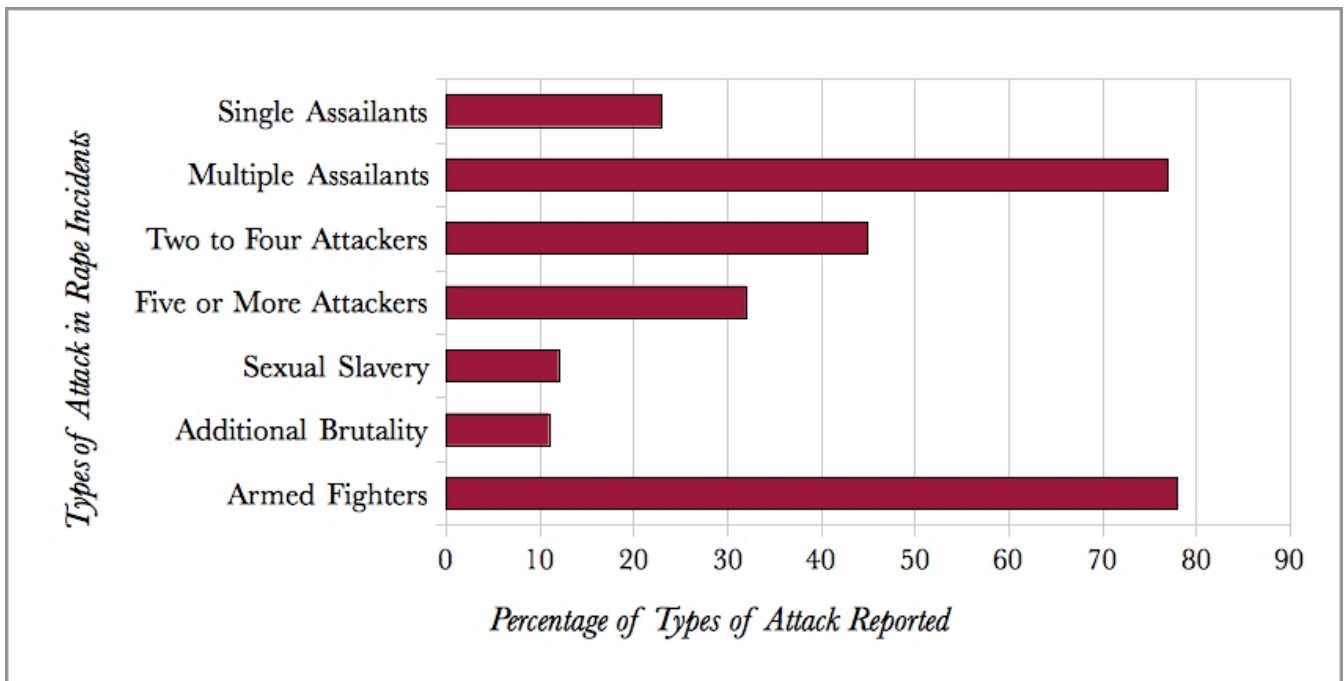


Figure 18: Types of Attack in Rape Incidents, Bunia, Ituri, August 2004-January 2005 (807 patients)⁴¹

⁴⁰ Data from Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:33-36, 62.

⁴¹ Data from Médecins Sans Frontières 2005:10.

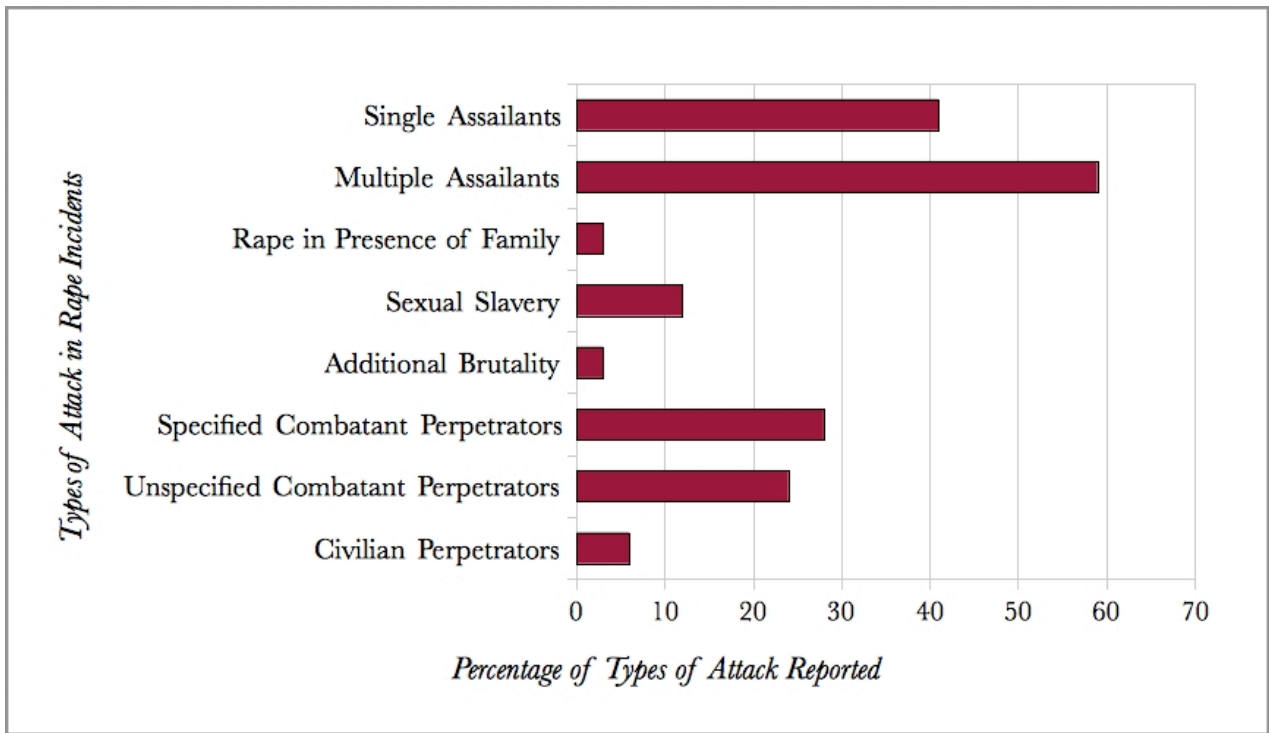


Figure 19: Types of Attack in Rape Incidents Reported at Panzi Hospital, 2004-2008 (4,311 patient records)⁴²

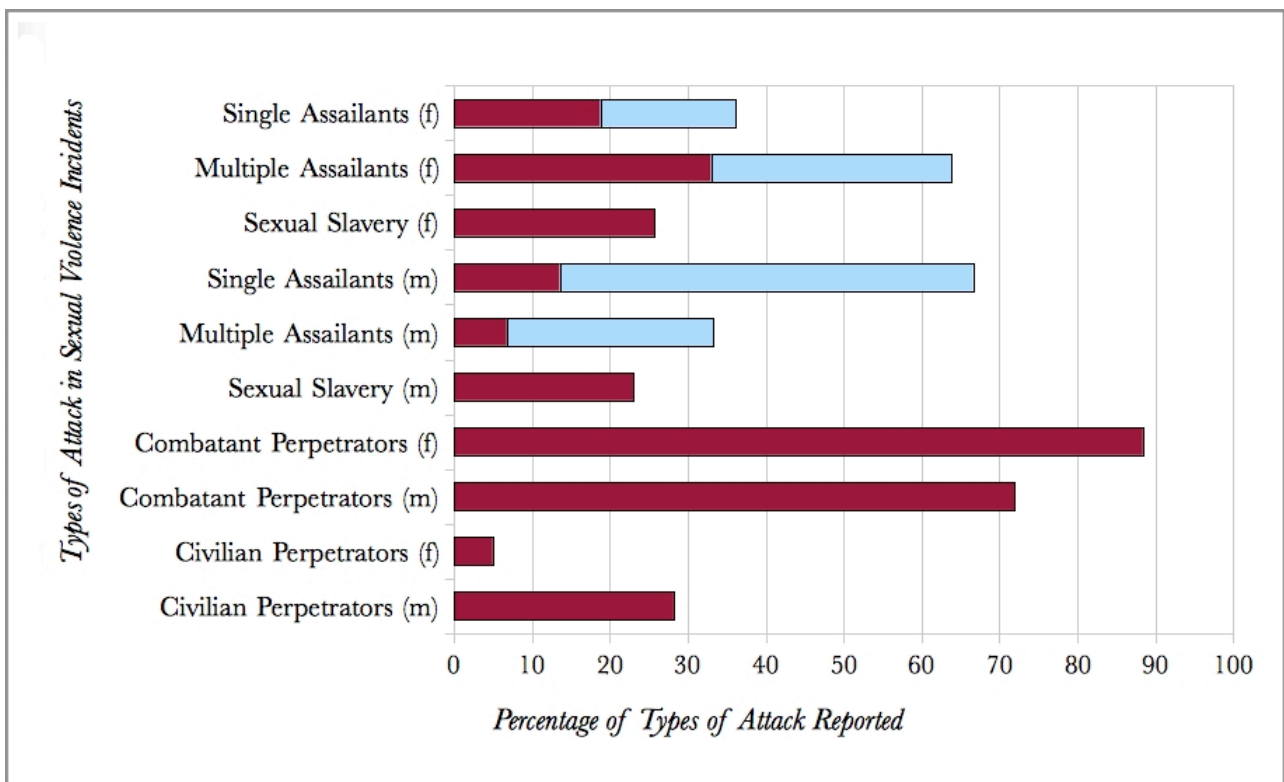


Figure 20: Types of Attack in Sexual Violence Incidents Over Lifetime for Male (m) and Female (f) Victims, Kivus, Maniema and Ituri (998 respondents)⁴³

42 Data from Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International 2010:13, 16.

43 Data from Johnson et al. 2010:557. The red sections of the bars indicate percentages of all sexual violence while the extended blue bars indicate percentages within cases of rape. So more than 30% of all cases of sexual violence where the victim was female involved multiple assailants, and more than 60% of all cases of rape where the victim was female involved multiple assailants.

An analysis of all records of sexual violence at Panzi Hospital by Oxfam and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (hereafter Oxfam-HHI) drew conclusions on the basis of 4,311 patient records covering medical examinations and after-care between 2004-2008 (i.e. after the formal conclusion of the Congo wars) (Figure 19).⁴⁴ Again, rape was most usually carried out armed groups (52% of rapes attributed to either a specified or unspecified armed group compared to only 6% by civilians, with the remainder of cases without perpetrator attributions, but likely also military) and was overwhelmingly gang rape. A similar proportion of victims (around 12%) experienced associated sexual slavery.⁴⁵ On release, this study was widely reported as showing an increase in rape by civilians.⁴⁶ But, despite the emphasis on this issue in the report (principally in terms of very large proportional increases in civilian perpetrators, rather than their role on an absolute scale) the researchers actually concluded that sexual violence in South Kivu is “largely militarized”, and that the vast majority of perpetrators do belong to armed groups.⁴⁷

More challenging to the conventional understanding of rape in Eastern DRC is a fourth study by Kirsten Johnson and colleagues, who interviewed 998 people in a representational cross-sectional study of the Kivus, Maniema and Ituri.⁴⁸ Because clinic-level data is likely to privilege war-related atrocity, the research team's method of random interviews was able to reveal a much greater extent of civilian and intimate-partner rape than previously explored. Intimate-partner violence stood at around 31% for women and 17% for men, with conflict related sexual violence at 74% and 65% respectively. Peterman et al. have also shown the existence of significant levels of civilian rape, with 35% of women in some parts of Congo reporting intimate partner sexual violence (compared to rates of 12-15% in neighbouring

44 Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International 2010.

45 The conclusion that unattributed rapes were also likely carried out by armed groups comes from an analysis of the other known characteristics they shared with military-perpetrated rapes. See Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International 2010:14.

46 See Al Jazeera 2010; Ross 2010; Pflanz 2010a; Fallon 2010.

47 Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International 2010:2, 33. What the study tracked was an increase in civilian rape on these measures from 1% of reported rapes in 2004 to 38% in 2008: Ibid., 19. This perhaps reflects a decline in armed group activity or a greater willingness to report civilian rape, as well as the 'spread' of rape to the civilian population usually cited. Several respondents raised concerns about the report by Oxfam and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, launched just before the interviews took place, and most concluded that civilians accounted for an important part of the data, but that the majority perpetrators were still armed groups.

48 Johnson et al. 2010.

countries).⁴⁹ Amongst those reporting sexual violence in the Johnson et al. study, gang rape was again common (although significantly less so for men), and sexual slavery a more significant factor than suggested in other studies for both sexes (Figure 20). The surprising figures for levels of male rape were matched by evidence of female violence, with women reporting carrying out wartime sexual violence against other women in 41% of cases, and against men in 10% of cases.⁵⁰ For sexual violence carried out by both men and women, perpetrators were again overwhelmingly combatants rather than civilians.

As with all analyses, there are potential problems with this data, as the authors themselves note in each case. It is possible that there is some double-counting across the studies, for example because the Johnson et al, International Alert and Oxfam-HHI studies all draw on data from South Kivu (although the International Alert and Oxfam-HHI studies examined different time periods). There are also some issues around direct comparison of the categories in the different studies.⁵¹ Nevertheless, when taken together these detailed accounts provide information on some 5,900 victims of sexual violence, which is itself a very large corpus of data, even if the results cannot be generalised more widely beyond these samples.⁵²

Bodies As Battlegrounds

Qualitative, summative, impressionistic and activist accounts generally reinforce these findings. A number of the distinctive forms of sexualised brutality discussed in Chapter 1 are again present. For example, the *deliberate destruction of victims' genitals* appears to be common. The Provincial Synergy to Combat Sexual Violence in South Kivu estimating that 20% of all rape victims suffered irreparable damage to their genital organs, that fistulas are

49 Peterman et al. 2011:1065.

50 Men carried out the remainder of the wartime sexual violence in both categories, with small numbers of attacks (less than 1%) being carried out by men and women together (Johnson et al. 2010:557).

51 The overall Johnson et al. figures are not strictly comparative, since 'sexual violence' included more than rape in their study. Of 202 women and 88 men reporting sexual violence, 105 and 18 respectively had been raped (so approximately 52% of sexual violence against women and 20% of sexual violence against men was rape). For Johnson et al., only about half of sexual violence was coded as rape, whereas for Oxfam-HHI 'rape' and 'sexual violence' were treated as interchangeable.

52 Here I count only the respondents from the Johnson et al. study who reported sexual violence (conflict-related or not) and not the entire sample of interviewees.

widespread, and that 22% of rape victims in the province were HIV-positive.⁵³ The clitorises and vaginas of victims have been cut with razor blades and 'Banyamulenge' troops are alleged to have shot suspected 'Mai-Mai wives' in the vagina.⁵⁴ In at least two similar cases in Kabumbe, RCD soldiers shot women they had raped in the genitals, killing them.⁵⁵ Reports of additional violence towards victims' bodies beyond rape itself are common in the documentary literature.⁵⁶

Rapes are often *public and accompanied by deliberate humiliation*. Women have been raped in front of their husbands and children, and fathers have been forced to rape their own daughters at gunpoint.⁵⁷ The practice of forcing family participation is reported as widespread by aid workers.⁵⁸ A doctor at Panzi related that soldiers would often surround villages and then rape women publicly and collectively, including children and the elderly.⁵⁹ Coerced dancing and obscene singing are also common features in these charades.⁶⁰ As would be expected, these rapes often involve multiple perpetrators.⁶¹

Another consistent theme concerns *gendered and sexual slavery*. Women have been forcibly recruited to act as porters or cooks, and many of these sexually exploited or raped. Women have been abducted for months at a time to provide services traditionally thought of as 'women's work'.⁶² Of 101,000 fighters demobilised by the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (CONADER), 2,600 were women, indicating the extent to which chronic slavery 'integrates' brutalised women into fighting forces.⁶³

53 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:14

54 Human Rights Watch 2002:54–55.

55 Human Rights Watch 2002: 55.

56 See Amnesty International 2008:11; Human Rights Watch 2009b; Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:34–35; Wakabi 2008:15.

57 Human Rights Watch 2005a:10; United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:12.

58 Wakabi 2008:15.

59 Pratt and Werchick 2004:7.

60 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:319–320.

61 Human Rights Watch 2005a:10–12, 2009b:30; Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:33.

62 Amnesty International 2008:9; Human Rights Watch 2005a:9, 17, 2009b; Rodriguez 2007:45.

63 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:15. On the wider phenomenon of forced female labour in DRC, see Dzhambova and Bashengezi 2012.

It also appears that many of the *victims are children*. Depending on the area of violence, between 35% and 50% of all reported rape cases concern children between the ages of 10 and 17 years old, and more than 10% of all rape cases concern children under the age of 10.⁶⁴ 13% of victims documented by the Provincial Synergy to Combat Sexual Violence in South Kivu in 2007 were girls under the age of 18 and in one case in Ituri in the early 2000s, a victim of four months was recorded.⁶⁵ A Canadian-funded programme in Ituri and the Kivus had assisted 4,222 child survivors of sexual violence by 2007.⁶⁶

As well as being victims, *children are also often combatants*. This is especially so with some groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army, that actively seek young recruits through campaigns of kidnapping.⁶⁷ CNDP forces have also been held responsible for large-scale child recruitment in North Kivu.⁶⁸ One local organisation recorded 236 recruitments from schools in September 2007 alone and there was also testimony that the CNDP had recruited from inside IDP camps in areas it controlled.⁶⁹ An adult forcibly recruited into the CNDP training centre at Bwiza, Rutshuru in August 2007, estimated that there were 170 children (mainly between 15 and 17 and only boys) and 250 adults in the camp.⁷⁰ A UNICEF study reported 8-10,000 child soldiers in the Ituri alone in 2003 and groups like the UPC and the Hema militias used children as young as 7 and 8 for both soldiering and domestic work.⁷¹ The RCD-National and RCD-Kisangani/Mouvement de Libération groups apparently included up to 25% children in their ranks.⁷²

64 United Nations Security Council 2009b:14.

65 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:7; Pratt and Werchick 2004:7.

66 Human Rights Watch 2007:26.

67 Human Rights Watch 2009c.

68 The CNDP (Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple) are an armed group particularly active after 2006 in Eastern DRC. Led by Laurent Nkunda and then Bosco Ntaganda, they were considered the main security threat from that time to the present. Now formally a political party, their elements were integrated to various extents into the FARDC, but have recently been heavily involved in the so-called M23 rebellion. These developments are partly addressed in the next two chapters, but see Stearns 2008.

69 Amnesty International 2008:15.

70 Amnesty International 2008:20.

71 Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2004:13.

72 Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2004:14.



Figure 21: The Brutalised Innocent: 'Rebel Rebel' (2011), Richard Mosse's Aerochrome Infrared image of a young APCLS rebel in North Kivu, wearing a Sponge Bob Squarepants t-shirt and the photographer's glasses.⁷³

73 From Mosse 2012:61.



Figure 22: The Monstrous Masculine: 'Congo, November 2008', Alvaro Ybarra Zavala's image of a soldier posing with a severed penis and a severed hand.⁷⁴

The two dimensions of child involvement in the war seem fundamentally related, in that children can be *brutalised when kidnapped by being forced to kill and rape*, which often means that they cannot return to their communities once demobilised for fear of the local people who observed their acts.⁷⁵ As Chapter 5 briefly suggested, this situation proves deeply unsettling, since it brings into disturbing proximity the figures of the brutalised innocent – who we want to shield from war and return to the innocence of youth – and the monstrous masculine – the nauseating representative of total degradation, and the one to blame for the horrors of

⁷⁴ As he later recalled “I saw three soldiers smoking, playing with their guns, and felt safe – I don't know why. Then I saw a man with a knife in his mouth, coming out of the bush – he was holding up a hand like a trophy. The soldiers started laughing and firing in the air. I didn't think about it and began shooting. He walked directly at me. People surrounded us, celebrating. I thought, 'Don't do anything crazy, just act like you're part of this crazy party'”. See *The Guardian* 2011.

⁷⁵ Amnesty International 2008:20–21.

rape (Figures 21 and 22).

Although a generally neglected topic, *men and boys have also been targeted for rape*, often specifically for 'forced incest', where they are compelled to rape family members, but also through sexual abuse in custody, where rape establishes hierarchy and where some men report being raped publicly by female guards.⁷⁶ At one legal clinic in Goma, men were the victims in 10% of the sexual violence cases in June 2009, and aid workers reported large increases in the months since.⁷⁷ Former combatants admit inserting sticks and hot knives into male penises as forms of torture.⁷⁸ And the Mapping Report includes details of male victims in 5% of the 1,660 cases of rape recorded in Fizi from 1998 to 2003.⁷⁹ Leaving aside the Johnson et al. estimate it is hard to quantify the scale of such violence. Even in that case, the sample of men reporting rape amounted to only 18 individuals.⁸⁰

It was particularly difficult to discover what extent of sexual violence incidents may involve male survivors, or what form such violence might take in the context of ongoing conflict. Some suggested that reports of male rape and male survivors were increasing, and even that male survivors may have accounted for as much as 9% of registered sexual and gender-based violence cases reported in 2009.⁸¹ UNFPA itself stated that the number of men accessing rape-related services was very small – only 10 men did so in the Kivus in 2007, rising to 124 in 2008 and 178 in 2009. This compared to 12,755 women accessing services in 2008 and 15,108 in 2009.⁸² Others reported that they had never encountered male victims of rape in any of their programmes.⁸³ Heal Africa, a Goma-based hospital and ecumenical organisation dedicated to treating survivors of sexual violence, reported that only some 2% of cases they had dealt with in 2010 had involved male survivors, slightly lower than for 2009, when 84 out of 3,086 cases (or 2.7%) had featured male rape.⁸⁴

76 Médecins Sans Frontières 2009:11.

77 Gettleman 2009.

78 International Alert 2010:19.

79 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:315.

80 Johnson et al. 2010:557.

81 Interviews with Hilary Margolis, *International Rescue Committee*, Goma, 28 May 2010; Sage Mulinda, *Alpha Ujuzi* NGO, Goma, 3 June 2010; and COOPI official, Bukavu, 8 June 2010.

82 Figures provided by UNFPA official, Goma, 17 June 2010.

83 Interview with *Save the Children* official, Goma, 3 June 2010.

84 Interview with Joseph Ciza, *Heal Africa*, Goma, 10 June 2010.

While some organisations emphasised that their programmes were open to all, most reported that they had no programmes designed specifically to address the impact of rape on men.⁸⁵ It was reported that Women for Women were running a programme with men specifically on the issue of taking leadership on sexual violence issues. In addition, V-Day have been planning a campaign centred around men to be launched as 'V-Man' when they open their 'City of Joy', to function both as a tool for sensitisation and a way to train male activists.⁸⁶ It was also suggested that the UK Foreign Office may be piloting a scheme with men as positive role models in the DRC. However, there was little sense of established programmes currently addressing these issues. As one interviewee put it, “Gender here is women, mostly”.⁸⁷

These forms of sexual violence summon familiar questions over which kind of analysis could account for this variety. Certainly the use of children as soldiers would seem to mitigate against any straight-forward description of *their* actions as the behaviour of freely-choosing market-rational actors (although there is a persuasive military logic to kidnapping children as soldiers in the first place). Again, the frequency of mutilation stands out as complicating appeals to instrumentality, while the significant extent of slavery suggests that there are uses to which victims are put (although the balance between labour and sexual abuse within that category is not explored by any study in depth).⁸⁸ In part this requires a more fine-grained analysis of combatants and perpetrators, which will be undertaken in the remainder of this thesis, but three consistently-reported aspects of sexual violence stand in particular need of explanation: the use of gang rape in the majority of cases; the migration of rape into sexualised slavery in a significant and persistent minority of incidents; and the varying use of additional brutality from object insertion to mutilation and torture in a significant minority of attacks.

85 None of the organisations interviewed reported running any programmes dealing specifically with men either as survivors or as perpetrators.

86 Interview with Christine Schuler-Deschryver, V-Day, Bukavu, 8 June 2010.. See <http://drc.vday.org/> for details on the 'City of Joy'.

87 Interview with UNOCHA official, Goma, 15 June 2010.

88 One study distinguished between victims who had been forced to work and those that had been forced to become 'wives'. The percentage was roughly equivalent in each case (3.7% of victims forced to work and 4% forced to marry). See Duroch et al. 2011:6.

Who Rapes?

We have seen that perpetrators include female combatants and also that, even where violence by civilians appears to be on the rise, armed groups are the majority agents of sexualised violence. And yet identifying *which groups* are responsible for *which kinds* of sexual violence has proved extremely challenging for analysts. Even where victims can be identified and interviewed, it is hard to determine who was involved in a particular attack. Perhaps the most widely-quoted report on sexual violence in the DRC, Human Rights Watch's *The War Within The War*, illustrates the limitations of research under such complex and difficult conditions. A relatively small sample of 50 women and girls who had been subjected to sexual or gender-based violence, as well as some witnesses and relatives, were interviewed in the Kivus.⁸⁹ Those who had been raped were generally unable to identify the perpetrators, since they came from outside their communities or hid their faces with masks or blinding light. There was no indication of what percentage of attackers might be strangers and what percentage might be known to victims but concealed by masks or disguises.⁹⁰

The victims were to some degree able to place attackers by their statements, so that those who accused them of links with the RCD or the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) during the rapes could be identified as Mai-Mai, or because of the timing of attacks, such as when RCD and RPA soldiers raped them in reprisals against locally-based armed groups that had first attacked their positions. Victims also relied on ethnic appearance and the language of the perpetrators where possible.⁹¹ But attackers often deliberately obfuscate their identity, as in one case where a girl victim was actually *instructed by the perpetrators* to report that her attackers were 'Interahamwe' and not RCD, a claim which is apparently reasonably common during rape attacks.⁹² Some groups seems to be differentiated by their patterns, so that Mai-Mai would abduct women for very long periods of time, such as a year or more, and seemed to require women to perform sexual acts for a number of combatants in the group, while other groups were more likely to 'allocate' abducted individuals to individual soldiers.⁹³

89 Human Rights Watch 2002:8.

90 Human Rights Watch 2002:24.

91 Human Rights Watch 2002:24–25.

92 Human Rights Watch 2002:26–27; Pratt and Werchick 2004:9–10.

93 Human Rights Watch 2002:25

There have been some efforts to track the changing incidence of human rights abuses and sexual violence attributable to different groups over time. For a period, MONUC released human rights reports at six month intervals providing a breakdown of identified perpetrators of abuses into the FARDC (the Congolese army), the PNC (Congolese National Police), ANC (L'Agence Nationale de Renseignements) and other state-run Intelligence Services, and assorted militia groups (see Table 4). The patterns are clear. State forces, whether army, police or intelligence services, were overwhelmingly responsible for abuses and were implicated in up to 92% of all cases. On average, the combined rebel groups were held responsible for only 11.5% of abuses.⁹⁴

Period	Incidents	FARDC	PNC	ANC/Intel Militia	
1 April-31 Dec '05	1,866	46%	23%	5%	10%
1 Jan-30 June '06	905	53%	24%	7%	18%
1 July-31 Dec '06	Unknown	40%	38%	9%	12%
1 Jan-30 June '07	Unknown	43%	43%	8%	6%

Table 4: Human Rights Incidents By Alleged Perpetrator, DRC, April 2005-June 2007⁹⁵

The figures indeed appear to show an increase in abuses by state forces and a decrease in militia abuses in the relevant period. The detailed figures for sexual violence are even more stark. MONUC concluded that the FARDC and PNC were responsible for 97% of all human rights violations in the DRC during the first six months of 2007, an increase on the 63% of all cases attributed to them during July-December 2006.⁹⁶ Armed groups were held responsible for only 3% of all such violations.⁹⁷ MONUC analysts indeed concluded that “[t]he FARDC remains generally incapable of carrying out military operations in accordance with the law because of the ill discipline of the members of most units as well as

⁹⁴ This is a straight average of the 'Militia' column in Table 4. Missing data on the number of incidents from July 2006 to June 2007 prevents a weighted average.

⁹⁵ Data from MONUC Human Rights Division 2006a, 2006b; MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007b, 2007a. There is an apparent calculation error in the MONUC report for April to December 2005 since the percentages given do not add up to 100%. This may reflect a proportion of incidents without known assailants or simply a calculation error.

⁹⁶ MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007a:17-19.

⁹⁷ MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007a:18.

their inadequate remuneration and logistical support”.⁹⁸ Analysis by the UN Group of Experts in North Kivu held the FARDC responsible for around 35% of all human rights violations there in the first half of 2010 compared to 19% attributed to the FDLR (the Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda, composed in part of *ex-genocidaires*).⁹⁹

The sheer size of the FARDC is sometimes considered sufficient to account for its role in perpetrating violence.¹⁰⁰ The national army's size is now estimated at 60,000 in eastern Congo.¹⁰¹ By comparison, in March 2009, total FDLR forces in the DRC were estimated to number 5,000-6,000 combatants.¹⁰² Increases in sexual violence are also attributed to rebel groups during military operations, although the balance still appears to tip towards atrocities by state forces.¹⁰³ Many report being raped during or soon after military engagements, which would seem to indicate a link to military policy, although it could also be explained by an increase in the absolute number of troops and hence in opportunities for opportunistic sexual assaults.¹⁰⁴

Even where the FDLR to appear to be responsible for most of the sexual violence, it remains unclear how much this reflects an overall strategy, and how much the violent entrepreneurship of a particular faction, such as the notorious 'Rasta' held responsible for many of the rapes treated at Panzi.¹⁰⁵ Similar problems plague the analysis of rape as a systematic tool used by other groups, especially where there are renegade elements, as in the case of the Congolese army's 14th Brigade, where perpetrators may be newly integrated elements rather than 'core' troops, as in the series of integrations of armed groups into the FARDC, or where groups initially characterised by a particular pattern have changed over time.¹⁰⁶ For example, there is some evidence that Mai-Mai forces originally constituted something of a 'popular resistance' movement, but were later infiltrated by other elements

98 MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007a:13.

99 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:13.

100 Human Rights Watch 2009b:5.

101 Human Rights Watch 2009b:20.

102 United Nations Security Council 2009b:10.

103 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:9.

104 On abuses after military engagements, see for example Human Rights Watch 2002:46.

105 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:7.

106 On the 14th Brigade in particular see Human Rights Watch 2009b. On integration see Thakur 2008.

with more of an interest in exploitative practices. Indeed, it had even been said that until the arrival of “Kabila with the Tutsis”, the Mai-Mai did not rape at all.¹⁰⁷

There certainly appears to be a strong relationship between the deployment of government troops in combat and increases in sexual violence, as during Kimia II operations against the FDLR, in which FARDC elements in the Kivus have been held responsible for coercing village chiefs into organising labour, pillaging villages, and for “substantial increases” in sexual violence wherever they have been deployed.¹⁰⁸ Successive operations by the FARDC with MONUC support have generally only worsened the general security situation and proliferated instances of rape and atrocity.¹⁰⁹ Nor is sexual violence restricted to armed groups operating in the DRC. Although the numbers are too low to warrant a substantive investigation here, peacekeepers have been found to trade food or small sums of money for 'sexual contact' with women and girls often under the age of 18, and some as young as 13, indicating “a pattern of sexual exploitation”.¹¹⁰

In addition to the generic distinctions employed in some studies surveyed above (specified armed group, unspecified armed group, and civilian perpetrators), the International Alert and Johnson et al. Studies provide a more fine-grained breakdown. In stark contrast to MONUC reports, neither identifies the FARDC as perpetrators of sexual violence *at all*. Instead both rank 'Interahamwe' as the majority perpetrators, at 27% and 22% respectively, followed by the FDD, RCD, Mai Mai and FDLR. Since 'Interahamwe' is a blanket term for purportedly Rwandaphone militias, this leaves little sense of any one major actor. In both

107 On early views of the Mai Mai see Human Rights Watch 2002:16–17 and the discussion in the next chapter.

108 United Nations Security Council 2009a:7, 9; United Nations Human Rights Council 2008; Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2009:483; Human Rights Watch 2009a.

109 International Crisis Group 2010:i, 9.

110 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:12. In one case in December 2001 a Congolese women allegedly delivered an 11-year-old girl to a MONUC soldier in Goma, who then sexually assaulted the child. Attempts to address the problem by the UN have met with resistance from commanders on the ground, and much the same pattern of obfuscation and secrecy that characterises responses by the Congolese army to allegations of rape. But allegations have also been substantiated against all categories and all levels of UN staff, with civilians found to be guilty more often than military personnel. See Human Rights Watch 2002:95; Dahrendorf 2009:10–12, 4, cf. Higate 2007.

studies the Mai Mai appear to constitute some 15% of attacks.¹¹¹ On these figures, then, sexual violence has a highly distributed character, being practiced by many groups and often indeterminate in source. The absence of FARDC attributions is very striking, and illustrates a running confusion over perpetrators. For example, on *the very same page* that one MONUC study concluded that more than 90% of abuses were by state agencies, it was also stated that the major perpetrators of rape in South Kivu specifically were members of foreign armed groups such as the FDLR.¹¹² In a similar vein, the UN's Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has noted both MONUC's figures for sexual violence in the DRC as a whole and the Provincial Synergy's analysis of sexual violence in South Kivu in 2007, which indicated that 70% of all rape was carried out by non-State groups, 16% by the FARDC or PNC, and a further 14% by civilians.¹¹³ In neither case was any attempt made to explain this discrepancy between overall sexual violence and that carried out in South Kivu.

Each piece of research is detailed and consistent over time with other analyses of the same sort. But the gulf in estimations is more than an anomaly. Even if we assume some important sample differences in time, place or circumstance, it simply cannot be that the FARDC are both the majority perpetrators of sexual violence and do not commit rapes on any measurable scale. MONUC human rights violations reports cover the whole country and so many of the reported incidents may have taken place in Kinshasa or other areas from the Eastern conflagrations.¹¹⁴ Yet this does not account for the absence of FARDC attributions in other reports, especially given clear indications that army operations in the Kivus and adjacent areas often result in rights violations. The only plausible explanation is that the International Alert and Johnson et al. research teams asked only about rebel groups

111 The International Alert report mentions Interahamwe (27%), FDD (26%), RCD (20%), Mai Mai (16%), unidentified (7%) and assorted other groups (such as 'Banyamulenge militia') at less than 2% each. The Johnson et al. Study includes only 'most frequent perpetrators' as Interahamwe (22%), Mai Mai (14%), FDLR (12%), and UPC (7%). The Johnson et al. Study in fact includes a breakdown of male perpetrators on male victims, male perpetrators on female victims, female perpetrators on female victims and female perpetrators on male victims, each with a different estimate of percentage belonging to each of the four armed groups listed, but the figures given here reflect only the major category, and the one most easily compared with other studies, which is of male perpetrators on female victims. See Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:37; Johnson et al. 2010:557.

112 MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007a:18.

113 United Nations Human Rights Council 2008:7.

114 The MONUC figures draw on 18 field offices and four mobile investigation teams across the country with 142 staff. See MONUC Human Rights Division and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007a:6.

or excluded government forces from the results in an equivalent way.¹¹⁵ For the MONUC figures, it is possible that victims were only able to report sexual violence in areas which were under joint MONUC-FARDC control, paradoxically meaning that the FARDC appeared to be perpetrators to a much greater extent than other armed groups that they had successfully expelled or neutralised.

Whatever the truth, this analysis of perpetrators indicates a similarly fragmented pattern to those from victim reports. Given that the FARDC has, at least since 2003, integrated other armed groups, it may well be that atrocities attributed to it were actually carried out by units which would otherwise have been considered part of rebel group. Thus, even if the most vivid of MONUC statistics was to be believed, it is not clear that the FARDC commit rape on state orders (an issue that will be addressed at greater length in Chapter 9). However, the consistent lack of clear information on perpetrator identity, combined with the frequently isolated nature of rapes, is itself suggestive. It indicates that rapes are not often part of the conduct of battle itself (as might be expected in a straight-forwardly geopolitical version of instrumentality) and that soldiers are not actively trying to impress their identity on victims (as might be expected in understandings of mythology stressing genocidal rape or ethnic identity. Victims often refer to perpetrators in vague terms such as 'Interahamwe' or 'Mai Mai', which suggest little more than the men came from outside the community. Do these attempts by perpetrators to hide their identity point to shame (and therefore a moral code); opportunism (as criminals absent from their units without permission); a military strategy of confusion (sent by commanders to intimidate the local population); or a kind of contemptuous play (the psychopathological result of their own brutalisation)? After all, the extent of impunity hardly suggests a fear of criminal prosecution.

¹¹⁵ This may reflect what Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers see as an excessive focus on rebels at the expense of critical perspectives on the DRC Government as itself a violent actor, political manipulator and process spoiler. See Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2009:476.

*An Un-Unified Theory Of The Congo Wars*¹¹⁶

These analytical problems reflect the underlying structure of violence in Eastern Congo. Armed groups coalesce, ally, split and shift in response to perceived threats and opportunities of politics, economics and autonomy.¹¹⁷ Small groupings emerge and then dissipate, but cause great suffering nonetheless.¹¹⁸ For example, in 2007 a militia called the Front Pour la Libération du Nord Kivu based on Mai-Mai and FDLR elements announced itself, ostensibly to help in containing the CNDP forces of Laurent Nkunda. Conflicts involving the FLNK, the FARDC, MONUC forces and Nkunda's troops internally displaced some 370,000 civilians in October.¹¹⁹ Since then they seem to have disappeared, and there is no discussion of them in the recent major works on conflict in Congo.

Statistical consistency in patterns of rape (group rape by armed men, accompanied to a significant degree by further brutality and sexual slavery) are matched by divergence and confusion over the identities and motives of perpetrators. In contrast to situations where one military in particular was the major source of sexual violence (for example, the US army in Vietnam) or where a distinct gender cosmology informed the tactics of enemies (as in Bosnia's ethnic conflagration), war in the DRC is instead characterised primarily by fragmentation: of actors, motives, identities, and lethal contestations. Wars themselves are shifting, ambiguous, hard to identify and locate in a given time-frame or place.

In spite of attempts to project agendas onto it, this iterated conflict has been characterised as defying simple diagnosis, as a 'conceptual mess' and as ideologically inchoate.¹²⁰ In the case of sexual violence, this has incubated a general condition of permissiveness, one usually defined in terms of impunity from the law, but also indicating an entire way of being a soldier and of conducting a war:

¹¹⁶ The allusion is to Jason Stearn's resistance to the 'Congo reductionism' so often apparent in attempts to "reduce the conflict to a Kabuki theatre of savage warlords, greedy businessmen, and innocent victims... I do not have a Unified Theory of the Congo War, because it does not exist". See Stearns 2012a:xxi.

¹¹⁷ To give one indication of the numbers involved, Prunier devotes no fewer than 11 pages to abbreviations covering armed groups and political movements in the Congo Wars. See Prunier 2009:viii–xviii.

¹¹⁸ Prunier 2009:228.

¹¹⁹ Thakur 2008:59.

¹²⁰ Stearns 2012a:5.

Wherever they went, the soldiers and officers of the RCD-Goma, whether stationed or on patrol, used the backdrop of war to abuse their power and rape women and young girls. This violence was accompanied by the breaking and entering of victims' houses, theft and looting.¹²¹

Moreover, violence does not seem to have been restricted to moments of necessity (whether military, economic or symbolic):

The successive and concurrent wars in the DRC contributed to widespread sexual violence during the fighting, during the withdrawal of combatants, after the fighting, in areas where troops were stationed, in occupied areas, during patrols, during reprisals against the civilian population and during raids conducted by isolated and sometimes unidentified armed groups.¹²²

These descriptions conjure again the stereotypes of the sexual predator and the frustrated power-seeker, and perhaps too of the disorientated victim and liminal subject. The zones where unreason and mythological explanation join. But the economic survivor is present too. At the level of ordinary soldiers, there would certainly appear to be serious material pressures. Overspends on the military are notorious in DRC where 'ghost soldiers' allow commanders to expropriate the pay of non-existent combatants, for example in setting up payment systems for 240,000 FARDC soldiers when there were probably less than 120,000.¹²³ But privates are paid only \$10 per month: a 'clear incentive' to loot.¹²⁴ The question is how this deprivation might be linked to sexual violence.

One discernible strategy of several armed groups is to resist demobilisation and *brassage* in order to maintain a strong bargaining position with the government over resources.¹²⁵ Violence is one way of achieving that, since it may encourage the government to concede

¹²¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:313.

¹²² United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:287.

¹²³ Prunier 2009:306.

¹²⁴ Prunier 2009:306.

¹²⁵ Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2009:480.

more, and sooner.¹²⁶ Autonomy can also enable other strategies of personal enrichment and community protection.¹²⁷ But attempts to achieve autonomy can just as soon invite the attentions of the FARDC, backed by MONUC and more recently working in collaboration with the Rwandan army. This has indeed been the case, and has not worked out well for many armed groups (as will be explored in greater detail in the coming chapter). Sexual violence may fit as part of such an independence strategy.

Finally, the Eastern DRC is itself part of the dilemma. Why has sexual violence been so clustered there, when the Congo Wars initially took in large swathes of the country (see Map 2)? For several analysts, the history of the Kivus is a necessary element in any viable explanation for war there. As a site of conflict and revolt, it is a node in a regional network of political identities and a 'recycling point' for armed groups, a role that goes hand in hand with the lack of central state authority.¹²⁸ As we will see, this is not merely a matter of natural resources, but encompasses land, identity (ethnic and otherwise), demography, regional geopolitics and post-genocide conflict dynamics.

“Well, What Is The Feminist Perspective On Congo?”¹²⁹

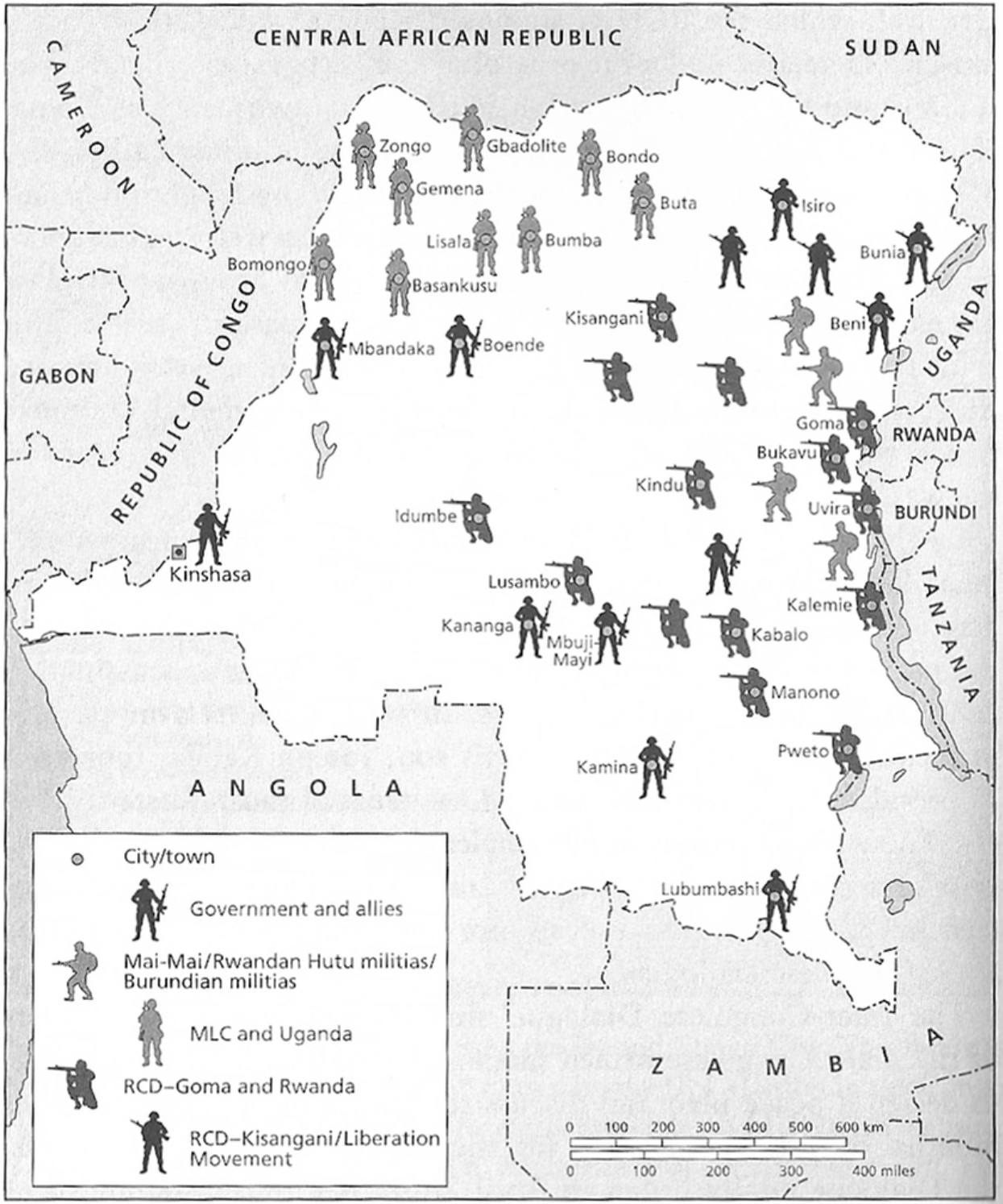
In short, a more fine-grained analysis is needed to reveal the dynamics of historical conflict, patterns of economic and political power, and the differing (and converging) characters of armed groups perpetrating sexual violence in Congo. What this will reveal is a *relative disconnect* between war and war rape in the region. Perhaps against expectations, understanding how armed groups sustain themselves and what motivates them to fight does not reveal why they rape, nor why rape takes certain forms. The analysis of forms of sexual violence and armed groups provided in this chapter has indicated fragmentation rather than ideological or economic coherence, and further inquiry will reinforce that conclusion.

126 Autesserre, for example, argues that Mai Mai were forces refused integration because they understood that they could never achieve the power in peace that their brutality had brought them in war. See Autesserre 2010:152.

127 This reflects the list found in Thakur 2008:60–61.

128 International Crisis Group 2010:15.

129 Cf. Zalewski 1995.



Map 2: Approximate Deployment of Armed Groups During the Second Congo War¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Sourced from Autesserre 2010:52.

Since feminists are concerned with how putatively private acts of sexual violence are integral to the public politics of war, this analytical move may seem suspicious. But it is not an argument that suggests that rape has nothing to do with war. It remains a practice of collective violence, and one ridden with politics. The dynamics of war as understood here – the allegiances made by armed groups, the ends sought, patterns of exploitation and funding, ideological beliefs and communal support – are articulated together with wartime sexual violence, but also operate with some degree of freedom from it. In the same way that the content of the Congo Wars is not exhausted by the motives of group leaders or resource accumulation, so too wartime sexual violence cannot merely be reduced to the functional expression of those 'higher' agendas. Revealing how gender power circulates in ways that do not align with geopolitics indeed resonates strongly with feminist curiosities.

Existing feminist analyses of the Congo Wars have advanced a broad diagnosis, seeing rape as, for example, a combination of “social constructs of masculinity and the politics of exploitation” but also endorsing view of it as “functional” and “a systematic and brutal weapon”.¹³¹ As with other accounts examined in Part Two, there is an unremarked combination here of distinct processes and logics: both individual motivation and discursive identity, both political economy and affective violence, both discipline and indiscipline, and so on. This is a way of observing that armed groups are involved in economic exploitation and that they are also the principle perpetrators of sexual violence, and therefore drawing the conclusion that the latter facilitates the former, all the while acknowledging a social constructionist dimension to gender attitudes. But there are other ways of understanding war and rape together apart from through this reduction. In particular, how do we reconcile accounts of the Congo Wars (which pay little specific attention to the question of war rape) with feminist concerns over gendered suffering (which tend to say very little about other histories of violence?). The next three chapters turn to claims about identity, power and resources and try to uncover how they might be related to sexual violence in an attempt to progress just this question.

131 Meger 2010:120, 119.

COCKROACHES AND AUTOCHTHONES IN THE GREAT LAKES WAR COMPLEX

For the laws of nature (as *justice, equity, modesty, mercy,* and (in sum) *doing to others as we would be done to,*) of themselves, without the terror of some power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like. And covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, Or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil*¹

And all the peripheral conflicts started to roll down the Congo basin like so many overripe toxic fruits.

Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War*²

Strategic Ethnocentrism³

Congo has been a place not only for fantasies of Africa but also for many of its crucial historical events. But it is the 1994 Rwandan genocide that casts the longest shadow over atrocity in the DRC. The Banyarwandan diaspora (spanning the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi) and the main Hutu-Tutsi dynamics attributed to it are so invested with responsibility for violence that the Second Congo War is often known simply as “the war of the Banyamulenge” in reference to those of purportedly Rwandan Tutsi ancestry.⁴ It is not

1 Hobbes 2008:III, emphasis in original.

2 Prunier 2009:xxxii.

3 The title given by Stephen Walt to a post in which he bemoaned the lack of knowledge about the Congo Wars, including his own, and attributed this lack to “Western elites pay[ing] a lot more attention when people like them are being killed in large numbers, and look[ing] the other way when the victims are impoverished Africans”. See Walt 2009.

4 Autesserre 2010:145. The terminology here can be somewhat confusing, but broadly speaking *Kinyarwanda* (Rwandophone speakers) and *Banyarwanda* (“those ancestrally belonging to Rwanda”) are the blanket terms for Hutu and Tutsi living in Eastern DRC, whose histories of migration are addressed to some extent below. *Banyamulenge* tends to refer to those of Rwandan descent (principally Tutsi) living in South Kivu, and was progressively adopted as label to stress location (it means “those living in Mulenge”) rather than lineage. It was coined to replace the ancestral connotations of Banyarwanda, which is now mainly applied to Hutu living in North Kivu. *Banyamasisi* and *Banyarutshuru* (“those living in Masisi” and “those living in Rutshuru”) are further distinctions within North Kivu communities of Rwandan descent (again predominantly Hutu). Banyarutshuru are considered more ‘indigenous’, being able to trace their presence in Eastern DRC to before the 1880s. The Banyamasisi are considered less authentic, having been mainly ‘transplanted’ by colonial authorities after 1937. While the Banyamulenge Tutsi are a small community in South Kivu, amounting to perhaps 3-4% of the population, the Banyarwanda Hutu are more strongly established, and made up around 40% of the North Kivu population in the 1970s. See in particular Mamdani 2002:239-241; 249-250; Pottier 2002:9-53; Prunier 2009:51-53.

unusual to hear that it was the Rwandans who brought sexual violence to the DRC. Nor is this view of a pre-genocidal sexual peace restricted to non-Kinyarwanda Congolese citizens. A UN official who had been in Kigali at the time of the genocide similarly claimed that patterns of atrocity today could be traced back to that seminal event: “I really believe that the intensity of violence that we see today was imported from violence in 1994...they've developed a culture where they think they can do anything”.⁵

The Rwandan genocide is better understood as a catalyst for, rather than as the cause of, the Congo wars.⁶ It was an event embedded in the regional politics of autochthony – of organicist territorial identity.⁷ Those politics have a close bearing not only on the question of sexual violence, but on the general dynamics of violence in Eastern Congo. For example, Tutsis had infamously been portrayed as *inyenzi* (cockroaches) in the genocide, and the same cosmological imagination could be seen at work when genocidaires who had fled to Congo organised attacks against the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) from Goma in July 1994, a counter-operation they christened 'Operation Insecticide'.⁸ And many more contemporary exchanges of brutality occur within similar appeals to origins, identities, and the threat of extermination.

This chapter explores some of these themes by stepping back from the close analysis of sexual violence developed in the last chapter. It explores patterns of war and belonging, examines the differing character of some armed groups, and advances an argument about retaliatory atrocity that stresses its mythological character (group identity, the precarity of performative identities) and resonance with themes of bonding, rage and abjection from unreason. This line of analysis begins to reveal how we might make better sense of atrocities like those of Kasika, and unravel the gender politics of the “imaginative encounter” in

5 Interview with MONUC Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration officer, Goma, 11 June 2010.

6 Prunier 2009:xxxii; Stearns 2012a:8.

7 'Autochthony' literally specifying “of the soil itself” (Geschiere and Jackson 2006:2). As Jackson comments, there is a “rather conventional irony” here, since the language of autochthony is ultimately traceable to French policy in the Sudan in the late 1900s, where it was put to use in the colonial ordering of local populations (Jackson 2006:97–98).

8 Stearns 2012a:27. See also Mamdani 2002:129; Fujii 2004; Jackson 2006:109–110. However, Straus provides some grounds for doubting the prevalence of dehumanising metaphors amongst perpetrators. See Straus 2006:158–160.

Eastern Congo.⁹

A Place Of Negations¹⁰

In some senses, the impact of the Rwanda genocide and civil war is hard to over-state. It contaminated the worlds of those those who lived through it.¹¹ But the effects of the genocide on Eastern Congo are less often discussed. After the killings, so many Rwandans had fled into Congo or had been herded into IDP camps in the South that only some 45% of the prewar population (or 3.6 million people) remained to live 'normally' in Rwanda.¹² Between July and August of 1994, no fewer than 850,000 refugees arrived in North Kivu, 320,000 in South Kivu, and 62,000 in Uvira, where they joined 225,000 Burundian refugees who had themselves fled in 1993 (see also Map 3 and 4).¹³

The impact on economic, social and environmental life was huge: “The refugees behaved as if in a conquered country, cutting firewood without authorization, stealing cattle, plundering crops, setting up illegal roadblocks, and, this not in an anarchic, disorganized way, but, on the contrary, clearly responding to the directives of a sinister and powerful leadership”.¹⁴ These movements exacerbated the set of pressures on land already present, pressures which, as we shall see, are hard to distinguish from ideas about identity.¹⁵

9 Pottier 2007:825.

10 Achebe 1978:2.

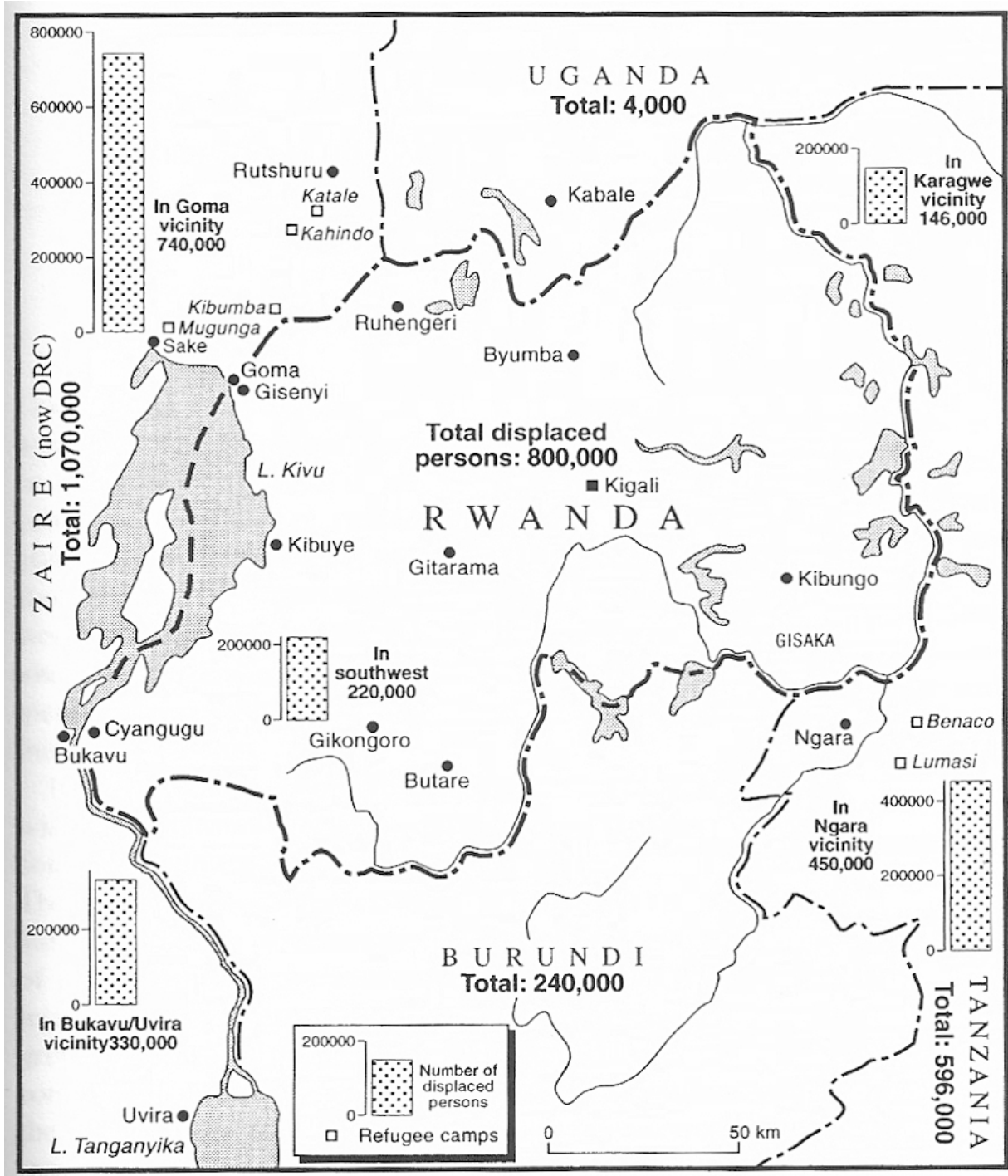
11 “To understand the complexity of the postgenocide situation in Rwanda, one should imagine a world in which many of the German SS would have had Jewish relatives and in which the postwar State of Israel would have been created in Bavaria instead of the Middle East” (Prunier 2009:1)

12 Prunier 2009:5.

13 Prunier 2009:53.

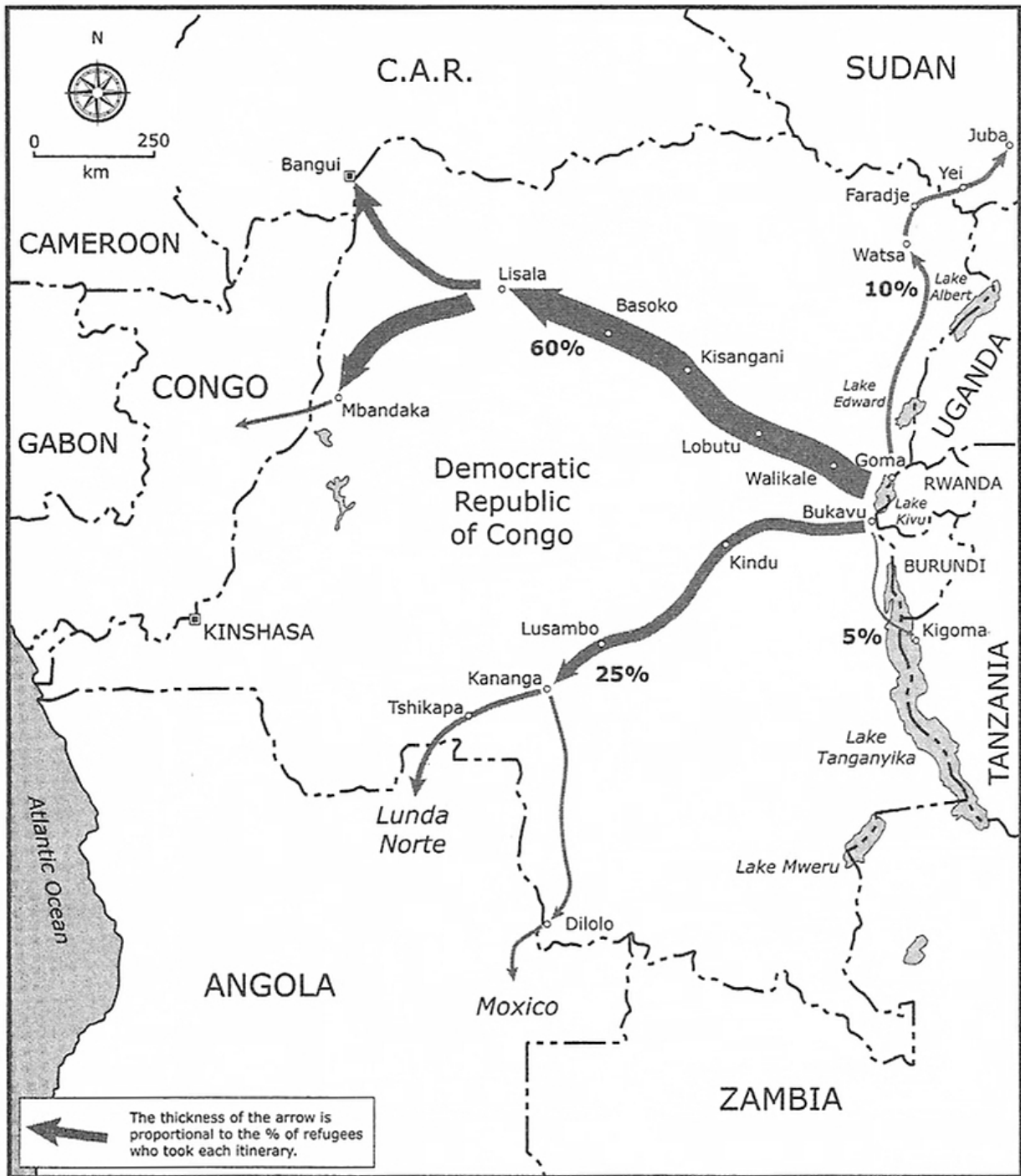
14 Prunier 2009:545–55.

15 Autesserre 2010:141. Land pressures have themselves been blamed to varying degrees for the patterns of the Rwandan genocide themselves. See André and Platteau 1998; Verpoorten 2012.



Map 3: Rwanda: Refugees and Displaced Populations, 31 March 1995¹⁶

16 Reproduced from Pottier 2002:xvii.



Map 4: Hutu refugee flows into DRC in the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide¹⁷

17 Reproduced from Prunier 2009:xxv.

The link, real or imagined, between suffering today and those events continues to animate political passions. As Paul Kagame, Rwanda's post-genocide leader and driving force behind shifts in regional geopolitics, has put it: “When a Tutsi is killed in Bukavu [in Eastern DRC], it is not one death, but a million and one”.¹⁸ Correspondingly, for the FDLR the conflict is partly the result of an unacknowledged 'double genocide', one in which Hutus are the victims as much as Tutsis.¹⁹ Common Cause, a group of Congolese women activists in London, have expressed the situation thus:

...for over a decade, the Congolese populations in Ituri, North and South Kivu have been suffering the consequence of the fratricidal conflict between ethnic Rwandans – Hutu and Tutsi – who were exported onto Congolese soil by mandate of Operation Turquoise by the UNSC in 1994.²⁰

About a million people crossed over to Eastern Congo after the genocide.²¹ The camps set up in the wake of this influx hosted both refugees and former *genocidaires*, and so became the locus of a vast renegade power structure within Eastern DRC. Fleeing Rwandan forces loyal to the Hutu regime amounted to some 22,000 soldiers stationed around Lake Kivu.²² The crisis was such that the international community poured money into the Eastern DRC, but with unintended violent consequences. Humanitarian aid to the refugee camps totalled more than \$2 billion between 1994 and 1996, while aid to Rwanda itself came to only \$897 million in the same period, although there were two million refugees and five million people in Rwanda recovering from genocide and political collapse: a comparison giving \$1.40 per capita per day in the camps compared to \$0.49 per capita per day in Rwanda.²³ These funds substantially benefitted the *genocidaire* leadership, allowing them to lay the foundations for the Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR) insurgency that continues to this day.

18 Stearns 2008:263.

19 Tegera 2010:19–20.

20 See Faray and Pambu 2010.

21 Stearns 2012a:15.

22 Stearns 2012a:26–27.

23 Prunier 2009:30.

But the situation in the camps had also set the scene for involvement by the new Rwandan leadership in the DRC. From the start the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) were less interested in saving Tutsi civilians than preventing the formation of any viable counter-elite, regardless of the brutality required or the identity of victims.²⁴ This required attacks against not only the remnants of the old regime who had fled to Congo, but on the mass of predominantly Hutu refugees that had gone with them. At Kibeho refugee camp in April 1995, Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) forces began a massacre that would last hours, with UN peacekeepers watching on. A proper accounting was prevented by the RPA, but it seems that over 5,000 refugees were killed over the two days.²⁵ The explanation for these atrocities must lie also partly in the character of the Rwandan genocide, which was achieved through popular participation on a mass scale, and so stimulated fears of whole communities.²⁶

Major protagonists in war and sexual violence in Eastern Congo are closely linked to these dynamics. Laurent Nkunda, for one, volunteered for the RPF in the Rwandan civil war, was a top RCD-Goma commander, and remains insistent that he fights to protect Banyamulenge from any further genocide (being himself a Tutsi from Rutshuru in North Kivu).²⁷ Making sense of agendas for war, and possible of repertoires of sexual violence themselves, thus cannot escape a tracing of the impact of pre- and post-genocidal dynamics on the Kivus, an area in many ways more contiguous with Rwanda than with the rest of the vast DRC.

24 Prunier 2009:21. Prunier reports that 'interior' Tutsi who had survived the genocide were often thought of as collaborators or as deserving of their fate by an RPF leadership that had developed in long exile in Uganda (Prunier 2009:19-20).

25 Prunier 2009:40-41.

26 Estimates are that some 175,000-210,000 people actively took part in genocide. See Straus 2004.

27 Prunier 2009:297-298; Stearns 2008.

*A War Of The Ordinary Person*²⁸

The forces accelerated by the post-genocide situation had longer lineages within Eastern DRC, histories which they worked to polarise and inflame. Identities had not always been so rigid. In Rwanda itself, Hutu were able to become Tutsi through cattle acquisition at least until the middle of the 19th century.²⁹ Rwandan populations have frequently been forced into migration by persistent drought as well as by political crisis, and that movement has usually been into Eastern Congo (or what is now Eastern Congo). There were major post-famine migrations in 1928-29 (leaving some 7% of Rwanda's population dead) and 1943, and a politically-charged exodus in 1959-1961 of 150,000 Rwandan Tutsi in the lead-up to national independence. Moreover, the Belgian colonial powers had encouraged 'assisted migration' from 1937-1955.³⁰ These population movements put considerable stress on the land, steadily increasing populations densities even before the arrival of refugees in 1994.³¹ The waves of immigration from Rwanda to Congo in the 20th century were such that some 500,000 descendants of Rwandan immigrants are estimated to have been living in North Kivu by 1990.³² And yet these pressures did not flower into *mass* brutality:

Up until the middle of 1996, the question of Banyamulenge citizenship and civil rights had been fought mostly through memoranda and verbal provocations. This changed dramatically the moment Banyamulenge/RPA [Rwanda Patriotic Army] soldiers crossed into Zaire from Rwanda. While effectively on a mission of self-defence, the campaign was understood to be an invasion because of the massive logistical support received from both Rwanda and Uganda. Anti-Banyamulenge sentiment in South Kivu quickly turned from ugly to insane.³³

28 Stearns 2012a:5.

29 Pottier 2002:116-117. Pottier stresses both that this class mobility was rarer than it has sometimes been made out to be, and that it ended not with colonial rule, but with the reign of King Rwabugiri. See also Stearns 2012a:14.

30 Pottier 2002:11, cf. Jackson 2007:484-485.

31 For example, the number of humans per square kilometre increased from 59 to 286 in Goma, from 26 to 91 in Rutshuru and from 39 to 101 in Masisi between 1957 and 1984 (cited in Prunier 2009:48). See also Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:139-143.

32 Stearns 2012a:72.

33 Pottier 2002:42.

However, although both 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' are designations deployed in Eastern Congo, and although both often carry the prejudice and fear that they might connote elsewhere, their histories (pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial) are also importantly different. They are linked, for example, to memories of Banyamulenge assistance to Mobutu in putting down Eastern rebellions during the 1960s.³⁴ Mobutu had used Banyarwanda, and especially Tutsi, in these decades precisely because of their vulnerable local position: he could be confident that they would not build a strong enough movement in the east to resist his plans.³⁵ The exact overlap between identity and economic power varies by area and changes over time. For instance, North Kivu mines tend to be owned by Tutsi Kinyarwanda-speakers because of the citizenship rights policies pursued under Mobutu, and so ethnic Hundes historically take issue with Tutsi land control in particular. In addition to this mix, North Kivu's most populous group is Congolese Hutu, who Hundes can view as immigrants, giving rise to three way tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, Hunde and Tutsi and Hunde and Hutu. The situation in South Kivu is more varied still, but in both both regions ethnicity can act as a uniting factor or as a source of tension (as in relations between Congolese Tutsi, Congolese Hutu, Rwandan Hutu rebels and the Rwandan army, all of whom are classified as Kinyarwanda-speaking).³⁶

Eastern Congolese Hutu and Tutsi were largely in alliance, designated jointly as Banyarwanda, after 1960. Their unity was generated in significant part through subjection to Mobutu's strategies of bait-and-switch. The 1964 Constitution specified that citizens had to be able to trace ancestors from within Congolese territory to before 18 October 1908, excluding many who had migrated in the preceding decades but who otherwise considered themselves Congolese.³⁷ For example, in Masisi, Hunde autochtones quickly replaced Hutu officials, with consequent effects on the development of ethnic consciousness.³⁸ Then, in 1972, the position shifted again, allowing all those of Burundian or Rwandan heritage to call themselves Congolese so long as they had ancestry from before January 1950. Banyarwanda were able to accumulate power again, and some estimates suggest that an elite

34 Pottier 2002:17-18.

35 Prunier 2009:49.

36 This paragraph summarises the argument made in Nest 2011:50-53.

37 Pottier 2002:26.

38 Pottier 2002:26-27.

of them gained up to 90% of the plantations in some areas.³⁹ In Masisi a 1991 study apparently showed that 58% of the available land was controlled by only 512 families, 502 of which were Banyarwanda.⁴⁰ The resentment against this growing influence was a cause of yet another politico-judicial shift, this time to an inconsistently applied 1981 law requiring citizenship traceable to 1885.⁴¹

It was not until 2004 that a new nationality law designated Hutu Banyarwanda in North Kivu as Congolese citizens (although even this retained some ambiguity and remnants of the native/foreign motifs past).⁴² Feeling more secure, and doubtless influenced by the conflicts deepened in the genocidal aftermath, these Hutu communities moved away from Tutsi Banyarwanda, seeking an alliance with the Nande who had won provincial elections in 2006.⁴³ But this citizenship crisis was specific to North Kivu, and even here there are divisions, with Hutu living in Rutshuru being allowed a Native Authority on grounds that they were present before the 1880s, while Masisi Hutu are not considered indigenous in the same way.⁴⁴ Similarly, whilst conflicts in Ituri have been characterised by intense violence, the situation in Masisi up until 2004 was more stable.⁴⁵ But changes in the short-term politics and in the details of law still had to figure with an underlying atmosphere of fear and prejudice. In 2002, only 26% of respondents to one survey agreed that the Banyamulenge were Congolese.⁴⁶

In other words, the geographies of identification in Eastern Congo are highly complex, frequently fractured, and shift over time. In spite of the major role played by the genocide, there is no simple alignment of identities across the border. On Gérard Prunier's account, it is thus misleading to understand violence in DRC either as a systematic attempt to annihilate Banyamulenge and North Kivu Tutsi on the part of *genocidaires* or as a case of 'Banyarwanda predators' exploiting innocent indigenous Congolese. The Kivus are

39 Pottier 2002:27.

40 Mamdani 2002:244.

41 Mamdani 2002:244.

42 See Jackson 2007:488–490.

43 Autesserre 2010:163.

44 Mamdani 2002:235–239.

45 Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:160–162, 151–156.

46 Stearns 2012a:265.

intimately connected to, but not merely an extension of, Rwanda.⁴⁷ Rather, they form part of the Banyarwanda diaspora, which can be understood as “the most volatile of all diasporic networks in the region”, with the result that it was the Banyarwandan communities in North and South Kivu which were “dissolved”, in the wake of genocide, “into the by-now volcanic crucible of Rwandan politics”.⁴⁸ And it is this diasporic fault-line that sits within a zone of civil warfare arcing from the Horn of Africa to the two Congos.⁴⁹

Mulele Mai!⁵⁰

So the alliance between Rwandan Hutu refugees and militias expelled by war and massacre and Congolese Hutus was a result of the 1994 genocide, not a stable identification preceding it.⁵¹ Both Hutu and Tutsi in the Kivus had been targeted as a single Banyarwanda community over these decades. Despite the validity of Pottier's general claim about the post-1996 explosion in anti-Banyamulenge sentiment, conflicts had taken place in the 1960s and the early 1990s over the threat of 'allochthons' to Hunde, Nyanga and Nande 'autochthons'.⁵² Hutu-Tutsi dynamics, whatever their substance, are only one element in the clash of identities. The language of autochthony could be mobilised in Hunde and Nyanga disputes as well as in distinctions with Kinyarwanda speakers, or in attempts to discredit candidates in one province as being from somewhere else.⁵³ The major argument of Séverine Autesserre's *The Trouble With The Congo* develops precisely this dimension: peacekeeping has failed because it has been treated as a top-down mission, rather than as bottom-up peacebuilding working through the multiple local dynamics that are in fact driving violence.⁵⁴ Despite disagreements over whether the explanation for all this is top-down or bottom-up, Jason Stearns similarly sees not one or two Congo wars, but “at least

47 Prunier 2009:53. Links with Rwanda have indeed been of at best ambiguous value for the Banyamulenge of South Kivu. The community there was largely divided in the mid-2000s along economic lines, with poorer Banyamulenge allying themselves with Joseph Kabila against Rwanda and Rwandan-backed rebels, and richer ones trying to maintain autonomy from Kinshasa and siding to some extent with Banyarwanda rebels from North Kivu. See Autesserre 2010:168

48 Mamdani 2002:38.

49 The designation is Crawford Young's. See Young 2002:13.

50 A phrase from the 1960s Eastern uprising led by Pierre Mulele, referencing his mythical ability to turn bullets to water. See Mamdani 2002:257.

51 Pottier 2002:29–30.

52 Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:145–148; Jackson 2006:101.

53 Jackson 2006:101–102.

54 Autesserre 2010.

forty or fifty different, interlocking wars”.⁵⁵

These micro-conflicts between communities revolve often around the control of land. Conflicts between groups like the Hema and the Lendu can be traced to before colonisation and to the different needs of herders (predominantly Hema) and farmers (predominantly Lendu).⁵⁶ Here, as elsewhere, apparently 'ethnic' divisions are legacies of class distinctions. For Autesserre, then, rape appears as something of a side-effect of local conflicts and antagonisms, wrapped together with other forms of brutality.⁵⁷ Occasionally she follows the instrumentalist path and suggests a strategic link, but when this is mentioned it is said to actually *increase* the antipathy of civilians towards attackers.⁵⁸ This is a view of conflict as resulting from “manipulation along the broader Great Lakes Rwandaphone ethnic configuration, and the debate on autochthony (in other words, the conflict between *originaires* and *non-originaires*, locals and strangers)”.⁵⁹

And yet, against Autesserre's argument, the UN Group of Experts view from a few years ago was that “land and cattle ownership are not lucrative enough at the moment to constitute a central cause of the conflict” and that they played a more symbolic role.⁶⁰ There are other reasons too why a land-conflict explanation cannot be so easily subsumed within instrumentality. For one, clashes were also founded on fears that each group was secretly working on a plan for the eradication of the other.⁶¹ Although clearly stoked by a degree of paranoia, such fears could not be considered fantastical given the history of pogroms and ethnic cleansing in the region. The ambiguity of these discourses means that apparent 'necessity' is subject to considerable rhetorical influence. An economic relation could thus be transformed into a racial-cultural one. So whenever there were significant numbers of immigrants, “competition for land was easily manipulated...into ethnically motivated conflicts”.⁶²

55 Stearns 2012a:69. For the argument over causes, see Autesserre 2012; Stearns 2012c.

56 Autesserre 2010:173.

57 Autesserre 2010:147.

58 Autesserre 2010:150.

59 Thakur 2008:56.

60 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:8.

61 Autesserre 2010:161.

62 Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:143-144.

The explanation for these dynamics is reminiscent of instrumentalised mythology, but ambiguously so. For many, the explanation for ethnic division is simple: that Mobutu – that exemplary 'ethnic entrepreneur' – created them, building on the legacy of colonialism.⁶³ But identities clearly have a salience beyond this. The two prominent themes in the discussion of Eastern DRC – that ethnic divisions there are the product of centralised *geopolitical* plot, and that the Kivus are a space where the state does not have meaningful control – cannot easily co-exist.⁶⁴ Mobutu and his heirs worked with the constellations of identity and interest they were given, and changed them in important ways, but the reduction leaves a stubborn residue. It is harder still to take the extra step and say not only that violent expressions of identity are directed by the state and its geopolitical enemies in the region, but also that the dynamics of sexual violence in turn reflect their purposes (the failure of these stories to explain the spread of violence in Congo will be themes returned to in the coming chapters).

So the politics of this complexity is itself revealing for modes of critical explanation. What, after all, is autochthony? A cynical tool of control, a gloss on desires to maim or a meaningful collective identity? As in other contemporary framings of the threatening stranger, there is something importantly slippery about authenticity discourse.⁶⁵ It is, in Stephen Jackson's apt phrase, “dangerously flexible in its politics”.⁶⁶ Since origins are relative, autochthony can always be flipped, and its advocates can find themselves on the wrong side of a given historical construction.⁶⁷ As discourse, it is

endemically nervous because many of those deploying it suffer the nagging fear that they could suddenly find themselves its objects. At some level, no one in the DRC seems to be sufficiently autochthonous to escape at some point becoming the target for accusations of foreignness.⁶⁸

63 Autesserre 2010:56.

64 On Mobutuist *géopolitique* see Jackson 2007:485–487.

65 Geschiere and Jackson 2006:3–4. See also Appadurai 1998.

66 Jackson 2006:96.

67 Dunn 2009.

68 Jackson 2006:115.

Identities of this kind are thus ridden with affect, contingency and the spectre of contamination. The language of belonging can be microscopic, say in distinguishing different communities within a single ethnic group inside a single province in the last decades, as well as megascopic and physiognomic, as in the 'Hamitic Hypothesis' that posits a a thousand-year war of the 'Bantu' against the 'Nilotes', with the former characterised as variously as Nande, Nyanga, Hunde, and Hutu, agriculturalist, hardworking, gullible, shorter, darker-skinned, and with flattened noses and the latter as Rwandan, Burundian and Congolese Tutsi, Congolese Hema, Ugandan Hima and others, invaders from the Horn of Africa, regal, lazy, cunning, taller, lighter-skinned, and with more aquiline noses.⁶⁹

Thus saturated with tropes of purity, infiltration, race history, and pathogens, the co-implication of contests over land and identity, and their connection to acts of brutality, cannot be rendered as purely instrumental. Nor, given the shifts in identifications in response to land and migration pressures, can they be taken as 'merely' cultural. If we are to see sexual violence in Eastern DRC as linked to communal identities (whether for an instrumentalist explanation of deliberate mass intimidation, unreason's view of the breakdown of sense of self, or a mythological account of cultural violence), then we must understand those identities historically. But the history is riddled with paradoxes, disjunctures and reversals of collective fortune. Practically any atrocity, no matter by who or on who, could retroactively be explained by previous tensions between the groups in question. The layering of judicial categories on traditional socio-economic ones, as described above, poses the question as not simply one of 'ethnicity', but of a *political* identity.⁷⁰ This layering is not restricted to the mixing of ethnic and political ideas, but becomes invested within land and property relations as well, at least when colonialism also bequeathed dual property systems mixing 'modern' rights with customary systems, as was the case in the Belgian Congo.⁷¹ Since the post-colonial situation was one in which differing, overlapping rights coexisted, ethnic identity became institutionalised, and groups sought autonomy by acquiring land along 'ethnic' lines.⁷²

69 Mamdani 2002:79–87; Pottier 2002:116–123; Jackson 2006:107–108. Note in particular how Hutu and Tutsi belong to different groups in some typologies but to the same Kinyarwanda enemy in others.

70 The distinction developed here follows the discussion in Mamdani 2002:22, which was focused more closely on these legacies in Rwanda, but which applies across the border in the Kivus in a similar way.

71 Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:122.

72 Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:125–131.

Recognising these legacies makes it easier to understand the otherwise perplexing practices of Mai Mai groups, amongst others. Initially considered as expressing a kind of egalitarian quality, and as genuinely representing the interests of local communities, Mai Mai militias have more recently come to be seen as a major source for sexual violence (recall from the last chapter the attribution of some 15% of sexual assaults in the east to Mai Mai forces).⁷³ Early estimates suggested that there were some 20-30,000 active Mai Mai, although individual groups tend to be much smaller, ranging from 50 to 1,000 combatants.⁷⁴ As will become clearer in Chapter 10, there does appear to be a specific set of ritualised actions amongst some Mai Mai groups that would constitute strong evidence for the mythological mode. Mai Mai have been reported as raping in the belief that the act will make them invincible, and have been known to use body parts from victims for magical charms, including cutting off and drying the genitalia of both sexes and foetuses to make into amulets.⁷⁵ Instances of sexual slavery – slavery for rape alone, without evidence of forced labour – have also been documented, with hundreds of captives held for days or months in different camps.⁷⁶ And although Mai Mai groups vary greatly, these mythological characteristics appear to be a binding element: “the only commonalities between the different Mai Mai groups were their reliance on magic-based rituals and their pretense of being destined to defend their villages”.⁷⁷

Responding to a seemingly constant shifting of social relations in Eastern DRC, subjected to not only refugee influxes and the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, but also to regional major wars, and drawing on a set of myths inherited from rebellions in the 1960s, Mai Mai groups emerged as true believers in the need for autochthonous violence.⁷⁸ Like others, the Mai Mai have *mythologised* migratory histories to set a legitimate origin for themselves.⁷⁹ This is the symbolic work of a precarious belonging, not the acts of instrumentally deploying a violent rhetoric, even if such identities can be turned to instrumental purposes. The situation is not much different for the CNDP, although the communities in question, and the

73 On the early reception of the Mai Mai see Autesserre 2010:148.

74 United Nations Security Council 2002:13; Thakur 2008:57–58.

75 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:323.

76 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:316.

77 Autesserre 2010:177.

78 For a recent example of Mai Mai atrocities against 'others', see IRIN 2012b.

79 Jackson 2006:112–113.

direct tactics used, are distinct. The rise of the CNDP was not merely a military or mercenary phenomenon based on extraction or a 'spoiler' agenda, but was instead related to fears of persecution amongst Banyarwanda communities stemming from changes in local power balances between 2003 and 2006.⁸⁰ And, although the CNDP was (and is) linked to Rwanda, and although its formation in part reflected fears that local Kivu dynamics were favouring the FDLR, both Hutu and Tutsi could be found in its communal base, in Nkunda's brigades and in the group's senior ranks.⁸¹

This explains how the dynamics of ethnic cleansing could remain even after the power of the *genocidaires* has ebbed. The influx of refugees in 1994 destabilised the east and heralded a new geopolitical balance in the region, one which would in turn end the reign of Mobutu, and twist against Kabila. At each point the originary upheaval has been layered with new politics and allegiances, to the point where figures from opposite sides of the Rwandan war-genocide now collaborate. Since 2002 close rapprochement between elements of the RPF and some former *genocidaires* has taken place, as FDLR generals dealt in coltan with high-ranking Rwandan military officers.⁸² More crucially, successive waves of militarisation have constricted the space of the FDLR. There is something of a paradox here. Defeating the FDLR is the rhetorical lynchpin of all state violence and international intervention in Eastern DRC, and yet they have often been neglected in favour of easier targets.⁸³ Organisational skill and tenacity has allowed them to survive, but not to flourish. FDLR numbers have been falling, and from 2009 to October 2010, MONUC estimated a decline from 6,500 soldiers to as few as 4,000.⁸⁴ A UN demobilisation official in Goma concurred with that assessment and suggested that there were no more than 200 or 300 former *genocidaires* left in the FDLR.⁸⁵ If the genocide did infect Eastern Congo with a particular repertoire of practices, including the patterns of sexual violence that studies have identified,

80 Stearns 2008:246.

81 Stearns 2008:247. The case can be overstated, and Hutu-Tutsi tensions do seem to have played some role in internal squabbles.

82 Prunier 2009:302.

83 Prunier 2009:309.

84 International Crisis Group 2010:6.

85 Interview with MONUC Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Officer, Goma, 11 June 2010.

these forms of brutalisation have long since diffused out from their progenitors.⁸⁶

What Is Retaliatory Atrocity?

Given this understanding of dynamics of power and belonging, we can return to the bloody scene presented by atrocities like that of Kasika. Just as the RCD troops there saw themselves as engaged in a *retaliation*, so too are many massacres in Eastern DRC described as responses, replies and reactions to some perceived harm.⁸⁷ Jason Stearns explains the Kasika massacre in straight-forward terms: “The killers wanted to show the villagers that this could be the consequence of any resistance”.⁸⁸ Yet Kasika's residents did not quite take the hint. Rather than changing their behaviour to respond to the RCD's signals, they became more angry, the memories melding with a directionless resentment. As one resident explained to Stearns himself: “I hate the Tutsi. If I see a Tutsi face, I feel fear”. Another, asked if he could ever forgive, responded: “Forgive whom? We don't even know who did it”.⁸⁹ If anything, the RCD's delivery of death and propaganda had “merely fuelled local resistance, and the region descended into vicious, cyclical violence”.⁹⁰

In other cases, we again encounter the use of increasingly vicious brutality going far beyond penetrative rape: acts like placing hot peppers in the genitals of victims before burying them alive.⁹¹ Given the proportions of victims who described such additional violence (between 10 and 12%, see Chapter 7, pgs. 207-208), these practices of revenge demand some attention:

In many cases, the soldiers attempted to outdo each other in terms of the cruelty of the sexual violence to which they subjected their victims, by introducing objects into the genitals. Sticks, bottles, green bananas, wooden

86 Intriguingly, the same MONUC official who had suggested an intimate link between the Rwandan genocide and sexual violence also posited the opposite chain of causality, noting that Mobutu sent Congolese troops into Rwanda in the early 1990s, and that they had engaged in rape there: “Maybe a cultural thing they've engaged in quite often”.

87 See the many examples in Afoaku 2002:122; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:303, 306, 310, 317, 320.

88 Stearns 2012a:257.

89 Stearns 2012a:262.

90 Stearns 2012a:265.

91 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:304, 315.

batons coated in pepper or chilli and the barrels of guns were all inserted.⁹²

Is this instrumental, somehow rational? As discussed in Chapter 4, explanations in the war studies literature frequently fall into circularities when faced with these kinds of examples. They say that the acts were rationally logical because otherwise troops would not engage in them, or that they seemed rational at the time, even if after the fact we can diagnose them in terms of signalling error or game-theoretic sub-optimality. Thus excluding affect, symbolism, rage, irrationality and associated factors by definition. Especially where observers are so often killed immediately after the spectacle itself, any strategic 'benefits' of sexual violence would seem to be immediately squandered. The plausibility of these forms of instrumentalist explanation recedes even further when repeated atrocities only increase the determination of enemies. For example, the atrocities of Nanking do not seem to have been militarily successful but instead galvanized Chinese patriotism and animated worldwide anti-Japanese propaganda.⁹³

Indeed, atrocity retaliations in Congo against civilians also appear to increased local community hatred of whoever committed them. Already considered not properly Congolese, Rwandan-backed armed groups do not appear to have profited from massacres such as Kasika. For their part, increasing abuses by Mai Mai forces earned them a reputation at odds with their initial profile as "prewar animosities turned into deadly grudges".⁹⁴ The long-term effect of iterated massacres thus appears not so much to be military or economic success, but increasing polarisation and hostility towards armed groups themselves. Repeated reference to 'settling accounts' are more reminiscent of the blood feud, mimetic exchange, and the violence of symbolic equivalence than of cool calculation.⁹⁵

This is not to say that soldiers are not agents of atrocity, nor that they might not be attributed responsibility for their acts. It is not the acts that are in question, but the meaning conferred on them, and the selection of some elements in the scene (say, the looting of food) to act as the ends which rape and massacre are said retrospectively to have been aimed at.

92 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2010:319.

93 Brownmiller 1975:41; Goldstein 2003:367.

94 Autesserre 2010:150.

95 See Jackson 2006:97.

Contradictions develop where analysts attempt to maintain both a symbolic and a rationalist dimension, as when Prunier describes the RPF both as a brutal military *culture* and as calculating users of terror for very clear political goals.⁹⁶ The conceptual issues here are likely interminable, and cannot be settled decisively by appeals to evidence. They reflect in part the general hybridity of war with more extreme practices of ethnic cleansing and genocide: the seepage of doctrines of instrumental violence (merely overwhelming the enemy through judicious force) into those of purification (blurring into the civilian basis of the enemy's political power).⁹⁷

Nevertheless, on the reading provided here, these patterns of violence must be recognised as significantly non-instrumental. Instead, they represent the most coherently mythological moments of violence in Congo, as soldiers bond in the performance of retaliation. The political complexities are such that few appear to endorse a fully exterminationist programme, responding instead to particular communities at given times for sometimes elusive betrayals. The perpetrators of atrocity may well be indoctrinated in a particular military culture, although alliances seem too shifting for that to be the general condition. More plausibly, they find themselves as liminal subjects and temporarily empowered communal enforcers, reacting to whatever group has been smeared with the status of inauthenticity and allochthony in that episode of war. Retaliatory atrocities may also yield short-term material benefits, although we will see in the next chapter that they seem to have a different quality to the acts that secure profitable resources. They more closely border the expressions of fragmented sexual aggression characteristic of unreason, expressions discussed with surprising openness by the combatants to be encountered in Chapter 10.

More Like 17th Century Europe Than Nazi Germany⁹⁸

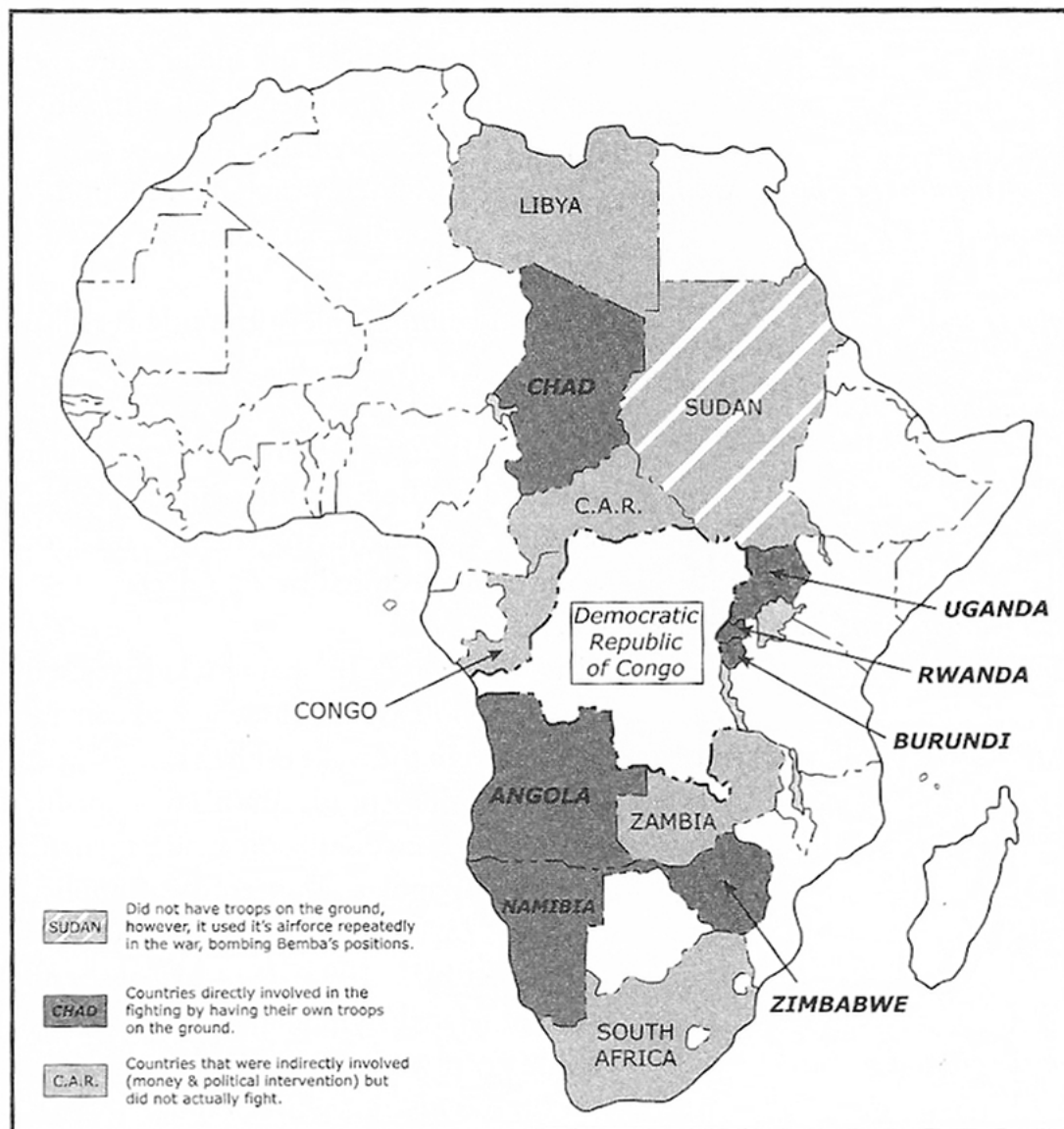
The immediate aftermath of the Rwandan genocide was only one moment in which the fate of Eastern Congo became intertwined in the Great Lakes war complex. And in some senses the Rwandan and Congolese situations are in fact opposites. The Rwandan genocide was highly organised, built on a long-gestating plan, clearly patterned in the forms of its

⁹⁶ Prunier 2009:19–24.

⁹⁷ See in particular Shaw 2007.

⁹⁸ Stearns 2012a:6.

slaughter and targeted particular communities in an explicit way (if not only them). FDLR organisation reflected this heritage: soldiers were clustered in standardised units, subject to clear military hierarchy and a range of benefits, including leave, despite the nominally disorganised labels of rebels and insurgents. By contrast, violence in the DRC is fragmented, widely distributed, subject to horizontal organisation (or that of minor hierarchies), communal but often not ethnic (at least not in any simple way) and combines periods of directed brutality with a general condition best understood not as 'impunity' in the sense of the mere *absence* of judicial power, but as a familiar and general way of conducting war.



Map 5: Countries intervening in the Second Congo War, 1998-2003⁹⁹

99 Reproduced from Prunier 2009:xxiv.

It is partly this contrast that has led several analysts to converge on a Hobbesian metaphor for understanding the fragmented nature of war in Congo. So Séverine Autesserre defines the problem as 'the missing leviathan'; Jason Stearns as a Thirty Years' War without an emergent Commonwealth; and Gérard Prunier as a "pattern of the conflict was much older and prenationalistic: it was more like the Thirty Years' War that had ravaged Europe between 1618 and 1648".¹⁰⁰ These scripts are misleading, or at least ambiguous beyond repair. They pose the Eastern Congolese quagmire as a deficiency of effective state power and see in the European model the promise of settlement. They jointly mobilise that pernicious trope of putative difference (national, cultural, geopolitical) as just a delayed re-enactment of a primary history.¹⁰¹ And yet the Leviathan trope has another relevance in the Great Lakes, one tied to the centrality of state power and organisation – to ordered networks of killing – that made possible the Rwandan genocide.¹⁰² In Congo, land tensions themselves are properly read as the instantiation of a particular kind of state settlement. As parallels with 17th century Europe intimate, this is in part a question of clashing warrants of legitimacy and overlapping political authority, but it is one that emerged from a deliberate colonial project to construct an ethnic-political-property tapestry of this kind.¹⁰³

Hobbesian motifs are a shorthand for the involvement of regional powers in the Congo Wars, an involvement that has indeed been extensive (see Map 5). This is the subject of the next chapter, which intertwines the Kivus with international flows and interests. It will return us to an old dilemma: of whether resources are the purpose of conflict or are merely used to fund it for other purposes.¹⁰⁴ Examining the 'resource curse' argument, and its difficulties in accounting for sexual violence, will provide a focused counterpart to this chapter's discussion of long-standing conflict dynamics.

¹⁰⁰ Autesserre 2010:69; Stearns 2012a:329; Prunier 2009:285.

¹⁰¹ See in particular Hindess 2007.

¹⁰² This is Scott Straus's argument: he titled his final chapter 'The Rwandan Leviathan'. See Straus 2006:201–223. In other contexts, too, the Westphalian model is less the guarantor of safety than the enabler of a totalising annihilation. Classically, Bauman 1989. See also Mann 2004.

¹⁰³ Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:125–133. This is not the place to revisit the debate about Westphalia itself, but there are important issues that arise from an understanding of state-formation that cannot be settled by vague references to 1648. See in particular Osiander 2001.

¹⁰⁴ cf. Vlassenroot and Huggins 2005:175.

WAR/RAPE/ECONOMY: THE RESOURCE CURSE AND WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The truth of what we heard from survivors is rooted in *simple economics*. Profits made from this illicit minerals trade arise from market demand for such minerals. If consumers demand conflict-free products, then companies will eventually meet that demand, in turn cratering the market for minerals mined through violence.

Ryan Gosling and John Prendergast,
'Congo's Conflict Minerals: The Next Blood Diamonds'¹

The regions with most rape are the regions with mines of gold and coltan...so long as the international community doesn't understand that this is an economic war, nothing will change.

Christine Schuler-Deschryver, V-Day, Bukavu, DRC, June 2010²

#bloodminerals³

Over the last decades, a certain consensus has emerged amongst activists, journalists and government officials regarding the connection between resources and sexual violence in Eastern DRC. In short, armed groups use sexual violence to acquire vital minerals, which they then smuggle and trade for extraordinary profits, profits which are then re-invested to secure their militarised hold in the region. The process is importantly internationalised, not only because neighbouring countries are closely involved in a convoluted geopolitical web, but also because the demand for the 'blood minerals' in the first place is driven by production in the East and consumption in the West.⁴ Clashes between armed groups are, then, best viewed not as motivated by long-standing grievances, ethnic ideologies or political projects against the Congolese state, but instead as competition between predatory and vicious military-corporate entities primarily concerned with raping civilians the better to

1 Gosling and Prendergast 2011:emphasis added

2 Interview, 8 June 2010.

3 #bloodminerals was the hashtag (a kind of collating keyword used on the social network site Twitter) introduced by a small campaigning group called Save The Congo in September 2011. For details see Kirby 2011.

4 Montague 2002.

'rape' the wealth of the Congo.⁵ As one political tract from the late 1990s put it, the United States was guilty of:

helping the international bandits from Rwanda, Uganda and some sons of the D.R.Congo to rape the country and loot Tantalum and Niobium minerals from Eastern D.R.Congo to be used in the US computer industry.⁶

This view of conflict in DRC has been most prominent in the work of John Prendergast and the Enough Project, an advocacy group campaigning on genocide and crimes against humanity. Testifying before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Prendergast cast “competition over the extraordinary natural resource base” as “one of the biggest drivers of the conflict” and also as the “root cause” of rape and sexual violence enabled by “the chain of command that either encourages or allows rape to be utilized as a war strategy”.⁷ Among Enough's proposed ways to end rape and sexual violence was further military collaboration between UN forces and the DRC government: “[p]roperly integrated Congolese security forces, supported by U.N. peacekeepers, should secure these sites and transit routes”.⁸ In 2010, Enough's advocacy resulted in a DRC-focused episode of the American crime drama *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit*, intended to bring into ordinary homes the reality of violence used by armed groups. Writing with the show's star Mariska Hargitay, Prendergast explained:

Rape becomes their principal means of terrorizing local populations into passive compliance, so they can steal the mineral wealth without opposition. These crimes destroy families, decimate communities, and lethally spread HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. There are few other conflicts in the world where the link between our consumer appetites and massive human suffering is so direct.⁹

5 As we have seen, the metaphorical relation between actual sexual violence and material exploitation is very common in journalistic and activist commentary on the DRC, both in terms of contemporary wars and colonial legacies.

6 Cited in Jackson 2002:519.

7 Prendergast 2009.

8 Prendergast 2009.

9 Hargitay and Prendergast 2010.

Enough also created a number of videos drawing explicit connections between the minerals they identified as the '3Ts' (tin, tantalum and tungsten) and the high rates of sexual violence in the DRC.¹⁰ For feminist campaigners like Eve Ensler too there is a “direct link” between the mining of natural resources and sexual violence in DRC: “we all *create* those atrocities through our consumption”.¹¹ Alongside others drawing attention to the economic dimensions of the Congo wars, Enough succeeded in generating House Resolution 4128, known as the Conflict Minerals Trade Act, which in July 2010 fed into Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, requiring publicly-traded companies to 'report and audit' their involvement with conflict minerals with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).¹²

The analysis that lies behind these advocacy programmes is familiar from the modes of feminist explanation and the logics of wartime sexual violence explored in Chapter 4. These are strong claims of instrumentality, identifying a conscious desire for economic or geopolitical aims as the motivating force behind acts of extreme violence. Whether for instrumentality, unreason or mythology, evidence to support the modes should ideally be comprehensive and compelling. This chapter assesses available evidence of a particular kind, that largely found in intergovernmental, NGO and academic studies of the economic dimensions of the Congo Wars, to assess claims of a strong link between mineral resource exploitation and sexual violence. The following analysis thus deals with two different research problems behind such an argument: first, that mineral resource exploitation is closely connected to the dynamics of collective violence in eastern DRC in a *war economy*; and second, that sexual violence in eastern DRC reflects, and is driven by, the needs of such a war economy to the extent that we can speak of a *war-rape economy*.

The chapter begins with a survey of existing analyses of the *war economy* proposition. Drawing on detailed UN reports and other studies, it confirms that armed groups have indeed been heavily integrated into mineral resource *and other natural resource* profit streams for more than a decade, and that the claim for a war economy in eastern DRC is thus convincing in many details. It then turns to some criticisms of this characterisation, focusing

¹⁰ Enough Project 2009; 2010

¹¹ All Things Digital 2009, emphasis added.

¹² Seay 2012:10–11

on countervailing evidence. This section qualifies the war economy thesis by embedding it more carefully in wider social and political dimensions of violence. In particular, the reliance of armed groups on mineral resources is somewhat overstated, and strong claims for a kind of rampant instrumentalism do not seem to capture the full dynamics at play. However, these qualifications are not sufficient to dismiss the war economy claim, only to modify it. The chapter then turns to the question of whether the war economy can be best viewed as a *war-rape economy*. An assessment of some incidents examined by UN reports suggests a marked variation in the forms of violence used to secure natural resources, with a general sense that sexual violence is *not* a major tool compared to other kinds of human rights abuses. A comparison of levels of sexual violence and mineral wealth at the national level further destabilises the correlation between the two factors. These issues are explored through the detailed case of the mass rapes at Walikale in July and August 2010, which provide evidence of instrumentalist rape, but also further complicate the relationship between those rapes and economic objectives. The chapter concludes by clarifying the complex of issues at stake and suggesting that no clear pattern is discernible without further information, but that strong versions of the instrumentality thesis do not appear to be supported by current evidence.

***Africa Has The Shape Of A Pistol, And Congo Is Its Trigger*¹³**

Since before the formal conclusion of the Second Congo War in 2003, detailed reports commissioned by the United Nations Security Council have investigated the connections between armed groups and the 'illegal' exploitation of natural resources.¹⁴ The cumulative analysis of these reports reveals a deeply embedded and widespread war economy in the east. An early estimate suggested that just one of three elite networks invested in the Kivus and elsewhere (the DRC/Zimbabwe political-military-commercial network) had managed to extract no less than \$5 billion over a 3 year period, largely in mineral wealth, transferring state assets to private companies which fronted for its interests and jointly ensuring that none

¹³ A commonly-cited phrase, attributed to Frantz Fanon.

¹⁴ As several critics have suggested, this terminology is inadequate, since it from the start sets the formalised activities of the state against those of the assorted armed groups, as well as against the frequently 'illegal' activities of locals in eastern DRC involved in survival economies. For many decades such illicit activities have been necessary for what is known as 'Système D', based on Mobutu's slogan of 'Debrouillez-Vous!' or 'Fend For Yourself!': a second survival economy beneath the official one. See Jackson 2002:520-522.

of that wealth was realised by the formal institutions of the DRC government.¹⁵ The first UN Panel of Experts report identified five strategies of exploitation used by elite networks: asset-stripping; control of procurement and accounting (with front groups declaring huge losses despite their access to major concessions for very low prices); organised theft from production at source via internal theft rings run by police, soldiers and managers (sometimes accounting for drops in total revenue of up to 25%); corporate facades as cover for criminal activities such as arms trafficking, smuggling and money-laundering; and the provision of equipment and services to militaries, for example in using diamond revenues to pay for FAC (the then DRC army) arms purchases.¹⁶

In one particularly prominent case coltan – one of the '3Ts' identified by Enough as driving the conflict – played a major role¹⁷. Ranking officers of the Rwandan army themselves purchased coltan during the last years of the Second Congo War, and used it to directly finance the army. The Panel of Experts estimated that this exploitation of resources was *the* major source of army revenues at the time, accounting for a full 80% of the RPA (Rwandan army) budget in 1999, so that the actual level of Rwanda military spending for that year is estimated at \$400 million despite the official budget provided by the Rwandan government standing at only \$80 million.¹⁸ Two years later, the real budget was estimated to be \$135 million, another huge increase on official figures.¹⁹ In the 1997-2000 period Rwanda and Uganda also saw their official diamond exports multiplied to 12 times their previous levels, while DRC exports collapsed. Rwanda's profiteering peaked with a 2000 diamond export level *90 times higher* than what it had managed in 1998.²⁰ As well as these wild official increases, a further \$13.5 million worth of diamonds went missing in 2000, likely laundered to the benefit of traders and armed groups.²¹ In all cases, minerals originating in the DRC

15 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:7.

16 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:9–13.

17 Coltan is an abbreviation for columbite-tantalite, and can be referred to as 'tantalite' in its unprocessed ore form or as 'tantalum' once processed. It is used primarily for capacitors in mobile phones and other electronic goods, but also for memory chips, superalloys, and cutting tools amongst other uses. See Nest 2011:3–10. On the sudden increase in tantalum's world price in the early 2000s see also Jackson 2002.

18 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:15; Nest 2011:23–24.

19 Stearns 2012a:300.

20 Samset 2002:471. Prunier argues that the benefits were especially pronounced for Rwanda, since its military spending was so much higher as a proportion of its budget and its own prior export capacity so much lower. See Prunier 2009:244–245.

21 Samset 2002:471.

had been extracted and circulated by elite networks working in alliance with elements of the DRC army and other armed groups.

These elite networks persisted after the formal peace, with local leaders linked to transnational networks of trade and exploitation and so able to hold considerable power in mini-fiefdoms beyond the control of the central government.²² Uganda and Rwanda both strongly maintained their interests for a number of years, interests which persist today, especially in the case of Rwanda.²³ Whilst the formal alliances, and many of the names, had changed, the 2007 Group of Experts Report continued to link resources and violence:

In Ituri and the Kivus there has been a close geographical correlation between the activities of illicit armed actors and areas of natural resource exploitation. *Control over territory has proved to be the key factor* enabling armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo to profit from the exploitation of natural resources.²⁴

These dynamics of exploitation and conflict are characteristic of all armed groups operating in the region, and cross the full spectrum of minerals. The principal funding for the FDLR, for example, has for the last decade been the illegal mineral trade, with profits in the millions of dollars generated every year from cassiterite, coltan, gold and wolframite.²⁵ FDLR units “tax and control the trade of minerals in a system they call 'non-conventional logistics’” and were until recently in control of the majority of artisanal mining in South Kivu, as well as 'many' gold mines in North Kivu.²⁶ The exact minerals focused on varies depending on the exact situation, so that by 2009 the FDLR came to trade most heavily in cassiterite because it delivered the highest revenues at several million dollars a year.²⁷ Others, like the ADF (the Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan-based Islamist group) rely more heavily on the timber trade, and there is even evidence of the FDLR attempting to sell on canisters of uranium

22 United Nations Group of Experts 2005:11. A significant change appears to have taken place in DRC-Rwandan relations since early 2009, although violence persists alongside old allegiances.

23 United Nations Group of Experts 2005:12.

24 United Nations Group of Experts 2007:7, emphasis added.

25 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:19–20, 2009:32.

26 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:19, 20.

27 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:42.

discovered in Walikale.²⁸ The DRC government's own estimates are that illegal gold exports alone total more than \$1.24 billion a year while the Enough Project estimates that all armed groups together made \$11.8 million from coltan in 2008.²⁹

The scale of extraction can be seen even in official statistics. For example, local government records for May to August 2011 showed 947 tons of iron ore arriving in Goma by air and land but only 361 tons officially exported in the same period, leaving as much as 586 tons (some 58% of the total) likely smuggled out through Rwanda.³⁰ Corporate actors are clearly implicated in these hidden profits and criminal networks, as when Tremalt Ltd. paid the DRC government just \$400,000 for cobalt and copper concessions actually worth in excess of \$1 billion.³¹ The Panel of Experts was similarly able to chart extraordinary shifts in international diamond trades based on shadow mining in the DRC, with diamonds from Mbuji Mayi apparently accounting for the increase of exports from the United Arab Emirates to Antwerp from only \$4.2 million in 1998 to \$149.5 million in 2001.³²

The over-riding indication given by UN studies is thus that military-commercial-political elite networks have consistently exercised a high level of control in multiple social spheres in the eastern DRC: using front companies, maintaining the 'facade' of rebel administrations, coordinating logistics through transnational criminal networks, and controlling military and security forces “that they use to intimidate, threaten violence or carry out *selected* acts of violence”.³³ The international aspect of this extraction was particularly evident in the final stages of the Second Congo War, but the value illicitly realised from mining secured by force by armed groups has persisted to the present day, and remains significant in both scale and variety, as indicated by Tables 5 and 6 below. Yet, that armed groups require funding, and that they use violence as a means to secure that funding, does not alone settle the question. The sheer scale and complexity of resource exploitation in the DRC is clear, but the interaction between this dimension of economic extraction and wider social patterns of

28 United Nations Group of Experts 2011:29, 2010:50.

29 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:32; Nest 2011:94.

30 United Nations Group of Experts 2011:122.

31 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:10.

32 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:26.

33 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:7, emphasis added.

wartime existence requires a further stage of inquiry before we can turn to the question of just how 'selected' these acts of violence are, and what relationship they bear to gendered suffering and to repertoires of sexual violence.

Armed Group	<i>Coltan</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Tin</i>	<i>Tungsten</i>	<i>Diamonds</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Cobalt</i>
<i>Pro-Government Forces</i>							
DRC Army					*	*	*
Zimbabwean Army					*		
Angolan Army					*		
Mai Mai	*	*	*		*		
<i>Anti-Government Forces</i>							
Rwandan Army	*	*	*	*	*		
Ugandan Army	*	*	*	*	*		
RCD-Goma	*	*	*	*	*		
RCD-ML	*	*	*	*	*		
MLC	*	*			*		

Table 5: Major Armed Groups and Sources of Mineral Revenue, 1998-2003³⁴

Armed Group	<i>Coltan</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Tin</i>	<i>Tungsten</i>	<i>Manganese</i>	<i>Diamonds</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Cobalt</i>
DRC Army	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mai Mai	*	*	*			*		
PARECO	*	*	*					
FDLR	*	*	*	*				
CNDP	*	*	*		*			

Table 6: Major Armed Groups and Sources of Mineral Revenue, 2006-2008³⁵

³⁴ Taken from Nest 2011:77.

³⁵ Taken from Nest 2011:80.

The War Economy, Qualified

So all armed groups, during both the Second Congo War and after, have been involved in the extraction of a wide range of minerals. Yet the association of armed groups, illicit mining and extreme violence is complicated by a number of factors, principally founded in a wider analysis of the social and political dimensions of natural resource exploitation in DRC. Michael Nest, for one, has suggested that coltan, which has been so central to activist campaigns against illegal exploitation and sexual violence, is much less important than conventionally supposed. The profits generated by Rwanda at the turn of the century in particular were exceptional, and based on a short-lived bubble of coltan prices.³⁶

Moreover, the overall contribution of DRC-origin coltan to the global economy is frequently over-stated in journalist and activist accounts. The most common myth is that the DRC holds 80% of the world's tantalum reserves. The actual figure is closer to 8% or 9%.³⁷ Although the figures are not as clear as they could be, a reasonable estimate for the DRC's share of total world production is around 21%, putting it between world leader Australia (30% of world production) and third place producer Brazil (with 14%).³⁸ The comparable value of coltan for armed groups is also small. Official records, which massively underestimate true levels but can nonetheless be used as a proportional measure, show that coltan exports from South Kivu were valued at only a few million dollars in 2005, moving up to \$7 million by 2008, in comparison with the value of gold (\$8 million in 2005, \$28 million by 2008) and tin (\$6 million in 2005, \$18 million by 2008).³⁹ Yet groups like Global Witness make much in their analysis of the claim that 64% of the world's known Coltan reserves are in the DRC.⁴⁰

Paradoxically, the very dominance of a mineral economy in areas of conflict generates the misleading appearance of an association between violence and mineral wealth. Up to 80% of exports and 30% of GDP in the DRC depends on mining, and these levels are

³⁶ Nest 2011:12–15.

³⁷ Nest 2011:16–20.

³⁸ Nest 2011:26–27. Other producers like China, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Russia, Canada and Nigeria account for between 1% and 8% of global production each.

³⁹ Nest 2011:95.

⁴⁰ Global Witness 2005:13.

particularly pronounced in mineral-rich areas like the Kivus.⁴¹ Estimates suggest that 750,000 to 2 million Congolese artisanal miners work in the 'illegal' war economies of the DRC.⁴² Their dependents in turn may total 10 million people, or 16% of DRC's population.⁴³ In other words, *almost all* social life in eastern DRC is strongly integrated into mining economies. Peaceful actors are as reliant on mining as violent ones, which destabilises the apparent correlation between resources and armed groups. Possible implications of a strong instrumentalist thesis, for example that non-violent actors are not associated with mining, or that rape is lower in areas where there is no mining-related economy, thus become difficult, although not quite impossible, to examine.

It is also not clear to what extent armed groups are the main beneficiaries of mineral resources. Data from 2000 suggests that armed groups received only around 11% of the total profits from coltan within the DRC, which in turn accounted for only 1% of the globally-realised profits. Within the DRC, similar shares went to the chief of mine, various middle men, taxes, with *creuseurs* (miners who sometimes act as combatants) and licence and fee collectors benefiting most. Globally, only 12% of profits were realised in the DRC, with brokers, processors and manufacturers taking by far the majority of the profit.⁴⁴ Drawing on the only available comprehensive mapping data of mines and who controls them, produced by the International Peace Information Service (IPIS) for 2009, Nest suggests that the FDLR fully control six coltan mines in South Kivu; the FLDR and Mai Mai control one mine in North Kivu; the FARDC fully control two mines; and former CNDP forces now 'integrated' into the FARDC control ten mines. Four further mines in the Kivus are controlled by no armed group.⁴⁵ The case of the CNDP is particularly instructive since they have been *the* major source of conflict in Kivus in the last decade, but did not control any major mining as late as 2008. They had links to traders, but appear to have received most funding from the Tutsi community and parallel taxation systems.⁴⁶

41 Seay 2012:8.

42 Nest 2011:37; Seay 2012:4.

43 Nest 2011:37.

44 Nest 2011:59.

45 Nest 2011:93. The full IPIS map is available at <http://www.ipisresearch.be/maps/MiMiKi/Areas/web/index.html>.

46 Stearns 2012a:258–259, 265. It can always be claimed that the CNDP were so disruptive precisely because they were seeking to control such mines, but this only returns us to the circularity of instrumentalist claims.

Of course, coltan is far from the only important mineral, and we have seen that armed groups are predominantly reliant on other minerals, but the overall IPIS data shows that armed groups maintained 'positions' at just over half the mines in the two Kivus.⁴⁷ The association of armed groups with mines is thus very significant, but not overwhelming. As Laura Seay indicates in her critique of Enough advocacy for the Dodd-Frank Act, many mines, even in the Kivus, are free of violence: “not all violence in the eastern D.R.Congo is related to the mineral trade, and not all mines are controlled by violent actors”.⁴⁸

Two qualifications of the war economy thesis thus arise. First, mining may only be one, albeit important, revenue stream among many for armed groups. An assessment of FDLR economic activities across Walikale since the late 1990s lists not only artisanal mining, but also quarrying, woodworking, transport, cattle trading, fish farming, local market taxation and even school and health post provisions in Bakanjo.⁴⁹ Second, in an economy so dominated by mining, it is almost impossible for armed groups *not* to benefit in some way from activities that could be plausibly be related to mines and mineral wealth.⁵⁰ Soldiers can still receive revenues from mines they don't control, either through systems of taxation and transport, or simply because they control trade around an area where miners and their dependents live.⁵¹ An analytical jump is required to move from this embeddedness in a mineral economy to a claim that this economy causes violence or that sexual violence would decrease if armed groups were not integrated into them.

The Rwandan state unquestionably benefitted from its involvement in the Second Congo War. But even here the money seems to be have been more means than end for a foreign policy elite raised in exile and engaged in a post-genocide project of state consolidation and moral-political vision: “For many Rwandans, from the presidency down to the school teacher, the war in Congo was an ideological project, not just an opportunity for plunder”.⁵²

47 Spittaels and Hilgert 2009:11.

48 Seay 2012:17, 7.

49 Rudahigwa 2010:37.

50 Similarly, it can be observed that rule in the DRC has always been related to its massive wealth and to a political economy of controlling distribution of gains, from Belgian rule through to Mobutu. In other words, the role of natural resources in the social sphere is a constant. See Nest 2006:17–30.

51 Spittaels and Hilgert 2009:11.

52 Stearns 2012a:301.

And for less prominent partners in accumulatory atrocity may not have benefitted much at all. Zimbabwe's involvement, for one, had been predicated on the lure of easily-accessible seams of copper and cobalt which proved far more challenging to access than planned. Smaller concessions could not make up for the outlay in arms and loans never to be repaid.⁵³

On this account, what matters is not so much whether armed groups are *motivated* by the acquisition of mineral wealth or whether they access wealth directly or indirectly. What matters is that armed groups require funding, and respond actively to changing military, economic and political situations to ensure that funding.⁵⁴ On the one hand, this may spur efforts to regulate mining in an effort to narrow the range of opportunities for armed groups. But it may also lead to *increases* in violence against civilian populations. Rather than paying merely for arms, mineral extraction is mainly used to cover soldiers' subsistence, for FARDC troops as much as for Mai Mai or other rebel forces.⁵⁵ Under conditions where civilians already suffer from extreme 'taxation', this may mean that mining bans will increase direct suffering, including levels of sexual violence.

Necropolitics and Necroeconomics⁵⁶

Consider the relationship between violence, minerals and arms suggested by the UN Panel of Experts. As Seay suggests, armed groups do not need to rely on income streams to purchase arms directly, usually acquiring them through easy raids on badly kept FARDC stockpiles.⁵⁷ In moves familiar from the 'sell-games' discussed by David Keen (see Chapter 4), the nominally opposed FDLR and FARDC have been known to collaborate at the local level in the sharing of arms and in disrupting the demobilisation efforts of MONUC forces.⁵⁸ In other cases vicious attacks, including decapitations, are inflicted on other armed groups in contests over control of resources like timber.⁵⁹ These interactions begin to suggest a more

53 Stearns 2012a:295.

54 This reflects the discussion over the greed/grievance debate in Chapter 4.

55 Seay 2012:18.

56 See the excellent polemic of Prasse-Freeman 2012.

57 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:6, 32–33, 2011:7.

58 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:25, 2009:9–14.

59 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:67.

complex relationship between military forces and civilian victims, one reinforced by some of the details on human rights violations offered by the UN studies.

The dominant form of violence recorded in the UN studies is not sexual violence, but targeted brutality towards miners as part of a protection racket guarantee both of direct mineral wealth and associated 'taxes'. In the case of the CNDP, this has involved “allowing” mine owners to retain their concessions in return for cuts of the product, and of them helping “resolve” business disputes in return.⁶⁰ Similar arrangements apply elsewhere, as at Kamituga in South Kivu where the 321st FARDC brigade under Colonel Rugo Heshima runs the Itabi goldmine, taking a cut of roughly 40% of all production.⁶¹ The Group of Experts summary of another particular egregious example illustrates several themes common to these situations:

Government officials particularly denounced Major Dudu’s 1,112th battalion, which on 17 March was deployed to the mineral-rich area of Manguredjipa. According to the same sources, Dudu’s soldiers have consolidated a monopoly on gold purchases through a barter system at Mbunia and Kisenge mines. The soldiers organize all transport of beer, food and supplies to the mines, in exchange for gold at favourable rates. When production is limited, according to mining officials, the soldiers have allegedly beaten numerous diggers whom they believe to be lying to or cheating them...The Group also received documents reporting on a meeting that mining authorities organized with diggers, traders, government officials and representatives of Dudu’s battalion at Manguredjipa. In the meeting notes, participants accused the military of imposing “security” taxes on diggers and forcing them to carry merchandise to be sold in the mine. In addition, soldiers were accused of collaborating with groups of deserters who harass and loot mineral traders. Participants also denounced the unequal market competition between civilian and military mineral traders.⁶²

60 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:14.

61 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:58.

62 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:66.

Such limited and goal-orientated harassment is indicative of closely controlled shadow and war economies. Taken together with the variety and complexity of military-civilian relations in eastern DRC, the instrumentalist case for mineral-driven sexual violence stands in need of more cautious evaluation, and of a more variegated depiction of how armed groups operate and why. As well as expressing both conflictual and collaborative relations, armed groups have developed their strategies for survival and profit over time. In Stephen Jackson's terminology, the Congo wars have been progressively *economised* as initially political objectives became more and more dependent both on economic means and economic ends.⁶³ Most armed groups are thus not best characterised as simplistically *motivated* by minerals: “instead, their violent behaviour stems from anger over inequality, ideological issues, and/or because there are no constraints on such activities in the eastern D.R.Congo”.⁶⁴ A similar diagnosis was recently made by the UN Group of Experts: “the exploitation of natural resources merely enables armed movements to sustain their efforts towards political objectives. However, the Group has noted that economic motivations are increasingly driving a significant portion of armed actors, including criminal networks of FARDC”.⁶⁵ Moreover, as the same Group put matters a decade ago, “[w]hile some hide behind a political agenda, all are pursuing illegal economic activities *as a matter of survival*”.⁶⁶

That capturing valuable minerals may make wars 'self-financing' (in Paul Kagame's boastful phrase⁶⁷) helps us establish how wars persist, but not what causes them. Nor does it help characterise the repertoires of violence used by combatants to secure profits or to pursue other agendas and desires. All wars require funding, which means that maintaining an economic base will likely be part of armed groups strategies, and that personnel will be dedicated to that task. This in itself is no more reason to see conflict in the eastern DRC as *especially economic* than would the total war economies of the Allied and Axis powers require us to see World War II as primarily driven by the desire for resources. The emergent picture is, then, one of collusion, private enrichment, overlaps with criminal network, conflicting incentives in which profit motives trump security duties, a mix of greed and grievance and a

63 Jackson 2002; Nest 2011:75–76.

64 Seay 2012:19.

65 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:74–75.

66 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:29, emphasis added.

67 Jackson 2002:528.

general context of impunity.

However, these qualifications to the war economy thesis have their own limitations. The attention to transnational resource flows, and to the mutual implication of violence in Congo and consumption in California in an international political economy, has the analytical value of marginalising simplistic notions of African barbarism and primitivism.⁶⁸ Rival explanations around the role of land pressures and ethnic conflict can have the effect of opposing 'land' and 'resources' as well as ignoring the co-implication of economic networks, ethnic identities and political projects. Moreover, the expansion of economic control by the FARDC in the war against rebels has important implications, not least at the level of state-building practice.⁶⁹ The sharpest critiques against activism challenge particular narratives, but do not disrupt the overall claim of a connection between collective violence and economic agendas. There is no evidence that *coltan in particular* is more frequently associated with violence *relative to other economic activities*⁷⁰, but this is not the same as saying that economic activities are not strongly associated with violence. Finally, in understanding the unfolding dynamics of violence (including sexual violence), what starts or drives a war might not be as important a question as what makes it persist and what determines the form that it takes. That struggles over resources may be an effect rather than a cause helps unsettle simplistic narratives⁷¹, but does not dispel the political economy of war.

The War-Rape Economy

Even if armed groups dominated mines, and received the vast majority of their wealth from them, this would not show that sexual violence is driven by the need to acquire such resources. A more detailed investigation is needed to establish the character of sexual violence as enacted in the DRC. Unfortunately, the UN reports surveyed here did not explore sexual violence in any great detail. Across the 169 pages of the five reports from 2002 to 2007, the phrases 'rape', 'sexual violence' and 'violence against women' occurred a combined total of only 5 times. Later documents fared better, but the four reports from

68 Montague 2002:104.

69 On the increasing control of mines by the FARDC, see United Nations Group of Experts 2007:7, 2010:67, 2011:36.

70 Nest 2011:97.

71 Seay 2012:7.

2008-2011 still only used those phrases 79 times in 998 pages of material. The reports give a general sense that violence is important to armed groups, and that concretely this *does* mean violence against civilians, but it is unclear just how much violence is civilian-directed, and how much of *that* violence in turn is sexualised in character. Do conflicts over resources happen in traditional military encounters between armed groups? Or as a way of capturing areas and using the local labour supply (coercive violence perhaps involved to secure a territory or exploit workers)? Or as part of a wider terrorising of civilians and cleansing to consolidate control? Or is sexual violence concentrated and distributed in ways much closer to the logics suggested by mythology and unreason?

As elsewhere, the quality of data is a major issue. As the Group of Experts explained in their short study of 300 cases of sexual violence in North Kivu in the 2008 Final Report, “[o]n the basis of the data collected, all armed groups and FARDC are responsible for committing such violations” but the data “did not however provide sufficient information about the authors or the chain of command”.⁷² Amazingly, the Group was not able to analyse a MONUC database of incidents of sexual violence apparently in existence at the time and seems to have had difficulty getting sufficient cooperation from MONUC at all.⁷³ The next year the Group again reported that “...despite the prevalence of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, obtaining accurate and reliable information regarding the number of victims and the identity of perpetrators remains a severe challenge”, although the Group was also confident enough to repeat the UNFPA estimate that 90% of all rape cases are perpetrated by “men with arms”.⁷⁴

It is therefore necessary to find other ways of uncovering the relevant dynamics of sexual violence. The detailed cases explored by the UN reports appear to bear differing relations to economic or instrumentalist pressures and encompass general harassment of the population, including looting, rape carried out by retreating military groups, and summary executions and reprisal killings carried out on suspected 'sympathisers'.⁷⁵ Sexual violence does appear to be a major dimension of some such reprisals, which we might include in the category of

72 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:46.

73 United Nations Group of Experts 2008:46, 52.

74 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:79.

75 See for example United Nations Group of Experts 2008:47.

retaliatory atrocity elaborated in the last chapter. For example, documentation of FDLR attacks between February and October 2009 put the cases of sexual violence at 135, amongst a total of 384 deaths, 521 abductions, 38 cases of torture and 5 cases of mutilation.⁷⁶ Evidence from several villages in Bunyakiri in South Kivu suggest that all of these attacks had been deliberately planned by Major Willy Guillaume Simba, the FDLR commander of the Romo Battalion stationed in that area. Some villagers had in fact received documents signed by Major Simba threatening retaliations if *Kimia II* (the military operation against the FDLR) was launched, a threat he followed through with in mid-June 2009.⁷⁷ Those attacks alone led to the burning of 1,000 houses, 70 abductions and more than 20 cases of sexual violence.⁷⁸

However, in other cases, reprisal attacks appear to take place without sexual violence, whilst in others sexual violence seems unconnected to any agenda. For example, in April 2009 the FARDC attacked FDLR dependents in Masisi, killing of at least 143 Rwandan refugees, primarily women and children, as part of *Kimia II* operations.⁷⁹ However, the UN Report presented no evidence of sexual violence, apparently in accordance with the plan of FARDC Colonel Ngaruye who is said to have ordered that “[a]ny young men found should be killed, while all children, women and elders should be captured and sent back to Rwanda”, in effect meaning that the the latter groups were often being killed en route.⁸⁰ A practice familiar from other contexts, and certainly deeply implicated in gender norms, but not one that fits the conventional narrative of rape as a tool of resource accumulation.

In still other cases rape appears to be part of a deliberate geopolitical strategy, although not one aimed at capturing mineral resources but as part of the overlap of ethnic conflicts with land disputes.⁸¹ In early 2010, for example, former-CNDP elements attacked villages in Lukweti, raping 40 women, killing 30 people and burning down 150 houses: “The unequivocal explanation that the villagers gave the Group was that all the attacks were

76 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:81.

77 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:81.

78 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:82.

79 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:84.

80 United Nations Group of Experts 2009:84.

81 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:72–73.

meant to drive the local Bahunde population out so that former CNDP officers could take over the lush pasturage of the Lukweti zone”.⁸² The 2011 Final Report further documented a number of separate cases of widespread rape, generally either without reference to any particular agenda, or as acts accompanying a melange of activities such as purported weapons searches by FARDC, evictions of people from 'illegal' settlements, direct retaliations for perceived support for FDLR, FDLR retreats accompanied by attacks on villages, or merely as acts associated with general looting.⁸³

These overlapping and contradictory accounts provide no clear image of how sexual violence is linked to particular instrumentalist projects, or whether such a link exists at all. Some evidence is available for direct commands to rape being passed down a military hierarchy and implemented for the purposes of securing mineral wealth. Other accounts point to more opportunistic conjunctures or show that definitive agendas like 'resource exploitation' or 'land dispute' cannot be so easily separated. Where rape is mentioned, it is often alongside other acts of atrocity, and without sufficient clarity about what drives it, as summed up in an early assessment of the spread of armed conflict through society:

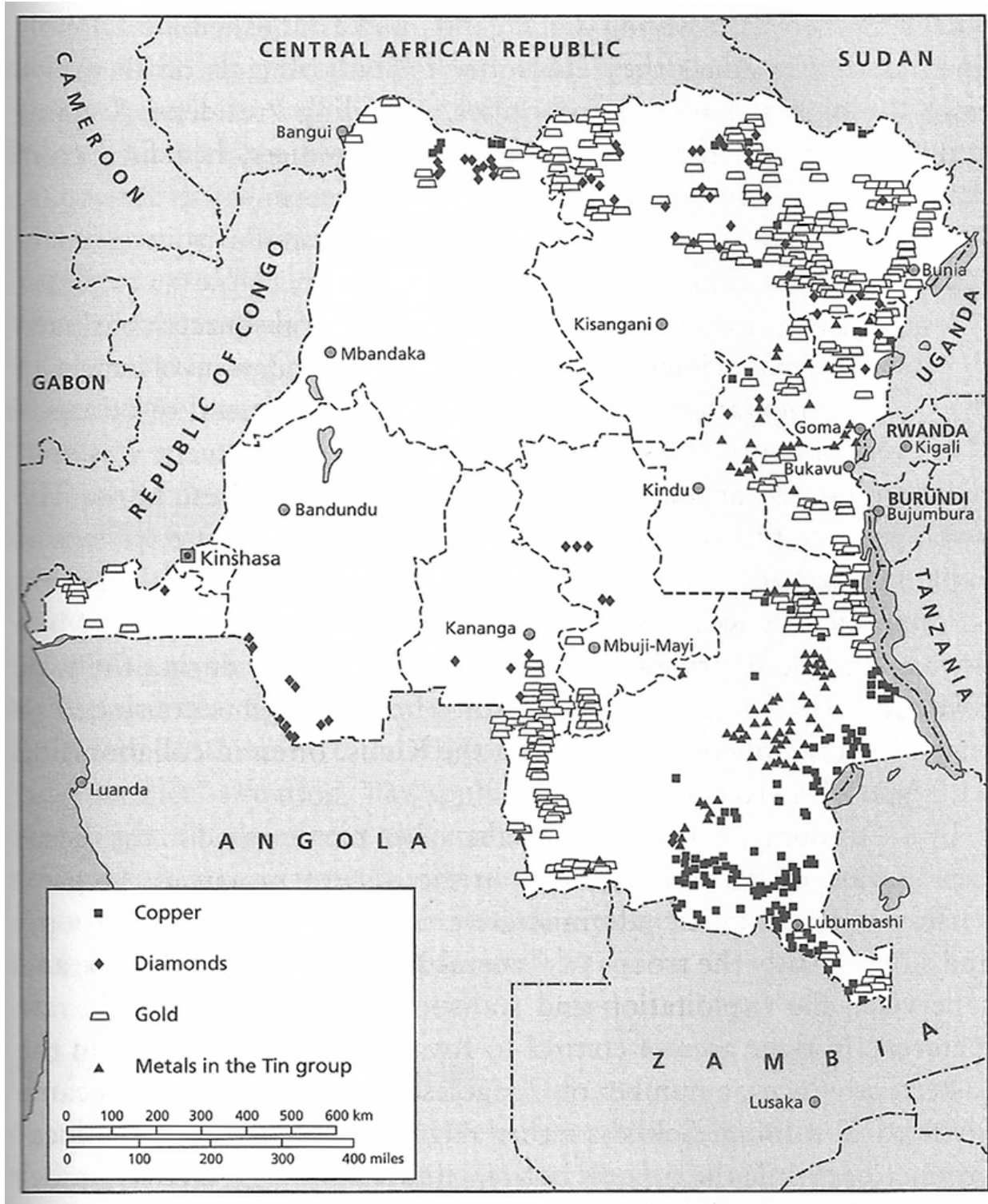
Widespread armed activity is characterized by *opportunistic* and *chaotic* encounters. Children are killed, adult victims are eviscerated, women are raped, property stolen, houses burned, churches demolished and whatever infrastructure exists is laid to waste.⁸⁴

A more general level of analysis only reinforces the sense that the war-rape economy thesis is insufficient. Table 7 sets out the Peterman et al. figures on sexual violence in the DRC. Unlike most studies, they used data for the DRC as a whole to separate out the experience of female survivors in different provinces and, importantly, to calculate the *rate* of sexual violence. As would be expected from the history of conflict in eastern DRC and the discussion in Chapter 7, the provinces most involved in the Congo Wars (North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Oriental) all reported extremely high rates of sexual violence. Areas usually thought of as more removed from the conflict registered lower rates.

82 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:74.

83 For details, see United Nations Group of Experts 2011:156–159.

84 United Nations Panel of Experts 2002:23, emphasis added.



Map 6: Mineral Deposits in the Democratic Republic of Congo⁸⁵

85 Reproduced from Autesserre 2010:63 but based on Global Witness 2005:7.

Province	Absolute No. of Occurrences of Rape in Preceding 12 Months	Rates per 1,000 Women of Reproductive Age in Preceding 12 Months
North Kivu	73,387	67
Equateur	94,604	65
Maniema	19,050	50
South Kivu	41,811	44
Oriental	59,779	38
Kinshasa	43,619	26
Katanga	28,784	14
Bandundu	22,691	14
Kasai-Oriental	9,418	8
Kasai-Occidental	7,749	8
Bas Congo	6,504	7
Total	407,397	29

Table 7: Calculations of Levels and Rates of Sexual Violence Among Women 15-49 Years by Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2007⁸⁶

Since the Kivus are mineral-rich, these figures may seem to indicate a correlation between areas of high mineral wealth and areas of high sexual violence. While this correlation in itself could not show that minerals are meaningfully the *cause* of sexual violence, it would add plausibility to some, perhaps quite convoluted, link between these factors. However, the Kivus are far from the only resource-rich area of the DRC, and an analysis of other areas of mineral wealth suggest that the assumed correlation may not hold at all (see Map 6). Nor can the difference be explained by different historical resources for rebellion. Katanga was the site of the most serious challenge to the integrity of the Congolese state after independence but shows a comparatively low level of sexual violence. The kind of historical attention to Kivus developed in the last chapter does clarify matters somewhat, but this is still very much a war economy located in ways that may be differently instrumental-rational-material, but also mythological-cultural-historical and unreason-contingent-emotional. And since studies predominantly focus on gendered brutality and the Great Lakes legacies of profit and conflict, they have tended to neglect cases where sexual violence was low or war

⁸⁶ Adapted from Peterman, Palermo, and Bredenkamp 2011:1064.

relatively absent. In other words, the analysis underling much advocacy around sexual violence in the DRC selects on the dependent variable.

Province	Total Granted Mineral Rights (Research Permits, Exploration Permits, etc.)
Katanga	1,282
Kasai-Occidental	518
Kasai-Oriental	461
Oriental	308
Bas-Congo	221
Bandudu	209
North Kivu	82
Maniema	77
South Kivu	71
Equateur	36
Kinshasa	10
Total	3,275

Table 8: Mineral Rights Issued by CAMI (Mining Title Registry and Cadastre Service) to 10 July 2007⁸⁷

The World Bank data on mineral rights in Table 8 suggests a very different ordering of provincial wealth than we might expect from the view that sexual violence is high in places where there is most economically to be gained from violence. The strong contrast between the tables is particularly suggestive for any war-rape economy hypothesis. Of the top five provinces granted most mineral rights (Katanga, Kasai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Orientale and Bas-Congo), only Orientale had a rate of sexual violence above the DRC average of 29 per 1,000 women of reproductive age. The Kasais and Bas-Congo were in fact the provinces with the lowest estimates of rates of sexual violence and Katanga's rate was similarly below the national average.

Excepting the capital Kinshasa, the top four provinces for sexual violence were also the *bottom* four provinces for mineral rights granted. Other figures buttress the position of Katanga as *the* major provincial wealth source in the DRC. World Bank estimates put

⁸⁷ Adapted from World Bank 2008:137.

anticipated mining receipts from Katanga at an annual average of between \$127 million to \$170 million between 2008 and 2012, compared to between \$43 and \$55 million for the two Kasai provinces put together in the same period, and only \$15 to \$21 million for Ituri on the same measure.⁸⁸ Indeed, the Katanga Copper Belt is the world's largest known cobalt resource, bringing the DRC total to second in the global rankings, behind Chile and ahead of the USA.⁸⁹ The gap between this clear wealth and the relative absence of sexual violence is striking, especially since Katanga shares a long border with Angola, and is close to Burundi and Rwanda, all countries closely involved in the Second Congo War. It is also the province which has come closest to permanently seceding from the DRC since independence (it declared independence in 1960 but was re-incorporated in 1963). Yet this history and wealth has not led to levels of wartime sexual violence comparable to those found in the Kivus.

Yet this table can only be taken as indicative. Since it lists only rights granted, it may miss much activity undertaken illegally in Eastern provinces, and it may also reflect more about prospective sources of wealth than areas currently being exploited at their full capacity. Serious mining companies are likely to be reluctant to invest heavily in the east, where most mining continues to be undertaken at an artisanal level. On the other hand, mining controlled by armed groups does also take place under officially granted concessions which are obtained corruptly. Mining in all of Congo remains artisanal, which is one reason why it has been traditionally so hard to quantify. Moreover, the data anticipates our estimates of sexual violence by two years, and so may be taken as reflecting the resource situation before those attacks were taken out.

So interpretive caution is in order on several fronts. As we have seen previously data problems in eastern DRC can be sufficiently disabling as to make any authoritative claims shaky beyond generic identifications of sexual violence as a serious and widespread problem. Sexual violence statistics can suffer from cross-cutting issues both of over-counting and under-counting in conflict areas.⁹⁰ Similar problems plausibly affect official mining statistics. An instrumentalist account may counter some of the criticisms above with relative ease, for

88 World Bank 2008:13. These were the only provinces for which this information was given in the report.

89 World Bank 2008:96.

90 International Alert 2010:52–54.

example by combining the short-term war-rape economy claim with an acknowledgement of certain broader regional dynamics that would tend to concentrate conflicts in the Kivus. Other possible connections between war economies and sexual violence, such as encounters between combatants, miners and prostitutes in areas of mineral wealth, have not been touched on.⁹¹ Although further research may yet validate some of these options, the current discussion has at least illustrated that claims for resource wealth as the driving force for sexual violence are hard to sustain in the face of complex details from existing investigations and contradictory national indicators. One way to clarify these points yet further is to take a particularly well-documented case of sexual violence and assess its relation to claims of instrumentality, unreason and mythology.

Walikale

Walikale is a territory of North Kivu province in eastern DRC, and the location of the Bisie mine (see Map 7), which is “the epicentre of cassiterite production in North Kivu since 2003”, accounting for two thirds of total recorded production exported from the province in first half of 2010.⁹² Between 30 July and 2 August 2010 it was also the site of some of the most infamous incidents of sexual violence in recent years. A UN investigation concluded that at least 387 civilians (300 women, 23 men, 55 girls and 9 boys) had been raped across 13 villages by a coalition of Mai Mai, FDLR and dissident FARDC forces.⁹³ The attacks drew international scandal because they happened less than 20 miles from a MONUSCO (formerly MONUC) troop contingent.⁹⁴

Some 13,000 people lived in Walikale before late 2010, of which around 3,000 were miners were men between 19 and 35 years (women traditionally not being allowed on the mining sites).⁹⁵ Bisie is the main mine in the Walikale area, alongside Omate, Obaye and Binakwa to the south, and its population is predominantly male (65% to 30% female and 5% children).⁹⁶ For a number of years prior to 2009, Bisie had been controlled by Colonel

91 Jackson 2002:528; Nest 2011:100–101.

92 United Nations Group of Experts 2010:51.

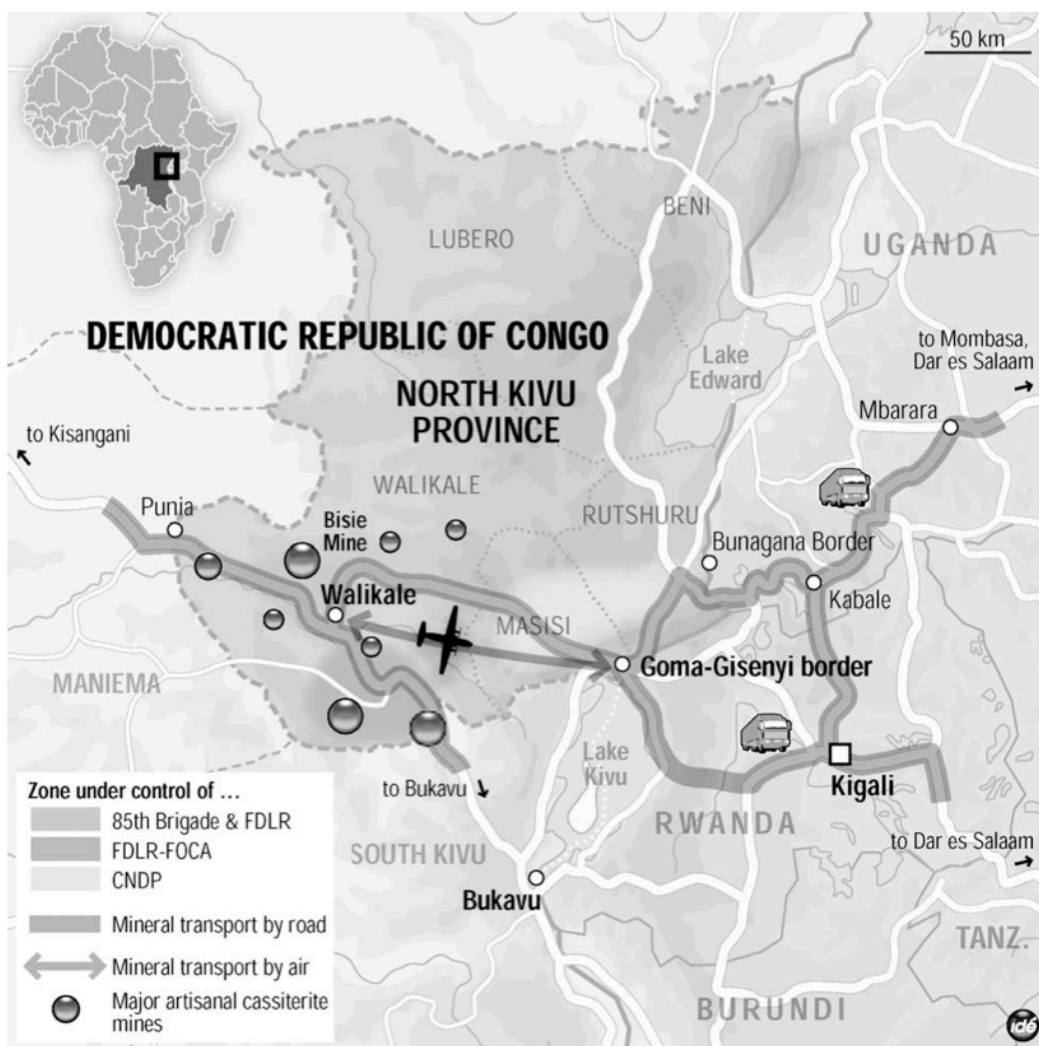
93 United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:4.

94 See Smith 2010; Pflanz 2010b; Stearns 2010.

95 Wimmer and Hilgert 2011:2.

96 Nest 2011:40.

Sammy Matumo and the 85th Brigade of the FARDC. Matumo was repeatedly named by advocacy NGOs as a controlling force in the area, and held responsible for a number of human rights violations around Bisie, although not apparently any allegations of rape.⁹⁷ Following the apparent reconciliation between Rwanda and the DRC in early 2009 and the nominal 'integration' of former CNDP soldiers into the national army, the former CNDP 212th Brigade under Lieutenant Colonel Yusuf Mboneza were stationed to Bisie in February 2009, replacing Matumo's 85th Brigade. Having been rotated away from the area around Bisie in a standard manoeuvre with the 211th FARDC Brigade, Mboneza the refused the order to move back to the axis near Walikale, leaving the area without FARDC soldiers.⁹⁸



Map 7: Mines, Transport Routes and Areas of Armed Group Influence in Walikale, North Kivu⁹⁹

97 Global Witness 2009.

98 United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:9. See also United Nations Group of Experts 2010:15.

99 Taken from Garrett, Sergiou, and Vlassenroot 2009:4.

This background provided an opportunity for three armed groups to come together to launch an attack: a Mai Mai Sheka group under the command of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka, formerly aligned with the 85th Brigade that had been ordered away from Bisie; an FDLR unit under Sérafin Lionso; and a break-away FPLC (Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo) unit commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Emmanuel Nsengiyumva, said to be the cousin of Mboneza, who had allowed the power vacuum to occur in the first place.¹⁰⁰ Attacks on all 13 villages followed identifiable patterns, carried out in groups of between two and six combatants:

the assailants arrived by surprise and stated that they had come to provide local people with security. Some chiefs and notables then instructed women to prepare food for the rebels. At that point, the assailants suddenly moved towards houses and began raping and looting. While one group raped and looted, another set up ambushes in the outskirts of the forest to intercept fugitives, and raped or abducted them. Some of the attacks took place by day, but most of them took place during the night.¹⁰¹

The small combatant groups would almost always gang-rape the victims, taking turns and using sticks or fists to further brutalise genital areas, often going on to “wipe their hands on the faces of their victims, insulting them and humiliating them verbally, with expressions such as *'you betray us, so you don't deserve to be left alive'*”.¹⁰² The looting was accompanied by the abduction and forced labour of at least 116 people who were forced to carry heavy packages of stolen goods for up to two days on the way to their assailants' camp.¹⁰³ Survivor testimony provided a strong narrative of the rationale for the attacks, one that matches the dynamics of retaliatory atrocity already examined:

100 United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:4-5; United Nations Group of Experts 2010:16-17.

101 United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:4-5; United Nations Group of Experts 2010:16-17.

102 United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:14, emphasis in original.

103 United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:15) Most escaped during the journey or soon after arrival.

According to local sources, the attacks were a punitive strike intended to subjugate local communities living along the Kibua-Mpofi axis, considered as “traitors” for reportedly sympathizing with Government forces, and aimed at equipping the coalition of armed groups.¹⁰⁴

In a brutal irony, the FARDC deployment launched at short notice to repel the attacks itself involved sexual violence, the systematic burning of houses, the widespread arrest of suspected 'collaborators', and abductions of civilians to serve as guides.¹⁰⁵

The detailed investigation into the Walikale attack provides the clearest indication of an instrumentalist rationale for sexual violence as a tool for material acquisition, although even here the attacks focused on looting and 'signalling' punishment to suspect communities in the style of retaliatory atrocity, rather than to a full attempt to recapture the mines themselves. Debriefings undertaken by the UN Group of Experts revealed a clear pattern to the Walikale attacks: a) choice of targets and looting operations jointly decided, with commanders then passing instructions down to their separate groups; b) overall tactical agreement still allowing for variation according to different group's agendas; c) loot equally divided up between groups. Rape, abduction, looting and forced labour tactics were used by the same coalition of groups in other attacks, with officers (including Sadoke Kidunda Mayele, Sheka's Chief of Staff) reported as present during mass rapes from 30 July and 2 August 2010.¹⁰⁶ The UN Joint Human Rights Office considers the information gathered in its study as sufficient to establish the command responsibility of the named commanders for human rights violations under the Rome Statute.¹⁰⁷

In spite of the relative clarity of this case, the situation both before and after the high profile rapes again suggests a complexity. Writing about the 85th FARDC Brigade in 2009, Nicholas Garrett, Sylvia Sergiou and Koen Vlassenroot pointed to the interconnection of the war, shadow and coping economies around Bisie. As the only 'non-integrated' FARDC Brigade in North Kivu, the 85th was thus particularly close to its former incarnation as a local Mai Mai

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:13.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:17.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Group of Experts 2010:40–41.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Joint Human Rights Office 2011:4.

force.¹⁰⁸ The system implemented under Matumo was indeed exploitative, but in a particular way. Miners worked at Bisie as part of 'Salongo', an indentured labour system that 'taxed' them of their product three days a week, while the coordinated use of impromptu checkpoints around Bisie brought in several thousand dollars a month.¹⁰⁹ The 85th was also well established enough to sign 'protection' agreements with the formal Administrator of Walikale.¹¹⁰ On the account given by Garrett, Sergiou and Vlassenroot, this not only made the area “relatively stable” but also meant that “the 85th brigade has a *better* record with respect to human rights abuses”.¹¹¹ Their assessment is worth quoting at length:

[T]here is a certain code of conduct deployed, enforced centrally by Colonel Samy [Matumo]. In the territory under their control, they have established a rules system, within which they also undertake police functions in security provision. The 85th brigade cooperates with the police and sometimes takes over their functions, while being the last instance of decision. In the Bisie mine, the 85th brigade fully takes over the police functions. There are soldiers permanently deployed in the mine, collecting taxes and enforcing the rules system and acting also as a mediator in cases of disputes between the artisanal miners. The highly centralized leadership structures and sanction mechanisms allow the development of such a security governance structure (coercive governance) that leads to a respectively secure environment. Offences committed by soldiers of the 85th brigade are largely punished, mostly by arrest and detention. Nevertheless, the 85th brigade regularly extorts “rations”, and violent incidences like rape and harassment happen, albeit irregularly. The population has learnt to adapt to a certain level of insecurity and they have arranged themselves with the armed groups and the negative consequences of their presence in the form of extortion. It should be considered that security situation analysis in a country that has recently undergone civil war has to incorporate the population’s adaptation to insecurity, depending on their experience of

108 Garrett, Sergiou, and Vlassenroot 2009:7-9.

109 Garrett et al. 2009:10.

110 Garrett et al. 2009:11.

111 Garrett et al. 2009:11, emphasis added.

violence, and the corresponding shift in their perception of what is considered as secure and insecure. Given that the overall situation in North Kivu is – put at its best – a post-war situation and is still marked by its transitional character, Walikale territory seems relatively stable and secure.¹¹²

Nor does the situation since 2010 seem to fit the model proposed by a war-rape economy thesis, at least in its advocate variant. Following Kabila's mining ban of September 2010 to March 2011, and pre-emptive corporate reactions to the Dodd-Franks Bill, it should be expected that armed group involvement at Bisie would decrease, with a corresponding fall in sexual violence following. On the one hand, the UN Group of Experts reported that by August 2011, production levels around Walikale were at 10% of 2010 levels, with prices halved, and the Mai Mai Sheka had moved from direct exploitation of the mine to more heavy taxation of local communities and placing of agents within mineral supply chains.¹¹³ The Group mooted the possibility that this official picture was itself part of a collaborative deception requiring FARDC forces to be redeployed more heavily to the area, at which point militarised exploitation could resume.¹¹⁴ It certainly seems that ex-CNDP elements within the FARDC have actually increased their control in the wake of the ban, now occupying 75% of the command posts in Walikale, and so being better placed to fully exploit mineral resources there.¹¹⁵ In addition to marked increases in workers arriving at nearby trading towns, satellite images show beyond doubt that the biggest of the work sites at the Bisie mine “increased considerably” in size between the imposition of the Kabila ban and its lifting.¹¹⁶ Huge drops in production have thus gone hand-in-hand with the consolidation of certain kinds of control.

112 Garrett et al. 2009:12.

113 United Nations Group of Experts 2011:115–116.

114 United Nations Group of Experts 2011:115.

115 Wimmer and Hilgert 2011:7.

116 Wimmer and Hilgert 2011:8–9.

The Sexual Security Dilemma

The links between armed force and the war economy in eastern DRC are thus complicated but real. While bold statements that violence is *caused* or *motivated* by mineral wealth do not bear close scrutiny, there is clearly a relation of dependency on these sources for armed groups, and constant plays of conflict and collaboration over who can control it. The interpretation of violence in the DRC as progressively economis-*ing* in response to these pressures is convincing, although it does not reduce conflict to its economic dimension alone, and must be situated within a wider social analysis of conflict, as well as of coping and shadow economies. The connection of mineral wealth to sexual violence is not so solid, and is much more suggestive than substantial. There is evidence of sexual violence, including instrumentally *commanded* sexual violence, associated with mines and mineral resources, but there is more to suggest either the micro-level instrumentality of rape as an accompaniment to looting or the vengeful brutality inflected by unreason and mythology. A close reading of war economies reinforces the sense of a relative disconnect between dynamics and patterns of sexual violence and the requirements of the war economy itself. Although linked at points, and condensing into particularly vicious enactments in cases like that of Walikale, the sheer scale of both resource exploitation and sexual violence demands a more comprehensive overlap between social fields. Understanding this disconnect will require a closer look at the gendered discourses deployed by combatants and perpetrators themselves, which is the subject of the final chapter.

ATROCITY DISCOURSE: PERPETRATORS, COMBATANTS, EXCUSES AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The assault is suffused with malevolence, with hatred, and with loathing so extreme, so palpable that it seems pointless, almost dishonouring, to attempt to make sense of it.

-Lisa S. Price, 'Finding the Man in the Soldier-Rapist'¹

Narrating Rape

Perpetrators are the absent presence in many accounts of rape in DRC. They are in one sense the centre of the conflict, since it is they who have created the 'rape capital of the world'. And yet there is generally little discussion of them. Agency and NGO interviewees in Eastern DRC often said that programmes with perpetrators and ex-combatants were much needed, but that it would be practically impossible to get donor support for them. This chapter surveys the existing picture of discourses of sexual violence adopted by combatants and ex-combatants in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Drawing on testimonies, video interviews and reports, it seeks to assess the forms taken by a range of statements regarding the causes and character of sexual violence, and to interpret that within the framework developed over the last chapters. Where previous case study chapters have considered the general relationship between war, conflict and sexual violence in the DRC and assessed our current understanding of who carries out rape, how and where, this discussion focuses on the reasons and rationales given by soldiers themselves.

This chapter draws on a range of sources to reveal common themes in combatant and ex-combatant testimony about war rape, as well as the areas in which respondents diverged, and concludes with an assessment of these themes and what they tell us about the character of war rape in Eastern DRC over the last decades. This is not a wholly straightforward task.² As one examination of discourse analysis in the aftermath of genocide puts it, "interviewing is also interrogation, and many subjects will not allow it to penetrate beyond a certain level

¹ Price 2001:213.

² On interviewing men about rape see in particular Hearn 1998.

of generality”.³ More so than with convicted rapists or general populations, testimony in times of war provokes questions of accountability and justification.⁴ Researchers therefore have to pay attention to what Fujii calls the 'meta-data' of fieldwork, the rumours, inventions, denials, evasions and silences that exist in addition to directly spoken accounts.⁵ Testimonies are invested in a moment of telling, and so are shaped not only by memory, but by the current political landscape, the perceived agenda of interviewers, and the social meaning of speaking out. General discourses may affect the perceptions of both interviewers and interviewees, for example in reproducing notions of pathology and barbarity.⁶ And, in the context of the DRC, prominent stories about mutilation and even cannibalism can reinforce a tendency for “men to appear as beast-like perpetrators, while women appear as passive and helpless victims”.⁷

These difficulties are further heightened by a reliance on second-hand interviews. I have had no access to the original transcripts or interviews which provided the testimony presented here (the sources of which are set out in Table 9). Although the sources chosen are quite detailed in their citation of exact phrases and the contexts in which discussions occurred, it is not possible to fully verify their accuracy. Moreover, a detailed examination of the distribution of these statements within an overall corpus of speech is not possible, since academic, documentary and journalistic sources present a necessarily edited version of the sum total of topics discussed and phrases used by combatants and perpetrators. This prevents any coded analysis of the frequency of given phrases, or any comparison of the occurrence of rape confessions or discussions within the overall 'text' of conversation.

But an analysis of combatant and ex-combatant discourses can cast light on the character and dynamics of rape in Eastern DRC, specially when considered alongside the range of other data already examined in the preceding chapters. Perhaps testimonies are subject to error and concealment, but can nevertheless provide information on the actual pattern of events. A stronger view of the constitutive power of discourse suggests that the question of

3 Fujii 2010:238, citing N. Patrick Peritore.

4 Price 2001:212.

5 Fujii 2010:232.

6 Cameron and Frazer 1987; Price 2001.

7 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008:59. See also the important discussion of the spectre of cannibalism in Pottier 2007.

veracity is unimportant, since testimonies are not for confirming empirical details, but for revealing the imagination and identity of the speaker.⁸ They are, in other words, the narrative scripts of the soldiers themselves.

Since one frequent suggestion is that the extent and character of sexual violence in the DRC varies by armed groups, each with their own repertoires of violence, this chapter analyses *general discourses* of war rape by affiliation – the FARDC, the FDLR and Mai Mai groups – alongside more fine-grained individual *confessions* of rape collected by documentary film makers.⁹ This is complicated somewhat by the large-scale integration of former militias and rebel groups into the FARDC since 2003 and the difficult of linking specific abuses to given units, but testimonies frequently specify which period and group is being discussed, which makes the relevant dynamics clearer.¹⁰

8 Hansen 2006:25–26.

9 The idea that different groups have different repertoires is taken from Kelly 2010:3. The two films in question are I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009; L. F. Jackson 2007.

10 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:11; Kelly 2010:4–5.

Author or Organisation	Title	Year	Sample Size	Groups Surveyed	Place and Period	Summary
Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern for SIDA	<i>The Complexity of Violence</i>	2010	226 soldiers and officers.	FARDC (50% former FAC; 50% former MLC, RDC, Mai Mai or CNDP)	Eastern DRC and Kinshasa (multiple sites), 2006-2009	No evidence of orders to rape. Significant discourse of suffering, poverty and lust as causes of rapes. Apparent contrast of 'lust' rapes (driven by desire and necessity) and 'evil' rapes (particularly brutal and brought on by the chaos of war). Some evidence of punishment and attempts by army leaders to prevent rape, although complicated by process of reform in FARDC.
Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern	Why Do Soldiers Rape?'	2009	193 soldiers and officers in 49 group interviews (presumed overlap with SIDA, 2010)	FARDC (presumed similar to SIDA, 2010 distribution)	Principally Kinshasa	General tone of <i>unreason</i> to justifications and excuses for war rape.
Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern	Making Sense of Violence'	2008	171 soldiers and officers in 41 group interviews (as above)	FARDC (majority former FAC)	Presumed same as SIDA, 2010, Oct 2005-Nov 2006	Strong stress on punishment for rape. Some permissiveness but not specific orders for rape. Some <i>mythology</i> , but generally discourse of <i>unreason</i> .
La Benevolencija Rwanda	'All Congolese Women are Ready... To Be Raped'	2010	101 ex-combatants in 19 focus groups	Ex-FDLR	Northern Rwanda, Sep-Nov 2009	Victim and perpetrator stress on indiscipline, poverty and chaos. Evidence of Mai Mai ritualistic rape. Some <i>mythology</i> , but generally suggestive of <i>unreason</i> .
RFDA, RFDP, International Alert	<i>Women's Bodies as a Battleground</i>	2005	50 RCD soldiers; 2 rebels; 492 female rape survivors	RCD; Mai Mai; rape victims and survivors	South Kivu (multiple sites), 15 Sept-15 Dec 2003	

Jocelyn Kelly (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative)	<i>Rape in War: Motive of Militia in DRC</i>	2010	33 current combatants	Mai-Mai Shikito and Mai Mai Kifuafua	Eastern DRC (multiple sites), Jan 2009-Feb 2010	Similar discourse of <i>unreason</i> in hardship/suffering. Stronger evidence of <i>mythology</i> in ritualisation of rape, starker ethnic divisions.
Ilse and Femke van Velzen (IF Productions)	<i>Weapon of War: Confessions of Rape in Congo</i>	2009	8 filmed perpetrator interviews	FARDRC; ex-Mai Mai; CNDP; ex-RCD	Eastern DRC, unknown dates.	Overwhelmingly justification in terms of <i>unreason</i> (hardship, lust, etc.) although some evidence of orders to rape as reward for accumulation (version of <i>instrumentality</i>).
Lisa F. Jackson (Women Make Movies)	<i>The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo</i>	2007	7 filmed perpetrator interviews	FARDRC; ex-Mai Mai	Eastern DRC, unknown dates.	Similar, but added evidence of Mai Mai <i>mythology</i> and some orders (<i>instrumentality</i>).
ITN / Channel 4 News / PBS Newshour	Victims, Rapists Speak Out.	13 Sept 2010	2 filmed combatant interviews	FARDRC	Eastern DRC, presumed Sept 2010	<i>Unreason</i> in lustful causes and 'evil' rapes caused by context of war.
Ngendaha Yo Leonce	Congo: "Rape was not policy",	30 April 2009	1 (single personal narrative)	ex-FDLR	Rwanda, presumed April 2009	Denial of <i>instrumentality</i> , but some evidence of <i>mythology</i> in FDLR as a general principle of organisation.

Table 9: Studies in Combatant and Ex-Combatant Sexual Violence Discourse, Organised by Sample Size*

*The studies are Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010, 2009, 2008; La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010; Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif, Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et la Paix, and International Alert 2005; Kelly 2010; I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009; Jackson 2007; Hilsun 2010; and Leonce 2009.

Poverty/Suffering; Or, The FARDC

The most thorough examination of attitudes to rape in the FARDC has been conducted over the last 6 years by Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, whose results have been presented in a series of publications.¹¹ They found little evidence of either explicit nationalist discourse or ethnic identifications in soldiers' views of rape, instead suggesting that sexual violence is a generalised phenomenon making all women vulnerable.¹² Their research design also directly broached one central instrumentalist proposition. Every one of the 226 soldiers and officers surveyed in their full study was asked whether or not they had ever received orders to rape. *Not a single one* reported receiving such orders.¹³

The dominant themes emerging from an examination of the FARDC are those of poverty, suffering, need and lust as the driving forces explaining sexual violence. Again and again, soldiers cite the hardships of army life, periods spent away from women, and poor pay and conditions as understandable pressures for rape. These comments can have an instrumentalist tone, especially where it is suggested that better pay may alleviate rape, but a closer reading suggests that these sentiments are much closer to the forms of frustration, anger and confusion characteristic of unreason.

Consider this exchange between Maria Eriksson Baaz and two male corporals in the FARDC:

{*Corporal A*} “We soldiers commit rape, why do we commit rapes? Poverty/suffering. When we are not paid, or not paid at all. We are hungry. And I have a gun. In my house my wife does not love me anymore. I also have a wish to have a good life like you.”

{*Maria*} “But that is a different thing, no? I asked about rape, not stealing.”

{*Corporal A*} “I understand...I am getting to it. I am not finished yet. Rape, what is that? *It is connected to all that – stealing, killing, it is all in that.*”

{*Maria*} “So, is it anger then or what?”

11 See Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.

12 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:14.

13 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:15.

{Corporal A} “Yes, it is anger, it is creating, the suffering is creating...*You feel you have to do something bad, you mix it all: sabotage, women, stealing, rip the clothes off, killing.*”

{Corporal B} “You have sex and then you kill her, *if the anger is too strong.*”

{Corporal A} “*It is suffering that makes us rape. Suffering. If I wake up in the morning and I am fine, I have something to eat, my wife loves me, will I then do things like that? No. But now, today we are hungry, yesterday I was hungry, tomorrow I will be hungry. They, the leaders/superiors are cheating us. We don't have anything.*”¹⁴

Although Eriksson Baaz and Stern concur that competition for resources is an important dynamic of violence in Eastern DRC, the testimony they collected does not suggest a specific link between sexual violence and this accumulation.¹⁵ Instead, most interviewed soldiers identified a link between poverty and violence of all kinds: as an obstacle to buying sex, forcing a resort to force, and as causing frustration and anger which is then expressed through violence.¹⁶

Direct confessions of rape by FARDC soldiers support this interpretation:

{Soldier A} “I've slept with some women...If she says no I must take her by force. If she is strong, I'll call some friend to help me. All this is happening because of the war. *We would live a normal life and treat women naturally.*”

{Lisa} “Is it about power or sex?”

{Translator} “These are complicated questions that he can't understand.”

{Soldier A} “...Yes, she is a human being but when I feel I want a woman and she is there, and my wife is not there, I must do it.”¹⁷

{Soldier B} “I've raped women in the forest”

{Lisa} “Does it make him feel more like a man when he rapes”

{Soldier B} “I rape *because of the need.* After that I feel I am a man”

14 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008:77, emphasis added.

15 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:20.

16 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:30–31.

17 Jackson 2007:1:14–1:20; 29:56–30:00; 30:58–31:03, emphasis added. The numbers here, and in further references to filmed testimony, refer to the minutes where quoted sections begin and end.

{*Lisa*} “If there was a law that would put him in jail for raping a woman, would he stop raping?”

{*Soldier B*} “Yes. *But we have been suffering in the forest, that is why we rape women.*”

{*Lisa*} “So he has to make the women suffer because he is suffering?”

{*Soldier B*} “Ah [yes], that's the problem. I have no time to negotiate, I have no time to love her. I am in need. If I ask and she says no, I will take her by force. They were afraid and when they resisted, I told them I would use my gun to get what I want and most of the time they ended up accepting.”¹⁸

Eriksson Baaz and Stern interpret these rationales via a distinction between normalised and understandable 'lust' rapes, contrasted to 'evil' rapes, with significant numbers of informants explaining high levels of sexual violence in terms of the former:

[T]here are different types of rape. *They are all forbidden.* There is the rape when a soldier is away, when he has not seen his women for a while and has needs and no money. This is the lust/need rape. But there are also the bad rapes, *as a result of the spirit of war...*to humiliate the dignity of people. This is an evil rape.¹⁹

{*Soldier A*} “There are different kinds of rape. Some rapes are about lust. But some are criminal. Well all are forbidden. It is bad. You cannot be with a women without her consent. Even in the house. Also in the house, if your woman does not want to, you cannot force her. But in the sense that I am talking about now, that rape is in two sorts, what do I mean? Because if it is only lust, *then why do you sometimes kill her?* Also if it is about lust, you will use the organ that you have. *Why would you put a stick in her?* We see that a lot...That is not about lust. It is not about the physical needs. *That is from a need to destroy*, to destroy the dignity, the human dignity of a person...rape is committed at both these levels. It is also about lust – it is *like if you are hungry* – it is the same with the body/sexual needs. And if you have the possibility –

18 Jackson 2007:29:38–20:55; 30:00–30:44, emphasis added.

19 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009:495, emphasis added.

you are also stronger than women, it can happen. But it is bad.”

{*Soldier B*} “The way that some rape, the women...They rape them, *that is not lust, that is to sully them*, it is not lust.”²⁰

[I]t is a problem of suffering/poverty. A soldier, *if he has no possibilities*, no money so that he can *go the normal way*...if he has nothing in his pocket, he cannot eat or drink his coke, he has nothing to give to a woman – he will take her by force. He will take a woman by force. Physically, *men have needs*. He cannot go a lot time without being with a woman. It is very difficult to stop him... So a soldier needs a bit of money in his pocket, and he needs to have leave. If that would happen, it would reduce the rapes a lot.²¹

The soldiers who are participating in the rape would stand and cheer, enjoying witnessing such an act. This normally encouraged more and more soldiers to rape women. Sometimes it starts with one soldier raping a women and then it ends up with a gang rape. And that's why I say *it's like evil spirits that are making us treat women in this way*. I now believe that this training will prevent these things from ever happening again.²²

These testimonies suggest a conflict in rationales. Soldiers emphasise both the powerless of men in the face of circumstances, with rapes resulting from a breakdown in the normal order of things, and the power of men to take what they need even in extreme circumstances. This combination of frustration and control was paralleled in talk of why soldiers joined the army in the first place:

{*Maria*} “What brought you into the army?”

{*Corporal*} “Anger, anger for all the bad things we have seen since we were children. We had little money. But when the soldiers came to our little boutique...Everything a soldier wants to do they do. *Soldiers do what they want*. All that made us angry. We just thought, I should become a soldier.”²³

20 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009:510–511.

21 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:31.

22 Sergeant Jean Ngoy Wa Kasongo in Hilsum 2010, emphasis added.

23 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:26, emphasis added.

As well as providing a reason for joining the army, frustration and shame also appears to accompany military existence, with several respondents complaining about the general attitude to soldiers in the DRC. One 29 year-old sergeant explained:

You know, [the civilians] do not understand. They no longer respect us. They see us as useless people. Because, these days we have nothing. We are the ones who have to come to them to beg for food. They laugh and refuse us a seat on the bus...It used not to be like that. Before... Of course they also fear us because of some of the bad things people in uniforms do. It is bad. So they fear us. But also, they don't understand what we are doing.²⁴

A corporal agreed:

The civilians don't respect us...Yesterday when I was out, somebody spat on me. Sometimes they even attack us...They are thickheaded. They don't understand things. So sometimes they need some punishment...That is also sometimes, sometimes, an explanation for rape. If they respected us, it would be different. Then you would not see so much of all that, rape, killings and stealing. It is also that. Their disrespect. They don't understand.²⁵

This strong sense of humiliation concurs with a psychological analysis in terms of the sources of aggression in shame.²⁶ The confessions of soldiers in a discussion group similarly cast sexual violence as a result of trauma, as well as a cause of it:

I have nightmares about murdering people...Sometimes I see a woman walking and I grab her and rape her. If I dream that, I wake up screaming.²⁷

24 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:27.

25 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:28–29.

26 See Gilligan 2000.

27 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:45:39–46:06.

It hurts me to see my comrades get paid well and not me. I fought for my country and now that there's a sort of peace I don't get what I deserve. They sent me out to rape and steal. Now I'm here, my Captain, but I don't know if I'll make it through the evening.²⁸

Soldiers also reported that alcohol and drug use was widespread, and attributed sexual violence to this in combination with general frustration at the 'craziness of war'.²⁹ This reinforces an analysis of discourses of sexual violence as drawing strongly on narratives of confusion, chaos and abjection. In some testimonies, the disorientation and madness of violence was particularly pronounced:

*War is crazy, it destroys the minds of people. Some people just go crazy. Rape is a result of that too, especially the bad rapes. It gets too much...Also, a lot is because of drugs. If you take drugs, drink, or other things – it is not good. And many, many...most take drugs.*³⁰

Despite this emphasis on hardship and disorder, the general attitude of soldiers seemed to be to strongly value and identify with standards of discipline:

The difference between a civilian and a soldier is that we follow orders/ rules. I get up at 5 in the morning, put on my uniform and go to work. I do not go to work because they will give 1,000 FC [US\$2] at the end of the day. I go with both my joys and my sorrows and I will sit on guard...until the superiors tell me it is enough.³¹

This was supplemented by a clear sense that rape was forbidden and, moreover, a practice of the enemy other:

28 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:46:30-46:56.

29 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:23.

30 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008:78, emphasis added.

31 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008:73.

Rape, [the commanders] tell us, *belongs to rebel fighting*. It does not belong in the army. Here it is punishable. In the army it is punishable, really long sentences. But of course some do it anyway. It depends on person to person. Every person has his way of doing things.³²

Rape is forbidden. It is forbidden for us soldiers. In the centres they tell us that, we can not take other people's things and we can not take other people's women...it says [in the military code] that if you have needs, if you have not been with a woman for a long time and there is no woman, you should use the soap [masturbate]. We are not supposed to take other people's women. That is bad.³³

FARDC officers frequently complained that rape was hard to stop, suggesting to Eriksson Baaz and Stern that rape was better conceptualised as a weapon of war in terms of “an *implicit authorisation* followed by a lack of specific orders not to rape, and coupled with an attitude that rape is unavoidable”.³⁴

Eriksson Baaz and Stern have tended to theorise this data in two ways. First, via the 'lust rape'/'evil rape' distinction drawn by informants and, second, by stressing that the background cause to these rapes is in fact the “idea and ideal of militarised male sexuality”.³⁵ They suggest that feelings of frustration are more likely to be the cause of rape than any shortfalls in pay, and even link expressions of sexual anger to a kind of resistance to the authority of the military and to the 'normalisation' of rape.³⁶ Yet they also stress that 'successful' masculinity for many of those they interviewed meant playing the archetypal role of provider and having the material means to pay for sex.³⁷ As they say: “In the soldier's testimonies, the man who rapes was, rather, an *emasculated man*, who, deprived of the

32 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:49.

33 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008:75.

34 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:16, emphasis in original.

35 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:32.

36 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010:32–33; 48.

37 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009:507.

resources needed to perform hegemonic masculinity, is 'forced' to rape".³⁸ The stress is therefore on the performance of a particular masculinity, but also on its failure.³⁹

Although Eriksson Baaz and Stern acknowledge the high level of ambiguity in soldiers' responses concerning military masculinity⁴⁰, they resolve this theoretically into a case for understanding sexual violence in terms of military masculinity. Yet the accumulated sense of trauma and confusion from these testimonies suggests a more subtle interplay between normality and deviance. Rather than acting out clearly authorised practices of celebrated masculinity, as suggested by a mythological analysis, soldiers instead seem deeply conflicted about the ethics of rape, as well as by the temporal and spatial distinctions that may authorise it under certain conditions (*a long time in the forest*). Although 'deviant' behaviour can implicitly reinforce sexual norms⁴¹, the characterisation of rape as undisciplined, mad, evil, motivated by spirits or the snapping of control, as abnormal and driven by feelings that come from without all suggest a profound dimension of unreason in experiences of wartime sexual violence by FARDC troops.

But The Rape, That Was Not Policy; Or, The FDLR And Interahamwe

Analysis of FDLR rebel discourse accords in many ways with the impression given by the FARDC interviews. A study of discourse among ex-FDLR combatants in Rwandan demobilisation camps (gathering testimony from 101 ex-combatants) found the difficulty and unpleasantness of life as a soldier to be a recurrent theme.⁴² In attributing motives for rape, ex-combatants primarily cited impunity, military indiscipline, the proliferation of armed groups and the combination of Congolese customs and alcohol and drugs.⁴³ One former FDLR combatant stressed the absence of structured command:

38 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010, 48, emphasis in original.

39 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009:505.

40 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009:508.

41 Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009:512-513.

42 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:25.

43 Of the 19 focus groups, 11 discussed impunity, 8 discussed military indiscipline, 7 suggested that too many armed groups were to blame, 6 cited Congolese customs, 6 suggested a role for alcohol and drugs, 5 referred generically to war, 3 said it was due to a lack of pay for soldiers and 1 mentioned forests (presumably as a space where violence could be enacted in secret) (La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:21).

We were never paid in the FDLR, we got nothing, only money from car-jacking. To get money and food we would approach civilians, take their crops, rob their villages. We would attack the civilians too, it's true. *But the rape, that was not policy, that was not organised like the stealing was.* The rape and killing was down to individuals.⁴⁴

Group discussions foregrounded similar causes of war rape:

{*Soldier A*} “Congolese armies are *undisciplined*, they are not punished when they commit crimes, this is why they’ll *do anything*. The women are also not protected by the laws.”

{*Soldier B*} “Actually, in Congo, there are many armed groups which are *out of control*.”

{*Soldier A*} “Congolese armies are not paid, they don’t have money to pay women, this is why they are violent.”⁴⁵

{*Corporal*} “Congolese armies are not paid, so they can do anything.”

{*Soldier*} “There are also many militaries belonging to different groups and this is the cause of sexual violence.”

{*Corporal*} “Congolese armies don’t have money to pay for the favours [faveurs] of a woman.”⁴⁶

The words of a 26-year old private and two corporals emphasise both the role of drugs and the practices of other armies:

Congolese armies are heavy consumers of drugs and of strong alcohol that is made locally, and it is after drunkenness that the armies attack women.

When there is war, there are no laws: it is the law of the strong that rules.⁴⁷

44 Leonce 2009, emphasis added.

45 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:23, translation mine from the French, emphasis added.

46 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:23, my translation.

47 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:23, my translation.

{*Corporal A*} “The source of sexual violence is *nothing other than war*. There are Congolese armies who, after having recaptured a zone previously occupied by the FDLR, rape all the women in the zone as a way of punishing them.”

{*Corporal B*} “The women are raped by Congolese armies because the latter are *vicious and undisciplined*.”⁴⁸

These references to 'Congolese armies' and ill discipline are characterisations of the FARDC and associated groups and not accounts of combatants' own behaviour. Similarly, respondents would commonly attribute practices of mutilation and brutality to other groups that were said to want to specifically punish Hutu women.⁴⁹

Given their reputation for rape, FDLR rebels surprisingly also stressed the forbidden nature of rape and emphasised that groups had punished its occurrence severely, especially before 2001:

{*Soldier A*} “There was the case of a Captain who was found guilty of raping a woman: he was killed at once. This happened at Gasiza during the war of infiltration.”

{*Soldier B*} “I know someone who received 300 blows.”

{*Soldier C*} “I knew someone who received 300 blows....There are many more examples in many more units.”

{*Soldier D*} “There are definitely cases which we don't know about. Those who commit rape are like those *without honour*, they do not receive more missions. The people who commit these acts go on to enrol with the Mai-Mai or the Mongols [a militia] because *they are cursed in the FDLR*.”

{*Soldier C*} “After the blows, the guilty cannot do anything because they have become like a handicap.”⁵⁰

{*Soldier A*} “I saw myself an FDLR combatant: he raped a woman and he

48 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:23, my translation, emphasis added.

49 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:16-17.

50 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:31, my translation, emphasis added.

was punished with capital punishment.”

{*Soldier B*} “For me, I know one [FDLR soldier] who was killed for raping a Rwandan woman.”

{*Soldier A*} “There are definitely those who commit rapes and who are not caught and who boast of having raped women during operations.”

{*Soldier C*} “Those who rape discuss it with their friends and not publicly.”

{*Soldier B*} “We think of these rapists *like idiots*.”

{*Soldier C*} “Later, from 2001, when rape became like a simple game, *there were no explicit orders to rape, but at the same time rapists were not severely punished.*”⁵¹

{*Soldier A*} “Within the FDLR, a combatant found guilty of rape would be sentenced to death. But now he is given a punishment of 300 blows.”

{*Soldier B*} “After these blows, the person is cared for and is ashamed of what he has done. People stress the standards of society, and more often than not he is ashamed of being with others.”⁵²

{*Soldier A*} “In 2000, when [General] Rwarakabije was found again in Congo, I knew of a case of an FDLR soldier who raped a woman and received the death penalty.”

{*Soldier B*} “I also know of two cases of rape in the FDLR: one of the guilty received 300 blows and the other 200 blows.”

{*Soldier C*} “In 1999, I knew of a case of an FDLR combatant who had raped a woman and he was killed immediately after being found guilty.”

{*Soldier B*} “In Congo, you can easily find a woman who will consent to sexual relations, so he who rapes is indicted by the standards of the community; he is taken to be *like those who are not normal.*”⁵³

In discussions of genital mutilation ex-FDLR fighters appeared to see such acts primarily as the side-effect of gang rape, and the physical damage that it does. Individual soldiers were held to be particularly barbaric, accounting for some intentional damage, but not in any

51 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:31, my translation, emphasis added.

52 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:31, my translation.

53 La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:31, my translation, emphasis added.

organised sense. Similarly, combatants revealed that there were deliberate attempts to inflict harm via genital mutilation as a punishment of civilian populations. This was held to occur for one of two reasons: either because of the ethnic identity of the target population, with some role for ritualised behaviour by perpetrators, or because the local population had ‘collaborated’ with enemy groups.

Yet these were again acts attributed to the FARDC and others, rather than admitted as part of rebel practice. As was the case with Eriksson Baaz and Stern’s informants, the discourse around genital mutilation amongst ex-FDLR combatants stresses that acts are a consequence of ‘war culture’ – extreme practices brought about by the ‘craziness’ and associated stresses of combat, often related to the consumption of drugs and alcohol.⁵⁴ Some ex-combatants did suggest that some rapes were part of military strategy (an interesting observation given the record of informalised punishment for sexual violence within the FDLR), but the more widespread narrative was that fighting provided the context of chaos and opportunity in which sexual violence could occur, rather than sexual violence being an intended goal in a military strategy.

Interestingly, these soldiers, interviewed in Rwanda as ex-members of a group with significant sources in Rwanda, attributed the low position of women specifically to Congolese culture. They reported that “men are like kings” in Congo and noted in discussions that the role of women in Congo was far more subordinate than in Rwanda, even citing the low levels of female political participation in contrast to the Rwandan context. Congolese women were also held to be “easy” and “like prostitutes”.⁵⁵ These kinds of distinctions do appear to have arisen out of stark contrasts in FDLR discourse between them and the Congolese forces they were fighting:

The other thing too is that the ideology is very, very strong. It is the ideology of 1993-94, the ideology of the genocide, the Interhamwe. It continues now at the FDLR and is strongly promoted at the highest level, at the command, with the politicians, and to their subordinates.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:16.

⁵⁵ La Benevolencija Rwanda 2010:27.

⁵⁶ Leonce 2009.

These clear indications of mythological narrative operate in a telling tension with discourses around sexual violence. Collective identities seem very important to FDLR cohesion as a fighting force. But this does not seem related to rapes that they may have committed, but is instead to posit enemy forces as particularly brutal agents of gendered violence. Accounting for FDLR sexual violence relies, as did FARDC narratives, on themes derived from the space of unreason, and the stresses placed on soldiers in the context of war.

The Devil Fools You; Or, The Mai Mai

In several respects, Mai Mai discourse shares the same emphasis on the hardship of war and the special impacts of space and time on the ethics of rape that were evident in FARDC and FDLR discussions:

{*Soldier D*} “We know it's not a good thing but what do you expect? We spend a long time in the bush and when we meet a woman and she will not accept us then we must take her by force.⁵⁷”

To rape? Well, rape for a Mai Mai, it is Satan's work, because as people walk, Satan follows behind them... This means [raping] may happen to you *when you are not prepared, but all of a sudden, the Devil fools you.*⁵⁸

{*Soldier E*} “It's all about control. Before raping them, I made sure that the women were in good health. Just by looking at her, I could tell if she was sick or not...Well, those women [that he raped] were not taken by force. The thing is they were in a combat zone where most of the fighters relied on magic power. That magic potion worked in such a way that you've got to rape women in order to overcome the enemies who've invaded our country, the Congo. That is why all those things have happened.”

[*Lisa asks how many women he has raped*]

{*Soldier E*} “It's hard to keep record of the number of women that I've

⁵⁷ L. F. Jackson 2007:1:00:51-1:01:04.

⁵⁸ Kelly 2010:8, emphasis added.

raped. The thing to keep in mind is the fact that *we stayed too long in the bush and that induced us to rape*. You know how things are in combat zones. We raped as we advanced village to village.”⁵⁹

Soldier E's mention of magic potions brings to the fore the much clearer stress on ritualised collective identities of a form suggested by mythological readings:

[Magic beliefs] are the rule, and it is our foundation. Our biggest support is that witchcraft. Because when we started fighting we didn't have any money for firearms, so, after you got the scarifications, they would provide you with a machete or a knife, and you'd go to war...We really believe in the witchcraft, so *if you don't go through the rituals, you don't go anywhere*.⁶⁰

As one Mai Mai was reported as having declared during a rape:

You are our medicine and we are going to come and rape you whenever we want.⁶¹

Victims and survivors reported that Mai Mai attacks often involved careful ritualisation. On one occasion in which 17 young girls were abducted and raped to break their virginity, the Mai Mai apparently collected vaginal fluids in bowls and handkerchiefs for their magical properties.⁶² Testimony gathered by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative suggests that initiation rituals for new soldiers were similarly coercive. The study also found that the use of marijuana was common to overcome fear in preparation for combat.⁶³

Mai Mai responses also posited instrumentalist themes suggesting that rape was sometimes the result of direct orders to rape, both as a kind of tithe to senior commanders and as an instruction that they themselves rape:

59 L. F. Jackson 2007:1:01:05-1:01:18; 1:02:23-1:02:44; 1:04:28-1:04:44, emphasis added.

60 Kelly 2010: 6, emphasis added.

61 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005: 49, emphasis added.

62 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005: 49.

63 Kelly 2010:6.

[The commander] will have his [girl] brought first before he can ask me to bring mine...That is exactly what I must do. You say: 'Great chief, here is the girl you asked me to bring to you'.⁶⁴

We are always sent by our chiefs who tell us: 'Do this!'. *Despite your refusal*, they oblige you to do it; otherwise you will be beaten seriously. As a result, *you will do it unwillingly*. And you can even rape because of that.⁶⁵

This second confession is particularly interesting for the way it combines a military order, apparently with the feel of a strategic objective, with the absence of reflection and control on the part of individual soldiers who are coerced, either by direct force or social pressure, to rape. Alain Kasharu, an ex-Mai Mai rebel interviewed in *Weapon of War*, similarly explains that the withdrawal of food rations by the local population led him to commit a series of rapes - "Looting and raping was our usual strategy"⁶⁶ - yet these acts were always conducted with the same three friends in a gang, targeting women washing by the river. As such they fit a pattern in which attacks do have an economic dimension, but one which is frequently conceived of as a cause of frustration leading to opportunistic violence, rather than as the return on an investment in gendered brutalisation. Where orders are given, they appear to be for sexual tributes to be given, rather than for particular resources to be targeted. Later Alain reflects:

When I go to sleep, I think about the bad things I did. I confess and I'm really sorry because I acted *like an animal*. *My brains didn't work like normal people's do*. I was like a *wild beast*. I had *no conscience*, couldn't separate good from bad.⁶⁷

These passages certainly provide evidence of command responsibility for rapes, but the purpose of such rapes remain within a broad framework of unreason (the trauma and

64 Kelly 2010:8.

65 Kelly 2010:8, emphasis added.

66 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:8:12-9:45.

67 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:16:33-17:00, emphasis added.

suffering of war) and mythology (the need to carry out rapes for certain magical purposes to triumph over invading ethnic others). Instrumentalist themes of accumulation and the resource curse were also a way for Mai Mai combatants to characterise the behaviour of enemies:

The goal of this group is to protect natural resources that are in this part of the country. We know already that natural resources are what *motivate the enemy* to come here.⁶⁸

But, unlike FDLR rape talk, the framing of an enemy other in Mai Mai discourse is much more clearly linked to an injunction for the Mai Mai themselves to rape:

{*Soldier F*} “Well *the worst acts were done by foreigners living in this area*. For instance, when the Hutus go into a village, they'll take some women up the mountains, and rape them multiple times. Sometimes one woman would be raped by at least twenty men.”

{*Lisa*} “But how is it different what he does?”

{*Soldier F*} “The difference between the Hutus and us?”

{*Translator*} “Do they enjoy gang rape more than you?”

{*Soldier F*} “Well, those guys have been living in the bush for too long without women. They've just been living like that for so long that it's very pitiful when they encounter a woman...Well, *we were just abiding by the conditions of our magic potion. We had to rape women in order to make it work, and beat the enemy*...Well, we were following our own rules. And they had to abide by our rules. They knew that having sexual relations with us would help us be successful in battle.

{*Lisa*} “So it's like patriotic to get raped?”

{*Soldier F*} “We raped them because of our belief in the magic potion.”⁶⁹

68 Kelly 2010:5, emphasis added.

69 L. F. Jackson 2007:1:01:34-1:02:22; 1:02:46-1:03:12, emphasis added.

Jackson interprets this last comment as proof that soldiers are 'often' ordered to rape, although the rules here appear to be those imposed on sex and rape by the magic rituals of the Mai Mai, rather than the direct commands of a military superior for clearly defined objectives. This sometimes gave rise to a strange combination of hierarchical deference and justifications on the basis of magic:

It was our war strategy to tattoo ourselves with magic. We cut off her breasts and her genitals. We laid them out to dry. Our magician used the ashes for the tattoos. The bullets didn't kill us. But our bullets did hit the enemy. Because they didn't have the magic. These are the scars from the tattoos. We don't give a damn, that's how it goes in the army. I could murder my own father. Even my mother. *The army is about orders.* There's no mercy.⁷⁰

Other Mai Mai combatants denied that they were responsible for rape at all, citing their putative role as honest defenders of local communities.⁷¹ Some Mai Mai combatants appeared particularly aware that rape could cost them the support of those communities, and hence held that it was strategically irrational to commit it. They also stressed that there were consequences for rape (“If you commit rape and you are caught, you must be punished”⁷²), although this study lacked the detail on the form and extent of punishment suggested by analysis of FDLR practices. This may reflect differences between militia groups, since Mai Mai Shikito were more likely to deny that rape happened at all, while Mai Mai Kifuaafua members spoke more often about women as trophies and objects of sexual violence.⁷³

As with evidence from the FARDC and FDLR, Mai Mai combatants appear to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable forms of gendered violence, situating abduction and opportunistic rape as common and acceptable, but genital mutilation and the use of foreign objects in rape as not only unacceptable, but also horrific and criminal.⁷⁴ Their narratives

⁷⁰ Soldier Kasareka of the Mai Mai Simbas in I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:20:05-21:10, emphasis added.

⁷¹ Kelly 2010:8-9. This is not a role without some basis in fact, as we have seen, since in the early stages of their existence, the Mai Mai were considered a local militia genuinely committed to the protection of communities.

⁷² Kelly 2010:9.

⁷³ Kelly 2010:9.

⁷⁴ Kelly 2010:1.

invoke more than any others the space and time of mythology, and the special licence and requirements that go with a practice of fighting. As with mythological accounts more generally, this discourse abstracts from individual rationality and trauma to speak of requirements imposed by a certain collective cosmology. Marked by a political imaginary of vicious and threatening others, rape becomes framed as necessary to protecting themselves and their resources from attack. Elements of instrumentality are present in accounts of internal hierarchy, but the general tone is one in which the traumas and hardships of unreason are organised and rationalised within the rules of a wider collective.

In Their Country, Violence Is A National Sport

The picture of attitudes to sexual violence among other armed groups does not differ substantially from the above analysis. A single filmed interview from *Weapon of War* with Commander Taylor of the CNDP provides the starkest instrumentalist account:

I can state that sexual violence was *our big weapon*. The leaders of our group organised secret meetings among colonels, the generals and majors. They discussed it. We thought up strategies that ordinary militia wouldn't understand. *We did it as a way of provoking the Congolese government. We didn't give the orders, but if they went out raping, we were proud of them...*I can tell you that sexual violence has led to the government wanting to negotiate with us to reach a ceasefire, and getting us *out of the jungle and into Goma. Because they say we wouldn't stop raping otherwise.*⁷⁵

This is a clear statement of rational purpose, although the ends themselves are somewhat more complicated. There is no mention of resources as the objective, but instead a sense of victimisation and hardship as something to be escaped (“out of the jungle and into Goma”) using sexual violence as a signal to other powerful actors, including the government, that the CNDP are a serious security risk and therefore need to be negotiated with. By contrast, Laurent Nkunda himself claims that CNDP soldiers who raped were punished with death, killed by fellow officers of the same rank:

75 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:18:05-20:00, emphasis added.

We have a military code of conduct... Rape will be punished by firing squad, death penalty. And it's known. And two weeks ago, two officers were killed for that... Officers, not soldiers... They did rape in their drunk[enness]. Then we called the military court, and we said now in our code of conduct if you rape now [slaps hands]... And we killed them there. Before soldiers... That's the way. It was a punishment.⁷⁶

Other accounts make mention of some instrumentalist themes, but again in a particularly complicated way. The complexities of command are illustrated by a series of interviews with Captain Basima, an army chaplain in the FARDC who promotes gender awareness during the integration of troops into the army. In one clip he recalls the context of war rape as it was when he fought with the RCD:

When I fought with the RCD *we didn't get any clear orders* during operations. But that actually stimulated soldiers to rape. We were told: when you arrive in a village and conquer it, everything you find is yours. The women, the goods, everything is yours. In fact, it was *sort of an order, like: Go, fetch and party*.⁷⁷

As with testimony from FDLR rebels, this narrative combines an injunction to celebrate, dependent on gendered conception of ownership and licence, with a sense of a permissive atmosphere that allowed rape to take place. But it lacks the articulated instruction of superiors seeking to attain a given material goal by using sexual violence. Instead, rape appears as a release and an excessive pleasure in the context of war. We later learn that Basima is indeed one of the rapists, and that one of his victims is now his wife.⁷⁸

The 2005 joint report between two feminist networks in DRC and International Alert also drew on discourses of rape relating to the period around the Second Congo War.⁷⁹ Two of

76 Nkunda 2009:00:15-02:04.

77 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:24:18-24:46, emphasis added.

78 I. van Velzen and F. van Velzen 2009:37:25-38:35.

79 The report focused on the period 1996-2003, whereas the Second Congo War is usually dated as 1998-2003.

the RCD combatants interviewed repeated the combination of lust and poverty explanations found in other testimonies:

Militias rape and pillage because many of them are not properly organised. The fighters wait four months to get paid. They've got nothing to eat, they have to cope as best they can.⁸⁰

Our combatants don't get paid. Therefore they can't use prostitutes. If we politely ask women to come with us, they are not going to accept. So, we have to frighten them to make them obey us so we can get what we want.⁸¹

RCD soldiers also engaged in familiar attributions of mythological/ideological motives to enemy others to explain sexual violence, locating rape as something foreign and particularly barbaric in the practices of other armed groups:

The foreign militias, such as the FDD, FNL and Interahamwe are like *mercenaries in a far-off land*, where they have neither father nor aunt nor brother and *they act without scruple*. They also have to demonstrate that they control the area.⁸²

The rapes took place because the Mai Mai wanted to *terrorise our soldiers*. By raping and torturing the women, cutting off their breasts or their heads...they could terrorise our soldiers who might be passing that way or hear about these atrocities.⁸³

It's ideological – they want to know *what's happening in our ranks* by making the women speak.⁸⁴

80 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:46.

81 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:46.

82 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:48, emphasis added.

83 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005: 48, emphasis added.

84 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005: 48 emphasis added.

The same research indicated a similar discourse of war rape amongst victims themselves. 83% of the 492 female rape survivors interviewed spoke about the causes of rape in terms of disorganisation and indiscipline in armed groups and 41% also stressed sexual needs on the part of the fighters.⁸⁵ Women abducted and kept in armed group camps reported an interesting dynamic between accumulation and sexual violence, one which reinforces the impression of sexual violence as a reward rather than a means:

Often we saw the soldiers turning up with stolen goods and their boss, to reward them, allowed them two hours in which to go back to the village to rape, so as to satisfy their sexual needs.⁸⁶

In other words, although sexual violence in this case is intimately linked to accumulation and war economies, it is not the sexual violence that facilitates the capture in an instrumentalist form, but sexual violence which allows a release and reward in unreason's terms *after* resource capture. The discourse of foreignness was common among survivors too, with more than 57% suggesting that rape was part of an overall plan to destroy the Congolese people:

They come to kill and destroy, because if it was only to satisfy their sexual urges, they would not set about raping 86-year-old women or children less than 11 years old. It means they are trying to harm and destroy.⁸⁷

They use torture to overcome and destroy us, because they are jealous of us. Ours is a big country with great wealth. They were chased out of their own country and now they're living off the bush. They've brought a culture of violence with them – *in their country, violence is a national sport.*⁸⁸

85 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005: 45-56.

86 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:47.

87 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:48.

88 Réseau des Femmes pour un Développement Associatif et al. 2005:48-49, emphasis added.

Compare this view with the testimony of ex-FDLR fighters, who attributed gender domination to Congolese culture, and saw themselves as corrupted by time in foreign lands. In both cases the narrative location of sexual violence in other times and spaces is repeated. For perpetrators, at least, this fits the justifications and excuses found by Hearn in his analysis of rape discourse: justifications (high responsibility/low blame) where circumstances are held to have forced combatants to act and to rape and excuses (high blame/low responsibility) where they narrate their own experiences as losing control.⁸⁹

Interpreting Soldier-Rapist Testimony

This collected testimony reveals the complexity of narratives around wartime sexual violence, but also makes clear some prominent themes in soldier-rapist discourse. There is evidence in informants' rape talk to match each of the modes. However, the discourse analysed also reveals clear patterning. Throughout, there was a heavy stress on themes of unreason. Participants and observers of wartime sexual violence in the DRC, from all groups and across contexts, clearly *experience* rape as the result of suffering and hardship, but also as something that emerged from an alien space, either within themselves or from the chaos of the war itself. Rape was repeatedly described in terms of disgust and brutality and in terms of sexual lust and group bonding. The contradictory expressions captured in the 'lust'/'evil' rape distinction were found across groups and contexts, and appears to be reinforced throughout with a dependence on stimulants and drugs to remove fighting selves from the realities of sexual violence. Informants returned again and again to the idea that rape was a behaviour that escaped their control and reason, and that this was part of the horror of their experiences.

Previous discussion pointed out that much existing literature conflates civilian victimisation, torture and sexual violence and tends to see them as closely linked to the identity and strategies of the armed groups that carry them out. This testimony instead illustrates the relative separation of practices of violence from each other and from the overall context of conflict. Although instrumentality and mythology are fairly commonly found in descriptions of the war itself and reasons for joining (protection of Congolese wealth, ethnic differences

⁸⁹ See Hearn 1998.

with rebels or armies, personal quests for a better life), accounts of rape focus instead on the loss of control, emotional needs and confusions, and the ambiguous or opposed relation between rape and military order.

This was in places supplemented with acknowledgement of collective imperatives and settings. Testimony touched on instrumentality to the extent that need was sometimes expressed in economic terms, although this largely lacked evidence of instructions to rape. Indeed, there was significantly greater discursive framing of rape as forbidden and punishable by extreme measures, and testimony suggested that such punishments were real, at least in certain phases of the war. Mythological frames were common to the extent that each group saw rape, and brutal rape in particular, as the province of enemy others who were to be resisted. The prevalence of group bonding discourse also suggests a role for mythology, although one which reflects the fraternal enjoyment of rape rather than a patriarchal demand for it.

Moreover, the salient distinctions between forms of discourse appear to map the different institutional cultures of the different armed groups. The Mai Mai in particular appear to conform to mythological propositions, adopting strong senses of group cohesion and a developed repertoire of rituals and symbols through which they enact and make sense of sexual violence. They expressed clearly that they saw acts of gendered violence as necessary and as demanded by an external magical force. These narratives also had the flavour of hetero-nationalism, with both Mai Mai and FDLR forces constructing coherent accounts of the sexual deviance of enemy others, deviance which entitled particular actions, whether retributive rape for the Mai Mai or a sense that Congolese culture itself approved of rape in the case of FDLR rebels.

The distinctions drawn by combatants of all allegiances clearly shows that moral codes *are* in operation. This need not rule out instrumentality in principle, although it does indicate that beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate gender violence are important to participants and perpetrators. Yet, given the detail of responses, there is little supporting evidence for instrumentalist conclusions. The persuasiveness of this testimony thus in many ways supports evidence gathered from other sources and other measures. Discourses of sexual

violence among combatants and ex-combatants further suggest a need to rethink strongly instrumentalist and materialist 'weapon of war' theses. Against the claims of activists and policy advisers like John Prendergast, war rape in the DRC is, then, much more than "simple economics". The knot of economic, social and political issues is clearly dense, but the accounts offered by combatants themselves are perhaps surprisingly close to the picture established through attention to research into rape, historical legacies of violence and dynamics of accumulation in the region.

WEAPONS AND MOTIVES, BLOODY FINGERPRINTS

It's all about strikes now
So here's what's striking me
That some punk could argue
Some moral ABCs
When people are catching
What bombers release
Well I'm on a mission to never agree
Here comes the argument
Fugazi, 'Argument'¹

What, in the wake of this long analysis, are we to make of wartime sexual violence, and of feminist ways of accounting for it? This thesis has made a contribution at three levels of inquiry. First, in terms of meta-theory and the philosophy of social science, it has offered a critique of the standard conceptions of feminism in IR, as either empiricist, standpoint or postmodern, or as an option alongside gender theory; explored alternative frameworks and found them unable to cover the variety of feminist claims; instead advanced a view of feminism as an assemblage of explanatory, political and ethical claims irreducible to any of those elements; turned to a view of feminism as deploying different forms of critical explanation; and further specified the content of feminist modes of critical explanation for wartime sexual violence in terms of differing analytical wagers, narrative scripts and normative orientations.

Second, in terms of feminist modes of critical explanation for wartime sexual violence, the thesis has distinguished three (instrumentality, unreason and mythology) and proceeded to outline each implicit mode and its logic; to relate the modes to parallel debates and problems in war studies; to develop a richer understanding of the modes through their resonance with wider debates in feminist, gender and social theory; to identify discontinuities and ambiguities in each mode and across them; and to set out the variety of propositional forms modes may take.

1 From Fugazi 2001.

Third, the analytical framework applied to the ongoing conflict and associated sexual violence in the DRC has done more than offer an account of its complexity. It has shown how the dynamics of war and the dynamics of war rape can be separated; shown the very real limits of narrowly instrumental and economistic arguments about the causal role of natural resources in sexual violence; and provided a close working through of how the conjunction of modes of unreason and mythology play out in practice. Although economic motives are important in sustaining (and to some degree causing) violence, rape does not appear to be a systematic tool aimed at accessing those resources. Victim and survivor reports do not indicate that rape is particularly 'ethnic' or otherwise communal in nature, although there are exceptions. On the contrary, many reports stress the distributed and fragmented character of violence carried out by combatants and civilians (although there is ambiguity about the exact balance).

There are important aspects of the conflict as a whole requiring a historical and micro-level perspective (focusing on the fall-out from the Rwandan genocide and local land disputes) but these indicate a mythological and instrumental reading only in some sense. They do not, for example, justify a view of rape in the DRC as a process of one-way cleansing, or of land conflicts as the generative force for atrocity. Combatants' own accounts stress trauma, confusion and, to some degree, codes of moral behaviour that they see as breaking down in the pressure chamber of prolonged war. In the specific case of the Mai Mai a more ritualised understanding of gender is evident, and this translates into relatively clear repertoires of violence that indicate a pocket of mythological intensity in the midst of a fractured war. Compared to what is known of other cases, the DRC case thus appears to combine both very high levels of rape overall with a rather distributed and unclear pattern in the character and perpetrators of rape. Examining these dynamics in the DRC has been an important activity in its own right: the conclusions generated matter because they refer to a real case of mass human suffering, and not merely because they advance a theoretical agenda.

This approach has added a clarity and precision not otherwise available. By thinking of feminism as explanatory-political-ethical, we have been able to go beyond making rape in Congo visible to adjudicating, however precariously, between rival understandings of what

drives violence there. Via modes of critical explanation, it has been possible to distinguish the multiple implicit understandings of how war rape works, to trace them against a varied and dense empirical record, and to show where contradictory explanations rub up against each other. And by considering rape and war in the DRC together, both have been exposed as co-implicated and as importantly different: as articulated layers in a running drama of overlapping brutalities. In each part, the thesis has thus sought to address one of Marysia Zalewski's questions from Chapter 1: 'what work is gender doing?'. What work in our ideas of method and truth; what work in our narratives of how rape occurs; and what work within the field of situated conflict in the Great Lakes?

The result of this three-part inquiry has been to forcefully illustrate that feminism in IR is not one, but many things. In this sense, a simple instrumentalist account of rape as a weapon of war has been jettisoned. Jettisoned only to be replaced by alternative, and more consistently critical, views of economic, military and material forces. Much the same can be said of unreason and mythology. The refusal to promote one modal truth is quite conscious. Each represents a sophisticated strand of feminist social thought, and cannot be disproved by single cases, or by refutations of one-dimensional theoretical instantiations. This may, of course, show that modes are too ambiguous and cumbersome constructions to be of any use, but my own sense is that, while the view of them promoted here may be far from perfect, they reflect very real challenges for explanation, ethics and politics.

It has also become clear that feminism and critical war studies have more in common than has previously been supposed. Many of the key questions raised for one find parallels in the other. A productive conversation (and, in part, synthesis) is therefore possible. There are convincing feminist accounts of wartime sexual violence available for instrumentalist, unreason and mythological readings (and, by implication, for critical war studies), but matters are clarified by setting them out in detail. Given the complexity of the theoretical and empirical discussion, modes and logics are best understood as analytical frameworks, rather than as mutually incompatible theses (although in specific instantiations they can be contradictory). In other words, it is possible (and likely) that different conflicts will fit different modes and combinations of modes.

Accepting this analysis nevertheless leaves some questions unanswered. It may be objected that the case-specific conclusions are rather straight-forward and mundane in light of the philosophical discussion in Part One and the convoluted resonances developed in Part Two. This is so especially because the inquiry into war rape in the DRC is thin on both ethics and politics: it represents no definitive party (beyond a blanket desire for less rape and less war) and advances no programme of action. This is particularly damning in light of the scale of intervention in the DRC, which has been examined only tangentially. There is certainly scope to say much more here: on the beliefs and actions of interveners, on how the internationalised history of the conflict has impacted on practices of sexual violence, on how global dynamics are implicated in dimensions of war beyond rape, and on what should be done by citizens who are not of the Congo to reconsider their roles in thought and deed.

It might be volunteered that the political intervention of the thesis is in its critique and extension of feminist accounts of war, and therefore in its spur to new action. But then academics always say that. The truth is that the kinds of politics practiced in academia – whilst certainly necessarily, and integral to the feminist insurgency – cannot accomplish the task of world transformation alone. Where they do, it is always because they are part of a praxis, and maybe even then they do not play a great role. Ending rape requires a different kind of political action.²

There is also much more to be said about the potential for revisiting and revising existent accounts of wartime sexual violence. We are only now beginning to think seriously about the large variation in the extent and character of rape in war. Perhaps the differences in modes arise as a particular consequence of the case-by-case approach, with those working on Bosnia or Darfur stressing military commands and strategy, while students of the Rwandan genocide are more alive to mythological aspects, and accounts of wartime sexual violence in Vietnam quicker to identify the frustration and pleasures taken by individual men as the running theme. If so, this may lead us to abandon any hope of a general account of wartime sexual violence in favour of more specific, historically located claims, or it might encourage us to trace connective elements across space and time.

2 See, classically, Marcus 1992.

Moreover, further attention to the explanatory-political-ethical character of feminist analysis might illuminate how this tension works in practice. The desire that arose out of Chapters 2 and 3 was to hold on to this hybrid character, and to make it the central argument for what designated feminism as such. Since this is a constitutive tension, revisiting it does not mean abolishing it, but better understanding how the different elements of an approach are linked and the impact they have on each other. In some cases, this may be grounds for re-evaluation some assumptions and ditching others. Although the task was not undertaken in this thesis, it is possible that elements of feminist modes of explanation will be revealed to be irrelevant in practice, or misconceived in theory.

That further work is both theoretical and empirical. The focus on a single case in this thesis was both defensible and productive. It would not have been possible to examine either differing modes or the contexts of violence in Eastern Congo whilst also addressing other situations of war/rape. Those cases have, of course, seeped into analysis: as the episodic detail at the beginning of the chapters in Part Two, as ad hoc illustrations of conceptual points, and as the implicit background to the discussion of the DRC as a coherent and bounded case. Try, for example, to think of any instance of war rape without rendering it in comparison to a different situation taken to be either normal or desirable. This comparative dimension, thus far muted, is not only desirable for comprehensiveness, but increasingly seems necessary to a fuller accounting of gendered violence. As Elisabeth Jean Wood's ongoing project suggests, attending only to the extreme and to the horrific blinds us analytically to human variance and politically to the opportunities for social transformation. Although there are works which make use of many examples, as this thesis has also done, there are none existing which seriously apply a theoretical framework to multiple cases of wartime sexual violence. Such works exist for revolution, for democracy, for the initiation, duration and cessation of war, for the dynamics of genocide and ethnic cleansing, and for the literary analysis of feminist theory. But not for war rape.

A further project thus takes shape. Feminist scholarship on wartime sexual violence was shaped to a significant extent by the war/genocides of Bosnia and Rwanda. This unsurprisingly foregrounded the purposeful of sexual violence in those cases, and its saturation with notions of righteous ethnic community (in the terms offered by this thesis,

aspects of instrumentality and mythology). We have seen that the DRC does not match this model, and it is not clear that similar dynamics would be found in cases such as the American war in Vietnam or in the conduct of the armies that wrestled across Europe between 1939 and 1945. Even within the supposed 'new wars' of globalised extraction and communal hatred in the last decades, revealing differences may emerge. How similar is sexual violence in DRC and Sierra Leone? Do conditions of state terror (such as those found in Darfur or Zimbabwe) reflect the patterns of more conventional wars or is violence used principally within the confines of state torture chambers? Can we determine a greater malice aforethought where *levels* of rape are actually lower, as elites target prominent enemies of state, or do practices of war rape escalate in the contest of forces? Such an account would also allow for a comparative sociology of military cultures, and so help clarify whether the rape-proneness of military masculinities constitute a kind of baseline explanation for wartime sexual violence, a foundation on which other factors work to either heighten or suppress levels of gendered suffering.

The focus of this thesis has been on what it means to inquire into war rape as a feminist. But the questions raised clearly go beyond both the phenomenon and the political-intellectual tradition. On the one hand, the perspective developed in Part One can be applied to other areas within (and without) the discipline: to the study of gender mainstreaming or representations in global culture or the feminisation of labour in the world economy. Recognising explanation as a vital part of what feminism does, and being clear about the terms of those explanations, engages a conversation about the direction and content of the disciplinary feminist insurgency itself. On the other hand, aspects of critical explanation, and insights from the modes and the relative disjuncture between war and rape in the DRC, have relevance beyond feminism. Post-colonialism too might be read as critical explanation, and perhaps self-consciously critical approaches of all stripes might be said to share the non-exclusive balance of explanation, ethics and politics. Similarly, the 'synthesis' suggested with critical war studies above might proceed on the basis of shared meta-theoretical commitments or contingent interests in addressing an unfolding case of concrete violence.

Like all theses (like all inquiry), what is offered here is thus both a progression and an opening. It may become many things or nothing, a lineage that cannot be settled in advance.

A revealing, to use language recalled from Chapter 1, of many different 'whys', and a stimulating of some new ones. A small refusal of the identity that birthright can bestow, a mimetic re-enactment of a political and intellectual identity, and an attempted intervention in world-knowing and world-making.³

3 The reference is to 'Refusing To Be A Man', in Propagandhi 1996. The relevant lines are: "I'm a hetero-sexist tragedy / And potential rapists all are we / But don't tell me this is natural / This is nurturing / And there's a difference between sexism and sexuality / I had different desires prior to my role-remodelling / And at six years of age you don't challenge their claims / You become the same / (Or withdraw from the game and hang your head in shame) / I think that's exactly what I did / I tried to sever the connections between me and them / I fought against their further attempts to convince a kid / That birthright can bestow / The power to yield the subordination of women ... And I refuse to be a 'man'."

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

List of interviewees in Eastern DRC by date. Each respondent was asked how they would like to be identified in any resulting publication. Some opted for vague designations (such as 'international official'). Others preferred more specific labels which nonetheless preserved their anonymity (such as 'UNICEF official'). A few, particularly Congolese respondents who had the most to fear from publication of their sometimes critical views, opted to be named in full. The below reflects those preferences.

1. Hilary Margolis, Gender-Based Violence Program Coordinator for North Kivu, *International Rescue Committee*, Goma, 28 May 2010
2. Official, UNICEF, Goma, 1 June 2010
3. Official, UNHCR, Goma, 2 June 2010
4. Dr Muteho Kasongo, Education Rights Coordinator, *ActionAid*, Goma, 2 June 2010
5. Human Rights Officer, MONUC, Goma, 2 June 2010
6. Sage Mulinda, *Alpha Ujuvi*, NGO, Goma, 3 June 2010
7. Official, *Save The Children*, Goma, 3 June 2010
8. EU Gender Officer, Goma, 3 June 2010
9. Police Advisers, EUPOL, Goma, 4 June 2010
10. Adèle Safi Kagarabi, Executive Secretary of COFAS (Conseil des Organisations des Femmes Agissant en Synergie) and Provincial President of CPLVS (Commission Provinciale de Lutte Contre les Violences Sexuelles Sud-Kivu), Bukavu, 8 June 2010
11. Official, COOPI, Bukavu, 8 June 2010
12. Christine Schuler-Deschryver, V-Day, Bukavu, 8 June 2010
13. Joseph Ciza, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Coordinator, *Heal Africa*, Goma, 10 June 2010
14. Activist, *Femme Plus*, Goma, 10 June 2010
15. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Officer, MONUC, Goma, 11 June 2010
16. Official, *International Alert*, Goma, 11 June 2010
17. Official, UNOCHA, Goma, 15 June 2010
18. British official, Goma, 17 June 2010
19. Official, UNFPA, Goma, 17 June 2010
20. Official, *War Child*, Goma, 17 June 2010