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**What Do We Know About Sexual Violence in Armed  
Conflicts?  
Recent Empirical Progress and Remaining Gaps in  
Peace and Conflict Research**

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# What Do We Know About Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts?

## Recent Empirical Progress and Remaining Gaps in Peace and Conflict Research

### Abstract

Since the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s, sexual violence in conflict has received increasing scholarly attention. While earlier research focused on documenting cases of sexual violence and investigating the topic from a meta-perspective, in the last decade an increasing number of empirical, largely qualitative studies have been published. This paper critically reviews this recent literature on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) according to two lines of inquiry. It first examines the literature on the causes of CRSV, then surveys the research on its social consequences. Overall, the growing body of research on CRSV has considerably advanced our knowledge. However, methodologically there remains a shortage of comparative, and particularly quantitative, research. Much of the qualitative research relies on convenience samples, which result in a clear selection bias. This hampers our ability to make more general statements about the causes and, in particular, the social consequences of CRSV.

Keywords: literature review, sexual violence, rape, armed conflict, war

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# **What Do We Know About Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts? Recent Empirical Progress and Remaining Gaps in Peace and Conflict Research**

**Carlo Koos**

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## **1 Introduction**

Sexual violence has been widespread in civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan (Darfur), Peru, El Salvador, Timor-Leste, Bosnia, Rwanda, Pakistan, and many other countries. Certainly, international attention to sexual violence in armed conflicts has increased in recent decades. A number of campaigns have been launched at the international level to counter conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and to prosecute perpetrators more effectively (for example, the UN's Stop Rape Now campaign). Furthermore, governments have taken action and brought together activists and policy makers (for example, the Global Summit to End

Sexual Violence in London in June 2014). However, women, men, and children continue to suffer from CRSV – for instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, and Syria – and it appears that the international awareness, campaigning, and political effort has had little impact.

This begs the general question of what social science research can tell us about sexual violence in warfare. Ultimately, should it not be one of the practical functions of social science scholarship to inform policy makers with more evidence-based research? Remarkably, research on CRSV is a relatively recent phenomenon, having emerged since the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where rape was used systematically to intimidate and terrorize the civilian population. Although research on CRSV has increased, there have been few attempts to bring together existing studies and synthesize the findings.<sup>1</sup> This is the purpose of this literature review. Two principal questions guide it and inform its structure: (1) What are the causes of CRSV? And (2) what are the consequences of CRSV?

The answers to these questions are important both for the scholarly debate on peace and conflict as well as for policy makers and practitioners. Research on the causes and consequences of CRSV is an important aspect of peace and conflict research. In particular, the literature on postconflict reconciliation (Hartzell 2009; Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Schneckener 2002; Toft 2009) can benefit from taking into account the social disruptions caused by widespread sexual violence during war (Sorensen 1998). For policy makers, knowing the causes of CRSV will ideally help them prevent it in the future. Understanding the consequences will enable the provision of targeted and effective measures to help individuals and communities recover (Sorensen 1998; World Bank 2011; 2013).

In order to provide a holistic answer to these questions, this literature review takes an interdisciplinary approach and does not restrict its literature review to political science; it also includes findings from sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, and public health research. While it prioritizes published scholarly work, it also takes into account reports by international organizations such as the UN and WHO and by nongovernmental organizations when they provide deeper conceptual contributions and/or empirical findings of relevance. The review has aimed to survey a balanced number of quantitative and qualitative studies. However, as will become apparent, most existing work is qualitative in nature as quantitative data on CRSV is so limited.

The paper continues as follows. Section 2 clarifies some conceptual terms, and Section 3 examines what the literature tells us about the causes of CRSV. Section 4 looks at the physical, psychological, and societal consequences of CRSV. In Section 5, I provide a general conclusion and suggest potential questions for future research.

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1 Isikozlu and Millard's (2010) development of typologies of "wartime rape" includes one of the more elaborate literature reviews (approximately six pages) but is very much restricted to the relatively small body of social science literature and excludes findings from psychology and public health. Buckley-Zistel, Krause and Loeper (2014) provide an annotated bibliography on sexual violence against women in refugee camps.

## 2 What is Conflict-Related Sexual Violence?

Although the term conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is widely used, there is not a commonly agreed-upon definition. The two components of the term, *conflict-related* and *sexual violence*, implicitly infer that sexual violence in conflicts is different from sexual violence in peacetime. While sexual violence in conflict has the same roots as sexual violence during peacetime (for example, gender inequality, sociocultural views), it is aggravated by ethnic, religious, or ideological cleavages that increase the level of hatred and brutality (Hagen and Yohani 2010). From a more philosophical perspective, Seifert (1993: 1) has proposed the notion that “[r]ape is not an aggressive expression of sexuality, but a sexual expression of aggression. In the perpetrator's psyche, it does not fulfill sexual functions, but is a manifestation of anger, violence and domination of a woman.” This aggression often takes the form of public gang rapes intended to humiliate and demoralize victims, their families, and the community at large (Meger 2010; Trenholm, Olsson, and Ahlberg 2011). The term CRSV or wartime rape never refers to isolated instances of sexual violence by individual combatants but rather indicates the much more widespread occurrence of it. The UN (2012: 2) defines CRSV as

incidents or patterns [...] of sexual violence, that is rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity against women, men or children.

This first part of the UN concept describes what is considered to constitute an act of sexual violence but allows for the inclusion of other acts of a similar nature (for example, sexual mutilation and torture). Importantly, the concept is not restricted only to female victims, but also includes males and children. Although research on male victims of CRSV has been less prominent, there is increasing evidence of it (Carpenter 2006; Christian et al. 2011). The definition goes on to relate these forms of sexual violence to the context of conflict:

Such incidents or patterns occur in conflict or postconflict settings or other situations of concern (e.g. political strife). They also have a direct or indirect nexus with the conflict or political strife itself, that is, a temporal, geographical and/or causal link. In addition to the international character of the suspected crimes (which can, depending on the circumstances, constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or other gross violations of human rights), the link with conflict may be evident in the profile and motivations of the perpetrator(s), the profile of the victim(s), the climate of impunity/ State collapse, cross-border dimensions and/or the fact that they violate the terms of a ceasefire agreement.

Although this part of the definition restricts the geographical and chronological scope of CRSV to conflict and postconflict contexts, it is not very explicit about the perpetrators. While CRSV is commonly associated with perpetrators who belong to the army, rebel

groups, and other types of armed groups, the UN's definition is relatively inclusive and does not exclude civilians and other unarmed authorities.

### 3 Causes of CRSV

Most social science research is interested in determining the causes of widespread sexual violence during civil conflicts. The longtime assumption that rape is an inevitable by-product of warfare (Brownmiller 1975) has been challenged by recent comparative empirical research, which has demonstrated variations in the prevalence of sexual violence across countries, across conflicts, and even across armed groups within the same conflict (Cohen 2013b; Wood 2009; Wood 2006). How can we explain these variations in CRSV? In the extant research on the determinants of CRSV, four major aspects of CRSV are identified. The earlier work theorizes about and examines the *purpose* of sexual violence in warfare (e.g., Brownmiller 1975; Turshen 2001; Cockburn 2001; Benard 1994). The second aspect is the *contextual conditions* under which CRSV is more likely (Brownmiller 1975; Cohen 2013b; Wood 2006). The third aspect is the *individual motives* of fighters (Wood 2009; Gottschall 2004; Elbert et al. 2013; Meger 2010), and the fourth is the *group dynamics* within armed groups (Leiby 2009; Elbert et al. 2013; Wood 2009; Green 2004). Although this body of research shares the same goal – that is, to determine what causes members of armed groups to commit sexual violence – the epistemological premises and thus the methodological preferences differ greatly, ranging from constructivist approaches to biosocial explanations to rational-choice-related perspectives. Notably, the individual works do not fit neatly into only one of the proposed categories (purpose, contextual conditions, individual motives, and group dynamics); in fact, some more comprehensive works address several of them.

#### 3.1 Purpose and Strategic Motives

A great deal of work on CRSV emphasizes its purpose – that is, the strategic and intentional use of sexual violence by armed groups against the “enemy” civilian population. The idea of using rape to punish groups of people based on certain characteristics (for instance, ethnic or religious identity, regional identities, assumed loyalties to other armed groups, etc.) is what distinguishes CRSV from everyday sexual violence perpetrated by spouses, relatives, acquaintances, or strangers (Hagen and Yohani 2010).

The widely accepted notion that rape serves as a weapon of war is based on this line of research. Much of this work argues that CRSV is used to terrorize, control, displace, and eliminate the civilian population by targeting female members (Leatherman 2007; True 2012; Boesten 2014; Pocar, Pedrazzi, and Frulli 2013). CRSV is viewed as a weapon of war as it demoralizes the population and generates a slow genocide through the spread of HIV/AIDS (Chowdhury and Lanier 2012; Hankins et al. 2002). Sharlach (2000) comes to a similar conclusion and argues that mass rape has the same outcomes as genocide: the physical and men-

tal injuries of women lead to the destruction of the family's and the ethnic community's morale. Along these lines, Brownmiller (1975: 38) introduced the notion that wartime rape represents the communication between the conquering men and the defeated, via the medium of the women's bodies: "Defense of women has long been a hallmark of masculine pride, as possession of women has been a hallmark of masculine success. Rape by a conquering soldier destroys all remaining illusions of power and property for men of the defeated side."

In their global overview, Bastick et al. (2007: 14) make a similar point, arguing that men are embarrassed to be unable to protect "their" women. In one of the rare empirical studies, Elbert et al. (2013: 58) present personal accounts from rapists that lend evidence to this argument. For instance, "The defeated enemy has to run. The women stay there. So the winner profits from the opportunity of raping them. And when the enemy comes back and sees that the women have been raped, his heart will be in pain."

Sexual violence is often even more painful when acts of rape are committed publicly and family members are made to watch each other being raped or are even forced to rape one another. Benard (1994) and Allen (1996) examine the systematic use of rape in Bosnia and make the case that forced impregnation, HIV/AIDS, and humiliation were elements of ethnic cleansing and were intended to destroy non-Serb Bosnians. In their very comprehensive and illustrative study on perpetrators of CRSV in the eastern DRC, Elbert et al. (2013) stress, among other things, the strategic calculus of using sexual violence against the civilian population in order to gain political attention and thereby be recognized as a dangerous armed group that needs to be taken seriously.

Other scholars, mostly from a feminist tradition, see the purpose of CRSV less as the control of the civilian population and more as the construction and perpetuation of gender inequalities (Cockburn 2001; Turshen 2001). These accounts echo Brownmiller's (1975) seminal work, which posits that men continually seek ways to dominate women and that the conditions of war provide the opportunity to use rape as a tool to exercise this urge.

A few recent studies investigate CRSV against men. This form of sexual violence is commonly ascribed the goal of demoralizing and emasculating men who belong to antagonized groups or who are disobedient civilians (Sivakumaran 2007; Christian et al. 2011; Carpenter 2006; Dolan 2010; Cohen 2013a). There is little doubt that this form of sexual violence is intended to violate social norms and to humiliate people and communities.

One problem with the concept of rape as a strategic weapon of warfare is that there is often no clear evidence regarding its strategic and targeted use. Proving its strategic use would require information that CRSV has been part of a military strategy and that orders have been given to systematically commit sexual violence against specific groups of people (ethnic or religious groups, regions, etc.). Some cases leave little doubt about the strategic calculus of rape – for instance, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, or Bangladesh. However, other cases with widespread CRSV, such as Sierra Leone or Burundi, show patterns of indiscriminate rape (Dijkman, Bijleveld, and Verwimp 2014; MSF 2004). This is not to say that CRSV has not been or-



dered by military leaders in such cases, but without – at least anecdotal – evidence of such orders, most of these studies' conclusions are based merely on assumptions and interpretation (Leiby 2009: 448).

Sharlach (2000: 99) addresses this point with regard to allegations of the systematic rape of women in Kosovo by the Serbian army in 1999: "The UN representatives report that there is not yet evidence that such rapes are systematic, but that the survivors feel that commanding officers were responsible." Buss (2009) and Kirby (2013), too, take a critical stance towards the widespread notion of rape as a strategic weapon of war. They are concerned about the reflexive use of the notion in all wartime contexts where sexual violence is prevalent, simply because it leads to reductionism and erases important empirical complexities.

Thomas and Regan (1994) point out that from a military perspective mass rape can be a very counterproductive strategy because it nurtures feelings of revenge and may mobilize civilians against the perpetrating group. Kelly (2010) presents evidence supporting this view from the DRC, where some members of the Mai Mai armed group make the point that raping civilians can jeopardize relations with the community on whose support they depend. In their survey with rape offenders in the DRC, Elbert et al. (2013: 43) report that explicit orders to rape were not the norm but rather the exception. What was more important appeared to be the absence of punishment in cases of rape.

### ***3.2 Contextual Conditions and Opportunity Structures***

Most scholars agree that the absence of the rule of law, impunity, weakened state institutions, and above all gender inequalities make sexual violence in the context of ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts more likely (Cohen 2013b; Wood 2009; Leiby 2009; Hagen and Yohani 2010; Meger 2010; Trenholm, Olsson, and Ahlberg 2011; Elbert et al. 2013; Meger 2010; Dolan 2010). This context of lawlessness may set free a desire to commit rape in some men (Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell 2007; Brownmiller 1975; Goldstein 2001). In general, the contemporary literature largely agrees that the context of political instability and insecurity provides the necessary conditions for large-scale sexual violence; however, these conditions are not considered to be sufficient (Elbert et al. 2013; Cohen, Green, and Wood 2013) and are in fact common conditions for political violence and civil war more generally (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier 2003).

Wood (2009) makes the point that weak states do not automatically result in a breakdown of society and thereby unleash people to commit rape; rather, she holds, state failure will only provide a breeding ground for CRSV when societal norms break down in its aftermath – for instance, as a result of war, displacement, and crises. In her cross-national study of wartime rape in civil wars, Cohen (2013b) finds partial support for a relationship between state collapse and CRSV; however, this is the case only for insurgent-perpetrated acts of mass rape and not state-perpetrated ones. Her analysis does not find a statistically significant rela-

tionship between ethnic wars and mass rape, an association that has been widely made by scholars (Benard 1994; Sharlach 2000).

Some scholars make the important observation that the circumstances and consequences of armed conflict “normalize” the phenomenon of CRSV (Dolan 2010; Baaz and Stern 2009; Bastick, Grimm, and Kunz 2007; Vlachová and Biason 2005; Bosmans 2007). A similar undertone can be observed in Elbert et al.’s (2013) survey of ex-combatants in the DRC, in which respondents provide personal accounts of their experiences and crimes. Their matter-of-factness in talking about rape points to what is the core concern of feminist scholars and relates not only to CRSV but also to violence against women in general: gender inequalities and power imbalances that are deeply engrained in some societies, particularly patriarchal ones, and are passed on from generation to generation, thereby reproducing the scope conditions for the exploitation of women (Buckley-Zistel 2013; Alie 2008; Boesten 2014). In relation to this, what is generally assumed to be an important determinant of CRSV is the level of sexual violence before the war. A cross-country quantitative study by Butler and Jones (2014) lends partial support to this thesis. In addition, Dijkman (2014: 9) presents the view of an expert in sexual and gender-based violence in Burundi:

[...] cultural habits must have guided sexual violence cases also before the war – but people would talk even less about it and there would be even less help or assistance for victims. You were supposed to marry the woman you raped, if this was made known to the community; and that’s how it was settled.

Such post-rape arrangements say a great deal about gender relations and social order (Bosmans 2007). Clearly, however, gender inequality and sexual violence are not restricted to conflict and postconflict societies, but can be found in virtually all societies.

Overall, the investigation of the contextual conditions leading to sexual violence in the quantitative literature on CRSV (Cohen 2013b; Leiby 2009; Green 2004) identifies conditions similar to those of civil wars: state collapse, the breakdown of law and order, and impunity. Surprisingly, the existing quantitative studies have not considered including measures of gender equality or perceptions of gender relations, variables that could be of value in predicting CRSV.

### **3.3 Individual Motives**

The archetypal configuration of wars and armed conflicts is understood to provide conditions conducive to engaging in crimes and brutal acts such as sexual violence. Yet, even in such settings, not everyone perpetrates sexual violence. While our understanding of the purpose of CRSV and the opportunity structures associated with it has increased, less is known about the perpetrators’ individual motivations. What are the individual drivers that make soldiers, militiamen, and civilians commit rape during conflict? Some accounts present the “enemy’s” women as the spoils of war – that is, as subjects of private pleasure for combat-

ants. Bidwell's (1973: 20) quote from Genghis Khan is often cited to illustrate this historically widely held view: "The greatest pleasure in life is to defeat your enemies, to chase them before you [...] and to ravage their wives and daughters." Others assert that the "soldier identity" that armies create – a mixture of masculinity, violence, and conquest – makes individual rank-and-file soldiers more likely to commit sexual assaults (Seifert 1996; Baaz and Stern 2009).

Given the difficulty and cost of attaining the data, there is considerably less empirical research on the perpetrators than on other aspects of CRSV. This has led to much interpretation and speculation (Elbert et al. 2013: 7). Interestingly, the existing empirical studies on perpetrators of CRSV rely largely on research conducted in the DRC (Baaz and Stern 2009; Kelly 2010; Elbert et al. 2013). Baaz and Stern (2009) present army soldiers' narratives on rape in the DRC and find a number of self-perceptions that contribute to explaining individuals' perpetration of CRSV. Soldiers distinguish between "lust" rapes and "evil" rapes. Lust rapes are described as serving the sexual needs of a man or soldier and are perceived as somewhat more ethically acceptable than evil rapes, which are described as an expression of hatred and anger. Both types appear to be driven by hypermasculinity and what is perceived as the male's right to have sex. Further, soldiers attribute their anger and frustration to poverty, lack of family, and the general and almost normalized climate of war and conflict (see also True 2012: 122). While the respondents admit that these personal views are causes, they blame the emergence of these views and attitudes on the conditions of war and conflict. Meger (2010) comes to similar conclusions, arguing that combatants' individual motivations to commit rape are associated with the social constructs of masculinity but must be understood in the context of the political economy of conflict.

Kelly (2010: 8) draws on qualitative interviews with members of the Mai Mai militia in eastern Congo and presents a slightly different perspective. The personal motivation to commit "evil" rapes (as used above) appears to be less pronounced among Mai Mai members, as being perceived as a rapist could poison relationships with the population: "To rape? Well, rape for a Mai Mai, it is Satan's work, because as people walk, Satan follows behind them [...] This means it [raping] may happen to you when you are not prepared, but all of a sudden, the Devil fools you."

What has also been mentioned as an incentive not to rape, however, is the risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. This seems to clearly contradict the abovementioned accounts on the purpose of CRSV in the context of genocidal conflicts like those in Bosnia and Rwanda, where spreading HIV/AIDS was an intentional method for killing the other ethnic group.

Psychological studies by Elbert and colleagues lend preliminary weight to the thesis that perpetrating extreme violence might be felt as a rewarding, fascinating, and addictive personal experience (Elbert, Weierstall, and Schauer 2010). In their recent and so far most comprehensive study of more than 200 former combatants in the DRC, Elbert et al. (2013: 8) conclude that

The suffering and struggling of the victim, his or her blood, wounds, and vocalization, as well as the aggressive act itself, provide the perpetrator with context-dependent sets of learned and inborn positive feedback cues, and thus incite further acts of brutality. Hence, perpetrating violence has the potential to be a highly self-rewarding experience, subsequently feeding a lust to commit more violence over time. Increasingly more brutal forms of SGBV [sexual and gender-based violence] then trigger positive feedback cues, and perpetrators crave the positive feelings attached to committing violence.

Elbert et al. (2013: 40) show that 44 percent of demobilized combatants from various armed groups agreed with the statement that “it can be satisfying to harm others.” More than 80 percent believed that “combatants are out of control” and experience a kind of bloodlust that includes killing and raping people. This notion resonates with Butler et al.’s (2007) principal-agent argument that rank-and-file soldiers will use the opportunities of war to indulge their selfish motives and carry out rape. About half of the respondents in that study attributed CRSV to personal frustration and the absence of a wife with whom they could be sexually intimate. Approximately one-third mentioned that CRSV happens through peer pressure – that is, to prove one’s manhood through gang rape (p. 46) – and 40 percent said that revenge constitutes a motive. The respondents raped civilians associated with enemy armed groups to avenge the rapes “their” families and communities had experienced. The most brutal forms of rape were attributed to substance abuse, particularly of marijuana; frustration; self-hatred; lust for power; and a belief in witchcraft.

In sum, there is relatively little empirical evidence – and little systematic evidence, in particular – on the individual motives behind CRSV (Elbert et al. 2013 is an exception). However, the few studies there are indicate that existing views of gender may lie at the core. The perception of the brave and fearless combatant who takes whatever he (and sometimes she) wants informs and sustains a culture of hypermasculinity that appears to be responsible for the prevalence of CRSV.

### ***3.4 Intragroup Norms and Dynamics***

A number of scholars argue that group dynamics within armed groups also play a substantial role in explaining the prevalence, extent, and brutality of CRSV. Two arguments are advanced:

The first argument suggests that collective rape increases cohesion between members of armed groups (Cohen 2013b; Bastick, Grimm, and Kunz 2007; Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Wood 2006). The idea is that jointly committing sexual violence creates bonds between the perpetrators by generating collective feelings of power and superiority. Elbert et al. (2013: 47) present accounts from rapists in the DRC that lend credence to this perspective:

Participant 2019: I saw groups of soldiers encouraging each other to rape. Then they negotiated who starts and who comes after. And they all raped one woman.

Participant 2044: When a group is new, the commanders sometimes order to rape so that the group will get known.

The aspect of group dynamics is further emphasized when the interviewed combatants confess that the most dangerous groups for women are made up of three to five combatants (Elbert et al. 2013: 46). They explain that in a group of this size, the dynamic allows individual combatants to exercise their full sexual aggression towards the victim. The privacy of small groups provides assurance that fellow rapists will keep quiet, even in extremely brutal cases. Larger groups have been reported to hinder such acts, as perpetrators may be more wary that fellow combatants with higher moral standards will report their behavior (Baaz and Stern 2009; Green 2004; Boesten 2014; Kelly 2010).

The second argument posits that the absence of penalties and norms prohibiting CRSV on the part of the group and its leadership make opportunistic (not strategic or tactical) sexual violence<sup>2</sup> more likely (Wood 2006; 2009; Meger 2010). The accounts of demobilized combatants in the DRC illustrate that the absence of norms prohibiting CRSV allowed them to commit rape without fearing disciplinary consequences. Furthermore, the military leaders themselves committed rape: “There are commanders who do not order to rape, but they do it themselves. They are role models for the other soldiers” (Elbert et al. 2013: 44).

Butler et al. (2007) argue that the principal-agent relationship is a useful tool for understanding the occurrence of opportunistic CRSV. Rank-and-file soldiers can pursue their personal agendas – for example, rape – and count on information asymmetries that prevent leaders from knowing what is going on the ground (see also, Weinstein 2005). In her paper on Peru and Guatemala, Leiby (2009) makes the case that information asymmetry – or, in other words, a loss of control over troops – is less likely in state-led military organizations and more likely in loose, poorly trained, and less hierarchical armed groups. This should thus have an effect on the prevalence of CRSV.

#### 4 Consequences of CRSV

CRSV has severe implications for individuals, families, and societies, both in the short term and the long term (Hagen and Yohani 2010; Kelly et al. 2011; Bastick, Grimm, and Kunz 2007). These include the physiological harm to victims, psychological and mental trauma, and the effects on social relations within and beyond communities. These different types of consequences are largely investigated within three disciplines: (1) public health and medicine; (2) psychology; and (3) the social sciences, including political science, sociology, and anthropology. Although the public health and psychological studies certainly have their own particular research interests, they offer important, if not fundamental, findings on the social

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2 Targeted sexual violence – that is, the use of rape as a weapon of war – is discussed in Section 0.

consequences of CRSV. In my review of the public health and psychological literature I focus in particular on findings related to these social consequences.

#### *4.1 Physical Impacts*

Medical research on CRSV is primarily focused on the physical consequences that survivors have to deal with. These studies find that women who have survived CRSV, particularly brutal forms such as gang rape and sexual mutilation, often suffer from extreme physical damage, including chronic pain, fistula, and infertility. Fistula and infertility often have direct consequences for the survivor's social and economic well-being and her standing in the community (Shanks and Schull 2000; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005; WHO 2013; Clifford and Slavery 2008; Johnson et al. 2008; Jones et al. 2014). A rape survivor from the civil war in Mozambique summarized her physical state as follows (Sideris 2003: 717):

I have pain in my stomach and I suffer from headaches since the war. I am not well – even to work. I only work because I have no one to support me. I mean that I am not well through what the Renamo has done to me. The Renamo made me crippled. They beat me and raped me. Now it is as if I am a crippled somebody.

Traumatic fistulas are caused by sexual violence, particularly by gang rape or vaginal and rectal torture. Fistula causes incontinence and therefore makes it impossible to control the passage of bodily fluids (Kinyanda et al. 2010; Amnesty International 2004; Rackley 2014). This often leads to rejection by husbands and even by the community because of the resulting smell. Consequently, women suffering from fistula avoid social contact out of shame, suffer from social isolation, and cannot participate in regular social activities. Furthermore, many victims are unable to work, lose their income, and cannot provide for themselves or their family. They are thus left in a vulnerable situation (WHO 2013; Baker 2013; Bastick, Grimm, and Kunz 2007; Skjelsbaek 2001).

Infertility is similarly devastating for CRSV survivors. This is particularly true in traditional societies and cultural settings where women's reproductive abilities are central and where women are viewed as the sanctuary of culture (Gottschall 2004; Meger 2010). Without their childbearing abilities, women lose value and often cannot find a husband. Since being married often results in a minimum level of economic stability and security, survivors' inability to marry again puts them in a vulnerable position (Johnson et al. 2008; Mills et al. 2006; Mukamana and Brysiewicz 2008; Hagen and Yohani 2010; Jones et al. 2014).

Furthermore, as discussed above, survivors of CRSV are more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (Supervie, Halima, and Blower 2010; Hankins et al. 2002; Bosmans 2007; MSF 2004; Chowdhury and Lanier 2012). Opportunities for diagnosis and treatment are usually limited if not nonexistent in (post)conflict settings.

In sum, the physical consequences of CRSV not only have profound effects on the survivors' individual well-being, but also affect their social position and opportunities within

their communities. In fact, as we will see below, the physical damage is directly related to the psychological and social consequences of CRSV.

#### *4.2 Psychological Trauma*

The psychological literature, and to a certain degree the anthropological literature, is interested in the mental consequences of CRSV for survivors. Research on the psychological consequences has increased in recent years, yet the evidence base has been limited to certain localities. Much work draws on information from Bosnia, the eastern provinces of the DRC, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, as well as from South America – for instance, Peru and Colombia. Although the research is limited to a few former hotspots of violence, most studies strongly suggest that the psychological damage is long-lasting (Kuwert et al. 2014; Clifford and Slavery 2008; Sideris 2003; Skjelsbaek 2006).

The use of extremely humiliating forms of sexual violence by armed groups, such as public gang rapes where family members are made to watch the violence, have been reported to cause a loss of dignity and respect, as a rape survivor from Rwanda's genocide explains (Mukamana and Brysiewicz 2008, 381): "That experience is so shameful. I was humiliated. It is indescribable how rape humiliated me. You imagine [having] sex with two different men as a prostitute does."

Survivors are more likely to suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and suicidal tendencies (Josse 2010; Jones et al. 2014; Kuwert et al. 2014). They tend to experience deep mistrust towards acquaintances and strangers. Cultural taboos with regard to sexuality complicate disclosure and make rehabilitation more difficult. This is aggravated by the fact that in many postconflict settings perpetrators and victims know each other and often live in the same communities, where the perpetrators continue to live with impunity (Buckley-Zistel, Krause, and Loeper 2014; Vlachová and Biason 2005). Symptoms such as PTSD and anxiety further contribute to a complete loss of self-esteem, extreme helplessness, and despair. Pappas (2003) has coined the term "dissociative containers," which refers to the exclusion and disconnection of rape victims from humanity and the external world. This isolation is captured well by a traditional leader in the eastern DRC when he explains what those who have experienced a CRSV-related trauma go through and how that makes them suffer (Trenholm, Olsson, and Ahlberg 2011: 144):

People who undergo this trauma lose their sense of self [...] the effect is profound; the people [...] do not have the ability to reconstruct [...] We have people who do not even know how to begin again – they are a people dispossessed – and even those who return to their villages – they don't even sleep in their homes.

Importantly, Hagen and Yohani (2010) point out that symptoms such as PTSD, anxiety, and emotional withdrawal should be understood as survival mechanisms in contexts where violence and threats to life continue to occur. In such situations, nondisclosure and silence are

ways in which survivors increase their chances of survival. In a (marginally) stabilized post-conflict context, however, nondisclosure is often driven by cultural taboos and the fear of rejection and thereby makes evident the other impacts of surviving CRSV, such as the loss of identity, social status, and self-esteem (Bosmans 2007; Sharlach 2000; Seifert 1996).

It should not be forgotten that the traumatic effect of CRSV also impacts people who have been made to watch such acts, who have felt powerless to save victims, or who have been forced to rape their family members themselves (Kelly et al. 2011).

### 4.3 *Societal Consequences*

CRSV is understood to have grave social consequences for survivors, families, communities, and societies (Kirby 2013; Maedl 2011; Meger 2010; MSF 2004; Rackley 2014; Jones et al. 2014; Vlachová and BIASON 2005; Skjelsbaek 2006; Sharlach 2000; Mukamana and Brysiewicz 2008). Sexual violence has distinct characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of violence. It carries a message from the perpetrators not only to the victim but also to the community. In this sense it exploits emotionally charged values about sexuality, virtue, shame, and honor (Gottschall 2004; Seifert 1996; Brownmiller 1975). The violation of such values increases the magnitude of the damage CRSV does to social relations within communities. Feminist activist Catharine MacKinnon (2007: 187) summarizes the impact in the following way:

It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, rape to make you leave your home and never want to go back. It is rape to be seen and heard and watched and told to others: rape as spectacle. It is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people. It is rape as genocide.

Although the existing research does not offer elaborate theories or comparative studies on the social impacts of CRSV, an emerging body of qualitative empirical work from (post) conflict contexts provides rich accounts from survivors, family members, and community members that identify different aspects of how CRSV affects social relations. Most of these empirical studies have been performed in locations where armed conflict has occurred relatively recently, such as the DRC, Rwanda, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Peru. These studies and the conclusions I draw from them are not representative. In fact, the empirical evidence used in most of the existing studies on the (short-term) consequences of CRSV on individuals and communities is relatively sparse. This limitation is true of both the sample sizes<sup>3</sup> and the selection procedures by which respondents were chosen. Scholars often use convenience samples and rely on local partners (for instance, psychosocial centers) to establish contact between researcher and respondent (e.g., Skjelsbaek 2006; Trenholm, Olsson, and Ahlberg 2011; Christian et al. 2011). This selection method introduces a clear bias into the al-

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3 For instance, Denov (2006) relies on three interviews. Skjelsbaek (2006) presents narratives from five CRSV survivors. Trenholm et al. (2011) rely on interviews with 10 traditional leaders, and Christian et al. (2011) draw on 15 interviews with survivors. Mukamana and Brysiewicz's (2008) study on the consequences of CRSV relies on seven interviews.



ready small samples because all those survivors who did not, could not, or chose not to seek access to support facilities are excluded. These empirical shortcomings have grave implications for what this already limited number of studies can actually tell us beyond the individual experiences they examine. Nonetheless, the virtue of these studies lies in the rich narratives they offer, which provide some evidence of the complex consequences of CRSV.

Given that there has not been much effort to construct theory, examine theoretical relationships, or find common patterns with regard to the social consequences of CRSV, I use these existing empirical accounts to identify some patterns of consequences. Two social consequences, social stigmatization and unwanted pregnancies, have been explored explicitly in a number of qualitative studies. The additional consequences – torn men, survivors' anticipation of rejection, intracommunal cleavages – have received little explicit consideration, but I found them to be mentioned repeatedly in my review of the literature. An emphasis on survivors' agency and the dynamics of gender relations in the aftermath of CRSV has been more prominent among anthropologist scholars and largely ignored by the mainstream social science literature. I believe that both of these last elements deserve more consideration when the consequences of CRSV are examined.

1. *Stigmatization of CRSV survivors.* Rape survivors not only suffer from the physical and psychological effects of CRSV but are often also ostracized by their own families and communities. Widespread CRSV during conflict can and often does destroy the social order and self-worth of communities (Kelly et al. 2011; Dijkman, Bijleveld, and Verwimp 2014; Bosmans 2007; Skjelsbaek 2006; MSF 2004). Sideris (2002: 47) quotes a woman in Mozambique as saying that “when one woman was raped, the whole community was raped.” The cultural values and taboos related to sexuality and the view of the female body as a symbol of a group's culture give patriarchal communities little room to integrate survivors (Gottschall 2004; Isikozlu and Millard 2010; Skjelsbaek 2006). Hagen and Yohani (2010) argue that societies end up in a collective state of shock not only because they have witnessed acts of CRSV and death, but also because of the familial and communal rejection of their loved ones. This idea is echoed by Trenholm et al. (2011: 148): “This residual ‘damage’ to the fabric of society consists of disintegration of communities and families, ostracism with subsequent homelessness, damaged reproductive abilities, unwanted children and its sequelae, all while living in a persistent state of fear.”

Shanks and Shull (2000) hold that the effectiveness of CRSV in damaging the social relations in communities rests on sociocultural norms that value the sexual virtue of women in extreme forms. This nourishes largely male perceptions of the public ownership of women's sexuality and thereby explains why an attack against a woman is perceived as an attack against the whole community (Leatherman 2007; Chowdhury and Lanier 2012; Benard 1994).

2. *Unwanted pregnancies and “children born of rape” as reminders of pain.* The community's collective pain is aggravated when survivors become pregnant as a result of rape and the memory of the attack is transmitted to the next generation (Carpenter 2007; Watson 2007). Sideris (2003: 720) quotes a rape survivor from Mozambique:

When the war was still on, if you brought a child from the camp or you were pregnant, people in the community wouldn't allow you back. People would say, "Oh Mrs So-and-So has got a small Renamo." They said that child also will be a Renamo and it is the thing that has made them suffer.

A similar account is given by a female survivor in Rwanda who became pregnant as a result of rape by the Hutu militia (Mukamana and Brysiewicz 2008: 382):

I am wondering who will bring her [the child] up after my death. My aunt who survived the genocide doesn't like my child as I do. She said that it will be an eternal torture to bring up an Interahamwe's child as she will remind her how the Interahamwe have decimated our family.

3. *Torn men.* The sociocultural image and valuing of the purity of women is associated with male attitudes that consider women to be the property of men. Bosman (2007: 6) asked HIV/AIDS peer educators in the DRC how they felt about sexually assaulted girls. The answers are disturbing: "We are boys, and we satisfy our physical [sexual] needs with her." "There is our culture. One should respect our culture and there is no way that she can stay home."

However, there are also examples of men who are seemingly torn between feelings of spousal support and the sociocultural expectation to reject a wife who has been raped (Bosmans 2007; Christian et al. 2011; Skjelsbaek 2006). There is anecdotal evidence that husbands are not necessarily the drivers of rejection, but that pressure or critical questions from the family or community are influential in the exclusion of rape survivors. Trenholm et al. (2011: 143) argue that the society takes the men hostage, quoting a traditional leader:

My wife has been raped, she went to the Panzi Hospital and she returned home to me [...] It is the members of my family who come, the grandparents: How can you tolerate a woman like that, she will contaminate, bring sickness, she will bring you anxiety.

This statement allows a small glimpse into the considerations of this man. The notion that the society takes the men hostage indicates the constraints that social norms place on individual behavior. The perceived pressure on men to reject their wives is also taken up by a participant of a focus group discussion in the eastern DRC (Kelly et al. 2011: 26): "The 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."

The fear of sexually transmitted infections, above all HIV/AIDS, further shapes men's attitudes about accepting wives who have been sexually assaulted (Hankins et al. 2002; Mills et al. 2006; MSF 2004; Chowdhury and Lanier 2012). The following account demonstrates this fear of HIV and at the same time provides a glimpse of the moral struggle that might be going on within men (Kelly et al. 2011: 26)

“They destroy this women’s life because when the husband hears that his wife was raped, he won’t live with this woman again. Women are more vulnerable, in a sense that it wasn’t her choice but she suffers the consequences of the war.” Despite this acknowledgement, other young men from Goma said that the husbands’ behavior is comprehensible since the soldiers who rape are infected with HIV and they need to protect themselves.

4. *Survivors’ anticipation of rejection.* Much qualitative research brings up the point that survivors worry about how their community will react to them and talk about them. Even the thought of what their family and community members might think of them causes survivors to experience further agony (Sideris 2003; Folnegovic-Smalc 1994; Goldstein 2001). Kelly et al. (2012) find that for CRSV survivors the societal isolation and shame become as devastating as the sexual assault itself. This view is echoed by Hagen and Yohani (2010), who hold that in certain cultures rape survivors have to expect extreme shame from their community, which is why many women do not report it. As mentioned above, admitting to having been raped has the personal consequences of not being able to get married or of being rejected by fathers and husbands (e.g., Vlachová and Biason 2005). Mukamana and Brysiewicz (2008: 382) quote a rape survivor from the Rwandan genocide:

It is a big problem to be known as a rape survivor in the community. They didn’t respect you, they isolated you, people said that we were no different from prostitutes because we accepted having sex with any man who wanted to have sex with us during the genocide.

Survivors have been associated so much with dishonor that not only the relations between them and their husbands but also between them and their communities have been destroyed, with the result that they have been forced to move to places where nobody knows them. Others have chosen to lie to their partners and communities in order to prevent these conflicts and the resulting isolation (Hagen and Yohani 2010; Clifford and Slavery 2008; WHO 2013; Skjelsbaek 2001). A similar destiny is reported in the work of Kelly et al. (2011: 27), who quote a woman who was abducted and held as a sexual slave by the Interahamwe (Hutu militia from Rwanda) in the DRC and then returned to her community only to be completely rejected:

It is only after having exploited you for so long that they release you, knowing that you are totally destroyed and are now only good for nothing, then they ask you to go back to your village. Where it is shocking is that, as you are back to the village, far from giving any sympathy, your husband says, “Where will I go with a wife of Interahamwe? You would be better to remain with them in the bush and never see me again.” She is then doomed to be homeless, without any chance to be married anew, since she is targeted by the whole village, referred to as “that one was abducted then raped.”

These male attitudes towards female CRSV survivors are common. While most of the accounts above are from Central African countries, Theidon (2007) shows how ambivalently men behaved in the aftermath of the Peruvian civil war. Although the rejection of raped women has been reported less in Peru, Theidon provides detailed information on how gendered power imbalances have affected the disclosure of war experiences. In her focus group discussions with both women and men, men repeatedly told the women to be quiet, even though it was the women who had endured the violence because the men had fled the conflict zone. The men's reasoning for leaving the women and children behind sounds absurd. One of them said: "We decided the men should escape. They [the rebels] hated the men – we didn't think they'd do anything to the women" (Theidon 2007: 460).

5. *Intracommunal cleavages.* What is often overlooked is that in the midst of war, the sides are not always as clear-cut and the communities not as homogenous as might be assumed. The cover of war is at times used to pursue private objectives that may have little to do with the conflict's cleavages (Kalyvas 2006; Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell 2007). A focus group participant in Kelly et al.'s (2011: 29) study in the DRC demonstrates this point:

The war had a psychological impact on people; some betrayed their own family members. You know that this person did this or that to this person or he helped rebels to rape my mother. There will no longer be a trusting relationship between us. The war has brought up a poison phenomenon because there is no longer love among ourselves.

Similar accounts are given in Dijkamn et al.'s (2014: 14) research on sexual violence in Burundi:

There is still a lot of tension between neighbours, or even between family members and friends. Someone from the family had been killed by some neighbour, and as a revenge, a boy from this family can rape a girl from that neighbour's family.

We are getting used to seeing death around us. Even if someone screams at night – before, we used to react to this, but nowadays, we close our windows and stay in. The solidarity that used to exist before has left us.

These interviews took place in the summer of 2012 in Burundi, almost seven years after the end of the civil war. It is noteworthy how present the sexual violence that occurred during the war remained and how it continued to influence the social order.

The disruption of the social order is often also intensified by massive displacement, which destroys social networks. Within the weakened social structures of (post)conflict societies, the perpetrators of violence – soldiers and combatants, both active and demobilized – continue to terrorize civilians with impunity (e.g., Kelly et al. 2011; Buckley-Zistel, Krause, and Loeper 2014; Denney and Ibrahim 2012).

6. *Taking agency as a group.* Few efforts have been undertaken to examine the conditions under which CRSV survivors take agency, the conditions under which family and community play a supportive role for survivors, and how gender relations change in the aftermath of

conflict and CRSV. This is surprising as research (unrelated to sexual violence) suggests that collective coping processes can be effective strategies for overcoming trauma (Bowles 2008; Lyons et al. 1998). Recent microlevel studies find evidence that exposure to (nonsexual) political violence tends to make people more altruistic (Gilligan, Pasquale, and Samii 2013; Voors et al. 2012) and politically engaged (Blattman 2009; Annan et al. 2011). Are there similar accounts for individuals, families, and communities who have been exposed to CRSV?

Mukamana and Brysiewicz (2008) present the personal accounts of CRSV survivors from the Rwandan genocide. In addition to the destructive consequences discussed earlier, they also observe that survivors had very positive experiences of joining survivors' associations. Members of such associations felt that the group partly replaced their families and their communities, lost during the genocide. Most importantly, the associations provided them with the means and group esteem to take agency and fight the social stigma inflicted on rape survivors. For instance, they presented their experiences at community meetings, as one respondent explained (Mukamana and Brysiewicz 2008: 382):

With the members of my association we make a campaign against the stigma on rape and HIV infection and it works. For example, the members of my church know that I am HIV-positive and they accept me. They said that I am to them an example of a good Christian.

The traditional leaders in the DRC interviewed by Trenholm et al. (2011: 147) gave the male view on the progress women made after meeting with other survivors and starting therapy sessions.

The women themselves [...] have been enlightened [...] when they listen, go to counseling, receive psychological treatment [...] this traumatic condition starts to leave them.

There is not that much quantitative evidence of collective coping in the social science literature on CRSV, but a recent psychology paper finds some proof of its positive effect. A randomized controlled trial in the DRC shows that group therapy sessions for female survivors have significantly reduced symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Bass et al. 2013).

*7. Reconfiguring gender roles.* Other studies emphasize how the effects of war (for example, displacement) can contribute to changing gender relations. Krause (2014) makes the observation that forced displacement can break patriarchal gender patterns, because in refugee camps gender relations are renegotiated and redefined. Buckley-Zistel (2013) emphasizes the importance of deconstructing prevailing gender roles in the process of postconflict reconciliation processes in order to reduce the risk of gender-based violence.

Kelly et al. (2011) and Theidon (2007) stress that during and after the war, women in the DRC took on duties and leadership roles traditionally occupied by men. This was due to the fact that men were fighting with militias and lived with them in the bush, where their spouses were not allowed (see also, Elbert et al. 2013). While this had a positive effect on the empowerment of women, it also disenfranchised men, who felt the transition as a loss of power:

Nowadays a woman does not value her husband any more, we let them do some businesses and they get raped in that process because of the type of life we are in. Hardship pushes women to work and where they go, violence is there, too. (Kelly et al. 2011: 23)

Skjaelsbek (2006) provides rare insights into how powerful the support of their husbands has been for rape survivors in Bosnia. Notably, this support was surprising for a rather patriarchal society in which rape victims are normally stigmatized and rejected because male honor and female sexuality are strongly connected. There are unfortunately no accounts that provide background information about why these men were supportive, against the odds of the tradition.

## 5 Conclusion

Sexual violence in the context of armed conflicts has received increasing attention from human rights groups, civil society, policy makers, and the social sciences since the wars in Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s. While the earlier work was more focused on bringing the issue to the fore, in the last decade there has been a general trend towards increased methodological sophistication. More studies now use empirical approaches, most of which are qualitative.

I have distinguished here between research on the causes of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and research on its consequences. In the social sciences there is considerably much more research on the causes of CRSV than on its consequences. Within the “causes” literature, four aspects of CRSV have received attention. Most work deals with the question of which *purposes* CRSV serves and makes the point that it is intended to terrorize and humiliate civilians and communities. Studies on the *contextual conditions* emphasize that the erosion of state institutions and the absence of the rule of law make CRSV more likely. Studies on the *individual motives* of fighters to commit CRSV have identified a distinction between “lust” and “evil” rapes, where the former serves to satisfy the sexual needs of combatants and the latter appears to be driven by bloodlust. Studies concerning *intragroup norms* and dynamics provide evidence that CRSV, in particular gang rape, serves the purpose of increasing bonding among combatants.

More microlevel research is needed that helps us understand why some members of armed groups use rape, particularly its most violent forms, and others do not (Elbert et al. 2013; Kelly 2010). What explains these extreme forms of hatred against women in particular and civilians in general? Furthermore, how can gender relations and the level of respect for civilians be altered to decrease CRSV? And how can norms that prohibit sexual violence on the part of armed groups be created? Future research on the causes of CRSV will benefit from ambitious quantitative data collection efforts that not only build on those studies that are regularly cited but also overcome their limitations (Cohen 2013b; Leiby 2009; Green 2004; Theidon 2007; Cohen and Nordås 2014). Achieving the latter will entail, in particular, the col-

lection of more disaggregated data. This can be done through the use of more targeted geocoded event datasets that build on reported cases of CRSV. Sources for such events could be drawn from international organizations working in this type of (post)conflict area – for instance, the UN and international and local humanitarian and human rights NGOs.

The research on the consequences of CRSV focuses largely on its physical and psychological impacts. Depending on the severity of CRSV, common *physical damages* include chronic pain, fistula, and infertility, all of which have further psychological and social effects. The *psychological implications* are for the most part trauma, a high likelihood of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and low levels of self-esteem. At the *societal level* survivors of CRSV are likely to experience social stigmatization that results in their rejection and social exclusion. Far too little attention has been paid to compounding mechanisms that influence the effect of CRSV on social outcomes (for example, the circumstances of CRSV, the role of the community) and to mechanisms that help survivors to gain agency, such as the use of survivors' associations to demand rights. Changes in the dynamics of gender relations as a result of conflict also remain under-investigated.

The consequences of CRSV offer a broad range of important research opportunities. We should aim to better understand how CRSV affects different aspects of social life, trust, and cohesion not only within but also beyond communities. Are some communities better able to rebuild their social potential? If so, it would be important to learn why in order to design policies and programs that support those communities having difficulty in this regard. If some communities adopt a more supportive role in relation to CRSV survivors, does this have an effect on the survivors' recovery? There are many more questions that would also be important to investigate.

The methodological trend towards qualitative and, in particular, quantitative studies has generated important insights that are helpful for policy makers in addressing CRSV. For instance, Cohen's (2013b) cross-sectional study on the determinants of wartime rape has shown that there is substantial variance in the prevalence of CRSV across countries, conflicts, and armed groups (see also Wood 2009; 2006). This has challenged the previously held view that rape in war is inevitable (Brownmiller 1975). Such empirical findings have practical implications. If sexual violence is not an inevitable part of warfare, we can investigate what it is that prevents it and design policies and interventions that put that into practice.

Another empirical study of former combatants in the DRC challenges the notion of strategic and organized rape as a tool of warfare. Elbert et al. (2013) provide evidence that the raping of civilians upon the orders of superiors has been the exception rather than the norm. Instead, they show that the absence of punishments for rape has been mentioned as a facilitating factor. Again such evidence-based insights help us to better understand and ideally alter the conditions that give rise to CRSV.

Our knowledge will continue to benefit from empirical studies, and particularly from the use of mixed-methods research designs. Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods al-

allows the researcher to exploit the strengths and balance the weaknesses of both methods, ideally resulting in the greater generalizability of results while also maintaining empirical complexity (Lieberman 2005). For the “consequence” questions, population-based opinion surveys would be an appropriate method with which to generate representative data that allow for statistical analysis. These could be combined with in-depth qualitative interviews to improve causal inference. Such approaches would overcome the key problem endemic to the extant literature: a lack of representativeness.



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