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Women, gender, and conflict: making the connections

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Women, gender, and conflict: making the connections

Martha Thompson

This review essay explores the need to make the roles of women and of men visible in order to understand the different ways in which they are involved in, and affected by, armed conflict; and also to examine the ways in which gender roles, the relations between women and men, are changed during and as a result of such conflict. The author reviews current literature on the political economy of conflict, and feminist writing on women in conflict, noting that the former tends to be gender-blind, while the latter generally fails to take into account an understanding of the wider Realpolitik. The author focuses on five recent feminist works that have attempted to do this, and hence contributed to moving the debate forward.

- **Enloe, Cynthia** (2004) *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in the New Age of Empire*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- **Giles, Wenona and Jennifer Hyndman (eds.)** (2004) *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- **Mazurana, Dyan and Khristopher Carlson** (2004) *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls in Sierra Leone*, Cambridge, MA: Women's Policy Commission, Harvard University.
- **Mazurana, Dyan, Angela Raven Roberts, and Jane Parpart (eds.)** (2005) *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping*, New York, NY: Rowan & Littlefield.
- **Nordstrom, Carolyn** (2004) *The Shadows of War: Violence, Power and International Profiteering in the Twenty-first Century*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lifting experience up to the light

Camilo Cienfuegos, a much-loved hero of the Cuban revolution, is pictured on Cuba's blue 20-peso banknote. When you hold it up to the light, the face of Celia Sánchez appears behind him. Although she is a famous revolutionary heroine in her own right, and widely believed to be Fidel Castro's most trusted adviser until her death, Celia is invisible until the light shines through the banknote. One way to classify the literature on gender and conflict is to divide it into that which makes women's and girls' experience of conflict visible by holding it up to the light; and that which analyses the different gender roles that emerge in conflict, the changing concepts of masculine and feminine identities, and changes in the power relationships between men and women.

Both aspects of the gendered analysis of conflict are of fundamental importance. Practice has shown that if we don't understand the specific circumstances, experiences, roles, vulnerabilities, and capacities of men and women in war, we construct homogeneous strategies of response that

do not address gender-based differences and generally tend to disadvantage women. Holding women's experience up to the light is also crucial: without doing this we cannot set that experience in the context of shifting gender identities, roles, and power relationships in situations of conflict. This is true whether you work in humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, peace-keeping efforts, human rights, disarmament, demobilisation, or post-conflict reconstruction.

The literature on gender and conflict and on women in conflict has grown steadily over the last 20 years. This includes texts dealing with the ways in which war affects women and girls differently from men and boys, the particular vulnerabilities and capacities that women develop in conflict, and the different ways in which relief and other forms of assistance and the cessation of hostilities can affect men and women. (See, for example, Ashfar 2004; Byrne 1995; Cockburn 2004; El-Bushra and Piza López 1984; El Bushra 2004; Enloe 2000; Kampwirth 2002; Korac 2004; Manchanda 2001; Mertus 2000.)

Despite this, there are still several important areas of the literature on conflict where there is little or no gender analysis. As Cynthia Cockburn says, 'Gender has a curious way of being both simultaneously present and absent in popular perception' (Cockburn 2004:25). Much of the current literature is still mainly about men's involvement in conflict, whether they are creating it, profiting from it, provoking it, supplying it, doing the fighting, directing it, or suffering from it. This gender blindness is perpetuated when writers specifically identify men as the main or sole actors in armed conflict, or fail to question the assumption that men's experiences and perspectives of war are universal.

In this review of current writing on women, gender, and conflict, I focus on the weakness of gender analysis in the current debates on conflict theory. Most of these debates are being conducted from a gender-blind perspective, and far too few feminists and gender specialists have engaged in them. This article first lays out some of the areas where I feel there is a need to apply a gender analysis to new conflict theories; then it identifies some of the writers who are trying to do this.

Current debates on conflict theory

Analysts across the political spectrum agree that the conduct and characteristics of war have changed since the end of the Cold War. Most wars are fought internally; ethnic divisions are prominent; no sides can any longer depend on support from the superpowers and must find their own forms of financing the war; civilians are widely targeted; and national sovereignty has been challenged by the growing use of armed humanitarian intervention.

However, much mainstream thinking about contemporary armed conflict is still dominated by outdated and questionable theories about the causes and mechanics of war. This is partly due to the dominant paradigm in the North that countries in the global South are all at different stages of progression towards states modelled on the democratic capitalist societies of Europe and North America. The underlying assumption is that democratic capitalism is the world's only viable political and economic model. Authors such as Robert Kaplan (1994) and Samuel Huntington (1998) go much further, popularising the ideas that certain countries and cultures are more inclined to violence, that 'ancient ethnic hatreds' are the cause of many wars, that the combination of youth and poverty in many countries in the South is combustible, and that the perpetrators of the new wars employ an incomprehensible brutality. Even more liberal authors base their analysis of conflict on a series of 'truths' that are accepted as self-evident. These include the idea that war is largely fought by men, acting in formal roles as soldiers; that it is defined and contained within the framework of state and seeks to acquire or retain state power; that it is caused by conditions of poverty and frustration and failure of the state; and that while violence against civilians is widespread, it is simply an unfortunate by-product of war.

The work of authors like Alex De Waal (2001), Mark Duffield (1994, 1996, 2001), Adele Harmer (Harmer and Macrae 2004; Harmer and Cotterrell 2005), David Keen (2000), Joanna Macrae (2002), Nicola Reindorp (see Macrae *et al.* 2002), and Slim (1998) challenge these assumptions and compel us to question our own way of viewing today's conflicts. The distinguishing characteristic of new conflict theory is that post-Cold War conflicts cannot be fully understood in terms of the breakdown of systems – in other words, failures of the state, ethnic hatred, or resource conflicts – but should be analysed as indigenous strategies for adapting to globalisation. Although they all write from their own areas of specialisation, most of these authors share the following observations about contemporary conflict:

- Many internal wars are not simply a failure of development policy: they represent new processes that seek to reshape political and economic power.
- The aim of many insurgencies is not to take state power, but to create parallel economic and political spheres of power that are linked into international economic systems.
- Many internal wars are partly or fully shaped by reactions to globalisation and are linked into international economic and political networks.
- The resulting 'network wars' have different nodes of influence and power, which can shift among countries, individuals, economic systems, and organisations.
- Ethnicity and religion do not cause war, but are used by elites as ways to mobilise populations into war.
- Many insurgents depend on terror as a means of controlling territory or populations, rather than relying on sophisticated weaponry and well-trained troops. Thus, violence against civilians is not an unfortunate by-product of war but a deliberate strategy of control.
- Many governments employ militia or irregular forces as a cheap and easy way to reduce costs and circumvent international law. The number of non-state actors in war is growing, as combat is increasingly 'privatised'. These may include militia, paramilitaries, irregular forces, security companies, warlords, and private armies.
- It is essential to understand the political economy of war and the actors (at differing levels) for whom war is a viable or profitable concern.
- In the post-Cold War era, the principles of impartiality and neutrality have become increasingly blurred, as Western governments seek to apply the policy of 'coherence', trying to line up political, economic, diplomatic, military, and aid actors into the same overall strategy.¹
- Wars are not caused by widespread poverty and the failure of development, but by local and regional power elites who seek to maintain networks of patronage.

The authors cited above are exceptional analysts of conflict, and their work is essential reading for everyone who works in the fields of development aid, humanitarian relief, conflict resolution, and peace building. However, their writing rarely mentions women and is largely gender-blind (Byrne 1995). The new theories of conflict have so far failed to bring to light the different ways in which such conflict affects the roles of men and women, or the relationships and power balance between them.

We therefore need a more gendered understanding of how and why contemporary conflicts are developing, what happens to the people involved in them, where the different poles of power lie, and who and what moves them. Below, I outline three main areas in which a gendered analysis is most needed.

Causes of internal wars, and Western strategies to shape their outcomes

Duffield (2001) and Macrae (2002) question the 'failed state' argument, which conveniently both circumvents the need for structural transformation or questioning of the international

global system and prescribes a better application of the democratic capitalist model as the only logical way in which to organise a nation state. Both analysts analyse how insurgencies are developing strategies of economic and political power that are not centred on the state. While there are many gendered analyses of state building (most notably Enloe 2000; Cockburn and Zarkov 2002; Afshar 2004; and Klein 2004), there is little gendered analysis of the increasing number of conflicts in which the state is disintegrating and new forms of power are being fashioned (Byrne 1995).

Duffield (1996, 2001) and Macrae (2002) also analyse Western geopolitical strategies to control and contain conflict in countries in the South. They develop the idea of coherence, explaining how Western democracies have sought to align diplomacy, political aims, economic policy, military actions, and international aid with security objectives as a way to contain conflict within the borders of other countries. Macrae focuses on the use of the doctrine of human security within the context of 'coherence'. Feminist analysts have begun to bring a gendered analysis to this doctrine, particularly in the realm of peace keeping (see, for example, Afshar and Eade 2004; Broadhead 2002; Hyndman 2001). Most feminist analysis, however, does not address current conflict in the light of these new theories.

Western states are using a range of measures, from sanctions to humanitarian intervention, to alter the internal governance of countries in the South (Macrae 2002). From the bombing of Afghanistan in 2001 after the attacks on the USA on 11 September 2001, as the 'global war on terror' (GWOT) develops, the policies of Islamic countries in relation to women are increasingly being used as a justification for intervention. Mohammed Haneef Atmar (2001) presents an excellent dissection of Western governments' cynical concern for gender issues for reasons of their own political convenience.

Economic systems and conflict within the global framework

Keen (2000) examines the economic engines that drive and sustain conflict, arguing that these must be examined in order to understand the causes. An increasing number of studies, such as those by Philippe Le Billon (2000) and Sarah Collinson (2002), consider the political economy of war. Since neither insurgents nor governments can now depend on superpower patronage, they have had to find new ways to fund wars, including trading in drugs and arms, sex trafficking, and illicit resource extraction. These and other funding strategies are now embedded in international economic and financial systems (Duffield 2001; Keen 2000). While there are good studies of how women develop livelihood strategies in situations of conflict (for example, Pain and Lautze 2002; El Bushra 2004), these largely country-specific studies have not been tied into a gendered analysis of the global economic systems that drive and sustain conflict.

New types of insurgencies: their objectives and use of violence

While nation states like Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Somalia appear to be weak or disintegrating, new spheres of economic and political power that depend on continual instability are being constructed within them (Duffield 2001). In such situations, and also in stronger states such as Uganda and Colombia, brutality is increasingly the central weapon of war. It is used both by rebel armies who use terror in place of manpower and sophisticated weaponry, and by paramilitaries deployed by governments in order to duck responsibility for war crimes and avoid giving grounds for humanitarian intervention. Max Glaser (2005) has produced a good up-to-date study on Armed Non-State Actors (ANSAs), with matrices to help humanitarians to figure out how to engage with them. However, since

this study is gender-blind, it will not help humanitarians to engage with the gendered reality of these non-state actors. Rebel groups such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, and the various armed groups in the eastern Congo have kidnapped girls and women for use in sexual, military, and logistics roles. They have forced their combatants to commit horrific acts of sexual abuse and other atrocities that have become their key mechanisms for population control. While there has been some good gendered analysis of the role of rape and sexual violence in ethnic cleansing and genocide, particularly in the cases of Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and now Darfur (Lorentzen and Turpin 1998; Turshan and Twagiramariya 1998; Mertus 2000; Rees 2002), there is far less gendered analysis of how the insurgencies in Uganda and armed groups in the DRC operate and successfully alter social relationships through the widespread violation of cultural norms and gender identities. The increasing role of non-state actors in war is a key element in new theories about conflict, but there are as yet too few gendered analyses of these actors' goals and how they build and wield power.

Literature on gender and conflict

You need to cast a wide net when looking for literature on gender and conflict. Apart from Cynthia Cockburn, Cynthia Enloe, Dyan Mazurana, and Sandra Whitworth, many feminists are either writing about conflict from their particular areas of expertise, or focusing on a specific national or regional conflict rather than doing a global analysis. Authors on gender and conflict come from fields as diverse as anthropology, human rights, geography, gender studies, law, and political sciences, and many are actively involved in health, humanitarian work, conflict resolution, peace keeping, and solidarity activism. However, they tend not to address the wider dynamic of conflict as global process; instead they concentrate their attention on the particulars of a conflict in a certain time and place and its effects on women, on men, and on their relationships. While such specific studies are absolutely essential, this focus on the particular may be one of the main reasons why particular studies of gender and conflict are not tied into a more global analysis.

A plethora of good solid work on gender and conflict began to flourish in the 1980s. The report of an Oxfam GB workshop on 'Gender, Development and Conflict' was a breakthrough from an aid perspective, demonstrating how conflict affected women differently from men (El Bushra and Piza-López 1984). From the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, Bridget Byrne (1995) made the critical link from Enloe's gender analysis of masculinity in war to theories of conflict and issues in humanitarian work, although her analysis does not include enough of the new thinking on contemporary conflict. Julie Mertus (2000) provides a valuable source on the effects of both war and humanitarian relief on women, but rather than examining why war has developed in these ways, she looks at how it is experienced by women. Fiona Fox of CAFOD looked critically at the conditionality implicit in the 'new humanitarianism' (Fox 2001). The volume edited by Haleh Afshar and Deborah Eade (2004) is an excellent collection of women's analysis of the impact of war and peace keeping from different parts of the world, unique in its geographic breadth.

There are many examples of excellent place-specific work, of which the following is only a handful. Judy El Bushra (2004) offers a perceptive account of the gendered impact of war on women in five African countries, making women visible in the political economies of conflict in those societies. Judith Zur (1998), an anthropologist, has written an authoritative portrait of the gendered use of terror by Guatemalan paramilitaries as a form of social control over women, while Rita Manchanda (2001) illustrates women's experience of conflict in a spectrum of Asian conflicts.

Its high quality notwithstanding, I would argue that this work needs to be carried further in two regards. As stated earlier, most of the literature on gender and conflict seems to be written in parallel with the new theories of conflict, without either of the debates engaging with the other. Analyses of gender and conflict urgently need to intersect with and engage with new theories of conflict. There is a considerable volume of gendered analysis of traditional conflict theory, including women's experience in guerrilla movements in El Salvador, Sri Lanka, and Namibia during the Cold War (Kampwirth 2002; Manchanda 2001). However, with the exception of authors such as Cynthia Enloe, there is very little gendered analysis of the reasons why insurgencies are now fighting in different ways. Secondly, while some place-specific studies touch on aspects of political economy, there is little literature that links these with the larger debates in order to give us a comprehensive gendered view of the dynamics of contemporary conflict.

Gender and conflict literature and new theories of conflict

Although there is a great need for more gendered analysis of the new theories of conflict, a few writers have been doing seminal work in that area. Within the confines of this article, it is only possible to highlight the books and articles that I have found most helpful in bringing a gendered understanding to the three areas identified in the introductory section.

Causes of internal wars and the role of the West

Dyan Mazurana's chapter, 'Gender and the causes and consequences of armed conflict', in Mazurana *et al.* 2005 is the most comprehensive gendered analysis to date of the new theories about the causes of conflict. Mazurana successfully weaves a gender analysis into the intersections of globalisation and conflict, incorporating many of the key challenges to mainstream assumptions about war. The strength of this edited volume is in both bringing a gendered analysis to peace keeping and human security and incorporating the new theories of conflict into a gendered analysis, particularly in relation to human security. The introduction to this edited volume also provides a comprehensive, gendered analysis of conflict. The chapter by Ruth Jacobson provides two gendered histories of the conflicts in Mozambique and Angola, with a focus on how the international community could have learned (but did not) from the good examples of gender sensitivity at the end of hostilities in Mozambique. While Jacobson does not really relate to the new theories of conflict, the way in which she analyses gender roles could easily be applied to them.

In *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, both in their introduction and in their concluding chapter, 'New directions for feminist research and politics', give a gendered analysis of some aspects of conflict theory, touching on political economy and human security and gender. The chapter by Edith Klein examines the intersections between globalisation, political violence, and social transformation in the former Yugoslavia. Klein develops a gendered framework tool for tracing the linkages among the politics of globalisation, conflict, and the increased oppression of women (p. 293); and provides a good gendered analysis of what she calls 'coercive constitutionalism' and the geo-politics of intervention in the Balkans. Although it resembles the explanations given by Macrae and Duffield of why Western democracies use humanitarian intervention to reshape the landscapes of conflict, Klein does not draw on their work. If she were to tie coercive constitutionalism into a broader examination of the political underpinnings of globalisation, her analysis would be brought into the wider debates on conflict theory.

This edited volume is meant to 'analyze the gendered, nationalized, racialized and economic dimensions of violent conflict and the ways these phenomena shape the waging of contemporary war'. Its primary focus is the impact of war-related violence on women, and many of the chapters are written by women who are conducting research in conflict zones. The editors also do an excellent job of pointing to future areas for feminist research. Again, however, the book seems to have been written in parallel with much of the new conflict theory, since the editors and contributors never really locate their work within the framework of the debates shaping the analysis of contemporary wars. This may explain the state-centric perspective adopted by most of the contributors. The exception is the outstanding and provocatively titled chapter by Audrey Macklin on the role played by Talisman, a Canadian oil company, in the conflict in southern Sudan.

How global economic systems intersect with conflict

In her book *The Shadows of War*, Carolyn Nordstrom takes apart the complex scenario of people trying to sell tomatoes in a war zone, and their links to the international economy, and lays out the pieces on the table so that we can understand how the links work. She does not give an explicitly gendered analysis of the political economy of war, but provides all the essential elements for building up such an analysis, because she brings to light so many things that usually remain hidden. She brilliantly links the experiences of men, women, and children both inside and outside war zones in Angola, and draws the lines that connect rural women surviving war, businesses and people engaged in smuggling goods, and the international centres of commerce. The chapter by Macklin referred to earlier is a good companion piece to Nordstrom's work: she offers a more gendered study of the linkages between displaced women from southern Sudan who were imprisoned in Khartoum for brewing beer and the practices of a Canadian oil company operating in their place of origin.

Political economy is crucial to understanding how wars are sustained, from the way in which elites manipulate resources, right down to the way in which villagers adapt their livelihood strategies in order to survive (Le Billon 2000). Women, as the majority of those displaced by war, both within borders and as refugees, are often the head of their families. They spend a lot of time 'diversifying their livelihood strategies'. Women wash diamonds, smuggle drugs, farm crops for insurgents, are used as war slaves in resource extraction, sell food to insurgents and government forces alike, act as porters for rebels. In other words, they are an integral part of the political economy of war and the financing of war. We need many more studies to help us to understand how women are affected by and affect these shadow war economies.

Conflict analysts often 'locate' women primarily in roles defined by humanitarian relief terms, i.e. *refugee* or *displaced*. Arturo Escobar (1995) argues that 'the power of the development apparatus to name women in ways that lead us to take for granted certain descriptions and solutions has to be made visible' (p. xx). Would not analysis of women in conflict situations also be different if women were primarily 'located' as actors in the political economy of war? We cannot begin that kind of analysis unless we can make women's roles visible. Analysis that maintains women's invisibility contributes to the concept of 'womenandchildren', the term that Cynthia Enloe so graphically uses to describe how we lump those populations together as faceless victims of war.

New types of insurgency

Contributors to Giles and Hyndman (2004) provide helpful gendered analyses of the uses and construction of nationalist and/or ethnic identities as a tool for mobilisation. They are, however,

rooted in a state-centred analysis and illustrate the need for equally detailed gendered analysis of how identities are constructed in the new kinds of insurgency, new paramilitaries, and parallel spheres of power. When authors fail to look at new understandings of how parallel spheres of economic and political power are emerging in situations of conflict, they consequently fail to address the gender politics that shape and inform them.

Mark Duffield (2001) and David Keen (2000) both examine how insurgents who are fighting against the state have changed the ways in which they prosecute war since the end of the Cold War, and they identify fundamental shifts in the insurgents' relationships with civilians. Insurgents must now support themselves, and they do so by siphoning off relief supplies, controlling resource extraction, linking up with international markets, engaging in illicit trade, and controlling civilians in their areas of influence. Many such groups feel no need to build a political project with the civilian population in territory that they occupy. Rather than even paying lip service to it, in places like Sierra Leone and Uganda, part of the *modus operandi* of the rebel groups is to use brutal terror in order to exercise control over civilians. These armed non-state actors depend on the widespread kidnapping of civilians for use as combatants, cooks, porters, workers, sexual companions, and spies, forcing them to comply by making them witness or participate in gruesome attacks on other civilians. As documented extensively by Human Rights Watch (2002, 2003) and Amnesty International (1999), rebels in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Uganda found that forcing kidnapped civilians to beat other people to death or amputate limbs under the threat of torture proved a brutally effective way to control large populations with only a limited supply of weapons.

Neither Duffield nor Keen offers a gender analysis of how these rebel groups operate, but Dyan Mazurana and Kristopher Carlson do so in their 2004 report *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls in Sierra Leone*. They render women in these rebel and paramilitary groups visible in analysing how girls and young women participated in the war in Sierra Leone and showing how girl soldiers in Sierra Leone fared in disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes sponsored by the UN and the World Bank.

Mazurana and Carlson show that the rebels needed captive 'wives' and children in order to maintain their war systems, and kidnapped young women and girls for that reason. Many of these women and girls also fought, as well as working as spies, cooks, health workers, or porters. Mazurana and Carlson pay close attention to the differences among these girls and women and find that forcibly abducted commanders' wives were key to the entire operation of the rebel forces. These women controlled the distribution of loot, supervised operations when their captor-husbands were away, and decided on fighting strategies. As captives themselves, some commanders' wives also tried to use their power to protect captive girls from sexual abuse by other male combatants. Much that is written about abducted women and girls in fighting forces simplifies the issue into male soldiers and kidnapped girls who are sexually exploited. Mazurana and Carlson provide insights into how rebel leaders manipulate and use gender in order to make their warfare systems viable, and the effects on those girls and women and their communities both during the conflict and in reconstruction.

The study is a good example of the kind of gendered analysis that needs to be done, and it demonstrates why such analysis is so necessary. Its detailed research reveals that the roles that women played in the rebel groups went far beyond being simple 'sex slaves' or 'camp followers', showing rather that they were essential to the functioning of the war systems. Mazurana and Carlson also reveal how little the females in the rebel forces benefited from DRR programmes, compared with the males, precisely because there had been no gendered analysis of the fighting forces by those who planned and implemented the programmes.

One very important way to make women's roles visible as the nature of conflict evolves is to identify and unravel the different gender policies of different actors in war. This means

understanding the gender policies devised by the controlling group to ensure that women and men will be more effective in carrying out their roles within the war system. In this way, we can see that the RUF in Sierra Leone, a group infamous for crude amputations, brutal violence, widespread sexual abuse, and kidnapping of children to serve as their soldiers, had a very clear gender policy. While it was brutal and subjugated women, the RUF certainly had a gendered analysis of how to control civilian populations, as well as a gender-specific policy on the kidnapping and use of children and women. Two excellent reports by Human Rights Watch (2002, 2003) on Eastern Congo and Sierra Leone give insights into a gendered analysis of the different roles and power relationships of men and women, civilian and combatant, in the insurgencies, including the cultural norms and gender roles that are consistently violated by the fighters. These reports provide an excellent basis for building a more complex gendered analysis of non-state actors and their methods of waging war.

Gendered violence in contemporary warfare

It has been argued that violence against civilians is not an avoidable or negative consequence of war, but a deliberate and necessary strategy of the conduct of contemporary wars (Duffield 1994, 2001; Mazurana 2005). While there is an important body of work on gender violence that examines rape, sexual abuse, and other types of violence against women in war, much of it focuses on rape as a weapon of ethnic warfare. Important literature on this came out of the collapse of Yugoslavia, and some focused on Rwanda and latterly on Darfur (see, for example, Abdela 2004; Copeland 1998; Turshan and Twagiramariya 1998; Manchanda 2001; and Gingrich and Leaning 2004). Only a few writers such as Mazurana (2005) and Macklin (2004) take up the insights of Mark Duffield and others, that this type of violence is not simply a by-product of war but is an organic part of how it is waged. Nor is rape primarily a tool of ethnic warfare, although it seems to be a fairly universal and effective strategy of military, insurgent, and non-state armed forces for the control of territory and populations. This begs a gendered analysis of how combatants and those running today's wars see sexual violence as part of their strategy. Cynthia Enloe has consistently driven home the point that construction of masculinity matters in militarisation. In her chapter, 'All the men are in militias, all the women are victims' (2004), she undertakes a thorough analysis of how Serbian militias used constructs of masculinity to make a 21-year-old casual worker rape Muslim women as part of his war effort. Her work raises questions about how war leaders define gender relations and gender identities so that fighters accept rape as such a universal strategy, even when it violates cultural norms. To move from denouncing rape as a war crime to finding out why generalised brutal sexual violence is such an important weapon in modern warfare, we need more studies like Enloe's of the gender policies of those armed forces that also engage with the discussion of new theories of conflict, particularly in challenging the 'weak states' argument.

Parallel spheres of political and economic interests

What roles do men and women play in constructing the parallel spheres of political and economic interest in conflict zones in the South? What are the impacts of living in these parallel spheres for men and women at different levels of power? What are the gendered identities upon which these spheres are built, and how do the participation of men and the participation of women differ? Enloe (2004) addresses precisely these points when she examines the role of militarised masculinity in creating and maintaining one sphere of parallel power, by taking a careful look at the area controlled by the former warlord (now statesman), Ismael Khan, in Afghanistan. Enloe's description of Khan's sexual politics and the role that militarised

masculinity plays in the US military support for him underlines an urgent need to develop a feminist analysis of the warlord phenomenon. Given the Bush Administration's incorporation of gender oppression into its rationale for bombing Afghanistan and for the war on Iraq, more thorough analysis of the role of gender relations in the mechanics of how warlords claim and maintain power is extremely important.

Chris Dolan (2002) has examined the links between violent masculinity and weak states in the Ugandan conflict, concluding that weak states do not allow alternative masculinities to evolve. This is an intriguing angle, but it needs to be far more developed. For example, Uganda is not a weak state in the sense that Somalia, the DRC, and Afghanistan are. However, Dolan's examination of the frustrations caused by men's expectations and experiences of masculinity in northern Uganda, and how those frustrations are played out violently in the larger political landscape, is a helpful lens for gender and conflict analysis.

Conclusion

Cynthia Enloe has always made the point that masculinity matters and must be taken into consideration when doing a gendered analysis of conflict. Such analyses are even more important in this New Age of Empire (Enloe 2004). The authors whom I have highlighted in this literature review are among those whose work is moving feminist insights into the field of new theories of conflict. A gendered analysis must now be brought into the new debates on how and why war is waged today.

Note

1. Andrew Natsios, the Director of USAID, gave a good illustration of coherence in May 2003, when he told the US aid agencies that their aims in Iraq were part of US government goals.

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