
Objective: To understand how social norms about gender and reproduction shape fertility desires and use of family planning among adolescents in post-conflict northern Uganda. 

Methods: A study was conducted in 2 post-conflict districts in north-central Uganda. Life histories were collected from 40 adolescents (20 males, 20 females). In depth interviews were conducted with 40 individuals (20 males, 20 females) who were identified as significantly influencing the lives of adolescents in research areas. Data were analyzed through inductive and deductive approaches, facilitated by the qualitative software program ATLAS.ti (v.5.6).

Results: Rigid gender norms and post conflict economic realities create an environment in which young people struggle to bridge the gap between idealized and experienced gender roles. Social changes brought about by the conflict, combined with cultural values and gender norms, strongly influence fertility desires and contraceptive use. Despite support for smaller, spaced families, gendered barriers to adolescent use of family planning and access to services are significant, even among married couples. Conclusion: The increased recognition of the determining influence of gender on adolescent reproductive health provided by studies such as this can encourage greater investment in gender transformative interventions with the potential to significantly improve sexual and reproductive health across the life course.


Rights-based approaches to forced marriage in wartime document forms of harm women experience, to the exclusion of men’s experiences. Such framing problematically reiterates a binary of women/men, victim/perpetrator and consent/coercion. Arguably, this delineation is useful in supporting projects of culpability and legal redress. However, what does such vocabulary obfuscate or render invisible? We draw from the experiences of men demobilized from the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and presently living in northern Uganda to consider how relationships and social accountabilities are governed in settings of coercion. We argue that forced marriage in wartime cannot be understood without examining the multiple relationalities on which it is contingent. We broaden the remit of men’s relationships to women in the LRA to consider how men’s relations to each other and to their children shaped their experiences of marriage during the war. We conclude by reflecting on concepts of consent and culpability in coercive settings.


Since the 1990s when the nature of conflict changed from interstate to intrastate, the use of children in the battlefronts and related places has become unprecedented. This paper discusses issues on children and war based on African experiences. The paper shows how children and their surroundings suffer in war conditions and how the crisis of use of children continues in northern Uganda. Issues that face children in war refuse to go away, the paper
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

concludes. This paper is a version of the theoretical framework of the author's thesis on the social reintegration of war-affected children in northern Uganda.


Violence against women and violence against children in Uganda are recognized as significant public health concerns. Exposure to violence at home as a child can increase the likelihood of perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life. These two forms of violence share similar risk factors and often, but not always, co-occur at the household level. Parenting programs have shown promise in reducing physical child punishment. Targeting men has also been proven effective in transforming attitudes related to gender roles and expectations and intimate partner violence (IPV) against women. The REAL Fathers Initiative is a 12-session father mentoring program implemented by volunteers that is designed to reduce child exposure to violence at home, breaking the cycle of intergenerational violence. Evaluation results comparing survey data among men exposed to the intervention and those unexposed demonstrate significant reductions in IPV at end line (aOR 0.48, CI 0.31, 0.76, p < 0.001) and over the longer term follow-up (aOR 0.47, CI 0.31, 0.77, p < 0.001) and significant reductions in physical child punishment at long-term follow-up (aOR 0.52, CI 0.32, 0.82, p < 0.001).


The book has a wealth of examples—including the Mediterranean countries, Northern Europe, Micronesia, aboriginal South America, Asia, the Middle East, North America, and ancient Greece—to document that manhood is a culturally imposed ideal that men must strive to attain rather than something they acquire naturally at birth or puberty. As an example, [David D. Gilmore] describes how, in the Truk Island of Micronesia, pressures are imposed from the age of four for males and females to engage in "sex-appropriate" behavior. By puberty in Truk Island, girls are assisting in food preparation and performing other domestic chores, while boys are roaming the countryside looking for excitement and frequently fighting. Young men in Truk Island also drink heavily and smoke tobacco, activities which are denied to young women. The drinking of alcohol seems to embolden young males in the frequent weekend brawls. Drinking alcohol is considered a sign of ruggedness, which further serves to reinforce a male's "manliness." In their thirties Trukese males are expected to "settle down," stop their earlier carousing, and assume responsible roles of husband and father. There is no single measure of manhood in Trukese society. However, adolescent competitive male experiences of bravado and derring-do (success in fighting, drinking, gambling competitions over material wealth) seem to provide a training ground for dealing with the challenges of male adulthood in Truk Island. Thus, these activities are not seen as an end in themselves but act as a proving ground for becoming adult "men." Among Mediterranean-based cultures, the Andalusians of Southern Spain illustrate, in Gilmore's book, how men are committed to an image of
manliness as a critical part of their personal identity. If Andalusian males measure up as men, they are "very much a man" (muy hombre), "very virile" (muy macho), or "lots of man" (mucho hombre). If males do not measure up as men, they are a weak and lazy impostor (flojo). Males who are "good at being a man" in Andalusian culture are sexually assertive and produce offspring (especially sons), make sacrifices to support their family, and defend their personal and family honor.


Ignored in the flurry of new research on fathers is that fatherhood may have consequences for men. This article explores possible effects on the lives and well-being of men for a range of fatherhood experiences. Data are drawn from the National Survey of Families and Households. The first part of this article examines whether men’s varied associations with children (no children, coresident, non-coresident, and stepfatherhood) are associated with men’s psychological health and behavior, social connections, intergenerational family relations, and work behavior. We found strong evidence that fathers differ from nonfathers in their social connections, family relationships, and work behavior. There is significant variation in effects among the father types as well. The second section of this article focuses attention only on men who are fathers and examines whether fathering behavior (e.g., the amount of time and nature of the activities that fathers are reported to be spending with their children) is associated with men’s well-being. The effects of father involvement on men was found to be most significant for those who were living with their own children.


Do gender relations change through conflict? How might conflict itself be fuelled by aspects of gender identity? A recently completed research project that combined oral testimony with more conventional research methods concluded that conflict has undoubtedly given women greater responsibilities, and with them the possibility of exerting greater leverage in decision making and increasing their political participation. The research sheds light on the role of ordinary citizens as ‘actors’ responding to crisis, and describes how gender identities are woven into a complex web of cause and effect in which war can be seen as a ‘conflict of patriarchies’.

Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

The image of the warrior as the ultimate symbol of manhood is familiar across cultures and countries. There is a large quantity of research that demonstrates the connection between militarism and masculinity, and militarized masculinities have been argued to be the hegemonic form of masculinity, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Recently, however, there has been a call for the rethinking of the connection between masculinity and violence. In this article, I explore the construction of masculinities among ex-combatants in Burundi.

Based on participant observation, 18 individual interviews and four focus-group discussions, I argue that having served in an armed group has not had a significant impact on the masculinity ideas of my interlocutors. There is a weak connection between ideas of what makes a good soldier on the one hand and manhood in civilian life on the other. Marriage, fatherhood, and being the provider are the most important factors in masculinity construction in Burundi. These all require economic capital. In addition, socio-economic status is important for the power and respect that it brings. The focus on socio-economic status as the locus of masculinity construction also applies to ex-combatants, but many of them are struggling to adhere to it. My interlocutors presented their time spent in the armed group as time wasted, that would otherwise have been used on education or starting a career – in other words, on the path to achieving manhood. The narrative given was thus one of soldiering being not an avenue but an obstacle to manhood.


Human bodies have assumed centre stage in modern warfare, and few armed conflicts epitomize this more than the war in northern Uganda, where both rebel groups and government forces violated bodily integrity and altered human tissue to communicate messages, humiliate the enemy and their support base, and dominate both people and territory. The injuries and disabilities inflicted during wartime continue to affect people long after the conflict has come to an end. People whose bodies were ‘marked’ continue to embody the war in everyday activities in terms of pain, disabilities and loss of mobility. In other words, the war continues in their bodies. Most marked bodies struggle to conform gender performances to expectations. Furthermore, a decline in the productivity of people with marked bodies and failure to reciprocate mutual beneficial interaction leads to ruptures within social capital networks, resulting in widespread stigmatization and discrimination. Yet, focus on the body seems to be largely missing in peace processes and transitional justice. In the aftermath of armed conflict, where so many bodies have been marked, disability mainstreaming should become a quintessential element in transitional justice. This goes beyond medical interventions, meaning that in all transitional justice thinking and practice, attention is paid to how marked bodies can be included, participate and benefit. To ensure inclusion of marked bodies and other victim groups, more micro-analysis is needed that distinguishes survivor groups in terms of their day-to-day survival concerns, challenges, experiences, needs and aspirations.
This article examines modes of theorizing about war in two contemporary literatures: on war and gender and on the changing nature of war. Both these literatures make a connection between masculinity and war. The article argues that, on examination, the link between masculinity and war does not depend on the substantive meanings of either masculinity or war, or on a causal or constitutive relation between the two; rather, masculinity is linked to war because the formal, relational properties of masculinity provide a framework through which war can be rendered both intelligible and acceptable as a social practice and institution.


Background: Development of appropriate interventions to increase male involvement in pregnancy and childbirth is vital to strategies for improving health outcomes of women with obstetric complications. The objective was to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences of male involvement in their partners’ healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth. The findings might inform interventions for increasing men’s involvement in reproductive health issues. Methods: We conducted 16 in-depth interviews with men who came to the hospital to attend to their spouses/partners admitted to Mulago National Referral Hospital. All the spouses/partners had developed severe obstetric complications and were admitted in the high dependency unit. We sought to obtain detailed descriptions of men’s experiences, their perception of an ideal “father” and the challenges in achieving this ideal status. We also assessed perceived strategies for increasing male participation in their partners’ healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth. Data was analyzed by content analysis. Results: The identified themes were: Men have different descriptions of their relationships; responsibility was an obligation; ideal fathers provide support to mothers during childbirth; the health system limits male involvement in childbirth; men have no clear roles during childbirth, and exclusion and alienation in the hospital environment. The men described qualities of the ideal father as one who was available, easily reached, accessible and considerate. Most men were willing to learn about their expected roles during childbirth and were eager to support their partners/wives/spouses during this time. However, they identified personal, relationship, family and community factors as barriers to their involvement. They found the health system unwelcoming, intimidating and unsupportive. Suggestions to improve men’s involvement include creating more awareness for fathers, male-targeted antenatal education and support, and changing provider attitudes. Conclusions: This study generates information on perceived roles, expectations, experiences and challenges faced by men who wish to be involved in maternal health issues, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth. There is discord between the policy and practice on male involvement in pregnancy and childbirth. Health system factors that are critical to promoting male involvement in women’s health issues during pregnancy and childbirth need to be addressed.
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

How does the process of becoming family shape a male soldier’s rendering of an imagined future in the precariousness of war? We consider this in relation to the experiences of former combatants in the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), where polygamous family units were formed under capricious and coercive conditions. To govern a diverse population abducted as a youth and forced to labour in the organization involved strict regulations of gender and sexual relations. The LRA sought to sever past kin relations to build a new nation, or people, through rituals that ‘cleansed’ one of civilian mentality and forged new relations. With the birth and care of children from forced conjugal unions, the LRA imagined a future nation cleansed of moral impurities. As soldiers became fathers, loyalties to their new biological and non-biological families usurped their allegiances to the LRA, which frequently led to soldiers releasing their wives, children, junior soldiers, and their own eventual escape. Drawing on life-history and semi-structured interviews with 12 former male fighters, we examine how the conflicting demands on the soldier-father’s performative and future-oriented roles ironically created the conditions for a counter-movement.

Parents are the most proximal influence in children’s lives and parenting practices can moderate the relationship between risk laden contexts and child outcomes. The present study is part of a broader project supporting Acholi parents in northern Uganda and adds to growing literature on the impact of fathers in children’s lives and fatherhood. Critical ethnography guided individual interviews with 19 fathers, three focus groups, informal conversations with community members and field observations to learn about Acholi fathering roles. Findings show that fathers have three primary ideal roles, to: provide for their children, educate their children, and provide a stable and peaceful home. These roles are all future oriented and occur within broader relational and social contexts including family relationships, recovery from war, and a changing but hierarchical society. The extent to which these roles are fully realised varied based on these contextual factors and individual differences. Findings provide directions for future research with fathers and support our research team’s inclusion of fathers in future parent education programmes.

Generally speaking been under-researched. Much of the existing research focuses relatively narrowly on men and their ‘violences’, especially that of combatants. Conceptually, much of the policy debate has revolved around either men’s ‘innate’ propensity to violence or relatively simplistic uses of frameworks such as hegemonic, military/militarized, or ‘hyper’-masculinities. These discourses have often been reinforced and reproduced without relating them to their respective local historical, political, and socio-economic contexts. In academic circles, the discussion is more advanced and progressive, but this has yet to filter through to on-the-ground work. Considering the overwhelming role men play in producing and reproducing conflict-related and other forms of violence, a better understanding of the links between masculinities and violence – as well as non-violence – should be central to examining
gender, conflict, and peace. Nonetheless, currently a large part of masculinities are side-lined in research, such as those of non-combatants or displaced persons, the associated challenges of ‘thwarted masculinities’, or the positive agency of peacebuilders. Non-heterosexual masculinities also are largely invisible. Based on recent multi-country field research, we aim to highlight some of the under-researched issues revolving around conflict-affected masculinities while also discussing some conceptual challenges arising as a result. Our two key arguments are that the notion of ‘hegemonic masculinities’ in conflict affected situations needs to be re-examined and re-articulated in more nuanced ways, and that the scope of studying masculinities in these situations needs to be broadened to go beyond merely examining the violences of men.


Two hundred and twenty-two working fathers with working wives and 246 working mothers with working husbands were randomly sampled and interviewed to ascertain the circumstances under which fathers in Uganda are getting involved in child-care tasks (which traditionally in Uganda are a women’s domain) as a result of increasing maternal involvement in paid employment. Paternal confidence and motivation, access to paternity leave, shorter work time requirements, harmony in marital relationships, and higher education levels, have a positive influence on fathers’ involvement in childcare while wife’s employment and wealth have a negative influence.


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After 20 years of civil war in Northern Uganda, the continuity of violence within the family constitutes a major challenge to children’s healthy development in the post-conflict era. Previous exposure to trauma and ongoing psychopathology in guardians potentially contribute to parental perpetration against children and dysfunctional interactions in the child’s family ecology that increase children’s risk of maltreatment. In order to investigate distal and proximal risk factors of child victimization, we first aimed to identify factors leading to more self-reported perpetration in guardians. Second, we examined factors in the child’s family environment that promote child-reported experiences of maltreatment. Using a two-generational design we interviewed 368 children, 365 female guardians, and 304 male guardians from seven war-affected rural communities in Northern Uganda on the basis of standardized questionnaires. We found that the strongest predictors of self-reported aggressive parenting behaviors toward the child were guardians' own experiences of
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

childhood maltreatment, followed by female guardians’ victimization experiences in their intimate relationship and male guardians’ post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and alcohol-related problems. Regarding children’s self-report of victimization in the family, proximal factors including violence between adults in the household and male guardians’ PTSD symptom severity level predicted higher levels of maltreatment. Distal variables such as female guardians’ history of childhood victimization and female guardians’ exposure to traumatic war events also increased children’s report of maltreatment. The current findings suggest that in the context of organized violence, an intergenerational cycle of violence persists that is exacerbated by female guardians’ re-victimization experiences and male guardians' psychopathological symptoms.

This article examines how male survivors of wartime sexual violence in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice. Whereas recent years have witnessed increasing consideration for redressing conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against women, specific attention to justice for male-directed sexual violence remains absent. Drawing on the empirically-grounded perspectives of 46 male survivors, this article incorporates the seldom-heard voices and perspectives of male wartime rape survivors into debates about justice in the context of sexual violence, thereby contributing towards a gender inclusive and holistic understanding of gender justice debates. The findings underpinning this article demonstrate that male survivors’ justice priorities primarily centre around three interrelated themes: (a) justice as recognition, (b) government acknowledgement and (c) reparative justice. According to male survivors, these three aspects of justice imply the potential to respond to the misrecognition of male survivors’ experiences and to remedy their sexual and gendered harms in a reparative and gender-sensitive capacity.

Relations between militaries and masculinities—and hegemonic masculinity and the state—are well-established in the literature on gender and development. However, there is less research on how militarised masculinities relate to state governance strategies. This paper, based on qualitative research conducted in northern Uganda between 2014 and 2017, offers a gender analysis of youths participating in informal security arrangements. Civilian male youths accept poorly paid or unpaid work in the informal security sector in the hope of gaining access to livelihoods that will enable them to fulfil masculine ideal-types. However, this arrangement denies them the resources necessary to achieve the ideal-type of civilian masculinity, as well as the state’s military masculinity, which produces young men as subjects of the ruling regime. To reconfigure this relationship between civilian and militarised masculinities, one should understand informal security organisations in the context of alternative livelihood arrangements and take a long-term approach to the demilitarisation of the Ugandan state.
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract

Divija Madhani


Although often eagerly anticipated, reunification after deployment poses challenges for families, including adjusting to the parent--soldier’s return, re-establishing roles and routines, and the potentially necessary accommodation to combat-related injuries or psychological effects. Fourteen male service members, previously deployed to a combat zone, parent to at least one child under seven years of age, were interviewed about their relationships with their young children. Principles of grounded theory guided data analysis to identify key themes related to parenting young children after deployment. Participants reported significant levels of parenting stress and identified specific challenges, including difficulty reconnecting with children, adapting expectations from military to family life, and coparenting. Fathers acknowledged regret about missing an important period in their child’s development and indicated a strong desire to improve their parenting skills. They described a need for support in expressing emotions, nurturing, and managing their tempers. Results affirm the need for support to military families during reintegration and demonstrate that military fathers are receptive to opportunities to engage in parenting interventions. Helping fathers understand their children’s behavior in the context of age-typical responses to separation and reunion may help them to renew parent–child relationships and reengage in optimal parenting of their young children.


Across the African continent, women’s rights have become integral to international declarations, regional treaties, national legislation, and grassroots activism. Yet there is little research on how African men have understood these shifts and how African masculinities are implicated in such changes. Drawing on a year of ethnographic research in the Ugandan capital Kampala, this article investigates how ordinary men and women in Uganda understand women’s rights and how their attitudes are tied to local conceptions of masculinity. The author argues that a new configuration of gender relations is evident in urban Uganda–one that accommodates some aspects of women’s rights while retaining previous notions of innate male authority. This article therefore illustrates the complex and often contradictory engagements with human rights that occur in local contexts and how such engagements are shaped by–and are shaping–gender relations, including conceptions of masculinity.

This article examines the social dynamics among survivors and amnestied Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) ex-combatants living together in Acholiland, asking how and if Acholi survivors have forgiven Acholi LRA returnees, forgotten past violence and moved on, as stated in northern Uganda’s amnesty framework. The amnestied LRA ex-combatants interviewed stated that they wanted and needed to reintegrate among Acholi survivors. Yet, after two decades of amnesty, the magnitude of the brutality of the war remains etched in survivors’ minds. My ethnographic findings suggest feigned compliance as well as resistance to amnesty by-laws. Many practise what I call survivors’ acts of resistance, which includes name calling, attributing misfortune to the presence of ex-combatants, stigmatization and stealing. In short, survivors make returnees’ lives unbearable. My analysis is framed in reference to and critique of conventional transitional justice mechanisms and I underscore the importance of memory in the cessation of war violence and the restoration of peace.


This article examines wartime sexual violence, one of the most recurring wartime human rights abuses. It asserts that our theorisations need further development, particularly in regard to the way that masculinities and the intersections with constructions of ethnicity feature in wartime sexual violence. The article also argues that although women and girls are the predominant victims of sexual violence and men and boys the predominant agents, we must also be able to account for the presence of male victims and female agents. This, however, engenders a problem; much of the women’s human rights discourse and existing international mechanisms for addressing wartime sexual violence tend to reify the male-perpetrator/female-victim paradigm. This is a problem which feminist human rights theorists and activists need to address.


Here, I explore the domestication of masculine identities that occurs within the British Army, and the transitions that take place upon re-entry into civilian life. Through oral accounts I highlight how men renegotiate their identity within the ‘home’ and within ‘society’ and seek to add to the debate on how we analyse a cultural repertoire of masculinities that are appropriate to particular places. In particular, I draw out: (1) how a domesticated body fit for purpose is created and maintained within the British Army; (2) how and with what effect an embodied routine and self-discipline is transferred into a home environment; and (3) the re-imaging of home life through the performance of these masculine identities.

All too often in conflict situations, rape is referred to as a ‘weapon of war’, a term presented as self-explanatory through its implied storyline of gender and warring. In this provocative but much-needed book, Eriksson Baaz and Stern challenge the dominant understandings of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. Reading with and against feminist analyses of the interconnections between gender, warring, violence and militarization, the authors address many of the thorny issues inherent in the arrival of sexual violence on the global security agenda. Based on original fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as research material from other conflict zones, Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? challenges the recent prominence given to sexual violence, bravely highlighting various problems with isolating sexual violence from other violence in war. A much-anticipated book by two acknowledged experts in the field, on an issue that has become an increasingly important security, legal and gender topic.


This article explores the ways soldiers in the Congo speak about the massive amount of rape committed by the armed forces in the recent war in the DRC. It focuses on the reasons that the soldiers give to why rape occurs. It discusses how the soldiers distinguish between “lust rapes” and “evil rapes” and argues that their explanations of rape must be understood in relation to notions of different (impossible) masculinities. Ultimately, through reading the soldiers’ words, we can glimpse the logics—arguably informed by the increasingly globalized context of soldiering—through which rape becomes possible, and even “normalized” in particular warscapes.


Feminist scholarship on war and militarization has typically focussed on the making of militarized masculinity. However, in this article, we shed light on the process of ‘unmaking’ militarized masculinity through the experiences of veterans transitioning from military to civilian life. We argue that in the twenty-first century, veterans’ successful reintegration into civilian society is integral to the legitimacy of armed force in Western polities and is therefore a central concern of policymakers, third-sector service providers, and the media. But militarized masculinity is not easily unmade. Veterans often struggle with their transition to civilian life and the negotiation of military and civilian gender norms. They may have an ambivalent relationship with the state and the military. Furthermore, militarized masculinity is embodied and experienced, and has a long and contradictory afterlife in veterans themselves. Attempts to unmake militarized masculinity in the figure of the veteran challenge...
some of the key concepts currently employed by feminist scholars of war and militarization. In practice, embodied veteran identities refuse a totalizing conception of what militarized masculinity might be, and demonstrate the limits of efforts to exceptionalize the military, as opposed to the civilian, aspects of veteran identity. In turn, the very liminality of this ‘unmaking’ troubles and undoes neat categorizations of military/civilian and their implied masculine/feminine gendering. We suggest that an excessive focus on the making of militarized masculinity has limited our capacity to engage with the dynamic, co-constitutive, and contradictory processes which shape veterans’ post-military lives.

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The concept of hegemonic masculinity has influenced gender studies across many academic fields but has also attracted serious criticism. The authors trace the origin of the concept in a convergence of ideas in the early 1980s and map the ways it was applied when research on men and masculinities expanded. Evaluating the principal criticisms, the authors defend the underlying concept of masculinity, which in most research use is neither reified nor essentialist. However, the criticism of trait models of gender and rigid typologies is sound. The treatment of the subject in research on hegemonic masculinity can be improved with the aid of recent psychological models, although limits to discursive flexibility must be recognized. The concept of hegemonic masculinity does not equate to a model of social reproduction; we need to recognize social struggles in which subordinated masculinities influence dominant forms. Finally, the authors review what has been confirmed from early formulations (the idea of multiple masculinities, the concept of hegemony, and the emphasis on change) and what needs to be discarded (onedimensional treatment of hierarchy and trait conceptions of gender). The authors suggest reformulation of the concept in four areas: a more complex model of gender hierarchy, emphasizing the agency of women; explicit recognition of the geography of masculinities, emphasizing the interplay among local, regional, and global levels; a more specific treatment of embodiment in contexts of privilege and power; and a stronger emphasis on the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity, recognizing internal contradictions and the possibilities of movement toward gender democracy.

Hegemonic masculinity was introduced as a concept which, due to its understanding of gender as dynamic and relational, and of power as consent, could explain both the persistence of male power and the potential for social change. Yet, when hegemonic masculinity is applied in empirical cases, it is most often used to demonstrate the way in which hegemonic masculinity shifts and adopts new practices in order to enable some men to retain power over others. This is especially so in feminist International Relations, particularly studies of military masculinities, where shifts toward “softer” military masculinities such as the “tough and tender” soldier-scholar demonstrate to many feminists merely the “flexibility of the machinery of rule.” In this article, I challenge the pessimism of these accounts of military
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

masculinity. My particular contribution is to build on an emergent and underdeveloped strand of Connell’s work on hegemonic masculinity: how change might be theorized. I argue that hegemonic masculinity remains a useful concept, but that the process through which “hegemony may fail” requires rethinking. I make this argument by exploring and working through empirical material on military masculinities, drawing on both my own research and critical analysis of the literature.

Studies of masculinity and armed conflict have struggled to capture the complex interaction between globalized militarized masculinities and local gender formations. Particularly in conflicts characterized by a high degree of combatant mobility (in the form of foreign fighters, massed displacement, or significant diaspora involvement) locating the relevant gender dynamics can prove to be a difficult step in understanding the character of armed groups. Based on fieldwork with Indonesian former foreign fighters, we make the case that feminist international relations have tended to unreflectively default to the nation when locating gender hierarchies. Exploring the multiple articulations of masculinity present in former fighters’ lives, we suggest that efforts must be made to resist methodological nationalism in understanding the relationship between gender hierarchies and armed conflict. Charting how foreign fighters traverse local constructions of gender, national gender hierarchies, and transnational social structures to participate in the conflict, we argue that adopting a conscious consideration of scale in our research method is needed to move beyond methodological nationalism.

In this article I develop what I term *chameleon masculinity* as a specific form of gendered adaptation of military agency opened up by the post-9/11 shift towards ‘population-centred’ counterinsurgency and stabilisation. A gendered analysis of this carefully cultivated form of military agency is central to revealing some of the concealed embodied dynamics that challenge the hegemony of the traditional combat soldier, and in practice enables this form of war. Drawing on 18 months of anthropological fieldwork, for the most part alongside the UK’s Military Stabilisation Support Group, this research incorporates my auto-ethnography as an officer in the Royal Naval Reserves. Rather than focusing at the level of policy, strategy, and doctrine, I examine how the specialized and masculinized agency of ‘the chameleon’ translates tactically into the body of the British military stabilisation operative, showing how this is developed through intensive pre-deployment training in the UK, and embodied and practised through operational deployment in Afghanistan. This reveals the specific agency of chameleon masculinity and how its potential for inherent violence becomes deceptively ‘hidden in plain sight’.

Inspired by the themes of violence, masculinity and responsibility, this article investigates the visibility of male victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in war. Despite the
passing of UNSCR 1820 in 2008, the formulation of UN ACTION (United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict), and the appointment of a United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General to lead policy and practice in this issue area, we argue here that male survivors/victims remain a marginal concern, which has, among other consequences, profound implications for the facilities that exist to support male victims/survivors during and after periods of active conflict. In the first section of the article, we provide an overview of the contemporary academic literature on rape in war, not only to act as the foundation for the analytical work that follows but also to illustrate the argument that male survivors/victims of sexualised violence in war are near-invisible in the majority of literature on this topic. Second, we turn our analytical lens to the policy environment charged with addressing sexualised violence in conflict. Through a discourse analysis focussed on the website of UN ACTION (www.stoprapenow.org), we demonstrate that this lack of vision in academic work maps directly to a lack of visibility in the policy arena. The third section of the article explores the arrangements in place within extant peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction programmes that aim to facilitate recovery with victims/survivors of sexualised violence in war. We conclude with reflections on the themes of violence, masculinity and responsibility in the context of sexualised violence in war and suggest that in this context all privileged actors have a responsibility to theorise violence with careful attention to gender in order to avoid perpetuating models of masculinity and war-rape that have potentially pernicious effects.


This article discusses how militiamen who fought in the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990) have been represented in Lebanese cultural production and how these militiamen relate to public discourse on masculinity and culpability in the postwar period. Through an analysis of interviews with former militiamen from the Lebanese press, an autobiographical novel, and a play about the war, this paper examines the link between debates about memory and responsibility on one hand, and contentions over norms of masculine behavior on the other. The texts suggest that some Lebanese artists privilege a redemptive narrative, where former fighters are shown as regretful, even feminized, “little men” on par with other human victims of a senseless war. This narrative is meant to counter the widely held notion in Lebanon that militiamen bear a large part of the responsibility for the war. At the same time, this redemptive narrative seeks to sever the link between masculinity and sectarian cultures that, still today, celebrate violence committed during the civil war.


Masculinities in conflict-affected and peacebuilding contexts have generally speaking been under-researched. Much of the existing research focuses relatively narrowly on men and their ‘violences’, especially that of combatants. Conceptually, much of the policy debate has revolved around either men’s ‘innate’ propensity to violence or relatively simplistic uses of frameworks such as hegemonic, military/militarized, or ‘hyper’-masculinities. These discourses have often been reinforced and reproduced without relating them to their respective local historical, political, and socio-economic contexts. In academic circles, the discussion is more advanced and progressive, but this has yet to filter through to on-the-
ground work. Considering the overwhelming role men play in producing and reproducing conflict-related and other forms of violence, a better understanding of the links between masculinities and violence – as well as non-violence – should be central to examining gender, conflict, and peace. Nonetheless, currently a large part of masculinities are side-lined in research, such as those of non-combatants or displaced persons, the associated challenges of ‘thwarted masculinities’, or the positive agency of peacebuilders. Non-heterosexual masculinities also are largely invisible. Based on recent multi-country field research, we aim to highlight some of the under-researched issues revolving around conflict-affected masculinities while also discussing some conceptual challenges arising as a result. Our two key arguments are that the notion of ‘hegemonic masculinities’ in conflict-affected situations needs to be re-examined and re-articulated in more nuanced ways, and that the scope of studying masculinities in these situations needs to be broadened to go beyond merely examining the violences of men.


Recent work on the multiplicity of masculinities within specific military contexts deploys the concept of intersectionality in order to draw attention to the hierarchies present in military organizations or to acknowledge male vulnerability in situations of war and conflict. While it is important to examine the breadth and depth of masculinity as an ideology and practice of domination, it is also important for discussions of military masculinity, and intersectionality, to be connected with the ‘originary’ black feminist project from which intersectionality was born. This may indeed reflect a more nuanced and historically attuned account of such concepts as intersectionality, but also black and double consciousness, standpoint and situated knowledges. In particular, what happens when concepts central to feminist theorizing and activism suddenly become of use for studying dominant groups such as male military men? What are our responsibilities in using these concepts in unexpected and perhaps politically questionable ways? This article looks at recent feminist theorizing on intersectionality, and several examples of the use of intersectionality in relation to masculinity and the military, and finally suggests some cautionary ways forward for rethinking militaries, masculinities, and feminist theories.


Drawing together the work of five feminist scholars whose research spans diverse sociopolitical contexts, this themed section questions militarisation as a fixed condition. Using feminist methodologies to explore the spatialised networks and social mechanisms through which militarisation is sustained and resisted, ‘gendering’ militarisation reveals a complex politics of diffusion at work in a range of everyday power relations. However, diffusion acts not as a unidirectional movement across a border, but as the very contingency which makes militarisation – and transformation – possible. Through connecting the empirical and theoretical work on militarisation with feminist geographies, the authors in this collection
highlight the influence of military thinking and institutions, not as static structures, but instead as productive sites.


This article examines modes of theorizing about war in two contemporary literatures: on war and gender and on the changing nature of war. Both these literatures make a connection between masculinity and war. The article argues that, on examination, the link between masculinity and war does not depend on the substantive meanings of either masculinity or war, or on a causal or constitutive relation between the two; rather, masculinity is linked to war because the formal, relational properties of masculinity provide a framework through which war can be rendered both intelligible and acceptable as a social practice and institution.


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Humanitarian interventions that confuse ‘gender issues’ with ‘women's issues’ ignore the complex nature of gender and its potential as a tool for social change. This article reflects on this issue, in the context of an analysis of the relationship between sexual and gender-based violence and hegemonic masculinities in the conflict zone of North Kivu province in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. It draws on a research study focusing on the discrepancies between dominant ideals of masculinity and the actual realities of men’s lives. As men try to enact masculine ideals of breadwinner and family head, the current political and economic context puts them under increasing pressure. Respondents drew a direct
connection between the resulting sense of failure and unhealthy outlets for asserting masculinity, lack of productivity, and violence. They were critical of the fact that most programmes dealing with sexual and gender-based violence focus exclusively on supporting women. I argue here that such interventions do not recognise the interdependent and interactive nature of gender. Their antagonising effect is evidenced by the high level of men's resistance to programmes and campaigns promoting gender equality. The article further highlights the role of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in creating a general climate of violence and conflict, pointing up the need for holistic approaches that empower men to make non-violent life choices.

This article reflects on the ways young urban Vietnamese men remember their imaginings while growing up about cultural scripts of masculinity and femininity, the ways such memories contrast with how they feel about their everyday relationships with women and other men, and how those feelings change. In so doing the article draws attention to the practical role(s) that affectivity and ambivalence play in signifying and mystifying for young Vietnamese men the ideals and practises of a ‘masculine self’. I argue that my informants appeared to believe that long-standing models of masculine advantage such as Confucianism underpinned their identities as men. But when they reflected on how they felt about their actual relationships with young women and other men, informants argued that the power and effect of masculine advantage was always situated in (abstract) cultural ‘traditions’, and not manifest in daily interactions. I argue that the ambivalence my informants expressed about gaps between the ideals and practises of a ‘masculine self’ can be understood not only as the manifestation of emotional expression but also as a strategy of interaction – a way for young men to attempt to satisfy personal desires amid the perceived demise of masculinist cultural traditions.

In contemporary Western, liberal democratic societies, the soldier is frequently regarded as ‘the best of us’, taking on the unlimited liability for the protection and betterment of the whole. In the context of volunteer militaries and distant conflicts, the construction of men (and the universalised masculine citizen) as ‘always-already’ soldiers (or potential soldiers) poses a substantial obstacle to the identification or performance of ‘good’ civilian masculinity – particularly during wartime. The theorisation and articulation of a positive, substantive civilian masculinity, or masculinities, rather than one defined simply by an absence of military service and implication in the collective use of violence, is a central challenge of contemporary politics. As a means of illuminating the complex dynamics of this challenge, this article examines charitable practices of civilian support for the military, and corresponding constructions of masculinity, in the UK during the ‘war on terror’. In doing so, the article demonstrates the ways in which gendered ‘civilian anxiety’, through its connection to citizenship, comes to condition the political possibilities and subjectivities of all those who seek belonging in the liberal political community. The article concludes by arguing for the essentiality of a research programme oriented around ‘civilianness’, and civilian masculinity/ies.
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani


The importance of including men and boys in order to successfully promote gender equality has been increasingly emphasized in international policymaking and governance. This article examines emerging discourses on men, masculinities and gender equality in the field of humanitarian aid to refugees. Through an analysis of key policy texts as well as interviews with humanitarian workers, three main representations of the role of refugee men in relation to the promotion of gender equality are identified. Refugee men are represented as perpetrators of violence and discrimination; as powerful gatekeepers and potential allies; and as emasculated troublemakers. These ways of conceptualizing men and masculinity are problematic in ways which significantly limit their potential for the transformation of unequal gender relations: gendered power relations are obscured; refugee men's masculinity is pathologized as “primitive”; and attempts to take the needs of men into account are often turned into an argument against the empowerment of refugee women.


A key component of peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction is the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. I argue that DDR programs imply multiple transitions: from the combatants who lay down their weapons, to the governments that seek an end to armed conflict, to the communities that receive—or reject—these demobilized fighters. At each level, these transitions imply a complex equation between the demands of peace and the clamor for justice. However, traditional approaches to DDR have focused on military and security objectives, which have resulted in these programs being developed in relative isolation from the field of transitional justice and its concerns with historical clarification, justice, reparations, and reconciliation. Drawing upon my research with former combatants in Colombia, I argue that successful reintegration not only requires fusing the processes and goals of DDR programs with transitional justice measures, but that both DDR and transitional justice require a gendered analysis that includes an examination of the salient links between weapons, masculinities, and violence. Constructing certain forms of masculinity is not incidental to militarism: rather, it is essential to its maintenance. What might it mean to “add gender” to DDR and transitional justice processes if one defined gender to include men and masculinities, thus making these forms of identity visible and a focus of research and intervention? I explore how one might “add gender” to the DDR program in Colombia as one step toward successful reintegration, peace-building, and sustainable social change.


War and peace are gendered and gendering geopolitical processes, constituting particular configurations of masculinity and femininity. When men are considered in relation to war and peace the majority of scholarly accounts focus on soldiers and perpetrators, typically observing their place in the gendered geopolitical solely through military/ized masculinities.
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

In contrast, this article examines fatherhood as a masculine subjectivity, interacting in a nexus with other masculinities to produce an intelligible propeace intervention in war, and considers the implications for our understandings of gender and the geopolitical. To analyze this political subjectivity of what I term “paternal peace,” the article considers the case of Bob Bergdahl. Bergdahl’s son was a US soldier held by a Taliban-aligned group for five years until 2014. During this time Bergdahl was publically critical of US foreign policy, presenting his son’s release as part of a peace process that could end violence in Afghanistan. I unpack how Bergdahl’s public political subjectivity was the outcome of a “gender project” drawing on accounts of “valley” fatherhood in combination with particular forms of diplomatic and military masculinity. I consider how Bergdahl’s intervention was publically received, and how the geopolitical reach of it was pacified within gendered and racialized coding.


There is a developing body of research regarding fathering, in the UK, but the experiences of African-Caribbean and white working-class fathers, and how their experiences are mediated by gender and ethnicity have been neglected. The purpose of this paper is to address this gap in research by reporting on the similarities and differences within the stories of African-Caribbean and white working-class men about fathering, and to examine the personal and structural dimensions to these experiences using Connell’s theoretical framework for understanding masculinities (1995, 2005). Qualitative, semi-structured individual interviews were undertaken with seven white and six African-Caribbean fathers. Findings indicate that African-Caribbean fathers, specifically, their associated practices, regarding children’s ‘behaviour’ and learning, with experiences of racism that they anticipated their children may encounter in the future. Both groups of men’s stories demonstrated limited reflexivity about the unequal distribution of domestic labour within the home. The study also found that fathers’ experiences were associated with contradictory and differing forms of masculinity. The fathers’ stories provide evidence of changing forms of masculinity, for example, in ways in which fathers conceptualised fathering as enjoyable involvement with children, and the ways fathers negotiated and resisted the constraints of paid work in order to be involved with children. Findings also reinforce the importance of health and social care services reorienting their priorities to engage with fathers, and opportunities for future research, regarding the experiences of African-Caribbean fathers in particular, are also identified.

This paper explores the expansive possibilities for a critical military studies that approaches the mechanisms of war-making as coextensive with broader arrangements of social life, rather than as intersecting or overlapping with distinguishable social spheres, like gender. The potential here is both analytical and theoretical: analytical in that it opens up productive avenues of critique through which to explore, but not resolve, the contradictions that animate
Masculinities and Conflict  
Bibliography with Abstract  
Divija Madhani

war-making and military life; theoretical in that war-making and military life offer spaces through which to consider deep questions of social theory – of, for example, the contours of a life worth living in liberal fantasies of the good life – that are amplified in this context, but that resonate well beyond it. In conversation with queer theory, the paper illustrates these possibilities by thinking through the ways that concern about soldier and veteran suicide is imbricated with heteronormative ideals of the family and practices of caregiving in the contemporary US.

* Zalewski, Marysia. “What’s the Problem with the Concept of Military Masculinities?” Critical Military Studies 3:2 (2017): 200-205. This think piece queries the value of the concept of military masculinities. This overly familiar and comfortable concept is perhaps falling short of its intended ambitions. Masculinized and militarized violence is rampant and no amount of ‘adding women’ (or other ‘others’) seems to make a difference. This begs the question of how much work we imagine concepts can do, as well as how much control we think we have over them.

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Ashe, Fidelma. "Gendering War and Peace: Militarized Masculinities in Northern Ireland." Men and Masculinities 15.3 (2012): 230-248. There has been extensive academic analysis of Northern Ireland’s ethnonationalist antagonisms. However, academic literature that has explored both the region’s ethnonationalist conflict and its more recent processes of conflict transformation has neglected the concept of masculinities. This article employs the framework of critical studies of men/masculinities to analyze why men’s gendered identities have received so little attention in a society that is marked by deep gendered inequalities and also exposes the consequences of this neglect in terms of exploring gendered power relationships in Northern Ireland society. Additionally, the article employs the concept of militarized masculinities to explore the relationships between ethnonationalist conflict, conflict transformation, men’s gendered identities, and gender power in the region.


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Davies, Sara E., and Jacqui True. "Reframing Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence: Bringing Gender Analysis Back In." Security Dialogue 46.6 (2015): 495-512. Over the past decade, significant global attention has been paid to the issue of ‘widespread and systematic’ sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). To contribute to the prevention of SGBV, researchers have examined the relationship between the presence of armed conflict and the causes of SGBV. Much of this causal literature has focused on the individual and group perpetrator dynamics that fuel SGBV. However, we argue that research needs to lay bare the
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

roots of SGBV in normalized and systemic gender discrimination. This article brings back structural gender inequality as a causal explanation for SGBV. In order to better understand and prevent SGBV, we propose a critical knowledge base that identifies causal patterns of gendered violence by building on existing indicators of gender discrimination.

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Recent international relations scholarship tends to view sexual violence, especially rape, as an exceptional—if not aberrant—phenomenon in war and armed conflict. Indeed, it often treats it as the sole form of gender-based violence capable of threatening international peace and security. I challenge the isolation of this particular form of gender violence in the study and governance of international security. I argue that the securitization of sexual violence produced its “fetishization” in international advocacy, policy, and scholarship. The stages of securitization operate as a process of fetishization by first, decontextualizing and homogenizing this violence; second, objectifying this violence; and third, affecting inter-unit relations through the “selling back” of sexual violence to actors involved in conflict. As such, my argument helps specify why securitization fails to adequately address an issue like sexual violence and often results in further retrenchment of disparate power relations.

This article moves beyond stereotypical portrayals of the connections between hyper-masculinity and violence in militarized contexts and identifies expressions of insurgent masculinities different from the imagery of ‘heroic guerrilla fighter’. Based on conversations with fifty female and male former insurgent militants in Peru, Colombia and El Salvador, this comparative analysis explores patterns within gender regimes created in insurgent movements. This contribution shows that ‘gender’ is not merely a ‘side contradiction’, but that guerrilla movements invest considerable efforts in creating and managing gender relations. The construction of insurgent masculinities is not based on the rejection or
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

devaluation of women in general, but requires diluting gendered dichotomies, enabling not only alternative role models functional for armed struggle, but also female–male bonding, prioritizing comrade identity over gender-binary consciousness.
Masculinities and Conflict
Bibliography with Abstract
Divija Madhani

**BIB: TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**


The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has forcibly recruited tens of thousands of youth from northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, and more presently the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. The longer that abducted youth spend inside the armed group, the more likely they will assume positions of command. These roles are differentiated on the basis of sex and gender expectations: young men are more likely to become active combatants and young women are more likely to become forced “wives” and mothers. As a result, forcibly recruited male and female youth are assumed to hold different degrees of responsibility. Comparing the life stories of an abducted male and female youth who became LRA commanders, I argue that each made choices within a state of coerced militarized masculinity. The question of responsibility must be located in the context of a present-day grey zone, and must unsettle gendered assumptions about men and women, and guilt and innocence. Transitional justice has only begun to grapple with the ambiguity of gender, responsibility, and the grey zone.


Dominic Ongwen is an indicted war criminal and former child soldier in one of the world’s most brutal rebel organisations, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Ongwen is at once victim and perpetrator: what justice strategy is relevant? I introduce the concept of complex political perpetrators to describe youth who occupy extremely marginal spaces in settings of chronic crisis, and who use violence as an expression of political agency. Ongwen represents a troupe of young rebels who were ‘bred’ in the shadows of illiberal war economies. Excluded from the polity, or rather never having been socialised within it, such complex political perpetrators must be recognised in the debate on transitional justice after mass atrocity, lest cycles of exclusion and violence as politics by another means continue.


The article is concerned with the relationship between the processes of return after mass displacement, and social repair. If mass displacement frays the social fabric of the family and community, possibilities of re-crafting a viable sociality are also found within these intimate relations. Thus, we look to the everyday as a space of negotiation and renegotiation of social relationships that make life meaningful. The article considers these propositions in the context of the forced displacement of up to 90 per cent of the Acholi population during the height of the war in northern Uganda between 1986 and 2008, and in the processes of mass return of displaced persons after the war. It takes as a point of departure the efforts of two sisters as they struggle to overcome their displacement from family networks, and seek to restore their status through the performance of Acholi notions of motherhood. Their efforts are collectivized by working with other female heads of households to trace paternal clans, and secure a future for their children. The concept of social repair, we suggest, illuminates the way return involves the day-to-day processual negotiation of relationships.