

**RETHINKING MASCULINITIES AND
NARRATIVES OF WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE**
A GENDER ANALYSIS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, EL SALVADOR, AND IRAQ

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Abstract

Wartime sexual violence is a known and heavily researched issue in both academia and policy. However, a growing body of research shows that, despite acknowledgement of men and boys as victims of wartime sexual violence, responses remain biased towards women and girls, often rendering male victims silent. This silence calls into question multiple factors including narratives of wartime sexual violence and perceptions of gender, and masculinities in particular. Thus, this paper will address the question: how do constructions of masculinity affect narratives and perceptions of wartime sexual violence against men? To answer this question, this paper will examine three case studies in which the use of wartime sexual violence against men varies in scope and context: The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), El Salvador during its Civil War, and the United States Army in Abu Ghraib during the Iraq War.

I. Introduction

Wartime sexual violence is a phenomenon that has existed for most of human history. From the founding myth of the Roman Empire, which featured the forced capture and rape of Sabine women, to historical accounts of mass rape of German women by Russians during World War II, sexually violating individuals to incite fear and exert power over one's enemy has remained part of the human conscious for some time.¹ However, it wasn't until the mid-1990s when news of mass rapes of Bosnian women by Serbian forces during the war in the Former Yugoslavia and of Rwandan women during the country's genocide, that the world began to respond. This included an "international recognition that systematic sexual violence can serve as a military tactic in a

¹ Mark Cartwright, "The Role of Women in the Roman World," *Ancient Encyclopedia*, last modified February 22, 2014, <http://www.ancient.eu/article/659/>; Lucy Ash, "The rape of Berlin," *BBC News* (Berlin, Germany), May 1, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-32529679>.

conflict environment" thus formally acknowledging sexual violence as a weapon of war, as well as the broader issue of wartime sexual violence.² Since then, attention to sexual violence in conflict has multiplied and led to greater advocacy efforts within the human rights community, the implementation of legal frameworks to respond to the abuses, and a proliferation of programs to help victims heal.

While this increased international attention and response to wartime sexual violence is certainly welcome, it is easy to recognize that much of the response in policy, academia, and advocacy has overwhelmingly focused on female victims. This bias towards women and girls in the discourse surrounding wartime sexual violence does make sense; substantial evidence indicates that women and girls are disproportionately affected by acts of sexual violence during conflict.³ Nonetheless, by focusing primarily on female victims of sexual violence, male victims are disproportionately rendered silent and invisible.

This silence and invisibility is the result of multiple factors which are being discussed in a growing body of research dedicated to understanding the motivations and implications of sexual violence against men in conflict. Additionally, policy frameworks do recognize that men and boys are also victims of sexual violence. However, these statements in policy and the existing literature on the issue have yet to produce a response to wartime sexual violence that addresses the needs of male victims. Thus, this remaining disparity and continued silencing of victims raises questions about gendered biases and assumptions from multiple perspectives including those made by national and international policymakers, members of communities affected by war, perpetrators of sexual violence, and victims of sexual violence. Specifically, these

² Suk Chun and Inger Skjelsbæk, "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts," *International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) Policy Brief* (Jan 2010): 2. http://file.prio.no/Publication_files/Prio/Sexual-Violence-in-Armed-Conflicts-PRIO-Policy-Brief-1-2010.pdf.

³ Ibid.

assumptions and biases raise questions about dominant narratives of wartime sexual violence and constructions and expectations of masculinity.

This paper will attempt to highlight how constructions of masculinity shape perceptions and narratives of wartime sexual violence against men. By focusing on three highly distinct case studies, this paper will also seek to challenge any singular narrative of wartime sexual violence against men and emphasize the variation in how and why such a phenomenon occurs. The three cases in this paper include wartime sexual violence against men in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), sexual torture as a form of sexual violence against men during El Salvador's Civil War, and the United States Army's torture of detainees in Abu Ghraib during the Iraq War. This paper will begin with an overview of the legal framework and international narrative of wartime sexual violence. Each case study will explore dominant constructions of masculinity and common narratives surrounding wartime sexual violence within that context. Finally, a gender analysis will attempt to highlight how masculinities shape narratives of wartime sexual violence.

II. Defining the Problem

This paper will focus exclusively on acts of sexual violence against men, primarily in instances where the perpetrator is male, but in the Iraq War case, also female. Additionally, the terms wartime sexual violence and conflict-related sexual violence will be used interchangeably. Because there is no single definition of sexual violence and because a bias is often present in referring to sexual violence against men as torture, this paper will draw upon a few definitions.

Of importance are those definitions used by the World Health Organization (WHO); the Special Rapporteur on systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict; and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Per the WHO, sexual violence is defined as "any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or

advances or acts to traffic that are directed against a person's sexuality using coercion by anyone, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including at home and work."⁴

However, the Special Rapporteur elaborates further that sexual violence includes "any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality," including "both physical and psychological attacks directed at a person's sexual characteristics, such as forcing a person to strip naked in public, mutilating a person's genitals, or slicing off a woman's breasts," and "situations in which two victims are forced to perform sexual acts on one another or to harm one another in a sexual manner."⁵ Thus, acts of sexual violence also include mutilation of one's genitals or forcing two individuals to engage in sexual acts. As defined under the Rome Statute, sexual violence includes "Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" and can be considered a crime against humanity.⁶ Given the numerous definitions of sexual violence, this paper will thus employ a wide-ranging definition that involves acts of rape, forced nudity, sexual slavery, sexual harassment, genital mutilation and forced sterilization.

The terms conflict-related and wartime situate acts of sexual violence committed within the context of both inter and intrastate armed conflict. While commonly held perceptions of conflict-related sexual violence include cases where sexual violence is used as 'a weapon of war,' (i.e. the mass rapes by Bosnian Serbs of Muslim women during the war in the Former Yugoslavia) or is connected to motivations for fighting in the war, this paper will expand beyond that form.

⁴ World Health Organization, *Global state report on violence prevention 2014*, WHO Press, Geneva, 2014, 84.

⁵ United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, fiftieth session, item 6 of the provisional agenda, *Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict*, submitted by Gay McDougall, Special Rapporteur, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13, 1998, 8-9.

⁶ United Nations General Assembly, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (last amended 2010)*, ISBN No. 92-9227-227-6, 1998, 3-4.

Following the logic of Elisabeth Wood's argument, conflict-related sexual violence includes acts of sexual violence committed by armed organizations (or armed actors) including paramilitaries, state actors (e.g. military and police), and non-state actors like militias and rebel groups.⁷ Despite legal classifications, this paper will consider instances of sexual violence that are not punishable by international humanitarian law (IHL) but are still subject to human rights and domestic law.

III. An International Legal Framework for Wartime Sexual Violence

Though many researchers point to the 1990s as a formative moment in recognizing wartime sexual violence under an international legal framework, one can look back to earlier moments in history in which legal bodies prohibited acts of sexual violence. In the United States, for example, the Lieber Code of 1863 explicitly prohibited rape under Article 44 stating:

All rape, wounding, maiming, or killing of such inhabitants, are prohibited under the penalty of death, or such other severe punishment as may seem adequate for the gravity of the offense. A soldier, officer or private, in the act of committing such violence, and disobeying a superior ordering him to abstain from it, may be lawfully killed on the spot by such superior.⁸

Additionally, early treaties that regulated armed conflict implicitly reference sexual violence.

The Hague Regulations of 1899 and 1907 included language to protect "family honour and rights"⁹ of an occupied territory's population while the 1929 Geneva Convention on prisoners of

⁷ Elisabeth J. Wood, "Conflict-related sexual violence and the policy implications of recent research," *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 96, no. 894 (2014): 458-459. doi:10.1017/S1816383115000077.

⁸ *Lieber Code: Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, General Order No. 100, 24 April 1863, Article 44, available at: www.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/110.

⁹ Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, The Hague, 1899, Art. 46; available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/150?OpenDocument>; Convention (III) relative to the Opening of Hostilities, The Hague, 1907, Art. 46; available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/190?OpenDocument>.

war noted that prisoners were entitled to respect for “their persons and honour.”¹⁰ It also noted that “women [prisoners of war] shall be treated with all consideration due to their sex.”¹¹

The formal establishment of IHL under the Geneva Conventions in 1949 also brought in a framework upon which contemporary law addresses conflict-related sexual violence. The Fourth Geneva Convention, on the protection of civilians, makes an explicit reference to sexual violence against women stating that “women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.”¹² As Gloria Gaggioli points out, the concern with one's honor in the Fourth Geneva Convention reflected norms and values at the time as had been seen in earlier legal frameworks like The Hague Regulations.¹³

Given changes to norms and values, more contemporary forms of IHL, including Additional Protocol I reflect a shift from a concern over honor to one's dignity and their humane treatment. Per Additional Protocol I of 1977, “outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault,” are “prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever, whether committed by civilian or by military agents.”¹⁴ With regards to non-international armed conflict, Additional Protocol II of 1977 to the Geneva Convention also reflects a similar shift in norms concerning sexual violence. Additional Protocol II prohibits, when and where applicable, “outrages upon personal dignity, in

¹⁰ Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Geneva, 27 July 1929, Art. 3; available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/375?OpenDocument>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, August 12, 1949, Art. 27; available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/385ec082b509e76c41256739003e636d/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5>.

¹³ Gloria Gaggioli, "Sexual violence in armed conflicts: A violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law," *International Review of the Red Cross* 96, no. 894 (2014): 512, doi:10.1017/S1816383115000211.

¹⁴ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), June 8, 1977, Article 75(2); available from <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/470-750096?OpenDocument>.

particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault."¹⁵ This applies to “all persons who do not take a direct part or who have ceased to take part in hostilities” (i.e. civilians and persons hors de combat).¹⁶ What is noteworthy about Additional Protocol II is that it does not make specific reference to female victims. Thus, Additional Protocol II applies to all female and male victims of sexual violence.

However, it was not until the 1990s that wartime sexual violence rose to significant prominence in the international criminal justice space with the establishment of two tribunals to prosecute war crimes. Both the war in the Former Yugoslavia and the Rwanda Genocide were noted for instances of mass sexual violence including the placement of Bosnian women in 'rape camps' for the purposes of forced impregnation by Serbian forces, and the rape of Tutsi women by Hutu men respectively.

In 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) took groundbreaking steps as one of the first international courts to explicitly bring charges of wartime sexual violence, and to define rape and sexual enslavement under customary law. It was also the first instance in which a court decided to include rape as a form of torture and sexual enslavement as a crime against humanity.¹⁷ This was shortly followed by the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1994. The ICTR was also largely influential on the international community's recognition of sexual violence as a crime under international law. Its first conviction for rape and sexual violence was recognized as the first

¹⁵ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977, Article 4; available from <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=F9CBD575D47CA6C8C12563CD0051E783>.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ "Crimes of Sexual Violence," United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, <http://www.icty.org/en/in-focus/crimes-sexual-violence>.

instance in which a person was convicted by an international court for rape and sexual violence that constituted genocide.

Since then "Legal scholars concur that...the ICTR took the first step in breaking down the international legal community's ambivalence toward rape and sexual violence as crimes under international law."¹⁸ In response, the ICTY passed convictions for rape as a crime against humanity when committed in armed conflict and used against a civilian population.¹⁹ It should also be noted that both the ICTY and ICTR "laid influential groundwork" with their gender-inclusive definitions of rape and other forms of sexual violence.²⁰ This momentum continued in 1998 with the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute, official recognizing sexual violence, defined as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or "any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" as a crime against humanity when it is committed in a widespread or systematic way against males or females.²¹

While these measures were groundbreaking in many regards, it is important to clarify some points concerning sexual violence as a violation of IHL. There are obvious instances in which acts of sexual violence would not be classified as a violation of IHL. An example may include a military commander raping a subordinate as a form of punishment, in the context of an ongoing international or non-international armed conflict as he (or she) would during peacetime. However, if the victim of sexual violence was detained for reasons relating to the conflict, the act would be subject to prosecution under IHL. In both instances, the perpetrator would also be in violation of domestic laws concerning sexual violence and human rights law. However, as

¹⁸ Alex Obote-Odora, "Rape and Sexual Violence in International Law: ICTR Contribution," *New England Journal of International and Comparative Law*, vol. 12, no.1 (2005): 137.

¹⁹ "Crimes of Sexual Violence."

²⁰ Lara Stemple, "Male Rape and Human Rights," *Hastings Law Journal*, vol. 60, no. 605 (Feb. 2009): 643-644.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Gaggioli argues "It is not because IHL is applicable at a given place and time that all acts occurring in this context are governed by IHL."²² Nonetheless, the ICTY made clear that in order to classify acts of sexual violence as violations of IHL, it is not necessary for fighting to take place in the same time and place as the crimes being committed.

However, an Appeals Chamber in a case during the ICTY made the point that "[w]hat ultimately distinguishes a war crime from a purely domestic offence is that a war crime is shaped by or dependent upon the environment – the armed conflict – in which it is committed."²³ Thus, the only requirement is that the existence of an armed conflict "must...have played a substantial part in the perpetrator's ability to commit it, his decision to commit it, the manner in which it was committed or the purpose for which it was committed."²⁴ Thus, instances of sexual violence against men or women, that may take place during a conflict must still fit within a defined set of criteria to be considered a war crime under IHL. When considering examples of sexual violence against men that may not be subject to prosecution under such criteria, there is risk for a silencing of male victims. Domestic legal frameworks can vary greatly in scope. If a domestic legal framework lacks a nuanced approach to sex and gender based violence, then men who have been raped or have faced other forms of sexual violence may face additional hurdles in obtaining justice for their perpetrator.

In addition to this more nuanced understanding of the applicability of international law, one must emphasize that incorporating gender-neutral language into legal frameworks does not necessitate a more gender-neutral response to victims and perpetrators of conflict-related sexual

²² Gaggioli, 515.

²³ "Prosecutor versus Dragoljub Kunarac Radomir Kovac and Zoran Vukovic," June 12, 2002, United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/kunarac/acjug/en/kun-aj020612e.htm>.

²⁴ Ibid.

violence. In the case of the ICTY, despite recognition that acts of sexual violence targeted men, women, boys, and girls, there are several cases in which acts of sexual violence against men were prosecuted as torture or beatings. In other criminal tribunals, including the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the 2009 Sesay et al case included cases of male and female sexual mutilations, enforced rape, and recognized that rape "is broad enough to be gender neutral" and that "both men and women can be victims of rape."²⁵ Regardless, the prosecution only pleaded cases of sexual violence against women and girls in the indictment without any convictions regarding male victims of sexual violence. Since then, other examples have highlighted that regardless of legal frameworks that would suggest a gender-neutral understanding of wartime sexual violence, reliance on the discretion of judges can result in a biased process that still assumes that women and girls are only victimized.²⁶

IV. International Narratives of Wartime Sexual Violence

The arrival of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (subsequently referred to as 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security in 2000 marked a significant change in the attention and response to sexual and gender-based violence. 1325 recognized the changing nature of war and its inordinate impact on civilian women with calls for "all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence."²⁷ Such language implies that women and girls require greater protection which is a hugely gendered assumption. As the above quote implies, women and girls need to be protected from violent men. This

²⁵ Ellen Anna Philo Gorris, "Invisible victims? Where are male victims of conflict-related sexual violence in international law and policy?" *European Journal of Women's Studies* vol. 22, no. 4 (Oct. 2015): 414. 10.1177/1350506815605345.

²⁶ Sandesh Sivakumaran, "Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict," *The European Journal of International Law* vol. 18, no. 2 (2007): 255. doi: 10.1093/ejil/chm013.

²⁷ United Nations Security Council, 4213th Meeting. "Resolution 1325 (2000) [on women, peace, and security]" (S/RES/1325). October 31, 2000, 3.

assumption reflects a key argument presented in Susan Brownmiller's seminal and largely influential *Against Our Will: Men, Women, Rape*. In her work, Brownmiller argues that "War provides men with the perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women."²⁸ Thus, men have inherently violent traits that are mobilized in the chaotic context of conflict to sexual violate women. Thus, as 1325 suggests, it is these women (and girls) who are especially in need of protection from such violent men during armed conflict.

Another interesting aspect about 1325 is that it marked a strategic redefining of sexual violence as a security issue that has "connected the discourse of 'high politics' to the previously overlooked social dynamics underpinning violent conflict."²⁹ This securitization of sexual violence is highly gendered: an individual and personal experience is reframed as international in the more masculine realm of high politics.

Therefore, the securitization of sexual violence does not transform or change the gender roles that belie the logic of sexual violence as evidenced by the "highly gendered understanding of who is to be secured, characterized by the exclusion of civilian males as subjects of 'protection' or as victims of 'gender-based violence'."³⁰ In other words, the elevation of a social issue, perceived as more feminine, to the more masculine securitized space of high politics perpetuates gendered assumptions about victims and perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict.

The framing of sexual violence in conflict as a feminine issue is also reminiscent of Miriam Ticktin's concept of 'regimes of care,' used to describe the contrasting and inequitable experiences of immigrants in France. Nonetheless, these regimes of care, "a set of regulated discourses and practices grounded on this moral imperative to relieve suffering," such as sexual

²⁸ Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, Rape* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975), 22.

²⁹ Charli Carpenter, "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 37 no. 1 (Mar 2006): 85. 10.1177/0967010606064139.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

violence in armed conflict "ultimately work to displace possibilities for larger forms of collective change, particularly for those most disenfranchised."³¹ While her work emphasizes those who are without French citizenship, the notion that a regime of care essentially displaces or excludes others may be applied to men and boy victims. Under the umbrella of humanitarian and programmatic response, particularly in light of 1325, sexual violence is likely to be associated as a female-only experience.

V. Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An Overview

To better understand the challenges experienced by Congolese men with regards to masculinity and sexual violence, an overview of the country's conflict and development of popular narratives provide context. Marred by a brutal colonial legacy and the 30-year kleptocratic rule of Mobutu Sese Seko, the DRC, and its Nord Kivu region in particular, has experienced a series of conflicts since 1993. These followed and were partly the result of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which tens of thousands of refugees crossed the Rwandan border in Gisenyi into Goma in the DRC's eastern region. This included Rwanda's Tutsis fleeing the violence, and Hutu génocidaires and militias fearful of reprisals following the genocide and seeking a haven.³²

Long after the genocide, thousands of refugees in the DRC faced atrocities, rapes, and killings in camps. Subsequently, Rwandan armed forces entered DRC and neighboring countries, leading to what was described as the African World War and eventually the installment of a new Rwandan-backed government under Laurent-Desiré Kabila in 1997. The ensuing fighting

³¹ Miriam Ticktin, *Causalities of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011), 3.

³² "The Eastern Congo," Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/congo-democratic-republic-of/eastern-congo/p37236?cid=otr-marketing_use-Congo_InfoGuide#!/p37236?cid=otr-marketing_use-Congo_InfoGuide.

compounded the country's chronic poverty and regional inequalities in DRC, and gave rise to an estimated 20-plus armed groups, many of which continue to operate in the region. These groups have numerous interests pertaining to economic and political issues and have been fighting over access to land and mineral resources in the region as well.³³

An agreement signed in Goma in 2003 to end fighting in the country resulted in the integration of several rebel groups into the DRC's Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). Following the agreement, a relatively peaceful period remained until April 2012. After the elections in November 2011, Kabila lost support within the country. In the midst of a power vacuum, multiple members of the FARDC including former soldiers of the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) created a new group called the M23, who claimed to protect Congolese Tutsis in the Kivu provinces. By June 2012, the M23 claimed that they would no longer honor the agreement of 2009. Since this surge in fighting, other dormant rebel groups including the Mai Mai and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which was originally formed by those who carried out the genocide in Rwanda, have taken advantage of the power vacuum and have challenged the weakened Kabila government.

Most recently, Kabila's failure to step down at the end of his second term in December 2016 sparked protests resulting in two days of violence killing over 40 individuals and leading to the arrests of hundreds. After reaching a deal between the government and opposition parties, Kabila agreed to step down following the next election.³⁴ Given the long-standing presence of fighting, DRC has been experiencing a range of human rights abuses by militias and soldiers, especially in recent years. The human cost of the conflict has been startling; according to recent

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Jason Burke, "DRC parties reach deal denying third term for President Kabila," *The Guardian*, December 31, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/31/drc-close-to-deal-for-president-joseph-kabila-to-step-down-after-2017-elections>.

estimates, the death toll has topped 5.4 million people and nearly three million people are displaced.³⁵ Despite evidence of multiple forms of violence committed on a massive scale, sexual violence has dominated narratives of the conflict, hence the ill-fated nickname 'the rape capital of the world,' and has attracted by far the most attention from 'outside' observers.³⁶

VI. Sexual Violence and Victimhood in the DRC: The International Community's Narrative

Analyzing the international community's narratives of sexual violence in the DRC reveals a set of assumptions of gender roles with respect to victims and perpetrators. This is further problematized by the 'othering' of sexual violence in the DRC as an exceptional African phenomenon. While there is no exact pinpointing of when the DRC acquired such a narrative, one can identify moments that have contributed to the development of a gendered narrative. Shortly after the adoption of 1325, Human Rights Watch issued a report on sexual violence in the eastern region of the country. A review of the report reveals very strategic use of language that both creates a sense of othering and is inherently gendered.

For example, the report quotes a local counselor who suggests that "There is real madness with all this [sexual] violence linked to the war. This is a whole war within the war—another kind of attack on the Congolese people" and goes on to suggest that sexual violence was not only carried out by "most of the forces involved in this conflict," but also those in positions of power including the "police, and by opportunistic common criminals and bandits, taking advantage of the prevailing climate of impunity and culture of violence to abuse women and girls."³⁷

³⁵ "The Eastern Congo," Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/congo-democratic-republic-of/eastern-congo/p37236?cid=otr-marketing_use-Congo_InfoGuide#!/p37236?cid=otr-marketing_use-Congo_InfoGuide.

³⁶ Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond*, (New York: Zed, 2013), 6.

³⁷ *The War Within the War: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002, 23.

The notion that the country is steeped in a culture of violence and madness in which sexual violence is used against women and girls, as a weapon of war creates an 'other.' Unlike other conflicts past and present in non-African contexts, there is a shock element in describing a country, with a so-called madness and culture of violence, that is reminiscent of a colonial or 'heart of darkness' narrative. As the above quote from the Human Rights Watch report suggests, the perpetrators' genders are not identified but assumed to be violent and male. This is due to the emphasis on the perpetrators as coming from masculinized authority bodies such as the police and military. Thus this language creates a common narrative consisting of themes including "Sexualized and racialized depictions of Congolese armed men as particularly bestial, and violence as particularly chaotic and naturalized"³⁸ which is found in many accounts of wartime rape in the DRC. Thus, these narratives are grounded in the troubling assumption that Congolese men, who belong to that Other and non-Western space, are inherently violent and sexual, and prey on women and girls.

Recognition of this narrative by high-profile actors has only furthered this narrative. In addition to the attention of multiple celebrities, former U.S. Secretary of State Clinton's visited the eastern region because "Women are being turned into weapons of war."^{39,40} By referencing women as weapons of war, Clinton essentially objectified women's bodies as tools to be used by the assumed violent perpetrator of conflict, men. Thus this reinforces assumptions concerning women and girls as peaceful and in need of protection as opposed to violent men. Narratives like these dominate the media, policy, and humanitarian space because "It is easier for international

³⁸ Eriksson Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War*, 24.

³⁹ Laura Heaton, "The risks of instrumentalizing the narrative on sexual violence in the DRC: Neglected needs and unintended consequences," *International Review of the Red Cross* vol. 96, no. 894 (Sep. 2015): 627. 10.1017/S1816383115000132.

⁴⁰ This was the first visit by an American Secretary of State and by a high-ranking foreign official, which further attracted international attention.

actors to find consensus when passing judgment on a feature of an emergency that is unequivocally “wrong”, or even “evil.”⁴¹ This notion that simplifying and essentializing a narrative of sexual violence in eastern DRC as a female-only issue is hugely troubling. First, it raises ethical concerns, particularly around the exploitation of the victim within the aid and donor community. Secondly, it reinforces assumptions and constructions of femininity as being weak, vulnerable, and more deserving of protection at the expense of male victims.

Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern reflect further on this phenomenon in what they call the 'commercialization of rape' in which sexual violence is used in project proposals and female victims of rape are exploited by agencies and organizations who compete with each other over rights to their 'victims' to maintain donor funding.⁴² With regard to men and boy victims of sexual violence, it is a counterintuitive phenomenon. Charli Carpenter highlights this paradox suggesting the use of gendered and essentialized language and imagery of people in need of protection by major international actors is a strategic attempt to raise awareness by capitalizing on pre-existing gendered and cultural assumptions regarding the innocence and vulnerability of women and children.⁴³ This excuse is very much iterated in the context of the DRC with regards to the sensationalizing of the issue for securing more funding. This is problematic when considering the dearth of funds allocated to other services and programs in the DRC, relative to treatment of rape for female victims only.⁴⁴ Nonetheless by failing to recognize those men who as Carpenter points out are not combatants, or in this example, are victims of sexual violence,

⁴¹ Ibid, 630.

⁴² Eriksson Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War*, 96.

⁴³ Charli Carpenter, "Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups": Gender, Strategic Frames and the Protection of Civilians as a Transnational Issue," *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (2005): 327. DOI: 10.1111/j.0020-8833.2005.00346.x.

⁴⁴ The lack of funding or support for legal services for female victims of rape highlights another fundamental issue with the impact of the sexual violence narrative in the DRC. Impunity is high in the country; without support for adequate legal frameworks, victims often don't receive reparations and perpetrators are not held accountable; Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 98.

"relying on the international community to protect them as civilians, the use of gender essentialisms to inform the cognitive scripts actors use to understand reality can produce sub-optimal outcomes in protection."⁴⁵ Thus, by perpetuating a simplified narrative that essentializes gender roles in sexual violence, the international community is complicit in silencing Congolese male victims of sexual violence.

VII. The Problem of Hegemonic Masculinity in the DRC

While there are multiple masculinities in a given context, recognizing the role of hegemonic masculinity in the DRC provides the lens through which one can analyze perceptions of sexual violence against men. The classic definition of hegemonic masculinity refers to the "pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of expectations or an identity) that allow men's dominance over women to continue."⁴⁶ However, following a review and critique of hegemonic masculinity, the updated concept expands on the idea of power differentials and gender hierarchies. This is largely in response to the problem that the classic definition of hegemonic masculinity essentializes masculinity as a singular construct that must be maintained to allow domination of heterosexual men over women.

When considering the international narrative around sexual violence against women in the DRC, one can argue that international actors are appealing to a classical definition of hegemonic masculinity.⁴⁷ Limiting the concept to a gender power imbalance between men and women ignores situations in which hegemonic masculinities are enforced to maintain power over other constructions of gender. For example, in any context with a plurality of masculinities,

⁴⁵ Charli Carpenter, "Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups," 327.

⁴⁶ R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (Dec., 2005): 832. DOI: 10.1177/0891243205278639.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 838.

people may enact certain traits associated with an idealized and supported image of being a man in order to challenge other forms of masculinity that are less supported (e.g. displaying or performing traits that are considered more feminine).

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the fluidity of hegemonic masculinities; they are not static constructs but rather are shaped and changed over time as a result of many factors. In the case of the DRC, this is hugely relevant when considering the state of the country as a result of the war and its impact on men's ability to perform according to an idealized masculinity. Thus, a key element of the classic concept of hegemonic masculinity that remains is that the construct of masculinity is more symbolic and idealized than it is representative of the reality. In other words, most men and boys cannot fully live up to their society's hegemonic masculinity.

Although hegemonic masculinities are technically unique in any given context, there are certain qualities that tend to dominate constructions of the ideal man, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Gary Barker and Christine Ricardo note this in their research on young men and masculinities in Sub-Saharan Africa stating that while "there is no typical young man in Africa," and that there is clearly a plurality of masculinities within the continent, "[t]he chief mandate or social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa is achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family."⁴⁸ This attribute cuts across varying societies: young males in traditionally agricultural communities attain manhood when they are given ownership of land whereas receiving cattle is an important marker for pastoralist communities.⁴⁹ The underlying assumption suggests that access to income or assets signifies that a man is in good socio-economic standing and is thus in a position where he is able

⁴⁸ Gary Barker and Christine Ricardo, "Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence," *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, paper no. 26 (2005): 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 4-6.

to provide for a family, another attribute that points to the power dynamics of many hegemonic masculinities in African communities. Other common trends noted throughout their multi-country research point to sexual experience as being associated with initiation into and "achieving a socially recognized manhood" and the continued presence of widespread denial and stigmatization of homosexuality, but that male-to-male sex is more common than assumed and some young men may have sexual experiences with other men, while not considering themselves to be homosexual."⁵⁰ As further analysis will later point out, this perception of homosexuality has major ramifications for male victims of male-perpetrated sexual violence.

When considering these broad attributes as they relate to the DRC, it is clear these traits underlie the construct of an ideal masculinity. Analyses of masculinity in DRC suggest that more specifically, men are not only expected to be breadwinners, but should be able to provide for their communities.⁵¹ Furthermore, a heavy emphasis on the importance of children, in interviews conducted by Heal Africa, suggests that another defining feature of hegemonic masculinities is a man's ability to produce children, which in turn "points to the interdependent nature of gender – it is thought that men need women in order to become men."⁵² As the classic definition of hegemonic masculinity implies, this widely acknowledged trait reflects a gender hierarchy that suggests women are vital to shaping a heteronormative masculine identity. Furthermore, defining elements of masculinity such as a stable income to provide for a family is indicative of the fact that masculinity "is thus a constant enactment of power" or "a way of being that [one] needs to perform and assert."⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid, 5.

⁵¹ Desiree Lwambo, *"Before the War I was a Man:" Men and Masculinities in Eastern DR Congo*, Goma: HEAL Africa, 2011, 12.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Therefore, as Connell and Messerschmidt suggest, this idealized form of being a man or hegemonic masculinity in DRC is dynamic and requires constant performance and maintenance. Furthermore, it is important to note that when considering the relation of men to women within DRC, it is clear that attributes such as access to income and the ability to provide for a family places men's attributes and thus status as superior to that of a woman. Thus "if a man 'loses' his attributes, he is reduced to the inferior status of a woman."⁵⁴ Thus, any element that threatens or takes away that sense of power and authority is severely damaging to one's sense of manhood and has major ramifications on one's well-being.

As Barker and Ricardo's research suggests, sexual experiences are also crucial to attaining an ideal masculinity within many communities in DRC. This attribute is highly hierarchical with regards to gender power relations as well. The IMAGES survey conducted by Promundo has consistently shown that both "men and women widely support inequitable attitudes that ascribe power to men and demand that women be submissive to their husbands' commands."⁵⁵ In other words, sexual experience as an effect of this idealized version of masculinity requires that women act submissively. By having control over a woman sexually, a man is also able to demonstrate his power as a man. Such attitudes thus condone the use of marital or partner-based rape.⁵⁶ Attitudes towards the use of forced sex suggest that heterosexual men are entitled to sex by their partner in order to sustain an idealized form of masculinity. This sense of entitlement to sex as a means of demonstrating power also has significant ramifications in the use of sexual violence against men.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 14.

⁵⁵ Henry Slegh, Gary Barker, and Ruti Levtoy, *Gender Relations, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and the Effects of Conflict on Women and Men in North Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*. Washington, DC, and Capetown: Promundo-US and Sonke Gender Justice, 2014, 34.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 33-35.

What is important to note is the context under which use of violence is most likely to occur. While attitudes and expectations of masculinity and femininity both condone a power imbalance between men and women, use of sexual violence (in an intimate setting, like a household) is partly influenced by the lack of means by which a man can attain or sustain an ideal masculinity. Given the constraints men currently face in terms of achieving a stable income and being able to perform other expected attributes of masculinity, poor coping behaviors increase the likelihood of use of violence.⁵⁷ Thus, in a conflict, use of sexual violence is not inevitable. But given the variables present such as in the case of DRC, it is clear that there are risks to the increased use of sexual violence. When thinking about forms of sexual violence, it is important to understand the motivation behind the act. In situations where violence has been somewhat normalized as it relates to the positioning of men and women in a gender hierarchy, it is possible that sexual violence takes place regardless of whether conflict is present.

However, in a conflict setting, sexual violence has other motivations and is more likely to occur if the perpetrators face other variables that increase the likelihood of sexual violence. As has been implied in all listed attributes above, heteronormativity is an underlying aspect of hegemonic masculinity within the DRC. Despite the fact that homosexuality is legal within the country, no protection mechanisms exist nor is same-sex marriage legal. Of greater concern is the taboo nature of homosexuality among attitudes. Considering the language surrounding Article 40 of the Congolese Constitution which states that "individuals have the right to marry a person of their choice of the opposite sex and to create a family,"⁵⁸ it is clear that at the national level, the construction and expectation of masculinity is hugely heteronormative. While little

⁵⁷ Ibid, 51.

⁵⁸ "Democratic Republic of Congo LGBTI Resources," International Refugee Rights Initiative: Rights in Exile Program," <http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/democratic-republic-congo-lgbti-resources>.

research exists on the issue, anecdotal evidence including an interview with a gay rights activist suggest that homosexuality is perceived as limiting to one's masculinity.⁵⁹ In certain instances, homosexual men may be denied rights to land ownership or be disowned by families or communities if their orientation is revealed. These attitudes have wide-spread ramifications in cases of male-male sexual violence.

As was suggested by Connell and Messerschmidt, this idealized form of masculinity does not constitute the norm of men's experiences within a given context. What is particularly problematic within the context of DRC is the narrow definition of manhood marked by heterosexuality, having access to a stable income, and having a family for whom one can provide as it is incredibly challenging to attain given the country's experience with war. As has been noted in research and reports, a man who is unable to perform according to those attributes within a hegemonic masculinity is humiliated. Consequentially, many men and boys often feel reduced to the status of a women, and thus emasculated as a result.⁶⁰ Despite the economic and political circumstances of DRC due to a variety of issues pertaining to the war, norms and expectations of masculinity remain in place.

VIII. A Gender Analysis of Wartime Sexual Violence Against Men in the DRC

Having examined the international community's understanding of sexual violence in the context of the DRC, it is clear that the common narrative renders women and girls in a perpetual state of victimhood at the expense of male victims being excluded. This silencing of sexual violence against men is heightened by constructions of masculinity in DRC. To understand how

⁵⁹ "Paul*, gay rights campaigner in DRC: 'They said I was the Antichrist,'" *IRIN*, August 18, 2014, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100509/paul-gay-rights-campaigner-drc-“they-said-i-was-antichrist”>.

⁶⁰ Emily Rauhala, "Rape as a Weapon of War: Men Suffer, Too," *Time*, August 03, 2011, <http://world.time.com/2011/08/03/rape-as-a-weapon-of-war-men-suffer-too/>.

these issues are reinforced, this section will analyze the gendered dimensions of the motivations and perceptions of sexual violence against men among Congolese men. While extensive research and analyses have been conducted on the forms and uses of sexual violence, much of the literature is designed under the assumption that it is used against women or simply fails to make the distinction of how and why sexual violence is used against men and women. While each situation is different, the available research on the issue of sexual violence against men in armed conflict points to a series of key motivating factors. According to the available (but limited nonetheless) data on sexual violence against Congolese men, these motivating factors often hold.

As Sivakumaran suggests, a key motivation of sexual violence against men in situations of conflict is asserting power and dominance both indirectly and directly. Much research on wartime sexual violence, which generally refers only to sexual assault of women by men, points to the significance of strategy. General consensus remains that sexual violence, as a weapon of war, is used to "terrorize, control, displace, and eliminate the civilian population by targeting female members."⁶¹ In Eriksson Baaz and Stern's interviews with members of the FARDC this analysis appears to hold. According to this particular group of soldiers in the conflict, rape (which is only in reference to rape of women) is categorized as "lust" and "evil" rape which both result from a man requiring satisfaction of his sexual needs and having the right to take a woman by force is deprived. This notion of having the right to assert oneself over another individual sexually also speaks to the type of discourse surrounding masculinity and femininity within military institutions and armed forces globally.⁶² Furthermore, the notion of terrorizing and

⁶¹Carlo Koos, "What Do We Know About Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts? Recent Empirical Progress and Remaining Gaps in Peace and Conflict Research," *GIGA Research Programme: Violence and Security* no. 275 (Jun 2015): 7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2618382>.

⁶² 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*, Vol. 53, Issue 2 (Jun. 2009): 508-511. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2478.2009.00543.x.

controlling by assaulting a population's female members points to the indirect effects of wartime sexual violence on men and specifically the shame they experience at the sight or notion of losing the ability to "protect 'their' women. In this way, female rape is a form of communication between men. It reinforces the 'conquered's status of masculine impotence."⁶³

When considering the significance of women to defining a man's masculinity in DRC, losing sexual control at the hands of another man is incredibly disempowering. As one respondent from an interview conducted by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative pointed out "[t]he husband will be obliged to abandon the wife – abandon her so that he can go and get married with another wife, one who was not raped. Therefore, everything about marriage or family cohesion is scattered."⁶⁴ Although not made explicit in the man's statement, this type of behavior suggests a reaction to the shame and humiliation that results from the sexual assault of one's partner. While this is not a direct form of sexual violence, authors like Charli Carpenter point to the traumatization and its lingering effects on men's psycho-social well-being.⁶⁵ Losing control over one's ability to protect a family member or community member can be devastating. Given the constructions of gender roles, "Men, too, are injured by the sexual assault of women for reasons untainted by offensive, antiquated notions of chastity and ownership. To watch helplessly as someone you love is tortured may be as bad or worse than being tortured yourself."⁶⁶ Furthermore, when considering the gendered assumptions underlying the

⁶³ Sivakumaran, "Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict," 268.

⁶⁴ Jocelyn Kelly et al., *Hope for the Future Again: Tracing the effects of sexual violence and conflict on families and communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Cambridge: Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 2011, 26.

⁶⁵ Carpenter, "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence," 97.

⁶⁶ Anne Tierney Goldstein, *Recognizing Forced Impregnation as a War Crime*, New York: Center for Reproductive Law and Policy (1993): 22.

international response to sexual violence, the lack of support services for men, including mental health services, reinforces the trauma.⁶⁷

When sexual violence is committed directly against men, the sense of power loss and impotence are magnified greatly. In the DRC, where the ideal construction masculinity is rooted in exerting power over others, being subject to physical and psychological control by another male is incredibly humiliating. This is evident in studies conducted on perceptions and attitudes towards gender and gender based violence within regions of the DRC and often the failure or noted difficulty of identifying male victims of sexual violence. For example, the IMAGES survey conducted by Promundo. While acknowledging the presence of sexual violence against men, the survey notes the difficulty for men to respond to questions about their experiences of sexual violence as a result of the taboo nature of the topic.⁶⁸

However, initiatives including the Kampala-based Refugee Law Project,⁶⁹ provide evidence through victims' testimonies, that highlight the psychological and physical damage that results from sexual violence. As one male victim of sexual assault points out in an interview, sexual violence is "a sort of vengeance, a sort of humiliation, a way of attacking our identity so they could diminish us in society."⁷⁰ In recounting his experience of being raped by a group of soldiers, the man points out that "they [the perpetrators] wanted to show that they were superior to us, that we were worth nothing, that this time around they were putting us in the place of women."⁷¹ The man's language reflects the idea that being sexually violated diminishes one's standing in society. This speaks to the notion of the hierarchies of gender within a given context.

⁶⁷ Chris Dolan, *War is Not Yet Over. Community Perceptions of Sexual Violence and its Underpinnings in Eastern DRC*. London: International Alert, 2010, 54.

⁶⁸ Sleggh, Barker, and Levtov, *Gender Relations, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and the Effects of Conflict*, 55.

⁶⁹ Although it is based in Kampala, Uganda, many of those who seek assistance are Congolese refugees.

⁷⁰ *Gender Against Men*, directed by Daniel Neuman, Ann Chang, and Otim Patrick (2008; Kampala: School of Law, Makerere University), documentary.

⁷¹ Ibid.

The male who is the perpetrator in this situation is embodying a masculinity that is more highly valued in the context of DRC because he is embodying power. The victim, who is also male, loses the ability to perform that masculinity by losing control over his body and thus power.

As is the case with sexual violence against women, sexual violence against men is not only disempowering of the individual but also of the community. "In Africa no man is allowed to be vulnerable, you have to be masculine, strong. You should never break down or cry. A man must be a leader and provide for the whole family. When he fails to reach that set standard, society perceives that there is something wrong."⁷² This again hearkens back to the ideal image of a man portrayed in research as one who can not only provide for his family, but also his community. When considering the socioeconomic aspects of the country and their impact on men's sense of masculinity, the double impact of sexual violence can be particularly difficult and traumatizing. A man is violated and thus rendered in a position of inferiority at the hands of a perpetrator, the action is symbolic of a community or family losing a strong leader.

As the victim interviewed by the Refugee Law Project alluded to, sexual violence puts men in the position of women which speaks to another motive: emasculation of the victim. Considering the framing of sexual violence by the international community and notions within the DRC that men are intended to protect and provide for their family and communities, the idea of being a victim and masculine is incompatible.⁷³ Thus, for a male victim, the experience of being raped or sexually assaulted strips away one's status as a man rendering him of the same status as a woman and thus subordinate to other men. This speaks again to the positioning of men

⁷² Will Storr, "The rape of men: the darkest secret of war," *The Guardian*, July 16, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/jul/17/the-rape-of-men>.

⁷³ Sivakumaran, 270.

and women in Congolese society. Being violated sexually as a man renders him unequal to other men because he is essentially considered a woman.

However, when considering the framing and language used to describe the impact of sexual violence on men, the characterization of losing one's status as a man and being feminized is problematic with regards to gender equity. In their work, Eriksson Baaz and Stern call this the 'gendered story' framework in which "subjects of violence and their experiences emerge as feminized exceptions: men as victims/survivors are reduced to exceptions to the (implied) real victims of sexual violence: women and girls."⁷⁴ This implies that sexual violence is only a female experience and that Congolese men must become female to experience it. When writing about and responding to the issue of sexual violence used against men, it is important to acknowledge, but also question the gendered choice of language in describing emasculation.

Another means through which male sexual violence is emasculating is the process of homosexualization. As research has pointed out, only the victim is considered homosexual as a result of being assaulted, particularly raped, by another male who retains his status in performing the heterosexual hegemonic masculinity which is rooted in power and dominance. This is particularly troubling for men in societies where homosexuality is not recognized. In the DRC, despite the legal recognition of homosexuality, norms remain homophobic. Thus, male victims often remain silent about their experience and if they are able to seek treatment, remain silent around families and their communities.⁷⁵

For example, a Congolese man, who was imprisoned and raped several times by a group of rebels, was able to escape captivity and seek treatment. However, as he states in an interview, he remains silent around his brother who continues to ask what's wrong stating "I don't want to

⁷⁴ Eriksson Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War*, 36.

⁷⁵ Storr, "The rape of men: the darkest secret of war."

tell him," because "I fear he will say: 'Now, my brother is not a man.'"⁷⁶ This sense of emasculation reverberates not only for the individual, but also for the community. If a man experiences any form of sexual assault and is thus no longer considered masculine, he is no longer perceived as a protector or leader of his community. Thus communities who are made aware of male victims of sexual assault may be left feeling more vulnerable.⁷⁷

IX. Relevance to the Argument

Analysis of wartime sexual violence against men in the DRC reveals the exploitation by international actors of a narrow narrative of wartime sexual violence. This narrative views women and girls as helpless victims and most deserving of protection from presumably violent male perpetrators in a country steeped in madness. By elevating women and girls as the more deserving victims, the narrative perpetuates perceived gender inequities within Congolese communities; men and boys are not recognized as victims because they are assumed to be inherently violent and are thus commonly viewed only as perpetrators. This effectively silences male victims, inhibiting their ability to seek treatment and help. Furthermore, DRC's gender inequitable attitudes about men and women contribute to high expectations that men attain and maintain a form of masculinity that is idealist, especially in the context of a protracted conflict. This drive for attaining a particular masculinity is reflected in both motivations and reactions towards sexual violence against Congolese men.

As the analysis suggests, male perpetrators use sexual violence towards other men as a means of performing a particular masculinity marked by power and dominance against a perceived weaker individual. Consequentially, male victims feel disempowered and emasculated,

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Kelly, Van Rooyen, Kabanga, Maclin and Mullen, 27.

and out of fear of stigmatization within their communities, often remain silent. The characterization of emasculation of male victims, both in literature and by Congolese, as a feminizing or homosexualizing experience is also problematic in reinforcing troubling narratives that 1) sexual violence is a uniquely feminine experience and 2) homosexuality is a sign of weakness and to feel 'homosexualized' is a problem.

The DRC highlights one example in which an idealized hegemonic masculinity combined with a problematic international narrative of sexual violence perpetuates a cycle in which male victims internalize sexual violence as a feminine and thus bad experience. However, this experience of wartime sexual violence against men is unique to the DRC. As the next two cases will reveal, narratives of wartime sexual violence against men reflect constructions of masculinity in a particular context. Given their vastly different contexts, the remaining two cases also demonstrate how perceptions and constructions of masculinities produce distinct narratives of wartime sexual violence.

X. An Overview of El Salvador's Civil War

Known as one of the most dangerous places in the world, a significant amount of research and reporting on El Salvador highlights the country's violence. However, coverage of the violence tends to primarily fall into the categories of violence among gangs and high rates of violence, including sexual violence, against women. Like the example of the DRC, such overt attention to sexual violence against women may raise questions about masculinities and the existence of sexual violence against men in El Salvador in a modern context. However, because this paper seeks to understand how narratives and constructions of masculinity shape perceptions of wartime sexual violence against men, this section will focus on sexual violence used against men during El Salvador's Civil War.

Though El Salvador's Civil War began in 1980, much of its roots date back decades earlier and is reflective of long-standing political and economic divisions within society. As early as the 1930s, the Salvadoran government suppressed an attempted peasant uprising led by the Communist Party in 1932. The ensuing brutal incident, known as 'La Matanza,' resulted in an estimated 10,000-30,000 deaths.⁷⁸ For decades, the country was ruled by a small elite class that controlled the majority of the country's arable land, thus marginalizing rural peasant populations; per reports, percent of all landowners controlled 56 percent of El Salvador's arable land. Thus, the number of rural landless members of the population grew substantially over time; between 1961 and 1980 the number rose from 11 to 51 percent.⁷⁹ According to Wood, 76 percent of rural communities lived in poverty while 55 percent lived in extreme poverty.⁸⁰ Furthermore, electoral fraud and political corruption (including collusion between economic elites and the military) suggested to those who felt marginalized that "while occasional promissory carrots might be extended to abate discontent, there would be no restructuring of economic or political relations in El Salvador."⁸¹

Throughout the 1970s, political opposition among the marginalized population was effectively blocked in 1972, 1974 and 1977. Fueled by long existing economic grievances, many people were thus motivated to support small guerilla groups that had begun to form and advocate for overthrowing the state. These guerilla groups ultimately united under the umbrella organization of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo

⁷⁸ Amelia Hoover Green, "Repertoires of Violence Against Noncombatants During Armed Conflict: The Role of Armed Group Institutions and Ideologies" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2011), 151.

⁷⁹ Tommie S. Montgomery. *Revolution in El Salvador: From Civil Strife to Civil Peace*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 23.

⁸⁰ Elisabeth J. Wood. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 24.

⁸¹ Michele Leiby, "The Promise and Peril of Primary Documents: Documenting Wartime Sexual Violence in El Salvador and Peru" in *Understanding and Proving International Sex Crimes*, ed. Morten Bergsmo, Skre Butenschøn, Alf Wood, and Elisabeth J. Wood (Beijing: Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, 2012), 4.

Marti National Liberation Front), an organization that was Marxist in ideological orientation with ties to Cuba and Russia's governments. In contrast, the government's Armed Forces received support from the United States, ultimately creating a proxy war between the two Cold War superpowers.⁸² The FMLN became known for adapting a mix of military and warfare tactics and strategies centered around urban guerilla warfare.

In 1981, after a failed "final offensive" by the FMLN, the organization retreated to the countryside in El Salvador. In response, the military-led government, with U.S. assistance carried out a series of widespread repressive tactics to defeat the FMLN.⁸³ Given the nature of the warfare, members of the Armed Forces were often unable or simply unwilling to make a distinction between FMLN members and civilians resulting in the disappearances and deaths of tens of thousands of civilians between 1979 and 1981.⁸⁴ As Michele Leiby puts it, "rather than weaken the rebels, the state's campaign of indiscriminate violence outraged local populations, providing a new pool of potential recruits and supporters for the FMLN."⁸⁵

By 1984, pressure from the U.S. on the Armed Forces to improve its human rights record, led to a change in the scale of lethal violence. Nonetheless, the Armed Forces' rapid reaction battalions continued to detain and torture anyone suspected of ties to the FMLN. After years of fighting and a stalemate both parties began to negotiate a settlement in January 1990 and in 1992, the FMLN and the Salvadoran government signed the Chapultepec peace accords, effectively ending the 12-year civil war.⁸⁶

⁸² Michele Leiby, "State-Perpetrated Wartime Sexual Violence in Latin America" (PhD dissertation, The University of New Mexico, 2011) 198.

⁸³ Leiby "The Promise and Peril of Primary Documents," 4.

⁸⁴ Dara Kay Cohen, *Rape During Civil War*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 171.

⁸⁵ Leiby, "The Promise and Peril of Primary Documents," 5.

⁸⁶ Leiby, "State Perpetrated Wartime Sexual Violence in Latin America," 70.

XI. Machismo and Sexual Violence: A Dominant Discourse

A review of current media and academic literature on El Salvador reveals a large focus on the legacy of the country's civil war, and more specifically its gang violence and disproportionate violence against women. Deeper analysis frequently attributes these problems, as a product of a heavily ingrained culture of machismo, or aggressive masculine pride, that permeates Salvadoran society. Though the focus of this literature and the narrative it perpetuates is partly based on the legacy of the war, the concept of machismo dates further back and has been explored in both the media and academia for some time.

An article in *The Los Angeles Times* from 1974 defines machismo as requiring "that men be manly and that they order their women at will," and observes that despite slow increase in gender parity across Latin American countries, women ultimately still have a long way to go in disrupting "attitudes and customs dating back far longer than the Europeans' conquest."⁸⁷ Though written for a newspaper, this description reflects an often employed simplistic approach to understanding the narrative of masculinity in the 'global south'. Peter Beattie articulates this arguing that conflating the concept of machismo with all Latin American masculinities, particularly by outside observers and scholars, is a frequently used to simplify the process of understanding a complexity of masculinities in a different context.⁸⁸

Regardless of this characterization, deeper analyses of masculinity and more specifically hegemonic masculinity in El Salvador frequently suggest that traits associated with machismo dominate the country's narrative of what is acceptable in a man. El Salvador's hegemonic ideas

⁸⁷ "Latin America Women Still Face Machismo: Discrimination Retreating but Complete Parity With Men Appears Far in Future" *The Los Angeles Times*, Oct 27, 1974. Available from ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁸⁸ Peter M. Beattie, "Beyond Machismos: Recent Examinations of Masculinities in Latin America," *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 4 no. 3, (Jan. 2002): 303. 10.1177/1097184X02004003005

of masculinity consist of traits that include being the primary breadwinner of the family⁸⁹ and the more hyper-masculine concept of machismo which influences the normalization of dominance, aggression, and violence.⁹⁰ This normalization of violence in the construction of an ideal heterosexual masculinity manifests in many facets. Mo Hume suggests that at the individual level, it is encouraged early on as a central component to one's identity stating that "Men are taught at an early age that they should not express emotion. They should "be firm.""⁹¹

This socialization process is accepted and employed by both men and women in societies. Women are also conditioned to comply with unequal gender norms at an early age. In relaying accounts of pre-Civil War life for rural communities in El Salvador, Ana Cristina Ibanez emphasizes the role of a patriarchal family structure that affected women's agency. For example, as girls reached adolescence they were described as being treated by their parents in a "more authoritarian and distant manner," and discussions of girls reaching puberty and their sexuality were not discussed within families or communities because "they meant trouble."⁹²

As has been suggested in gender theory, this binary construct of heteronormative gender roles reflects assumptions about the spaces men and women should occupy in constructing a nation. Women are linked with nature because "in bearing children women create new 'things' naturally," as opposed to men who are typically identified with culture as they are free to create things culturally.⁹³ In other words, men do not inhabit the more natural, domestic sphere and by

⁸⁹ While this expectation may hold, in reality it is difficult to attain, given the lingering impacts of war and prevalence of gangs on El Salvador's economy. Thus, gang membership is high among men.

⁹⁰ Lina Lakhani, "El Salvador's Zika crisis compounded by failings of state, violence and machismo" *The Guardian*, February 12, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/feb/12/el-salvador-zika-crisis-compounded-by-failings-of-state-violence-and-machismo>.

⁹¹ Mo Hume, "The Myths of Violence: Gender, Conflict, and Community in El Salvador," *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 35, no. 5 (Sep., 2008): 65, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27648120>.

⁹² Ana Cristina Ibañez, "El Salvador: War and Untold Stories—Women Guerillas," in *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline O.N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark, (New York: Zed, 2001), 119.

⁹³ Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, (Sage: 1997), 6.

creating culture, can influence the norms and policies that shape society. Therefore, these spaces are ultimately rendered unequal within a patriarchal context; more masculine, cultural spaces have greater worth than more feminine, natural spaces.

XII. Challenging the State, Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity

Examining El Salvador's history in the decades leading up to and during its civil war reveals the role and influence of the state in perpetuating a construct of masculinity associated with violence and aggression. The state and elites, prior to the country's civil war, reinforced narratives of dominance and violence through structural and physical forms of violence. Socioeconomic policies that perpetuated inequality between elites and more rural, peasant populations for example reinforced this narrative. Furthermore, the use of military brutality, to maintain the elite's hegemonic, powerful position in El Salvador reinforced "the rationalization and legitimization of force as a political and economic tool."⁹⁴

Brutal tactics to repress Salvadorans, as most famously demonstrated in La Matanza, further normalized a narrative of violence and fear as a means of domination. As Hume points out, the "collective memory of military repression has proved important for the development of a society based on polarization and violence in El Salvador." As an example he notes the consequences of La Matanza in which the military took control of the state apparatus as a signal to Salvadorans that violence is an effective means of dominance and control.⁹⁵ The ensuing decades of repression and indiscriminate violence by the military elite reinforced this narrative of aggression and dominance by a powerful force over a weaker group of individuals.

This exposure of Salvadorans to indiscriminate violence employed by a powerful force

⁹⁴ Hume, 70.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 69.

thus came to dominate and influence how individuals and groups interacted, particularly in the form of gender expressions. Implicitly communicating and normalizing such behavior at a powerful level thus implicitly genders a nation. As Reeser points out, "national discourse may implicitly or explicitly teach its men how to be masculine, a leader may transmit what a man is or should be (or what he should not be), or he may pass on a certain national style of masculinity."⁹⁶ Thus, in seeking to dominate and control a particular class of people within El Salvador, the state-military apparatus and elites implicitly communicated a set of values that have come to be associated with accepted forms of masculinity. In her research, Amelia Hoover Green suggests that misogynistic language, and sexual harassment and threats of sexual violence (including rape and mutilation) have been used within El Salvador's Armed Forces as a means of improving performance, particularly among lower-ranking servicemen.⁹⁷

Interestingly, this dominant discourse appears to vary when one considers the construction of masculinity in the context of the FMLN. The formation of an insurgent group reflects a split from the status quo within a society's structures, but also, what Luisa Maria Ortega notes as a prioritization of "class struggle above side contradictions on normative, discursive and practical levels."⁹⁸ This emphasis on class struggle, as a unifying factor among insurgent groups, including the FMLN during the war, effectively "disrupts complex mechanisms of authorization and marginalization."⁹⁹ Furthermore, appealing to the struggle of a lower class connects with "other structures of inequality, such as gender, ethnicity, age and so on, has considerable impact on insurgent gender arrangements."¹⁰⁰ Thus, in the context of an

⁹⁶ Todd W. Reeser. *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction*. (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 180.

⁹⁷ Green, 29.

⁹⁸ Luisa Maria Dietrich Ortega, "Looking Beyond Violent Militarized Masculinities." *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 14, no. 4, (Dec. 2012): 493, DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2012.726094.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

insurgent movement, one's sense of masculinity may be impacted and shift to distinguish oneself from the dominant narrative perpetuated by the structural inequalities of the state and military. In reviewing accounts of life within the FMLN and gender roles, much of the research points to stories of female members, who comprised a significant portion of the group.¹⁰¹ While there are elements of the FMLN that suggest that gendered norms still applied, evidenced by gender-specific roles male and female combatants performed, several norms were also abandoned in pursuit of the organization's goal of unity in fighting the Armed Forces.¹⁰²

Referring to these alternative constructions as guerilla gender regimes, Ortega notes that "shared capacities of militant masculinities and femininities are stressed, rather than conceived as inherently different or necessarily complementary."¹⁰³ Accounts from former FMLN members suggests that such guerilla or insurgent masculinities were a departure from what was perceived as a dominant masculinity embraced by the state and military forces. Instead, this alternative, insurgent masculinity reflected a departure from a hypermasculine identity characterized by "aggression and skill with weapons," with an emphasis on traits including intelligence, dedication, and sacrifice.¹⁰⁴ It is worth noting that such traits presented a stark contrast to those of physical strength and military capacity posited by the more hypermasculine ideal espoused by the military as FMLN members comprised of ordinary citizens who did not have such capacities.

Furthermore, accounts by former members and research conducted on the FMLN reveal internal efforts to promote an ideal model of masculinity which Hoover Green calls the "new man."¹⁰⁵ Such ideal behaviors included avoidance of alcohol and sacrifice for the future of one's

¹⁰¹ Elisabeth J. Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence During War." *Politics & Society*, vol. 34, no. 3, (Sep 2006): 330, DOI: 10.1177/0032329206290426.

¹⁰² Cohen, 185.

¹⁰³ Ortega, 494.

¹⁰⁴ Ortega, 499.

¹⁰⁵ Green, 200.

community if necessary. Importantly, respect for women and men and a strong emphasis on the prohibition of rape (and other forms of sexual violence) was a key defining trait that was employed as a recruitment tactic. Internalizing this norm was critical to the FMLN in creating an image of male members as 'good guys,' with regard to their fight against the state.¹⁰⁶ Thus, being a good guy entailed regulating one's behaviors to challenge accepted behaviors encouraged within a machismo-masculine identity.

Overall, the extent to which the promotion of such ideals was wholly successful is mixed, given evidence of experiencing sexual violence being committed against some combatants (in available accounts, victims are always female). However, the fact that a counter narrative and construction of masculinity was being promoted in the context of the war challenges mainstream perceptions, both within and outside of El Salvador. While it is true that machismo has heavily influenced the notion of what it means to be an ideal man in the country, counter-narratives have existed as evidenced within the context of FMLN's efforts to recruit and unify its combatants.

XIII. A Gender Analysis of Wartime Sexual Violence Against Men in El Salvador

Having developed an understanding of narratives surrounding machismo and deconstructing hegemonic and insurgent masculinities performed in El Salvador during its Civil War, this section will attempt to further analyze the gendered dimensions of sexual violence committed against men. However, it is important to point out the limitations of available data in El Salvador's context, which renders this analysis subject to further debate and research. The reasons for a lack of data are varied but nonetheless reveal a set of gendered assumptions and biases in both collecting and reporting information about sexual violence. Despite these

¹⁰⁶ Cohen, 190.

limitations, El Salvador is still considered a case in which wartime sexual violence, against men and women, was generally not widespread, thus supporting the argument that wartime sexual violence is not always inevitable.

Much of the available evidence of sexual violence against men committed during the Civil War suggests that most acts were committed against political prisoners under the guise of sexual torture, rather than during combat, a large contrast to instances of sexual violence in the DRC.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, evidence suggests that state forces including the military and police were the primary perpetrators of wartime sexual violence against men, relative to members of the FMLN.¹⁰⁸ This contrast in perpetrators of wartime sexual violence in El Salvador raises questions about the extent to which hypermasculinity is a reliable indicator of increased risk of wartime sexual violence in a given context. It also raises questions about the role of alternative masculinities in affecting rates of wartime sexual violence, and more specifically against sexual violence against men.

The reasons for an overall lack of available data in El Salvador during its civil war are multifold. Few primary data sources explicitly reference sexual violence during the war. These include the final report of the UN-sponsored la Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador (Truth Commission for El Salvador, CVES); reports from Socorro Juridico and Tutela Legal, two Christian legal aid organizations,; a report by the NGO la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador, CDHES); and interviews conducted by scholars including Dara Kay Cohen.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Elisabeth J, Wood. "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?" *Politics & Society*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Mar 2009): 153, 10.1177/0032329208329755.

¹⁰⁸ Cohen, 177-178.

¹⁰⁹ Cohen, 169.

Biases regarding sexual violence are reflected in documents produced at the end of the conflict. These include the CVES report, which suggests that the issue of sexual violence, and against men more specifically, was not perceived as warranting further investigation. Though the CVES acknowledged that acts of sexual violence occurred during the war, it did not investigate any cases because it determined that there was no evidence of orders or an official policy of rape and other acts of sexual violence. The CVES thus argued that such instances were apolitical and interpersonal in nature. This decision was ultimately problematic; by not investigating cases of sexual violence, the Commission "did not define the parameters of sexual violence, and made no attempt to explain these violations in the narrative of its final report."¹¹⁰

Instead, the CVES only included an annex listing victims of sexual violence based on testimonies that only included names of the individuals (where allowed), date and location of the violation, and suspected perpetrator without any contextual information. Additionally, the list only included cases in which women were the victims, excluding cases involving any form of sexual violence against men, including sexual torture, which did occur based on other available reports.¹¹¹ It is important to note that these decisions by the CVES also reflect "the temporal placement of the conflict within the development of the international human rights agenda."¹¹² Given the context in which the war occurred, the international human rights agenda recognized today had not yet fully developed. Thus, the focus of human rights groups and advocates centered primarily around acts of lethal violence, and (non-sexualized) torture of political prisoners and detainees. Nonetheless, by failing to fully acknowledge the sexualized dimensions of such violence, actors like the CVES effectively silenced victims of sexual violence.

¹¹⁰ Leiby, "The Promise and Peril of Primary Documents," 10.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Leiby, "State-Perpetrated Wartime Sexual Violence," 199.

Interestingly, the decision by an international body (the CVES did not have any Salvadorans so as to remain impartial and neutral) to refrain from investigating sexual violence, and not include information about male victims, implies an acceptance of El Salvador's privatization of violence and silencing of victims. As Hume points out, such impunity surrounding violence "in the private sphere (i.e. the home) is not a problem unique to El Salvador but a global one."¹¹³ Though instances of violence, and sexual violence specifically, during the war occurred in prisons and other locations that would be characterized as public spheres, that characterization of such acts as private and apolitical and not warranting attention by a non-Salvadoran body parallels this attitude and acceptance of hypermasculine aggression and violence. The failure to account for male victims at all also speaks to a general bias that has persisted in data collection and is further elaborated in one of the few sources of primary data that includes information on male victims of sexual violence.

A study conducted by the CDHES on sexual torture of political prisoners in El Salvador is cited for containing evidence of sexual violence against men during the war. The report produced by the NGO documents instances of torture on a group of 434 male political prisoners in La Esperanza Prison and was carried out by human rights activists who were also prisoners.¹¹⁴ The division of categories of torture into physical, physical-psychological, and psychological reflects a common bias of coding acts of sexual violence against men as torture. Nonetheless, in analyzing the report, Inger Agger acknowledges that of the 40 registered torture methods included in the study, 6 can be classified as sexual torture of men. These forms of sexual torture documented by the prisoners (as non-sexual torture) include (1) blows to the testicles, (2)

¹¹³ Hume, 66.

¹¹⁴ Pauline Oosterhoff, Prisca Zwanikken and Evert Ketting, "Sexual Torture of Men in Croatia and Other Conflict Situations: An Open Secret," *Reproductive Health Matters* vol. 12, no. 23 (May 2004): 68. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/3775973>.

electrical torture, (3) nakedness, (4) rape, (5) threats of rape, and (6) “other methods” that are sexual in nature.¹¹⁵ Based on an analysis of the survey results, Agger points out that 76 percent of the 434 men experienced 1 of his 6 identified forms of sexual torture while in prison.¹¹⁶

Another interesting point is that of the men surveyed, 62 percent experienced a form of sexual torture that provoked homosexual anxiety.¹¹⁷ This reaction from this set of victims calls into mind general attitudes towards masculine identities, which in El Salvador includes an acknowledgement that masculinity defined by hypermasculine and aggressive behavior is acceptable. This anxiety about homosexuality also may reflect the influence of religiously conservative attitudes towards identities that do not fit into a strict gender binary.

Though it is clear that machismo cannot be applied to characterize every man in El Salvador, the concept, along with conservative attitudes towards gender relations, have both influenced attitudes towards acceptable forms of masculinity. Thus, to be sexually violated by another man is perceived by both the perpetrator and victim as homosexual behavior, and thus humiliating to the victim, not the perpetrator. This reflects what Sivakumaran notes as homosexualization of the victim as a form of emasculation while "It is the heterosexual male that is the symbol of power. It is the heterosexual male that fills, or at least filled, the ranks of the armed forces."¹¹⁸ The association of homosexuality with male sexual violence is extremely problematic in associating a sexual identity with a violent act, and thus perpetuating an acceptance of a gender binary.

From the perspective of those who perpetrated sexual torture, including those in La

¹¹⁵ Agger, Inger, "Sexual torture of political prisoners: An overview," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* vol. 2, no. (Jul 1989): 311, DOI: 10.1002/jts.2490020306.

¹¹⁶ Ibid 312.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Sivakumaran, 272.

Esperanza Prison, the use of sexual violence in a detention facility was likely a reflection of the state's response to pressure from the United States to improve its human rights record. Thus, following a period of mass and visible violence, state forces moved repressive operations, including sexual violence and torture of male prisoners accused of subversion, "behind closed doors."¹¹⁹ This move to hide such acts of violence to what is perceived as a private space parallels the country's general attitudes towards privatized violence.

The notion that violence by a male against a woman who 'misbehaves' in a private sphere, like a household, is acceptable reflects an attitude that violence employed against someone who does not conform to an acceptable role is thus warranted. In the context of state-sanctioned sexual torture against politically 'subversive' males in El Salvador, one can view this phenomenon as a reflection of this general attitude towards gender roles. Because these men are viewed as not conforming to an acceptable position within El Salvador's society, and a challenge to the accepted (political) order maintained by elites and the military state, it is thus acceptable for the more 'masculinized' state to employ force (including acts of sexual violence) with the intent of humiliating and subduing the enemy.

In contrast, an analysis of alternative masculinities, and specifically guerilla masculinities, during El Salvador's war may help one understand the lack of sexual violence committed against men (and women) by the FMLN. As has been argued, a common misconception around wartime sexual violence is that it's ubiquitous. However, evidence from multiple conflicts shows that sexual violence, including rape "by combatants...even within the same war do not perpetrate sexual violence to the same extent or in the same form."¹²⁰ In

¹¹⁹ Leiby, "State-Perpetrated Wartime Sexual Violence," 199.

¹²⁰ Dara Kay Cohen, Amelia Hoover Green, and Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications, and Ways Forward*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2013, 2.

analyzing masculinity as defined by the FMLN, one can argue that efforts to differentiate from normalized social and structural determinants in El Salvador included efforts to differentiate from an idealized form of masculinity that authorized violence and aggression.

In recognizing the role of the state and elites in perpetuating a hypermasculine narrative of aggression and violence towards a perceived 'weaker' class of people within El Salvador, it is plausible that an alternative masculinity may be marked by prohibition or a more selective use of such violence against those associated with the state. Furthermore, studies on the FMLN's indoctrination of recruits with strict rules concerning sexuality and violence, with an emphasis on not raping, suggests a strong attempt to challenge what was perceived as normalized by the state and to also influence perceptions of the FMLN as 'the good guys.'¹²¹

There are likely other explanations for the prohibition of sexual violence within the FMLN. As Wood has argued, explanations may include the group's' need to cooperate with civilians for support (i.e. to access resources and to engage recruits) but also in the FMLN's case, a respect for liberation theology that influenced norms and practices of the insurgency. Thus, to have employed sexual violence would have violated core tenets of Catholicism.¹²² Nonetheless, the widespread rejection of a normalized, hypermasculine behavior speaks to the importance of challenging the narratives that sexual violence in war is inevitable and that sexual violence is a product of male sexual urges that cannot be controlled in the chaotic environment of war.

XIV. Relevance to the Argument

Though limited data suggests a possible bias on the part of investigators during the country's peace process, sexual violence against men in El Salvador's Civil War was likely

¹²¹ Cohen, 190.

¹²² Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence During War," 329.

limited in scale, relative to other examples like the DRC. Nonetheless, El Salvador's case is interesting because it challenges the assumption that the presence of particular masculinities in a given context necessarily result in wartime sexual violence against men and women. One explanation, based on an analysis of masculinities within El Salvador during the civil war, is that the presence of an alternative insurgent masculinity espoused by the FMLN attempted to limit some hypermasculine behavior including sexual violence. Because sexual violence was perceived as being associated with the state's hypermasculine traits of aggression and violence against civilians, it is possible that the FMLN attempted to prohibit such behavior so as to appear as 'the good guys' fighting the evil state.

Nonetheless, narratives surrounding instances of sexual violence against men during the country's conflict reveal many problematic assumptions about gender roles. Somewhat similarly to the DRC case, El Salvador's example reveals how the CVES, an international actor, perpetuated a gendered assumption concerning victims of sexual violence. The failure to investigate and include information about male victims in reports reveals a complicity by the CVES in biased assumptions about gender roles and sexual violence. Additionally, the characterization of sexual violence as 'torture' and a noted sense of "homosexual anxiety" by male political detainees is problematic. Like testimonies from the DRC suggest, this anxiety among Salvadoran detainees about being 'homosexualized' is reflective of attitudes towards 'acceptable' heteronormative gender roles and identities within El Salvador.

XV. The Abu Ghraib Scandal: An Overview

Perhaps one of the more recent, troubling moments within the U.S. Military's history is that of the Abu Ghraib scandal in which detainees at the Iraqi prison were subject to multiple forms of sexual violence as part of a torture regime by the United States. Such violence, which

began in 2003, unfolded in the media spotlight in the spring of 2004, nearly a year after former President George W. Bush declared that the toppling of Saddam Hussein's government was "one victory in a war on terror that began on September 11th, 2001," beneath a banner that read "Mission Accomplished."¹²³ While events at Abu Ghraib, including the U.S. government's response, have been significantly covered, the scandal's ramifications for masculinities, privilege, and power are deeply concerning. To emphasize this problematic framing of the scandal, one can simply analyze the overall response to sexual violence against men within the U.S. Military; that is to say, the implementation of programs and response mechanisms to address sexual assault of male ranks by their counterparts and/or higher ranking officials.

To provide some background, Abu Ghraib prison, located 20 miles west of Baghdad, was formerly Saddam Hussein's torture chamber and site for weekly executions of political dissidents under his regime. Multiple human rights violations occurred at Abu Ghraib under abhorrent living conditions.¹²⁴ In 2002, Hussein declared a general amnesty for all prisoners in Abu Ghraib resulting in their subsequent release. Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the prison was looted and ransacked like many institutions and buildings within Baghdad. During this period, between May and June 2003, the U.S. 800th Military Police Brigade received a new mission to manage Iraq's penal system and multiple detention centers. This included oversight of Abu Ghraib, which was reopened by the United States on August 4, 2003.

Problems at Abu Ghraib significantly increased after October 15, 2003 when the 372nd Military Police (MP) Company took over the facility. The MP Company had received control of Tier 1A and Tier IB in the prison, where both civilian and military intelligence specialists held

¹²³ Dana Bash, Mike Mount, and Sean Loughlin, "Bush: Iraq is one victory in war on terror," *CNN*, May 2, 2003. <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/05/01/sprj.irq.bush.speech/>.

¹²⁴ "Iraq Prison Abuse Scandal Fast Facts," *CNN*, last updated March 5, 2017. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/30/world/meast/iraq-prison-abuse-scandal-fast-facts/>.

"high-risk" detainees and detainees identified for interrogations.¹²⁵ Per accounts, the 372nd soldiers were not trained for prison guard duty and due to the large number of detainees in "the hard site" (the name given to Tiers 1A and IB), the company commander deferred prison guard duty to noncommissioned officers who had "civilian correctional backgrounds" to work night shifts. Ultimately, Tiers 1A and 1B became known as the sites of abuses that were widely covered throughout the scandal. At its height, the prison under U.S. occupation held approximately 3,800 detainees.¹²⁶

The scandal unfolded the following year on April 28, 2004 when *60 Minutes II* released graphic photographs of Iraqi detainees being tortured and humiliated. Two days later, Seymour Hersh published an "Torture at Abu Ghraib" in *The New Yorker* on April 30, detailing the abuses taking place in the Iraqi prison.¹²⁷ Violations, per a report released by Major General Antonio Taguba included numerous forms of abuse and sexual violence. These included forcibly arranging detainees in sexually explicit positions for photographs; forcing detainees to remove clothing and remain naked for days at a time; forcing male detainees to masturbate while recording the behavior; arranging naked male detainees in a pile and jumping on them; and attaching wires to a naked male detainee's genitals to simulate electric torture.

XVI. "A Few Bad Apples": Delegitimizing Institutionalized Sexual Violence

When news broke of Abu Ghraib during *Sixty Minutes II* in 2004, the reaction from media outlets was one of shock and revulsion.¹²⁸ The very images of naked, humiliated Iraqi men

¹²⁵ Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba, *Executive summary of Article 15-6 investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade*, (May 5, 2004). <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4894001>.

¹²⁶ "Iraq Prison Abuse Scandal Fast Facts," *CNN*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ Rebecca Leung, "Abuse at Abu Ghraib: Dan Rather Has Details Of One Man Who Died In The Custody Of Americans," *CBS News*, May 05, 2004. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/abuse-at-abu-ghraib/>.

juxtaposed with smiling American service members not only shocked, but represented a sense of shame among American audiences. Nonetheless, the response from the U.S. government was swift; then President George W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld promptly issued public apologies and attempted to assuage concerns by insisting that such abuse did not represent American values nor the Administration's policies. Furthermore, Bush highlighted that the abuses depicted in the photos were performed by 'rogue' soldiers, or a 'few bad apples.'¹²⁹ Though such public reactions expressed disgust and suggested an acceptance of responsibility for the events, both Bush and Rumsfeld knew of the allegations months before the photographs were made public, but chose not to speak out until the media aired the images.

This decision to remain silent until the impact of the scandal prompted a response speaks to both individuals' complicity in the abuses. Just two years before, both officials signed off on the use of torture which effectively authorized the use of sexual violence. A 2002 memo signed by the President titled "Humane Treatment of Taliban and al Qaeda Detainees" authorized the abandonment of the U.S. commitment to key provisions of the Geneva Convention.¹³⁰ That same year Rumsfeld also signed a memo to end a military prohibition on cruelty and authorized 15 new techniques including nudity and humiliation.¹³¹ Though neither explicitly condones the use of sexual violence, the broad-sweeping nature of both memos ultimately gave individuals within the military the ability to order individuals to use such tactics that were sexual in nature. Per testimonies that were later released, these behaviors were ultimately labeled as humiliating and degrading and having an explicit sexual nature.¹³² Nonetheless, public reaction via media

¹²⁹ Phillippe Sands, "It Was Top Down, Stupid: The Bush Administration's 'bad apples' theory goes sour," *Slate*, June 18, 2008. http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisprudence/2008/06/it_was_top_down_stupid.html.

¹³⁰ Mark Danner, *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2004), 105.

¹³¹ Sands, "It Was Top Down, Stupid."

¹³² Maj. Gen. George R. Fay, "Investigation of the Abu Ghraib Detention Facility and 205th Military Intelligence Brigade," in *The Abu Ghraib Investigations: The Official Reports of the Independent Panel and the Pentagon*

coverage commonly framed the sexually violent behavior that took place, as acts of torture, reflecting a common bias in coding sexual violence against men as torture.

Furthermore, the decision to label the individuals as a 'few bad apples' is a technique that seeks to deflect the blame and responsibility from powerful to less powerful individuals. As Cynthia Enloe describes it "the 'bad apple' explanation always goes like this: the institution is working fine, its values are appropriate, its internal dynamics are of a sort that sustain positive values and respectful, productive behavior."¹³³ To diminish the wide scale authorization of such behavior to the product of a few 'rogue' individuals removes the blame and responsibility from the higher echelons of authority, the President and his Administration. Furthermore, it reinforces a narrative that the institutions in which the behaviors occurred, in this instance the U.S. Military (and Army more specifically) are performing according to positive, respectful values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.¹³⁴

Thus, rather than examining institutions like the U.S. Military, and looking to the broader context or as Enloe writes the "barrel" in which these "bad apples" come from, "nothing needs to be reassessed or reformed...all that needs to happen to stop the abuse is to prosecute and remove those few individuals who refused to play by the established rules."¹³⁵ As a result, the narrative shifts the focus of the abuses to the individuals and fails to acknowledge the gendered aspects of the culture and institutions in which these individuals operate. This reflects the power of such individuals who oversee these institutions, including Rumsfeld and the President, to reframe the issue. By shifting the focus to individuals who are thus portrayed as 'rogue,' Administration

on the Shocking Prisoner Abuse Scandal in Iraq, ed. Steven Strasser (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 112-113.

¹³³Cynthia Enloe, "Wielding Masculinity Inside Abu Ghraib: Making Feminist Sense of an American Military Scandal," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* vol. 10, no. 3 (2004): 89. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/docview/197722028?accountid=14434>.

¹³⁴"The Army Values," U.S. Army. <https://www.army.mil/values/>.

¹³⁵ Enloe, 89.

officials are using the privilege, accorded through their public office, to suggest that the 11 service members misused the power they were granted under the scope of the Army.

Though the Taguba Report highlights the actions of individuals, it also faults individuals higher up the chain of command within the Army. However, media coverage during the scandal overwhelmingly focused on the individuals in the photographs, and in particular two women Lynndie England and Sabrina Harman. Ultimately it was England who became the "poster child for bad behavior and a cautionary tale for thousands of women soldiers on active duty," whereas Harman, though not receiving as long of a prison sentence, "did not escape scrutiny as a woman."¹³⁶ Media accounts as Marita Gronnvoll suggests overwhelmingly point to details about England and Harman's appearances and describes England, in particular, as monster-like.¹³⁷ Headlines like *The Guardian's* "A new-monster in-chief"¹³⁸ and *CBS News'* "A Symbol of Shame?"¹³⁹ convey this sense of shock and horror at a female who would commit such behavior.

Nonetheless, as *The Guardian* article articulates, "England is a bit-player who came to symbolise a wider horror story," in which "a 'sweet, down-to-earth' paper-pusher who wanted to be a weather girl turned into a preening sexual predator."¹⁴⁰ This language not only renders England into a monster-like individual because of her actions, but also reflects inherent assumptions about feminine traits to be performed by women like England. Nonetheless, the same scrutiny and attention to such 'deviant' behavior is overwhelmingly rendered silent in describing the men implicated in the scandal.

¹³⁶ Marita Gronnvoll, "Gender (In)Visibility at Abu Ghraib," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 10, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 375, 10.1353/rap.2008.0016.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 376.

¹³⁸ Mary Riddell, "A new monster-in-chief," *The Guardian*, May 9, 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/may/09/usa.iraq1>.

¹³⁹ Joel Roberts, "Symbol of Shame?" *CBS News*, May 7, 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/symbol-of-shame/>.

¹⁴⁰ Riddell, "A new monster-in-chief."

This calls into mind the central argument of *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* which seeks to explain away political violence at the hands of women as being driven by personal and apolitical forces and thus being the product of "maternalism, mental instability or deviant sexuality."¹⁴¹ Gronnvoll argues that many view women, who perform masculine traits, as troubling "because they detach it from biological men and demonstrate masculinity to be a construct maintained with effort."¹⁴² This media narrative of England as being sexually deviant, and monster-like reflects of her abnormality by not performing expected feminine traits. It also reflects a shock at seeing performed masculine traits not attached to a male body. The lack of such attention to the men implicated in the scandal, and their marking as ungendered, further emphasizes this point. Gronnvoll again articulates this detail vividly by pointing to four articles about Corporal Charles Graner, considered one of the main players in the scandal. None of the articles' headlines refer to Graner's biological sex and each describes him with terms such as a guard, suspect, and Specialist.¹⁴³

XVII. Masculinizing the Nation Through the U.S. Military

As mentioned previously, masculinity is not a singular construct and multiple masculinities may exist in any given context. To make sense of what possibly motivated sexual violence in Abu Ghraib and to understand the narratives dominating the scandal, one must examine the influence of hypermasculinity in U.S. Military culture. Given the plurality of cultures within the different military branches, this section will focus specifically on the culture within the U.S. Army, which was implicated in Abu Ghraib. Even with the many developments

¹⁴¹ Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. (London/New York: Zed Books, 2007), 41.

¹⁴² Gronnvoll, 376.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

and changes to the institution's policies, service in any branch of the U.S. Military has long been viewed as a process that transforms boys into men. Given a common gender bias in which sex and gender are assumed to be associated (i.e. male-masculine and female-feminine), a space inhabited by men is thus perceived as masculine.

This touches upon Reeser's point about the military as an historically all-male institution and functioning as a means through which a nation is built, thus rendering it more masculine.¹⁴⁴ Though the U.S. Military may be mixed-sex in composition presently, imagined perceptions of the institution as all-male may remain due to a selectivity of preferential traits and aspects that may embody a nation (i.e. military might, courage, and strength). One example includes the very recent policy change to allow women to serve in combat roles. It was assumed previously that women could not serve in combat roles because such work was considered as too dangerous and thus too masculine for women who were assumed to naturally embody more feminine traits. Thus these "metonymic connections, then, always imply a choice to include or to focus on one representation along with a choice to reject others,"¹⁴⁵ which in an institution like the Army, and by extension the entire military, speaks more broadly to the gender of the nation.

However, Melissa Tracey Brown also points out that the idea of the military as a space, in which young men become 'real men' embodying heteronormative masculine ideals, has been challenged. This was particularly the case during the emergence of an all-volunteer force in the military in the early 1970s. The period was defined by multiple factors that disrupted assumed gender roles. These included "the women's movement; the loss of good-paying, blue-collar

¹⁴⁴ Reeser. 173.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

industrial jobs that gave working-class men status, economic independence, and the ability to support a family; and the loss of the Vietnam War."¹⁴⁶

Despite this shift, Brown points out that recruitment materials by different branches of the military still appeal to a performative masculinity characterized by traits including economic stability and independence, which are still commonly perceived as prerequisites for manhood in American culture. Furthermore, such materials appeal to less overt forms of a "soldiering-based masculinity" using to a lesser degree images of becoming a protector "but mainly in terms of character development and personal transformation, with reference to such traditional warrior traits as strength and courage and with frequent use of militaristic imagery."¹⁴⁷

Despite this subtle shift, scholars, and feminist scholars in particular, still argue that the culture within the military continues to reinforce hypermasculine behaviors and traits. Recognizing the essential element of a military as combat and acknowledging the historic framing of the military as an all-men institution and thus all-masculine space, produces what Patrice Keats calls a combat-masculine-warrior (CMW) paradigm. This CMW is ultimately the central force that governs military socialization and acculturation by "shaping members' cognitions and perceptions of meaning, reality, and sense of belonging."¹⁴⁸ Given the military's emphasis on group cohesion, activities appeal to this paradigm, defined by hypermasculine traits and behaviors including "strength, toughness, violence, insensitivity, and aggressive or exaggerated heterosexuality," even with female members present.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Melissa Tracey Brown, "Enlisting Masculinity," (Phd dissertation, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2007), 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 85.

¹⁴⁸ Patrice Keats, "Soldiers Working Internationally: Impacts of Masculinity, Military Culture, and Operational Stress on Cross-cultural Adaptation," *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Dec 2010): 293. DOI: 10.1007/s10447-010-9107-z.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Training, for example, begins by inculcating individuals with ideal values that are associated with masculinity, which include aggressiveness, strength, emotional insensitivity, and violence. An example includes soldiers being told during basic training that “pain is weakness leaving the body,” while enduring physically taxing activities regardless of pain and injury so as to force an adherence to a particular identity characterized by emotional insensitivity and strength.¹⁵⁰ Thus to be in pain is to appear weak, and soft. This softness is counterintuitive to the hard, toughness valued by the military.

Means of desensitizing soldiers have included various psychological techniques. Referred to as "mechanisms of moral disengagement," these include dehumanizing one's enemy with coded language including "target acquisition" and employing derogatory terms.¹⁵¹ Historical examples including "gook," used during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and "faggot" in multiple contexts have adapted to different contexts over the years.¹⁵² In Iraq "towel head" and "Hajji" were used to describe the Iraqi people while "man love Thursdays," was used in Afghanistan to describe Afghan men having sex before Friday; a crude reference to bacha bazi, the practice of sexual slavery of young Afghan boys.¹⁵³ As an individual deployed to northern Iraq in 2003 recalls “...Towel head and camel jockey and most disturbing of all, sand nigger,” were used to describe the Iraqi people, adding “...these words did not initially come from my fellow soldiers but from my platoon leader, my sergeant, my company first sergeant.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Cheryl Abbate, "Uprooting the Culture of Sexual Assault of the Armed Forces through a Gender Aware Perspective" (presentation, Command and General Staff Foundation Ethics Symposium, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, May 6, 2014), 9.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 10.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ben Brody, "The definitive glossary of modern US military slang," *Global Post*, December 03, 2013, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2013-12-03/definitive-glossary-modern-us-military-slang>.

¹⁵⁴ Phillip Martin, "Why So Many Iraqis Hate Us? Try ‘Towel Head’ On for Size," *The Huffington Post*, April 11, 2008, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/phillip-martin/why-so-many-iraqis-hate-u_b_96330.html.

Interestingly the juxtaposition of rank and use of derogatory language suggests a privileging of hypermasculinity based on characteristics including race and ethnicity. The ability to use such language and normalize such derogatory terms in this instance permeates from higher to lower ranking individuals. Furthermore, such language also reinforces an 'othering' of the enemy. To use such derogatory and non-human language to identify individuals living in an area inhabited by the 'enemy' speaks to Reeser's point on Said's orientalism, a lens through which "the West is coded as more civilized and as more cultured than the East."¹⁵⁵ This East/West binary used to 'other' one's enemy in the military, may parallel a gender binary of "masculine/feminine, masculine/effeminate, or masculine/homosexual function," particularly when considering such terms as "man love Thursdays." But also, in choosing to label people with such language, whether not overtly sexual in nature, reflects a recognition that in being associated with a hypermasculine institution like the U.S. Military, one has the ability to assert his or her strength through use of such language.

In combination with such desensitization, other processes through official training and indoctrination but, more so unofficial reinforcement through group interaction and socialization, continue to reinforce hypermasculine behaviors including "violence, emotional insensitivity, distrust of others, substance abuse, dominant and misogynistic relationships with women, and work compulsion," along with sexual behaviors and the consumption of pornography.¹⁵⁶ Such behaviors have been commonly viewed as having a correlation with the use of gendered and sexualized norms and behavior, including the labeling of individuals in training with feminized language (i.e. "pussy" and "bitch") and the use of sexual violence against such individuals, whether male or female.

¹⁵⁵ Reeser, 185.

¹⁵⁶ Keats, 296.

As Reeser suggests, such behavior may be construed symbolically in understanding a nation's dominance of another nation "without necessarily suggesting the homosexuality of the dominant nation."¹⁵⁷ Instead, it is the dominated nation that is consequently feminized due to this association of weak with feminine and dominant with masculine traits. Thus, it is important to consider this point in deconstructing the behaviors that took place at Abu Ghraib by U.S. forces on Iraqi detainees, which will be further explored.

Over the past several decades, the Military has sought policies to challenge such behavior and seek greater gender equity. Evidence includes the decisions to allow female members to serve in combat, and end 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and the ban on transgender service members. Nonetheless, the long term effects of these changes have yet to be fully understood. As Keats argues, "norms related to sexuality are nonetheless inevitable in the context of a primary group, and indoctrination into the combat masculine warrior paradigm creates a fertile environment for sexual norms idealizing aggressive heterosexuality." Though training and official indoctrination may be more gender sensitive, hypermasculine group socialization through informal group behaviors still reinforces this CMW paradigm. Thus, service members may still subscribe to and perform particular traits and behaviors based on an underlying dominant masculinity despite ongoing policy efforts to change such norms.

XVIII. Abu Ghraib and the Politics of Victimhood and Perpetration: A Gender Analysis

Based on the reactions and what has been revealed through an analysis of militarized masculinity, it appears that the Abu Ghraib scandal represents an institutionalization of hypermasculine dominance over a perceived 'other.' Unlike the first analysis of the DRC, the

¹⁵⁷ Reeser, 183.

othering referenced here speaks to the differentiation of the victim as part of the 'other' nation that is determined to be lesser than and more feminine. This othering of the victim also points to the gendered politics of privilege and race, manifested in U.S. Military capacity in Iraq, in exerting sexual violence against Iraqi detainees. Thus, this section will deconstruct what this means for understanding wartime sexual violence against non-Western men, when committed by Western men and women, under (Western) state authority.

The nature of sexual violence by Americans against Iraqis in the context of a foreign prison reflects a nationalized exertion of hypermasculinity. As Reeser articulates with regards to sexual violence and specifically, male rape, the act "may construct a certain kind of masculinity, analogically, without necessarily suggesting the homosexuality of the dominant nation, as with sexualities in prison, in which homosexual acts can function as a trope for control or power."¹⁵⁸ Forcing prisoners to masturbate in front of other prisoners, remain naked for days, and sit and pose piled on top of other naked detainees, all in the presence of U.S. soldiers could arguably be perceived as an act of asserting dominance over a perceived enemy. Such dominance can be viewed as homosexual behavior that is designed to 'homosexualize' the individual.

This characterization of such behavior parallels the dynamics of sexual violence against men, which Sivakumaran elaborates with regards to power and dominance of the perpetrator over the victim, and emasculation through homosexualization and feminization of the victim (i.e. forcing Iraqi detainees to wear women's underwear on their heads for days).¹⁵⁹ However, it is important to question whether the intent of the U.S. military was to humiliate Iraqi men and why humiliation necessarily included sexual violence. Whether Americans deliberately intended to offend Iraqi cultural sensitivities and lessen detainees' sense of masculinity can actually be

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Sivakumaran, 172; Maj. Gen. Taguba, *Executive summary*.

viewed as a reflection of the perpetrators' own insecurities concerning masculinity and fears of homosexuality.

Cynthia Enloe notes this phenomenon surmising the possibility that the behaviors performed by members of the military in Abu Ghraib may reflect a "belief in an allegedly "exotic," frail Iraqi masculinity, fraught with fears of nakedness and homosexuality." However, this belief among Americans in this 'exotic' Iraqi construct of masculinity may be the result of "home-grown American sense of masculinity's fragility -- how easily manliness can be feminized -- that prompted them to craft these prison humiliations."¹⁶⁰

When considering the process of masculinization through training and indoctrination of the Army and other military branches, this argument makes sense. Male and female members of the military are not inherently hypermasculine, but rather are trained to uphold idealized traits that must be continuously performed, but do not reflect the individuals' sense of self. Sandra Whitworth reflects on this phenomenon pointing out that such militarized masculinities "rarely resonate with soldiers' sense of self and lived experiences or with the actual conditions of militarized men's lives."¹⁶¹ Thus, individuals must continuously conceal this fragile sense of self through institutionalized practices and individual expressions that may appear hypermasculine, including the use of sexual violence.

One can also view this behavior through the lens of Reeser's analysis of Said's orientalist argument. When viewed through an East/West binary, the exertion of such hypermasculine and sexual behavior by Americans on Iraqis may represent a Western nation, which perceives itself as dominant and masculine, over a weaker and more feminized Eastern nation. Thus, this

¹⁶⁰ Enloe, 89.

¹⁶¹ Sandra Whitworth, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 166.

othering is not only rooted in how one frames their enemy, but also in ethnic and racial markers; masculinized, white, American perpetrators versus feminized, brown, Iraqi victims.

From this orientalist perspective, implicitly coding victims and perpetrators along racial and ethnic terms is problematic when one considers the privilege associated with victimhood. An example that highlights this issue is a comparison of the Abu Ghraib scandal, and in particular the treatment of victims, to the overall response to male victims of sexual assault within the U.S. Military. The reported participation of medical staff in Abu Ghraib in facilitating and monitoring torture of detainees, and failure to accurately report injuries sustained from interrogations (in addition to deaths caused by torture), underscores bias against responding to non-American victims of violence due to their perception as an 'other' and enemy.¹⁶² This also represents a complicity of such hypermasculine sexual violence and an extension of the role of perpetrator beyond those who conducted such violence and those that ordered it in the military.

Additionally, a brief overview of the overall response, or lack thereof, to the Abu Ghraib scandal highlights this privileging of male victimhood as a result of a nationally-based, orientalist-aligned construction of masculinity. Following the media headlines, multiple investigations, and apologies issued by top Administration officials, only 11 U.S. soldiers were convicted. Ultimately these individuals were reprimanded, demoted, and/or relieved of command. While some of these individuals served in prison, they have long since completed their sentences.¹⁶³ This response does not account for those who are further up the military chain of command, nor the Administration officials including Secretary Rumsfeld. As P.W. Singer pointed out in 2015, "It is now a decade since, and key players in one of the worst scandals in

¹⁶² Allen Keller, "Torture in Abu Ghraib," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, vol. 49, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 566. 10.1353/pbm.2006.0059.

¹⁶³ "Iraq Prison Abuse Scandal Fast Facts," *CNN*.

recent U.S. history have not faced any accountability."¹⁶⁴ Two years later, this fact remains.

The privileging of American male victims over Iraqi detainees is particularly clear when contrasted to the large response by the Department of Defense to address sexual violence internally. Measures have included the implementation of a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office in 2004 to "enable military readiness and reduce -- with a goal to eliminate -- sexual assault from the military."¹⁶⁵ More recently, the launch of a Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men in 2016 reflects a more nuanced recognition and concern for sexual violence against men, but only internally within the Department of Defense.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, a recent swell in American media coverage further highlights this attitude of concern towards one's own military. A *GQ* article, for instance, includes multiple testimonies from male victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence in the military.¹⁶⁷ The article highlights the challenge of victims being silenced in a hypermasculine institution and includes multiple testimonies addressing the perceived feminized role of victimhood.

However, such coverage of the issue and characterization of victims, and new recruits in particular, as "stripped of their free will," and incapable of questioning their authorities evokes a feeling of sorrow and concern for these victims.¹⁶⁸ Coverage of the Abu Ghraib scandal in the media did highlight the nature of the acts used against detainees and decried the use of torture. Nonetheless, well-cited articles including the 2004 *The New Yorker* piece failed to employ the

¹⁶⁴ Noah Bierman, "Few have faced consequences for abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-abu-ghraib-lawsuit-20150317-story.html>.

¹⁶⁵ "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office," U.S. Department of Defense, <http://www.sapr.mil/>.

¹⁶⁶ *Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men*, Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, October 2016. http://sapr.mil/public/docs/prevention/DoD-Plan-to-Prevent-and-Respond-to-Sexual-Assault-of-Military-Men_Approved.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Nathaniel Penn, "Son, Men Don't Get Raped," *GQ*, September 7, 2014, <http://www.gq.com/long-form/male-military-rape>.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

term sexual violence despite citing sexual acts including forced nakedness.¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the lack of a comparable response to the victims and a failure to hold perpetrators accountable, beyond those directly implicated for carrying out orders from higher ranking officials, suggests an inconsistency within the U.S. Military in recognizing all male victims equally.

In addition to this privileging of victims is the privileging of the perpetrators, and what the silence around accountability means for gender. In addition to medical staff, multiple members of the military, lawyers, and government staff and officials were all aware that such forms of torture were taking place.¹⁷⁰ As Enloe points out, these individuals despite knowing that such behaviors "violated both the spirit and the language of the Geneva Conventions, the UN Convention Against Torture and the US federal law against torture" remained silent.¹⁷¹

When considering the function of the military, an institution that is viewed as an essential component to constructing a modern nation-state, in defending its nation and as an agent for enacting policies that may fall under the realm of national security, one must consider the normalization of such masculinity at a national scale. If one considers the privileging and normalization of militarized masculinity within the U.S. national security community, then key decision makers in that space also perform such masculinity as seen in the enactment of policies that authorized torture. The silence Enloe addresses among individuals who knew of the legal ramifications of such policies may represent a fear of appearing too soft or weak and thus too feminine in a highly masculinized space.¹⁷²

Finally, the strong media reaction to the women involved in Abu Ghraib, and to England

¹⁶⁹ Seymour Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib: American soldiers brutalized Iraqis. How far up does the responsibility go?" *The New Yorker*, May 10, 2004, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/05/10/torture-at-abu-ghraib>.

¹⁷⁰ Keller, 566.

¹⁷¹ Enloe, 89.

¹⁷² Enloe, 89.

in particular, speaks to the troubling association of gender with sex. This gender-sex assumption, made clear by Baaz and Stern assumes men perform masculine traits and women perform feminine traits only, which reinforces a heteronormative gender-binary. As Baaz and Stern argue, such assumptions have contributed to a general lack of recognition of women as perpetrators of wartime sexual violence in multiple contexts and narratives. In instances in which women are recognized as perpetrators, they are considered exceptions who "emerge as so masculinized that they no longer fit into the notion of 'women.'"¹⁷³ In reacting so strongly to England as a deviant individual, the media reflected this reaction; England was viewed as an exceptional individual to the female-feminine, male-masculine binary. However, the more troubling aspect is the lack of such detailed coverage of England's male colleagues. Paralleling the silence Enloe addresses, the lack of such a media response reflects an implicit acceptance of hypermasculine behavior, including sexual violence, when performed by men.

XIX. Relevance to the Argument

Unlike the examples of the DRC and El Salvador, the Abu Ghraib scandal represents a case in which wartime sexual violence against men represents an institutionalized expression of hypermasculine dominance over the 'other' enemy. Whereas the 'other' in the DRC is used in international narratives to describe sexual violence as a racialized and exoticized phenomenon in a country steeped in madness, perpetrators in Abu Ghraib view the victim as a racialized and evil 'other.' The complicity of such tactics and implicit approval by the U.S. Government further reflects this view. El Salvador, by contrast, represents a case in which sexual violence was used by the state to assert hegemonic, hypermasculinity and feminize and thus weaken a political

¹⁷³ Baaz and Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War*, 35.

enemy. However, the Abu Ghraib scandal takes on this narrative further through a racialized lens in which white individuals exert a militarized, and thus institutionalized, form of hypermasculinity as a means of attacking a brown, 'other' enemy.

Unlike the examples in the DRC and El Salvador, the Abu Ghraib scandal also underscores the privileging of masculinities as evidenced in the overall reaction toward Iraqi victims versus U.S. military victims. The acknowledgement of the issue as damaging to the U.S. Military's morale has prompted the establishment of programs designed to address sexual assault within the military. Comparatively, the reaction or lack thereof to victims in Iraq and the minimal response to those implicated reflects a privileging of masculinities along racialized lines. This hierarchy of masculinities is also apparent in the reaction towards women who exhibit hypermasculine traits, evidenced by media narratives of Lyndie England. Thus, the lack of scrutiny towards the men implicated in Abu Ghraib suggests an acceptance of institutionalized hypermasculinity within the military when performed by men. However, the perception of wartime sexual violence in non-Western contexts including that of the DRC warrant a much different reaction in which the issue is framed as an exceptional non-Western phenomenon.

XX. Conclusion

Through these three cases, this paper has not only demonstrated how constructions of masculinity affect perceptions and narratives of wartime sexual violence against men, but also how such narratives vary greatly across different contexts. This variation reflects factors including political and racial attitudes towards particular actors, the temporal context in which the violence took place, and an acceptance of particular masculinities. In trying to understand why wartime sexual violence against men occurs, an analysis of masculinities and a focus on hegemonic masculinities in a given context can help one understand possible motivations.

The DRC represents one case in which wartime sexual violence against men is largely overlooked due to assumptions perpetuated in narratives employed by powerful international actors. The failure to consistently acknowledge male victims further reinforces a silencing of victims which is shaped by hegemonic masculinities within the country. Men are socialized to be powerful in terms of providing for families and exhibiting physical traits of strength and dominance. Thus sexual violence by another male undermines this performance.

In being sexually violated, victims feel homosexualized or feminized and thus less masculine. In this particular case, to be a man and to exhibit traits associated with homosexuality or femininity is less idealized and accepted. Nonetheless, this internalization of victimhood and the perpetuation of such hegemonic masculinity is problematic because it renders feminine and homosexual traits as lesser than masculine traits. Furthermore, the added international narrative of wartime sexual violence in the DRC as an exotic and exceptional phenomenon is especially problematic when compared to perceptions of wartime sexual violence in the other contexts.

Unlike the DRC in which sexual violence against men appears to reflect a performance of idealized masculine traits, El Salvador challenges such logic. Despite the influence of machismo within hegemonic masculinities in the country, insurgent masculinity particularly within the FMLN can help explain the lower rates of sexual violence against men (and women) during the war. Nonetheless, this lack of information may be attributed to other factors including the silencing of victims by the CVES report in which investigators did not include full details about sexual violence against men in reports. Like the DRC, this reflects a perpetuation of a narrative by an international body that suggests that men are not victims of sexual violence.

In contrast to both the DRC and El Salvador, the narrative of sexual torture as a form of sexual violence during the Abu Ghraib scandal is largely absent of language describing sexual

behavior. Instead, much of the language surrounding the scandal focused solely on torture and framed the behaviors of those involved as the result of a 'few bad apples.' Such a narrative is interesting in that it fails to acknowledge the broader issue; the influence of militarized masculinity in allowing for sexual violence and the context in which senior U.S. officials allowed such behavior to occur.

Another interesting aspect about Abu Ghraib is the privileging of masculinities along racialized elements, that underlies motivations and reactions to the scandal. Sexual violence against men is an experienced within the U.S. Military and has prompted a fairly robust response to address the issue. Comparatively, detainees in Abu Ghraib did not receive an adequate amount of care and reparation for the violence they experience. Though the perpetrators of the violence were reprimanded in response, the extent of the punishments were fairly limited. Applying Said's orientalist argument helps one better understand the use of sexually violent behavior against Iraqi detainees as a means of exerting the nation's masculinity over a feminized 'other.' Furthermore, the failure to hold senior level military and government officials accountable reflects an inability to acknowledge or confront an acceptance of an institutionalized, military masculinity.

While an analysis of three cases has revealed significant information concerning how dominant masculinities in a given context can shape the narrative of sexual violence against men, many gaps and unknowns remain in trying to understand this issue. A common element raised in these cases is that of emasculation and stigmatization of the victim. Sexual violence against men is often framed as a means of emasculating the individual. By arguing that emasculation is the intent of sexual violence, one assumes that the victim identifies with a particular form of a heteronormative masculinity that must be maintained.

Furthermore, much of the research that has helped inform this paper is built on

assumptions regarding heteronormativity. Arguments including sexual violence against men as a means of emasculation imply that all male victims feel violated because they lose their heteronormative masculinity. This is evidenced in testimonies by victims in the DRC and El Salvador who exhibit anxiety about homosexuality due to being violated. This concern about being homosexual alone is problematic because it reflects a bias against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) individuals.

Nonetheless, it is important to question and better understand the emasculation argument. Is sexual violence against men always about masculinity? Is there another underlying motivation for such violence? And how does one explain the experiences of those men (and women) who do not identify as heterosexual and have been sexually violated during wartime? Beyond the physical pain inflicted upon the individual, what is the intent by the perpetrator? And how do those individuals internalize the experience? Such research may reveal a larger gap, particularly in responding to the physical and psychological needs of these victims.

Nonetheless, policy, legal, and academic responses to wartime sexual violence must emphasize the context in which the issue occurs. Though one may argue that sexual violence against men is caused by a commonly cited set of motivations and may happen under a particular context, a deeper gender analysis of masculinities in that context can shed further revelations and assumptions concerning the victim and perpetrator. By recognizing the largely varied contexts and motivations for which wartime sexual violence against men does and does not occur, policymakers and practitioners in legal and humanitarian response can more adequately address institutional and cultural elements that may perpetuate such behavior and more importantly, identify and address the unique needs of victims.

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