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‘WHAT IS WRONG WITH MEN?’: REVISITING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

Abstract: Much has been written about the high rates of rape and other forms of violence against ‘enemy’ women in wartime, and sustained violences against women in post-war contexts. Research on violence against women, recognised as a problem for peace and development and even a threat to international security, has begun to identify and explain contrasts between different locations. The explanations focus on men, their behaviour and ‘masculinities’, some of which, and even some military codes, may even proscribe such violence. By contrast, research on the mental health of male former combatants, and possibly other male survivors of war trauma, suggests that there is a strong risk of them perpetrating violence specifically against women, even in cases where the highest standard of veteran care is expected, but without much explanation. This article considers what potential there is in this topic for lessons in peacebuilding policy and identifies areas for future research.

Key words: sexual violence, gender, war, peacebuilding, masculinity, men, ex-combatants, veterans, soldiers

Much has been written about the high rates of rape and other forms of sexual violence committed by men against ‘enemy’ women in wartime. There is a veritable canon of feminist academic work on the nature of, and explanations for, such violence in war.¹ Brownmiller²

¹ A useful list of ‘the canon’ up to the 1990s is set out in reference 7 of Inger Skjelsbæk, ‘Sexual Violence and War: Mapping Out a Complex Relationship’, *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no 2, (2001): 211–237. To this I would add: Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen, eds., *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation* (London: Zed Press, Moser, 2001); Caroline Moser and Fiona C. Clark eds., *Victims*,

paved the way in the 1970s to seeing sexual violence in war as being committed by men *qua* men against women *qua* women, as war provides the opportunity, and that it is ubiquitous, whether or not it is condoned or used by political forces. A ‘second wave’ of feminist work has demonstrated the complexity of wartime sexual violence and its variation; has considered a wider range of explanations; and has articulated why this phenomenon is a security issue.³ In the policy arena there is nonetheless a persistent view of men’s generalised predilection to commit acts of sexual violence against women, as promoted by Brownmiller. This is the case in the ‘Women, Peace and Security’ agenda of the UN (WPS),⁴ and the policy approaches taken by many other international organisations which have aligned their work to it.⁵ The WPS agenda calls for the mainstreaming of gender into activities relating to post-conflict peacebuilding, but does not easily take on the insights from the ‘second-wave’ of feminist work.

This article is therefore written in response to Richmond and MacGinty’s suggestion that ‘it would be useful to integrate gender analysis more fully into our research’.⁶ In particular here

Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence, (London: Zed Books, , 2001); Caroline Nordstrom *Girls and Warzones. Troubling Questions*, (Uppsala: Life and Peace Institute, 1997); and D. Buss, ‘Rethinking “Rape as a weapon of War”’, *Feminist Legal Studies* 17 (2009):145–163. A thoughtful review of this evidence is at, Anette Bringedal Houge, ‘Sexualised War Violence. Knowledge Construction and Knowledge Gaps’, *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* VOL NO2015).

² Her seminal work is, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, (New York: Fawcett Books, 1975) which has been re-published many times and in different countries.

³ E.g., L. Anderson, 'Politics by Other Means: When does Sexual Violence Threaten International Peace and Security?' *International Peacekeeping* 17, no.2 (2010): 244-260; and L. Sjoberg, ‘Seeing Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in International Security’, *International Journal* 0 (2015): 1-20.

⁴ The eight UN security council resolutions under the WPS framework may be found at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/wps.shtml>, (accessed 03.02.16)

⁵ See Susan Willett, 'Introduction: Security Council Resolution 1325: Assessing the Impact on Women, Peace and Security', *International Peacekeeping* 17, no.2 (2010): 142-158, and the other articles in this issue.

⁶ Oliver P Richmond and Roger MacGinty, ‘Where now for the Critique of the Liberal Peace?’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, no.2 (2015): 184.

I attempt to show peacebuilding scholars the outcome of some aspects of the ‘second wave’ of feminist, and other, research on violence against women, which may be helpful for post-war peacebuilding. These include explanations for the continuation of sexual violence in peacebuilding settings,⁷ and what is known about the behaviours of men who may be spoilers of peace, and how they are conceptualised and explained.

Violence Against Women as a Problem for Peacebuilding

The WPS agenda was established in response to feminist campaigning along three broad lines. First, there was an argument that women experience specific forms of violence, that tend to be overlooked, and therefore require special attention. Second, these campaigns posited that there is something specific (if not unique) about these violences in war and post war settings, as compared with non-war settings (although the decades of research on the latter are rarely considered).⁸ Third, there is a foundational assumption that women have something distinct from men to offer in peacebuilding, but are almost universally marginalised, and often absent, from peace talks and other peacebuilding activities, which leads to their rights and interests being marginalised or even undermined in peacebuilding.

⁷ I use the terms *post-war* and *peacebuilding* throughout but with the usual caveats that such phases are rarely clear-cut temporally, or chronological. I use *war* rather than *conflict* as the latter covers many different contexts that are not related to war in any way, but also acknowledge that there are many different types and definitions of war.

⁸ A very useful review is Beverly A. McPhail, ‘Feminist Framework Plus: Knitting Feminist Theories of Rape Etiology Into a Comprehensive Model’, *Trauma Violence Abuse* (May 2015); see also F. Miler, ‘Rape: Sex Crime, Act of Violence, or Naturalistic Adaptation?’, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 19 (2014): 67–81.

The assumptions regarding the distinctiveness of such violence have been subject to critical comment by feminist writers⁹ who critiqued the assumption that women would be more successful at peacebuilding as an essentialist view of women, and the view that they are more innately peaceful and have special skills and abilities to prevent violence if they are given the opportunity – seeing ‘peace as women’s work’.¹⁰ The focus on women (as victims, survivors, activists and leaders) sometimes eclipsed the analysis of men. Furthermore, an over-focus on sexual violence has sometimes obscured the other violences experienced by women (and men), which may also be considered to be more serious by women survivors.¹¹

Sexual violence covers a range of acts, and is variously defined in different legal settings.

The introduction to an important database on violence in conflict follows the definitions of the International Criminal Court:

we define sexual violence as (1) rape, (2) sexual slavery, (3) forced prostitution, (4) forced pregnancy, and 5) forced sterilization/abortion. Following Elisabeth Wood (2009), we also include (6) sexual mutilation, and (7) sexual torture. This definition does not exclude the existence of female perpetrators and male victims, both of which are observed in the data. We focus on violations that involve direct force and/or physical violence. We exclude acts that do not go beyond verbal sexual harassment, abuse or threats, including sexualized insults, forced nudity, or verbal humiliation.¹²

⁹ See footnote 1, and Azza Karam 'Women in War and Peace-building: The Roads Traversed, The Challenges Ahead', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3, no.1 (2000): 2-25.

¹⁰ See footnote 1

¹¹ Karam 'Women in War and Peace-building', 2-25.

¹² Dara Kay Cohen and Ragnhild Nordås *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) Dataset Codebook and User Instruction Guide*, (2013) www.sexualviolencedata.org. Further clarification of rape is also given (p.7), ‘Rape is defined as the case where the perpetrator invaded the body of a person by conduct resulting in penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital

This database clearly illustrates that there is considerable variety in the prevalence of sexual violence, as well as other factors, rather than being ubiquitous. It has facilitated the identification of correlations between different possible explanatory factors during war on a large quantitative scale,¹³ including typologies of war,¹⁴ although there is not yet a consensus on what the typologies should be. It includes data for five years after the official ending of conflict,¹⁵ with much potential for the future analysis of peacebuilding.

A great deal more attention is paid to sexual violence against women than other violences against them, and even sometimes women or even men's deaths, both during and after conflict. Sexual violence can of course lead to death (immediately, through HIV or other injuries resulting in death¹⁶) but often it does not, hence the large numbers of women (and smaller numbers of men) who give testimony as survivors. A question for our time is why sexual violence is held up as the ultimate war damage – by some commentators almost worse than death.¹⁷ At times it seems almost salacious¹⁸ when women themselves sometimes see

opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body. The invasion was committed by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or the invasion was committed against a person incapable of giving genuine consent.’, along with definitions of other acts listed.

Also see D.K. Cohen, ‘Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)’, *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 461-477.

¹³ Cohen and Nordås, *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Cohen and Nordås, *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict*. p. 8. The data are drawn from the State Department, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch.

¹⁶ Thomas Plumper and Eric Neumayer, ‘The Unequal Burden of War: the Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy’, *International Organization* 60, no.3 (July 2006): 723-754.

¹⁷ E.g., ‘Women and girls are uniquely and disproportionately affected by armed conflict. Women bear the brunt of war and are the vast majority of casualties resulting from war.’ <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights/women-peace-and-security>

other issues (including violence) as being more important. These include domestic violence, and public attacks on individual or groups of women, as well as features of structural violence such as land rights, property rights, employment, political representation and so on.

Men as well as women are targeted for violence because of their gender. It is after all normal in wartime for forces to target young men and in some wars the focus is on all men, as they are seen as the most obvious threat and even to define the enemy. Death from immediate assault is always a more common outcome for men than for women¹⁹ (even though some feminist activists persist in referring to women as the greater victims of war). There is some nuance to the relative death rates of men and women if longer-term causes of death caused by war are taken into account, but it is pretty much universally the case that, at the end of wars, women outnumber men.

Addressing sexual violence should be part of post-war peacebuilding for several reasons which go beyond the basic legal and moral issues. It may become a security issue.²⁰ It causes major ruptures in society (amongst men as well as between women, men and children) at a time when it is hoped that families can contribute to social stability.²¹ Persistent impunity for

¹⁸ “‘It is really amazing’”, said one Kosovar woman ... “that the international community cared only about Kosovar women when they were being raped – and then only as some sort of exciting story. We see now that they really don’t give a damn about us.” Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-building*, (New York: UNIFEM, 2002):125. This view was echoed by feminist activists, academics and policy makers at an international conference held by the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict research group in Hamburg, July 2015.

¹⁹ E.G. Krug , L.L. Dahlberg , J.A. Mercy , A. Zwi , R. Lozano-Ascencio , (eds.) *World report on Violence and Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002).

²⁰ Anderson, 'Politics by Other Means'.

²¹ R. Jenkins, and A.Goetz, ‘Addressing Sexual Violence in Internationally Mediated Peace Negotiations’, *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 2 (2010): 261-277, especially 266; D. Buss, J. Lebert, B. Rutherford, D. Sharkey and O. Aginam, eds., *Sexual Violence in Conflict*

perpetrators undermines government legitimacy whereas impartial prosecution can reinforce it. At a practical level it can reduce the potential for economic activity, particularly that of women and girls at a time when this is seen as crucial, particularly in rural economies reliant on their labour for agriculture.²²

As a means of addressing these and other gender issues, the WPS agenda calls for the ‘mainstreaming of gender’ in all aspects of peacebuilding, and so international organisations have aligned their position accordingly. Both NGOs working at a local level,²³ and academic analyses,²⁴ have highlighted the significance for development and peace of reducing violence against women, as well as the promotion of equality between women and men. There is a large and growing body of work which highlights the failure to achieve the ambitions of WPS, which tend to conclude that local and international structures of power continue to prevent women playing the roles called for in the WPS, but that local analyses is needed to uncover what is going on given the considerable variations.²⁵

The Phenomenon of Post-war Violence against Women After Wars

and Post-Conflict Societies: International Agendas and African Contexts, (Place: Routledge, 2014).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ E.g., ACORD, 2016 <http://www.acordinternational.org/news/violence-against-women-and-girls--a-development-issue/>.

²⁴ E.g. Jenkins and Goertz, ‘Addressing Sexual Violence’, and Buss et al, *Sexual Violence in Conflict*.

²⁵ E.g. F. Ní Aoláin D.F. Haynes , N.R. Cahn , *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); T. Gizelis and L. Olsson, eds., *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325* (London: Routledge, 2015); M. McWilliams , A. Kilmurray 'From the Global to the Local: Grounding UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Post Conflict Policy Making', *Women's Studies International Forum* 51(2015):128-135; A. Björkdahl , J. Mannergren Selimovic , 'Translating UNSCR 1325 from the Global to the National: Protection, Representation and Participation in the National Action Plans of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda', *Conflict, Security and Development*15 (2015): 311-335.

In the peacebuilding phase it is also common to see heightened rates of violence committed by men against ‘their own’ (i.e., non-enemy) women, whether they be spouses, other known men, or strangers. Literature on the ‘backlash’ or ‘aftermath’ of war locates these bodily violences against women within a broader set of actions by men which work against women post-war. These actions can be supported, or even led by, the state, and cover a range from disadvantageous legislation and policy to acceptance of everyday abuses (sexual and otherwise) in private and public which undermine women’s status, as well as actual harm. Some may not even include sexual violence,²⁶ whilst other contexts, such as Guatemala, have witnessed such heightened rates of post-war violence against women, often resulting in death, that the term *femicide* is used.²⁷

Perhaps because of the widespread publicity about high levels of sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide and the former-Yugoslavian wars, it is common to assume that sexual violence is particularly high in ethnic-based wars, and in the context of ethnic cleansing. When more case studies are analysed, however this correlation is not born out and is certainly therefore not inevitable.²⁸ Sierra Leone’s war, for example, is known to have had high rates of sexual violence but could not accurately be described as an ethnic conflict.

There is huge variation in the nature, extent and longevity of the backlash and the patterns do not seem obviously to match women’s experiences during war. Commentators locate

²⁶ E.g. Elisabeth Jean Wood ‘Variation in Sexual Violence during War’, *Politics & Society* September 2006 vol. 34 no. 3: 307-342; and Elisabeth Jean Wood, ‘Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When is Wartime Rape Rare?’, *Politics and Society* 37, no. 1 (2009): 131-162

²⁷ See H. Trujillo, ‘Femicide and Sexual Violence in Guatemala, eds., Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Américas*, (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2010), 127-137).

²⁸ Also see D.K. Cohen, ‘Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)’.

‘backlash violence against women’ within the context of a reaction to changed gender norms,²⁹ but the earlier tendency to generalise is countered by the emergent picture of enormous variety in women’s experiences after war. This type of backlash violence can occur at a high level where there was not a major change in women’s roles, and in some where gender relations did change significantly this is not followed by mass increases of violence against women.³⁰

An important example of an attempt to look in detail at this violence was published some time ago by Judy El-Bushra.³¹ In Northern Uganda, women were provided with income generating opportunities that were not open to men and it was reported to researchers by both that increases in violence against women has been triggered by men’s resentment about the loss of their role as provider and their new-found dependence on women.³² By contrast, El-Bushra reports that in Angola men accepted their wives’ economic dominance without this violent response. The explanation for such variety is not present in an analysis which only considers the change in gender relations and deduces this to be the cause in men’s behaviour.

‘Masculinity’ as Explanatory Factor: ‘What is Wrong With Men?’

Feminist writers have in the past located heightened levels of violence, and particularly sexual violence against women, within the conceptual framework of ‘masculinity’. The word

²⁹ E.g., Meintjes et al, *The Aftermath* ; and Meredith Turshen, and Alidou Ousseina, 2000. ‘Africa: Women in the Aftermath of Civil War’, *Race and Class* 41, no. 4, (2001): 81-92.

³⁰ Wood, Elisabeth Jean Wood, ‘Variation in Sexual Violence during War’: 325

³¹ J. El-Bushra, ‘Fused in Combat: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict’, *Development in Practice* 13(2003): 2-3, 252-265; see also C. Dolan, ‘Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States – A Case Study of Northern Uganda’, ed., Frances Cleaver, *Masculinities Matter! Men, Gender and Development* (London: Zed Books, 2000); and M. Turshen, ‘The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women During Armed Conflict in Africa’, Moser and Clark, *Victims, Perpetrators Or Actors?*

³² Jenkins and Goertz, ‘Addressing Sexual Violence’, 266make the same point

alone is used in many different ways and so it is important to be clear about what is intended. At its simplest it merely refers to what men do, within a socially-approved framework. Various prefixes have sometimes been used to highlight the nature of a new specific set of behaviours and beliefs, such as *extreme-masculinity*, or *hyper- masculinity*.³³ The intellectual heritage of *hegemonic masculinity* is the careful scholarship undertaken by Connell and others³⁴ in which the concept has been developed.³⁵ Hegemonic masculinity refers not necessarily to the set of beliefs and practices that all men are expected to embody and perform, but what is aspired to; it is an expression of normativity. This is a complex and much-debated topic with interesting reflections about the extent to which hegemonic masculinity changes, and why and how, in different settings.

Crucially there are attempts to tie together the practical and actually-existing efforts of men and women, in their roles as political leaders, community leaders, wives and mothers for example, to change what is expected of men – using exhortation, but also punishment for non-compliance. Typically, shame is used.³⁶ One of the complexities of this concept is that to be hegemonic, the normative values of masculinity have to be supported and sanctioned socially rather than enforced, when this is evidently not always the case, and would require widespread endorsement from women.

³³ See Donna Pankhurst, 'Post-War Backlash Violence against Women: What Can "Masculinity" Explain?', ed., Donna Pankhurst, *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007)

³⁴ R.W.Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: California Press, 2005); Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell eds., *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (London: Sage, 2005); Jeff Hearn, *The Violences of Men*, (PLACE: Sage, 1998).

³⁵ R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society* 19, no.6 (2005): 829-859.

³⁶ It is very common for women to publicly seek to shame men who are reluctant to fight, such as the presenting of white feathers in public during the first world war in the UK, and see Jamie Munn, 'The Hegemonic Male and Kosovar Nationalism, 2000–2005', *Men and Masculinities* 10 no. 4 (June 2008): 440-456.

Integral to the concept of *hegemonic masculinity* is the notion that different *subordinate* masculinities co-exist in the same setting, where the meaning is less ideological and more about being and doing. Not all men are expected to be the strongest, most violent, most successful, by definition, and so alternative masculinities exist which are more widely attainable. Without considerable care, the use of the term in this setting is little more than a descriptive label and does not give any further explanatory power than *gender roles* or *gendered identities*. It can also be tautologous: men behave like this because their masculinity makes them behave like this, and their masculinity is determined by their maleness and what men do. Such an approach can also lead to a crude essentialism about maleness which is not accurate or helpful in seeking to understand the nature and causes of variety and differentiation between different men's behaviours.

In particular it is often suggested that men, passively or actively, fall under the pressures of changed masculinities which take on extreme forms.³⁷ More recent research tends not to rely heavily on the use of 'masculinities' as a concept³⁸ but focuses on the variability of incidence of sexual violence, and the importance of analysing the specificities of social context.

Research with men in Sierra Leone³⁹ and DRC⁴⁰ has revealed greater understanding of local

³⁷ E.g. Euan Hague, 'Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina', ed., Ronit Lentin, *Gender and Catastrophe*, (London: Zed Press, 1997), , who uses *hetero-national masculinity*. and see Pankhurst, 'Post-War Backlash Violence' for further comment on the usefulness of the term.

³⁸ E.g. Cohen, 'Explaining Rape during Civil War'; Cohen and Nordås *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict*; J. Gottschall, 'Explaining Wartime Rape', *The Journal of Sex Research* 41, no. 2, (2004): 129-136.

³⁹ Interestingly Cohen 'Explaining Rape during Civil War' shows that committing rape in the Sierra Leone war was known to be very dangerous for the perpetrator, where debilitating STDs are common, including HIV/Aids)

⁴⁰ Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, 'Why do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)', *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2009): 495–518; Theo Hollander, 'Men, Masculinities, and the Demise of a State: Examining Masculinities in the Context of Economic, Political, and Social Crisis in a Small

experiences, and suggests that the reasons are varied, even within the same contexts.⁴¹ In some settings, for instance, there is a stronger tendency for official, state-supported forces to commit sexual violence than militias or rebel groups, rather than all men.⁴² In some, women

Town in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', *Men and Masculinities* 17, no. 4 (2014): 417-439.

In addition the high levels of sexual violence in DRC has attracted more detailed studies from various disciplines than most other recent, see for instance: S.A. Bartels, J.A. Scott, J. Leaning et al, 'Sexual Violence Trends between 2004 and 2008 in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo', *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 26 (2011): 408; S. Bartels, J. Kelly, J. Scott, et al, 'Militarized Sexual Violence in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 28 (2013) :340-358; Françoise Duroch, Melissa McRae and Rebecca F. Grais. 'Description and Consequences of Sexual Violence in Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo', *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 11, no.1 (2011); M. Guimond K. Robinette, 'A Survivor behind Every Number: Using Programme Data on Violence against Women and Girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo to Influence Policy and Practice', *Gender and Development* 22 (2014):311-326; T. Hecker, K. Hermenau, A. Maedl, T. Elbert, M. Schauer, 'Appetitive Aggression in Former Combatants - Derived from the Ongoing Conflict in DR Congo', *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 35 (2012):244-249; J. Kelly, J. Kabanga, W. Cragin, L. Alcayna-Stevens, S. Haider, M.J. Vanrooyen, 'If Your Husband Doesn't Humiliate You, Other People Won't': Gendered Attitudes towards Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo', *Global Public Health* 7 (2012):285-298; R. Kidman, T. Palermo, J. Bertrand, 'Intimate Partner Violence, Modern Contraceptive Use and Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', *Social Science and Medicine*. 2015;133:2-10; B. Maclin, J. Kelly, J. Kabanga and M. VanRooyen, 'They Have Embraced a Different Behaviour': Transactional Sex and Family Dynamics in Eastern Congo's Conflict', *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 17 (2015):119-131; S. Meger 'Rape of the Congo: Understanding Sexual Violence in the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 28 (2010): 119-135; J. Trenholm, P. Olsson, M. Blomqvist, et al, 'Constructing Soldiers from Boys in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo', *Men and Masculinities*. 16 (2013): 203-227; G. Zihindula and P. Maharaj, 'Risk of Sexual Violence: Perspectives and Experiences of Women in a Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Journal of Community Health* 40 (2015):736-743.

This was also historically the case amongst US forces in Vietnam. For example, in the My Lai massacre not all men engaged in the sexual violence and killing of women and children, according to their own testimonies to US Congress

(https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Vol_II-testimony.html).

⁴¹ Baaz and Stern, 'Why do Soldiers Rape?', and Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond* (London: Zed Books, 2013), 5.

⁴² Dara Kay Cohen and Ragnhild Nordås, 'Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC Dataset, 1989–2009', *Journal of Peace Research* 5, no. 3 (2014): 418-428; Jennifer L. Green, 'Uncovering Collective Rape: A Comparative Study of Political Sexual Violence', *International Journal of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (2004): 97-116

are also perpetrators of a range of violences⁴³ whilst in others to a far lesser degree or not at all.

Connecting the study of masculinities to the study of sexual violence

In some cases men also experience specifically sexual violence, although there are key differences in the way this is categorised.⁴⁴ Men suffer much violence which is referred to as torture but which focuses on the genitalia and/or is aimed at preventing future procreation, and so therefore could well be described as sexual violence (and of course the sexual violence that women experience may also be categorised as torture). Whilst it is commonly believed that men's reporting is probably even lower than that of women, it is not generally thought to feature as a post-war phenomenon,⁴⁵ even though one can speculate on the its impact on men's mental health in the longer term.

Yet in spite of the variety, where sexual violence does occur it is also seen as being at the heart of gender identity for women and men, even when they include acts which happen to both, such as the stripping of clothes, and anal and oral rape. At the same time these acts during conflict are thought to constitute attacks on more than the individual and to hold a power that goes beyond the immediate wounding and death, but are intended and experienced as attacks on the whole community in order to undermine morale and social order. This remains a much under-researched area in post-war settings.

⁴³ Susie Jacobs, , Ruth Jacobson, and Jennifer Marchbank, eds., *States of Conflict. Gender, Violence and Resistance*, (London: Zed Books, 2000); See also Sjoberg and Gentry's *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, (London: Zed Books, 2007).

⁴⁴ Sandesh Sivakumaran, 'Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict', *European Journal of International Law* 18, no. 2 (2007): 253-276

⁴⁵ For an account of how this is embedded within combat see P. Kirby, 'Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict: the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its Critics', *International Affairs* 91 (2015): 3.

There is still much to understand about the motivation of male perpetrators of sexual violence in the peacebuilding phase, just as there is during war. The loss of social values and psychological damage are generally presumed to be part of the explanation, summed up in the idea of a ‘culture of violence’, and it is also commonly described as a means of control or punishment, rather than sexual desire, but there is still far more scope for research with veterans / ex-combatants,⁴⁶ and what is considered best practice for recovery, as well as the impact of violent trauma on non-combatant men.

Writers vary in the degree to which they consider rape and sexual violence to be about sex, and very few writers draw on the research findings on these phenomena in non-war settings. The key historical feminist contribution to discussion of rape was to see that this is not about sex but an act of violence intended to control, demean, or punish women within a system of patriarchy.⁴⁷ Alongside this view is the assumption that war heightens men’s sex drive and also removes social constraints.⁴⁸ Clearly the situation is often more complicated than this suggests however, because of the significant variations in rates of incidence.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ The terms former soldiers, ex-combatants, veterans and ex-fighters are used throughout the literature referring to locations other than the West. All but ‘ex-fighters’ are commonly used in the West.

⁴⁷ For a review of this literature see Charlotte Watts and Cathy Zimmerman, ‘Violence against Women: Global Scope and Magnitude’, *The Lancet* 358, (April 6 2002): 1232-1237.

⁴⁸ which I have previously cast as the ‘social constraints removed thesis’, Pankhurst ‘Introduction’, in ed., Donna Pankhurst, *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007).

⁴⁹ Wood, ‘Armed Groups and Sexual Violence’, 135.

A more nuanced approach considers the process of male sexual arousal and desire; penile rape cannot occur without an erection and it is alleged that many rapes end in ejaculation.⁵⁰ On the face of it this reinforces the view that sexual violence is essentially about male desire, but the differences in men's behaviour at least brings this into question.⁵¹ Sexual frustration and desire are less often cited as part of the explanation for sexual violence during peacebuilding than during war, but I am not aware of a study that specifically focuses on this 'wartime versus post-war' distinction. There is very little commentary, let alone research, on the ways in which shortened life expectancy and fear of death themselves may impact on sexual desire, or sexual activity in war, or peacebuilding.

Other attempts at explanations have considered the status of women and rates of sexual violence prior to war, but this also does not correlate neatly with high rates of sexual violence during war. In a few places there was a deliberate attempt by leaders to prevent sexual crimes during war, which cuts across this explanation, such as in El Salvador.⁵² The patterns then are complicated and certainly more so than individual opportunity or incentive, and nor can they be explained entirely by the strategic intentions of political or military leaders,⁵³ but require a nuanced and context-specific approach.

A more nuanced use of *masculinities* (however defined), occurs where they are used to describe, and even seek to explain, the ways in which some violences are effectively limited

⁵⁰ Xabier Agirre Aranburu, 'Sexual Violence beyond Reasonable Doubt: Using Pattern Evidence and Analysis for International Cases', *Leiden Journal of International Law* 23 (2010): 614.

⁵¹ Wood, 'Variation in Sexual Violence during War': 323-5

⁵² Wood, 'Armed Groups and Sexual Violence'.

⁵³ Wood, 'Variation in Sexual Violence during War'; and Wood, 'Armed Groups and Sexual Violence', has made this case thoroughly through reviewing the SVLA data set.

or even proscribed. Wood⁵⁴ highlights some commonly-cited examples of wars where sexual violence is thought to have been limited precisely because of a masculinity promoted by military leaders that choose not to engage in such behaviour. If this is accomplished merely by a strict military code, however, it is not clear what the introduction of the *masculinities* concept adds to our understanding. Where it might do is where men have more choice and refuse – such as at an individual level when they choose not to conform to a norm with a high level of sexual violence.⁵⁵ In so doing they are presumably embracing a different *masculinity* which tends to be ignored in such analyses, in the shadow of violence.

Wood⁵⁶ has developed a framework for describing the prevalence of sexual violence in war, having clearly illustrated that there is enormous variety. She and other writers⁵⁷ have also highlighted that the incidence of sexual violence can vary within wars, geographically and temporally, and so there is a great deal that needs explaining. Data on sexual violence is of course very difficult to verify (as it is in non-war settings), but she makes a strong case that the potential for under-reported incidence is very unlikely itself to explain the variation.⁵⁸ She emphasises this differentiation by highlighting some wars where sexual violence is thought to be very rare, for example in El Salvador and Palestine/Israel, and where there is an asymmetrical prevalence of sexual violence between opposing sides, for example in Sri Lanka. She also sets out different levels at which such violence should be analysed; as part of a leadership or military strategy, at the group level where it serves to build bonds between members; and finally at the individual level.

⁵⁴ Wood, 'Armed Groups and Sexual Violence', 131-162.

⁵⁵ C. Enloe, 'When Soldiers Rape', C. Enloe, *Maneuvers. The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, (London: University of California Press, 2000), 108-152.

⁵⁶ Wood, 'Armed Groups and Sexual Violence', 131-162.

⁵⁷ E.g., Inger Skjelsbæk, 'Sexual Violence and War'; Dara Kay Cohen, 'Explaining Rape During Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980-2009)'.

⁵⁸ Wood, 'Armed Groups and Sexual Violence', 134.

Wood's analysis is based on correlations, rather than explanations, which leaves in place the common assumption that if the right conditions are in place then all men will undertake these acts.⁵⁹ This is not the case though, as it seems that it is never the case that all men do this. The differences between men's behaviour in the same contexts has received the least attention and yet is possibly the most potentially significant in our understanding of violence in peacebuilding phases.

Perhaps the most obvious parallel with the fighting group of men level of analysis in war, is post-war gangs, where sexual violence can also be part of initiation rites and continued status, and which are very common in post-war urban centres.⁶⁰ The same explanatory challenges apply at these levels, however, in that not all men behave in the same way and we do not have a clear understanding of what factors influence the variety of incidence. Opportunity and motivation are commonly suggested, including the use or threat of sexual violence in order to gain access to property; this is often described as 'sexual looting', particularly where women's property rights are insecure.⁶¹ Davies and True usefully frame these issues within the need to keep at the forefront the analysis of gender relations in specific settings as it is these that determine the opportunities and incentives for men.⁶² It is becoming clearer that

⁵⁹ Wood, 'Variation in Sexual Violence during War': 321-327 outlines key features of opportunity and incentive.

⁶⁰ Cathy McIlwaine and Caroline O. N. Moser, 'Violence and Social Capital in Urban Poor Communities: Perspectives from Colombia and Guatemala', *Journal of International Development* 13, Issue 7 (October 2001): 965-984. .

⁶¹ Aranburu, 'Sexual Violence Beyond Reasonable Doubt': 614; M. Turshen, 'The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women During Armed Conflict in Africa', Moser and Clark, *Victims, Perpetrators Or Actors?*.

⁶² S. Davies and J. True, 'Reframing Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence: Bringing Gender Analysis Back in', *Security Dialogue* 46, no.6 (2015): 495-512

there are key aspects of the context which seem to affect the chances and nature of such violence occurring and only with local knowledge can these be understood.⁶³

One theme which occurs time and again is the mental health of men, whether they are former combatants or citizen survivors of violence (and people can be both at different moments during wars), and the suggestion that mental illness resulting from war may have something to do with acts of violence against women. Context is still very important here but there is a lot of potential to consider cross-cultural phenomena which may have some explanatory value as well as implications for policy.

What do we know of the Impacts of War on Male Ex-Combatants⁶⁴

In the context of such variety of sexual violence, there is nonetheless a common focus on men who have been part of a military structure and/or committed and experienced high levels of violence.⁶⁵ Dating back to previous world wars there is a broad expectation that levels of trauma are likely to lead to high levels of violence against women and many programmes for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (DDR) acknowledge this, even if there is little attempt to address it.

Diagnosis is sometimes difficult, treatment is expensive and widely seen as unreliable,⁶⁶ and the specific connection with violence against women is not well understood. As a way of spotlighting what is known about this it is worth considering the situation of war veterans

⁶³ Buss, 'Rethinking "Rape as a weapon of War"'.
⁶⁴ This is my focus for an ongoing research project

⁶⁵ Pankhurst, 'Post-War Backlash Violence'.

⁶⁶ E.g. David Wilson and Peter Barglow, 'PTSD Has Unreliable Diagnostic Criteria', *Psychiatric Times*, (9 July 2009).

from the UK and US armies. Both armies are highly influential in setting the expectations for international efforts to support former soldiers in countries emerging from war (as well as UN peacekeepers). In both the UK and USA, returning soldiers, and those who leave the service, experience disproportionately high levels of alcohol and drug use and engage in increased levels of domestic and social violence⁶⁷. In the USA and the UK, there is not an explicit concern with the perpetration of violence against women *per se*, and data are not easily available to review the rates of these violences committed by veterans compared to the general population. Nonetheless the mental health of combatants after active service is of serious concern to both armies, even though they have not been involved in civil wars, or face the problems of living in a post-war country, like many of the veterans who seem to present such a threat to peace elsewhere.

The US Army became so concerned that it made it mandatory for soldiers to report to officers if they suspect that a colleague is suffering from mental ill-health.⁶⁸ There have been a number of major incidents where veterans have turned their weapons on their families on return from active duty, and data suggest that there is a higher level of domestic violence than in the general population.⁶⁹ There are also many accounts (much under-researched) from Vietnam veterans about the impact active service had on their mental health and what led them to commit violent crimes.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ E.g., Patrick S. Calhoun, John R. Elter, Everett R. Jones, Harold Kudler, and Kristy Straits-Tröster, 'Hazardous Alcohol Use and Receipt of Risk-Reduction Counseling Among U.S. Veterans of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan', *J Clin Psychiatry* 2008;69(11):1686-1693; Amy D. Marshall, Jillian Panuzio, Casey T. Taft, 'Intimate partner violence among military veterans and active duty servicemen' *Clinical Psychology Review*, Volume 25, Issue 7, November 2005: 862–876.

⁶⁸ <http://www.army.mil/article/154854>; there many other articles available at <http://www.army.mil/>

⁶⁹ Pankhurst, 'Post-War Backlash Violence'.

⁷⁰ Vietnam vets interviews cited in Wood, 'Variation in Sexual Violence during War'

There are sufficiently high numbers of UK soldiers in domestic prisons to have triggered a number of Freedom of Information requests by MPs and several official investigations.⁷¹

There have been several inquiries about the high numbers of ex-soldiers in UK prisons – many of whom were committed for various crimes of assault, including domestic abuse.⁷²

One key report states that the majority of veteran prisoners have been committed for crimes of personal violence, and that the majority of these are against women,⁷³ but the research concludes that there is no self-evident explanation for this. There has been a notable reluctance on the part of government to acknowledge the potential effects of war on soldiers⁷⁴ although there is official acknowledgement of the dangers of trauma for soldiers by the British Army,⁷⁵ and there has been little further investigation of this particular crime.

The medical research on PTSD has advanced but it is still seen as a complicated phenomenon with no clear medical consensus on treatment and certainly no broadly accepted position by western governments.⁷⁶ Proclamations about new attempts to take PTSD more seriously have also come into question, as ministers came to reject their own policy about psychological

⁷¹C. Lyneand D. Packham, *The Needs of Ex-service Personnel in the Criminal Justice System: A Rapid Evidence Assessment*, (London: Ministry of Justice Analytical Series, 2014); Howard League for Penal Reform, *Report of the Inquiry into Former Armed Service Personnel in Prison*, (London: Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011); Howard League for Penal Reform, *Leave No Veteran Behind. Inquiry into Former Armed Service personnel in Prison visits the United States of America*, (London: Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011). Also see popular news coverage, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1216015/More-British-soldiers-prison-serving-Afghanistan-shock-study-finds.html> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/sep/24/jailed-veteran-servicemen-outnumber-troops>

⁷² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389855/the-needs-of-ex-service-personnel-in-the-cjs-rapid-evidence-assessment.pdf.

⁷³ Howard League, *Report of the Inquiry into Former Armed Service Personnel in Prison*.

⁷⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00sp1rv>

⁷⁵ <http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/23245.aspx>.

⁷⁶ Wilson and Barglow, 'PTSD Has Unreliable Diagnostic Criteria'; Kenneth E. Miller and Andrew Rasmussen, 'War Exposure, Daily Stressors, and Mental Health in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings: Bridging the Divide Between Trauma-Focused and Psychosocial Frameworks', *Social Science and Medicine* 70 (2010): 7–16 show how the harm caused during conflict can continue beyond and propose new approaches to diagnosis and treatment.

screening for mental illness⁷⁷ and soldiers report the stigma of acknowledging a problem whilst still in the army, which can lead to delays in visiting families and/or including the likelihood that they would have to leave the army, possibly with a dishonourable discharge, where violent crimes have been committed. Meanwhile there are also concerns about the number of former soldiers who are homeless and /or unemployed.⁷⁸ Recent research on a small case sample in the UK focussing on domestic abuse against army wives by UK soldiers suggests that there is no correlation with perpetrators actual combat experience, and that a lot of explanatory weight should be given to both the background of individuals and the experience of militarisation.⁷⁹

Two key points could be taken from this very brief account of the US and UK. First, the decommissioned soldier / combatant, even in the best-resourced country of the world, can end up without any support for mental illness, and that this is likely to result in crimes of violence, as well as personal suffering including high rates of suicide for veterans themselves.⁸⁰ This is much more likely in poorer countries, whether men concerned were fighting for a government or an irregular army. As evidence accumulates, this phenomenon ought to figure more prominently in planning for peacebuilding.⁸¹ Such a

⁷⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8739662.stm>

⁷⁸ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/9000-ex-service-personnel-homeless-after-2071049>;
<http://news.stv.tv/west-central/190903-soldiers-on-the-streets-campaigners-sleep-rough-to-highlight-homelessness/>;
<http://www.soldiersoffthestreet.com/How%20you%20can%20Help.html>

⁷⁹ H. Gray, 'Militarism in the Everyday: Responses to Domestic Abuse in the British Armed Forces', PhD thesis, LSE, 2015.

⁸⁰ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/10178403/More-British-soldiers-commit-suicide-than-die-in-battle-figures-suggest.html>.

⁸¹ There is now a substantive body of research on the behaviour of male peacekeepers who engage in various forms of sexual violence against women, as well as prostitution, and abuse of children e.g. P. Higate and M. Henry, 'Engendering (In)security in Peace Support Operations', *Security Dialogue* 35, no.4 (December 2004): 481-498. They also draw the same conclusion that there is a tendency to overgeneralise about men's behaviour and that local context and knowledge is essential to understand the behaviour of peacekeepers..

concern complements the feminist critiques of DDR which highlight the neglect of women's concerns.⁸²

Once again however it is noteworthy that the impacts on fighting men are not universal or even consistent, and so there is still much to be learned about the men who commit these acts at an individual level, and those who do not. My initial review some years ago⁸³ showed that common psycho-social explanations tend to be ignored even in macro level analyses, and they have not fed into more detailed analyses of different local social, particularly gendered, post war dynamics of violence. So the use of masculinities here was not very developed and did not assist in explanations of the variety. Specific local analyses is needed of gender roles and perhaps local, subordinate, masculinities and how they change. In many parts of the world, even if there was greater understanding of who is more likely to commit such violence, it would not increase the chances of preventive or therapeutic interventions as this is so expensive and is not often seen as a high priority compared with other violence-reduction measures.

Where such therapeutic interventions are attempted they tend to be built on the western model of individual, long-term psychiatric / therapy interventions, whilst there is a growing school of thought that this is not always the most appropriate approach and can sometimes

⁸² K.M. Jennings, 'The Political Economy of DDR in Liberia: A Gendered Critique', *Conflict, Security and Development* 9 (2009): 475-494; J.P. Kaufman and K.P. Williams, 'Women, DDR and Post-Conflict Transformation: Lessons from the Cases of Bosnia and South Africa', *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 5 (2015):11; Ní Aoláin et al, *On the Frontlines*; K. Theidon 'Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia', *Human Rights Quarterly* 31(2009);1-34; W. Verkoren, R. Willems, J. Kleingeld, H. Rouw, 'From DDR To Security Promotion: Connecting National Programs To Community Initiatives', *International Journal of Peace Studies* 15 (2010):1-32.

⁸³ Pankhurst, 'Post-War Backlash Violence'.

exacerbate individual illness.⁸⁴ An alternative approach is thought to be more appropriate in some settings where people are counselled in group settings with the aim of rebuilding constructive relationships.⁸⁵ This is not just a ‘cultural’ difference between the West and the rest of the world as similar arguments have been put forward for emergency-personnel who survive traumatic events in the West.⁸⁶

Conclusion

In parallel to the critics of ‘Liberal Peace’ provoking ‘secondary critiques’⁸⁷, critics of the gendered nature of peace and peacebuilding have moved on from an earlier position of over-generalising about the extent and patterns of sexual violence, and the different roles played by women and men, to a newer acceptance of variability and the importance of context-specific explanation. Nonetheless, the amount of research undertaken is far greater on the incidence of violence against women during war than afterwards, or on the specifics of perpetration in context, or on its implications for peacebuilding. Whilst similar explanations are offered for sexual violence in both war and post war contexts, there are additional phenomena at play in post-war settings, not least because violence against women is often committed by men from their own communities.

In this article I have attempted to bring to the attention of those working on peacebuilding some of the key lessons of research about men’s violences in post-war settings. Young men

⁸⁴ See Wilson and Barglow, ‘PTSD Has Unreliable Diagnostic Criteria’.

⁸⁵ See Pankhurst, ‘Post-War Backlash Violence’; Anthony J. Marsella, ‘Ethnocultural Aspects of PTSD: An Overview of Concepts, Issues, and Treatments’, *Traumatology* 16(4) 17–26.

⁸⁶ E.g., Jerome Groopman, ‘The Grief Industry How much does crisis counselling help—or hurt?’, *New Yorker*, 2004, <http://jeromegroopman.com/ny-articles/GriefIndustry-012604.pdf>

⁸⁷ Richmond and MacGinty, ‘Where now for the critique of the liberal peace?: 174

in particular are often seen as the most likely spoilers of peace, and men as a group are often held responsible for the key problems of inter-personal violence in peacebuilding settings, yet there is enormous variety in the ways that they behave. We know much more about violence in wartime than in post-war, although this is a fast-moving agenda, and we now have information about some of the variety and complexity of such phenomena. This ought to provoke us into taking more care not to make assumptions about ‘self-evident’ causes, or ‘what is wrong with men’, or to over-generalise about violences in post-war settings and how to minimise them.

There is now a range of explanations for different patterns of war and post-war violences which indicate complexity and context specificity, in much the same way that local contexts of broader aspects of peacebuilding require context-specific analyses. In this way the discussion of post-war violence against women, and the possible approaches to deal with it as a peacebuilding issue, can be seen through the prism of the debate about the importance of ‘the local’ in the ‘liberal peace’ debates.

Several conclusions have significance for analysis and policy regarding post-war violence against women from this review. First, whilst wartime experiences are obviously significant in peacebuilding phases, there is no simple connection, just as the incidence of violence against women during wars is now recognised as being highly varied. A key lesson from analysis of wartime violences is that context is therefore very important and most generalised explanations do not hold in all contexts. That seems a simple thing to say but is important when considering the possible relevance of ‘blueprint’ approaches to peacebuilding.

Second it is important to hold a spotlight to the men who do not commit such acts, as well as those who do, in order to better understand how the different drivers of opportunity and motivation play out. Within this context the economic circumstances and other aspects of structural violence for men, as well as women, seem to be highly significant and so reconstruction strategies need to consider the impacts of promoting new economic opportunities for women at a fast rate, in the absence, or reduction, of those for men.

Lessons that may be learnt from the ways in which veteran fighters are treated in the UK and USA suggest that doing nothing to address mental health issues is likely to lead to high rates of violence against civilian women, whether or not mental ill-health is caused by active combat. Furthermore similar issues may occur amongst people who have not been part of military structures but who have experienced trauma from violent wartime experiences. This may also seem an evident truth, yet it is one which is not effectively addressed in policy terms anywhere.

Such analyses of violences should also support us in the tasks ahead to notice and analyse where men's behaviours and ambitions change away from violent strategies and towards a stronger engagement with peace endeavours that also support women's multiple forms of agency exhibited in conflict and post-conflict settings.