No Place for a War Baby:
The Global Politics of Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence

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Declaration

This is to certify that:

i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD;

ii. the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of footnotes and bibliography.

[Signature]
Donna Seto
Abstract

Children born of wartime sexual violence are rarely included in post-conflict processes of reconciliation and recovery. Instead, these children are often marginalized and rejected by their mothers, community, and nation. As a consequence, children born of wartime sexual violence are often subject to infanticide, abandonment, political exclusion, social and cultural stigmatization. In some cases these children are pariahs within their own birth community and lack formal membership of any state.

By positioning children born of wartime sexual violence as a point of enquiry, this thesis aims to create a space in which the rights, experiences, and identities of this specific group of war-affected children can be theorized. This thesis argues that these children have fallen between the analytical gaps of the two most relevant approaches within global politics: feminist International Relations (IR) and children’s human rights regimes. It argues that despite the differences within feminist approaches to IR, the focus has often been on the war-affected woman rather than the child. This thesis finds that children born of wartime sexual violence are also marginalized within the children’s rights debates on war-affected children.

To reflect this argument, this thesis is structured in two parts. First, it questions why children born of war are largely absent from existing feminist IR discussions of wartime sexual violence. In doing so it explores a number of feminist approaches to IR, with particular focus on the debates regarding the manipulation of women’s identities and roles in conflict, and the debates surrounding wartime sexual violence. The first section also presents a case for how feminist IR might accommodate a consideration of children born of wartime sexual violence. Secondly, this thesis will address why these children are excluded from human rights regimes and humanitarian programs that deal specifically with war-affected children. This will proceed through an exploration of the debates behind childhood as a concept. The second section reveals that children born of wartime sexual violence are unable to fit into the existing concept of childhood that is used by the children’s rights regime and humanitarian organizations. As a consequence, children born of wartime sexual violence are left out of the international humanitarian discourse concerning children.
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Introduction

Systematic mass rape, forced impregnation, enforced pregnancy, and forced maternity shockingly demonstrate that we human beings possess a seemingly limitless capacity to devise ever more terrible forms of cruelty and misery for our fellows.

- Michael Goodhart

"Faisal changed my life. Because of him I am sick. Because of him my life is ruined." These words were uttered by Ashta in 2005, a thirty-year-old mother residing in the Al Riyadh refugee camp located on the border of Chad and Sudan. Ashta was raped by the Janjaweed as she tried to flee her village. The Janjaweed, literally translated as the "devil on horseback," have been ravaging Sudan’s southwesterly region of Darfur since 2003. Rape has been used as a method to instill terror, shame and long-term suffering onto a community that has traditionally protected female chastity. The rape left Ashta pregnant with an unwanted child. She gave birth to Faisal nine months after the assault.

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Her child is among the hundreds of babies produced by the use of sexual violence in the conflict plaguing Darfur. Anecdotal evidence provided by traditional midwives and aid organizations have indicated that there were two dozen babies of rape that were born in Al Riyadh refugee camp in early 2005. Darfur is not the only community dealing with the consequence of children born as a result of wartime sexual violence.

An orphanage in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina houses the consequences of a systematic campaign of wartime rape and forced impregnation. At face value, these children do not appear to be that different from other children. However, their ages and ethnicities reveal that they were a part of the campaign to produce “Chetnik” children during the 1992-1995 Bosnian conflict. Most of the children were created from systematic rape committed by the Serbian military against Bosnian-Muslim women. The rapes occurred in prison camps, safe houses, and schools that were turned into centres for rape. Similar to the conflict in Darfur, the rapes were used as a method to instill long-term forms of suffering and social humiliation into the Bosnian community. Some of these children were created by a policy of forced impregnation; others were the consequences of mass rape.

The conflicts in Darfur and Bosnia-Herzegovina are not isolated cases where children were born as a result of militarized sexual violence. Children born of wartime sexual violence have become an increasingly visible issue as the international community begins to recognize the systematic and deliberate use of sexual violence in conflict. In the past two decades, wartime sexual violence has been recognized as a crime against humanity and a war crime. Central to this recognition was the creation of the International Criminal

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4 Polgreen, “Darfur’s Babies of Rape Are on Trial from Birth.”
5 Doug Saunders, “Children Born of Rape Come of Age in Bosnia,” Globe and Mail (Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, March 3, 2006), http://www.theglobeandmail.com/archives/children-born-of-rape-come-of-age-in-bosnia/article815852/, [accessed September 10, 2010]. The suggestion that the Serbian military was responsible for the rape of Bosnian-Muslim women is not to suggest that either ethnicity is solely to blame for the violence that occurred in the former Yugoslavia. Sexual violence was used as a form of intimidation and method to instill terror. Thus, both groups of women were subject to forms of sexual violence. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that men were also subject to sexual or gender-based violence during the 1992-1995 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This reflection of the use of sexual violence is not meant to essentialize the experience or to indicate that a specific ethnic group has been responsible. Rather it works to complicate the matter and suggest that sexual violence in conflict is holistic and difficult to explain.
Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 and the International Criminal Court for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1994. Both the ICTY and ICTR have recognized wartime sexual violence as a heinous crime committed against women.  

Despite the recognition of wartime sexual violence, the international discourse has “so far proved inadequate in formulating a response to the children born as a result of such attacks.” As of the writing of this thesis in 2010, there have been no systematic fact-finding or humanitarian programs that adequately address the interests of children born of wartime sexual violence. This thesis will attempt to address the reasons why the international community has not sufficiently responded to the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence. More specifically, it will analyze how this specific group of war-affected children has not been addressed by the two most relevant fields of enquiry: feminist International Relations (IR) and the children’s rights network.

Research Problem

As a group, children remain under-represented within mainstream explanations of international politics. Yet, more specifically children born of wartime sexual violence are rarely mentioned at all. Mainstream IR has largely assumed that children exist outside the daily workings of politics and their activities have been safely confined to the private or domestic sphere. Even within the sub-disciplines of IR, such as feminist IR, children born of wartime sexual violence remain bystanders to discussions concerning war and sexual violence more specifically. For instance, feminist discussion of this issue has


11 Some of the experiences of children born of war are highlighted in programs that deal with child refugees, child soldiers, and the trafficking of children. It is, however, difficult to find a program that specifically deals with these children.


13 Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
concentrated on the experiences of the war-affected woman rather than the child.\textsuperscript{13} As a consequence, children who are born as the result of wartime sexual violence have been used to reflect upon the torture, trauma, and humiliation that the war-affected woman had experienced. This discussion has rarely reflected the experiences and interests of children who are born under such circumstances.

Moreover, the children’s rights regime and humanitarian organizations working with children have also been unable to deal with children born of wartime sexual violence. The children’s rights regime has largely relied on a definition of childhood that is compatible with mainstream prescriptions of international politics. Existing child-centric humanitarian programs continue to rely on the understanding of childhood as a stage of development that requires adult protection. This definition of childhood associates the child as existing within the private-domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{14} This thesis will demonstrate that children born of wartime sexual violence have been unable to fit into the existing categories of childhood. Although this thesis does not specifically engage in mainstream IR, some of IR’s key concepts will be addressed to show how children as a group have not been represented. More specifically, this thesis will address why feminist IR and the children’s rights regime have neglected this specific group of war-affected children.

\textit{Positivism and Mainstream International Relations}

The discipline of IR has traditionally been limited in its approach. Dominated by positivist interests, mainstream IR holds the sovereign state and issues concerning anarchy, self-help, and the military as central units of analysis.\textsuperscript{15} Realism,\textsuperscript{16} as the central tenet of IR,


\textsuperscript{16} Realism is a complex theoretical tradition which involves a number of internal debates over issues such as human nature, the role and nature of anarchy, the role and power of states, international institutions and
was revitalized in the post-World War II era to help make sense of international politics, war, as well as provide prescriptions for peace. However, Realism, in its classical post-WWII form, has evolved into the dominant theory used by mainstream IR scholars. Realism and its successor, Neo-Realism, have prided itself in its empirical basis and adoption of state-focused methodologies to explain the social world. Whereas earlier forms of Realism, as developed by the insights of Thomas Hobbes, codified human nature as the prime focus of relations between states; Neo-Realists has heavily emphasized the anarchic and unstable conditions of the international system. Unlike classical Realism, Neo-Realism emphasizes the permanence of conflict in the international sphere and the need for states to constantly prepare for conflict through military and economic development. Mainstream IR’s focus on the state, however, has failed to question its own epistemological approach. This failure to question the activities of the state has perpetuated a narrow prescription of the international sphere as one focused on anarchy, state-based conflict, military strength, and weaponry. In doing so, Neo-Realism believes that its focus on state behaviour is the sole legitimate perspective of international politics. The discipline of IR has tended to accept implicitly an uncontested set of positivist assumptions that fundamentally stifles debate over both what the world is like and how we

regimes. Classical Realism developed in the post-World War II era and largely borrowed ideas from Thomas Hobbes’ work in Leviathan. This early contribution to mainstream IR focused largely focused on the ‘nature of man’ as inherently competitive, self-centred, egotistical, and conflictual. In relating such ideas of the nature of man to the behaviour of states, classical Realists concentrated on the behaviour of states within an anarchic world. These issues are debated in such classic Realist texts such as Edward Hallett Carr. The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations. 2nd ed. London: MacMillan Press, 1948; Hans Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948); Hans Morgenthau, Scientific Man Versus Power Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). The development of Neo-Realism followed the contributions of Liberal-Realism/English School. Through the contributions made by Hedley Bull in The Anarchical Society (1977) and Martin Wight, Liberal-Realism focused on the ability for states to enter into a relationship of stability. This relationship of stability ensured that states held common interests and entered into a relationship that ensured international cooperation. Instead of focusing on human nature as the central understanding of state behaviour, Neo-Realists shifted towards the sovereign state as the prime actor in IR. Attention is focused on states and state behaviour as the central actor of analysis. More importantly, whereas classical Realism aimed to understand the rationale behind conflict, Neo-Realism accepted that conflict is inherent and inevitable in an anarchic world. As a result, Neo-Realists encourage states to perpetually prepare for conflict in the form of military and economic development. Texts that reflect Neo-Realist contributes include, but not limited to, Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979); John Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Fareed Zakaria, From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); The debates and emergence of neo-Realism is also discussed in Robert Keohane, ed., Neo-Realism and its Critics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).


might explain it. Neo-Realism has largely ignored the relevance of non-state actors and how state actions can detriment the livelihood of its own citizens. This failure to understand that there are particular voices that remain silenced by their positivist prescriptions of the world has meant that the field remains incomplete.

Within mainstream IR’s narrow approach, non-state actors remain largely absent from discussions concerning conflict, militarism, foreign policy, and reconciliation. In particular, IR’s reliance on state-centric concepts has historically excluded non-state actors such as women and children. If considered at all, Realism assumes that non-state actors exist within the private-domestic sphere where they are separate from the public-political sphere. However, contemporary examples of war suggest that broader methods are required to understand the intricacies of international politics. The prevalence of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations is evidence that war cannot be understood primarily through state-centric (or positivist) concepts. For example, feminist IR academics have revealed that wartime sexual violence has historically accompanied war and peace. In recent studies of conflict, it has been revealed that hundreds of thousands of women are subject to sexual violence during and after conflict. The repercussions of wartime sexual violence have been detrimental to the recovery of the community, as well as the livelihood of the women who survive the attack(s). Although efforts made by feminist academics and activists have brought international attention to the use of sexual violence in conflict, mainstream IR has largely been resistant to addressing this issue.

Mainstream IR’s division between the public-political and the private-domestic complicates the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence. Children, as a group, have been excluded from mainstream IR. Alison Watson has argued that, “[n]o international relations theory currently makes any specific reference to children as actors.” Realism, and its reliance on the state, has not been able to accommodate non-state actors such as children. Similarly, liberalism and its assumption that adults can make rational and independent decisions have not been extended to children. Liberalism continues to

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22 Watson, “Children and International Relations,” 244.
associate the child as a passive actor that relies on the assistance and guidance of adults. Children born of wartime sexual violence, however, contradict mainstream IR's assumption that children passively exist within the private sphere. There are several reasons for this. First, children born of wartime sexual violence are conceived through systematic forms of violence. As will be discussed in detail, this specific group of children is deliberately conceived during conflict or is the result of militarized liaisons between civilian women and (foreign) military men. Secondly, this group of war-affected children is often neglected by their mothers, community, and nation. Their neglect has a lot to do with their socially-constructed identities as the “other” and as reminders of the violence experienced during the conflict. Thus, children born of wartime sexual violence cannot neatly fit into mainstream IR’s prescription that children are non-political.

Feminist International Relations and Wartime Sexual Violence

Feminist theorists argue that the study of IR has primarily been a male-dominated field. As a consequence the field has not been able to address the major issues related to women and children. Within feminist IR’s critique, mainstream IR has been shown to privilege the socially constructed masculinist values of war, military activity, and conflict as legitimate and inevitable practices between states. This reliance on activities of the state has, however, often failed to account for how the state’s militaristic actions have been detrimental to the livelihood of non-state actors. Feminist contributions to IR have shed light onto the subject of wartime sexual violence, among other issues. Feminist theoretical and methodological enquiries have made the act visible to researchers and practitioners alike. Contributions made by feminist academics have widened the discussion of wartime sexual violence, likening it to a weapon of war, a crime against humanity, and an act of


genocide. Moreover, feminist discussions have recognized that forced impregnation and the birth of children have been intrinsic to the campaign of wartime sexual violence.

However, feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence have largely concentrated on the experiences of the war-affected woman rather than the child. The tense relationship between the representation of women and/or children is reflected in the development of human rights discourses developed to deal with the repercussion of wartime sexual violence. Despite the international recognition of wartime sexual violence as a crime against humanity and a war crime, children who have been the result of the rape campaigns have largely been missing from the discussion. For instance, the experiences of this particular group of children have not been mentioned in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). This failure to address the needs of these children neglects how their existence was part of the strategic campaign of conflict in both the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In the process, the rights, interests, and experiences of children born of wartime sexual violence have rarely been mentioned in international politics, let alone feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence.

Childhood and the Children’s Rights Regime

The subject of children has only been mentioned in passing in international politics. Similar to women, children’s identities have been constructed as non-political.

30 Watson, “Children and International Relations”; Alison M.S. Watson, “Can There Be a "Kindered" Peace?,” Ethics and International Affairs 22, no. 1 (Spring 2008); Brodiehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
Mainstream IR’s prescriptions of politics have largely ignored children as a group because they are considered to be politically innocent, in need of protection, and socially inexperienced.31 Moreover, they are not conceived as having any political agency. However, the subject of children has been addressed by major international humanitarian institutions and human rights regimes. At the forefront of protecting children is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Ratified in 1989, the UNCRC has been signed by nearly every state in the world and has been applied to the domestic policies of a number of countries.32 The rights outlined in the UNCRC have been set into action by child-centric humanitarian organizations. Children have been represented in the advocacy agendas of major organizations such as the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, World Vision, and the International Labour Organization. Leading child-centric organizations have been the motivating factor in ensuring that children’s rights are protected.33 Such organizations have been concerned with issues such as child soldiering, child labour, prostitution, trafficking, and child refugees.

Despite international recognition of children as a vulnerable group in need of protection, children born of wartime sexual violence have largely been absent from the programming agendas of existing organizations.34 Whereas organizations have addressed the interests of child soldiers, child refugees, and child prostitutes, there is an absence of programs that deal with the rights and concerns of children born of wartime sexual violence.35 Even though the UNCRC states that the rights of “all” children will be


protected, many children born of wartime sexual violence exist outside of the rights regime. Children born of wartime sexual violence are often stateless or lack membership to any community. The lack of membership to any state prevents this group of children from gaining access to the rights regime because documents, such as the UNCRC, rely on government action. Thus, despite the existence of the children’s rights regime and humanitarian organizations that address the issue of war-affected children, children born of wartime sexual violence are not protected.

Children born of wartime sexual violence challenge the boundaries of IR, feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence, and the children’s rights regime. The identities of children born of wartime sexual violence are complex and cannot be easily integrated into existing theories and regimes. The identities of these children, however, offer valuable insights into the workings of the field of IR, feminist IR, and the children’s rights regime. In analyzing the gaps within existing discourses, this thesis aims to create a space in which the rights, experiences, and identities of children born of wartime violence can be theorized. It will question why children born of wartime sexual violence have been excluded from existing discussions of wartime sexual violence. In addition, it will address why children have also been excluded from human rights regimes and humanitarian aid programs that deal with war-affected children.

Argument

By positioning children born of sexual violence as a point of enquiry, this thesis questions why this specific group of war-affected children has been missing from international politics. This thesis argues that these children have fallen between the analytical gaps of two of the most relevant approaches within global politics: feminist International Relations and children’s human rights regimes. Children born of wartime sexual violence are often silenced, ignored, and, at best, embedded within the footnotes of feminist texts that discuss the occurrence of sexual violence in war. This thesis argues that despite the differences within feminist approaches to IR, the focus has often been on the war-affected woman rather than the child.

This thesis also finds that children born of wartime sexual violence are marginalized within the children’s rights debates on war-affected children. As a
consequence, children born of wartime sexual violence are left out of the international humanitarian discourse concerning children. Whereas other war-affected children have been discussed in studies of contemporary conflict, the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence has been inadequately addressed.\textsuperscript{36} On occasion, they surface in the news or humanitarian reports concerned with the disaster of modern warfare. But rarely are the voices and the experiences of this particular group of war-affected children heard in feminist IR and the children’s rights regime. Most often, these children exist within the margins of societies ravaged by war.\textsuperscript{37}

**Thesis Outline**

To reflect this argument, this thesis is structured in two parts. First, it questions why children born of wartime sexual violence are largely absent from existing feminist IR discussions of wartime sexual violence. In doing so, it explores a number of feminist approaches to IR, with particular focus on the debates regarding the manipulation of women’s identities, their roles in conflict, and discussions concerning wartime sexual violence. The first section also presents a case for how feminist IR might accommodate a space where the experiences of children born of wartime sexual violence can be discussed.

Chapter One provides an outline of the different cases of war children. In presenting the different cases of children born of wartime sexual violence, this chapter highlights that this is a holistic issue that cannot be isolated to one specific area or conflict. Chapter Two engages with some of the contributions feminists have made to the discipline of IR. There are two reasons why this thesis explores the offerings of feminist IR: first, it can help to question the ontological and epistemological foundations of mainstream IR and feminist theories; and second, it helps to build a space to question why feminist discussions have not been able to accommodate the subject of children born of wartime sexual violence. As will be discussed in this thesis, feminist IR is not a homogenous field but a


\textsuperscript{37} "The thesis will go into specific cases of children who are ostracized. However, there are cases where children have been able to grow up without being aware of their origins and live “normal” lives. The example of these children cannot be isolated to their ill-treatment. There have been some cases where children have demonstrated the agency to break out of their marginalized situation."
field that has evolved through internal debates and dialogues. As a result, more critical approaches of feminist IR, such as post-structural feminism, can help deconstruct existing theories, such as liberal and radical feminism, and programs of action. Chapter Three applies the frameworks presented by feminist theories to the specific issue of wartime sexual violence. The purpose of exploring different feminist theories is to expose the knowledge gaps concerning wartime sexual violence and conflict. Lastly, Chapter Four uses a post-structural approach to complicate efforts made by feminist theorists. This chapter engages in an in-depth analysis of how particular frameworks of understanding wartime sexual violence can continue to alienate survivors. Part One explores a number of feminist approaches in IR in order to present a case of how feminist IR might accommodate a consideration of children born of wartime sexual violence. Part One’s focus on the manipulation of women’s identities and roles in conflict is intrinsically linked to Part Two’s discussion of children born of wartime sexual violence.

Secondly, this thesis will address why children born of war are excluded from human rights regimes and humanitarian programs that deal specifically with war-affected children. Chapter Five deconstructs the concept of childhood. It suggests that although childhood has been discussed in other disciplines, IR has been reluctant to express interest in the experiences of children. It will discuss how childhood has been constructed as a state of political innocence and inexperience. Chapter Six takes the concept of childhood further and explores its use in the children’s rights regime. The intention of this chapter is to survey the extensive list of rights outlined in the UNCRC. In doing so, it argues that the UNCRC relies on the idea that “all” children are guaranteed a specific set of rights, children born of wartime sexual violence are one example of how specific groups of children are not included within the UNCRC’s protectionist regime. Chapter Seven explores the role of humanitarian aid agencies and their programs dealing with war-affected children. The purpose of this chapter is to question how childhood or children’s identities are framed by humanitarian organizations. It argues that some humanitarian organizations associate all children with passivity in order to operationalize a projection of victimhood. However, groups that do not fit into the stereotype of a victim are often excluded. For instance, the identities of children born of war are too complicated to fit into the agenda of many humanitarian organizations.
Terminology

Key terms need to be addressed in order to set the boundaries of this thesis. This thesis mainly concerns itself with questions regarding ontology and epistemology. Engaging in ontology and epistemology helps to question the origins of concepts such as women, gender, sexual violence, children, and childhood. Understanding the background of concepts reveals that they are constructed and applied for a political purpose. This process of deconstruction suggests that an understanding of a subject is never far removed from the political process that defines it.\(^{38}\) Four key terms will be addressed here; these are ontology, epistemology, sexual violence and children born of wartime sexual violence.

The study of ontology can be defined as what we understand as knowledge and its relationship to the world. Ontology shapes or categorizes the different criteria that determines how theories come to conceptually frame knowledge.\(^{39}\) For instance, it shapes how we understand wartime rape, children, and what is important to our theoretical enquiry. Thus, ontology refers to the categories we form in order to intellectually map the world. They are the “starting points” that researchers use to construct knowledge related to a topic.\(^{40}\)

Epistemology refers to the study of how theorists go about acquiring knowledge. In short, epistemology is how we know things.\(^{41}\) It is important because it shapes the practice of knowing, how we come to acquire such knowledge, and the methodology used to produce knowledge. In other words, methodology is epistemology in action.\(^{42}\) Knowledge we develop is fundamentally shaped by the questions we ask (and do not ask), and by what we consider interesting and important. Methodology is our approach to developing knowledge. Typically, methodology has been used to question whether the researcher


\(^{40}\) Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, eds., *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006); Steans, *Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions*.


engages in qualitative or quantitative methods, or what specific types of methods one should use to examine a specific question.\textsuperscript{43} The subject of epistemology deals with the creation and dissemination of knowledge that is used in particular contexts and areas of theoretical enquiry. Whereas ontology is what we know, epistemology is how particular questions shape the practice of knowing. This practice of acquiring knowledge is the basis on which we reason with the understanding of the world.\textsuperscript{44} It demonstrates that the way in which practitioners “do” their research is predicated on particular understandings of what concepts are important, what questions are asked, and what are the most appropriate methods of conducting research. An enquiry into how ontological concepts and epistemological approaches are considered allows researchers to understand that there are often different and conflicted modes of questioning.\textsuperscript{45} Ontological and epistemological considerations are central to this thesis because they determine if and how children born of war are conceptualized in global politics. Additionally, it also makes an enquiry into how these children might be (re)conceptualized.

Children born of wartime sexual violence will be thoroughly defined in Chapter One. Children of war can be understood as those who are born to a mother who had “sexual encounters” with members of a foreign or local military force. This definition is synonymous with the concept used in available studies of war children.\textsuperscript{46} These children can refer to persons of any age who were conceived of violent, coercive or exploitative sexual relations that occur in conflict. This thesis employs a broad understanding of sexual violence as any physical or emotional violence of a sexualized nature. However, this thesis focuses primarily on the kind of sexual violence which results in pregnancy. Sexual violence in conflict is demonstrated by occupation forces, peacekeepers, humanitarian workers, and private militaries. A broad definition of war children can complicate the issue, but it also provides a holistic view of their experiences. The terms war children, children of war, children born of wartime sexual violence, children born of war, and war baby will be used interchangeably to refer to this particular group of war-affected children.

\textsuperscript{43} Weldon, “Inclusion and Understanding: A Collective Methodology for Feminist International Relations.”
\textsuperscript{44} Tickner, “Feminism meets International Relations: Some Methodological Issues.”
\textsuperscript{45} Smith, “Positivism and Beyond.”
Methodological Difficulties

Research concerning survivors of wartime sexual violence and their children is difficult to conduct. This particular area of enquiry is cloaked in silences and enshrouded in unequal power relationships. Such power relationships occur between the researcher and her subject as well as the interpretation of both primary and secondary sources. Due to the sensitivity of the subject, this thesis relies on anecdotal research produced from autobiographies, newspaper articles, and reports published by non-governmental organizations. It also relies upon existing literature written on children and global politics. Immersing children born of wartime sexual violence within the framework of IR works to question why the needs of this specific group of children have not been addressed as part of the study of global politics. This thesis also relies upon research gathered during my own field research to the United States and Canada which was conducted in the January and February of 2009. During this time, I interviewed a number of war children (now adults) who have already publicly discussed their identities as war children. These included individuals who advocate for the rights of war children in NGOs, as well as those who have publicly written about their experiences.\(^{47}\) The information gathered was largely anecdotal and is largely reflected in Chapter 5 of this thesis. This thesis does recognize that the precarious nature of the subject and its reliance on anecdotal research has its limits. Consequently, there are several methodological difficulties this thesis reflects upon.

First, the sensitivity surrounding the issue of wartime sexual violence provides methodological difficulties for the researcher. Sexual violence is often shrouded in ideas of collective and personal shame as well as humiliation. Conducting research that involves survivors of sexual violence may bring attention to the identities of these women and their experiences. Often survivors of sexual violence rely on silence as a method of protection.\(^{48}\) Thus exposing the identities of these women for the sake of research can be detrimental to their livelihood. Moreover, the identities of women and the politics surrounding wartime

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sexual violence are heavily tied to the construction of national identity. Any attempt to conduct research in this area requires attention to how national identities are shaped through women's bodies, reproduction, and the treatment of these women vis-à-vis their children.

Secondly, it is difficult to compile quantitative data involving survivors of sexual violence. Estimates of the number of women who have experienced sexual violence are mostly anecdotal. Quantitative data produced about this topic rely on news reports, statistics provided by humanitarian aid organizations, medical evidence provided by doctors, and government reports. Nonetheless, sexual violence in conflict remains under-reported. Women often conceal the evidence of its occurrence. The lack of adequate evidence regarding rape is due to the sensitive nature of the issue. As mentioned, victims often do not reveal that they have been raped. This makes it difficult to gather quantitative data concerning the number of women subject to sexual abuse. The sensitive nature of the subject also makes it difficult to find the exact number of women who were pregnant and gave birth to children born of sexual violence. Despite the limitations of available quantitative data on the subject, the estimates provided by non-governmental organizations, medical centres, and government authorities suggest that the issue is widespread and systematic.

Evidence concerning children conceived and born of such circumstances is difficult to come by. These children are reminders to their mothers and communities of what occurred during the conflict. Revealing that they exist provides tangible evidence of wartime rape and impregnation. Thus, women and communities have often concealed that these children actually exist. Moreover, the turbulent nature of conflict makes acquiring evidence difficult. Often evidence has been inadvertently destroyed by war or deliberately concealed for political reasons.

War also makes finding evidence about these children difficult. Many war children are not formally registered. During war, facilities that ensure that children who are born are registered are often not available. On the other hand, in many cases, mothers may not want to register a child of sexual violence. In doing so, she admits that the act of rape occurred and that the child exists. Both the rape and the child can detriment the survival

of the woman.\textsuperscript{51} Moreover, children who were adopted, placed in institutions, or in orphanages may not be aware of their true identities. As a result, official statistics concerning sexual violence and children born of war are difficult to uncover.\textsuperscript{52}

Finally, for the reasons noted above, it is impossible to map the individual experiences of these children. Many of them share similarities in terms of their experiences within their communities, and in their interaction with states and international legal structures. That said, it is important to recognize that the capacity of each child to individually address or confront these issues is unique. This thesis does not suggest that all children born of wartime sexual violence are the same, or that they will feel or experience their political lives the same way. Instead, it recognizes that each child’s relationship to its mother and her family, attitude to its father, and experience within their community are all human relationships which can be complex and context-specific. While that may be the case, it is nonetheless important to understand, highlight and analyze the challenges that they face.

**Approach**

This thesis examines a point of coalescence between IR, feminist theory, and international child-centric regimes. It specifically makes two claims. First, the ontological concepts of existing feminist theories and children’s rights regimes have largely disabled the inclusion of children born of wartime sexual violence. Second, the inclusion of this particular group of children reveals that existing feminist theories and children’s rights regimes have relied upon similar conceptualizations of childhood.

This thesis will use post-structural feminism as its theoretical point of enquiry. Post-structural feminism is preferred over emerging approaches focused on human security because the former tackles the issue at the heart of the problem: the construction of identity. Whereas the emerging paradigm of human security has shed light on the security of the individual rather than the state, it remains questionable whether a human security approach can offer insight into the experiences of children born of wartime sexual violence. Although a human security approach does provide alternatives, it remains

\textsuperscript{51} Carpenter et al., *Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps.*

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
questionable what 'security' means to those individuals who require it. For the purposes of this thesis, a post-structural feminist approach is preferred over a human security approach because the focus is on the identity of children born of wartime sexual violence and how it has been constructed and used during war and post-conflict situations. Due to the complex identity of these children, many of them lack the basic identity or membership to a community to be recognized as needing security.

A post-structural feminist approach allows for a deconstructivist examination of existing ontological and epistemological biases. It allows for a questioning of how identities are constructed, excluded, and legitimated. This thesis does recognize the limitations within post-structural feminism. For instance, one such limitation includes the inability of post-structuralism to provide durable solutions to the issue itself. However, embedded within the issue of finding a space for children born of wartime sexual violence is the problem of defining the complex identities of this particular group of children. Post-structural feminism, with its attention to deconstruction, is able to unravel historical and material consequences that have resulted in the mistreatment of this category of war-affected children. For instance, with reference to child-centric institutions, a post-structural feminist approach will uncover how norms are created to sustain a specific international standard of childhood. Devices used to enforce this include international rights regimes, humanitarian organizations, and liberal frameworks used by governing institutions. Concurrently, this theoretical approach also reveals how existing ontological concepts discipline or control those who do not conform to the norms. Survivors of sexual violence, for instance, have deviated from the accepted understanding of femininity, and, as a result, they have been ostracized from society. A similar argument can be made about the children who are born of war.

Engaging with a post-structural feminist approach also allows for an exploration of how we understand the identities of children. Post-structural feminism engages with the deconstruction of identities, how they are framed, and by whom. Thus, understanding children within this framework questions the multiplicity of familial relationships, rights to citizenship, community and national identity. This thesis does recognize that post-structuralism has its limits, but it is suited for a questioning of the ontological and epistemological complexities surrounding children of wartime sexual violence.\footnote{Post-structural work on epistemology is extraordinarily diverse and defies easy summary.}
engages in the theories offered by Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Giorgio Agamben.\textsuperscript{54} In doing so, it engages in the processes of genealogy. Genealogy shows how specific academic discourses emerged not as a neutral result of scholarly enquiry, but as the direct consequence of power relations. In short, power is implicit in all knowledge systems, such that notions like reason or truth are the products of specific historical circumstances.\textsuperscript{55} This thesis engages in the processes of genealogy for the purpose of uncovering how specific frameworks within IR have come about. More specifically, it will deconstruct feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence and children's human rights regimes. In doing so, this thesis attempts to uncover reasons why children born of wartime sexual violence have not been addressed in either field. This enquiry into relevant fields of research attempts to build a space where the rights of children born of wartime sexual violence can be addressed.

**Significance**

Children born of war remain one of the most vulnerable groups of war-affected children. Although emerging work concerning war-affected children have dealt specifically with child soldiers, child refugees, and child labourers, research concerning children born of war remains limited. This particular group of children embodies the detriments experienced by other groups of war-affected children. Similar to child refugees, they are stateless. But unlike refugees who once belonged to a state, children born of war are often born without membership to any country.\textsuperscript{56} Children born of war may be exposed to similar circumstances that mobilize children to participate in war as soldiers, sex trade


\textsuperscript{55} Smith, "Positivism and Beyond," 30.

\textsuperscript{56} Carpenter et al., *Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps*. 
workers, or labourers.\textsuperscript{57} Thus, the detriments experienced by children born of war places them in a precarious situation.

Investigations into the issue of war babies also allow researchers to question the legitimacy of norms concerning childhood, rights regimes, and humanitarian institutions. Although existing regimes and institutions aimed at protecting children have sincere intentions, there are also limits in their approach. For instance, the children’s rights regime aims to protect children worldwide. However, despite the near universal ratification of the UNCRC, children born of war remain absent from its protections.\textsuperscript{58} This particular group of children questions the feasibility of these rights regimes. These children demonstrate that in order to be a recipient of such rights one has to be a member of a state.

More importantly, children of war embody the complexity of identity and belonging. Their existence reminds us that identity is politically constructed, fluid, and subject to constant redefinition. Although these children are not any different from other children, they are perceived to be. On the one hand, their identities are constructed as a method of war. These children are produced to bring further shame to the victimized community, they remind the nation of the horror of defeat, and are perceived to identify with their “enemy” fathers. On the other hand, this identity is instilled onto the child after the war. Their identities are constructed based on the identities of the parents and has very little to do with the child. With this said, the child demonstrates how our identities can also be subject to redefinition.

Primarily, however, this thesis is committed to opening up a safe space to honestly discuss the precarious situation faced by children born of wartime violence. While it recognizes the enormous difficulty of this task, it also suggests that this issue has for too long been silent. The detrimental effects that it has not just on children, but on their mothers and communities should not be allowed to continue. Resolution of this issue will require the commitment, the changing of attitudes, and, in some cases, fundamental reshaping of a number of entrenched political practices. However, this thesis positions itself as contributing to the beginning of that project.


Chapter One:

Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence: Case Studies, Conflicting Identities and Complexities

Assumptions regarding identity, biology, paternity, and genetics underpin politics of rape during warfare. These assumptions are discernable in the discourse surrounding rape and in other debates regarding the fate of the children who are the consequences of the assaults.

- Patricia Weitsman¹

Information concerning children born of wartime sexual violence is limited. Knowledge concerning this specific group of children arises through discussions of wartime sexual violence and anecdotal evidence provided by medical staff, the media, and aid organizations. Despite the burgeoning interest in issues related to wartime sexual violence, the status of children born as a result of it remains cloaked. As of the time of writing this thesis in 2010, there have been limited projects of a holistic-international nature that assess the needs and interests of children born of war.

Additionally, cross-contextual research and enquiries into the best practices to advocate for and secure the rights of these children are minimal. The lack of research and attention to issues involving these children is problematic. Children born of war represent a distinct group of war-affected children. Their complex beginnings and identities subject them to a wealth of discriminatory practices that are detrimental to their well-being. As this chapter will illustrate, many of these children are subject to abandonment, stigma, and infanticide. Older children and adults are trapped as they realize that they are stateless, are unable to secure a sense of a real identity, and are exposed to systematic forms of discrimination. This chapter provides an initial step to addressing this issue. It aims to define the category of children born of war. Defining who these children are can help build strategies that identify their needs, the structural causes of their marginalization, and develop a space in which they can be recognized as subjects of academic enquiry.

This chapter will identify the key cases of children born of wartime sexual violence. A discussion and comparison of the different cases of children will help to illustrate that this specific group of war-affected children spans across history and geography. Available research shows that the “rejection of these children by their community is not uniform,” but many of these children share similar forms of ostracization and societal rejection. This chapter aims to show that the case of children born of wartime sexual violence is not an issue isolated to contemporary conflicts. The argument of this chapter will be presented in two sections.

This chapter will first explore what a child born of wartime sexual violence is. It will highlight how their identities are constructed, some of the political vulnerabilities they face, and why these children are analytically distinct from other war-affected children. In exploring the complex identities of this particular group of children, this chapter reflects a deeper question of what it means to belong to this category of children born of wartime sexual violence. This section will also draw comparisons between different forms of sexual violence and sexual exploitation that occur in war.

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2 Carpenter, “Gender, Ethnicity, and Children’s Human Rights: Theorizing Babies Born of Wartime Rape and Sexual Exploitation,” 2; Watson, “Children Born of Wartime Rape: Rights and Representations.”
3 Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps; Grieg, The War Children of the World.
4 Carpenter, “Gender, Ethnicity, and Children’s Human Rights: Theorizing Babies Born of Wartime Rape and Sexual Exploitation,” 2.
Secondly, this chapter will briefly outline the different cases of children born of wartime sexual violence. These cases will help illustrate the complexity of sexual violence by comparing the repercussions of militarized rape, militarized prostitution, and militarized consensual love matches between foreign troops and local civilian women. Comparing the different cases will highlight some of the gendered myths and stereotypes that are sustained in war. This section will explore cases from the two World Wars, the Cold War, and contemporary conflicts and campaigns of ethnic cleansing. Cases involving Nazi Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Darfur will help to illustrate how the identities of these children challenge the existing field of IR.

This chapter builds on the larger argument of this thesis. It will illustrate how understanding the identities of children born of wartime sexual violence can help question existing institutions and policies. It will help question why feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence, the children’s rights regime, and humanitarian organizations have not addressed the concerns of children born of war. In later chapters, children born of wartime sexual violence will be discussed with reference to feminist enquiries into IR. Such discussions will bring attention to wartime rape, the institutions that protect children’s rights, and the motives of humanitarian organizations.

Defining Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence

Children born of wartime sexual violence represent a special category of war-affected children. As recent research concerning war has illustrated, children as a group have been exposed to conflict in different ways. Some children are seen to participate as soldiers, porters, or labourers. Other children are internally displaced or become

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refugees as they flee conflict zones on their own or accompanied by adults. In many respects, children effect and are affected by war in multiple and conflicting ways. In contrast to children who are directly or indirectly affected by conflict, the detriments experienced by children born of wartime sexual violence cannot be clearly defined. Unlike other groups of war-affected children, the suffering of children born of war often occurs after conflict has formally ended. The identities of children conceived of wartime sexual violence are constructed based on violent modes of "personalized" warfare such as forced impregnation, sexual violence, and militarized sexual exploitation. Such methods of conflict play on the psychological and emotional aspects of conflict while also involving complicated issues related to identity, gendered expectations, and memory. As a consequence, the suffering experienced by these children is an intrinsic consequence of the climate of conflict and, often, their own identity.

Children born of wartime sexual violence can refer to those who are born to a mother who had "sexual encounters" with members of a foreign or local military force. This thesis recognizes the possibility that female members of the military may mother children of local fathers, either through love matches or militarized sexual violence. There have been cases where women who have engaged in acts of violence or are members of the military who have given birth to "children of the enemy." However,

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[9] The term "personalized warfare" can describe how so-called "private" forms of violence (such as sexual violence) have become political. This term can be associated with second-wave feminist attempts to politicize the personal.
this thesis focuses on the category of children born of wartime sexual violence from a civilian mother and a member of a foreign or local military force. The reasoning behind using this particular construction is because it builds upon existing research concerning wartime sexual violence.\textsuperscript{12} The literature on wartime sexual violence has heavily focused on the experiences of the victim. In this sense, framing a child born of wartime sexual violence within literature on sexual violence is allows further dialogue to question its own debates. This concept also explores the complexities behind the experiences of war rape survivors. Such issues include how forced impregnation affects the rape survivor, how children born of wartime sexual violence alter the climate of war, and the agency of the rape survivor. Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, children born of wartime sexual violence will primarily refer to those who are born to a local woman and a member of a foreign or occupying military.

The War and Children Identity Project (WCIP) has been at the forefront of addressing the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence. The WCIP was initiated in Bergen, Norway in 2001. The project has collected data concerning children born of war. Its data provides a basis for quantifying how many children of war exist around the world. Subsequently, the WCIP has published three separate reports on cases of war children around the world.\textsuperscript{13} The reports refer to war children as “a child that has one parent that was part of the army or peace-keeping force and the other parent a local citizen.”\textsuperscript{14} R. Charli Carpenter, who has written extensively on the topic, has defined this group of war-affected children in a similar vein. She writes that children born of war can refer to “persons of any age conceived as a result of violent, coercive, or exploitative sexual relations in conflict zones.”\textsuperscript{15} Thus, this definition includes cases of children who are born as the result of rape and sexual slavery by members of a militarized institution, as well as from sexual exploitation by occupation

\textsuperscript{12} Existing research is illustrated in Greg, The War Children of the World; Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps; R. Charli Carpenter, Born of War: Protecting Children of Sexual Violence Survivors in Conflict Zones (Bloomfield, CT: Kumanar Press, 2007).


\textsuperscript{14} Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps, 3-4.

\textsuperscript{15} Carpenter, Born of War: Protecting Children of Sexual Violence Survivors in Conflict Zones, 3.
forces, peacekeepers, humanitarian workers, and private militaries. Although the
definition of war children proposed by Carpenter and the WCIP is broad, it does help
to highlight the complexity of militarized sexual violence that occurs in conflict and how
cases involving relations with peacekeepers, prostitution, and rape can sometimes be
difficult to differentiate in a militarized climate.

The WCIP claims that tens of thousands of infants have been born of wartime
rape or sexual exploitation in the last decade alone. Published in 2001, the WCIP
report outlines historical and current cases of children born of wartime sexual violence.
Additionally, in 2005, University of Pittsburgh’s Ford Institute for Human Security
published a report that echoed WCIP’s findings. University of Pittsburg’s report
suggests that if other categories of militarized sexual violence are included, the number
of children born of war grows exponentially. This includes sexual relations with peace
keepers, humanitarian workers, and members of private militaries. Both the WCIP
report and the report issued by the University of Pittsburgh estimates the number of all
living children born of war to be 500,000. It is, however, important to note that the
nature of this issue makes it difficult to produce accurate data and numbers of how
many children actually exist today.

Table 1 illustrates an estimate of the number of war babies born from conflicts
that occurred during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The figures
provided below are adopted from the numbers presented by the WCIP reports on war
children. It outlines the relative dates of conflict and involves cases from the First and
Second World Wars as well as conflicts during and after the Cold War. The cases listed

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Congo (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002); Human Rights Watch, Climate of Fear: Sexual Violence and
Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad (New York: Human Rights Watch, July 2003); Amnesty
International, Must Boys be Boys? Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Missions
(Refugees International, October 2005); Keith J. Allred, “Peacekeepers and Prostitutes: How Deployed Forces Fuel
the Demand for Trafficked Women and New Hope for Stopping It,” Armed Forces and Society 33, no. 1
(2006): 5-23; Human Rights Watch, Darfur 2007: Chaos by Design Peacekeeping Challenges for AMIS and
UNAMID (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 2007); Corinna Csaky, No One to Turn To: The
Under-Reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Aid Workers and Peacekeepers (London, UK: Save the
Children, 2008).

17 Enloe, Manoeuvres: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives; Sandra Whitworth, Men,
18 Grieg, The War Children of the World, 7; Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and
Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps, 3-4.
19 Grieg, The War Children of the World, 7; Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and
Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps, 4.
below illustrate how this issue is not geographically isolated. Similarly, it spans across a range of conflicts. The figures provided in Table 1 also help to illustrate the difficulty in acquiring accurate numbers of children born of war.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicts</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year of Mil Presence</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World War I</td>
<td>Germany/France and Britain</td>
<td>1914-1918</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan/Korea</td>
<td>1940-1945</td>
<td>100+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Britain/US</td>
<td>1941-1948</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Britain/Canada</td>
<td>1940-1947</td>
<td>22,000 – 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Germany/US</td>
<td>1945-1946</td>
<td>96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Britain/Soviet Union</td>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>14+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany/Norway</td>
<td>1940-1945</td>
<td>7,000-12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany/France</td>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany/Holland</td>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>10,000-50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US/Austria</td>
<td>1945-1955</td>
<td>2,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>UN (US)/Korea</td>
<td>1950-1953</td>
<td>2,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US/Philippines</td>
<td>1965-1982</td>
<td>52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US/Vietnam</td>
<td>1965-1975</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Cold War</td>
<td>Indonesia/East Timor</td>
<td>1975-1999</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rwanda (Tutsi/Hutu)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2,000-5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serbia/Bosnia and Croatia</td>
<td>1992-1995</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td>UNTAC/Cambodia</td>
<td>1992-1997</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Reduced version of War Child Identity Project, 2001*

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The complex identities of these children are central to their marginalization. The construction of the identities of these children is based on three factors. First, in cases where forced impregnation or rape was used as a systematic method to instill violence, horror, humiliation and shame into a community the identities of these children are politically charged. Through this campaign of violence, children born of sexual violence have become intrinsically written into the agenda of war. The identity of these children is, therefore, the product of a deliberate method of conflict. It is designed to ensure that the affected community suffers from the consequences. An example of children produced as a direct strategy of war was witnessed during the 1990s conflict in the former Yugoslavia. From 1992 to 1995, the Serbian Army carried out a campaign of terror. The motive was to intimidate, terrify, and disperse the Bosnian-Muslims and Croats. Forced impregnation was used as a method of conflict and a way to ensure that one ethnic group suffered long after the conflict ended. Similarly, anecdotal evidence has surfaced concerning the ongoing conflict in Darfur. Rape has been used systematically to force people in Darfur to flee the region. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that the Janjaweed are using rape as a method to create "mixed-race" children.

Secondly, the identities of children born of war are socially constructed and are not considered to be natural. For instance, existing patriarchal ideas that sustain the subordination of women, and the identity of a child as belonging to the father, are created and legitimated within a male-dominated society. During conflict, the gendered stereotypes and power relations between men and women appear more rigid and are enforced as such. Such ideals are reinforced by the perpetrators of violence as well as the community in which these children are born into. In most cases, both the birth community and the perpetrators assume these children will take on the identity of the father. Such values can be seen in non-conflict periods when children are expected to

21 Allen, Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Hercegovina and Croatia.
23 Allen, Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Hercegovina and Croatia; Copelon, "Surfacing Gender: Reconceptualizing Crimes against Women in times of War."
take on the name of the father and be part of the father’s clan or group. Within the case of children born of war, patriarchal values such as the automatic adoption of the father’s identity can be detrimental to the child. The father of the child is often considered to be part of the enemy nation who had invaded, raped, and pillaged the mother’s community. This assumed adoption of the father’s identity was witnessed in the Yugoslavian case illustrated above. Both the Bosnian and Serbs understood the social custom that children took on the identity of the father. Based on this understanding, the creation of children, who were believed to be Serbian, became a method to further the suffering of the Bosnians. In addition, within a militarized context where rape and sexual violence are used against the victimized nation, the identity of the father is often unknown. In many cases, the identity of the father is unknown because more than one soldier carried out the rape. As a result, children conceived of wartime sexual violence suffer from the conflicted identity of neither truly belonging to the mother’s community nor to the community of their unknown father.

Lastly, the identity of the child relies on the actions and behaviour of the mother. The mother of the child born of war is a survivor of sexual violence and/or exploitation. The repercussions of sexual violence in militarized zones will be discussed in detail in the next three chapters. It is important to note that the perceived behaviour of the mother or survivor of sexual violence plays a large part in the stigmatization experienced by the child. Local communities and families of survivors of rape may not understand either the politics behind the act or be able to access opportunities for redress. Women who have been exposed to sexual violence often face feelings of shame and humiliation. As a result, survivors of sexual violence may not openly speak about the act occurring, let alone how it was carried out. If a child is conceived, it plays a role in providing tangible evidence that the rape occurred. Whereas the feminist international community recognizes the repercussions of sexual violence and is quick to

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28 Watson, “Children Born of Wartime Rape: Rights and Representations.”
reinforce that it was not the fault of the woman, their communities may think otherwise.²⁹

**Health-related or Physical Vulnerabilities**

Similar to other children affected by war, children born of wartime sexual violence face numerous health-related consequences. One such consequence is the lack of medical facilities available during war. Medical facilities, as well as other social services, are often limited or not available in conflict zones. The lack of medical facilities can, thus, be detrimental to women’s health. The damage caused by conflict “often means that women no longer have access to healthcare appropriate to their needs, whether in their communities, in camps for refugees and displaced people, in prisons, barracks or camps used by combatants, or in demobilization camps established in the aftermath of conflict.”³⁰ The lack of facilities can be detrimental to the development of children and the care of their mothers.

Children of wartime sexual violence face additional consequences related to their health. Women who are subject to rape often do not seek professional medical attention even if facilities are available. Amnesty International reports that rape survivors in Sudan have been reluctant to report the attack to medical workers. The report observes that “[o]ne factor contributing to this reluctance is a legal requirement that all cases of rape be reported to the police before medical workers can give survivors treatment.”³¹ Women who have been subject to sexual violence fear that seeking medical attention will reveal the occurrence of rape.³² As a result, women who are

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found to be pregnant from rape may not deliver their babies in a hospital. This also limits women who seek a termination of their pregnancy.

The lack of assistance available for women who are pregnant during conflict can be detrimental to the health of the fetus and development of the child. As explained, during the 1992-1995 conflict in the former Yugoslavia pregnant mothers were held captive until late in their pregnancy. Although pregnant women received preferential treatment because the goal was to produce “Serbian” babies, some women continued to experience physical torture combined with acts of sexual violence. The stress the mother experiences can have added repercussions on the development of the fetus. Moreover, cases from the 1994 Rwandan genocide and 1971 Bangladesh civil conflict have shown that women have attempted to abort the unwanted child. In cases where the abortion was unsuccessful, the child born as the result may experience detrimental effects to his or her development.

Conflict areas that have been highly exposed to HIV/AIDS may also see the spread of the disease through rape. Stefan Elbe has written about the complications of biological warfare in a climate where rape has been used as a method to instill long-term suffering upon a community. Elbe notes that during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, rape was used to instill shame and humiliation, as well as spread HIV/AIDS. The genocide in Rwanda witnessed cases of Hutu militiamen who were HIV-positive warning women they were about to rape that they will “die a slow death.” Thus, in areas where there is minimal access to medical attention, pregnant women do not have access to the anti-retroviral medication that prevents the spread of HIV from the mother to baby during

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34 Joanna Daniel-Wrabetz, “Children born of War Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in Born of War


child birth. Even at birth, children conceived of wartime sexual violence can suffer from the repercussions of war.

Children conceived of wartime sexual violence who survive childbirth may further be exposed to infanticide and abandonment. Children born to Pakistani soldiers during the 1971 civil war with Bangladesh (East Pakistan at the time) were subject to state-initiated infanticide. Rape was considered a form of humiliation and shame that would help further ostracize these women and humiliate the nation. Women who were found to be pregnant were allowed to have an abortion. Abortion was previously not allowed in the Muslim nation of Bangladesh, but the government made an exception in order to prevent the birth of children of Pakistani soldiers. Women who went ahead and gave birth to children were asked to give their child over to the state. The state was then responsible for conducting infanticide on these children. Moreover, mothers sometimes left children conceived of war rape with distant relatives, at orphanages, or abandoned them on the street. Vietnamese women who gave birth to children who were half-American through the Vietnam War (1963-1975) were often seen to leave their children with distant relatives.

Social and Political Discrimination

Children born of sexual violence often do experience discrimination from their peers, community, and the state. As illustrated in the case studies, in areas where children born of war are racially different from the local children, children born of war are often called names that connote their difference. In cases where the country is racially homogenous, the presence of a child that “looks different” can bring about discriminatory slurs from other children and adults. In homogenous countries such as


Vietnam, East Timor, and Darfur it becomes difficult to hide these children or have these children blend into the local community. In other areas, such as Rwanda, where there has been a high level of intermarriage between the Tutsi and the Hutu, children that are born of war can have a better chance of being concealed. However, even within this case, children who were born from violence during the genocide were called names that identified their role as reminding the nation of their suffering.

For instance, children born of war have been called names that identify this difference. Such names refer to their identity as a “child of the other.” The aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide witnessed the birth of children who were conceived of the rapes committed against Tutsi and moderate Hutu women. The names that these children are called represent the events that took place and suggest that the memory of the genocide is very much alive today. Children who were born of such violence are called “enfants mauvais souvenir.” This term connotes how these children were conceived and what they represent. The literal translation of the term means “child of bad memories.” As mentioned, despite the high level of intermarriage between the Hutu and the Tutsi before the genocide, these children were considered different due to their illegitimate status, and because they reminded the nation of what had occurred.

Children who were born of “relationships” that occurred between Vietnamese women and American soldiers prior to and during the Vietnam War (1963-1975) experienced similar forms of discrimination. Amerasian children, as they are called, are referred to as “bui do” which translates into the “dust of life.” The term is used to describe individuals who belong to the lowest strata of society and is also used to refer to this particular group of children. Within Vietnam, the mixed-raced origins of

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46 “Dust of life” is also used to refer to street children in Vietnam. See Human Rights Watch, "Children of the Dust": Abuse of Hanoi Street Children in Detention.
Amerasian children meant that they are visually different from native Vietnamese children. Mothers or guardians of Amerasian children often tried to conceal the racial difference of these children. Some mothers of half-Vietnamese and half-Caucasian children would rub dirt on their child’s face in order to conceal their lighter skin.  

Many Vietnamese locals identified these children based on the racial origins of their father. Although all Amerasian children are differentiated, children of Caucasian American fathers are treated slightly better than children whose features originated from American fathers of African ancestry.  

Other examples include children who were born to Canadian soldiers and British women after WWII. These children are referred to as “war left overs” or “war babies.” In the Philippines, children left behind by American soldiers are referred to as “babay na sa” which translates into “bye-bye to daddy.” Throughout the world, these children are referred to as “children of the enemy” or “unwanted children.” Such terms identify their connection with their father and the nature of how they were conceived.

Lack of Citizenship or Membership to a Group

Children born of wartime sexual violence often face an additional barrier of not having membership to any state or group. Being an offspring of a foreign military force leaves these children in an uncompromising position with regards to citizenship. The child’s lack of citizenship is primarily based on his or her perceived association with their fathers. Negative labels mentioned earlier identify the father as the main influence in the child’s identity. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, for instance, this identity, however, mistakenly assumes that one-hundred percent of the child’s identity comes

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47 Nguyen, The Unwanted: A Memoir.
49 Nguyen, The Unwanted: A Memoir.
51 Grieg, The War Children of the World, 20; Ophaug, The War Children of the World, Report 3; Rains, Olga, Rains, Lloyd, and Jarrat, Melynda, Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War II.
from the father. This association has negative impacts on the child’s ability to find membership within their mother’s community. It is assumed that the child’s genetic make-up has nothing to do with the mother’s genetic material.

For instance, children born to Vietnamese women and American fathers were left in limbo after the Fall of Saigon in 1975. The Vietnamese government insisted that fathers register children for formal citizenship. Many of the American fathers, however, were not present to register the children. This left many of the Amerasian children in a difficult situation when it came to acquiring the right to an education or certificates to officially leave Vietnam.52 Similarly, the children born in Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf War who were considered children of Iraqi soldiers were refused citizenship. These children were given financial compensation instead of formal membership to the state.53 The systematic discrimination that these children experience prevents them from gaining formal citizenship.54 Having formal citizenship to a state can, in theory, guarantee that their rights are protected. These children, however, are a unique category of war-affected children who experience vulnerabilities that are specifically related to their complicated identities.

The identities of these children are intrinsically tied to how war is waged and how societies recover from the damage caused by conflict. The issue of children conceived of wartime sexual violence raises intensely personal and political questions about how the identities of these children are constructed. Are these children considered outsiders? How, if ever, do these children integrate into a society? Do they belong to the father’s or the mother’s community? Are these children ever considered true citizens of any state? What does justice for these children look like? In order to coherently answer these questions, a comparison between different cases of war children will be undertaken. It is, however, important to highlight that despite geographical and contextual differences, these children experience similar systematic forms of discrimination and alienation.

52 Bass, Vietameric: The War Comes Home; DeBonis, Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers. It assumes that the child will take on the (violent) behaviour of the father as he or she grows older. Rendering the child as purely belonging to the father’s nation is an easy escape for the victimized nation. It consigns the child as an “outsider” of the community that they are born into and thus prevents the nation from being responsible for these children. This can be seen in the adoption processes that many post-conflict nations participate in when dealing with children born of war. The area of adoption and post-war methods of dealing with violence will be discussed in Chapters Four and Six.
54 Ibid.
Historical and Contemporary Cases of Children born of Wartime Violence

This section will provide a brief overview of children conceived of sexual violence from World War I to the present day. Evaluating the different cases of wartime sexual violence and children who are born of this circumstance helps to understand the systematic nature of abuse to women and children during conflict. Understanding the silences related to these children also reveals the institutional restrictions that have maintained the neglect of this specific group of war-affected children. The case studies presented here span different continents and cultural contexts. Each case yields new insights regarding the contextual specificity of this crime against women and children.

World War I, 1914 - 1918

The First World War (1914 – 1918) has been heralded as the event that transformed the international system. The “Great War” witnessed a transformation of “old” forms of war, where soldiers were seen marching off to war in brightly coloured uniforms, to one that heavily depended on machinery, the trenches, and wearing the enemy out. This war involved the world’s central powers which formed into two opposing groups – the Allies and the Central Powers. More than 70 million military personnel were mobilized from nearly a hundred different countries. The Great War witnessed the death of 15 million people. It involved the participation of different groups who sided with either the Allies or the Central Powers. At this time, villages throughout Europe were occupied for the purposes of war.

Evidence of children of wartime sexual violence born during and after World War I is limited. It is not to say that sexual violence and exploitation did not occur

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during the First World War, rather it points out that issues related to gender and the repercussions of sexual violence were not considered of importance. Having said this, there were news reports of sexual violence in occupied areas where foreign troops had an influence. Occupied France, for instance, reported several different incidences of rape committed by German soldiers. Such cases also showed that children were the result of some of these rapes. Additionally, children of war were born from relationships between foreign troops stationed throughout Europe.  

Sexual violence committed against women during the Great War was first recorded when the Germans invaded Belgium in 1914. British historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee recorded that German soldiers committed scores of rapes along with the plundering of villages and killing of civilians. Similarly, in France, Susan Brownmiller writes that the towns of “Chateau-Thierry… Charmel…[and] Gerbeville…” witnessed women who were subject to rape. In September 1914, for example, “a fourteen-year-old girl went out to buy bread in her native town of Chateau-Thierry (Aisne). On her way to the shop, she was abducted by a German soldier who took her to a room and raped her.” The WCIP also reports that during the First World War, villages were mainly occupied by women and children because the men were away fighting the war. As a result, enemy forces used it as an opportunity to take advantage of the fact that the women were not protected. In another account, a Frenchwoman was raped in front of her friend after the German soldier showed her a piece of paper written in German. She recalls that the paper was used to “make me believe he had permission from his superior to rape me, on pain of being shot.” Rape was considered a form of domination or an act that was awarded to the victor. In such illustrations of war “the assaults seemed to establish new relations of power between the conquerors and the vanquished.” Regarding the case of rape performed by German soldiers on French women, the relationship “showed that all the Frenchmen possessed was now within the

58 See Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 40.
59 Ibid., 40-44.
63 Ibid., 186.
Germans’ grasp.” Even within this premier case of systematic sexual violence, there were psychological meanings behind the act.

The rape of French women and the birth of children are discussed in Ruth Harris’ 1993 piece “The Child of the Barbarian: Rape, Race and Nationalism in France during the First World War.” In her article, Harris connects the rape of women and the birth of children of war. She argues that women who endured rapes from the Germans were (re)classified as “heroines” of war for having survived the ordeal. The recovering French nation did not want to demonize these women because, in doing so, it would admit defeat to the Germans. However, the children of women who were raped by German soldiers suffered a different fate. Unlike their mothers, the children that were born as a result of the rapes were unwanted. Harris reports that these children:

came to public prominence in an article in the widely read daily, _Le matin_, on 7 January 1915. Jean d’Orsay’s piece entitled “For the Race!” reported that an unnamed priest had offered ‘absolution before God and before men’ to female parishioners who aborted infants of German fatherhood.65

Uttering the racial and patriotic arguments against children of war, the priest “urged women to exterminate ‘without scruple, the ignoble and criminal chaff which would one day dishonour the pure wheat of our plains on which blows the wind of liberty’.”66 This illustration of a priest supporting abortion for women who were raped signaled that these children were deemed detrimental to national reconstruction.

Following on this account, it is evident that children of German soldiers who were born to French women were not accepted into the society. As Harris notes, these children were called “enfants du barbare” or children of the barbarian. This identity as a child of the barbarian is an indicator that these children were thought to identify with their German fathers. The WCIP report suggests that an estimate of 15,000 children were born of violence committed by the Germans on the French.67 During the period of the First World War, sexual violence was not recognized as a crime against humanity.

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., 191.
66 In Harris, “The "Child of the Barbarian": Rape, Race and Nationalism in France during the First World War,” 191.
nor a systematic method of war. However, the incidents of rape brought international attention to the case.

World War II, 1939 – 1945

Whereas the First World War had involved heavy machinery and trench warfare, the Second World War (1939 – 1945) resembled a “total war.” Within the state of total war, the participants that are involved invest their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities to the war effort.  

This involvement in the war erased the distinction between civilian and military resources. Similar to the previous world war, the Second World War involved two opposing sides – the Allies and the Axis powers. The Second World War was also marked by the Holocaust, the use of nuclear weapons, and the war in the Pacific. The Second World War is considered to be the most widespread war in history and involved the participation of over 100 million military personnel and countless non-military actors.  

World War Two (WWII) produced an estimate of 300,000 children born between soldiers and civilian women. The WCIP suggests that WWII saw the largest transfer of soldiers from one geographical area to another. At this time, different relationships between soldiers and civilian women developed. As a result, children of war were born during different times and regions as well as from a diversity of circumstances involving rape, prostitution, and long-term relationships with soldiers. Children born during this time were from both consensual and non-consensual relationships. In cases where children were born in consensual relationships, the ill treatment of the child in the aftermath of the war is illustrative of the systematic abuse this particular category of war-affected children experience.

The most systematic case of war children was initiated by Nazi Germany. Nazi Germany supported a campaign of ensuring the dominance of the “master race.” Along
with this racial campaign the production of children from the right ethnicity was of utmost importance. In 1935, the Lebensborn program was created as a series of maternity homes. These maternity homes were initially set up in Germany and encompassed financial assistance for women, and as orphanages for abandoned children of SS (Schutzstaffel) guards. The Lebensborn program also helped to run relocation programs for these children. This program was a part of SS leader Heinrich Himmler’s plan to lay the foundations for a blonde, blue-eyed race of “supermen” with children fathered by Nazi officers. Parallel to other Nazi initiated programs of racial purification, the Lebensborn program believed that children born of Aryan mothers to Nazi SS officers would ensure a generation of “super children.”

In 1941, Nazi Germany expanded the program into Norway. To ensure a future race of Aryan children, German soldiers were encouraged to socialize with Norwegian women. The program created “safe houses” or clinics in Norway as well as other parts of Nazi occupied Europe. As in Germany, the houses gave women the chance to safely give birth to children of German soldiers. SS officers and police officers with girlfriends who were pregnant were allowed to apply for the program. However, only couples with particular racial qualities were admitted. Mothers, who were admitted during the early parts of their pregnancy, were allowed to stay until their child was weaned. It was a way for the mothers to hide their pregnancies from their communities as well as their families. Babies born in such houses would be “examined by SS doctors to see if they were good Aryans and those who did not fit the bill were put into orphanages.” Children who were born with physical defects were often murdered.

The Lebensborn program lasted from 1935 until 1945 and produced an estimate of 7,000 to 12,000 children. A majority of the Lebensborn children were adopted and grew up unaware of who their birth parents were. There was only a small minority of children who grew up with their biological parents. In such an instance, these children

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76 John Hooper, “Nazi archive gives hope to children of ‘master race’,” Guardian (Berlin, November 19, 1999), www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,3932200,00.html, [accessed May 1, 2010]; Grieg, The War Children of the World, 70.


78 Ibid.
were either born to couples who later married or to mothers who subsequently reclaimed their children. Most of the men and women who participated in the Lebensborn program went on to marry other partners and had other children of their own.  

Records concerning the Lebensborn program are believed to have been destroyed by the American troops in 1945, but available evidence suggests that there were a total of five safe houses in Norway and nine such clinics in Germany.

World War II also witnessed several cases of “mixed-babies” born from liaisons soldiers had with local women. One such case includes African-American soldiers fathering children of British women. From May 1942 to 1945, estimates of 130,000 African-American troops were stationed in England. Some of these men acquired British girlfriends, however, they were only allowed to marry the women if permission was granted by their (white) superior. Permission, however, was seldom granted. The relationships between the African-Americans and mostly Caucasian British women were considered a taboo because of its inter-racial nature. Irregardless, a group of children known as the “brown babies” were born from such relationships. Estimates of 2,000 children were born from relationships between African-American soldiers and British women. Along with the relationship, the children were considered illegitimate. When the soldiers were sent back to the United States, the children who were “half-black” were not able to physically blend in with the general population in England. It was suggested by the English authorities that these children be given up for adoption or sent away to live with their fathers.

In a similar case, Canadian soldiers who were stationed in Europe during the post-WWII era had relationships with British women. The WCIP notes that estimates of 30,000 children were fathered by Canadian soldiers. Many of these children were born to “consensual” relationships that occurred between British women and Canadian soldiers. Unlike the previous case, children who resulted from relationships between Caucasian Canadian men and British women were not discriminated against based on their racial differences. These children were able to fit into British society without the

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79 Hooper, “Nazi archive gives hope to children of ‘master race’.”
community noticing that they were different. However, many of these children and their mothers experienced social discrimination because it was believed that these relationships were not legitimate. Children born under such circumstances were considered to be illegitimate. In most cases, the mothers and children were later transferred to Canada through the War Brides program and given rightful citizenship.

Similar to the Lebensborn children, Canadian-British war children experienced systematic forms of discrimination. Since these children were not considered to be legitimate, as adults they were not given access to information concerning their parents. Information concerning the identity of Canadian soldiers was protected by the Canadian Privacy Act. The Canadian Privacy Act protects the identities of veterans from being named to the grown-up children. Efforts instigated by Lloyd and Olga Rains helped to reform the Privacy Act to allow children believing to be offspring of veterans to locate information concerning their parents. Currently, the archives will first enquire for permission from the father, if he is alive, to request for permission of his alleged children to have access to the information.

The Pacific War, 1931 – 1945

The war effort in the Pacific was an extension of the stalemate in Europe. The Pacific War witnessed the occupation of East Asia by Japan, the dropping of the atomic bombs, and the defeat of the Japanese military in August 1945. During the Pacific War, the Japanese military had initiated a program of sexual slavery under the pseudonym of the “comfort women” system. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, the

comfort system operated through the forcible recruitment of Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese, and Southeast Asian women to serve the sexual needs of Japanese soldiers. These women were placed in make-shift brothels that were set up in different areas of Japanese occupied Asia. Unlike the Nazis, the Japanese military were not interested in increasing the population in their occupied regions. Rather the comfort system was created to prevent soldiers from raping local women and endangering relations with the locals in occupied areas.

This Japanese initiated program of sexual slavery did not produce a large number of war children. Pregnancy was highly prohibited by the Japanese military. Women who were found to be pregnant were administered an abortion. Military doctors conducted frequent tests to ensure that the women were not pregnant. Birth control in the form of condoms and a chemical formula that later caused sterility were administered to women to prevent them from falling pregnant. Upon Japan’s defeat in 1945, many of the Japanese soldiers forced these women to commit a “double ritual” suicide. As a result, this systematic form of rape and sexual slavery did not produce a large number of war children. There is an estimate of 100 or so children who were born out of the 200,000 women used in the comfort system.

The Korean War, 1950 - 1953

The era immediately after the Second World War was marked by the perceived threat of Communism. Presented as a threat to its ideological livelihood, the United States took on the role of the “world’s policeman” and the duty of ensuring the world was protected from Communist expansion. In short, the United States strategically occupied geographical areas that were threatened by Communism. In Asia, the

89 Ibid.
92 Grieg, *The War Children of the World*. 
American military occupied (south) Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The presence of the United States in Asia left behind an estimate of 150,000 children.93

Many of these children were produced from relationships that American military personnel had with women who worked in the thriving military entertainment industry. Some of these children were produced from relations that took on “marriage-like” characteristics whereas other children were the result of rapes that occurred in the militarized surroundings. Known as Amerasians, these half-American and half-Asian children were left behind when American soldiers were forced to leave the region. Many of these children were later adopted by overseas families, whereas some of the children were able to (re)unite with their fathers.94

Korea created a system of militarized sexual slavery that resembled the Japanese initiated use of the comfort women. In 1950, the communist regime of (North) Korea invaded (South) Korea. As a result, the United States, along with the United Nations, sent a force of nearly one million men to Korea. A temporary ceasefire was implemented in 1953, where a bulk of American troops withdrew. During the occupation of the American military, the Korean government understood that the influx of American troops meant that the men needed avenues to relieve sexual tension. The Korean government legislated the use of Korean “prostitutes” and brothels.95 The Korean government therefore felt that a supportive sex industry was needed to prevent the rape of their own women. Hypocritically, it was often women from lower-class Korean families who were forced to work in the sex industry.96

The kichi'on system of militarized prostitution will be discussed in Chapter Four. It is believed that the kichi'on system in Korea resulted in an estimate of 2,000 children.97 The children born to the American troops suffered the same fate as other half-Asian children born to American troops who were stationed in different areas of Asia during

93 Ibid., 8, 28-34.
the Cold War. Many of these children grew up not knowing who their fathers were. Only some of these children were able to relocate to the United States.

The Vietnam War, 1963 – 1975

American presence in Vietnam from 1963 to 1975 resulted in the birth of an estimate of 40,000 children. Children born between American soldiers and local Vietnamese were the result of consensual relationships, militarized prostitution and rape. Vietnam was a strategic area of occupation for the United States. It became the heart of an ideological war against the threat of Communism. Similar to Korea, the influx of American military personnel saw the rise of the entertainment and prostitution industries. In the Southern cities of Vietnam, bars, dance clubs, and brothels emerged to serve the growing number of Americans entering the country. Prostitution provided an alternative source of income for economically disadvantaged women and women migrating from the rural regions of Vietnam. The availability of Vietnamese women also meant that American soldiers could “purchase” women on a temporary basis. In many areas of Saigon, such as the prostitution district of Tu Do Street, pimps were seen escorting American soldiers to-and-from Vietnamese brothels. Women working at the brothels earned somewhere between three and five dollars a day. For instance, as a migrant to Saigon, a woman named Dung felt that she did not have a choice but to enter into the sex industry. She testifies that she “never went to school [and] never learned to read and write” which combined with the need to “help [her] mother” meant that she was limited to entering the sex trade. Women such as Dung were not alone as the streets of Saigon became flooded with brothels and prostitutes available to entertain the sexual pleasures of foreign men.

100 Yarborough, Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War; DeBonis, Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers.
101 Yarborough, Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War, 18.
102 Interview with Dung in DeBonis, Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers, 258.
In other instances, Americans could also "rent-a-girl" by paying a woman a flat-rate to live with them for a week, months, or a year. Trin Yarborough notes in her 2005 book *Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children and the Vietnam War*, that this lucrative business of "renting" Vietnamese women provided women who were able to speak English with a substantial income. Vietnamese women, Yarborough notes, could earn as much as "$11 per day, or $50 for five days," which was substantially more than what a woman would earn by working at the factory or as a maid. American construction workers and civil engineers were also present in Vietnam, and were there for longer periods of time. These men often entered into long-term relationships with Vietnamese women.

Instances of rape and sexual violence were also reported in the Vietnam conflict where children were born as the result. The 1968 My Lai incident provides evidence of the ill-treatment of Vietnamese women and children. This American mission to "search and destroy" Communist fighters ended with the massacre of more than 500 Vietnamese civilians. The incident saw soldiers "gunning down unarmed men, women, children and babies." Women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five were also forced to strip with the intention of being gang raped. Additional cases involved civilian Vietnamese women who worked on or near American military bases and were subject to sexual violence committed by soldiers. Testimony given by a woman named Anh reveals that she was raped by an African-American soldier who also worked at the base where she was employed. This soldier had volunteered to give her a ride home after work. Rather than driving her home, Anh revealed that the soldier "turned into an isolated area, and he raped [her] in the car." After the incident Anh refused to have any contact with this soldier, at which point he was conveniently transferred back to the United States. She later found out that she was pregnant.

Sexual relationships and the birth of children were inevitable in an environment where civilian Vietnamese women interacted with American military personnel.

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103 Interview with Dung in DeBonis, *Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers*, 258.
105 Ibid.
Whereas methods of birth control were available in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, it was not the case in Vietnam during this time. In a climate where birth control was not readily available, unwanted pregnancies were common among Vietnamese women who worked in the sex industry. Prostitutes who were found to be pregnant and decided to keep the child were forced to “hide it somehow and pretend that nothing had happened.”

Bangladesh, 1971

The 1971 Pakistani-Bangladesh conflict was another conflict that saw the birth of children conceived of sexual violence. The 1947 Partition divided British India into two separate parts – a secular state which is present day India and an Islamic state of Pakistan. Pakistan, however, was divided between two geographical regions. The two separate regions comprised of West Pakistan (which is present day Pakistan) and East Pakistan or East Bengal (Bangladesh). As a response to its culturally and economical marginal position, the state of East Bengal declared itself independent Bangladesh in 1971. Bangladesh subsequently fought Pakistan in a rebellion that lasted nine months. This conflict only ended when Indian troops came to support the Bengalis. During the nine months of conflict Bangladesh witnessed the slaughter and rape of hundreds of thousands of its own people. Unofficial estimates of the death toll ranges from 300,000 to three million. In addition to the mass killings, estimates of 200,000 to 400,000 Bengali women were subject to mass rape. The estimates of the number of deaths and rapes, however, remains highly contested. The Pakistani government continues to deny the allegations of conflict in Bangladesh.

Mass rape was used as a systematic method to punish the people of Bangladesh. The “army used rape to terrorize the populace, to extract information about the insurgency, to boost the morale of soldiers, and to crush the burgeoning Bangladeshi

110 Enloe, Manoeuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives; Yarborough, Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War.
111 Interview with Anh in DeBonis, Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers, 258.
national identity.”114 Pakistani soldiers and their collaborators raped women in their homes, in their local areas, or forcibly took them to “rape camps.”115 Along with rape, forced impregnation was an intrinsic part of this conflict. Salma Sobhan, an activist and scholar, had documented that forced impregnation and the birth of Pakistani children was systematically written into the campaign of rape initiated by the Pakistani army. It was part of a campaign to ensure that Pakistani children of Bengali rape survivors would grow up and infiltrate the nation from within. Sobhan notes that the Pakistani Army boasted about its opportunity to “convert East Pakistan through engendering true Muslims.”116 This creation of “true Muslims” was an intrinsic part of a campaign of forced impregnation and the birth of children of Pakistani soldiers.

Estimates of 25,000 children were the result of the rapes in Bangladesh.117 Children who were conceived of sexual violence during this conflict were subject to either abortion or a program of adoption if they were born. International Planned Parenthood, the Red Cross, and the Catholic Church were directly involved in dealing with cases of pregnancy that resulted from the conflict.118 Bangladesh did not legally recognize abortion, however, the government made an exception where women who were found to be pregnant during the war were given the right to one.119 The children who survived campaigns of infanticide were immediately put on international adoption lists. Many of the children were adopted by families in Canada, France, and Sweden.120 The reasoning behind legislating abortion for rape survivors and a program of international adoption for the children was connected to Bangladesh’s attempt to rebuild its nation. Nilima Ibrahim, a prominent social worker and feminist author, recalls her meeting with Sheikh Mujibur the Prime Minister at the time. In her book Ibrahim writes that when questioned about the status of the war babies, the prime minister said, “Please send away the children who […] have their father’s identity. They should be raised as human beings with honour. Besides, I do not want to keep those of polluted blood in this country.”121 Similar to other cases of children born of wartime sexual violence, children born from the 1971 Pakistani-Bangladeshi conflict suffered

114 D’Costa, “Tragic Silence over Bangladesh’s babies of war of 1971.”
116 In D’Costa, “Tragic Silence over Bangladesh’s babies of war of 1971.”
118 D’Costa, “Tragic Silence over Bangladesh’s babies of war of 1971.”
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 In Ibid.
from stigma, discrimination, and, in many cases, death.  


The case of systematic sexual violence used during the 1992 – 1995 conflict in the former Yugoslavia has been widely documented. Sexual violence was used as a systematic method to humiliate, degrade, and torture members of a particular group. In this case, the Serbs were seen to instigate the use of sexual violence upon the Bosnian-Muslims and the Croats. Similar to conflict in Bangladesh, sexual violence was used as a method to displace and terrorize the population of Bosnian-Muslims thus making it an effective method of war. However, evidence has shown that women from both sides of the conflict were subject to sexual violence. Pregnancies resulted from opportunistic or single-incident rapes on all sides. In addition, the:

Bosnian Serb Army and Yugoslav National Army engaged in a policy of mass systematic rape, which included the detention of Bosniak and Croat women with the intent to impregnate them as a means of altering the ethnic composition of the communities to whom these women belonged.

Within the conflict, rape was seen to be systematic as rape camps were set up, schools

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122 The 1971 Pakistani-Bangladesh conflict witnessed the use of sexual violence against different groups of women. Rape was instilled as a method of systematic retribution on both the Hindu and the Bihari population. Sexual violence was used by the Pakistani army as a method of intimidation. It is important to note that after the 1971 conflict, sexual violence was perpetrated by the different groups within Bangladesh.


125 Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps, 5.
were turned into areas for rape, and a program of forced impregnation was instituted. Women who were found to be pregnant from the rapes were held captive until it was unsafe to have an abortion. Ruth Seifert has illustrated that Bosnian women who were abducted, raped, and kept in Serbia were transferred back to their homelands in Bosnia. Pregnant women were sent in busloads across the border with the message that children of the Serbs will grow up to infiltrate the Bosnian society. Thus, as in the previous case of Bangladesh, forced impregnation was an intrinsic part of the method of war in the former Yugoslavia.

Estimates of the number of children born as a result of these rapes are largely unverifiable. While the European Community issued a controversial estimate of 20,000 women raped in 1993, subsequent United Nations reports cast doubt on this number. In 1993, The Mazowiecki Report confirmed a total of 9 births out of the 119 rape-related pregnancies during the period, a rape-related birth rate of 7.5 percent. The WCIP suggests that this conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina produced an estimate of 4,000 children. A majority of the children were placed in orphanages or were abandoned. The belief that these children are “of the enemy” and will eventually betray their mother’s nation and return to their father’s, played a large role in the neglect these children have experienced as a result of their identity.

**East Timor, 1975 - 1999**

East Timor is the newest state in the world. Its process of nation building has been mired by a history of Portuguese and Indonesian colonialism. The Portuguese occupied East Timor from the sixteenth-century until 1975. Subsequently, during World War II the Japanese occupied the region surrounding East Timor. In 1975

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130 Ibid., 48.
Indonesia occupied East Timor, and ruled with heavy military violence until the United Nations organized an independence referendum in 1999.\textsuperscript{131} During the lead up to the 1999 UN led referendum, militia forces that were backed by and trained by the Indonesian military carried out a campaign of systematic violence. The East Timorese witnessed the onslaught of Indonesian military forces that initiated a scorched-earth policy. This campaign of terror was also accompanied by widespread abuses such as rape and sexual slavery.\textsuperscript{132} The use of sexual violence during the referendum was not any different from the Indonesian occupation of East Timor from 1975 to 1999.\textsuperscript{133}

According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, rapes and forced marriages of Timorese women to occupation soldiers were widespread during the Indonesian occupation as well as the post-referendum violence.\textsuperscript{134} During the occupation, women were forced to be “wives” of the soldiers. Many of these women lived under slave-like conditions while serving and working for the militia. Such abuses also occurred against wives and relatives of independence leaders.\textsuperscript{135} As a result of such conditions, an unspecified number of children have been born as a result of rapes. After the 1999 referendum, anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the East Timorese women who were “wives” of members of the Indonesian military returned to their villages with their children. However, much like other cases of children, the children of the East Timorese women and Indonesian men were rejected.\textsuperscript{136}

According to the WCIP Report there are at least 100 children of post-referendum rapes in one district.\textsuperscript{137} In East Timor, a single woman is usually taken care of by her larger family. Furthermore, the University of Pittsburg report suggests that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134} Grieg, The War Children of the World, 36-39; Harris-Rimmer, “Orphans” or Veterans? Justice for Children Born of War in East Timor,” 53-55.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Harris-Rimmer, “Orphans” or Veterans?: Justice for Children born of War in East Timor.”
\item \textsuperscript{139} Grieg, The War Children of the World, 36-39.
\end{itemize}
families and the community stigmatize these children and their mothers; where there have been cases where husbands rejected women who were already married at the time of the rape. Without support from their families, children born of the rapes and their mothers are often economically more disadvantaged than the average East Timorese.\textsuperscript{138}

In "Orphans or Veterans? Justice for Children Born of War in East Timor" (2007), Susan Harris-Rimmer writes that the sensitive nature of the subject of sexual violence means that it is difficult to find quantitative evidence regarding the number of rapes committed.\textsuperscript{139} Similarly, failure to gather evidence on the number of rapes also means that it is difficult to show how many children are born of this situation. Nevertheless, Harris-Rimmer suggests that "anecdotal evidence points to perhaps hundreds or even thousands of children born of war who have been kept and raised by their mothers despite the stigmatization and rejection of these women and children by their families or villages."\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{Rwanda, 1994}

From April to July 1994, Hutu extremists, at the helm of the Rwandan government, perpetrated a genocide that cost the lives of at least half a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu.\textsuperscript{141} Perpetrators of the genocide sought to exterminate the Tutsi minority, who then represented approximately 10 percent of the Rwandan population. The Hutu majority felt that it was unjust that the Tutsi occupied higher positions in government and were often better off economically. This perceived ethnic difference was fabricated by the Belgians during their occupation of Rwanda.\textsuperscript{142} The Belgians believed that the Tutsis were similar to the Europeans and were given positions of power.\textsuperscript{143} Violence against this unequal relationship erupted on several occasions during

\textsuperscript{138} Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing Practice and Knowledge Gaps, 6.

\textsuperscript{139} Harris-Rimmer, "Orphans" or Veterans? Justice for Children Born of War in East Timor."

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 55.


\textsuperscript{143} Erin Baines, "Body Politics and the Rwandan Crisis," Third World Quarterly 24, no. 3 (2003): 479-93; Philip Gourevitch, I wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998); Power, "A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide.
the twentieth-century. However, the 1994 genocide is of particular interest because of the high incidents of rape used as a campaign of ethnic-cleansing.

Violence during the genocide assumed gender-specific forms. Members of the Hutu militias known as Interhamwe, civilians, and the Rwandan Armed Forces targeted Tutsi and moderate Hutu women and girls in a genocidal campaign of mass sexual violence.144 A 1996 report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Rwanda estimated that at least 250,000 women were raped during the genocide.145 The forms of gender-based and sexual violence were varied and included individual rape; gang-rape; rape with sticks, guns, or other objects; sexual enslavement; forced marriage; forced labour; and sexual mutilation.146 Sexual violence was one of many injuries inflicted upon Rwandan women and girls. According to many personal accounts of the genocide, perpetrators of sexual violence murdered a large number of their victims directly or following the sexual assaults.147

Similar to the other cases discussed here, the estimated number of children born from these rapes remains unknown. The WCIP suggests that the number of children who were born range from 2,000 to 5,000.148 As mentioned, these children are referred to by names that connote their identity as a product of the genocide. Many of these children are believed to experience forms of discrimination and ostracization from the community.149 However, unlike the Bangladeshi case, the post-genocide Rwandan government was unwilling to initiate programs of international adoption for these children. The Rwandan government was aware that the genocide had depleted population numbers and that an adequate population size was needed to regenerate the country's labour and military force. Thus, the Rwandan government figured if these children were “exported” through channels of international adoption they would be “looting a country of its population.”150 Despite having said this, the Rwandan government was not willing to either compensate or provide a social network for children born from genocidal rape.

144 Human Rights Watch, Struggling to Survive: Barriers to Justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda, 7.
146 Human Rights Watch, Struggling to Survive: Barriers to Justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda.
147 Ibid., 7-8.
Reports of sexual violence and children who are born as the result of rape continue to surface in the ongoing conflict in the Darfur region of the Sudan. A long history of discontent was pushed to major significance in 2003 when two rebel groups representing the non-Arab citizens of the region began to attack government installations. The government swiftly supported the Janjaweed, a militia comprised of local Arabs, to strike back on their behalf. As a result, a conflict arose. Hundreds of thousands of Sudanese have been affected by this conflict, either through famine, displacement, murder, or rape. As in many international conflict settings, sexual violence, including gang rape and sexual slavery has been used in Darfur as a means to terrorize the civilian population. The Janjaweed, who are documented as using rape as one of their primary methods of attack, rely on the havoc they create and the psychological long-term effects that accompany sexual violence. As conservative Muslims themselves, members of the Janjaweed are fully aware of the repercussions caused by rape. Women who are exposed to sexual violence experience stigma, trauma, and ostracization. This message is embedded into the acts of rape as one woman recalls being told during her rape that “[w]e want to change the colour of your children.” This message indicates that forced impregnation is being used as a method of conflict.

The majority of research available on the Darfur conflict focuses on the women and girls who are raped. Little research is available to date regarding infants born of

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154 Polgreen, “Darfur’s Babies of Rape Are on Trial from Birth”; Human Rights Watch, *Five Years On: No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur*, Bashir and Lewis, *Tears of the Desert: A Memoir of Survival in Darfur*, Refugees International and Martin, Sarah, *Ending Sexual Violence in Darfur: An Advocacy Agenda* (Refugees International, November 2007). Whereas in Rwanda, victims of sexual violence were often killed as part of the genocidal campaign; the perpetrators of rape in Darfur have often kept the women alive. The purpose of sending a raped woman back to her community has been to ensure that the suffering is prolonged. As a result, the reports published by Human Rights Watch and Refugees International have pointed out how the issue of pregnancy has become commonplace in rape cases in Darfur.
such violence. Long-term assessment is required, but initial research indicates the
babies, like their mothers, are heavily stigmatized and rarely are accepted by the
community or in some cases even the mother.¹⁵⁷ In traditional Darfurian society, the
identity of the child is associated with the father, not the mother, so even if the child
does not look like the “enemy,” he or she will still be checked for ill temperament and
potentially abandoned in the future, even if they are accepted in the present. According
to press reports, such children have been referred to as “Janjaweed babies” or “dirty
babies” by the communities in which they were born.¹⁵⁸ Aid workers have reported
rumors of infanticides, but these reports have not been independently verified. Specific
statistics do not exist tracking the number of babies born from rape during this conflict,
but speculation is that thousands of rapes have since the conflict began.¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

An evaluation of the different groups of war children suggests that this issue is a
global phenomenon. The examples above have shown that despite their different
origins, these children suffer from similar forms of stigma and alienation. For instance,
in comparing the use of forced impregnation in Bosnia with the Nazi case, there appears
to be dramatic differences related to reproducing with the enemy. Unlike the Nazi
regime, the Serbs were willing to reproduce with the enemy. Children born to Bosnian
women with Serbian fathers were still seen as Serbian. In the Nazi regime, however,
reproducing with the Jews would perpetuate the survival of the group it wanted to
exterminate. However, if a comparison is made between the Lebensborn children and
children born from the rapes committed in the former Yugoslavia, it is evident that
both groups of war children face systematic forms of discrimination. It is important to
note that despite the origins of their parents’ relationship there appears to be a pattern
of ostracization. This sense of ostracization is heavily related to the identity of the
mother, the father, and essentially the identity that has been imposed onto the child.

¹⁵⁷ Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Existing
Practice and Knowledge Gaps.
¹⁵⁸ Ibid.
¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.
Children born of wartime sexual violence raise important questions about how nations, academics, and institutions conceptualize identity. These children inform us about the way those ideas about identity are disseminated. Such institutions include the warring communities, the transnational scholarly community and media, and post-conflict governments.\textsuperscript{160} Patricia Weitsman argues that the state, society, and media all play an important role in generating the assumptions about biology, ethnicity, and gender that construct a permissive environment for sexual violence during war and the perceptions of the children who are born as a consequence.\textsuperscript{161} The rest of the thesis will engage how these children challenge issues related to identity politics. The very complex identities evolving around these children highlight questions related to citizenship, nationality, and essentially the politics of exclusion.

Chapter Two will begin this exploration by examining the different theoretical approaches offered by feminist IR scholars. The purpose of Chapter Two is to critically engage IR’s inadequacies through an evaluation of feminist contributions to the ontological and epistemological minefields of the study of international politics. A review of feminist epistemologies is not to suggest that feminist enquiry provides a solution to the suffering caused by conflict. This exploration of feminisms’ contribution to IR can help to understand why mainstream IR and its institutions have not adequately addressed the issues of sexual violence. More importantly, and in relation to this chapter, feminist epistemologies allows for a space to question why children of sexual violence have been missing from the understanding of war. Through an exploration of feminist epistemologies, children born of wartime sexual violence can be seen as subjects of human rights.

\textsuperscript{160} Weitsman, “Children born of War and the Politics of Identity,” 110-111.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
Chapter Two:

Gender and International Relations: Geopolitical and Postcolonial Logics

Part One:

Wartime Sexual Violence and Feminist International Relations
Chapter Two:

Gender and International Relations: Ontological and Epistemological Limitations

Women are the group most victimized by sexist oppression. As with other forms of group oppression, sexism is perpetuated by institutional and social structures; by the individuals who dominate, exploit, or oppress; and by the victims themselves who are socialized to behave in ways that make them act in complicity with the status quo.

- bell hooks¹

Feminist theorists have argued that the study of International Relations (IR) has primarily been the work of elite men.² As a consequence, IR has reflected masculinist values and has failed to consider issues not related to the experiences of men. Within feminist IR’s critique, the male-centric field of IR privileges the socially constructed masculinist values of war, military activity, and conflict as legitimate and inevitable practices between states. This reliance on the activities of the state has, however, often failed to account for how the state’s militaristic actions have been detrimental to the livelihood of non-state actors. The unlimited number of civilian casualties in current

¹ bell hooks, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 43.

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conflicts, women suffering from the repercussions of wartime sexual violence, and neglect of children born of such circumstances are indicators that a focus on state-centric issues has been detrimental to non-state actors. The increasing number of casualties and groups suffering from the repercussions of conflict suggests that a new approach is needed for the study of IR. Existing state-centric prescriptions within IR, for instance, have inadequately failed to address how actions to secure the state have undermined the security of individuals and non-state actors.

The purpose of this chapter is to critically engage in IR’s inadequacies through an evaluation of feminist contributions to the study of international politics. It will trace the evolution of feminist theory and how early feminist debates have contributed to the development of Feminist IR. In doing so, it will discuss the different, and often conflicting, theories within feminist IR with a particular focus on liberal feminism, radical feminism, and post-structural feminism. Although the debates within Feminist IR have evolved beyond contributions made by particular liberal and radical feminists, a review of such theories will provide a background to the major feminist debates and contributions. Through an evaluation of feminist IR theories, this chapter will show how different ontological concepts and epistemological approaches invite and exclude particular actors. This evaluation of feminist IR’s contributions and setbacks can assist in analyzing topics that will be discussed in this thesis, such as wartime sexual violence. In doing so, it also questions why some feminist theories have been able to accommodate actors such as war rape survivors and children born of war rape while others cannot.

Feminist contributions to the field of IR have allowed for a questioning of the exclusion of women and other non-state actors from the discipline. The feminist approach offers insight into the voices that have traditionally been silenced from the state-centric concentration of IR. Feminist enquiries into IR have asked questions concerning women’s oppression and marginalization. More simply, it has interrogated the question: “where are the women in the study and practice of International

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5 Carpenter, *Born of War: Protecting Children of Sexual Violence Survivors in Conflict Zones.*
Relations? Feminists, such as Cynthia Enloe and J. Ann Tickner, have highlighted that women have always played a role in international politics. Their investigations have suggested that further questions are needed to uncover where the women are. Feminist investigations are designed not only to locate the women, but also to ask critical questions such as why have women been missing from the discipline.

However, it is important to recognize that while feminists share some common goals, they should not be considered a homogenous group. Feminists disagree on a number of aspects such as what constitutes women’s oppression, how to explain it, and what is to be done. Tickner argues that “[f]eminist theories are multidisciplinary; they draw from both the social and natural sciences as well as the humanities and philosophy. They include a wide variety of epistemological and methodological approaches.” As will be discussed in this chapter, liberal, radical and post-structural feminisms have different points of origin, different ontological concepts, and different epistemologies.

The differences within feminist theories however are not a hindrance to the approach, but a sign that it is growing and adapting to the debates within and outside of IR. Although this chapter separates liberal, radical, and post-structural feminisms, it does not suggest that each theory does not interact with or reflect on each other. Feminist theories should not be understood within a linear timeline of liberal-radical-post-structural, but rather as sets of ideas that borrows from and critiques each other. Thus, a critical engagement of feminist ontologies and epistemologies will reveal that there is not one dominant understanding of feminist IR, but many. On the surface,


9 Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era, 11.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 12. Tickner’s argument is important here. She notes that acknowledgement of the different feminist theories of international politics does not hinder the process of understanding women’s experiences. Rather, acknowledging “that much of contemporary feminism has moved beyond these labels, they are, nonetheless, helpful in understanding feminist thought in its historical context.”

12 This section mostly deals with the early developments and contributions of feminists. More recent contributions made by Feminist IR reflect the construction of masculinity. The discussion of what is deemed “first wave” Feminist IR here does not refute the credibility of recent developments in Feminist
the varying theoretical offerings of feminist IR can be conflicting and in disagreement. But similar to the development of the mainstream field of IR, the conflicts over epistemological and methodological approaches can be seen to help build upon one another in order to form an epistemology that can include multiple actors and approaches.

This chapter is broken up into four different sections. This chapter will first summarize the key feminist projects in IR. In doing so, it will show how mainstream IR has been unable to accommodate the experiences of women and other non-state actors. More specifically, it will demonstrate that despite the differences among feminists there are also similarities. Subsequently, the chapter will be divided into three separate sections that will examine the strengths and weaknesses of liberal feminism, radical feminism, and post-structural feminism. It will reveal how the three feminist theories make use of different ontological and epistemological approaches. Alternatively, the different feminist theories also have conflicting perspectives on how women are to pursue emancipation. However, such differences should not be taken as a setback in feminist theory, but as a method to develop a diverse field of enquiry.

**Feminist Projects**

Enquiry into the field of international politics has largely been driven by frameworks that "foreshadows some things, and backgrounds others."\(^{13}\) In other words, scholars investigate a subject through isolating variables, asking questions that are deemed analytically relevant, and finding solutions that will provide meaning to global politics.\(^{14}\) Feminist epistemologies and methodologies have not been exempt from being influenced by particular sets of ideas and backgrounds. Based on its critique

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of the mainstream, feminist theories provide a distinct methodological framework that challenges androcentric or masculine knowledge biases in the discipline of IR. International Relations, argue feminist theorists, has largely operated through a narrow understanding of the subject matter. Women and issues related to gender have been excluded from the study of international politics. It is not because women have been absent from the field, but rather questions concerning women’s interests and experiences have not been asked.\(^{15}\) Tickner notes that feminist IR theorists see reality differently to mainstream IR theorists. She suggests that feminist perspectives “make different assumptions about the world, ask different questions, and use different methodologies to answer them.”\(^{16}\)

The field of IR has consequently been made up of elite men from Western countries who have failed to ask questions related to women.\(^{17}\) Nor have these elite men developed theories that address the experiences of women. For instance, IR has relied on the theory of Realism as its central tenet of analysis. Realism was revivified in the post-WWII era and as a response to the idealism of the interwar period.\(^{18}\) Realism has been dedicated to uncovering the causes of conflict and work towards developing a method to ensure state security. The dominant forms of Realism adopt a scientific methodology and assume that the world can be understood and manipulated through positivist, state-centric concerns such as anarchy, self-help, and military power.\(^{19}\) Reliance on this scientific methodology has, however, undermined the relevance of issues that are not associated with state security. Feminist IR theorists have claimed that Realism ignores that politics is also constituted by non-state actors who effect and are affected by conflict. Thus, feminist IR theorists propose that Realism, as a male-centric theory, cannot adequately represent the views of non-state actors such as women.

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\(^{15}\) Grant and Newland, *Gender and International Relations*, 1–7.

\(^{16}\) Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era*, 3.

\(^{17}\) IR’s reliance on Realism has meant that other actors, such as women, have been excluded from the study. Feminist IR theorists have claimed that Realism has ignored that the world is made up of non-state actors. Thus, feminist IR theorists propose that Realism, as a male-centric theory, cannot adequately represent the views of non-state actors such as women.


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As a response to the exclusion of women, feminist IR developed as a critique of the major assumptions in the field of international politics. Feminist IR emerged from the “third debate” in the discipline of international politics. The third debate was a response to the stalemate between the existing debates of Realism and idealism. In challenging the existing theories, a more critical school developed to question the origins and power relations within the debates. The third debate called for a rethinking of the way in which world politics can be explained or understood. Similar to the third debate, feminist IR “has also been engaged in a critical discussion and reevaluation of epistemological issues.” More specifically, feminist IR theories also drew upon earlier debates within feminism. These debates began in the 1960s when the empiricist foundations of liberal feminism were challenged by radical feminism. In favour of feminism theory, Tickner notes that these “were more genuine debates than those in IR” because it called on scholars from a variety of disciplinary and epistemological perspectives. The development of feminist IR theory occurred through the adoption of gender as its main ontological variable.

In order to understand feminist enquires into the field of IR, it is important to deconstruct its key concept: gender. Gender is not synonymous with the experience of women. Similarly, it should not be understood to be interchangeable with the notion of biological sex. Gender does not refer to what men and women are biologically, but to the meaning produced by relations between people labeled as “men” and those who are known as “women.” Terms such as masculine and feminine are gendered and socially constructed categories that are not natural characteristics directly related to the “sex” of the individual. The concept of gender can also help to understand the relationship of individuals other than men and women. Children, for instance, are constructed as “feminine” despite the biological sex of the child. Children have been understood to embody the “feminine” because they have traditionally belonged, at least in the Western

20 Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era, 10.
21 See Keohane, Neo-Realism and its Critics.
22 Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era, 9-11; Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 20-32.
23 Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era, 10.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Steans, Gender and International Relations: An Introduction, 7; Jane. I. Parpart and Marysia Zalewski, Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender, and Violence in International Relations (London: Zed Books, 2008), viii. Parpart and Zalewski suggest that gender is very much a part of the public discourse, in that it is immersed in the public, institutions, the way companies, governments and education systems operate.
27 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 7-8.
world, in the private-domestic realm. Thus, gender can be understood as a concept that
describes the socially-constructed relationship between two or more groups. Feminist
theorist Jill Steans explains, “to look at the world through gendered lenses is to focus on
gender as a particular kind of power relation, or to trace out the ways in which gender is
central to understanding international processes.” In short, gender is the meaning
associated with the “material relationship” behind masculinity and femininity.

Gender can help understand how the world creates social hierarchies based on
perceived associations with masculinity and femininity. Within a gendered
relationship, the one designated as the masculine-public is constructed as more powerful
than the feminine-private. The differentiation between the masculine and the feminine
structures society into dichotomous blocs of understanding. The two exist as opposites,
but cannot exist without the other. Lauren Wilcox explains, “gender symbolism
describes the way in which masculine/feminine are assigned to various dichotomies that
organize Western thought” where “both men and women tend to place a higher value
on the term associated with masculinity.” This dichotomy can be used to structure
society into different groups. In some cases, it has been used to create a hierarchical
system where one group is valued more than the other. Gendered social hierarchy,
then, is at once a social construction and a “structural feature of social and political life”
that “profoundly shapes our place in, and view of, the world.”

It is important to recognize that understandings of gender are not universal.
Gender relations are not the same throughout the world and can vary depending on
culture, geography, and political climate. Gender inequality can recognize how certain
cultures or societies are gendered “feminine” in order to justify development and peace

28 Ibid., 5.
29 Ibid., 7-8.
31 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 9.
214-240.
33 Wilcox, “Gendering the Cult Offensive.”
34 Gender in this sense can be applied to deconstruct how the world is understood. For instance, post-
colonial feminists have applied this idea of gender to understand the inequality caused by colonialism and
neo-colonialism. For instance, rather than assuming that all women are “feminine,” post-colonial
feminists assert that colonial-women or Caucasian women occupy the masculine-power producing
identity, whereas women of colour have been relegated to the “feminine” non-political. This relationship
is complicated because it cannot be neatly understood within dichotomous static concepts.
building programs. As will be discussed, gender relations have been infused into the international sphere in complex ways.35

While gendered relations exist throughout the world, it would be uncharacteristic to suggest that it can be measured or quantified in a scientific manner.36 As a structural feature of social and political life, gender is “a set of discourses that represent, construct, change, and enforce social meaning.”37 Used as feminism’s key unit of analysis, gender as well as feminist theory “is neither just about women, nor the addition of women to male-stream constructions; it is about transforming ways of being and knowing” as gendered discourses are understood and transformed.38 As a result, there is not one gendered experience of global politics, but many. By extension, there is not one gender-based perspective on IR, but multiple understandings.39

Feminists can approach global politics from a number of different perspectives, including realist, liberal, constructivist, critical, poststructuralist, postcolonial, and ecological. As will be discussed, the different perspectives provide different, and sometimes contradictory, insights into and predictions about global politics.40 It helps to expose the complex relationships that are formed at the international and local level. More importantly, gender helps to deconstruct and understand why particular groups

35 Sjoberg, Mothers, Monsters, Whores; Parpart and Zalewski, Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender, and Violence in International Relations; Marysia Zalewski and Jane L. Parpart, The "man Question" in International Relations (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1998); Whitworth, Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: a Gendered Analysis; Miranda Alison, “Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security,” Security Dialogue 35, no. 4 (December 2004). Within the era of contemporary conflict, the influx of foreign “friendly” peacekeepers has altered the gendered dynamics within local communities. Whereas men within the local community appear to have social power, the influx of foreign soldiers changes the gender dynamics by creating a hierarchy of masculinity within the community. Within the influx of an international masculine role, the role of local men is displaced through the power given to foreign soldiers, whether male or female. This dependence on foreign soldiers for assistance can undermine the masculinity of the local men because suddenly they are seen to be “incapable” of protecting their own. Gender concepts can thus help to understand how the local men are inadvertently “feminized” as a result of the influx of more “masculine” international assistance


39 See Marysia Zalewski, “Women’s Troubles” Again in IR, International Studies Review 5 (2003): 287-302. Zalewski comments on the limitations feminist IR experiences. She writes that despite the successes brought upon by feminist IR, the “sub”-field continues to be restricted to the extent that central concepts risk abandonment altogether. In response to R. Charli Carpenter’s argument on the “success” of feminism and the need to move beyond “women’s” issues, Zalewski notes that feminism has not been all that successful. Rather, she notes that Carpenter has assumed that feminism has been accepted by the mainstream. Zalewski notes that this argument only works to “contain” feminism.

have been excluded from international politics. Despite the different epistemological approaches within feminism, feminist theorists do agree on three different projects that work towards the emancipation of women and other actors.

First, feminist theorists engage in a cross-disciplinary agenda to expose the extent of masculinist bias. The existing framework of mainstream IR, as noted by feminists and critical scholars, is biased and incomplete. Mainstream IR's reliance on positivism, the state, and scientific methodologies has neglected issues that are considered irrelevant to its research agenda. Feminists have argued that the knowledge that sustains existing institutions, policies, and decision-making procedures has been shaped by a select portion of society. Feminist theorists, such as V. Spike Peterson and Gillian Youngs, indicate that the central problem within a positivist framework is the acceptance of male-dominated knowledge as a natural given. Within the first project of exposing andocentric knowledge, feminists indicate that knowledge is constructed through the preferences of a particular subset of humans, such as men. Such groups of men also live within a certain geographical contexts, such as Western Europe or the United States. Therefore, knowledge that has come to frame disciplines such as IR are claims from the experiences of elite men rather than concepts that can be universally applied to different geographical regions and human identities.

Feminists also engage in a second project that seeks to include the experiences of women within existing frameworks of analysis. Existing discussions within IR and other andocentric fields have placed too much emphasis on activities in the "public sphere." For instance, traditional IR has relied on a Realist interpretation of conflict.

42 Peterson, "Feminist Theorists Within, Invisible To, and Beyond IR"; Peterson, Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations; Peterson and Runyan, Global Gender Issues; Peterson, Transgressing Boundaries: Theories of Knowledge, Gender and International Relations.
44 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 28.
45 Grant and Newland, Gender and International Relation; Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era; Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists"; hooks, Feminist Theory from Margin to Center.
46 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 28.
47 Smith, "Positivism and Beyond"; Cynthia Enloe, "Margins, Silences and Bottom rungs: How to Overcome the Underestimation of Power in the Study of International Relations," in International Theory:
This interpretation relies on the actions that take place between the state and statesmen, the military, and decision makers. This emphasis, however, mainly legitimizes the actions within the public sphere without providing a reason to criticize the origins or the nature in which the structure is created. 48 Feminism’s second project thus helps to broaden knowledge because it includes non-traditional resources such as diaries, domestic duties, and conversations within the private sphere. 49 Within this project, women’s lived experiences become a subject of research where academics can discover more about everyday life as well as the experiences of men. The inclusion of women as a central research subject further allows feminists to expose the existing hierarchies of power in gendered relationships. 50 Feminist scholarship represents a cross-disciplinary field that aims to understand unequal gender hierarchies that exist in all societies. Some feminist theories also have the goal of changing existing power relations.

Through the inclusion of women as subjects of research, some feminists engage in a third project that permits the deconstruction of existing male-centric forms of knowledge. 51 Within this project, feminist theorists move from a concentration on differences between men and women towards the socially constructed concept of “gender.” Peterson notes that “[i]n contrast to positivist/empiricist notions of sex (as a biologically ‘natural’ binary of male-female), gender is a historically contingent social construction that dichotomizes identities, behaviours, and expectations as masculine and feminine.” 52 Gender-centric behaviour is created, and is context-specific, rather than biologically determined. Gender, as a social construct, becomes an analytical category

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51 Ibid., 30-31.

52 Peterson, “Feminist Theorists Within, Invisible To, and Beyond IR,” 39.
which infers that human behaviour is not natural but is learned within a historical and geographical context.\textsuperscript{53} Thus, gender not only becomes an analytical unit in understanding human behaviour, it is used to understand how certain constructions of privileged masculinity depends on the exclusion and devaluation of femininity.\textsuperscript{54} Through the third project, feminist theorists are able to directly challenge positivist-knowledge claims by suggesting that certain categories are based on a socially constructed context.

The three different projects of feminist theory aim to expose the masculine bias in mainstream fields of enquiry while also building a possibility for women’s emancipation.\textsuperscript{55} Although the three feminist projects share the goal of locating women and asking questions concerning women’s experience, feminist theories are different in its approach and methods. The following section will address the three theories of liberal feminism, radical feminism, and post-structural feminism. Although there are number of different feminist theories, liberal, radical, and post-structural feminism(s) have been selected because they offer important insights into the use of sexual violence in war. Each feminist theory is devoted to the main feminist projects mentioned above, but approach them differently.

**Liberal Feminism**

Liberal feminist theory represents one of the earliest contributions to representing women. Liberal feminism emerged as a response to mainstream prescriptions of liberalism in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. Liberalism adopted its ideas from the Enlightenment period which suggested that individuals were able to create the truth through reason rather than depending on religion. According to Enlightenment thinking, all those who are capable of independent thought and action should be able to participate in society. In practice, however, all women and certain groups of men\textsuperscript{56} were excluded due to claims that they were less capable of reason.

\textsuperscript{53} Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.
\textsuperscript{54} Peterson, “Feminist Theorists Within, Invisible To, and Beyond IR,” 39.
\textsuperscript{55} Steans, *Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions*, 29.
\textsuperscript{56} Men who were excluded from being able to participate in society include working-class men, non-property owning men, and men of colour who inhabited the colonies.
Liberal feminism developed as a reaction to the exclusion of women from the public sphere.

The origins of liberal feminism stem from the work of Mary Wollstonecraft, an eighteenth century British feminist who argues that women have the intellectual ability to participate in the public sphere. In her 1792 seminal piece *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, she writes that women have long been thought to be inferior to men. Wollstonecraft argues that institutions and legal structures have maintained the idea that women are irrational, temperamental, and emotional creatures. As a result of such beliefs, women have been prevented from participating in the public sphere and decision-making roles. Wollstonecraft argues that such assumptions are not true, rather women should not be judged by their inability to participate within the public sphere. She argues that women are able to participate fully in the public realm if they are given the right education and the opportunity. Thus, according to Wollstonecraft, women are seen as rational creatures capable of taking on tasks in the public sphere.

Following Wollstonecraft, liberal feminist theory has pointed out that full social participation in public life has been denied to women. The structural discrimination women experience originates from the perception that women are different from men. Liberal feminists argue that “whereas men have been judged on their merits as individuals, women have tended to be judged as female or as a group.” In response to the systemic discrimination women experience, liberal feminists believe that women can reach their full potential as “rational actors” if they are given the opportunity to do so. Liberal feminists believe that the lack of women’s participation is due to “legal and other obstacles that have denied them the same rights and opportunities as men.”

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57 The tradition of liberal feminism also developed from the theories of 17th to 19th Century European thinkers such as Christine de Pizan, Mary Astell, and Harriet Taylor.
58 Rousseau, *Emile*. In opposition to Wollstonecraft, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argues that the perceived "ignorance" or "innocence" of women meant that women should be confined to the private sphere. Rousseau believes that a hierarchy exists between men and women. Men belong to the public sphere where they engaged in the activities of politics and decision-making. In contrast, Rousseau argues that women are not rational creatures who are capable of participating in the public sphere. Rather, women are seen to inhabit the domestic-private sphere where their tasks are seen to be relative to those of men. According to Rousseau, "women should always be relative to that of men. To please, to be useful to us, to make us love and esteem them, to educate us when young, to take care of us when grown up, to advise, to console us, to render our lives easy and agreeable." Rousseau notes that these were the duties assigned to women and what should be taught in women’s education.
60 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.
62 Ibid., 13.
Thus, it is only when the legal barriers are removed that women can begin to move towards full equality. Liberal feminism has an agenda to ensure that women are equally represented within the public sphere and decision-making roles.

The traditions of liberal feminism are still apparent in contemporary efforts to emancipate women. Its influences have been most successful within affirmative action programs, equal opportunity schemes, and strategies that seek to meet a quota of women within the workplace. More recent recognition of the need for equal representation of women is seen through the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the inclusion of women's interest on the agenda of the United Nations, and efforts to include more women in peacekeeping and peace building operations.

UN Resolution 1325, for example, can be celebrated as a liberal feminist success. Adopted in 2000 by the UN Security Council, Resolution 1325 represents a movement away from the post-Cold War tendency to typecast women as victims of armed conflict who are in need of protection. Resolution 1325 is the first time that the Security Council recognized that women may be something other than victims of armed conflict. This recalibration of the Security Council’s gender narrative allowed a shift in the definition of women as victims to the importance of women’s participation and involvement in international peace and security. Resolution 1325 highlights and mainstreams the concept of gender within its decision-making protocols and programs. The program of gender mainstreaming can be seen as synonymous with liberal feminism’s goal of including women in the public sphere. Gender mainstreaming is considered as a process of bringing “what can be seen as marginal into the core business and main decision-making process of an organization.” This includes efforts to incorporate gender into the workings of major institutions such as the United Nations, its programs, and procedures. It goes on to invoke many other independent and self-sufficient representations of women as peacekeeping personnel, including military

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63 Ibid., 12-13.
64 Ibid., 12.
67 Ibid., 6.
observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian workers. Resolution 1325 also recognizes women as bearers of human rights, as refugees and ex-combatants, as well as victims of armed conflict.\(^9\) The net effect disrupts the dominant script of women as victims of armed conflict by acknowledging a diversity of women’s experience and importance of women’s contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

Resolution 1325 has also become a major component in how the Security Council deals with sexual violence in conflict zones. The Security Council recognizes that the presence of male military personnel in the post-conflict period can be a detriment to women. Resolution 1325 recognizes that the presence of female military personnel and police can help to alleviate the suffering of women. Putting female personnel in place is believed to provide a deeper understanding of the situation of contemporary warfare. Since civilians are direct targets of conflict, it is believed that women will be able to understand the repercussions of war, more so than men.\(^0\)

Liberal feminists believe that the inclusion of women on the ground and in decision-making areas would mean that the interests of other women are represented. Resolution 1325 can be noted as a much celebrated feminist achievement. From a liberal feminist perspective, it provides a step towards including gender-centric issues within the programs initiated by the United Nations.

An example of gender mainstreaming has been witnessed in the contribution of an all-female peacekeeping force to post-conflict Liberia. In early 2007, over 100 female UN peacekeepers from India were introduced to Liberia to help stabilize the country. The all-female peacekeeping unit played an important role in alleviating the suffering of Liberian women, especially those women who endured the repercussions of sexual violence. Rape was widely used in Liberia as a form of intimidation, humiliation, and terrorism during the fifteen-year conflict.\(^1\) Resolution 1325, and its successor Resolution 1820, both state the importance of dealing with wartime sexual violence. Both Resolutions argue that the introduction of women to on-the-ground programs can help deal with the issue of sexual violence. “In a post-conflict society, women are much more traumatized,” notes Annie Abraham, the commander of the outgoing Indian

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\(^0\) United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1325.

peacekeeping unit. Abraham asserts that “[t]hey are much more open to us. With men, there is some kind of skepticism.”

The all-female peacekeeping force also served as a method of “empowering” local women. The presence of female peacekeepers and police officers was meant to help empower local women to join the police force in Liberia. Liberia has traditionally been a patriarchal country where women do not have much socio-economic power, thus the presence of a female component is meant to encourage women to participate in helping to rebuild their country. The message behind the efforts made by the female peacekeepers from India suggested that “[y]ou can trust us. And you can do anything a man can do. Even better.”

Although the intentions of Resolution 1325 are sound, in practice, programs have failed to achieve their initial goal of empowering women worldwide. Resolution 1325 commits several epistemological mistakes that limit its success. First, Resolution 1325 maintains a managerial and problem-solving approach to improving peace operations by just “adding” women to decision-making areas. This process fails to question the structure of women’s oppression, which women are added, and if their values are any different from the men who already run the institution(s). Adding women to programs of peace is assumed to help alleviate the suffering caused by war. However, adding women to decision-making and conflict-prevention programs fails to ask questions concerning the cause of war, how introducing foreign troops may exacerbate tensions, and whether women from elsewhere can associate with local women. In support of this contention, it is significant to note that Resolution 1325 makes no reference to addressing the structural causes of women’s inequality. Although the goal set out by Resolution 1325 aims to redefine women as actors instead of victims of conflict, in practice the operations carried out by the Security Council maintains

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74 Basu, “Indian Women Peacekeepers Hailed in Liberia.”


existing institutional modes of knowledge. This idea of mainstreaming gender maintains this progressive idea within existing structures of binary oppositions of feminine/victim/peace being set against masculine/perpetrator/war. It is assumed that because men cause war, the inclusion of women within male-centric institutions can correct the damage that has been caused by men.

Liberal feminism has been criticized for its empiricist enquiry and assumption that male-centric biases can be corrected with the inclusion of women within global institutions such as the United Nations. The successes of liberal feminist projects are primarily due to its epistemological connections with existing scientific methodology. This methodology is accepted by the mainstream because it does not challenge the structure of the institution on which it is based. The use of female peacekeepers in Liberia, for example, reinforced particular ideas about women without questioning how the hierarchy of social relations can affect the situation. The program in Liberia depended on the image of foreign peacekeepers as “mothers” who are able to empathize with the situation on the ground. This image of women as “mothers” does not question the diversity of motherhood, nor does it note the cultural diversities and differences between India and Liberia. Resolution 1325 assumes that all women are the same, thus, adding women to a program will represent the interests of women worldwide. Resolution 1325 can be seen as a liberal feminist success because it encourages existing institutions to adopt gender mainstreaming. In doing so, it ensures that more women are included within the public sphere.

However, such an enquiry has failed to assess the structural features of inequality between men and women. Liberal feminism has been guilty of prioritizing a strategy of “just add and stir” – that is just adding women without questioning how women are socialized, what values they would bring to the public sphere, and are they the same or different from men? This notion of adding and stirring does not assess whether the inclusion of women will necessarily result in the representation of women’s views or interests.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminist theory is an early tenet of feminism developed during the 1960s and 1970s. Radical feminism largely reflects the differences between men and women and uses this unequal power relationship as its central argument. Although radical feminism may not be of particular use in contemporary Feminist IR, discussion of radical feminist theory and its disagreements is of particular importance to wartime sexual violence. Radical feminist thought has been highlighted in some of the most influential works on sexual violence, such as Susan Brownmiller’s 1975 book Against Our Will. Due to its use in pioneering work concerning sexual violence, a review of radical feminism is needed. Radical feminist theory is committed to the experiences and interests of women. Unlike the liberal feminist approach of accepting “reality” as a given, radical feminists attempt to move women from the peripheral realms of knowledge to the centre. In doing so, radical feminists use “women’s perspectives” to correct the biases created by male-centric knowledge.

Radical feminism is heavily influenced by psychoanalytical theory. Psychoanalytical theory emphasizes the difference between the two sexes. Radical feminism adopts this idea and suggests that oppression is rooted in the division between men and women, where women have traditionally been placed in a disadvantaged position. Sara Ruddick’s work on maternal care, for instance, claims that skills that are necessary for mothering, which girls learn through socialization, are different from those employed in public life. Ruddick suggests that maternal practice or responsibility for childcare requires nonviolence, truth, and tolerance of ambiguity, which are skills that are consistent with peacemaking. Unlike liberal feminists who stressed women’s equality with men, psychoanalytical feminism argues that processes of socialization and gender-specific experiences like childbirth and motherhood means that women are different from men.

The assumptions made by radical feminists are based on two different perspectives developed from psychoanalytical theory. One perspective relies on a biologically-determinist view that sees gender difference between men and women as

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78 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 13.
79 Sara Ruddick, Maternal Thinking: Toward A Politics of Peace (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era. Ruddick has argued that if women’s traits are extended into the public sphere, there would be less wars and more instances of peace.
80 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 13.
innate and natural. This idea originates from a woman’s assumed natural role as a mother.\textsuperscript{81} Secondly, radical feminists who disagree with the biological view suggest that gender roles are socialized through the material conditions that girls and boys are exposed to at a young age.\textsuperscript{82} The difference between the biological perspective and the socialization perspective are explained below.

Radical feminists note that the formation of gender identity is different between boys and girls. The difference in gender identity draws upon existing roles within the private sphere, such as the role of the mother. Radical feminists who depend on a biologically-determinist argument suggest that women are innately peaceful, nurturing and caring because they are destined to bear children and undertake the task of motherhood.\textsuperscript{83} Since mothers usually assumed primary responsibility for care during a child’s formative years, girls generally relate more to their mothers while boys become more independent. The independence of boys is achieved through their search for an alternative identity that is not associated with their mothers.\textsuperscript{84} Male children, therefore, develop a sense of “self” through the process of distancing themselves from their mothers, and in turn, the private sphere. According to this theory, to be a boy involves escaping the world of women and entering the public realm of men. In contrast, the formation of gender identity in girls evolves closely related to the mother, developing an orientation towards the domestic realm and adopting passive and submissive behavioural patterns.\textsuperscript{85} Radical feminists argue that the biological position of women as subordinate to men have allowed women to think of the world differently. Such relations of complexity are developed through the struggle to give birth, raise a child, and care for a family.

In \textit{The Second Sex} (1953), Simone de Beauvoir illustrates that the difference between men and women is apparent through the meaning given to how sex organs are organized. De Beauvoir illustrates that society disciplines the body to use particular bodily functions according to one’s perceived sexual identity. This identity relies on the structure of biology and the functions of such organs. In her book, she confesses her desire to be able to urinate standing up, like her male peers. Instead, she, like many girls, was made to crouch and cover herself and her sexual organs. She further laments

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 13-15.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Steans, \textit{Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions}, 13.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 13; Whitworth, \textit{Feminism and International Relations}, 16; Harding, \textit{The Science Question in Feminism}. 

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that while growing up, girls are taught to reject their sexual organs, whereas young boys are taught to privilege the penis as a symbol of manhood.\textsuperscript{86} She writes:

All children try to compensate for the separation inflicted through weaning by enticing and showoff behaviour; the boy is compelled to go beyond the state; he is rid of narcissism by having his attention directed to his penis; while the little girl is confirmed in the tendency to not draw attention to herself.\textsuperscript{87}

Even this elementary form of differentiating between sex organs is understood to formulate the different gender identities between boys and girls. The competitive nature of boys is developed or considered to be associated with how their sexual organs are viewed. Whereas their penis is seen to be the centre of attention, in de Beauvoir's illustration, girls are taught to be ashamed of their sexual organs. Within the biological, gender oppression is created through the neglect of their sex. De Beauvoir concludes that "sex" thus becomes a caste that creates a hierarchy between men and women.\textsuperscript{88}

Radical feminists who disagree with the biological determinist perspective retain that women become more peaceful and nurturing through the process of socialization. Women's activity has important epistemological implications for the perspective of radical feminism. The process of socialization is thought to result in girls experiencing a more complex relational world. Girls develop amongst family members and peers that are present within the private sphere, thus allowing them to develop into individuals who able to relate to others. In addition, the task of motherhood and childrearing is reinforced early on in girls thus allowing them to develop a sense of self in relation to another. Boys, on the other hand, are believed to spend their formative years concerned with autonomy and the need to establish an individual identity. The move towards separation and the development of the sense of self, however, can lead to rigid ego boundaries where other people are perceived as threats to be controlled or dominated.\textsuperscript{89}

Since girls are raised in a world that is different from the public sphere, radical feminists argue that this oppression allows women to understand and critique existing structures

\textsuperscript{86} Simone de Beauvoir, \textit{The Second Sex} (A Four Square Book, 1960), 20-30.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{89} Steans, \textit{Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions}, 14.
of power. Men, who have been socialized to be individuals, are unable to adopt such traits because they were raised in a different way from women.

According to this perspective of gender difference, feminists such as Jean Bethke Elshtain argue that times of war and militarism exemplify and play on the gender differences between men and women. In her 1987 book *Women and War*, she notes that war has primarily been the activity of men and not women. Her first chapter illustrates the different roles men and women play in times of conflict. She writes that “in time of war, real men and women – locked in a dense symbiosis, perceived as beings who have complementary needs and exemplify gender-specific virtues – take on, in cultural memory and narrative, the personas of Just Warriors and Beautiful Souls.”

This division between the Just Warrior and the Beautiful Soul plays on the idea that men (warriors) adopt traits that are more violent, aggressive, and competitive in order to participate in war. Whereas women’s role include supporting their warriors, weeping for them, and even participation as a “pacifist protestor.” Such roles, however, do not exemplify the identity of the violent and aggressive warrior that men are socialized into.

The roles of the Just Warrior and the Beautiful Soul are conveyed through the toys that children are given in their formative years. Girls are often given toys that are associated with the private sphere. In the role-play that girls participate in with their toys, they develop or mirror relationships that they have with their mothers. For instance, girls are often seen to mimic the role of a mother through a doll that is a baby, model kitchens, or houses. This understanding is also developed through how girls engage in role play by “playing house” – where the girl child pretends to be their mother and takes care of the family through cooking, caring, and nurturing her toys.

Boys, on the other hand, are often given toys that exemplify their aggressiveness, competitiveness, and role within the public sphere. Elshtain notes that the role boys are expected to play within the public sphere is evident through the toys that are given to them, such as guns, airplanes, and cars. Elshtain uses the acceptance of militaristic toys to illustrate how male-centric interests have become the norm. She notes that boys are given toys such as “GI Joes” and toys that are related to impersonating particular warrior-like figures. She writes that “the toys, of course, are primarily destined for male, not female, children whether – one suspects – the child has

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91 Ibid., 3.
92 Ibid., 197.
requested a gun, a GI Joe, or miniature Huey, a helicopter widely used in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{93} Even through the discussion of toys, Elshtain emphasizes the idea that toys are gender-specific. Elshtain’s emphasis has been that men created this militaristic world where violent toys have become the norm in socializing our children, whereas girls, who will grow up to be mothers, are less likely to exert such tendencies.

The roles children play out through their interaction with toys further differentiate girls from boys. The toys that are given to boys feeds on characteristics of aggression, competitiveness, and violence. Such traits, as noted by maternal feminists and radical feminists alike, allow boys to survive in the competitive public sphere as adults.\textsuperscript{94} Such characteristics are developed to ensure that their individualism and identity is protected and maintained. In the attempt to distance themselves from traits associated with women, such as emotion, affection, and nurturance, young boys accentuate more aggressive and violent tendencies. Similarly, Steans notes that such roles of socialization allow boys to “develop a sense of ‘self’ – of identity – through the process of radical differentiation from the mother and by identification with a frequently absent father figure.”\textsuperscript{95} Whereas girls develop through socializing with others or being compared within a relational sense, boys, in contrast, are removed from a world of women and the home. Radical feminists, however, have suggested that such traits are synonymous to the cause of militarism, war, and violence.\textsuperscript{96}

Arguing that the world is divided into two separate categories, radical feminists further note that the oppression experienced by women allow them to understand more fully than men the implications of war and militarism.\textsuperscript{97} Within this particular project, radical feminists collaborate with liberal feminists on the issue of “bringing” women into areas of political influence and decision-making. Radical feminists seek not just to right the historical injustice experienced by women through their absence on the international stage, but also to replace it with women’s more pacifist approaches to international decision-making.\textsuperscript{98} Understanding that women are responsible for the detriments of war, radical feminists propose that women’s values replace male-centric

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} Elshtain, \textit{Women and War}.
\textsuperscript{95} Steans, \textit{Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions}, 13.
\textsuperscript{96} Whitworth, \textit{Feminism and International Relations}, 18.
\textsuperscript{98} Whitworth, \textit{Feminism and International Relations}, 18.
ideas in the public sphere. In doing so, radical feminists believe that the detriments of war, violence, and militarism will be solved.

In *Three Guineas* (1938), Virginia Woolf sets out to answer the question “How in your opinion are we to prevent war?” The question was posed by an educated man belonging to the elite class and is asked to his “equal,” that is Woolf, who also belongs to a select group of educated British women. Woolf proceeds to answer the question by suggesting that it is difficult to understand the nature of war because it is not a problem that has bothered the minds of women. Women, Woolf argues, are not responsible for war; rather war is a man’s problem. To fight, she argues, has “always been a man’s habit, not a woman’s.” Woolf’s enquiry into the question draws on the difference between men and women. Since women are not given the chance to participate in the public sphere, women are not responsible for the repercussions of war. From this understanding, Woolf’s analysis underpins the arguments that radical feminists such as Elshtain and Ruddick make. However, the role women take on as mothers and caretakers can help correct the biases that are inherent in the origins of war.

Radical feminism challenges the epistemological approach of liberal feminism in several ways. First, while liberal feminism suggests that gender equality can be reached by including women within male-centric institutions, radical feminism dismantles androcentric biases by bringing women’s interests to the centre of the epistemological framework and how IR should be understood and practiced. Unlike liberal feminism, radical feminism aim is to dismantle existing structures and institutions of power. Radical feminists believe that such institutions are infused with androcentric biases to ensure that war and violence are inevitable. Radical feminists believe that the androcentric traits can be replaced by feminine traits associated with motherhood and care in order to ensure that conflict and warmongering are not dominant characteristics within the public sphere. In short, unlike liberal feminists, radical feminism’s aim is to make the “personal” characteristics related to domesticity, motherhood, and childrearing “political.”

Second, radical feminism confronts liberal feminist epistemology by bringing marginalized groups to the centre of knowledge. Radical feminism moves beyond the liberal feminist approach that identifies politics as only located within the public-

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100 Ibid., 9.
international sphere. Radical feminists recognize that politics occur within the personal relationships between men and women, or among women within the private sphere. Within the private sphere, where women engage with domestic activities, radical feminists believe that women learn the characteristics and responsibilities that are related to peace. If such characteristics are brought into the public sphere, argue radical feminists, the world would be a better place. Using the political slogan “the personal is political,” radical feminism’s approach appears to challenge the legitimacy of the public realm through the inclusion of the private.  

Third, radical feminism argues that women’s experiences have not been accounted for in international politics. Radical feminism offers a more profound critique of mainstream international politics than liberal feminism does. By addressing the androcentric biases within mainstream epistemology, radical feminists argue that the experiences of women cannot be included within a structure that values a scientific-empiricist methodology. A scientific-methodology in studying international politics has not been free of androcentric values. Questions of enquiry have, therefore, been asked by those who hold socio-economic power. Since men have overwhelmingly been positioned within such sectors of power, their approach does not include the interests of women nor can it represent women. Unlike the liberal feminist approach, radical feminism’s emphasis on “difference” challenges the “unmediated truths” by arguing that knowledge is dependent on a variety of factors related to the individual’s identity.

Although radical feminism offers an alternative to understanding international politics, this epistemological framework does not exist without limitations. On the surface, radical feminism’s goal of overthrowing the androcentric biases of mainstream IR theory with a “woman-centric” approach appears to represent the perspective of women. However, upon a closer examination of radical feminist theory, its reliance on women’s experience assumes that there is an “authentic” woman’s experience that can

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102 Whitworth, *Feminism and International Relations*, 18.
103 Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists.”
105 Peterson and Runyan, *Global Gender Issues*, 73-74; Whitworth, *Feminism and International Relations*. 
serve as the basis of knowledge claims. Radical feminists rely on the idea that all women are more peaceful because of their assigned roles as mothers and care takers.

African-American feminist, bell hooks, argues against the idea of a universal peaceful and non-violent woman. hooks argues that the ideas that there is a universal sisterhood and that all women experience life similarly are not true. Within her own experience as a feminist, hooks notes that she has experienced similar forms of ostracization and differentiation within the women’s movement. Whereas the gender difference is seen as inherent between men and women, hooks draws on the fact that there are differences and hierarchies between women. hooks argues that the feminist movement’s use of the “victim” or the idea that women are “oppressed” ignores the fact that “white” women had often supported or perpetrated violent acts against “black” women. A history of oppression experienced by the African-American population in the United States is illustrative of the racial differences that exist between groups despite their gender. In addition, during the colonial period of the United States, white women were more likely to support the decisions of their male peers rather than take sides with their black sisters. The radical feminist view that there is an innate and universal women’s experience can be said to be a naïve understanding of the differences and diversities among women. This idea of a universal sisterhood is flawed, hooks argues, because it is a “false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women’s varied and complex social reality.”

Whereas radical feminists aims to ensure that women’s experiences are represented in the public sphere, such an idea essentializes the experiences of men. Associating women with peace and men with militarism and violence ignores the diversity of male experiences within the public and private sphere. Examples of pacifist men or men who have refused to engage in war-like activities are neglected by the radical feminist engagement in literature concerning international politics. Individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, who had refused to engage in violence,

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108 bell hooks, Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism (Boston: South End Press, 1981); bell hooks, Black Looks: Race and Representation (Boston: South End Press, 1992); bell hooks, We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity (New York: Routledge, 2004); bell hooks, Yearning Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics (Boston: South End Press, 1990); This idea is also reflected in M. Jacqui Alexander, Pedagogy of Crossing Meditations on Feminism, Sexuality, Politics, Memory and the Sacred (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

109 hooks, Feminist Theory from Margin to Center, 44.
and proclaimed a non-violent approach to politics are largely forgotten by the radical feminist approach. Instead, radical feminism’s dependence on the pacifism of women demonizes the role of men, while reinforcing the idea that women are victims. Similarly, this idea of the victim as not being responsible for what occurs in the international sphere reinforces the existing understanding that women are unable to partake in the public sphere. This idea that men are the perpetrators (of war) and women are the victims ignores the presence of assertive, competitive, and aggressive women.\textsuperscript{110}

Despite its ability to expand knowledge concerning IR, a closer examination of radical feminism reveals that its approach is not as “radical” as its name suggests.\textsuperscript{111} By identifying the masculinist biases, radical feminists believe the material differences between the two sexes means that women offer a less distorted and perverse view of the world. However, the use of an essentialized idea of women’s experience ignores the diversity of experiences among women as well as men. Although radical feminism does provide a provocative enquiry into existing understanding of international politics, it relies too heavily on ideas that require contestation.

\textbf{Post-structural Feminism}

As a response to the essentialist approaches of liberal and radical feminism, some contemporary feminist scholars are engaged in a fundamental reassessment of feminist IR’s methodologies and epistemologies. Post-structuralism emerged as a process to challenge the existing structures of knowledge. From a post-structuralist perspective, certainties or truths in knowledge are heavily contested. For instance, feminists who have adopted a post-structural approach assert that there is no one overarching framework for understanding the experience(s) of women.\textsuperscript{112} Unlike radical


\textsuperscript{111} Whitworth, Feminism and International Relations; Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions.

\textsuperscript{112} Post-structural feminists include, but not limited to, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Christine Sylvester, V. Spike Peterson, and Marysia Zalewski
feminists, post-structural feminists assert that "there is no essence to 'woman';" thus there is no one true women's experience. Post-structuralism, as well as post-structural feminism, engages in several projects. Post-structural feminism provides the most "radical" challenge to IR, because it problematizes IR's foundational ontological concepts.

In opposition to the arguments made by radical feminists, the epistemological framework of post-structural feminism aims to deconstruct the authenticity of claims to universal womanhood. For instance, post-structural feminists argue that the feminist movement as a method to emancipate women is problematic. As discussed, radical and liberal feminists continue to rely on "essentialist" understandings of women. From a post-structural feminist perspective, such deterministic ideas of womanhood fail to understand how categories such as men, women, and gender are discursively constructed. Post-structural feminists argue that women cannot be understood within essentialist terms because how society understands men and women depends on an array of factors such as context, power relations, and the construction of history. Post-structural feminists contest the possibility that feminism can serve its goal of emancipating women because "the whole process of theorizing is viewed as a form of domination whereby the theorists comprehends and appropriates the object of knowledge." Basically, post-structuralism engages in the process of deconstructing and uncovering the truth, identity, how history has been constructed, and how ideas are reinforced by those who hold power.

For instance, post-structural feminism is engaged in questioning the accepted dominance of patriarchy. From a post-structural feminist perspective, patriarchy, as a structure of oppression, is only geographically and culturally specific. Systems of oppression are multiple and cannot be associated with one form of control. Post-structural feminism points out that associating with patriarchy as the main form of

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113 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 16.
114 Ibid.
115 Peterson, Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations; Whitworth, Feminism and International Relations; Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994); Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"; Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.
116 Steans, Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions, 16.
117 Ibid.
118 Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"; Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity; Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.
oppression has been the work of radical feminist claims, which have mainly reflected the experiences of white Western women.\textsuperscript{120} For instance, post-structural feminism asserts that the structure of patriarchy is highly problematic.\textsuperscript{121} Radical feminism's reliance on patriarchy as the central component of women's oppression is a misunderstanding according to post-structural feminists. Patriarchy is a context-specific structure of oppression that cannot be applied to all cultures. Post-structuralists indicate that in some cultures women have more power than men, whereas in other contexts particular groups of women have power over some men and women. Existing forms of oppression are much more diverse, as illustrated by post-structural feminists. As bell hooks informs us, African-American women experience the world differently from those who are not black and female.\textsuperscript{122} Equality in the form liberal and radical feminists have fought for, may not mean that African-American women's interests are represented. The post-structural critique has allowed the field to open itself up to multiple forms of oppression and subjectivities.

Post-structuralism has played a large part in feminism's deconstruction of essentialist categories. Dissatisfied with the narrow categories of enquiry, post-structural feminists argue that oppression is multiple because the experiences of women varies and is different across different cultures and identities. Rather than grounding feminist enquiry on one ontological variable, post-structural feminists examine "gender as a source of power and hierarchy in order to better understand how these hierarchies are socially constructed and maintained."\textsuperscript{123} To post-structuralists, knowledge is constructed and legitimated through relationships with existing influences of power. Existing forms of knowledge may not be legitimate, rather it is only made to be legitimate it has been accepted by those who hold socio-economic power.\textsuperscript{124} Therefore, it is up to the post-structuralists to deconstruct existing forms of knowledge and locate its origins, question why it holds legitimacy, and expose the different forms of oppression and power relations that are embedded in existing modes of knowledge.

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\textsuperscript{120} Tickner, \textit{Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era}, 18.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} hooks, \textit{Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism}; hooks, Feminist Theory from Margin to Center. hooks has been highly influential to post-colonialism. Post-colonial feminism has similarities to post-structural feminism.
\textsuperscript{123} Tickner, \textit{Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era}, 18.
\textsuperscript{124} Steans, \textit{Gender and International Relations: Issues, Debates, and Future Directions}, 16-17.
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Feminist academics V. Spike Peterson and Jacqui True note that the existing "structure of dichotomies promotes patterns of thought and action that are stunted (unable to envision alternatives), static (unable to acknowledge or address change), and dangerously oversimplified (unable to accommodate the complexity of social reality)." Rather than a single binary between male and female, post-structural feminists claim that there are multiple relations that determine how knowledge surrounding international politics is constructed. Thus, in refuting the category of woman or even the radical feminist definition of the experience of women, post-structural feminists challenge existing epistemological agendas that essentialize identity. They deconstruct and expose the different power relations that are embedded within existing ontological categories. In doing so, post-structural feminists make the problem or existing understanding of power relationships (between men and women) more complex. Through this discursive challenge of existing categories, post-structural feminist theorists have opened up the space in which issues related to identity construction can be deconstructed.

Post-structural feminist analysis makes several significant contributions to feminist IR. First, it problematizes essentialist categories such as the idea of the "authentic" woman. Post-structuralists argue that the idea that women's experience is universally the same is a mistaken idea of reality. The assumption that women's experience is universally the same has not been deconstructed. Its legitimacy as the main ontological category of the feminist discourse, as argued by post-structural feminists, is taken as a given rather than a context-specific understanding that fluctuates and changes with time and space. Women's experience through motherhood and childbirth, for instance, can be seen as a fluid and contestable experience that holds different meanings in different societies.

Second, post-structural feminism offers a space to theorize about "gender" as a socially constructed concept. Under liberal feminism, the concept of gender was largely associated with women's issues. This was evident through the implementation of

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126 Ibid., 15.
127 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Agamben, State of Exception. Although not directly connected to feminism, Agamben's work engages in problematizing ontological categories. His work deconstructs the nature in which categories are constructed and suggests that it often reflects the interests of the sovereign or those who hold power.
gender mainstreaming in Resolution 1325. Deconstructing the category of “gender” under the post-structuralist guise allows men to be included within a feminist analysis. The subject of “gender” can be understood as not just “femininity,” that is traits traditionally associated with females, but also “masculinity.” This post-structural deconstruction of gender helps to expand its meaning by welcoming the idea that there are multiple categories of femininities and masculinities. Opening the ontological concept of gender to include more than just “women” allows for the field of feminist IR to understand how masculinity can also have an impact on society.

The inclusion of “gender” as a socially constructed category allows feminists to understand the ever-changing relationships that exist between individuals and groups. For instance, the use of multiple masculinities can help to question the role men play in conflict and post-conflict decisions. Post-structural feminists point out that men may not exhibit social characteristics that are associated with masculinity. Characteristics that have traditionally been assigned to men, such as aggression, competitiveness, and violence, are socially constructed and should not be used to describe all males. For example, military violence committed on women can be seen as a socially constructed method by which men in the military prove their masculinity. The military as an institution has historically relied on its all-male contingent. In cases where groups of military males are seen to commit violence against women, some males may be coerced into committing the act in order to ensure their masculinity is not damaged. Not committing a misogynist act, such as raping a woman, can result in men in the military being subject to name-calling or other forms of discrimination that undermines their identity.

Marysia Zalewski writes that post-structural feminism not only discusses women, but contests masculinity and structures of power. She notes that exposing how power is constructed through the androcentric realm introduces the idea that the category of masculinity is socially constructed. In doing so, this idea welcomes different interpretations of masculinity, as well as, femininity. Additionally, Euan Hague supports the argument that masculinity is socially constructed. Masculinity, she writes, relies on

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129 Zalewski, “’All these theorists yet the bodies keep piling up’: theories, theorists, theorizing”;
Zalewski, “’Women’s Troubles’ Again in IR.”
how identities are constructed where the degree of masculinity can vary based on the context one is placed in.\textsuperscript{130} Post-structural feminism thus makes the emancipation of women more complex. It does so by contesting the claims that existing truths are "real" because it has been defined by a select few who hold socio-economic power. Post-structural feminism considers the perspectives of multiple actors, and in doing so, suggests that there is not one truth but many.

Judith Butler's work, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, contests the categorical representation of gender and deconstructs how men and women, as ontological categories are constructed.\textsuperscript{131} Her earlier books \textit{Bodies That Matter} (1993) and \textit{Gender Trouble} (1999) are synonymously connected to the deconstruction of women and men as categories of enquiry. Gender, Butler notes, is assigned based on the importance that is given to it. In Butler’s later work on the post-September 11\textsuperscript{th} climate of the United States, she further complicates the idea of socially constructed categories by suggesting that the marginalization of individuals is systematically institutionalized in order to maintain the power of another. She illustrates this through the systematic internment of so-called “terrorists” at Guantanamo Bay.\textsuperscript{132} The Bush administration had legitimized a process through which the civil liberties of such individuals could be removed, where they are subjected to "bare life," in order for the insecurity of the United States (as a nation) to be corrected. Thus, the insecurity of the already oppressed group is further undermined in order for the nation to feel secure.\textsuperscript{133} Butler’s understanding of oppression and power relations provides a more complicated understanding of how power is constructed and distributed among different groups.

The inclusion of a post-structural gendered analysis “decenters biologicist explanations that have effectively disabled our understanding of social relations.”\textsuperscript{134} An analysis that accounts for how social relations are structured is important in building a feminist epistemology that can transcend the existing dichotomous knowledge barriers. It generates an understanding of the world where knowledge is constructed rather than taken as natural. Rather than restricting the differences between men and women as

\textsuperscript{130} Hague, “Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”

\textsuperscript{131} Butler, \textit{Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"}; Butler, \textit{Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity}.


\textsuperscript{133} Butler, \textit{Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence}; Butler, \textit{Frames of War}.

\textsuperscript{134} Peterson, \textit{Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations}.
one that is determined by nature, the concept of gender enables theorists to understand relations between men and women as one that was developed through social relations. As Peterson notes, a post-structuralist perspective creates the space for an understanding that men and women are “made not born.”  

Post-structural feminist theory thus offers an epistemological alternative to existing frameworks of feminist IR. Its epistemological engagement with social constructivism allows for the questioning of existing essentialist, ahistorical and static frameworks that sustains the basis of positivist-based analysis. This questioning exposes the biases within Realist IR theory and feminist theory under the banner of liberal and radical analyses. Post-structuralism allows a stream of thinking where gender encompasses an “ongoing, complex, and often contradictory process.”  

Post-structural feminism, however, contains numerous flaws and epistemological setbacks. Sandra Whitworth notes that the chief limitation of post-structural feminism is its “political paralysis.” Post-structuralism devotes most of its efforts to deconstructing existing categories and subjects of enquiry. In doing so, it remains categorically impossible to determine a tangible starting point in which post-structuralists and its critiques can agree. More importantly to feminism, the failure to define an ontological starting point traps feminists within a feminist cul-de-sac. Whereas radical feminists and liberal feminists simply identify “woman” as its central unit of analysis, post-structural feminists fail to have a settled category in which to begin. Consequently, post-structuralism fails to offer a coherent point of enquiry and has been criticized for being nihilistic. Post-structuralism, despite its agenda to deconstruct ontological categories, risks the inability to answer questions with concrete solutions. Rather in response to its nihilistic tendencies, post-structuralists will reply with the question of “what is wrong with nihilism?”

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the different epistemological and methodological approaches contained within the feminist theories. Beginning with the influences of

135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 9.
137 Whitworth, Feminism and International Relations, 22.
liberalism, liberal feminism suggests that equal representation would be achieved if women are included within spheres of influence. Radical feminists use the argument of women as specific knowledge producers in their goal of replacing androcentric biases within international politics. As explored, the epistemological approaches presented by liberal and radical feminists continue to reinforce certain stereotypes associated with men and women. Although the two projects aim to challenge the androcentric biases within mainstream IR, their epistemological approaches fail to break away from their positivist foundations. Post-structural feminism emerged as a challenge to the positivist undertones of earlier feminist approaches. Post-structural feminism has been useful in providing a theory of contestation and has allowed for the deconstruction of existing power relations. It reveals that power relations are diverse and rely on multiple ontologies.

Initially, the epistemological differences between liberal, radical, and post-structural feminism may appear to be a hindrance to building a cohesive agenda to emancipate women. On the surface, the different epistemological enquiries presented allow for a dialectical process where theory builds and expands on one another. Each feminist epistemological framework makes a contribution towards “uncovering the ways in which women have been absent from International Relations and the way in which world politics have always been gendered.” However, feminist IR theories present a framework that is much more complicated than one where theories develop in linearity. Rather, the three feminist theories discussed in this chapter demonstrate that theories are interchangeable and can be used in different contexts to explain events. Alternatively, one theory can be seen to borrow aspects from another theory in order to develop a more complete understanding of the world.

Building on this foundation, the next chapter will approach the issue of wartime sexual violence through liberal, radical, and post-structural feminism. The chapter suggests that each tenet of feminist theory has its own method in understanding wartime sexual violence. However, this argument does not suggest that there is a correct way to understand sexual violence. Instead, it explores the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, and analyzes the debates which emerge from competing feminist theories. By applying the different epistemological approaches of feminist

\[138\] Ibid., 23.
theories, Chapter Three hopes to build a space where non-state actors, such as children born of wartime sexual violence, can be theorized.
Chapter Three:

Conceptualizing Wartime Sexual Violence: Searching for a Feminist Agreement

[Exposing militarized rapes does not automatically serve the cause of demilitarizing women's lives. Making visible those women raped by men as soldiers is usually a difficult task; but sometimes it is a task made dangerously easy.

- Cynthia Enloe

Feminist theoretical and methodological enquiries have made the subject of wartime sexual violence visible to researchers and practitioners. Whereas mainstream International Relations (IR) has largely ignored the occurrence of sexual violence in war, feminist scholarship has highlighted how it is a systematic component of conflict. Contributions made by feminist academics have widened the discussion of wartime sexual violence, describing it as a weapon of war, a crime against humanity, and an act of genocide. By being curious about the intricacies of war, feminist theorists have effectively made, once personalized, issues such as sexual violence a politicized act. In doing so, sexual violence, an act that has long been kept silent, has become a visible

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2 Farwell, “War Rape: New Conceptualizations and Responses.”
3 Green, “Uncovering Collective Rape: A Comparative Study of Political Sexual Violence.”
4 Shalich, “Rape as Genocide: Bangladesh, the Former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda”; Schiessl, “An Element of Genocide: Rape, Total War, and International Law in the Twentieth Century.”
issue in international politics.

This chapter is an extension of the discussion of feminist theories in Chapter Two. It will continue to engage in liberal feminism, radical feminism, and post-structural feminism to help uncover the contradictory and often conflicting relationship between sexual violence and war. The purpose of exploring the offerings of feminist theories is to expose the knowledge gaps concerning sexual violence and war. This exposure helps to build upon existing epistemological enquiries and methodological approaches into the field of feminist IR. More specifically, it helps to deconstruct understandings of sexual violence, as well as children born of wartime sexual violence and their mothers.

As an extension of the previous chapter, this chapter will continue to engage with the epistemological complexities of liberal, radical, and post-structural feminisms. Each form of feminist enquiry exposes the conflicted relationship between the survivor of sexual violence and the perpetrators. Additionally, an engagement in feminist theories can help analyze the role of institutions, such as the United Nations, as well as efforts made by feminists. All three feminist theories have contrasting interpretations and methods of analyzing sexual violence. By further engaging with feminist theories, this chapter hopes to highlight how different actors demonstrate varying and conflicting levels of power. Exposing how actors exhibit different levels of power works to reveal that survivors of sexual violence are capable of demonstrating agency under unlikely circumstances. An engagement in feminist theories can help to expose the multiple identities and relationships surrounding the use of sexual violence in war.

This chapter is organized into two main sections. First, a brief synopsis of sexual violence in war and its invisibility in mainstream IR will be discussed. This discussion will be followed by an engagement with the three feminist theoretical frameworks. The purpose of this chapter is not to discuss the details of wartime sexual violence, but how sexual violence is interpreted based on contrasting frameworks of understanding. It also engages in questions surrounding children born of wartime sexual violence. Questions will include: Why have feminist IR enquiries into wartime sexual violence ignored the children? What does the existence of these children suggest

about feminist efforts? Can feminist IR accommodate a space where the rights and interests of children born of wartime sexual violence be theorized?

Wartime Sexual Violence and Mainstream International Relations

The phenomenon of wartime sexual violence has historically been ignored by mainstream prescriptions of international politics. At best, mainstream IR has recognized wartime sexual violence as a consequence of conflict or a natural byproduct of wartime activity. Within this prescription, women who have been exposed to sexual violence are seen as “collateral damage” and the “spoils of war.”6 The persistent mischaracterization of wartime sexual violence as a personal sex act, or a “just reward” for “boys [who] will be boys,” or even as “inevitable pillage” works to reinforce the acceptance that rape is a natural aspect of war and human behaviour rather than a systematic weapon or a crime under humanitarian law. The work concerning wartime sexual violence has mainly been undertaken by feminist IR academics. Previous to enquiries made by feminist academics, wartime sexual violence was mostly a forgotten consequence that was believed to be an inevitable act of conflict.

The prevalence of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations is evidence that it is not an accidental consequence of war. Wartime sexual violence has historically accompanied the cycle of war and peace, however, it has largely been a silent issue relegated to the dark corners of international politics. In the 1970s, feminist academics, such as Susan Brownmiller, began making connections between “everyday rape” in non-conflict situations and systematic incidents of sexual violence in war. Brownmiller’s 1975 book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* outlines examples of women’s bodies becoming the symbolic battleground or spoils of war. She illustrates cases of sexual violence that date back to the wars of the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews.7 Following Brownmiller’s research, more diverse cases involving soldiers stationed in Europe and Asia during the First and Second World Wars began to surface.

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According to Arnold Toynbee’s accounts of World War I, German soldiers used rape as a deliberate campaign to instill terror into civilian populations in Belgium and France. During the Pacific War, the Japanese occupied city of Nanking witnessed the rape of an estimate 20,000 women within six weeks. The Japanese, as revealed later during the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, often discarded any evidence of their atrocities by murdering the women after the rapes. Further evidence gathered from foreign missionaries suggests that there was an estimate of at least ten cases of gang rape a day in the city of Nanking. The Japanese further instigated a systematic form of military slavery. As discussed in Chapter One, the Japanese military and local entrepreneurs created “brothels” to house women from Korea, Taiwan, China, and Southeast Asia as their sex slaves.

Similar cases of wartime sexual violence were witnessed in Europe during World War II. Rape was regarded as a method of degrading and humiliating the Jews under the Nazi regime. The rape of Jewish women was reported as early as 1938 during Kristallnacht and was further witnessed as Germany advanced into other parts of Europe. According to evidence presented at the Nuremberg Trials, the German command had initiated similar acts to the Japanese by opening a brothel in Smolensk. Women from occupied areas were forcibly recruited and coerced into serving the German soldiers. Women who were forced to work in the brothel were often branded with a tattoo that read, “Whore for Hitler’s troops.” In addition, in 1943 Moroccan mercenaries who were serving under the French were granted the right to rape and loot in conquered Italian territory. After the war, the victims of such rapes were granted a small pension by the Italian government. In many cases, women who were subject to mass rape and survived were not compensated.

Despite the systematic use of rape in conflict, the extent of its consequences was not widely recognized until the 1990s. The widespread ramifications of sexual violence were brought to international attention by its use as a strategy of ethnic cleansing in the

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8 In Niarchos, “Women, War, and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,” 663.
10 Tanaka, Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and US Occupation.
12 Hicks, The Comfort Women: Japan’s Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War; Tanaka, Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and US Occupation.
13 Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 49-56.
14 Ibid., 55; Seifert, “The Second Front: The Logic of Sexual Violence in Wars.”
former Yugoslavia. From March 1992 until November 1995, there were reports of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian women being subject to sexual violence. Although there were reports of Serbian women being subject to rape, Bosnian and Croatian women endured the brunt of the torture.\textsuperscript{16} Women were reported to be gang raped, subject to sexual torture in camps, forced to sexually entertain soldiers in brothels, and held as captors to be impregnated.\textsuperscript{17} Subsequently, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda witnessed the use of mass rape as a form of ethnic cleansing. Within the Rwandan case, it was believed that the Hutu militia raped Tutsi women with the objective of infecting them with HIV/AIDS.\textsuperscript{18} The use of rape, coupled with infecting women with HIV/AIDS allowed the Hutu militia to impose long-term forms of suffering upon the Tutsi community. More recently, the civil conflict in Darfur reports that women in refugee camps continue to experience sexual violence as they engage in daily activities such as gathering food and collecting water.\textsuperscript{19}

It was the mass rapes in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda that exposed the systematic extent of wartime sexual violence to the world. As feminists proposed a new kind of analysis of rape as a violent crime by men that exert power over women, wartime rape became less easy to dismiss as either too innocuous or too historically universal to warrant further inquiry.\textsuperscript{20} Awareness concerning wartime sexual violence at this time generated curiosity in what was occurring in war. A large proportion of the literature that emerged during this period involved documenting the historical and contemporary cases of sexual violence. Feminist groups and human rights organizations reported on the frequency of systematic rapes that were occurring all over the world. These studies showed that wartime sexual violence is a political act that has occurred in war throughout millennia, and is not an isolated accident instigated by individual soldiers.\textsuperscript{21} Through the awareness raised by feminist academics and activists alike, sexual violence in war could no longer be a silenced issue.

\textsuperscript{18} Elbe, “AIDS, Security, Biopolitics.”
\textsuperscript{21} Green, “Uncovering Collective Rape: A Comparative Study of Political Sexual Violence.”
One of the major contributions made by feminist academics and activists was the redefinition of sexual violence. Originally, under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, rape was considered a crime against women’s honour. Recognizing rape as a crime against women’s honour had placed too much emphasis on the character of a woman or the value placed on her relationship with the rapist. Rape had originally been associated with the behaviour of women, rather than considered an abuse of the rights of women. This recognition under the Geneva Convention did not take into account a woman’s right to her own body and as a person who is free from bodily harm. The recognition of the systematic nature of rape in war was made when the criminal tribunals of the 1990s reclassified rape as a crime against humanity. The criminal tribunals redefined rape as equal to, but distinct from, other crimes against humanity like murder and torture.

The creation of the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1994 is a landmark success for feminist activists worldwide. On the surface, it adequately dealt with the crimes committed during the campaigns of ethnic cleansing while also recognizing sexual violence as a crime against humanity. In September 1998, for example, the ICTR made a landmark ruling in the trial of former Rwandan mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu. Akayesu had actively participated in the 1994 Rwanda civil conflict where estimates of 500,000 individuals were killed along with the rapes of 250,000 women. In addition to being convicted of murder, inciting genocide, and torture, Akayesu was convicted of rape. For the first time in history, rape was declared a crime against humanity and also an element of genocide. Akayesu was found guilty, not of raping women himself, but of sanctioning the rapes of dozens of Tutsi women. In addition to the ICTY and the ICTR, the Special Court for Sierra Leone created in 2002

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22 Niarchos, "Women, War, and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia."
23 Ibid.
has also handed down several indictments for rape on participants in that country’s civil war.  

Feminist curiosity on the subject of wartime sexual violence helped to unravel the androcentric biases of traditional understandings of war and reveal that existing approaches have failed to explore questions concerning gender. This revision of war and awareness that women are targeted because of their gender changed the way sexual violence is seen in war. First, rape was recognized as a systematic and strategic form of violence that occurred in war. Second, rape was redefined as a crime against humanity and a form of genocide. Feminist activism has therefore enabled a reshaping of the international community’s understanding of contemporary warfare.

Feminist efforts in IR have not been without their difficulties and conflicts. Although international recognition of sexual violence should be considered a landmark success for feminist academics and activists alike, this recognition has only scratched the surface of the issue. First of all, the mere inclusion of an issue such as sexual violence within the existing paradigm of knowledge does not necessarily explain the exploitative structure that may have caused and maintained such violence. Including sexual violence on the agenda of reconciliation, peace building, or in war crimes trials, for instance, does not necessarily address the forms of militarism that allowed it to occur. Secondly, recognition of the issue does not account for the additional sources of trauma survivors of sexual violence experience as a repercussion of its recognition. International recognition of wartime sexual violence has only opened a burgeoning field of questions, many of which remain unanswered in part because of the difficulty in doing research concerning sexual violence.

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30 Mertus, “Shouting from the Bottom of the Well.”
Public Women, Public Rape: Contributions made by Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism seeks to highlight and address instances of wartime sexual violence rather than necessarily challenge the underlying structures which allow it to occur. Believing that women are under-represented in the public sphere, liberal feminists argue that gender inequality could be corrected if more women are included in areas of decision-making. As mentioned in the previous chapter, liberal feminists argue for the inclusion of women within the government, peace building programs, the military, and any field dominated by men. The main goal of liberal feminism is to break down systematic barriers that have historically prevented the participation of women within public spheres of influence. Once such barriers of systematic bias have been broken, liberal feminists believe that issues that concern women will inevitably be addressed. Thus, under the liberal feminist agenda, the inclusion of more women within decision-making may address women-centric issues such as wartime sexual violence.

The inclusion of more women within the public sphere is evident in the program of gender mainstreaming initiated by the United Nations. While the program of mainstreaming reflects many liberal feminist ideals, in practice it often complicates liberal ideals of inclusion and representation with other feminist interpretations of gender, such as radical feminism. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 seeks to mainstream gender within peace building, reconstruction, and reconciliation programs. It calls for a greater participation of women in decision-making areas, on-the-ground work, police and military personnel, and within peacekeeping efforts. Resolution 1325 also calls for the incorporation of aspects of gender in training programs for military and police.31 Whereas Resolution 1325 urges women to have a greater participatory role in politics and aims to remove women from the image of a victim, subsequent resolutions fail to disrupt this image.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 was passed in June 2008. Resolution 1820 continues to reaffirm the agenda set forth in Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace, and Security), Resolution 1612 (Children and Armed Conflict), and Resolution 1674 (Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict). For the most part, Resolution 1820 is a continuation of liberal feminism’s efforts of gender mainstreaming. It highlights

issues related to gender in conflict zones, such as the use of sexual violence against women. In doing so, it is working with the existing agenda of gender mainstreaming which asks to include more women on-the-ground. Adding more women to on-the-ground programs is believed to help highlight the issues that are central to women. Resolution 1820 further recognizes that civilians make up the majority of those affected by armed conflict, and specifically notes that women and girls are targets of sexual violence.\textsuperscript{32} Whereas Resolution 1325 takes a broader approach to including women within the public sphere, Resolution 1820 adopts a narrow perspective by dealing directly with wartime sexual violence. It calls for the “immediate and complete cessation” of the use of sexual violence by all parties participating in conflict.\textsuperscript{33} Resolution 1820 urges all parties to take measures in protecting civilians, namely women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence. It also recognizes that rape and sexual violence constitute a “war crime, a crime against humanity, and a constitutive act with respect to genocide.”\textsuperscript{34} Recognition of the use of sexual violence also extends to a policy of “zero tolerance” of sexual violence and abuse that may be committed by United Nations peacekeeping troops, and military and police from contributing countries.\textsuperscript{35} In doing so, Resolution 1820 hopes to raise awareness and heighten responsiveness amongst participating personnel in UN peacekeeping and peace building operations.

Resolution 1820 is different from its predecessor in a number of ways. Whereas Resolution 1325 deals with women-centric issues at a general level, Resolution 1820 is much more narrow and limited in its ambitions. In concentrating specifically on sexual violence as a security issue linked to resolution and sustainable peace, Resolution 1820 uses an issue-specific method in dealing with conflict. Resolution 1325 recognizes women as active participants in security related issues and peace building, thus moving women away from the protectionist-victimhood script that has long restricted women from joining the public sphere. Resolution 1820, however, removes earlier advancements of women’s participation in the public sphere. Dianne Otto argues that in Resolution 1820 “women are again defined primarily by their violability, and


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 3.

protective responses return with a vengeance.36 Within Resolution 1820, the language of vulnerability associated with the adage of "woman and children" re-emerges, where the stereotype of women as victims of war is reinstated.37

Although it can be argued that women should be classified as "victims" of sexual violence, doing so restricts the amount of agency women have in surviving and recovering from the ordeal. This language of vulnerability reinforces existing stereotypes of women. Resolution 1820 treats sexual violence as a "fixed reality"38 of the experience of women. It reinforces the idea that women are continuously vulnerable to the dealings of the public sphere. For example, Clause 3 of Resolution 1820 calls for "all parties to armed conflict immediately take appropriate measures to protect civilians, including women and girls, from all forms of sexual violence."39 Identifying that women and children need "protection" returns women to the original stereotype of vulnerability. Women's participation is only highlighted once in paragraph 12 of Resolution 1820, which recognizes women as active participants in decision making related to peace and security. Throughout Resolution 1820, the subject of sexual violence as an inherent part of women's everyday lives is apparent.

Despite the recognition of sexual violence, Resolution 1820 reinforces a particular script of victim-and-protector. Resolution 1820 plays on the existing script that women are victims in need of protection. The United Nations thus plays the role of the "protector" of vulnerable and victimized women. As a decision-making institution, the United Nations is protecting women by recognizing sexual violence as a crime, creating protection mechanisms, and urging that actors stop the use of sexual violence in war. Through Resolution 1820, the United Nations reinforces its role as a "protector" of the vulnerable and victimized women rather than advancing the participation of women in the public sphere. In doing so, Resolution 1820 neglects how women's identities, as well as the legitimacy of institutions, are constructed. The assumed idea that women are victims reinforces the institutional legitimacy of the United Nations.40 The role of the United Nations as a protector of civilians, women,

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
40 Otto, "The Exile of Inclusion: Reflections on Gender Issues in International Law Over the Last Decade."
and children has reinforced the protector-victim script. Consequently, this script continues to damage the role of women.

Moreover, Resolution 1820 perpetuates a number of myths concerning sexual violence. Sexual violence is seen as the worst crime that can happen to women. Under this Resolution it is classified as an offense that is worst than death.\textsuperscript{41} Women as victims are given paramount privilege under this Resolution, but in doing so, it creates a hierarchy of crimes that women experience as the result of war. Sexual violence is recognized as the most important crime, where it appears to take precedence over other forms of violence that can be equal to death.\textsuperscript{42}

Under this predicament, the myth that women are victims is reinforced. Women are painted as victims who are incapable of surviving on their own, or showing signs of resilience, or the ability to fight back. The solution to this problem “as promoted by the Resolution, is to stop men from engaging” in the act of sexual violence.\textsuperscript{43} Resolution 1820 reinforces the idea that men, and men within the military in particular, are the primary individuals who are responsible for sexual violence. It reinforces that “military training” needs to take responsibility for elements of sexual violence that may be apparent in its practices.\textsuperscript{44} In agreeing with Otto that such measures concerning the military should be taken into account, the emphasis on changing the behaviour of men inadvertently reinforces the stereotype that women are vulnerable. In doing so, the idea that “men’s genitalia” serves as a weapon of war is given paramount legitimacy, in which women have no measure of defending themselves. This script of women as helpless victims of sexual violence reinforces the gender script that makes sexual violence a recognizable crime under international humanitarian law. It, however, fails to account for the diversity of roles women may have during and after conflict. The Resolution also continues to reinforce the idea that only men commit sexual violence. This script ignores the fact that some women are capable of committing acts of violence, even at the level of sexual violence, against men, women, and children as well.\textsuperscript{45} Perpetuating the script that women are the sole victims

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{42} Carpenter, \textit{Innocent Women and Children: Gender, Norms and the Protection of Civilians}; Otto, “The Exile of Inclusion: Reflections on Gender Issues in International Law Over the Last Decade.”
\textsuperscript{43} Otto, “The Exile of Inclusion: Reflections on Gender Issues in International Law Over the Last Decade,” 14.
\textsuperscript{45} See Sjoberg, \textit{Mothers, Monsters, Whores}.
of sexual violence may prevent men who have been exposed to similar forms of violence from speaking out about the crime.

Resolution 1820, adopted as a follow-up to Resolution 1325, shows the potential pitfalls of gender mainstreaming. Despite the fact that sexual violence is recognized within peace building and military operations under the United Nations, particular stereotypes concerning women and men are reinforced. Resolution 1820, along with its predecessor, does reinforce its liberal feminist influences of “adding” women, however, it does not challenge existing understandings of either gender or sexual violence. Similarly, it does not problematize the workings of the United Nations but accepts them as a viable solution to issues related to gender. Additionally, Resolution 1820 adopts some of the prescriptions offered by radical feminists. Resolution 1820’s reliance on the difference between men and women is synonymous with the ideas of radical feminists. Women are pegged as the sole victim of sexual violence, where they are helpless to the violence caused by men, and are in need of protection. Considering that Resolution 1820 relates to both liberal and radical feminism outlines the gaps within positivist-based prescriptions of feminism. It demonstrates that both liberal and radical feminism fails to challenge the gendered stereotypes used by the mainstream.

Wartime Sexual Violence as a Man’s Responsibility: Assessing the Efforts made by Radical Feminists

The influences of radical feminism are pivotal in redefining wartime sexual violence as a weapon of war and a crime against humanity. Whereas liberal feminists engage in the project of “adding” women into the public sphere, radical feminists embark on a journey to replace epistemological biases of the existing patriarchal structure. Radical feminists argue that sexual violence is not an accidental occurrence in war, but a calculated-systematic act that is used to sustain the power that men have over women. Rape as a structural mode to control women, radical feminists argue, cannot be solved my merely including women within the public sphere. Radical feminists argue that the foundation of sexual violence is deeply ingrained in the structure of society and sustained by the legitimacy given to patriarchal institutions. Rape, under the radical
feminist understanding, is a systematic act that keeps women in a constant state of fear.\textsuperscript{46}

The work of Brownmiller provides a historical documentation of rape in war, revolutions, and “normal” circumstances. \textit{Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape} was published in 1975, and at the time it was one of the more comprehensive accounts of sexual violence throughout history. Brownmiller’s initial message resonates with the question feminist IR theorists have asked about mainstream IR: where are the women? In her introduction, Brownmiller laments that previous academic work has failed to concentrate on an issue such as sexual violence. For example, Sigmund Freud has explored the complexities of gender difference through psychoanalysis. Despite the efforts made by Freud, radical feminist theorists have argued that Freud’s work on gender difference has failed to explore the subject of sexual violence, which as suggested by Brownmiller is at the centre of gender difference. As Brownmiller argues, Freud’s concentration on the “primacy of the penis” did not account for the “real-life deployment of the penis as a weapon.”\textsuperscript{47} Moreover, rape as a form of exploitation has also failed to be a subject of discussion amongst Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Brownmiller writes that for individuals who “developed the theory of class oppression and put words like ‘exploitation’ into everyday vocabulary, they, too, were strangely silent about rape, unable to fit it into their economic constructs.”\textsuperscript{48} Here, Brownmiller begins her book with an enquiry that is compatible with the questions many feminist academics have been asking about war. Her enquiry, however, undertakes a much more narrow subject of sexual violence as a systematic form of exploitation and inequality.

Brownmiller’s questioning of how the mainstream has failed to account for rape as a form of exploitation becomes clear in her main argument. Through the illustrations of sexual violence in history, Brownmiller’s central argument is that rape is not an accidental occurrence but a strategically planned and sustained strategy used to maintain the structure of patriarchy.\textsuperscript{49} Brownmiller builds her argument by pointing out the physiological differences between men and women to explain how rape is a structured form of patriarchal control. She argues that man’s structural capability to rape is inherently created through the “locking together of two separate parts; penis into

\textsuperscript{46} Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape}, 15.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 13-18.
Without this formation of two parts, she argues, there would neither be "copulation nor rape." Emphasis is further placed on the physical differences between men and women when she likens a man's genitals to a weapon. She writes that "[m]an's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe." Catharine A. MacKinnon further builds on this argument. She argues that biological differences between men and women place women in an uncomfortable position whereby sex, whether consensual or non-consensual, is considered rape. This structure of inequality, apparent even within the physiological differences between men and women, is the basis on which the patriarchal structure is maintained.

Brownmiller, however, is careful to state that despite the biological basis of rape, she does not suggest that rape is natural. She builds this thesis by comparing data that zoologists have developed on chimpanzees with a theory of human behaviour. Chimpanzees, Brownmiller argues, exist within a structured mating season where "one female in heat, who showed the telltale pink swelling of her genital area, [...] displayed an aversion to one particular male." Human beings, on the other hand, are subject to copulation "365 days of the year; it is not controlled by the female estrous cycle." The illustration alludes to the idea that within the animal world, rape is rare because animals are only subject to mating at particular times of the year. Alternatively, humans are not regulated by mating cycles, and thus can engage in acts of copulation at all times. Thus, unlike the animal world, humans are subject to a much more complex structure where copulation evokes feelings, as well as exploitation. She continues to note that rape is a political form of oppression that men have over women. Rape is a structured form of patriarchal control "by which all men keep all women in a state of fear." But rape is not accidental, nor inadvertent, but a planned and strategic method to keep women under the control of men. Brownmiller's analysis of rape creates the foundation of a radical feminist prescription of sexual violence.

50 Ibid., 14.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 14-15.
54 Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 13.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 15.
Radical feminists believe that the basis of rape is to sustain the legitimacy of the patriarchal structure. Both Brownmiller and MacKinnon write that all women are vulnerable to rape. Whereas men are believed to be physiologically capable of rape. Upon this acknowledgment, women are also aware that they cannot be protected by their female counterparts and must seek protection from men. In her analysis of sexual violence, MacKinnon agrees with Brownmiller’s assertion that women are subject to the uncomfortable position of being compliant to men who are both the predators and their protectors. MacKinnon identifies that women enter into agreements, such as marriage, in order to gain legitimate protection from rape by men other than their husband. By entering into a relationship, women gain protection, but also subject themselves into becoming the property of the men who are their protectors. Agreeing with Brownmiller, MacKinnon asserts that women’s sexuality is something that can be “stolen, sold, bought, battered, or exchanged by others.”

Within the legitimate relationship of marriage, MacKinnon argues that women place themselves within a situation where they are “protected” but subject to “rape” by those that are close to them, their husband. MacKinnon argues that women, unfortunately, never have ownership of their sexuality, especially within the confines of patriarchy.

MacKinnon’s argument takes Brownmiller’s historical account of rape a step further. MacKinnon likens rape to violence, and compares consensual sex to coerced sex. In Toward a Feminist Theory of the State (1989), MacKinnon writes that if “sexuality is central to women’s definition and forced sex is central to sexuality, rape is indigenous, not exceptional, to women’s social condition.” Similar to Brownmiller’s assessment, rape is something that happens to all women. However, MacKinnon pushes the argument further by suggesting that all forms of sex are considered as violence to women. Connecting the physiological differences between men and women, MacKinnon argues that the idea of “consent” in sex is never true or readily available to women. She argues against the idea that consent gives men the license to have sex with women, rather MacKinnon notes that “all sex is rape” because women exist in an unequal power relationship. Within this relationship of inequality, she argues, the ability to “consent” to sex has been coerced by the patriarchal structure. To illustrate this,

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57 MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, 172.
59 MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, 172.
MacKinnon returns to the blurred relationship of sex/rape within marriage that is often not seen to be wrong.60

MacKinnon and Brownmiller both note that women historically have not had control or ownership over their own bodies. As a result, under the patriarchal system, women are considered property that can be bartered or traded. Brownmiller illustrates that women’s bodies have historically been treated as chattel, where rape was seen as a violation of male property rather than an act committed against a woman’s body.61 This idea of ownership over women or women failing to have the right to own themselves is clear in the use of wartime rape. The argument that rape sustains the structure of patriarchy becomes evident in the analyses radical feminists make concerning war. Radical feminists argue that war is primarily a male domain, where men make up the rules of engagement, and how particular actors are treated and mistreated.

The argument that rape is intrinsic in conflict is sustained by radical feminists. In her essay “War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis” (1994), Ruth Seifert develops five theses concerning rape in war. Seifert’s analyses align with and build on Brownmiller’s and MacKinnon’s prescriptions of sex as violence. First, Seifert argues that rape is a ritualistic performance that is systematically included within the rules of war. She carefully points out that rape occurs systematically, and has nothing to do with the availability of women in conflict.62 For instance, after the rapes that occurred in the city of Nanking in 1937, the Japanese military felt that the abuse of women within occupied areas would create tension between the new occupiers and the locals. In order to maintain legitimate power in the area the Japanese believed that it was better if local men did not see them raping their women. In so doing, the Japanese military created the “comfort women system” thus providing soldiers an outlet to relieve their sexual tension. However, officials soon discovered that despite the creation of brothels and the availability of prostitutes on the front lines, soldiers were still committing rapes against women in the occupied territory.63 Radical feminists such as Seifert, Brownmiller, and MacKinnon argue that the rape of women in war has nothing to do

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60 Ibid., 170-183.
62 Seifert, “War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis.”
with the availability of prostitutes or avenues for "sex." As Seifert describes, war provides an "open space" for rape, where "men simply prefer to rape; it has nothing to do with sexuality, but rather reflects the exercise of sexual, gender-specific violence."

Seifert asserts in her second thesis that rape serves as a form of male-to-male communication. Playing on the idea that women belong to a particular man or group of men, rape in war is used as a symbolic method to humiliate and embarrass the male opponent. Seifert argues that the "rape of women carries an additional message: it communicates from man to man, so to speak, that the men around the women in question are not able to protect 'their' women." For instance, this method of communication was used in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Bosnian-Muslim women who were raped and impregnated by Serbian soldiers were often held in Serbia until it was too late to have a safe abortion. The Serbian militia would then send the pregnant Bosnian women home with the message that Serbian children will be born into their community. Thus, Serbia will slowly invade the Bosnian territory through these children. Not only was rape used as a method to instill the long-term suffering of the Bosnian community, it was also used as a strategy to communicate to the Bosnian men that they were unable to protect either their women or their nation. Brownmiller confirms that "the winning side is the side that does the raping" because it holds a symbolic message that the victors are the one's marching on the bodies of those who are defeated. The raped women represent the "trophy" or triumph of the victor's masculinity over those who are defeated.

Rape as a strategy to reinforce patriarchy is inherent in its use by the military. Seifert notes in her third thesis that rape is a part of proving and sustaining one's masculinity. The military, she argues, maintains itself as the prime institution, as a "young man's rite of passage on his way to the final acquisition of a specific gender identity or as his 'graduation to manhood'." The military sustains its identity as the utmost masculine institution through its misogynistic use of language, rituals, and its exclusion of women and homosexuals. Soldiers are frequently exposed to misogynistic

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65 Seifert, "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis," 58.
66 Ibid., 59.
67 Carpenter, "Surfacing Children: Limitations of Genocidal Rape Discourse."
69 Ibid.
70 Seifert, "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis," 59.
language that associates “femininity” with weakness and “masculinity” with power. Misogynistic rituals and language generate a negative sentiment towards women. Seifert notes that language creates an environment where women and “femininity” are alienated. She writes that:

Language is revealing here, a ‘conquest’ is made both on the battlefield and in the bedroom; the Germans’ invasion of Belgium at the beginning of World War I was described in the English press as the ‘rape of Belgium,’ just as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was described as the ‘rape of Kuwait,’ a weapon is called the ‘soldier’s bride.’

These images link masculinity with power through the exclusion of the feminine. This negative sentiment and culture of exclusion provides a ripe environment for violence towards women to be committed and accepted.

Seifert’s fourth prescription of wartime sexual violence further maintains Brownmiller’s original argument that rape is used to sustain patriarchy. In Seifert’s fourth point, she notes that wartime rape is used as a method to destroy the opponent’s culture. This point, however, is similar to the earlier argument made about rape as a form of male-communication. Rape destroys a culture because it attacks the family structure and ensures that the women no longer fully belong to a particular group of men. The rape of women symbolizes that the masculinity of the men and their ability to protect their women has been damaged. Brownmiller suggests that the nature of public or gang rape serves as a way to destroy a group’s culture. Often in war, family members are made to watch the rape of their sisters, mothers, and daughters. Brownmiller argues that “[r]ape of a woman in war may be as much an act against her husband or father, for the rapist, as it is an act against the woman’s body.” Women are often rejected by their husbands or families if it is known that they were raped. The reason behind this is that women are considered property that can be disposed of if they no longer are able to meet their purpose. In this sense, rape destroys a chaste woman who is owned by their father or husband. And within the military, men are given the

71 Ibid., 60.
72 Ibid., 62.
73 Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 40.
74 Ibid.; MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State.
“license to rape” because “rape in war reveals the male psyche in its boldest form, without the veneer of ‘chivalry’ or civilization.”

Finally, argues Seifert, rape is considered a method of living out misogynistic feelings that men have for women. In war, the enemy is often thought to be the oppositional military, however, both Brownmiller and Seifert argue that the real enemy of men is women. Men’s contempt for women is thus played out through the scenario of rape. Seifert concludes that “[g]etting to the bottom of this definition, we have to say that women are raped not because they are enemies, but because they are the objects of fundamental hatred that characterizes the cultural unconsciousness and is actualized in times of crisis.” MacKinnon agrees that misogynistic tendencies exist under the surface of everyday life and appears in its most violent form during conflict. For instance, during conflict, pornography breeds and sustains misogynistic ideas among men, where rape and violence against women are considered to be the accepted norm in how women are treated. MacKinnon notes that pornography was widely distributed throughout the former Yugoslavia. When the conflict started, the mass rapes of Bosnian women were often filmed and treated as if it was pornographic material. War, thus, becomes an “adventure where fantasies of destruction unconsciously directed against women are encouraged and acted out.” This final argument made by Seifert reaffirms the notion that rape is a form of violence that is equivalent to torture. Misogynistic methods are conveyed through how sexual violence in war is played out. Seifert writes that rape in war is quasi-ritualistic: “a woman’s breasts were sliced off, her stomach slashed open or her vagina torn apart with a weapon or military tool after she was raped.” Such images convey the message that femininity is hated.

The efforts made by radical feminists can be considered to be a success. In recognizing rape as a form of violence, radical feminists have brought international attention to the ramifications of the act itself. Whereas rape was long neglected or not

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75 Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 33.
77 MacKinnon, “Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide.”
78 MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State; MacKinnon, “Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide.”
80 Ibid., 37-38.
considered important to mainstream discussions concerning war, contributions made by radical feminists helped to link rape to a weapon of war and a crime against humanity. In doing so, radical feminists have transformed rape from a silenced issue of war into a political issue that is central to how war is waged. The landmark contributions made by radical feminists, however, are not without its criticisms.

The contributions provided by radical feminism hold key ontological faults that can be detrimental to the emancipation of women. First, although bringing international awareness to sexual violence has helped to transform the meaning of the act, exposing wartime rape does not automatically emancipate women. Often women can be retraumatized and remilitarized within the act of exposing sexual violence to the public.\textsuperscript{81} For instance, stories of rape are more often framed in ways to suit the audience more so than the survivor of rape. Julie Mertus has criticized the efforts made by the ICTY and ICTR. She notes that during the punitive process, survivors are made to sit in the witness stand and voice their stories according to a script prepared by the lawyers. The script is meant to serve the purpose of punishing the aggressors rather than helping the survivors of sexual violence to recover.\textsuperscript{82} In her analysis of the 1992-1995 civil conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mertus suggests that the women who came out to testify at the ICTY wanted to help create an environment of healing. Like others, these women wanted to put the past behind them and to create a record of the crimes. These women, many of which are rape survivors, believed that in giving testimony they would help heal themselves and the nation.\textsuperscript{83} They did not see themselves as passive recipients of the courts or war, but rather as active agents who are engaged in producing history. However, the system in which the lawyers questioned these women reduced them to an identity of a victim. Mertus notes that the ways that the lawyers and courts structured the questions and how the identities of these women were constructed devalued the agency of the women who testified. Instead of being active agents, these women were once again confined to the status of victims.\textsuperscript{84} A similar case of (re)victimization will be discussed in the next chapter.


\textsuperscript{82} Eholc, \textit{Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives}; Mertus, “Shouting from the Bottom of the Well.”

\textsuperscript{83} Mertus, “Shouting from the Bottom of the Well.”

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
Second, the ontological concepts that are used in generating attention concerning sexual violence reinforce existing gendered scripts concerning men and women. In the literature written by radical feminists, women who have been exposed to sexual violence are often associated with the identity of victimhood. Although it is evident that survivors of sexual violence should be likened to victims, this reinforces women’s identities as passive beings in need of rescue. Associating women as victims reinforces and maintains this victim-protector relationship that has failed to move women away from a cycle of violence. Brownmiller’s and MacKinnon’s use of victimhood is understandable, however, it removes any sense of agency women may have in surviving the ordeal of rape. It also fails to account for how survivors of sexual violence can engage in silent forms of emancipation without identifying with the victimhood persona enforced by radical feminists. Although Brownmiller’s and MacKinnon’s ideas of victimhood can help describe the experiences of war rape survivors, in doing so, they are defining and enforcing a particular identity of passivity that is associated with victimhood onto the woman.

Third, including women within the victim-protector scenario neglects how men have also been exposed to rape in war. Radical feminists have relied on the idea that women are the only victims of war. This association with women as the only victims repeats the mistakes that are seen in liberal feminist efforts. The inclusion and recognition of sexual violence neglects how men are also exposed to sexual forms of violence that can be equally as damaging. Associating sexual violence in war as only a woman’s experience reinforces the women/feminine/victim versus man/masculine/perpetrator dichotomy that may not resonate with the complex relationships inherent in war. This dichotomous script reinforces a structure that prevents men from speaking out about sexualized forms of violence that occur in war.85

Adam Jones’ work on genocide challenges the arguments made by radical feminists. Jones argues that feminist engagement with the subject of sexual violence has sustained the same biased framework as mainstream modes of generating knowledge. Feminist epistemological enquiries, Jones asserts, has only asked questions regarding women while neglecting the fact that men are also exposed to gender-specific forms of

violence. In his article titled “Gendercide and Genocide” (2000), Jones asserts that gender-specific modes of torture associated with men have largely been neglected by feminist scholars and mainstream theorists. He writes that “gendercide – at least when it targets males – has attracted virtually no attention at the level of scholarship or public policy.”

Jones points out that existing feminist literature on genocide has concentrated on women rather than men, where concepts such as female infanticide, witch hunts, misogynistic attacks have failed to mention gender-specific attacks directed at men. Men, Jones argues, have received the brunt of the gender-specific attacks. He notes, “non-combatant men have been and continue to be the most frequent targets of mass killing and genocidal slaughter.”

He also points to the fact that throughout history, human communities have accepted mass killing in the form of military conscription. The criticism made by Jones is evident in the mass killing of men and boys in the July 1995 massacre in Srebrenica. Although named a United Nations “safe zone,” Srebrenica was found to hold a mass grave of an estimate of 7,000 bodies, mostly men and boys.

On a similar note to Jones, R. Charli Carpenter has engaged in criticizing the existing efforts made by radical feminists. Carpenter argues that recognition of sexual violence in war has failed to account for the experiences of men. Whereas existing literature has mainly concentrated on the abuse of women and children, men have largely been missing from the overall picture. In her article “Recognizing Gender-based Violence Against Men and Boys in Conflict Zones” (2006), Carpenter asserts that

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87 Jones, “Gendercide and genocide,” 186. The term “gendercide” was coined by Mary Anne Warren. In her 1985 book *Gendercide: The Implications of Sex Selection*, Warren asserts that gendercide is a sex-neutral term, in that the victims may be either male or female. She argues for the use of this term because there are sexually-discriminatory killings. In her book she has highlighted female-selective killing, female infanticide, the witch-hunts in Europe, suttee or widow burning in India, female genital mutilation, the denial of reproductive freedom, and the existence of misogynistic ideologies as being harmful to women as a sex. Jones takes this idea and applies it to men.

88 Ibid.


90 Power, "A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide.
efforts to alleviate the suffering of female-survivors of sexual violence cannot ignore the violations experienced by their male counterparts. She also points to incidents such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide when Hutu militia took off the diapers of children to reveal their gender. Boy children were singled out and killed, whereas many girl children were spared. In addition, Tutsi widows who survived the genocide were "transferred" to Hutu men to be their wives, thus sparing their lives.\textsuperscript{91} Similar to Jones, Carpenter also uses examples of sex-selective modes of killing and conscription to demonstrate how men are exposed to violence at a similar or greater level as women.\textsuperscript{92}

Finally, Brownmiller's labeling of male genitalia as powerful and female genitalia as passive works to reinforce the damaging stereotypes that place women within an exploitable position. It continues to prioritize male genitalia and associates women as being passive-victims who are unable to defend themselves from the power of the penis. Although Brownmiller may have been trying to be provocative in her illustration, in doing so, she has legitimized the existing structure of patriarchy. In recognizing the biological/physiological power men have over women, Brownmiller and her successors have propped up the foundational power of patriarchy rather than challenging its legitimacy. If Brownmiller is able to look beyond the male-female dichotomy and explore how there are differences between groups of women, the structure of patriarchy may not appear to be the only institution of exploitation.

Although the efforts made by radical feminists have provided a discursive space to engage the legal and psychological affects of sexual violence in war, it is important to further develop the literature in exploring the various repercussions and multiple facets of rape. An exploration through a post-structural feminist perspective helps to analyze the role of state institutions and how rape survivors have been silenced. It also unveils the complex relationship between rape survivors and existing myths concerning war. For instance, the focus on a dichotomous relationship that suggests "men are the perpetrators" and "women are the victims" fails to account for how such identities are socially constructed and change within different circumstances. The development of a

\textsuperscript{91} R. Charli Carpenter, "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations," \textit{Security Dialogue} 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 90; Baines, "Body Politics and the Rwandan Crisis."

discursive space that allows for an exploration of different voices of denaturalized behaviour can provide a space to understand how the identities of perpetrators of rape and the survivors are constructed.

Multiple Victims, Multiple Survivors: Post-structural Feminism and Wartime Sexual Violence

Wartime sexual violence is made more complex by post-structural feminism. As discussed, post-structural feminists are engaged in a project(s) of deconstruction where the roles and natures of gendered identities are questioned. Under post-structuralism, gender relations become something that “we do rather than something we are.” Thus, the conceptions that women are victims of sexual violence and men are the perpetrators are deconstructed by post-structural feminists. Under post-structuralism, gendered categories such as victim and perpetrator are seen as social constructions rather than inviolable truths. Essentially, for post-structuralists, the categories of men and women or perpetrators and victims are gendered myths that are given meaning. Post-structural feminists are “inherently skeptical about generalized theories of male/female relations.” The skepticism of post-structural feminism invites an alternative perspective of wartime sexual violence where both men and women can be perceived as potential perpetrators and victims.

Post-structural feminism offers several alternative insights to understanding wartime sexual violence. Post-structuralists argue that the relationship of inequality between men and women is one that has been socially constructed rather than natural. Although men and women, as well as masculinity and femininity, are understood to be “opposites,” post-structural feminists argue that the traits associated with masculinity should not be automatically assumed to apply to all men nor should femininity be synonymous with women. In fact, post-structuralists disagree that there are static

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95 Ibid.
categories of identity, rather, they argue that identities are constantly changing and subject to the context in which they are situated in. Returning to the issue of wartime sexual violence, post-structural feminists assert that the assumption that “all that is female is feminine, and all that is male is masculine”97 is problematic. Hague notes that “[n]ot all men fit the standard model of what it means to be masculine unequivocally.”98 Rather, power relations define categories such as masculinity and femininity or perpetrator and victim. Such power relations are reliant on contextual and circumstantial factors.99

Post-structuralists highlight that rape is considered only as violence, and violence towards women, because of the priority given to masculinity and men. Under post-structuralism, rape can be understood as “an experience of power, domination, degradation and humiliation, wherever, whenever and whoever commits the crime.”100 Rather than associating rape as the responsibility of men, post-structuralists argue that the perpetrator of sexual violence assumes the position of power and uses it to subjugate a person or a group.101 Within this understanding, “[p]ower relations infuse the entire context and perpetration of rape. The rape victim is physically and/or psychologically coerced into sexual acts.”102 This can occur regardless of the biological sex of the person. Thus, post-structuralists argue that wartime sexual violence is a demonstration of domination that is socially constructed and given meaning through power relations rather than assigned gendered categories.

Along these lines, post-structural feminists question how men have been associated as the only perpetrators of sexual violence. Post-structuralists note that naturalizing sexual violence as solely based on male aggression neglects the history and/or context of the situations in which rape occurs. Soldiers who participate in conflict may be pressured or coerced into committing acts of sexual violence. Hague argues that men are not innately inclined to rape, but rather it is the institution or the context that encourages individuals to commit the act. She claims that the “all-male setting of the military and the perpetration of gang raping creates a ‘bonding’

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., 53.
100 Ibid., 51.
101 Hague, “Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”
102 Ibid., 51.
experience. The “group gives the rapist protection through loyalty and support, but also puts pressure on the man to imitate his peers and live up to or even exceed their expectations with his actions.” In this context, group rape is undertaken by the soldier because the failure to do so may result in death for the abstainer. For example, there is evidence to suggest that some of the rapes that occurred in the 1992-1995 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina were gang rapes and, in some cases, this tactic was employed in order to coerce soldiers into publicly performing the acts. This does not absolve the rapist of their decision to commit sexual violence, however it does demonstrate the importance of the social, political and military context in understanding the origins of such violence in war.

Post-structural feminists note that society has not questioned why men and masculinity are associated with the characteristics of power and aggression, whereas women are subjugated to an inferior position because of their femininity. However, they argue that this dichotomous relationship where men gain power at the expense of women’s subjugation is a socially constructed. Hague, for instance, complicates this power relationship by suggesting that not all women are “feminine” nor are all men “masculine.” Similarly, there are variances between men as well as between women. As Hague notes, “rather than a single masculinity, there are multiple masculinities that vary across space, time and context. The same contention applies to femininities.” Rather than being static and unchanging, these gender relationships are negotiated regularly and continuously changing.

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103 Ibid., 57.
104 Ibid.
105 The experience of child soldiers can demonstrate how instances of sexual violence can be coerced. Child soldiers, despite the fact that they are children, are seen participating in wartime rape. The notion that they are children blurs the line between perpetrators and victims. In suggesting that men within militarized situations can be coerced to perform acts of violence against women does not suggest that men are now “victims” of such actions. In addition, this assumption does not do away with the fact that men (and women) do demonstrate agency under such circumstances. Presenting the counter argument that men’s identities and masculinities need to be deconstructed can help to understand how complex and intertwined the subject of wartime sexual violence is.
109 Ibid.
Understanding the complexity of gendered myths can help expose another dimension of wartime sexual violence. In disagreeing with radical feminism’s notion that women are victims, post-structural feminist analyses open the enquiry to the possibility that women can also commit violence. One such example includes the actions of Pauline Nyiramasuhuko. During and prior to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Nyiramasuhuko was the national minister for family and women’s affairs. Her story is an illustration of the complicated nature of feminist epistemologies. She was able to defy gender restrictions and gain a role in the public sphere. Nyiramasuhuko took on the role of a social worker, offered lectures on female empowerment, and instruction on childcare and AIDS prevention.\textsuperscript{110} Her days as minister were devoted to improving the lives of women and children. However, during the 1994 genocide, Nyiramasuhuko was responsible for administering and encouraging the rape and murder of moderate Hutus and Tutsis. She was heard ordering the militia, “Before you kill the women, you need to rape them.”\textsuperscript{111} Charged with war crimes by the ICTR, Nyiramasuhuko’s case complicates existing understandings of sexual violence and the identity of men and women. Her case connotes that women can adopt “masculine” notions of power, just as how men can easily be “feminized.” Although her work with women and children can be associated with “feminine” characteristics, her exercise of political power and legislation of rape suggests that gendered characteristics are not innate.

Nyiramasuhuko’s adoption of “masculine” traits alters existing understandings of women. It suggests that particular characteristics are constructed and can be used in particular circumstances to support one’s political agency. Nyiramasuhuko’s case also demonstrates that rape is infused with power regardless of who commits it.\textsuperscript{112} In possession of power, the rapist understands the attack as a method to torture and abuse the victim, who has been relegated to the inferior role. The individual or group who has been subjugated to being raped has been gendered “feminine.”\textsuperscript{113} Although Nyiramasuhuko did not actually commit the rapes, she gained power through legislating and encouraging the Hutu militia to engage in acts of sexual violence. The use of

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\textsuperscript{110} Sjoberg, Mothers, Monsters, Whores.
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\textsuperscript{112} Hague, “Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 54.
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\textsuperscript{113} Hague, “Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 54; Sjoberg, Mothers, Monsters, Whores.
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gender stereotypes such as masculine-power and feminine-weakness is disconnected from the sex of the individual, but applied to the collective level to symbolize power and submission.\footnote{Hansen, "Gender, Nation, Rape: Bosnia and the Construction of Security."} The effect of power-gain and submission only becomes effective through the meaning that is attached to the masculine and the feminine.

Unlike radical feminists, post-structural feminists disagree that women can be identified as a holistic group. Post-structural feminists argue that women, as well as men, are constructed categories of identity. Thus, women might not necessarily embody traits that are considered "feminine" whereas men might not be "masculine." Post-structural feminists "simultaneously resist the notion of uniquely female experiences, because that involves making essentialist or universal claims on the basis of experiences that are historically and culturally specific."\footnote{Ibid.} Rather, post-structuralists "concentrate on exposing the hidden presuppositions and assumptions that underlie all attempts to theorize or tell 'One True Story' about the human condition."\footnote{Skjelbæk, "Victim and Survivor: Narrated Social Identities of Women Who Experience Rape During the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 375.} As mentioned, liberal and radical feminists have both identified women as the predominant/only "victim" of sexual violence. Post-structural feminists, however, complicate the idea of woman as a victim of sexual violence. Understanding that there is no one true experience, post-structural feminists expose how ontological categories, such as women and victim, are based on assumed knowledge.

Post-structural feminists argue that relying on an image of victimhood instills a static and homogenous understanding of sexual violence and victim.\footnote{In light of research on wartime sexual violence, most feminist efforts, such as radical feminism, have been careful to not blame the victim for what occurred. As a result, the sexual history of the survivor is not considered in feminist efforts to alleviate the suffering of these women. Historically, it was assumed that women who were raped had "instigated" the act. Thus, in erasing the history of the woman, feminists have been able to apply this idea of victimhood onto the rape survivor as well as bring attention to rape as a crime and form of violence.} The construction of victimhood serves the feminist goal of erasing the sexual history of the rape survivor.\footnote{Skjelbæk, "Victim and Survivor: Narrated Social Identities of Women Who Experience Rape During the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina"; Geetanjali Gangoli, "Engendering Genocide: Gender, Conflict and Violence," Women's Studies International Forum 29 (2006): 534-538; Alison, "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security."} As will be discussed in the next chapter, the status of victimhood neglects the agency of the rape survivor and positions her as a "victim" rather than a "survivor."\footnote{Ibid.} Post-structural feminists argue that the wealth of experiences survivors
endure prior to and after the rape are neglected. It also neglects the fact that rape survivors have the agency to determine their own modes of existence. More importantly, they argue that the single category of victimhood confines the rape survivor to a dependent position where the actions and stories of individuals are only legitimate if they conform to the existing framework of understanding.\footnote{Skjelbaek, “Victim and Survivor: Narrated Social Identities of Women Who Experience Rape During the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 375-376.} That is, if survivors of rape proclaim that they are victims, they will be heard, whereas if they are otherwise, their stories will continue to be silenced.\footnote{Mertus, “Shouting from the Bottom of the Well.”} Accounts of rape are considered relevant only if they are related to existing understandings of what rape is or that women are victims.

Post-structural feminism can help broaden the understanding of wartime sexual violence. Post-structural feminism helps to challenge the narrow conception that women are natural victims of rape. In connection with the idea of power, it is understandable how the sexual identity of the perpetrator of rape does not matter, but what becomes important is how this power relationship is carried out. A post-structural feminist approach demonstrates that identities can be fluid and context-specific. It questions what constitutes our understanding of masculinity and femininity. By suggesting that gender identities are negotiated, the ontological variables of men and women are understood as being socially constructed.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has engaged in liberal feminist, radical feminist, and post-structural feminist theories to expose the complex and often contradictory understandings of wartime sexual violence. First, liberal feminists efforts to deal with wartime sexual violence envision the inclusion of more women within decision-making areas. Efforts made by liberal feminists are seen in the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 and 1820. Resolution 1820 dealt specifically with wartime sexual violence and returned women to the stereotype of victims of sexual violence. Rather than providing a route for emancipation, Resolution 1820 reinforced the existing dichotomous relationship of victim-protector while homogenizing the experiences of women. The second
epistemological approach of radical feminism aimed to politicize wartime sexual violence. The efforts made by radical feminists helped to politicize rape as a weapon of war, as a method in humiliating and degrading the enemy, and as a misogynistic attack against women. Through the agenda of politicizing rape, radical feminists emphasized that the greater project was to expose the biases within patriarchy and how rape was used to sustain its legitimacy. Finally, through post-structural feminist epistemology wartime sexual violence is made more complex. Its agenda of deconstruction allows for the questioning of ontological categories of men and women. Post-structural feminists argue that the categories of men and women are not natural, but are made.

Although a review of the three different feminist epistemologies might suggest that there are cleavages within the feminist attempt in dealing with sexual violence, feminist IR has shown to be a collaborative approach. Each feminist theory is different, but should be seen as contributing to a common conversation. At times, liberal feminism appears to offer a clearer picture to IR, whereas radical feminism can help interpret some things better than others. Feminist theory continues to be a dialectical process of enquiry. Feminist IR, more specifically, has shown to combine some of the most important aspects about each epistemology in the attempt to practically deal with issues such as wartime sexual violence. A post-structuralist approach to understanding rape and its outcome in war provides a space for individuals who are either perpetrators and/or victims of sexual violence to recover, empower themselves and, perhaps, change.

The next chapter of this thesis will use a post-structural feminist approach to evaluate how rape victims are often defined as the *object*, or an outsider, within the community after he/she has been raped. Whereas this chapter helped to expose how post-structural feminism addresses sexual violence, the next chapter further complicates the case by bringing in structural issues. It will discuss how power structures that marginalize rape survivors are embedded within some feminist movements. It will explore the repercussions of "secondary trauma" - when communities stigmatize women/men for the experience they endured as subjects of sexual violence. This theory of exclusion will further be applied to children who are born of wartime rape. In doing so, it hopes to expose the level of agency survivors of rape have, while also revealing how different actors (such as children) are involved.
Chapter Four:

The Politics of Exclusion: The Production of Bare Life and the War Rape Survivor

Certain lives will be highly protected, and the abrogation of their claims to sanctity will be sufficient to mobilize the forces of war. Other lives will not find such fast and furious support and will not even qualify as “grievable.”

- Judith Butler

Recognition of sexual violence as a method of conflict and a crime against humanity does not always engender emancipatory possibilities for rape survivors. The issue of wartime sexual violence is much more complex, entrenched, and interconnected to the process of militarism, reconciliation, and national (re)building than most state governments would like to admit. The previous two chapters have demonstrated that different feminist theories recognize and build on conflicting aspects of wartime sexual violence. The disagreements between feminist academics and activists have revealed that wartime sexual violence is not an issue that can easily be solved. Nor does its recognition by the international community, criminal courts, and academics automatically result in the emancipation of rape survivors.²

¹ Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence, 32.
This chapter takes an in-depth analysis of how particular frameworks of understanding conflict continue to alienate survivors of wartime sexual violence. In doing so, it reveals that the experiences of rape survivors are often shaped by the process of post-conflict nation building as well as the agenda(s) of some feminist organizations. The goal of this chapter is to critically analyze the identity of the rape survivor and how she has been used as a political tool to structure the identity of a nation recovering from conflict. This chapter will discuss how the personal interests of rape survivors have not been adequately represented within the process of national recovery. In doing so, this chapter will use literature written by Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, and Giorgio Agamben. More specifically, this chapter engages with their theories of political exclusion and the creation of “bare life.” The works of Kristeva, Butler, and Agamben are useful when applied to an analysis of how post-conflict communities depend on certain meanings of sexual violence to (re)define itself while defining the identity of the rape survivor.

This chapter will approach the complex relationship between the war rape survivor, feminist organizations, and the nation in two parts. First, this chapter complicates the existing understanding of rape. This section attempts to expose how the identities of victims of wartime sexual violence are constructed in existing efforts to assist rape survivors. In doing so, this section engages with post-structural philosophy to illustrate how the recognition of war rape does not automatically result in the emancipation of rape survivors, but may further trap women (and men) in a cycle of trauma and militarism. The literature on “bare life” presented by Agamben, Kristeva, and Butler is useful here.

Second, to illustrate the complex power relationship between the rape survivor and the nation, this chapter will undertake an analysis of the Asian “comfort women” case. This analysis will specifically address the efforts of a Korean women’s organization. In the 1990s, an organization known as the Korean Council (re)defined the former comfort women as “victims” of the abuse committed by the Japanese military. Although the efforts made by the Korean Council appeared to be sincere, this emphasis on the comfort women as victims proved to be detrimental to the

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4 Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"; Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity; Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence; Butler, Frames of War.
5 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Agamben, State of Exception.
emancipation of these women. As this analysis will demonstrate, the Korean Council was primarily interested in (re)positioning Korea as the region’s victim vis-à-vis the atrocities committed by Japan during the Pacific War. The interests of the comfort women was secondary to the individuals involved in the organization. This case illustrates the complex and often contradictory relationship between post-war national identities, silences, and (re)traumatization.

Theories of Exclusion: The Production of Bare Life

Survivors of wartime sexual violence are relegated and exist within the limited confines of “bare life.” The notion of bare life, written about by Michel Foucault, Carl Schmitt, and Giorgio Agamben, helps to illustrate the contradictions that societies are embedded in during times of emergency. The rape survivor is one such individual that exemplifies bare life. As discussed in the previous chapter, the rape survivor, because of the rape, is often excluded from their family or nation. This exclusion is the result of the shame, humiliation, and trauma that accompanies the meaning of sexual violence in war. The rape survivor’s identity is further complicated by the political nature of her exclusion. For instance, she acts as a reminder that the nation is victimized and, as such, presents a potential hindrance to the nation’s process of recovery. Thus, she is excluded because she no longer fits into the society.

The exclusion of the rape survivor has a political purpose. The literature on bare life illustrates that the marginalization of the rape survivor helps to draw the line between those who are considered to fit within the post-conflict landscape of renewal.

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6 Skjelback, “Victim and Survivor: Narrated Social Identities of Women Who Experience Rape During the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”
9 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Agamben, State of Exception; Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive.
10 Bare life as a concept has been used to describe different individuals or groups who have been relegated to the margins. Bare life, for example, has been used to describe the situation of refugees and stateless peoples. Alternatively, the term has been used in analysis of death, the treatment of animals, and the disabled. An infamous example of bare life, as used by Agamben, has been the treatment of Jews in the Nazi concentration camps.
and those who do not. In this sense, the rape survivor "establishes a clean-cut distinction between insiders and outsiders, between subjects and outlaws." As this section will explain, the rape survivor is pushed to the outskirts of society, where she is relegated to bare life because she no longer fits within the dominant identity of the nation. Under this guise, wartime sexual violence demonstrates a political connection, one that is used to define and reinforce the power of the sovereign.

**Defining Bare Life**

Agamben's attempt to theorize the difference between bare life and politically-qualified life begins in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998). With reference to Aristotle and Carl Schmitt, Agamben denotes that life is divided into two separate types: *bios*, which is politically qualified life or the good life; and *zoe*, or bare life, a life lived by animals, one that is void of pleasures, or a life that is not considered to be significant to politics. *Bios* can be referred to as the "good life" or life within the public realm, where rightful citizens are granted the ability to participate in the political community and are protected by the state. *Zoe*, on the other hand, exemplifies bare life, life that is reduced to a minimal state in which existence occurs only through the discourse of "mere living." *Zoe*, or bare life, is life stripped of political significance and is reduced to mundane activities that keeps one alive but nothing else. This division between *bios* and *zoe* forms the structure in which society functions. Whereas *bios* can be understood to be public-political life, *zoe* is connoted as the private-non-political sphere. Similar to a feminist deconstruction of the public-private, the existence of *bios* depends

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14 Agamben’s discussion of bare life is reflected in his earlier work that includes *The Open Man and The Coming Community*. *Homo Sacer* is where he explicitly engages in the subject. The idea of bare life is continued in his other work: *The State of Exception and Remnants of Auschwitz*.

15 Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 1-3; 11-12. A similar division was discussed earlier with the division between the masculine/feminine or the public/private.

16 Ibid., 1-12. Agamben’s initial claim about *zoe* as being void of a political identity is an important claim. Initially, *zoe* is thought to be non-political, however, within times of emergency this subjectation of *zoe* becomes a political act. It is only through the control and subjugation of *zoe* that *bios* is maintained. The repercussions of such, however, are that the condition in which *zoe* is marginalized is extended into non-emergency times. Thus, *zoe* becomes the norm.
on the subjugation of zoe or the creation of bare life.  

Central to the construction of bare life is the figure of homo sacer, or sacred man, who exists within the confines of mere existence. Defined simply, homo sacer is the figure that is stripped of any sense of humanness and is relegated to a zone where it can be punished and killed without sacrifice, thus reduced to the confines of bare life. The situation of bare life is exemplified by homo sacer, which as Agamben notes, is a life that can be killed but not sacrificed. Agamben illustrates the ill treatment of homo sacer through comparing what life was like for those interned in the Nazi concentration camp. The camp is seen to be the original space of exception, an excluded space, entrenched and surrounded within secrecy. Bare life is produced within the camp. Within the camp, individuals are stripped of their rights as humans and are left to face survival through mere existence. The camp is placed outside the rule of law and within the camp guards have the authority to punish prisoners randomly without consequences. Examples of the existence of homo sacer were seen in the treatment of Jews in the concentration camps. More recent examples include the treatment of detainees on Guantanamo Bay and the detention of asylum seekers in Australian detention centres. In some ways, the Nazi concentration camp can be compared to the rape camps that women were housed in during the 1992-1995 conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Within the camp, women were subject to rape, torture, and/or forced impregnation and were exempt from being protected by international law.

17 Agamben’s theory does not touch on feminism or gendered issues. However, an initial engagement with his work will reveal that he does try to develop a theory concerning marginalized groups are considered political. In this way, his work can be seen as useful to the analysis of wartime sexual violence.

18 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence.


20 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.

21 Rens van Munster, “The War on Terrorism: When the Exception becomes the Rule,” International Journal for the Semiotics of Law 17 (2004): 142-143. van Munster notes that “the camps is characterized by a permanent state of exception in which law and chaos enter into a zone of indistinction.”

22 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, 119-180.

23 Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence; Butler, Frames of War.


Homo Sacer (1998) can be read as a treatise on the extension of sovereign power in the contemporary era. Essentially, Homo Sacer questions the nature of governmentality within times of emergency, such as during a war, moments of national security, or fragile periods of peace building. In times of emergency, sovereign power is threatened. As a response to this threat, states are empowered, at least in theory, with the responsibility of ensuring that this threat is minimalized. In the past, this has often resulted in the marginalization or detention of a particular group. As described, the political exclusion of a particular group, such as asylum seekers, terrorists, or a particular ethnic group, can help the sovereign (re)gain its legitimacy over a given territory. Sovereignty is demonstrated through reducing subjects to the limits of bare life, and (re)gaining confidence to rule through this subjugation. This ensures that the rights or civil liberties that were once guaranteed to individuals or groups that were a threat are no longer feasible. Power is (re)gained through this exclusion of those who are deemed to be a threat.

Creating Conditions of Bare Life

Although Agamben does not engage in issues related to gender, his theory of bare life can be applied to the subjugation of war rape survivors. Women often exist within the disciplinary space as property of their families, community, and nation. Furthermore, women’s bodies or wombs are thought to be the property of the men within a community. Militarized societies often rely on a rigid understanding of gender, where women are subjected to a disciplinary space. Within this space, the bodies of women are disciplined to ensure that their chastity belongs to men, their family, or the

26 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, 119-180.
27 Catherine Mills, “An Ethics of Bare Life: Agamben on Witnessing,” borderlands 2, no. 1 (2003);
29 Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, “Bare Life on Strike: Notes on the Biopolitics of Race and Gender,” South Atlantic Quarterly 107, no. 1 (2008): 89-105. Ziarek continues where Agamben left off but through a gendered perspective. She notes that bare life is implicated in the “gender, sexist, and colonial, and racist configurations of the political, and because of this implication, how it suffers different forms of violence.”
nation. Under such regulated confines, women are subject to bare life. Bare life under gendered terms is defined through the subjugation of a woman’s identity as non-political. As highlighted in previous chapters, women have been defined as belonging to the private sphere and, therefore, irrelevant to the public sphere. The existence of the masculine sphere is ensured through the marginalization of the feminine. Thus, if women are understood to occupy the feminine-private sphere, the control of a woman’s body can be a method to reinforce the sovereignty of men. This can be seen in the myths that motivate men to fight in wars in order to protect the women who stay within the private sphere. Such myths about the dichotomy between the public and the private ensure that the sovereignty of the public/masculine field is maintained.

Rape survivors further embody the existence of bare life. Women’s bodies are seen as the property of men. Thus, an infringement of that property is believed to undermine the sovereignty of the men within the community. Based on this myth, rape is seen as damaging the masculine identity of the community. It suggests that the men within the community are unable to protect their women. Thus, the sovereignty of the men is damaged and taken by another group of men. Essentially, rape is about a relationship of power. It is not just a relationship of power where women are subjugated by men, but by one group of men against another. Women who have been raped in conflict are often treated as reminders to the nation of what occurred. Rape reinforces a collective message of defeat and shame. As a result, women who have been raped are often rejected by their families, their community, and the nation. The rejection women experience as a result of rape is intrinsically linked to their identity as property of men or their families. Their identity as property is fortified by the perceived value of their chastity and obedience, whereas rape signifies the absence of chastity.

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32 Hague, “Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”
33 Klaus Theweleit, Male Fantasies: Volume One (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Elstain, Women and War.
34 Seifert, “War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis.”
35 Theweleit, Male Fantasies: Volume One; Seifert, “The Second Front: The Logic of Sexual Violence in Wars.”
For example, the civil conflict in Eastern Congo provides several cases that illustrate the rejection of the survivor of rape. A report issued by Human Rights Watch entitled *The War Within the War: Sexual Violence Against Women in Eastern Congo* (2002), illustrates the contradictions sexual violence in war has on a nation enduring conflict. For instance, in this particular case, the husband of a rape survivor believed that his wife had collaborated with the perpetrators and had consented to the sexual act. The testimonial by the rape survivor recalls that:

> Afterwards I went home. I tried to hide it from my husband but he found out. He said that I had accepted it voluntarily. He said although I had bruises and marks where the soldiers had pressed their fingernails into my inner thigh. \(^{38}\)

This case in Eastern Congo reinforces the patriarchal notion that women are considered property to men. The husband in this case did not believe that sexual violence can be forced and can occur against the will of women. The rejection of his wife suggests that she no longer abided by the identity that women are supposed to abide by. In another case, in a nearby village of Goma in Eastern Congo, a woman who had been raped by a former Rwandan soldier wanted to conceal the crime from her husband. However, the act had left a feeling of shame upon her. This woman also did not want to remain silent about what occurred. As a result, she decided to seek advice and forgiveness by confessing the incident to the local pastor:

> When I got home, I went to the pastor to tell him what had happened. His wife heard our conversation, and she went around and told everyone about it. Now I am an outcast. No one will come to see me or share anything with me. My second husband said he was unlucky with wives because he had already lost two wives before me. We don’t get along. Sometimes he says I should go back to [my first] husband... or I should be with another man in the forest. \(^{39}\)

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\(^{39}\) Ibid., 65.
Testimonials such as the two described above suggest that husbands often socially or emotionally abandon their wives once they learn about the rape. The act of rape brands the female survivor because it damages her previous identity as someone who is chaste, a possible mother, or a reproducer for the nation. The act of rape expels her from the community and brands her as someone unfit to reproduce a future generation for the country. The rape survivor is also thought to be not respectable enough for marriage to someone who belongs within the community.

Contradictions within the Production of Bare Life

Agamben’s theory of bare life becomes more complicated in his analysis of contemporary politics. He asserts that the ostracization of zoē as seen during times of emergency continues during times of peace. The sovereign begins to control the actions within the private sphere even when there is no imminent threat. Agamben notes that modernity is not exemplified by freedom and liberty but through an increased politicization of the private sphere. Consequently, this occurs through the regulation of the private sphere and ensuring bare life becomes the norm. This leads to instances where it becomes necessary to reduce individuals to conditions of bare life without any source of justification. According to Agamben, bare life, life that was once considered non-political or insignificant to politics, becomes necessary in modern-day politics.

Michel Foucault’s later work draws on similar conclusions. Near the conclusion of volume one of The History of Sexuality (1978), Foucault argues that the regulation of natural life, or zoē, becomes central to the affairs of the state. Foucault notes that modern society has witnessed a transformation where “the ancient right to take life and let live was replaced by a power to foster life and disallow it to the point of death.”

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42 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, 136-143.

43 Agamben, State of Exception, 1-6.

44 Foucault, The History of Sexuality, 1:139.
The creation of institutions such as the asylum, law, and the prison, argues Foucault, act to regulate the movement and actions of the population. Institutions are invented to monitor the movement of people, maintain a level of surveillance, and regulate the way bodies are used and treated.\textsuperscript{45} The creation of regulatory institutions ensure an entire population of people, such as those illustrated earlier, have their rights erased, are rendered voiceless, Ungrievable, and reduced to the mere existence of bare life.\textsuperscript{46} Simply stated, their lives are regulated because they are unable to conform to the existing society or they are considered a threat to the existing identity.

The regulation of \textit{homo sacer}, or those who exist within the confines of bare life, is contradictory to the practices of the sovereign. Within an era marked by human rights conventions, restricting the rights of a significant portion of the population appears to be contradictory.\textsuperscript{47} Originally, the sovereign demonstrates its prowess through acts that are within the public-political sphere and exerts minimal attention to those who exist within bare life. Contemporary forms of politics, however, have witnessed an ever-increasing surveillance of the private-non-political sphere.\textsuperscript{48} It has seen the exclusion of \textit{homo sacer}, or its distinction from \textit{bios}, as the main activity of the sovereign. Contradictory to the existence of \textit{homo sacer} as being within the non-political sphere of bare life is the fact that its exclusion exemplifies the action of politics. It is the very exclusion of particular groups from accessing their rights that make up the politics of the modern day. The sovereign brings \textit{homo sacer} into politics to sustain the dualistic relationship between \textit{bios} and \textit{sacer}.\textsuperscript{49}

The irony behind \textit{homo sacer} is that it is included within politics in order for the sovereign to exercise its power. This act of defining who is deserving of a political life and who is reduced to mere existence permits the sovereign to rejuvenate its role.\textsuperscript{50} Foucault's idea of "revitalizing sovereignty" exemplifies the sovereign as a state that


\textsuperscript{46} Butler, \textit{Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence}.

\textsuperscript{47} Agamben, \textit{Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life}, 136-143.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 160-180.


\textsuperscript{50} Agamben, \textit{Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life}. 
holds legitimate power to protect and represent the population within its borders. As Foucault notes, sovereign power depends on the source of interaction between the state and its population, where relations of power are "exercised only over free subjects and only in so far as they are 'free'." Society cannot exist without power relations, because "to live in society is...to live in such a way that some act on the actions of others," where resistance and challenge are possible. Contemporary politics occurs through the act of dividing and differentiating between those who deserve a politically-qualified life and those who should be relegated to bare life. The coexistence of politically qualified life (bios) and bare life (zoe) is thus central to the operation of modern-day politics.

Agamben goes beyond Foucault's initial argument. Contemporary politics, according to Agamben, is defined by the act of the "sovereign ban," that is the duty of relegating particular groups to bare life in order to sustain the politically-qualified life of others. He argues that within contemporary politics, the activity of the sovereign in banning those it deems unfit for a politically-qualified life has become heavily embedded within everyday political activity. Politics, Agamben writes, as defined by the sovereign, has created a society in which opportunities for resistance are limited. Sovereign power can no longer operate without engaging in the act of differentiating between politically qualified life and bare life within times of non-emergency, let alone during wartime. Sovereign power, which has been replaced by the sovereign ban, no longer operates in order to revitalize the legitimacy of the state. Consequently, it has become an unnecessary given in the control of the population and the normalization of a totalitarian grip over society.

Jenny Edkins summarizes Agamben's notion of the sovereign ban and bare life


53 Foucault, "The Subject and Power."

54 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Edkins, "Whatever Politics."

55 See Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Agamben, State of Exception; Jenkins, "Bare Life: Asylum-Seekers, Australian Politics and Agamben's Critique of Violence"; Edkins and Pin-Fat, "Through the Wire: Relations of Power and Relations of Violence"; Diken and Lausten, "Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War"; Diken and Lausten, "Zones of Indistinction: Security, Terror, and Bare Life."

56 Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life; Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive; Edkins and Pin-Fat, "Through the Wire: Relations of Power and Relations of Violence.

succinctly. She writes that the:

structure of the sovereign ban, or the state of exception, is such that bare life is included in the sovereign sphere precisely through its exclusion from it. The life set outside the law is nevertheless subject to and of the law through the very (legal) process of the setting outside of that life.\textsuperscript{58}

Simply stated, bare life is embodied by the “inclusive exclusion” of homo sacer, a form of life that can be killed without accusations of homicide, but is a life that cannot be sacrificed.\textsuperscript{59} Since the difference between war and peace is often blurred in contemporary politics, it becomes more and more difficult to shed conditions of bare life in non-emergency times. Thus, as bare life becomes the norm, society enters into a “state of exception” where the state continues to exercise its right to differentiate between those who do exist within the protection of the state and those who do not.\textsuperscript{60} Agamben writes that the state of exception “constitutes a ‘point of balance between public law and political fact’ that is situated – like civil war, insurrection and resistance – in an ‘ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe, at the intersection of the legal and the political.’”\textsuperscript{61}

Lives that are not synonymous with the national discourse of recovery are excluded from the political conversation. Such lives, as will be discussed through the “comfort women,” are not considered lives at all.\textsuperscript{62} They are forgotten, rendered voiceless, and not guaranteed the rights that are entitled to them based on their status as human beings.\textsuperscript{63} As Agamben notes, inhabitants of modern forms of the camp exist in conditions of bare life that is outside of what is qualified as political.\textsuperscript{64} The state legitimately revokes their civil liberties in order to reinstate sovereign power. However, Agamben’s extension of Foucault’s ideas of biopower suggest that conditions of bare life no longer exist within the camp, but have become the norm in which society operates. The rights of war rape survivors have been revoked, they are considered

\textsuperscript{58} Edkins, “Whatever Politics,” 75.
\textsuperscript{59} Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, 83, 81-86.
\textsuperscript{60} Agamben, State of Exception; Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence.
\textsuperscript{61} Agamben, State of Exception, 1.
\textsuperscript{62} Butler uses this phrase in Precarious Life to describe the treatment of the detainees on Guantanamo Bay as well as the Palestinians. Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence, Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism.
\textsuperscript{63} Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.
“non-humans” and often rendered stateless.

The extension of bare life can be seen within times of non-emergency, when societies or nations are attempting to recover from war. Despite the end of formal conflict, writes Agamben, the state continues to exclude particular groups in order to reinstate its own sovereign right to govern.\(^{65}\) Rape survivors have demonstrated how the state has historically neglected its responsibility to assist and reinstate victimized groups. The comfort women case in Asia, for instance, is illustrative of the state’s and international community’s neglect of women who were subject to sexual violence during war. Despite the mass use of rape by the Japanese military during the Pacific War, women did not speak up until the mid-1990s, nearly sixty years after the system of forced sexual slavery occurred. As will be discussed in the next section, even when the former “comfort women” decided to speak up, their voices were further muted and criticized. The comfort women issue illustrates how these women have been reduced to conditions of bare life during and after the war.

The Asian Comfort Women: Conflicted Narratives, Silenced Stories

The institutionalized abuse and silence of the Asian comfort women\(^{66}\) demonstrates the complexity of power relations in post-war societies. It calls into question the construction of power relations between the rape survivor, feminist organizations, and the nation. The comfort women case helps to demonstrate the complexity behind efforts to emancipate rape survivors, and how, in doing so, individual women have been trapped within the politics of exclusion. This section illustrates how the former comfort women have been reduced to bare life during conflict, its aftermath, and during the process of gaining recognition.\(^{67}\)

Although the Geneva Convention (1949) identified wartime rape as a crime against women’s honour, the abuse of the comfort women was only recognized through

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\(^{65}\) Ibid.; Agamben, *State of Exception*.

\(^{66}\) The use of the term “comfort women” is not to valorize the institutionalized use of these women for “comfort.” The use of this term rather than other terms is to maintain consistency with other sources on the topic. As expressed through the thesis, I do understand that these women were engaging in acts that were the direct opposite of comfort.

\(^{67}\) See Ueno, *Nationalism and Gender*. Ueno notes the complex use of identity and identity formation behind the comfort case. She suggests that the women have been (re)victimized multiple times.
a series of hearings conducted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights starting in 1992.\textsuperscript{68} Prior to the involvement of the United Nations, the former comfort women were perceived as licensed prostitutes who had engaged in private transactions with military personnel. In 1996, a report submitted by Radhika Commaraswamy redefined the comfort system as a practice of “military sexual slavery”\textsuperscript{69} that was compared to the “rape centres” in the former Yugoslavia. In contrast to earlier assumptions that comfort women were prostitutes, through the help of the human rights discourse and feminist activists, the “international community has now come to define them as victims of military sexual slavery [and] a war crime perpetrated by the Japanese state.”\textsuperscript{70}

As discussed in Chapter One, the systematic “recruitment” of women for the sexual pleasure of military personnel cannot be isolated to the comfort women issue, but represents an institutionalized blindness towards groups embedded in the margins of society. Academic records estimate that from 1932 to 1945 between 50,000 to 200,000 women were mobilized for military sexual slavery under the Japanese emperor.\textsuperscript{71} Japanese historian Yuki Tanaka has illustrated that women from Korea, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, Indonesia and other occupied territories were mobilized to service the Japanese troops. The comfort women issue is complex and represents a problem ranging from “militarized prostitution” to that of sexual slavery based on gender, age, social class and ethnicity.\textsuperscript{72}

As this section will demonstrate, the efforts in (re)defining wartime rape as a crime against humanity has consequently (re)positioned former comfort women to the margins of the human rights discourse. This section will concentrate on the actions of the South Korean feminist movement who had advocated for the former comfort women. Although the movement started off as a regional effort to address the human rights of women, the movement soon transformed into one that cooperated with a national agenda to pressure Japan for a formal apology. Within the movement,

\textsuperscript{68} In 1991, former comfort woman Kim Hak Sun broke the silence of the issue. The awareness she brought to the issue broke her 40-year silence.

\textsuperscript{69} Soh, “From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the “Comfort Women”,” 59; Soh, “Prostitutes versus Sex Slaves: The Politics of Representing the “Comfort Women”,”

\textsuperscript{70} Soh, “From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the “Comfort Women”,” 60.

\textsuperscript{71} Tanaka, Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and US Occupation.

\textsuperscript{72} Soh, “From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the "Comfort Women",” 62.
survivors of the comfort system were constructed as “victims” rather than political agents. Through this analysis, it becomes apparent that the motives of the comfort women movement in South Korea was a political tactic to counter Japanese revisionist claims that these women were prostitutes. In doing so, such efforts were attempts to reinforce the guilt concerning war crimes committed by Japan rather than addressing the rights of survivors.

The Influence of the Korean Council: Where are the Voices of the Rape Survivors?

The Chongsindaemunje Taeolb'aeak Hyupniboe or the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (Korean Council) has been the dominant force in pressuring the Japanese government to formally recognize the systematic abuse of the former comfort women. The Korean Council addressed the issue of the comfort women by highlighting how these women were not prostitutes, but sex slaves. This emphasis on the victim was apparent in how they defined the comfort women. Members of the Korean Council described the comfort women as “victims” who were forcibly recruited into sexual slavery. The term chongsindaemunje, rather than wianbu (comfort women), was used as the name of the movement to distinguish the former comfort women from “prostitutes” who served the American military in Korea. The term chongsindaemunje “literally means the ‘voluntary-submitting body (chongsin) corps (-dae)’. This group was mobilized to support the war effort of imperial Japan, and was assumed to include women from colonial Korea who were recruited to serve in comfort stations in Asia. The use of chongsindaemunje “functions as a considerate euphemism born out of

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74 Tanaka, Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and US Occupation. A comparison can be made between the ostracization of the comfort women with the earlier case of the women in East Congo discussed in this chapter.
75 Moon, “South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labour.”
76 See Ibid. Although the movement defined the differences between the “comfort women” and the kichi’on (the women who served the American troops stationed in Korea), Moon argues that there are similarities between the two groups of women.
78 Moon, Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korea Relations.
cultural sensitivity for the survivors in order to avoid the negative image of prostitutes evoked by the term *wianbu.*

Within South Korea, graphic accounts of sexual brutality in the comfort women system surfaced in the early 1990s to counter accusations by Japan that the comfort women were merely prostitutes. Unlike Japan's whitewashing of information concerning their war atrocities, many South Korean human rights organizations emphasized the harm Japan committed against their nation and people. For example, in 1992, a television drama series, "Eye of the Dawn," depicted Korean resistance to Japanese colonial rule and included portraits of young women and girls being forcibly rounded up for sexual use on battlefronts. Infiltrating the message through the entertainment industry allowed viewers to identify with the horrors experienced by the women. Aside from the entertainment industry, nationalistic fervor was also demonstrated by the leaders of the Korean Council. Leading feminists within the movement, such as Yun Chong Ok and Lee Hyo Chae, emphasized that the survivors of the comfort system "represent in body and mind the most humiliating, degrading, and painful colonial oppressions that were imposed on the Korean people" and should not be associated with "voluntary adventures into the world of sex." By juxtaposing rape as violence against man's property and the nation's dignity, the Korean Council wanted to demonstrate that the basic human rights of former comfort women were violated through the violence experienced within the comfort system. Activism within the organization had maintained that the former comfort women were innocent victims who suffered at the hands of the Japanese.

Additionally, the Korean Council has capitalized on the "military comfort women problem as a universal moral issue of women's human rights." The organization emphasized the lasting effects of military sexual labour in terms of bodily damage, social alienation, loss of dignity, shame and loneliness. Professor Chong Chin Song, leader of the Korean Council, argued that the comfort women endured grave physical and psychological consequences while serving the sexual needs of the military. She stated that after having returned to Korea, survivors:

79 Soh, "From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the "Comfort Women,” 68.
80 Moon, "South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labour,” 310.
81 Ibid., 319.
... bore guilty consciences, simply because of the knowledge that they had been prostitutes. They suffered from the prejudice and discrimination of their relatives and friends. Many still had venereal disease or from time to time suffered its recurrence... Many women subsequently found that they were barren, and many still suffer from... womb infections, high blood pressure, stomach trouble, heart trouble, nervous breakdowns, mental illness and so on. The psychological aftermath is far more serious than the breakdown or mental disorders... haunted by delusions of persecutions, shame and inferiority. They tend to refrain a distrust and hatred of men... People around the women tend to despise them.84

The Korean Council’s connection of sexual slavery with the use of violence helped position the issue on the international human rights agenda. The activist group further emphasized the horror associated with the comfort system and how it had forcibly procured innocent victims into the realms of sexual slavery. Movement leaders understood that in order to receive international attention, the issue of “sex” needed to be replaced by “violence” in the discussion concerning the procurement of the comfort women.85 For instance, the Korean Council wanted to “completely change the social conceptions of women’s sexuality” in order to stop the marginalization of “fallen women.”86

Within the framework where “all sex is violence,” the Korean Council has blamed Japan (as a nation) for the crime of sexual slavery. The Korean Council’s tactic of blaming Japan for the crime has occurred without understanding the layered complexity of patriarchy. By solely identifying that the Japanese were perpetrators of wartime rape, the organization failed to undertake an examination of how their own government and the international community has maintained the silence of these women. More importantly, the Korean Council has deliberately neglected the use of Korean women during the Korean War who service American troops in local “camptowns.”87 In addition, the claim that all the survivors of the comfort station were

85 MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State; MacKinnon, “Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide.”
87 Moon, Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korea Relations; Moon, “South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labour.”
victims of military rape has homogenized the identity of the women within the image of the “model victim.” The use of essentialized arguments that homogenize a discourse within binary constructs fails to deconstruct how hegemonic structures are produced and reproduced by the actors who seek to overthrow it.

The construction of the comfort women through the “victimhood” paradigm has reinforced the dualistic distinction between “worthy/slaves” and women who are “unworthy/prostitutes.” The rift within the initial Korean comfort women movement demonstrates how the division between “forced” and “voluntary” sexual labour has silenced the voices of the former comfort women who do not fall within the stereotype of the “model victim.” For instance, in generating international support, the Korean Council has juxtaposed its agenda against the kijich’ on movement that sought to gain rights for the Korean prostitutes who served the American military during the Korean War. Although the kijich’ on movement also aimed to alleviate female victims from debt bondage and foreign domination, it was not recognized by the Korean Council because these women were perceived to have “voluntarily service(d) soldiers whereas the [comfort women] did not.” The key difference in terms of entry into:

Sexual labour between the two groups is that many chongi dae women routinely were rounded up and systematically kidnapped into military prostitution whereas kijich’ on women, as a collective, were not. However, some camptown women were kidnapped by common criminals, and other forms of coercive procurement, such as fraudulent promises by traffickers for well-paying jobs and skills-training, applied to both groups

88 By associating the comfort women with reductionist definitions of victimhood and slavery, the Korean Council has (re)created and reinforced the structural barriers that prevent the former comfort women from clearly addressing their concerns. The women are placed back into the realm where their rights should only be recognized because it violates their “honour and dignity” as a female or a victim rather than a human being.

89 Katharine R. Mendoza, “Freeing the ‘Slaves of Destiny’: The Lolas of the Filipino Comfort Women Movement,” Cultural Dynamics 15, no. 3 (2003); Allen, Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. The use of particular constructs of victimhood to garner sympathy has merely replaced one kind of “use value” with another while silencing women who do not identify with the particular definitions of victimhood. Within this paradigm, the inclusion of the comfort women into the international human rights discourse depends on their role as “victims” rather than as human beings who are entitled to such rights. Associating women with particular traits of a particular brand of femininity has constructed the human rights agenda based on the need to “protect” women because of their “natural” vulnerability rather than being truly entitled to such rights.

90 Ueno, Nationalism and Gender, 69-70.


92 Ibid., 312.
of women. And in both the chongsindae and kijich' on systems, rape was often used as a way to “initiate” women into sexual labour.93

Despite the similarities between the two groups of women, the Korean Council has emphasized the categorical difference between the two. Within the Korean Council, the idea that the kijich' on women were serving the American troops somehow differed from the service that the former comfort women were submitting themselves to during the Pacific War.

However, Katharine Moon argues that there should not be such a bold distinction between the former comfort women and the post-war militarized sex industry. In many cases, this dichotomy is blurred when the multiplicity of the individual’s identity is considered. Moon illustrates that, in some instances, the comfort women and the kijich' on women were the same person. She notes that:

Staffworkers at My Sister’s Place noted that a few of the elderly prostitutes they had gotten to know revealed information about Japan in wartime that regular civilians would not be familiar with. Bakery Auntie is one such person: she had lived in different parts of Japan during the war and had “told stories” to the staffworkers about the Japanese. Given that they had already become “fallen women” in their own eyes, feared that their past might be uncovered, and were poor and unmarriageable upon return to Korea, it is not an unlikely possibility that some former chongsindae (comfort) women fell into sexual labour for the US military.94

As this example demonstrates, the difference between the former comfort women and prostitutes is not clear. Nevertheless, the movement has concentrated on particular characteristics in order to maximize international attention concerning the perceived rights of women. The differentiations made by such women’s organizations have reinforced the same patriarchal elements that it sought to reject. In perpetuating the image of the “passive victim,” the Korean Council has whitewashed the diversity of these women in order to create the “model image” of the victim. The distinction between slavery and the prostitution paradigm has created a division between those who “voluntarily” serviced the Japanese or American military and those who were forced

93 Ibid., 315.
94 Ibid., 314.
into the trade. As Chizuko Ueno notes, the “sexual slavery paradigm refers to systematic sexual crimes carried out against the women of enemy or occupied countries. Consequently, it functions to exclude from this victimization those comfort women who were fellow nationals or military-base prostitutes of allied countries.” In the quest to bring recognition to the comfort women issue, the feminists within the leading organization have not dedicated a space to survivors who do not fall within their categorical idea of victimhood.

The comfort women case demonstrates the conflicting discourses available in the process of post-conflict recovery. Returning to Agamben’s discussion of bare life, this case demonstrates how the comfort women have been reduced to bare life within the process of voicing their concerns. Although the efforts made by the Korean Council may have been genuine, they conflicted with the interests of the comfort women. On a more complicated level, this case also demonstrates how the Korean Council relied on the image of “victimhood.” The Korean Council embodied the idea of victimhood in order to gain a formal apology from the Japanese government. As an analysis of the Asian Women’s Fund will demonstrate, efforts made by the Korean Council have undermined the voices of the comfort women.

**The Asian Women’s Fund: Gaining Financial Justice?**

In response to mounting international pressure concerning the comfort women issue, the Japanese government introduced the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) in 1995. The AWF “was established as a means of expressing the government’s awareness, remorse and apologies concerning the comfort women issue.” In a press conference concerning the fund, the president of the AWF, Tomiichi Murayama, summarized the goals of the fund as:

> to express atonement to the former comfort women at a national level, combining compensation from citizen donations and medical welfare support from government funds; to collect and edit historical documents related with the issue

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95 Ueno, *Nationalism and Gender*, 90.
and use them for historical lessons; to reflect on past mistakes of violating women's dignity and assist projects that deal with current women's issues such as violence.\textsuperscript{97}

Despite the efforts made by the Japanese government to express atonement to the former comfort women, the Korean Council, along with a similar organization in Taiwan, were critical of the AWF. Both organizations claimed that the AWF was not suitable for the interests of the comfort women and, more importantly, it did not include for a formal apology from the Japanese government.\textsuperscript{98}

The Korean Council and the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation (TWRF) argued that the AWF is an "expedient evasion of legal responsibility by the Japanese government, which has consistently insisted that all postwar claims for compensation between Japan and other nations be settled by various agreements and bilateral treaties."\textsuperscript{99} In order to discourage the former comfort women from accepting money from the AWF, the TWRF went as far as to raise compensation money for the former comfort women. Soh indicates that in "Taiwan, the official positions of the movement leaders and the government have been to reject the AWF and to seek Japan's formal apology and legal compensations for the violation of the women's human rights."\textsuperscript{100}

The TWRF had managed to raise NT\$500,000 for each victim which was the "equivalent amount to the AWF atonement money of two million yen."\textsuperscript{101} The purpose of TWRF's actions was to maintain the dignity of the comfort women, but also to defend the pride of their own nation.\textsuperscript{102} The actions taken by the Korean Council were similar to the TWRF. The organization also aimed to raise funds to help survivors resist the temptation to accept the AWF money. Similar to the TWRF, the Korean Council had interests other than the representation of the comfort women. The Korean Council aimed to ensure the pride of the Korean nation while also pressuring Japan for a formal apology.\textsuperscript{103} Consequently, in order to maintain their "country's pride," the Korean Council and the TWRF have stigmatized the women who have chosen to accept the

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 124.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
atonement money and have restricted them from future state-sponsored compensation.¹⁰⁴

At the expense of generating Korean support, the AWF established direct contact with some of the former comfort women and arranged a private meeting to disburse the atonement money to survivors. However, the individual acceptance of the sympathy money caused an ideological divide between particular survivors and movement leaders that demanded national solidarity against the Japanese. For instance, Soh states that in 1997 the Korean Council had been “able to raise over 550 million won (approximately $700,000). They disbursed the money (3,600,000 won each, approximately $4500) among the survivors.”¹⁰⁵ The goal was to discourage the comfort women from accepting the AWF money and enforce national pressure to gain an apology from Japan.

Consequently, the ideological rift between individual survivors and the agenda of these women’s movements resulted in the (re)silencing of the voices of the former comfort women. Seven women from the select group of comfort women wanted to accepted the money from the AWF. Rather than allowing them to make decisions based on their individual conditions, these women were “treated as turncoats by some of their fellow survivors and the movement leaders.”¹⁰⁶ As a further response, the Korean Council went as far as to “punish” the comfort women who wanted to receive compensation from the Japanese government. Soh notes that:

[T]he representatives of the Citizen’s Coalition (a section of the Korean Council) had discussed the possibility of discontinuing monthly welfare stipends to the seven at their meeting with the minister of Health and Social Welfare on March 25, 1997. The Citizen’s Coalition exhorted survivors to fight the AWF and thereby contribute to an end to the organized wartime rape that takes place across the globe. Their statement also demanded that the South Korean government should proactively request Japan to withdraw from the AWF, as Taiwan had done. This would maintain the honor of the survivors and the pride of the nation.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 126.
The movement’s urge to “resist the temptation” has resulted in the stigmatization of those who decided to accept the funds offered by the AWF.

Nationalistic undertones within the Korean Council are apparent through the anti-Japanese fervor expressed by the movement’s leaders. Moon illustrates that the leaders of the Korean Council continued to share the anti-Japanese resentment harbored by many other Koreans. The Korean Council board member stated, “Do you know what I pray for each day? That Japan be destroyed!”\textsuperscript{108} In addition, the two founders of the movement, Yun Chong Ok and Yi Hyo Chae harbored personal resentment towards the Japanese. Both leaders are from a generation that experienced first hand the colonial oppressions initiated by the Japanese during the Pacific War. Moon states that Yi and Yun “have both pointed out that they could have been victims too, generating empathy for the survivors and universalizing these women’s experiences as a victimization that could have happened to an entire generation of Korean women.”\textsuperscript{109} Moreover, Yi stated unequivocally that the comfort system “can only be defined as a crime against the Korean people.”\textsuperscript{110} Within this understanding, the survivors represent not only the degradation of the Korean people, but also the collective wish to reclaim national sovereignty and integrity.

The Korean Council leaders and the governments of Taiwan, China, the Philippines, and Indonesia, however, have held contrasting views concerning the AWF. Although the Korean Council has pressured for solidarity among survivors, the ideological preference that the comfort women should take has consequently marginalized their right to determine what serves in their best interests.\textsuperscript{111} The ideological standpoint of the Korean Council and its Taiwanese counterpart has maintained a narrow agenda of targeting for a formal apology from the Japanese government. It appears that the particular stance taken by Taiwan and Korea has represented their position as a former colony of Japan. Thus, in an effort to resist former colonization, the comfort women issue has been used as a tactic in questioning the war crimes initiated by the Japanese.

\textsuperscript{108} Moon, “South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labour,” 318.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} See Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Chunghee Sarah Soh, “Japan’s National/Asian Women’s Fund for ‘Comfort Women’,” \textit{Pacific Affairs} 76, no. 2 (2003); Ueno, \textit{Nationalism and Gender}, 80-93.
Unlike the organizations within Korea and Taiwan, the LILA Filipina\textsuperscript{112} organization in the Philippines has been more flexible towards the interests of the former comfort women. The LILA Filipina organization supported the former comfort women’s individual decisions to receive funds from the AWF.\textsuperscript{113} Unlike the Korean organization, LILA Filipina was not interested in allying with the national government to gain an apology from the Japanese government. Rather, LILA Filipina respected the “personal decisions of the survivors and has assisted them to receive the AWF money, playing an intermediary role between the survivors and the Philippine government, which handles the distribution of the AWF money.”\textsuperscript{114} Consequently, the efforts made by the Korean Council silenced the voices of women (and men) who may experience different forms of oppression embedded in different power structures.

It is ironic that while the remarkable success of the Korean Council is based on the representation of the comfort women as victims of gross violations of human rights, the emphasis has been on righting the wrongs of the past. Scant attention has been paid to helping survivors exercise the right to self-determination regarding the AWF offer. Soh notes that it is questionable whether “the voices of the Korean survivors are simply being forced into silence again, this time by the Korean government and the movement leadership.”\textsuperscript{115} In addition, accusations made by the distributors of the AWF money have suggested that “the Korean movement’s message to survivors that they are the nation’s pride and should fight the AWF to win state compensation parallels wartime imperial Japan’s exhortation to the Japanese people to sacrifice themselves in the name of the Emperor.”\textsuperscript{116} The Korean and Taiwanese responses to the AWF controversy underline the predominance of ethnic nationalism over advocacy for the interests of the comfort women. This legacy is due largely to the two countries’ history under Japanese rule rather than working towards promoting the “women’s rights as human rights” agenda.

The Asian comfort women case is illustrative of how rape survivors are positioned between different and conflicting narratives. The narratives held by both the Japanese government and the Korean feminist organization could be considered to be

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{112} League of Filipina Grandmothers (LILA Filipina). Organization consisting of former `comfort women’ who served in the Philippines.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Soh, “Human Rights and the 'Comfort Women',” 126.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 127.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
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in direct conflict with the interests of the former comfort women. Whereas the women who spoke up about their ordeals wanted to bring awareness to the situation and receive reparations, the Japanese government and the Korean Council were competing to represent their own interests rather than the rights of some of the women. The case of the Asian comfort women illustrates that the identity embodied by the rape survivor is in conflict with the collective agenda of national recovery. Through the use of the former comfort women as “abject” survivors of rape, the Korean Council aimed to show how Japan had been the perpetrator of violence against women. Japan, on the other hand, continued to neglect how these women were once victimized at the hands of the military. As the next section will illustrate, the abject, or homo sacer, is created and used to restructure a disorientated nation and to help (re)establish sovereign control over its population.

The Rape Survivor as the Abject: Reinforcing Bare Life

The collective excision of the rape survivor, as illustrated through the comfort women case, can further be understood within the literature on abjectivity. The rape survivor is identified, in Agamben terms, as homo sacer or an abject. Rape survivors are often seen as the abject because they are outside of the ideal of how femininity is defined.117 The act of rape socially brands the woman, where the stigma and shame that is attached to the act forces her to abide by the marginalized space that is permitted to the abject.118 For instance, Korean women who were forcibly recruited for the comfort women system were once expected to abide by the rule of chastity. Chastity defines the role Korean women have within a patriarchal society, it reinforces a woman’s role as an obedient daughter and a subject to the patriarchal system.119 The systematic use of rape, in the case of the militarized comfort system, meant that an identity of chastity is no longer possible for these women. Women who have been exposed to the military comfort system, despite its forcible nature, were originally branded as unworthy women.


118 Diken and Lausten, “Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War.”

under the Korean patriarchal system. The shame and social stigma instilled upon the rape survivor suggests that the act physically marks her body and brands her as an abject, or homo sacer. In patriarchal societies where female chastity represents the foundation of order, rape damages and dissolves this categorical identity of understanding. As a result, rape forces the woman outside of the community and brands her as an abject while removing her from the rigid categories that a patriarchal or militarized society allocates to women.

However, rape has a multifarious meaning to a victimized nation. The reaction of the Korean Council in the 1990s suggests that the rape of a woman symbolizes the suffering of a community. As illustrated in the comfort women case, women are defined as being synonymous with the future of the nation, or come to represent what a nation is. The identity of the former comfort women were (re)constructed by the Korean government and sustained by the Korean Council. In the case of post-war recovery, the rape of the Korean comfort women is taken on by the nation as a rape of their women. The suffering experienced by the Korean women is exemplified in the victimized nation’s identity that is Korea. The rape of their women is thus considered the rape of the nation, so to speak, and was used to pursue its own political agenda. However, the Korean nation, as well as the feminist community, contradicts itself by rejecting and relegating the rape survivor to the margins.

This rejection of the rape survivor can be said to reinforce the power of the sovereign within the given territory. Taking the literature on bare life into consideration, the rejection of the rape survivor can be seen as a method in which the community recovers from the ordeal of conflict. The presence of the rape survivor and the communal acknowledgement that she was subject to rape works as a reminder to the community that it was subject to war. Julia Kristeva likens this phenomenon to the feeling when someone gets when they encounter something that provokes disgust, such as a corpse. She writes that “[s]uch wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit.... the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything.” Here, Kristeva attempts to theorize the feeling one gets when they encounter something, such

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120 Ibid.
121 Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Infidel (London: Pocket Books, 2007). Infidel provides an interesting example of how the importance of female chastity has been constructed.
as a corpse, that reminds humans of their vulnerability. She describes the idea that when most individuals confront a corpse, they are most likely to be repulsed. This repulsion occurs because the corpse represents an object that was once alive, but is now cast out of the cultural world in which the person understands. As Kristeva writes, “[t]he corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject.”

Comparing the rape survivor to Kristeva’s idea of the abject and Agamben’s notion of *homo sacer* suggests that communities reject the raped survivor in order to reinstate sovereign power. Similar to Giorgio Agamben’s *homo sacer*, Kristeva’s idea of the abject suggests that the rape survivor is not entirely outside of society. Rather, the rape survivor is kept within society to help distinguish the difference between who can be classified as belonging to the inside and the outside. Thus, the rape survivor becomes a scapegoat or spectacle that is used to discipline and remind the society of what occurred in conflict. Within this understanding, the rejection of the survivor of wartime sexual violence is a method to ensure that the community survives. Similarly, as will be addressed in subsequent chapters, the rejection of children born of wartime sexual violence ensures that order within a community is maintained. As a consequence, the rape survivor and child are immersed in the “gray area” where meaning collapses. Their exclusion is used as a political object to define the structure of society. They are used to define who belongs within and who does not belong. Agamben suggests that society defines itself through those that are the “exception” — those that exist within elements of bare life and marginalized into the corners of limited existence. As shown through the actions of the Korean Council, the movement embodied the identity of the rape victim for nationalistic purposes. The rape survivor fits within such an existence because the community in which she once belonged has now relegated her as an abject, a formless being that is neither alive nor dead, but is central in defining what is real and what is not.

Connecting the rape survivor with *homo sacer* highlights the activity of state and community during times of national recovery. In doing so, it suggests that exploitative

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123 Ibid., 4.
124 See Taylor, Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s “Dirty War”. Taylor brings in to the idea of the spectacle in her analysis of rape used during the “Dirty Wars” in Argentina. She connotes that having a visual reminder of what occurred works to discipline the nation, or coerce those who have not been harmed that danger is imminent if one steps outside of the boundaries.

125 Agamben, State of Exception.
power relations that exist in war can be extended into peace time. It exposes how the nation in which the rape survivor once belonged to is responsible for (re)subjecting her to an ostracized identity. This identity is external to how she perceives herself and is often in contradiction to her emancipation. Consequently, this subjectification and forced identity is enforced through the shame and stigma instilled by the community. The shame teaches the rape survivor to conform and abide by existing categories of understanding. She is relegated an abject and can be used as a political spectacle to discipline a society recovering from war. The treatment of the rape survivor thus becomes central to the understanding of contemporary warfare.

The existence of war rape survivors within the state of abjection serves as an experimental space that blurs the boundaries between what is considered to be “human and inhuman.” A survivor of rape calls into question the actions of the perpetrators while also drawing on the responsibility their state and community has in minimizing the secondary sources of trauma, such as further psychological harm. However, as the examples of excising rape survivors from families, the community and the nation suggests, their own communities not only stigmatize them but create further loopholes for recovery. Such actions by their community demonstrate how the rape survivors are pushed to the confines of bare life. This exclusion and removal of the survivor signifies the society’s inability to accept this abject. It also creates a space where the community can construct itself as innocent of committing the same harm while being freed of the responsibility to deal with the repercussions. An example of this is the ordeal behind the comfort women case. Further examples include how children born of wartime sexual violence are treated within their community, by their mothers, and the international community.

To state it simply, there are multiple narratives within the process of reconciliation and national recovery. In the case of war rape, the personal narrative of the survivor runs parallel to the narrative of the collective. However, the survivor of rape, for various reasons, may not fit in with the overall nature of national recovery. The rape survivor may exhibit an individual effort of recovery or an attempt to neglect the ordeal, and is deemed to be in direct conflict with what the nation attempts to achieve. Including the voices of those who are marginalized, nevertheless, suggests that

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126 Taylor, Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s "Dirty War".
there are multiple narratives. A recovery process that includes the voices of those who are left silenced or further marginalized by the recovery period would provide a clearer picture of what post-war reconciliation looks like.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter was to question the actions of the state and the international community through its treatment of the survivors of war rape. The actions of the state within the post-conflict era were called into question through an analysis of how it reinforced strict boundaries to politically contain the survivor of rape. In doing so, survivors suffer from the initial trauma of the rape while also being marginalized by her own community and nation. Through the literature on abjection, the identity of the war rape survivor was highlighted as the central component in understanding the actions and responsibilities of the state. Understanding the rape survivor as an abject allows for the questioning of how her community has strategically used her as a political spectacle in order to emancipate itself. While disciplining the survivor’s actions, the state and nation regains confidence in repositioning itself as the sovereign.

The argument presented in this chapter provides an important framework for the proceeding chapters on the children who are born of wartime sexual violence. The theories of exclusion can be used to explain why particular groups of war-affected children are not protected by the rights regime. Similar to their mothers, children born of wartime sexual violence embody an identity that may threaten the recovery of the nation. As noted in Chapter One, children born of wartime sexual violence remind the nation that it was once a victim of conflict and of rape. In many cases, children born of wartime sexual violence are thought to take on the identity of the father. Often, members of the community believe that these children will grow up to retaliate against the nation and continue on with the campaign of violence that was initiated by their fathers. Thus, a community often expels the child in order for it to survive. The examples of ostracization experienced by children born of wartime sexual violence are illustrations of survival within bare life.

Similar to their mothers, the identities of children born of wartime sexual violence are politically loaded. This chapter has argued that rape survivors are often
ostracized by institutions that seek to rebuild the nation. Even within some feminist efforts, the voices of the rape survivor are silenced. More specifically, the example of the Korean Council and the comfort women illustrated that only individuals who abide by the ideas of the sovereign will be heard. Individuals who stepped out of the existing agenda were often not heard. In a similar vein, the children of war rape survivors suffer the same fate as their mothers. Children born of wartime sexual violence add to the complication of war. First, they remind the nation of the suffering. Second, they are also reminders to their mothers of the suffering they experienced. Third, these children challenge existing understandings of identity within the community. These three factors contribute to the exclusion of these children. They fail to represent what the nation identifies as a child. Thus, in order for the nation to recover, a child of wartime sexual violence is often neglected and/or ostracized.

The following chapters will discuss how children born of wartime sexual violence are excluded from existing paradigms concerning children. Chapter Five discusses the concept of the child and how childhood has been framed as a stage of development and innocence. Within this definition, children are believed to exist within a space where they are protected and free from the complicated aspects of adult life. However, children who fail to adhere to the existing definition of childhood are often constructed as “un-childlike” and excluded from dominant discussions considering children. Subsequently, Chapters Six and Seven apply such theories of exclusion to the child rights regime and the work of child-centric humanitarian organizations. The chapters argue that despite the availability of programs and rights relating to children, particular groups of war-affected children do not benefit from them. The reasoning behind their exclusion is because existing rights regimes and humanitarian programs are unable to accommodate the complicated identities of particular groups of war-affected children. These children do not fit within their programs and protections and as a result they are forgotten. Children born of wartime sexual violence is one such group of war-affected children.
Part Two:

Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence and International Relations
Chapter Five:

Theorizing Children in Global Politics

The childhood shows the man
As morning shows the day.

- John Milton\(^1\)

Children, if defined as people under the age of eighteen,\(^2\) may be said to make up half of the world’s population. Despite their numerical representation in census data records, the subject of children has only been mentioned in passing in international politics. This chapter argues that the neglect of child-centric issues is synonymous to the relationship feminist International Relations (IR) has with mainstream IR. Simply stated, childhood as a concept is gendered feminine and thus neglected by the mainstream. This gendered relationship demonstrates the inequality between the public and the private sphere. Within this relationship, issues related to children have long been silenced because they are seen to be irrelevant to the political-public sphere. Having considered this idea, this chapter will continue to explore the complexities of feminism’s contribution to IR. In doing so, it will use a post-structural feminist approach to analyze how the concept of childhood is constructed. The reason why a post-structural feminist approach is used is because it can help deconstruct childhood,

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as well as theorize the exclusion of non-state actors such as women and children. In short, a post-structural feminist approach can help expose the power relations behind the process of constructing childhood as a concept.

Children have often been thought of as non-political and thus having nothing to contribute to the international sphere. However, emerging research concerning childhood suggests that “children are a group of actors worthy” of political recognition. Contemporary conflict, for instance, has witnessed the political participation of children as activists, peace builders, and combatants. In addition, children are also seen to take on roles as sex slaves, messengers and labourers during conflict. Thus, an analysis of international politics remains incomplete without a consideration of issues related to children.

Central to the silencing of children in IR is the framing of childhood as an idealized state that is free from the complications of the adult world. Children’s identities remain framed by their mental and physical underdevelopment that is associated with age. In many respects, age is not a sufficient enough indicator to differentiate between childhood and its perceived opposite, adulthood. Age, as an indicator of childhood, does not consider the socially constructed aspects related to children’s identities. Childhood, rather, remains a unique and transient period of intense physical, emotional, and mental development that varies across time, cultures, and geographical space.

To demonstrate how ideas surrounding childhood are gendered, this chapter will first engage in the literature on the construction of childhood. It will trace the development of the concept of childhood through the philosophical contributions made by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The relevance of Locke’s and Rousseau’s contributions to the contemporary concept of childhood are then contested through the

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3 Children have often been associated with inhabiting the private sphere, under the protection of adults, and considered to be consumers of the feminine space. Feminist contributions to IR, seen particularly through radical feminism, have reinforced the role of children as being within the private sphere. Radical feminists have suggested that children’s interests are represented in conjunction with the concerns related to women and motherhood.

4 McEvoy-Levy, Troublemakers or Peacemakers?: Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building.

5 Watson, “Can There Be a "Kindered" Peace?.”

6 Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations, 1-3; London, One Day the Soldiers Came: Voices of Children in War, 1-38; Wells, Childhood in a Global Perspective, 1-20.

7 Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding; Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education; Rousseau, Émile; Archard, Children: Rights and Childhood; Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
burgeoning work on children and international politics. This includes, but is not limited to, the work of Philippe Ariès,\(^9\) and Neil Postman,\(^10\) as well as more recent contributions by David Archard,\(^11\) Alison Watson,\(^12\) and Helen Brocklehurst.\(^13\) This section explores how the concept of childhood has developed. In doing so, it questions whether this concept of childhood can represent particular groups of war-affected children.

Secondly, this chapter takes a closer look at the construction of childhood. It does so through an analysis of two autobiographical texts written by war-affected children (who are now adults). The construction of childhood will be explored using the controversy behind Ishmael Beah's book *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (2007), as well as Kien Nguyen's memoir, *The Unwanted* (2001). Beah's autobiography tells the story of his experience as a child soldier in Sierra Leone. Nguyen's memoir is a reflection of his identity as a Vietnamese Amerasian who migrated to the United States. Both autobiographical books account for the conflicted identities children experience in international politics. More importantly, their experiences after the publication of their autobiographies reveal how institutions and the public questioned the accuracy of their accounts. Beah's and Nguyen's books illustrate how voices that fail to comply with existing understandings of childhood are often excluded as illegitimate. Whereas the Beah controversy has been widely reported in international newspapers, the Nguyen account originates from an interview I conducted in January 2009.

### Childhood as a Concept

The theoretical conception and framework of childhood is relatively recent in the field of IR. Although the idea of childhood has long been excluded from IR, disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology have been at the forefront of theorizing childhood and children's identities.\(^14\) Despite IR's reluctance to see its

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12 Watson, "Children and International Relations."
importance, the subject of children has not been absent from the activities occurring in the international sphere. During the twentieth-century, international law recognized childhood as a separate state to adulthood, where the former is believed to endure a stage of development and protection away from the harms of adult life. Subsequently, 1979 was declared the “year of the child,” and the twentieth-century became the “century of the child.” This recognition of child-centric issues became the responsibility of state governments through the signing of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The near universal ratification of the UNCRC meant that norms concerning childhood are widely recognized throughout the world. The idea of childhood, however, remains under-theorized within the discipline of IR.

Most contemporary understandings of childhood suggest that it is a relatively protected stage of development, where children are expected to engage in activities of learning and experimentation. Within this understanding, childhood is understood as a regulated space in which children are to grow up carefree, safe, secure, and happy. This understanding of childhood as a protected sphere of existence is clearly stated in international law and policies concerning children. In addition, dominant ideas concerning childhood have emphasized the difference between adulthood and childhood. Childhood is seen as a stage of knowledge acquisition that will eventually transform a child into an adult. In order to ensure that this is possible, children must be segregated and removed from the harsh realities of the adult world and protected from social danger. Within this understanding, childhood is defined according to a

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20 Archard, *Children: Rights and Childhood*.
21 Boydjen, “Childhood and the Policy Makers: A Comparative Perspective on the Globalization of Childhood,” 186-186; Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*.  

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range of appropriate "contexts, experiences, relationships and behaviours." 22 Jo Boyden explains that the contemporary understanding of childhood is one in which children are nurtured and loved and where children are believed to be contained and protected in the private sphere. 23

However, the concept of childhood cannot be contained within one overarching understanding of children’s identities. As this section outlines, theories concerned with the concept of childhood have changed throughout history. Ariès, for example, argues that childhood as a concept did not exist until the seventeenth-century. 24 In contrast, other theorists such as Archard note that modes of childhood did exist but the space for theorizing the concept of childhood did not. Archard suggests that there "are also good reasons for thinking that all societies at all times have had the concept of childhood. But there have been different conceptions of childhood." 25 Thus, childhood as a concept is a social construction where some societies contest the age in which a child enters into adulthood whereas other cultures measure this transition through experience.

**John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Current understandings of the concept of childhood contains ideas from the philosophical traditions offered by John Locke. Locke (1632-1704) has been praised as the most influential and important figure in the history of English-speaking philosophy. 26 His work has been recognized to influence the workings of government, the tradition of liberalism, and empiricism. Although Locke did not write on the subject of childhood specifically, his ideas on childhood have been raised throughout his main literary works. Locke wrote about the concept of childhood through the foundations of knowledge and the operations of civil government. His understandings of childhood are found scattered throughout his writing and cannot be found explicitly in a single

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24 Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*.
26 Ibid.
work. However, Locke’s ideas on childhood have been considered contradictory. The contradictions that are highlighted in his work have a lot to do with the tensions within the concept of childhood itself, as well as, the different subjects in which he was commenting on. Nevertheless, within Locke’s writing childhood is constructed as a stage where children are recipients of an ideal upbringing and are transformed into citizens. Locke also downplays the identities of children by suggesting that they are imperfect reasoners and “blank sheets” to be filled by experience.

In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Locke provides a treatise of understanding how the human mind and acquisition of knowledge works. He argues that human knowledge is only acquired from one source – experience. Here, Locke denies any knowledge that is biologically inherent. According to Locke, babies are born into the world without any idea of how society works. In addition, young children also display no awareness of knowledge. This understanding is based on the idea that children have “no awareness of those ideas, theorems or propositions which other philosophers had claimed to be innate.” The reasoning behind the lack of awareness children have is because of the inexperience associated with their age. Children have no awareness of knowledge because they are not exposed to the experiences that can help generate a sense of rationality. According to Locke, if knowledge is acquired from experience, it is only acquired gradually. Consequently, humans become knowledgeable reasoners through experience. Childhood is seen as a stage in the developmental process with adulthood as its end goal. Children are therefore seen to be imperfect and incomplete versions of adults.

Furthermore, in his critique of government, Locke likens the development of a child as an important phase in producing reasonable adults for the state. He writes in *Two Treatise of Government* (1698) that a civil government is founded upon the reason of citizens. Reason is produced through rational methods in raising children to become valuable citizens. Locke’s idea concerning civil government presumes that adults are reasonable, whereas children lack reason. Locke adopts this idea from his own observation of his civil government as founded upon the democratic principles of consent and reason. Locke asserts that adults are responsible for educating children to

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27 Ibid., 1.
28 Discussion of Locke in Ibid., 2.
29 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.
be future citizens who will create subsequent rational civil governments. Since children lack reason, it is the responsibility of parents to educate and guide their children.\textsuperscript{31} Locke's empiricism holds that the human mind may, at birth, be presumed to be a blank piece of paper that is void of all characters and ideas. It is only through experience and guidance that children are able to transform into adults.

Locke's ideas on transforming children into adults are further seen in Locke's \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education} (1693). Here, Locke published letters he had written to his friend Edward Clarke. In the letters, Locke prescribes methods that Clarke could use to educate and guide his own son. Understanding that children are future citizens, Locke ensures a program that includes the necessities for producing a generation of rational thinkers. The advice he offers ranges from diet, through to the discussion of punishment for misconduct, to a suggested programme of studies. Guidance through reason is central to Locke's prescription on how to raise a young child. Locke insists that a child's needs and interests should be reasoned with. Thus, parents should use good judgement when raising a child and not simply beat or coerce the child into conformity. This method is achieved through educating the child. The principle aim of education is to produce a virtuous person who is able to control one's character and adhere to rational self-control.\textsuperscript{32} Locke's prescription assures that parenting through reason would ensure that the child would eventually recognize his or her effect and be able to govern his or her behaviour in accordance with reason.

Locke's understanding of childhood, however, is not without its limitations. Locke's opinion of childhood relies on its status as being different to adulthood. Children are assumed as not yet fully rational and will only achieve this stage through the right experience and guidance. Locke's famous assumption about children is that they are born as "blank slates" or "white Paper, void of all Characters, without any Ideas."\textsuperscript{33} It is only through experience that children are transformed into rational adults who are also virtuous citizens. However, Locke's assumption that children are different to adults is based on "acquired" knowledge, rather than knowledge and rationale that appears to be innate. Locke denies that such ideals that are natural, but rather concentrates on ideas related to the rational development of the mind. Locke notes that pre-natal knowledge of pleasure and pain is not the equivalent to the knowledge that

\textsuperscript{31} Archard, \textit{Children: Rights and Childhood}, 2.
\textsuperscript{32} Archard, \textit{Children: Rights and Childhood}; Locke, \textit{Some Thoughts Concerning Education}.
\textsuperscript{33} Locke, \textit{An Essay Concerning Human Understanding}, II.i.
adults possess. He is more concerned with claims that a child does not understand principles such as “2+2=4” or philosophical questions asking if “God exists?” In Locke’s opinion, such ideas are what define a rational adult from a child. He assumes that the transition of childhood to adulthood is acquired through learning and development. In so doing, Locke gives the authority to parents to guide and teach children to become reasonable adults. This assumes that adults are able to reason with the knowledge that they have acquired.

Following Locke’s assumption that adulthood and childhood are different, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) adopts similar views in his work on children. Rousseau has been recognized as pioneering the modern view of childhood. He defends the status of childhood as a stage of development where children are “children.” He criticizes those “seeking the man in the child without thinking of what he is before being a man”, insisting that ‘childhood has its (place) in the order of human life. The man must be considered in the man, and the child in the child’. To Rousseau, childhood is a separate stage of development that is not (yet) adulthood. Rousseau also has his own prescription on what childhood is. Rousseau believes that childhood is a moral stage of innocence, which is “close to Nature and deserving the freedom to express itself.” To Rousseau, childhood is also a stage that is free from the corruption associated with “social convention.” In this vein, Rousseau demands that education recognize the identity and peculiar nature of the child, that is a state of innocence free from the corruption that social controls bring. This entails that children be seen as “children” and not adults. Childhood is also understood as having its own special traits and necessities.

In Emile: or, On Education (1792), Rousseau attempts to develop a manifesto for a “child-centred” education. Emile is a fictitious account on how to properly raise a young boy (Emile) to become a man. Within the book, Rousseau engages in theories concerning education and how it should be put into practice in a boy’s life. Childhood, according to Rousseau, is a “state of nature,” an anarchical state of being that is without the guidance of rational adults. Rousseau describes children as “animals” at a young age, who must be allowed to explore unhindered by the burdens of formal education.

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34 Archard, Children: Rights and Childhood, 3.
35 Ibid., 22.
36 Rousseau, Emile, 34,80 in Archard, Children, Rights and Childhood, 22.
37 Rousseau, Emile.
38 Archard, Children: Rights and Childhood, 22.
and strict moral instruction. Emile is described as growing up within this “state of nature,” but is transformed into a man through the gradual education and guidance offered by Rousseau. Rousseau asserts that only rational adults who are engaged in a liberal education hold the duty to transform children into valuable citizens. Similar to Locke, Rousseau draws on the idea that children are born as “blank slates” and require adults to teach them how to become proper citizens. As discussed earlier, similar assumptions have been made about women which liken them to children.

Locke’s and Rousseau’s arguments concerning the difference between childhood and adulthood are widely accepted today. Within institutions and rights regimes, childhood has been accepted as a separate state to adulthood. Childhood is also understood as a distinct sphere where children receive treatment based on their needs that are different from adults. For instance, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognizes the needs of children. The UNCRC defines children as anyone who is under the age of eighteen. Similarly, domestic laws in most Western liberal democracies also conform to the idea that childhood consists of someone under the age of eighteen. The insight offered by Western thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau clearly suggest that childhood is a “state of being” that is separate from adulthood. This understanding of childhood defines adulthood as an achieved state. Although research concerning the different developmental stages of childhood remains questionable, it is widely believed that children are different from adults, where adulthood is seen as “being coterminous with a mature or developed norm.”

Contemporary Debates on Childhood

Childhood is further discussed in Phillipe Ariès’ book *Centuries of Childhood* (1962). Ariès’ book provides the first general historical study of childhood. More specifically, the book was published “at a singular moment when there were both political and intellectual pressures to appreciate and defend the particular character of

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Although Ariès' work has been criticized as highly flawed, it is worth reviewing his contribution to the concept of childhood.

Ariès argues that the concept of childhood did not exist in pre-modern Europe. In comparing children in the Middle Ages to the contemporary era, Ariès makes the argument that younger members of society were not considered to exist within a special or distinct social status. Although infants were recognized as fragile and vulnerable beings, Ariès argues that parents were indifferent to them and treated death with casualness. This perhaps contributed to the high rate of infant mortality during this era. According to Ariès, children during the Middle Ages were not considered any different to adults. After the age of seven, Ariès notes that children were regarded as smaller versions of adults. Children, he writes, were expected to behave and take on the responsibilities of adults after they were weaned. Within pre-modern Europe, children dressed like adults, spoke like adults, and were expected to behave like adults.

According to Ariès, the formal division between children and adults did not exist, nor did different stages of childhood such as pre-adolescence, youth, or young-adulthood. Children, like adults, were expected to engage in activities according to their physical and mental capacities. Ariès' argument is sustained by his examples of how children were required to work extensive hours in factories, within the domestic sphere, attend to farms, and give birth to children.

The evidence Ariès uses to sustain the argument that there were no differences between childhood and adulthood in pre-modern Europe is taken from his analysis of portraiture. In an analysis of paintings, children were portrayed "only as miniature scaled-down adults, with no representative appreciations of their particular and distinctive attributes." Alternatively, Ariès observes that children dressed in reduced versions of the clothes worn by adults. Games that were played by children were also common among adults. Similarly, adult games were also played by children. Unlike the contemporary era, Ariès argues that children did not have their own separate space

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43 Arghard, Children: Rights and Childhood, 15.
44 Watson, "Children and International Relations"; Wells, Childhood in a Global Perspective; Brocklehurst, Who's Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
45 Ariès, Centuries of Childhood.
46 Ibid., 50-61.
47 Ariès, Centuries of Childhood.
48 Ibid., 16-17, 33-38.
49 Archard, Children: Rights and Childhood, 16.
50 Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, 62-99.
in the pre-modern era. Children interacted with adults and were considered no different to them.

Ariès’ argument proceeds to suggest that this idealized-separate state of childhood, that contemporary society now recognizes, only began when children were no longer seen as viable economic commodities. As noted, children were seen to contribute to the household through labour. However, technology developed during the industrial period meant that labour from younger members of society was no longer needed. Younger members were soon removed from adult-like tasks, such as working in the factories or farms. Childhood thus became known as a period that was different and separate from adulthood. At this time, childhood, as a protected state of development, emerged through the growth of “new attitudes of ‘coddling’ towards children, which stressed their special nature and needs.” Formal education or longer-periods of schooling became the prerequisite for children to assume responsibilities as an adult.

The argument that Ariès sets forth remains ambiguous. Ariès’ argument that childhood simply did not exist in the pre-modern era relies, in part, on the claim that parents were indifferent to the death of their children. Ariès however neglects the fact that the medical field did not recognize the needs of children, nor was it developed to ensure their survival. In contrast to the arguments made by Ariès, Archard complicates Ariès’ idea of childhood. Archard states that “a development of modern predisposition to be concerned about infants predates any significant decline in the high infant mortality rate which he holds responsible for parental indifference.” In asserting this claim, Archard simply suggests that Ariès’ argument is “chronologically imprecise.” Ariès argues that education systems and methods of raising children only came about with the idea of children as a concept. However, Archard disagrees by arguing that the “emergence of an educational system and the preeminence of the family are presented as following from a society’s having a ‘concept of childhood’. Yet these developments are also seen as the preconditions for the acquisition of the concept.” In Archard’s words, Ariès assumes that accepting childhood as a concept opened up a wealth of new methods of socializing and disciplining children. Childhood, however, emerged from

51 Ariès, Centuries of Childhood.
53 Archard, Children: Rights and Childhood, 18.
54 Ibid.
national programs regarding the well-being of the population as well as changing values regarding younger members of society.

Karen Wells further questions the legitimacy of Ariès' argument. She notes that Ariès' assumptions made concerning childhood were made from analyzing portraits that included children. Wells highlights that Ariès' point discounted the fact that portraiture did not necessarily represent the social status of individuals in pre-modern Europe. In her book *Childhood in a Global Perspective* (2009), she argues that Ariès' analysis of portraiture only provides a selective perspective of children. Portraiture was only a reflection of a select population of society, such as those who were financially able to afford to have portraits done. More specifically, Ariès ignores the fact that changes concerning childhood as depicted in art may not have anything to do with the concept of childhood. Rather changes in how children are perceived may be due to general developments in art rather than its representation of the social environment.

Childhood, as a constructed state, is supported in Neil Postman's book *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1982). Similar to Ariès, Postman notes that the current ideal of childhood as a protected state is only about four hundred years old. He writes that "[u]nlike infancy, childhood is a social artifact, not a biological category." Postman also reaffirms that childhood was developed as a bourgeois concept that was later passed down to the lower class. This emerging notion of childhood was only a reflection of a particular section of society. It was only the economically advantaged upper class who had the time and money for "childhood." Children belonging to the poor-sections of society were still required to contribute to the family to ensure its survival. As these trends defused downwards through society, this idealized form of childhood became more widely accepted.

With reference to the creation of formal schooling for children, Postman argues that childhood evolved along with the printing press. Printed literature provided a number of advantages to the development of childhood. Postman claims that the printing press allowed for the mass distribution of literature that permitted the dissemination of social norms or standards. Without the distribution of mass literature,

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55 Wells, *Childhood in a Global Perspective*.
57 Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, xi.

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Postman notes, the medieval population did not have a viable standard in which to differentiate between who was considered an adult and a child, nor were they able to differentiate between the different stages of childhood. Printed material thus provided a method in which to measure the difference between childhood and adulthood. Postman’s argument advances Ariès’ thesis. Postman does not explicitly say that childhood did not exist in pre-modern Europe, rather he notes that there was not a method in which childhood can be measured. The printing press offered a way in which the differences between childhood and adulthood can be measured.

For instance, printed material provided a foundation to evaluate a child’s cognitive ability to read and learn. Printed material was seen to hold knowledge and secrets that were only understood by those who were able to possess the cognitive ability to do so. He notes that literature contained in itself a wealth of valuable secrets that were only to be understood by adults who were able to access this information. Postman writes that “[i]n a literate world children must become adults. But in a nonliterate world there is no need to distinguish sharply between the child and the adult, for there are few secrets, and the culture does not need to provide training in how to understand itself.” Adults, who were literate, assumed the role of “real” adults; whereas those who were not able to read were confined to the status of “childhood.” As Postman confirms, “[c]hildhood began with the task of learning how to read. Indeed, the word began with the task of learning how to read. Indeed, the word child was frequently used to describe adults who could not read, adults who were regarded as intellectually childish.”

The comparison made by Ariès assumes that the division between adults and children exists in every society in the contemporary era. His assumption does not understand how the conceptions of childhood are affected by geographical space, time, and context. In contrast to Ariès, Archard suggests that pre-modern societies held neither our present day conceptions of the child, nor the visible social support

59 Postman, The Disappearance of Childhood.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., 13-17.
62 Ibid., 13.
63 Ibid., 42.
structures that modern day society has created to support children’s rights. Ariès’ argument thus relies on an understanding of children as being different from how they are treated in contemporary society.

Childhood, however, remains a heavily contested subject. The different insights offered by Ariès and Postman suggest that ideas of childhood are socially constructed. Their insights also suggest that the association of childhood with development and protection is a recent phenomenon. Also, their work suggests that this understanding of childhood is constructed and specific rather than considered to be natural and universally applicable. Ariès argues that childhood did not exist in pre-modern Europe, and when it did emerge it was mainly a practice of the upper class. Similarly, Postman observes that with the dissemination of printed material, ideas became norms that were later passed down to the lower classes.

Helen Brocklehurst further contributes to the idea of childhood. She writes in *Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations* (2006) that childhood as a concept evolved through the process of nation-building. She recognizes that in most Western liberal democracies, childhood is accepted as a state that needs to be protected from harm. However, Brocklehurst also notes that the conception of childhood as a protected state and the institutions that are used to ensure that children are protected is a recent phenomenon. The beginning of the twentieth-century witnessed an era of imperialism, conquest and colonization, where the state became ever more dependent on the strength of a healthy population. Healthy adults ensured that the state had a good supply of strong soldiers and workers. High infant mortality and slow population growth in Western Europe was a cause of concern because it meant a lack of healthy adults that the state could use as soldiers to defend the nation. The need for a healthy generation of adults contributed to the development of specialized medicine for children, specific nurturing activities, and the ideal of a healthy childhood. Medical advances soon grew into separate institutions and structures to ensure the well-being of children. Although the development of a separate medical or pediatric field was necessary, it was not apparent until the demands of war made it known. For example, Brocklehurst notes that the Boer War and the First World War witnessed an increasing

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66 Archard, *Children: Rights and Childhood*.
68 Ibid., 6.
population of frail citizens that would be detrimental to the future survival of the country. Thus, at this time, the difference between adulthood and childhood became apparent as scientific evidence proved that healthy adults (soldiers) needed sufficient care and nutrition in their formative years.69

In his 2004 book *Children: Rights and Childhood*, Archard furthers the argument that the concept of childhood is socially constructed.70 Archard’s conception of childhood is compatible with existing debates concerning children and politics today. He explains that the concept of childhood is dependent on the idea that “children be distinguishable from adults in respect of some unspecified set of attributes.”71 Childhood is thus the specification of this set of attributes, which remains unclear and open to interpretation. Archard attempts to conceptualize childhood by drawing out a general timeline in which the different stages of development can be measured. First, Archard notes that there are “boundaries” of childhood. These boundaries include when childhood begins and ends and concerns how childhood is distinguished from adulthood.72 Archard notes that this idea of a boundary outlines a vague “age of majority” where certain responsibilities and roles are allocated to specific children. Second, Archard further sustains that there are “dimensions” of childhood. The dimensions of childhood include the:

moral and juridical perspective from which persons may be judged incapable, in virtue or age, of being responsible for their deeds; an epistemological or metaphysical viewpoint from which persons, in virtue of their immaturity, are seen as lacking in adult reason or knowledge; and a political angle from which young humans are thought unable to contribute towards and participate in the running of the community.73

Lastly, Archard notes that there are “divisions” within childhood. The divisions can be understood as a “human’s early years, that period from birth to adulthood, can be subdivided into a number of different periods, and the subcategory of ‘childhood’ can bear

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69 Ibid., 5.
70 He reviews the theories offered by Locke, Rousseau and Ariès and suggests that childhood cannot be narrowly defined as existing and non-existing. Nor can it be understood as all children are born without any awareness of the world, as Locke notes.
72 Ibid., 24.
73 Ibid., 25.
different relations to these." The current understanding of what childhood is, especially amongst philosophical circles in the Western world, is that childhood is essentially a "comparative negative: an individual who is not yet an adult." In addition, Brocklehurst notes that available research confirms that there are two ways of understanding the maturation process of children. For one, prior to becoming adults, children have essential "child qualities" and need specific nurturing and teaching to transform them into adults. On the other hand, children are understood as a "partial" or "lesser" version of the adult, with adult qualities in place but yet to develop without assistance. Both views see childhood as different to adulthood, and a stage that children can grow into. This view also assumes that childhood ends when full adulthood is attained. Brocklehurst notes that "[i]n the former interpretation children’s qualities are gradually transformed, in the latter, adulthood outgrows childhood." In noting the divisions of childhood and adulthood, Brocklehurst suggests that such views fail to recognize how traits associated with childhood can extend into adulthood. Nor do such views understand the fluid nature of both stages of being, while assuming that adulthood is the end of development.

In Archard's work on the theory of childhood, the former developmental model of children is sustained. He emphasizes that there is a sudden transition from childhood to adulthood. This sudden transition is reflected in existing institutions and regimes such as the UNCRC. The UNCRC sets an international standard in which the treatment of children can be measured. Similar to other international conventions and statutes, the UNCRC has defined children narrowly as individuals under the age of eighteen. As questioned, age remains a narrow and often insufficient variable to measure childhood and the differences that exist across cultures, history, and geography. For example, the UNCRC's guideline of eighteen suggests that childhood ends and adulthood begins at eighteen. This understanding obscures the diversity of experiences and aptitudes held by individuals between the ages of zero and seventeen.

74 Ibid., 26.
77 Ibid., 4.
It also assumes that adults over the age of eighteen are able to adopt the characteristics that are associated with adulthood.

A guideline based on age does not account for the diversity of roles that children have within international politics. Regardless of age, children participate in politics in a variety of different ways. For instance, some children partake in extensive working hours in sweatshops, are unaccompanied minors seeking for refuge, become primary guardians of siblings, or caretakers of parents suffering from illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, or are parents themselves.79 Thus, the guideline of eighteen suggests that prior to this age, a child should be sheltered within a protected space where they can enjoy the childhood that is allocated to children. The guideline of eighteen is arguably much more in line with a Western-notion of children as someone being in full-time education and under the protection of parents until this time.80 For those children who live in non-Western societies and may have been looking after siblings since the age of seven while also working in factories since the age of eleven, the guideline of eighteen obscures the wealth of experiences such children may experience. Consequently, this view ignores that the source of what childhood represents remains deeply embedded in myths and socio-political structures of particular societies.

The current conception of a child “has been to a considerable degree infused with what are essentially myths or imaginative projections, deriving from a mixture of cultural and ideological sources.”81 The conception of childhood is, thus, a socially constructed idea that is separate from adulthood. Theories offered by Locke and Rousseau, as well as more contemporary writers on childhood, have revealed that childhood is difficult to define. What childhood has evolved into is a reflection of what a particular society believes childhood to be. As Ariès and Postman have argued, the construction of childhood is a state of being that was created by the upper class and then passed down to the lower class with time. What is considered the stages of


80 Watson, “Can There Be a ’Kindered’ Peace?.”

childhood is defined by adults rather than by children themselves. It is the meaning adults give to childhood that makes it what it is, rather than the other way around.

The different and conflicting aspects of childhood discussed above suggest that childhood cannot be conceptualized as a narrow concept. The concept of childhood and children's identities change. Research concerning children suggests that it is difficult to develop a holistic definition of what childhood is. Charles London, a researcher and advocate of children's rights, questions the intentions behind the definition of childhood itself. He draws his example from the language used by humanitarian agencies. London notes that the language used by humanitarian organizations does not necessarily reflect the range of diverse and interchanging identities of children. Reflecting on his work with Refugees International, London argues that the label of childhood explains very little. Rather it captures the assumptions made by those who define what a child is. He notes that many humanitarian aid organizations identify children through different categories such as street children, internally displaced children, child soldiers, child head of households, unaccompanied minors, children in conflict with the law, children affected by HIV, and children accused of sorcery. In many places in the world, children who are the heads of a household may also be victims of HIV, as well as, street children. Instead of providing an understanding of what a child is, this type of "categorization is a way of processing children for targeted assistance." Often, children fit into more than one category.

In a similar vein, Boyden writes that our current understandings of childhood are culturally and historically bound to the "social preoccupations and priorities of capitalist countries of Europe and the United States." The model of childhood, which has influenced legislative frameworks, welfare institutions, and rights regimes are a reflection of the historical interplay of the Judeo-Christian belief system and changes in

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83 Brocklehurst, Who's Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
85 London, One Day the Soldiers Came: Voices of Children in War, 5; London, "Interview with Charles London."
87 London, One Day the Soldiers Came: Voices of Children in War, 5.
the "productive and democratic base of society corresponding with capitalist
development." Boyden further notes that childhood was not considered as a topic of
discussion until the time of religious reformation, when moralists and theologians
began to apply the principles of the doctrine to children in hopes of securing converts.
It was only during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that childhood was first
associated with the qualities of innocence and nobility. As will be discussed in later
chapters, values that secured the innocent, protected children evolved into ways to
monitor the parenting practices of the population.90

Deconstructing Childhood

The current concept of childhood is too narrow. Within it, children are
understood as primarily existing in the private sphere where they are "thought of as
naturally and typically resident in a non-political sphere, namely of the innocent, weak
and vulnerable, in families and houses, schools and workplaces."91 Similar to the earlier
assumptions about women, children are thought to exist in isolation where they are
completely divorced from the workings of the public-political sphere. However, the
construction of childhood as a concept is highly political.

More specifically, the construction of childhood is gendered.92 For instance, the
characteristics associated with childhood draws upon similar gendered connotations that
are associated with the private sphere. The traits of innocence and existing within the
"state of nature," as described by Rousseau, are associated with women as well. Such
understandings draw upon the gendered dichotomy of the public-private realm where
women and children are assumed to exist within the private realm. Within the private
sphere, women and children are believed to be sheltered from the daily workings of
politics. As a result, women's and children's interests are not considered. More so, the
construction of childhood relies on this gendered dichotomy. Returning to the work of

89 Ibid.
90 Boyden, "Childhood and the Policy Makers: A Comparative Perspective on the Globalization of
Childhood."
91 Brocklehurst, Who's Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations, 140.
92 Tickner, Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era, Enloe, Manoeuvres: The
International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives; Brocklehurst, Who's Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and
International Relations, 141.
Locke and Rousseau, children are to be taught or guided by an educated and rational adult. This construction assumes that adulthood, like masculinity and the public sphere, is valued over the perceived opposite: childhood, femininity, and the private sphere. Childhood as the opposite of adulthood assumes that adulthood is an achieved state.

Alison Watson’s critique of the concepts of childhood is useful here. Drawing on the gendered understanding of motherhood, Watson suggests that children are often forgotten because of the assumed role of mothers.\textsuperscript{93} Children are assumed to be consumers of the “feminine space” where mothers are responsible for caring and protecting them. In alignment with maternal feminist thinking, mainstream politics associates mothers with the private sphere where their role involves caring for children. Watson criticizes this understanding because it plays on particular gendered characteristics and roles while neglecting how the mainstream discourse silences and denatures particular actions that are thought to be incompatible with the public sphere. She succinctly writes, the “international discourse, in other words, can care less for children, because their mothers care more.”\textsuperscript{94}

How childhood has become regulated and constructed based on gendered terms will become apparent through the examples discussed in the next section. The next section will review the autobiographical works of Ishmael Beah and Kien Nguyen. The autobiographical accounts published by Beah and Nguyen reflect childhoods that deviate from the norm of a protected childhood. As will be discussed, both Beah’s and Nguyen’s accounts reveal that the development of childhood as a concept does not always guarantee the rights of children.

\section*{The Ishmael Beah Controversy: Questioning Childhood}

In 2007, former child soldier Ishmael Beah published his memoir, \textit{A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier}. Selling over 600,000 copies, Beah’s book soon became an international bestseller. The tale that Beah tells earns him the role of the official spokesperson on the experiences of a child combatant and an ambassador representing

\textsuperscript{93} Watson, “Children Born of Wartime Rape: Rights and Representations,” 24-25.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 25.
child soldiers to the United Nations. However, Beah’s ability to recall the tragic tale of his experience was challenged by an Australian newspaper. Several journalists from The Australian questioned the accuracy of Beah’s memoir, suggesting that the memoir could not be accurate because it was written in retrospect rather than at the time of the events. The criticism brought about by The Australian questioned the nature and construction of childhood, memory, and its application.

_A Long Way Gone_ traces Beah’s experience as a child growing up in war torn Sierra Leone. While growing up, Beah admits that his only encounter with conflict was through the stories told by refugees who had found temporary refuge in his village. He admits in the outset of the book that the “only wars I knew of were those that I had read about in books or seen in movies such as Rambo: First Blood, and the one in neighbouring Liberia that I had heard about on the BBC news.” Beah claims, as a child, he was unable to understand the extent of the violence in the news and stories told by adults. He writes that “[m]y imagination at ten years old didn’t have the capacity to grasp what had taken away the happiness of the refugees.” Similar to other children, Beah had hobbies and participated in social activities. At the age of eight, Beah was preoccupied with music, this hobby grew into forming a rap and dance group with his peers. In many respects, violence was absent from Beah’s early childhood. It was only in 1993, when he was twelve, that he experienced the first inclinations of conflict in his village.

The massacre that marked his descent into violence occurred while Beah and his peers were away in the neighbouring town of Mattru Jong. At this time, the militia attacked his village killing his father, as well as his mother who lived in the next village. Upon returning to the village, Beah was told that the “rebels attacked the mining areas in the afternoon. The sudden outburst of gunfire had caused people to run for their lives in different directions.” Children “ran home to look for parents who were wandering the streets in search of them. And as the gunfire intensified, people gave up

97 Ibid., 6.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., 9.
looking for their loved ones and ran out of town." Like many of the survivors, Beah and his peers became homeless and displaced.

For about a third of the book, Beah describes his experience as a child refugee. At the age of thirteen, in 1993, he "slept in abandoned villages, where [they] lay on the bare ground and hoped that the following day [they] would be able to find something other than raw cassava to eat." It appeared that Beah had to grow up instantly as he was confronted by death and starvation on his journey to find refuge. In one instance when he was attempting to venture into a new town, he describes that there "were dead bodies everywhere and flies were feasting on the congealed blood on them." The journey was also mired with threats from rebel militias.

Beah’s first encounter with child soldiers was through the rumours he heard about children patrolling the streets of Sierra Leone. He notes that "these children now patrolled in special units, killing and maiming civilians. There were those who had been victims of these terrors and carried fresh scars to show for it." As the civil war overtook Sierra Leone, Beah was forced to become a child soldier. He describes his first encounter in combat with fear: "I lay there with my gun pointed in front of me, unable to shoot. My index finger became numb. I felt as if the forest had turned upside down and I was going to fall off, so I clutched the base of a tree with one hand." According to Beah’s account he was a soldier for three years before he was placed in a United Nations rehabilitation camp. During his time in the government militia, Beah admits that he killed large numbers of people. Similar to other child soldiers, he smoked marijuana and sniffed amphetamines and "brown-brown," a mix of cocaine and gunpowder. Beah admits that he was not solely responsible for the violence he committed, rather it was the mix of drugs and brainwashing that forced him to commit such crimes. He cites that the pressures of the army prevented him from escaping on his own. Beah writes, "If you left, it was as good as being dead." In 1997, Beah fled

100 Ibid.
102 Ibid, 28.
103 Ibid, 37.
105 Ibid.
Freetown and eventually found his way to New York City. In New York, he lived with his foster mother, Laura Simms.\textsuperscript{106}

After the publication of \textit{A Long Way Gone} in 2007, Beah was nominated as the UN official spokesperson of child soldiering in Sierra Leone. However, his claim to represent the experiences of child soldiers did not go uncriticized. From January to February 2008, \textit{The Australian} published over a dozen articles criticizing the accuracy of Beah’s book. Accusations about the inaccuracy of Beah’s account as a child soldier first surfaced through the findings of Bob Lloyd, an Australian mining engineer who was working in Sierra Leone at the time of the conflict. Through conversations with the miners, Lloyd located a man working at the mine who claimed to be Beah’s father. Lloyd tried to contact Beah through his publishers and eventually contacted \textit{The Australian} newspaper as an attempt to give Beah the news. The man that Lloyd thought was Beah’s father, however, turned out to be a distant cousin. Lloyd’s findings concluded that the events that resulted in the closing of the mine in Sierra Leone, which was close to the village where Beah’s family lived, occurred in 1995 and not 1993. The question of the dates in which the events that Beah describes in his book led to an inquiry by \textit{The Australian} newspaper.\textsuperscript{107}

On 19 January 2008, \textit{The Australian} questioned the length of time Beah actually spent as a child soldier. \textit{The Australian}’s Shelly Gare, Peter Wilson, and David Nason questioned the date of the attack on Beah’s village that resulted in the death of his parents and his experience as a child refugee. Beah’s account of his ordeal was that it started in 1993 with the attack on his village, when he was twelve years old. This suggested that his ordeal and time spent as a child soldier was two to three years. \textit{The Australian}, on the other hand, claimed that Beah’s account of the dates were inaccurate. The journalists wrote that the events that lead to Beah’s “savagery, happened two years later than he said, not in 1993 as in the book, but in 1995.”\textsuperscript{108} Further claims were made that Beah was actually enrolled in school from 1993 to 1994, instead of living a life of a refugee and soldier. Since Beah was placed in rehabilitation centre in 1996, and the

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} Kate Douglas, “Ethical Responses to Childhood Trauma Testimony: Mandates for Scholarship,” presented at the Testimony, Trauma and Social Suffering Conference: New Framings/New Directions, Research School of Humanities, Australian National University, 2009.
events he described occurred in 1995, *The Australian* claimed that Beah’s time as a child soldier did not last two to three years, but two to three months.\(^{109}\)

Following the initial accusations about the inaccuracy of Beah’s account of the dates and the length of time as a child soldier, *The Australian* continued to question the nature of his memoir writing. On 21 January 2008, *The Australian* published an article titled the “Inconvenient Truths of a Child Soldier.” The article notes that the facts in *A Long Way Gone* are “incorrect,” and that such an ordeal “reminds us that the world needs to know the way he, and tens of thousands of others like him, were conscripted into crimes of slaughter in the fighting and the way he was brutalised by the murder of his family.”\(^{110}\) However, *The Australian* claimed, “[e]ven though it seems certain that Beah was a teenage soldier as he claims, this fundamental error inevitably calls into question every other aspect of his book.”\(^{111}\) In another article published on the same day, Peter Wilson notes that “[i]f the lengthy part of the book describing his first nine or 10 months as a refugee is true, then he could have spent only two or three months fighting for the Sierra Leone army, rather than the two years he claims, and he could have begun fighting at about 15 years of age, instead of 13.”\(^{112}\) Wilson further claimed the events that occurred were inaccurate. He writes that “[f]or any adult from those towns to mistake the year of the attacks, which were marked by horrific atrocities, widespread killing and the evacuation of whole towns, would be akin to a New Yorker not knowing the date of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre.”\(^{113}\)

In the same article, Wilson further points to the nature of events that Beah describes in his book. He asserts that “[o]ne social scientist working with the UN agency in Freetown [...] said that when she read the book she was struck by the impression that Beah had devoted relatively few pages to what was supposed to be a two-year period as a soldier.”\(^{114}\) For instance, the “first 100-odd pages are devoted to Beah’s nine or 10 months as a refugee, then the timeline speeds up dramatically to cover

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\(^{111}\) Ibid.


\(^{113}\) Ibid.

\(^{114}\) Ibid.
his two years as a soldier in just 30 pages, then it returns to the original pace over the
remaining 90 pages on his life after the military with a further 10 pages of flashbacks to
the army life.” Further criticism by Wilson related to Beah’s inability to support the
dehumanizing events that took place in war. Beah was criticized for not being able to
mention taking part in the killing, or even witnessing events such as rapes that soldiers
committed. In addition, Wilson notes that most of the events that are in the book are
difficult to verify because they involved Beah “hiding for his life or fighting for the army
in unnamed villages and with people who were unnamed or later killed.”

Wilson further claims that one of the key events that Beah describes in the book
did not take place. Beah had described a fight that took place on the first night he was
at the rehabilitation centre where six people were killed. The aid workers at the centre
were not aware of the rival differences between the child soldiers, and as a result, placed
members of enemy factions in the same centre. However, Wilson claims that “[n]one
of several relief workers from Sierra Leone and two Western agencies who were
questioned […] could remember such a deadly conflict having taken place inside an
official relief camp in Freetown.” Following this accusation, on 26 January 2008,
Wilson followed up with Beah’s account of the fight at the rehabilitation centre with an
article titled “Deadly fight Beah describes ‘didn’t happen’.” Once again, Wilson refutes
that the event did take place. He illustrates through an account from the local
newspaper journalist who states that “[i]t is not possible that could happen, with six
people killed and nobody knowing about it. Nobody would believe that a fight like that
could happen in the presence of army soldiers and involving people from UNICEF in
any way and then there is nothing: no murder charges, no official injury, not even
rumours.” The journalists from The Australian contested further claims to events
made by Beah.

Supporters of the book challenged the accusations made by The Australian. In
response to the argument concerning the inaccuracy of Beah’s account of war, Laura
Simms, Beah’s foster mother in the United States, notes that “[i]f you were a kid in war,
would you have a calendar with you after you lost everything and were running through

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115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
119 Wilson, “Deadly Fight Beah describes "didn't happen".”
Similarly, when questioned about the map that appears in the first few pages of the book, Beah responds with “I drew the map from memory and gave it to the publishing house — I didn’t do the measurement. When I was running, I didn’t have an instrument to measure how far I had gone.” Beah’s writing professor, Dr. Dan Chaon defended the accusations of the accuracy of Beah’s work. He told The Australian that if errors existed in the autobiography, they should be put down to “poetic license.” Chaon notes that the factual integrity of the two years Beah claims to have spent as a soldier was never discussed. He argues that “[i]f it turns out there are factual errors, I wouldn’t necessarily be all that concerned about it.” More importantly, Chaon argues “I don’t think the book is being presented as a piece of journalism. It’s being presented as a memoir.”

The debate behind Beah’s book goes beyond the existing conversation about the accuracy of the events. The Beah controversy calls into question the construction of childhood, the participation of children in war, children’s rights, and whether children have a legitimate voice to document political events. At the core of the issue is the nature of how events that happened when one was a child are remembered and how one is able to make sense of such memories as an adult. The accusations behind the controversy questions how Beah is able to recall the events that are written in his book when they happened nearly fifteen years earlier, when he was a teenager. The book was written when Beah was a young adult, and as Chaon notes, as a memoir to express his own experiences and ideas. Chaon concludes that Beah ‘was writing it as a creative writing project. He was writing it for himself . . . with really no sense that it would be published.’ The accusations made against Beah, however, question his ability to remember the events when he was a child at the time it occurred.

The Beah controversy questions the construction of childhood. As noted in the earlier part of this chapter, the concept of childhood assumes that every child could grow-up in happy-protected households. For instance, Locke’s understanding of children assumes that children are given the space to develop and be guided by rational

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120 Gare, Wilson, and Nason, “Twist in the Tale of a Sierra Leonean Child Soldier as Dates and Facts Begin to Unravel.”
121 Wilson, “Beah’s Credibility a Long Way Gone.”
122 Chaon in Nason and Gare, “Beah’s Flaws "Poetic License".”
123 Ibid.
124 Douglas, “Ethical Responses to Childhood Trauma Testimony: Mandates for Scholarship.”
125 Chaon in Nason and Gare, “Beah’s Flaws "Poetic License".”
adults. The current understanding of childhood, however, draws on gendered assumptions that associate children with the private sphere. This assumption associates children as non-political beings who are somehow protected by adults. Consequently, this reliance on the idea that children exist within the private-non-political sphere works to “contain” the political activities that children engage in.\textsuperscript{126} Within Beah’s case, the accusations made by \textit{The Australian} are heavily reliant on the idea that children are unable to comprehend the events that occur in the adult world. Children, as the case presents, are supposed to be weak, innocent, and dwell within the private sphere.\textsuperscript{127} They are not supposed to be participating in political events such a soldiering, nor are they capable of recollecting events that they will come to record down on paper as adults.

Beah’s experience, however, challenges this notion of childhood in multiple ways. Beah’s experience as a child soldier challenges the existing understanding of childhood as an ideal stage of protection. His experience as a child soldier, whether forcibly recruited or voluntary, suggests that not all childhoods are similar to the one presented by earlier theorists. Beah’s account of childhood contradicts ideas that associate childhood as a state of weakness, where children are free to engage in activities outside of the adult realm.\textsuperscript{128} Unlike the preconceived idea of childhood, Beah endured a part of his childhood as a refugee as well as a soldier. The roles of refugee and child soldier became a source of livelihood or a method of survival for Beah and other children during conflict. In Beah’s account of child soldiering, the daily activities of violence became a way of life, a method of survival within war. This idea of childhood challenges the existing understanding of childhood as a period of protected and guided development and learning. Additionally, it also challenges the idea that rational adults are supposed to guide children.

More importantly, the criticism Beah received from \textit{The Australian} reinforces the idea that children are “blank slates” that learn through experience. Beah’s account of his childhood was criticized on the notion that he was unable to comprehend or remember what was actually occurring at the time. The dates, as \textit{The Australian} noted, were wrong, and thus did not coincide with the events that community members described. However, criticism that Beah received reveals the complexities behind

\textsuperscript{126} Brocklehurst, \textit{Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations}.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{128} See Rousseau, \textit{Emile}, Archard, \textit{Children: Rights and Childhood}. 
traumas and dangers that war encompasses. It is the turbulent nature of war that blurs the recollection of events, rather than the child’s inability to remember the exact date it occurred. The Beah controversy reveals the complexities behind childhood as a concept, how post-war identities are constructed, and the relationship between adults and children.

Contesting Childhood Trauma: Kien Nguyen

In 2009, as a component to this thesis, I conducted a personal interview with Kien Nguyen. Nguyen published his memoir, The Unwanted, in 2001. The Unwanted traces Nguyen’s life as a war-child, a half-Vietnamese and American child who was left behind in Vietnam by his father. Like Nguyen, many children of American soldiers faced stigma and institutional discrimination while growing up in Communist Vietnam. The book eloquently illustrates Nguyen’s attempts to gain an education in a system that discriminated against half-American children, his attempt to beat bureaucratic discrimination, and his attempt to emigrate to the United States. However, upon the publication of the book, Nguyen was criticized for publishing a “rape” that he experienced as a child. This incident was briefly mentioned in the book but was pointed out by critics as inaccurate. Critics suggested that the event did not occur or was fabricated to “sensationalize” the political context.

The Unwanted begins with a discussion of the political events that resulted in Nguyen’s mother meeting his American father. As discussed in Chapter One, the influx of American military personnel changed the landscape of wartime Vietnam. The presence of the military forces and advisors from the United States significantly altered the socio-economic environment in the region. The opening of American military bases and businesses that catered to American interests provided new employment opportunities for Vietnamese men and women. The influx of the American military

129 Douglas, “Ethical Responses to Childhood Trauma Testimony: Mandates for Scholarship.”
also saw the rise of the entertainment and prostitution industry. Within this climate, children were born of relationships that were both consensual and forced. There were instances of women entering into relationships with American soldiers, whereas others met via the entertainment industry. Instances of rape and sexual violence where children were born as the result were also reported in Vietnam. Within the turbulent nature of war, Nguyen’s mother met his American father. As Nguyen describes “[n]ine years before, when an American civil engineer working in Saigon had hired my mother as a translator, a romance blossomed between them. I was the result of their brief liaison.” Unlike some of the women who worked in the entertainment industry, Nguyen’s mother worked as a translator for his father. When the Americans were forced to evacuate Vietnam, Nguyen’s father followed. Nguyen’s American father, however, left her with money that she later invested. Unlike other children born of militarized relationships, Nguyen spent his initial childhood in a household surrounded by extended family members. In The Unwanted, Nguyen writes that because of the fortune that his father had left his mother, she was able to live the life that she wanted. He opens up the book with an account of a privileged childhood growing up in the “Nguyen Mansion.” In the first chapter dated 1972, he writes “[f]rom the numerous stories I was told growing up, mostly by my grandparents, I came to understand that my mother built the house during her pregnancy with me, motivated by the idea of having her first baby in her own home.” However, the looming threat of the Communist victory cut Nguyen’s childhood short. As he writes, “I was to sleep for three years, banished from my mother’s warmth and sent away to school.”

The evacuation of American troops in 1975 meant that anyone who had any association with the United States were a threat to the Communist forces. Rumours surfaced that anyone who had been associated with the Americans would be killed or sent to re-education camps. Such rumours meant that the survival of wives and

133 Nguyen, The Unwanted: A Memoir, 22.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., 5-6.
136 Ibid., 10.
girlfriends of American soldiers, some of whom were mothers of Amerasian children, were under threat. Women who refused to evacuate with their American boyfriends or who were left behind were seen destroying any evidence that linked them back to their association with the United States. Photographs and letters documenting the relationship between Vietnamese women and American men were burned or destroyed at this time. Aware of the discrimination and shame half-American children brought about, Nguyen's mother had a wall erected around the house to shield it from the curiosity of the outsiders, as well as to conceal her half-American children. He laments that it was as if his mother was "covering something shameful. [As if the children] were never meant to be discovered."  

The fear of the Communists led to the displacement of the Nguyen family. Any association with the United States was considered an act of betrayal to the new Communist regime. The birth of half-American children was evidence that this relationship existed regardless of whether it was consensual or not-consensual. Vietnamese women who decided to keep their half-American children were required to find ways to prevent the Communists from knowing that these children existed. Since the physical appearance of Amerasian children was the main factor in determining their identities as half-American, women found ways to disguise their children's appearance by cutting off their hair or rubbing dirt on their faces so they appeared darker. As a result, the Nguyen family, along with Lam, Nguyen's mother's live-in boyfriend, were displaced from their homes because of the fear of being associated with the Americans. They embarked on an attempt to flee to the United States.

In the middle of their attempt to flee Vietnam, Nguyen writes of an incident where he was sexually abused by Lam, his mother's boyfriend. At the time, Lam was being interrogated by the Communist forces and was on bad terms with Nguyen's mother. Nguyen writes "[s]ometime that night, Lam crept into my bed. Lying asleep on my stomach, I was not fully aware of his presence until my body was crushed by his weight." He proceeded to describe that Lam had covered his mouth to prevent him from screaming. Nguyen confesses, "Lam peeled the bottom of my pajama off, taking off his own clothes with one hand, while continuing to hold me with the other. I was  

139 Bass, Vietamericas: The War Comes Home.  
140 Nguyen, The Unwanted: A Memoir, 130.
scared and humiliated yet did not understand what Lam was about to do. After the rape, Lam threatened “[k]eep this between you and me, boy, and maybe I will be more gentle next time. And if you are stupid enough to tell your mother about this, I will go after your brother next.”

While the rape was only mentioned in one chapter of the book, in an interview with Nguyen that I conducted in January 2009, he revealed that critics continued to question its legitimacy. Critics questioned if Nguyen had fabricated the rape in order to sensationalize his story. Nguyen mentioned that there was a level of disbelief that children experience rape, whether by family members or by strangers. Other critics questioned the nature of the relationship between Lam and Nguyen, asking why the latter did not seek protection from his mother. Accusing Nguyen of fabricating an intimate story, such as his rape, appears to be preposterous. This assumption that Nguyen had created the story of rape in order to generate attention excused the fact that children do experience sexual abuse at the hands of family members. Criticizing the nature of the act or whether it actually happened or not, assumes that all children exist in an protected environment. Nguyen suggested that upon migrating to the United States he was still full of anger. The experience of growing up displaced, discriminated against, and abused left him with an emotional scar that remained despite his relocation. However, the writing and publication of the book provided a sense of release where he was able to “make peace” with the events that occurred during his childhood.

Similar to Beah’s case, the criticism Nguyen’s book received reveals a level of gender bias that is embedded within the concept of childhood. First, Nguyen’s account of the rape challenges existing understandings of childhood. Within the existing concept of childhood, children are defined as innocent beings that are protected by adults. Children, as this ideal proposes, are supposed to have a “childhood” consisting of education, play, and freedom from abuse. However, the rape challenges existing conceptions of what childhood is. As mentioned, this gendered understanding of childhood has been shaped from the idea that children exist within the private sphere. Second, acknowledgement of child abuse further isolates the child as a perpetual victim. Within this constructed idea of victimhood, children are void of agency or possibilities

141 Ibid., 130-131.
142 Ibid., 131.
143 Nguyen, “Interview with Kien Nguyen.”
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
of resistance. Brocklehurst notes that the construction of children as victims works to “politically contain” any possibility children have as actors. It confines with childhood as the innocent victim or bystander of everyday politics.\footnote{Brocklehurst, \textit{Who's Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations}.} Nguyen’s experience demonstrates a deviation from existing understandings of children. On the one hand, he challenges the existing understanding of childhood. On the other hand, he exposes the idea that victims can also be empowered to speak out about their experiences. The criticism that Nguyen has received is an illustration of how individuals who step out of dominant understandings childhood as a space for development, innocence, and learning are deviants or too “risky” to be considered as relevant.

Although both Nguyen’s and Beah’s memoirs are contextually different, similarities exist through their wartime/post-war experiences, as well as the criticism they received when their memoirs were published. The rape that Nguyen experienced as a child, as well as Beah’s experiences as a child soldier work to undermine the existing understanding that children are “protected” by adults and the state. More importantly, their experiences and survival challenges existing understandings of childhood. Neither Beah nor Nguyen grew up in situations where their rights were protected. Rather they demonstrate that despite the international rights regime, their rights as a child did not exist.\footnote{Watson, “Children Born of Warumé Rape: Rights and Representations”; Brocklehurst, \textit{Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations}; Constance L. Mai and Julien Murphy, “Enduring Freedom: Globalizing Children’s Rights,” \textit{Hypatia} 18, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 197.} Their stories also challenge the idea that children are without agency. Nguyen’s and Beah’s ability to survive, recover, and deal with their ordeals reveals an immense level of agency despite age or experience.

Conclusion

The existing definition of childhood is useful, however, it remains an ideal. This chapter has discussed that the acceptance of this particular ideal of childhood as the norm suggests that other experiences of childhood are lacking. Other experiences of childhood, as voiced by Nguyen and Beah, are not seen as “real” testaments of childhood. Rather, their experiences are branded as illegitimate or inaccurate because
they do not comply with the existing rules of childhood. On a deeper note, the experiences of Beah and Nguyen helped to illustrate that the current concept of childhood is problematic. The stories told by Beah and Nguyen depict a childhood that is outside of the norm. Their very existence “can appear to somehow threaten the existing societal order.” Consequently, the experiences that are told by individuals, such as Beah and Nguyen, are often neglected or cast as fabricated. The reasoning behind this is, as academics such as Watson argue, that these children are deemed “risky” and considered to potentially pose a threat to the existing system. Thus, “[m]aking more specific reference to children such as these may then be perceived as a precarious strategy for policy makers, because it gives these ‘risky children’ a more clearly defined role.”

In *Gender Trouble* (1999), Judith Butler proclaims that concepts often help to justify the legitimacy of the most powerful group while undermining the actions of another. She writes that “subjects are invariably produced through certain exclusionary practices that do not “show” once the juridical structure of politics has been established.” Within this understanding “the political construction of the subject proceeds with certain legitimizing and exclusionary aims, and these political operations are effectively concealed and naturalized by a political analysis that takes juridical structures as their foundations.” International politics has been defined through the exclusion of particular voices, but even within the study of childhood, the existing concept limits the experiences children can have. The current form of understanding occurs through the exclusion of particular groups, experiences, and insights into childhood. This occurs in order to legitimize the power of those who define what childhood is, while undermining those groups of children who fail to conform.

Enshrining childhood as an ideal stage of life, in theory, ensures that the rights of children are protected. However, the issue is more complicated than recognizing and protecting the rights of children. It works to legitimize the actions of those who do the defining while undermining those who are defined. As mentioned, children are defined as the opposite of adults, where childhood is seen as a stage of without and adulthood as an achieved state. This understanding reinforces the legitimacy of adulthood without

150 Ibid., 27.
152 Ibid.
recognizing that childhood can encompass different experiences where children demonstrate agency. As a result, as will be discussed in the next chapter, parents and states are often blamed for their malpractice of not being able to protect their children. Ensuring that children are placed within this idealized understanding, parents and states who guarantee such “rights” of children are constructed as “better parents” or states.

This chapter has presented the complexities behind defining what childhood is. Children have been accepted to embody a gendered state of innocence and development. However, the cases mentioned earlier note that there are groups of children who do not fit within the existing definition of childhood. The proceeding chapters will apply the exclusionary undertones embedded within the concept of childhood. The next chapter will address how the children’s rights regime has been unable to accommodate the interests of children who do not adhere to the existing definition of the child. Whereas the international children’s rights regime ensures that the rights of all children worldwide are protected, it is clear from the example of children born of wartime sexual violence that this is not true in practice.
Chapter Six:

Unlikely Protection: Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The fundamental conceptual problem in children’s rights arises from the separation of the rights-holder and the moral agent, that is who is empowered to act by the institutionalisation of children’s rights.

- Vanessa Pupavac

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and additional Optional Protocols have created international norms regarding the rights of children worldwide. The near universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) suggests that most countries recognize the importance of children’s welfare and well-being. However, contemporary methods of warfare have placed the promises made by the UNCRC in a precarious position. Recent figures provided by the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) suggests that there are over 1 billion children that live in countries affected by armed conflict, where some 300 million are under the age of five. Furthermore, children living in conflict zones suffer from indirect harm that can leave them homeless, orphaned, or stateless. Others suffer from

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direct detriments of war such as being maimed, permanently disabled, raped or used as sex slaves, recruited for labour or as combatants, and detained.\(^3\) Despite the advent of a paradigm recognizing the rights of the child, it is evident that conflict complications efforts.

Currently, the UNCRC stands at a critical crossroad where scholars and practitioners have both questioned whether it is "just another declaration of noble intentions"\(^4\) or a genuinely effective tool for enhancing the well-being of children. The intention of this chapter is to survey the extensive list of rights outlined in the UNCRC and question whether specific groups of children, such as children born of wartime sexual violence, are protected under international law. This chapter will argue that the UNCRC is unable to protect children born of war. The UNCRC is a document that relies on the "duty bearers, including States parties, families and guardians, who are entrusted with ensuring that children’s rights are realized."\(^5\) However, children born of wartime sexual violence are often not recognized members of any state. This situation places children born of war outside the reach of the state-bound UNCRC. More specifically, their precarious and complicated identity as children outside of the existing norms of childhood reveals how the UNCRC imposes a particular form of childhood. Children born of wartime sexual violence represent a contradiction within the children’s rights regime because as a group they are not always protected.

The children’s rights discourse as embodied in the UNCRC relies on the idea that “all children” are guaranteed a specific set of rights. However, children born of wartime sexual violence provide a good example of how specific groups of children are not included within the UNCRC’s protectionist regime. Children born of wartime sexual violence occupy a precarious space within the understanding of conflict. They are invisible in the literature on war-affected children, studies of child soldiers and refugees, and are rarely identified as a distinct group deserving of rights fine-tuned to


their needs. Thus, their identities make them ideal candidates for questioning the existing codes of childhood.

The argument that the current framework for children’s rights remains unable to accommodate the needs of children born of wartime sexual violence proceeds as follows. First, this chapter identifies the gaps and promises of the UNCRC by reviewing the drafting and ratifying of the document. It outlines the purposes of the UNCRC, key articles, and how it has been applied. This section also traces how the Convention has evolved from the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the subsequent 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Reviewing the history behind the UNCRC helps to understand how the document has created norms for children worldwide.6 Second, this chapter questions the effectiveness of the UNCRC by outlining how children born of wartime sexual violence are not included. Children born of wartime sexual violence fall between the gaps of the child’s rights regime because they often do not have the basic rights, such as citizenship, to be guaranteed protection. This section reinforces the argument that the UNCRC’s reliance on the state has failed to accommodate specific groups of war-affected children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child: Critical Engagements

It is perhaps too early to critically deconstruct the success of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UNCRC represents “the most comprehensive human rights treaty and legal instrument for the promotion of and protection of children’s rights.”7 Ratified in 1989 and joined by an Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict in 2000, in comparison to other international conventions, the UNCRC has merely reached the peak of its adolescence. During the past two decades, the UNCRC has transformed how children are perceived and treated throughout the world. Considering the transformation that the UNCRC has generated for the concept of childhood, one can say that it is a very successful international document.

6 See Pupavac, “Misanthropy Without Borders: The International Children’s Rights Regime,” 96. Pupavac criticizes the perceived linearity of the children’s rights regime. She notes that the rights regimes do not develop in linearity, but rather in “waves” where new generations can be seen to criticize earlier generations of rights.
The UNCRC holds numerous successes. The document outlines an entire spectrum of rights related to children, including rights to self-fulfillment, development, and participation. It has managed to combine a wide-range of political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights. Additionally, the Convention also represents the first international instrument “to explicitly recognize children as social actors and active holders of their own rights.”\textsuperscript{8} The UNCRC is comprised of 54 articles and is based on the core principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of children.\textsuperscript{9} The 2009 United Nations Report on the State of the World’s Children concludes that the broad scope of the UNCRC “and the importance it places on the agency of the child make[s] it timelessly relevant to all actions that intend to promote, protect and fulfill children’s rights.”\textsuperscript{10}

In addition, the UNCRC is compatible with and reinforces the existing international human rights framework. States have incorporated sections of the document within its own constitutions. The UNCRC has been ratified by 192 countries. There are only two states in the world, the United States and Somalia, which have not ratified the UNCRC. The fact that the UNCRC has been signed by nearly every state is a success in itself.\textsuperscript{11} More importantly, the UNCRC “is more than a treaty with a monitoring arm; it is a far-reaching opus on the care and protection of children in practical and moral terms.”\textsuperscript{12} Thus, the UNCRC sets a standard of childhood and ensures that signatory states promise that the rights of children within their borders are protected.

The UNCRC has been an internationally recognized instrument that works to shape what is acceptable and not acceptable in regards to childhood. The Convention acts as a moral compass in which states are obligated to guarantee that the needs of children are met. The 2009 Report on the State of the World’s Children notes that what is “[e]qually important is the optimism, clarity and steadfastness that the Convention

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
captures for the future - that one day all children will enjoy a childhood with full respect for their rights, their basic needs provided for, protected from violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination, and empowered to participate meaningfully in all decisions that affect their lives. 13 As will be discussed in more detail in the later half of this chapter, the regulation of the concept of childhood plays a large role in determining the behavior of states, communities, and families.

The UNCRC is the product of a long history of attempts to protect children. Initial attempts originated from individual efforts made by philanthropists interested in the well-being of children. 14 These efforts broadened after World War I (WWI) as international organizations began to "articulate codes of human rights." 15 The new organizations helped to frame the basic guidelines in regards to specific rights for children. For instance, the newly formed International Labour Office (now Organization) was concerned with the rights of child workers. The International Labour Organization managed to set a minimum age standard 16 in which children were able to work. 17 Such efforts were later enshrined in legally bound conventions that held members accountable. The UNCRC also builds on existing child-centric documents such as the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The UNCRC has also provided a comparative standard for subsequent child protection regimes such as the 1999 African Convention 182 concerning Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour, and numerous United Nations Security Council

13 Ibid., 3.
14 The imposition of an idealised period of childhood became an institutionalised method to control the poor in modern England. In England, the 1834 Poor Law sought to punish poor parents by separating them from their children. The social reformers saw childhood as an important phase of development that should not be exposed to the detriments that poverty brings. Workhouses were administered to separate working-class parents or poor parents from their domestic life. The initiation of separate workhouses provided a form of state-administered poverty relief by separating parents from their children
16 The International Labour Office (Organization) was responsible for implementing the Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention of 1919 and the Minimum Age (Agriculture) Convention of 1921. International legislation that was introduced between the world wars did not explicitly specify rights for children as distinct from those of adults.
Resolutions and reports reviewing children and armed conflict. More recently, the UN CRC has been connected with attempts to mainstream gender through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820. Both UN Resolutions recognize the importance of gender and how the girl child may have different needs to male children. Whereas Resolution 1325 addresses the inclusion of gender within UN programs and strategies, Resolution 1820 specifically addresses the issue of sexual violence among women and girl children. Thus, within the past century the rights of the child have evolved manifold.

The first attempt for the international community to become legally involved in regulating the welfare of children was through the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The 1924 Declaration was created by the efforts of Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of the Save the Children Fund. Jebb was directly concerned with the suffering of Austrian children in the aftermath of World War I. In 1920, Jebb established the Save the Children Fund in Geneva to raise emergency aid money for children suffering from the consequences of war. Jebb argued that the well-being of children will only be internationally addressed if nations cooperated. To that end, the Save the Children Fund drafted a succinct declaration outlining child-specific rights and persuaded the League of Nations to adopt it as the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The Declaration was adopted on 26 September 1924.

The Declaration mirrored the efforts of earlier philanthropists who were interested in ensuring the well-being of children. The final result of the Declaration articulated five core principles. These included the underscoring the child’s right to the means for material and spiritual development; help when hungry, sick, disabled, orphaned or delinquent; protection from exploitation; and a socially oriented upbringing. It addressed the fact that children must receive relief when distressed. The Declaration stated that children should be placed into a position where they are


capable of earning a livelihood. Unlike its successor, the 1924 Declaration mirrored a conception of childhood as a vulnerable state that required protection. An expanded version of children’s rights was introduced in 1959 by the United Nations.

The aftermath of the two world wars prompted further efforts to address the needs of children. Security concerning children arose through the changing nature of conflict at this time. Conflict became removed from distinct oppositional quarters and resembled more attrition-based violence that targeted local civilians as well as combatants. The Second World War (1939-1945), for example, witnessed the direct targeting of children who were housed in Nazi concentration camps, the bombing of major cities across Europe, and the recruitment of girls for the sex trade. Since children became targets of conflict and other forms of suffering, local organizations searched for methods to alleviate and prevent future generations from perishing. In 1946, the International Union for Child Welfare (IUCW) pressed the United Nations to endorse the 1924 Geneva Declaration. However, the United Nations was more interested in endorsing its all encompassing Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was to be ratified in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not recognize children as a separate group to adults, but assumed that all human beings deserved rights associated with being human. Organizations involved in the well-being of children thought it was important for the General Assembly to recognize child-specific rights. Therefore, a separate international document that outlined children’s rights was needed in order to separate the protection of children from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Similar to earlier efforts made by Jebb and the Save the Children Fund, the IUCW took on the task of drafting a new document that outlined specific rights related to children. The United Nations did not adopt the new children’s rights document until 20 November 1959.

The 1959 Declaration ensured that children would be protected from discrimination, neglect and exploitation, as well as protection from racial or religious forms of discrimination. In addition, the Declaration recognizes a child’s access to

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23 Ibid.
24 Kaklor, New and Old Wars.
health care, the right to a name and nationality, benefits of social security, special needs such as education, family rights, protection and relief. The principles of the 1959 Declaration emphasized children's emotional well-being and how children should be among the first to receive protection and relief in emergencies. The scope of the 1959 Declaration was undoubtedly wider than its predecessor, however, its emphasis was still firmly based on welfare and protection. Michael Freeman states that the 1959 Declaration did not recognize a child's autonomy, nor did it exhibit an “understanding of the importance of a child's wishes and feelings” or an appreciation of the value of empowerment.”

Within the 1959 Declaration, the child remains an object of concern rather than a person who has access to self-determination. In 1979, the government of Poland submitted a draft convention on children's rights to the UN Commission. It stated that the existing 1959 Declaration needed to be expanded to incorporate additional child-specific rights.

The importance of the child is further recognized in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, followed by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 1992. Similar to its predecessor, the UNCRC recognizes the vulnerability of children worldwide and seeks to prevent children from exposure to socio-economic and political harm. For instance, the UNCRC clearly identifies child-specific rights such as the right to life, development, and a family. The Convention also recognizes political rights such as the right to an identity, citizenship, and nationality. Departing from its predecessor, the UNCRC does recognize the agency of children participating in political events. Unlike the 1959 Declaration, the UNCRC highlights that children are capable of forming an opinion about issues and should be given the ability to demonstrate this. The ability to demonstrate political agency, however, still continues to be highly debated. The landmark acceptance of the UNCRC by nearly every state government in the world suggests that the enshrinement of children's rights is considered a necessity.

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Similar to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UNCR provides a checklist of rights related to the protection of children’s well-being as well as specific rights associated with childhood. The UNCR specifically defines what a child is based on the notion of age. Article 1 of the UNCR outlines specifically that “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years” and thus any child who has not reached the “age of majority” is protected by the UNCR.\textsuperscript{30} Similar to other human rights regimes, the UNCR recognizes basic rights such as the right to life (Article 6), the freedom from discrimination (Article 2), and the freedom of expression (Article 13). The UNCR also moves beyond existing frameworks by identifying child specific rights such as the well-being of the child (Article 3), the responsibility of parents or guardians (Article 5), separation from parents (Article 9), the right to an identity (Article 7), the right to a family or adoptive services (Article 20), and the right to health and education (Article 21). In addition, the UNCR highlights specific rights associated with the girl child, such as freedom from sexual violence (Article 34). In doing so, the Convention acknowledges the rights associated with specific groups of children, such as children who are disabled (Article 23), indigenous groups (Article 30), and refugees (Article 22). In addition, Article 38 and 39 of the UNCR states that children should not be harmed during armed conflict.\textsuperscript{31} In contrast to prevailing notions of protectionism and control that still dominate approaches to children’s development, the UNCR attempts to bring into balance the crucial importance of safeguards for children’s unique vulnerabilities and recognition of their personhood and self-determination.

The UNCR is an expansion of earlier efforts to protect the rights of children. It is accompanied by additional Optional Protocols that recognize different groups of children and how they are specifically affected by the circumstances that they are positioned in. In 2000, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography were adopted. Recognizing the burgeoning issue of child soldiers, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict outlines that children under the age of eighteen should not be recruited or participate in conflict. Alternatively, it also highlights the structural causes of conflict that foresees the

\textsuperscript{30} United Nations, \textit{Convention on the Rights of the Child}.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
recruitment of children. In addition, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children recognizes the need to protect children from being trafficked, forced into the sex trade, as well as preventing the distribution of child pornography. It ensures that states are legally entitled to take action in dealing with the alleged offender and the victim within its national boundaries. In addition, world leaders made a commitment to fulfilling children’s rights at the 2002 UN Special Session on Children. This session encouraged governments to adhere to standards of the Convention and achieve internationally agreed objectives and goals. Such goals include meeting the objectives set out in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs recognizes child-specific rights in the form of maternal well-being and children’s health.

In the twenty years since the ratification of the UNCRC, the treaty has ensured a number of successes worldwide. The near universal ratification of the UNCRC means that its principles have been supported by most states. This widespread acceptance is illustrated by the fact that more than 70 countries “have incorporated children’s codes into national legislation as part of law reform efforts based on the Convention’s provisions.” The Convention has also been effective in influencing public institutions. Influence on public institutions is reflected in the “increased usage of children’s rights language and a stronger focus on child rights in national and international targets, policies, programmes, and advocacy for human rights and social progress.” In addition, the Convention has also encouraged national and local governments to “adopt child-friendly budget initiatives, social protection measures and human rights-based approaches to development cooperation for women and children.” More importantly, the significance of the Convention goes beyond the promises set out in the document. Rather, the “treatise has also helped to transform attitudes towards childhood by

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 2-3.
defining the minimum standards for treatment, care, development, protection and participation that are due every individual under the age of 18.”

Despite the influences and successes of the UNCRC, there are numerous limitations within the document itself. First, the Convention, like other human rights treaties, relies on a transfer of liberal ideas to nations who do not adhere to them. The Convention has created standards and norms of childhood worldwide. It has defined what the development of the child includes and under what circumstances children should grow up. With this said, in signing the UNCRC countries are expected to enshrine the values enlisted in the Convention to their national and local policies and programs. Thus, nations are obligated to behave and adhere to the principles outlined in such conventions. In doing so, the Convention has worked to (re)define how particular governments treat children within their own borders. On a deeper level, the UNCRC has (re)defined what the “norms” of childhood are. The UNCRC specifically states that children, individuals under the age of eighteen, should enjoy the experience of being a child, thus attending school, protected within the family, and be free from discrimination. It further states that children should be free from engaging in “non-childlike” acts such as working in the labour force or fighting as combatants. Signatory countries (or even families) that fail to adhere to such “norms” of childhood need to be changed in order to ensure the rights of children are protected. This method of establishing international norms of childhood works to regulate the behaviours of states (or families). Although it needs to be recognized that not all communities associate children’s identities in a similar manner, being a signatory of the UNCRC enforces the need to do so. The Convention thus enforces particular standards that states need to conform to.

The UNCRC and those who enforce it do not consider if countries are able to adapt to the conditions outlined in the document. Although the UNCRC outlines state obligations, it is unclear how states are to enforce such “norms.” More importantly, the principles of the UNCRC assumes that all societies start at a level-playing-field, that is,

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having the facilities, resources, and assistance to ensure the priorities of children are looked after. For instance, child labour is deemed harmful to the development of children and is outlined in Article 32 of the UNCRC. Article 32 states that the “child has the right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development.” Furthermore, Article 24 outlines a child’s right to an education, where the state has the duty of ensuring that primary education is “free and compulsory” for children. Although it is agreed that children should be free from duties, such as labour, and given the time to acquire a minimum level of education, this “norm” of childhood is constructed as a universal-given without understanding the context in which it is applied. Many families in less developed nations rely on the labour of children in order for the household to survive. Taking children out of the labour force and placing them into school would mean that the family loses a valuable source of income. Moreover, the UNCRC positions the family and school as the two institutions that “simultaneously protect children and socialize them into particular ways of being human.”

In addition, the assumption that children must exist within a family can undermine the diversity of childhoods that exist elsewhere. Articles 5, 9, and 10 of the UNCRC emphasize the important role that parents play in socializing and protecting children. Children who exist “outside” of the family structure and do not attend school are considered to engage in un-childlike activities. For instance, anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom’s analysis of children living in the storm drains of Angola reveals the complexities of childhood. Nordstrom contradicts the existing understanding that children without parents inevitably live in a state of anarchy. She describes her visit to the storm drains of Angola, where street children have built a home. The children, who are of various ages, are seen to assemble a “hierarchy,” where the older children behave as pseudo-parents and take care of the other street children. In contrast to the views of parentless children, Nordstrom notes that the storm drains were surprisingly orderly, clean, and odourless. In her example of the Angolan street children, these children were able to build support networks and form pseudo-families without the guidance of adults.

42 Ibid.
43 Wells, *Childhood in a Global Perspective,* 167.
The second limitation of the UNCRC is that it relies on the idea that children are the negative opposite of adults. The Convention continues to adhere to Locke’s and Rousseau’s assumptions of children as coming into the world as “blank slates” and thus needing the guidance of “good” parents.\(^{45}\) Despite the recognition of children’s empowerment, the UNCRC continues to undermine the agency of children. Children’s rights privilege the idea that children are given a special-protected space in order to develop into viable adults. Children are understood as “dominated persons” that are protected from the political events and harms of the public sphere. The examples of children participating in conflict, those who are parents themselves, or orphans demonstrate that children are exposed to “adult”-like circumstances.\(^{46}\) Such examples demonstrate that adults are not always the best individuals to guide children.

Individuals under the age of eighteen who engage in such activities may acquire skills and insights that are equivalent to those experienced by adults. In some situations, children end up on the streets because they are escaping the home. In the case of child soldiers, the militia can provide a space where children can be agents, engage in politics, and have power over adults. The militia can also provide a group-like setting that becomes like a family for child soldiers.

Although the UNCRC has recognized the agency of children, the language behind the Convention relies heavily upon “policy makers to ensure that the rights are recognized.”\(^ {47} \) Understanding that children are the opposite of adults, however, works to marginalize and erase particular experiences that children encounter in different contexts. The current children’s rights paradigm has been structured along binary-dichotomous terms of the parent versus the child or, the professional institution versus the child-abusing-parent, or on a macro level, the state versus non-state actors.

Lastly, the UNCRC depends on the actions of states to ensure children are protected, thus placing reliance on the state as an institution. In a similar vein, the UNCRC reinforces the actions of adults as legitimate actors in place of the child’s well-being. This understanding of children’s rights differentiates the role of the child from the adult, giving the adult (and the state) the right to represent children. If children happen to be working in sweatshops or participate in armed conflict, the UNCRC

\(^{45}\) See Rousseau, *Emile, Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding; Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education.*

\(^{46}\) London, *One Day the Soldiers Came: Voices of Children in War.*

suggests that states are responsible for protecting children from such conditions of maltreatment. The UNCRC's investment in the state as the protector of rights, however, neglects the fact that governments have long been responsible for the abuse of children's well-being. As discussed throughout this thesis, non-state actors have been systematically exposed to a variety of human rights abuses. Systematic forms of violence are an indicator of the irony behind employing the state to protect the rights and liberties of children.

This idea of "adding" child-specific rights to existing political efforts assumes that injustices experienced by children will be solved. However, despite the extensive list of rights outlined in the Convention, the contemporary plight of children in situations of armed conflict has undermined the promises and efforts set forth in the UNCRC. Contemporary forms of conflict do not differentiate between combatants and civilians, and as a result, children have experienced the repercussions of war in countless ways. Consequently, children become both the victims and perpetrators of violence. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to ensure that the rights of children are recognized and protected. The UNCRC has been limited in its capacity to deal with military actors who are not directly connected to the state or who are working with the state to exacerbate the suffering of a particular group of people. For instance, within conflict, children are exposed to gender-based violence, coerced into becoming combatants, exposed to threats that violate their right to survival, subjected to malnutrition, become orphaned, and have the right to an education taken away from them. However, simply "adding" child-centric values to existing structures of governance neglects the structural causes of suffering and exploitation experienced by children. In this sense, the UNCRC resembles a "model of the achievable" or a "checklist" where particular standards in which children are treated can be measured between signatory states.

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This section has argued that the framework of the UNCRC is limited in its approach. The next section will explore how a gender-centric approach to children’s rights reveals that particular individuals are not protected or recognized. It will primarily explore the experiences of children born of sexual violence to illustrate how state(s) and the international community have failed to represent all children. The next section reveals that the complex identities of children born of wartime sexual violence exposes the structural limitations of the rights regime. Understanding the detriments experienced by children born of sexual violence and exploitation illustrates how state-centric institutions can sometimes be the source of marginalization rather than a pathway to the emancipation of children. Children born of wartime sexual violence also illustrates how specific groups of children cannot be protected by a state-centric document.

**The UNCRC and Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence**

Despite the near universal ratification of the UNCRC, children born of wartime sexual violence remain exempt from the “protections” set forth in its promises. The conflicting identities of this particular group of children place them in a precarious situation in regards to obtaining rights. The fact that many of these children are not recognized as members of their community, and are subsequently rejected by their parents and the state, raises the question of how these children will receive access to such rights. As this section will show, children born of wartime sexual violence question the framework of the UNCRC. In doing so, the experiences of these children bring light to the structural causes of oppression and how the rights regime contradictorily relies on the legitimacy of the state.

**Infanticide and Abandonment: Violating the Right to Survival**

The endless examples of infanticide during and after war illustrates the vulnerability many children born of wartime sexual violence experience as a result of

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their identity. Infanticide violates one of the most important rights protected by the UNCRC. Article 6.1 of the UNCRC states that "every child has the inherent right to life." Furthermore, Article 6.2 specifies that "States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child." The basic right to survival is important to the children's rights discourse because its maintenance means that the child has the ability to achieve subsequent rights enshrined in the UNCRC.

Children born of wartime sexual violence, however, are often not entitled to the basic right to survival. In numerous cases, such as in Bangladesh, the former Yugoslavia, and in post-WWII Asia, the identity of children born of sexual violence places their lives in a precarious position.

The Japanese military "comfort" system demonstrated the extent of the measures taken prevent the birth and survival of war babies. As noted in Chapter Four, the Japanese military presence in Asia enforced the comfort women system to service the "sexual desires" of troops stationed in occupied areas. Similar to Nazi Germany, pregnancies were forbidden between the military and the women used for the comfort system. To ensure that these women did not give birth to children, military doctors carefully monitored the reproductive systems of these women. Women were forced to visit a military doctor each month where they would undergo a routine checkup. In addition, condoms were provided and a chemical "birth control" agent was administered. This chemical agent that women used to wash-up after sex was believed to make the women sterile and caused many negative health-related consequences. If women were found to be pregnant they were immediately administered an abortion.

The aim of the comfort women system was to ensure the sexual satisfaction of the military troops. The survival and birth of children between Japanese troops and the comfort women is unlikely because many women were killed or were forced to accompany the troops in ritual "double-suicide" upon their defeat.

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54 Acknowledgement of this example does account for the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child did not exist at this time. The 1924 Declaration was enforced, but Japan had opted out of the League of Nations. However, this example is illustrative of the extent in which the state prevents the birth of children of war and its subsequent survival. The 1924 Declaration, however, does not directly recognize a child's right to life. Subsequently, in later cases, the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights was enforced.

55 Tanaka, Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and U.S. Occupation; Hicks, The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War; Ueno,
Bangladesh’s response to the rape and impregnation of Bengali women in the 1971 conflict is another example of state administered infanticide. Even within patriarchal cultures that forbid abortions, certain exceptions were made to ensure that children who were “of the enemy” were not born. In the aftermath of the 1971 Pakistani-Bangladesh conflict, Bengali women who were impregnated because of forced rape were given an abortion. Children who were not aborted continued to face infanticide as illustrated through stories of infants being placed into “dustbins” by public officers after the conflict. After independence, Sheikh Mujibar Rahman attempted to reduce the stigma that was associated with rape. He valorized the rape survivors by calling them biranganas, or war heroines. Along with this new title, rehabilitation centers were introduced to assist the women in their recovery. In addition, since unmarried women experienced economic and social disadvantages, many of the women were offered as rewards to Bengali men. However, “most Bengalis refused to issue marriage proposals to the girls or even to take the wives or daughters back into their families because of the dishonor” associated with rape.

Siobhan McEvoy-Levy notes that children conceived of wartime sexual violence inevitably highlight the conflict between the rights of the woman and the rights of the (unborn) child. In cases where abortions are administered, it raises a whole wealth of questions concerning whether the unborn fetus has the right to life. McEvoy-Levy notes that “[a] genuine human rights culture would promote these and other discussions mediating the multiplicity of competing rights claims that can be imagined.” Furthermore, McEvoy-Levy highlights the complicated circumstances that surround abortion in different cultures. She notes that the abortion debate is very much a Western connection. McEvoy-Levy further suggests that in other cultures communities continue to deal with the cultural repercussions of the act. For instance, she notes that some cultures can conceptualize a continuation of conflict through the “spirits of aborted fetuses reborn in future children.” In this vein, existing rights regimes may not recognize the cultural dimension behind abortion. Such prescriptions highlight how

_Nationalism and Gender, Soh, “From Imperial Gifts to Sex Slaves: Theorizing Symbolic Representations of the "Comfort Women".”_

_56 Brownmiller, _Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape_; Grieg, _The War Children of the World_, Sharlach, “Rape as Genocide.”_

_57 D’Costa, “Marginalised Identity: New Frontiers of Research in IR?”_

_58 Sharlach, “Rape as Genocide,” 95._

_59 McEvoy-Levy, “Human Rights Culture and Children Born of Wartime Rape,” 159._

_60 Ibid., 160._

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“[u]nwanted children, death, and motherhood, for example are conceptualized and experienced differently in their local contexts. These particularities would also need to be well understood and accommodated in delivering reproductive health services to women in war zones.”

Alternatively, individual examples of infanticide were illustrated in other conflict-ridden areas, such as Kosovo. As mentioned, the civil conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the mid-1990s witnessed the use of systematic rape. An article in The Guardian reported on the complications pregnant rape survivors endured. The article describes the birth of a healthy baby boy named Mirveta whose mother is a survivor of the rape camps. The article describes that the mother “cradled him to her chest, she looked into her boy’s eyes, she stroked his face and she snapped his neck.” In the aftermath of the death of her child, the mother was held in a psychiatric cell and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Although this case may have been an exception, it is worth mentioning because it helps to illustrate the psychological trauma mothers experience as a result of wartime sexual violence. Infanticide not only seems to be directed at some of these children, but also appears to be accepted as a legitimate response to bearing a child who belongs to the “enemy.”

The killing of children born of rape by their mothers poses another dilemma. It raises the question of whether “women who kill their children [can] be prosecuted as a punishment and deterrent to others?” Cases as the one described above are complicated. In cases where mothers or communities do not commit the act of infanticide, women who have been psychologically and socially damaged by rape or sexual exploitation may not be in the best condition or environment to take care of children. As discussed, women are often ostracized, thrown out of their community, and are considered “damaged goods.” Where marriage remains the primary route to securing socio-economic security, women who have been subject to sexual violence and/or given birth to children are placed in a difficult position. Many of these women, as seen in the case in Bangladesh, are left searching for alternative means to

61 Ibid.
64 Delaet, “Theorizing Justice for Children Born of War.”
survive both socially and economically. The UNCRC identifies the immediate family as
the best environment for a child to grow up in. In circumstances where single-mothers
are experiencing a combination of trauma, and economic and social ostracization,
mothers may not be in the best situation to ensure that a child of war is guaranteed
survival, let alone the right to an education.

Infanticide is in direct conflict with the right to life that is enshrined in the
UNCRC and subsequent human rights conventions. Not only are children born of
wartime sexual violence subjected to infanticide, they are also exempt from the
protection that is granted to them based on the fact that they are children. States or
governments have not ensured that these children have a viable future because they are
not given the chance to survive into adolescence or adulthood. More importantly, the
above examples have illustrated how the state has been central in ensuring that the
suffering of specific groups of war-affected children is prolonged.

My Mother Calls Me a “Monster-Child”: The Right to Non-Discrimination

Unlike other war-affected children, many children born of wartime sexual
violence are marginalized by their identities. The mothers, their own community, and
even the nation label these children as “outsiders” of the community, “children of the
enemy,” or “unwanted children.” Such labels connote the fact that they are not
legitimate members of the community and thus are not entitled to rights that are
associated with its membership. If the community knows that the child is conceived of
rape, sexual exploitation, or illegitimate sexual relations, the child is often exposed to
discriminatory taunts that are directly associated with an identity as a child of wartime
violence.

The non-discriminatory clause outlined in Article 2.1 of the UNCRC is of
particular importance to children born of wartime sexual violence. It states that
children should not be subject to discrimination based on “his or her parent’s or legal

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66 Carpenter et al., Protecting Children Born of Wartime Rape and Exploitation in Conflict Zones: Exciting
Practice and Knowledge Gaps; Grieg, The War Children of the World; Carpenter, Born of War: Protecting Children of
Sexual Violence Survivors in Conflict Zones.

67 Baldi and MacKenzie, “Silent Identities: Children born of War in Sierra Leone”; Siobhan Fisher,
“Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide,” Duke Law Journal 46, no. 91 (1996); Harris-Rimmer,
guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.” Children of wartime sexual violence, however, are discriminated against based on parentage. For instance, these children are often identified as belonging to their father’s community, which in many cases is the aggressor nation. In patriarchal societies or societies that have enforced militarized-patriarchal ideals, the community often enforces the identity of the father onto the child. In communities where the identity of the child is directly associated with their father, the child becomes subject to the identity of the “enemy,” who in many cases is a member of a militarized force that is external to that nation. This can be illustrated in the names that are given to children by members of their community and their mothers. Believing that the child is “of the enemy” deliberately excludes him or her from the community that they are born into, which is often the mother’s community. In addition, the child is also identified as a child of a woman who was raped. Within the stigma of rape, the child experiences the complicated identity of a child of rape, a child born out of wedlock, and an illegitimate child. Finally, the birth of such a child is systematically written into the method of war. It is understood by both participants in the conflict, that this child is produced to further detriment the community long after war has ceased. Through the act of rape, it is intended that the birth of a child of this particular form of violence will further harm and destabilize the community. Article 2.1 is thus of particular significance to children born of wartime sexual violence. It highlights that children should not be discriminated against based on the identities of their parents. However, due to the nature of their conception, children who are born under such circumstances are discriminated against based on their parents’ identities.

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68 Joshua S Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives*; Sharlach, “Rape as Genocide”; Green, “Uncovering Collective Rape: A Comparative Study of Political Sexual Violence”; Bos, “Feminists Interpreting the Politics of Wartime Rape: Berlin, 1946; Yugoslavia, 1992-1993.” In conflicts such as those in Bangladesh, Rwanda, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the chastity of women becomes the central component for maintaining a peaceful society. Thus the birth of children of the “enemy” suggests to the nation that the elimination of the enemy is not possible when war ends. Children who are born of such circumstances provide reminders of the defeat that was experienced during the conflict long after the fighting has ended. The child is stigmatized based on their identity as the child of the “enemy.” They are further marginalized through their association of what rape or illegitimate sexual relations have come to symbolize for the community.

69 Examples of children experiencing discrimination based on their origins are evident throughout the twentieth-century. Children produced from the Lebensborn program during WWII were called names that identified them as outsiders. Within communities in which Lebensborn children grew up in, people taunted these children with labels such as “Iskereuge” (child of a German), slurs that meant son or
Children born of sexual exploitation in recent conflicts continue to be ostracized and discriminated against based on their parents’ identity. The genocide in Rwanda is believed to have produced 2,000-5,000 children born of the rapes committed by the Interhamwe. Children born to women of sexual violence in Rwanda were referred to as “pregnancies of war”, “children of hate”, “enfants non-desires” (unwanted children), or “enfants mauvais souvenir” (children of bad memories). A *New York Times* (1996) report helps to illustrate the struggles that mothers and children experienced in the aftermath of the genocide:

[Rape survivors] have become outcasts in their own communities. A woman in this position is often accused of being a “wife of the interhamwe,” the Hutu militia that did most of the killing. Many have had to wage battles with their own families to keep the babies, who are seen as “little interhamwe” by relatives.

Children born to Tutsi women who were raped by the Hutu militia experience “secondary” forms of stigmatization. The children illustrate the complexity of the post-conflict era where their suffering is not based on their actions, but associations that were assigned to them prior to their birth. The children thus symbolize that conflict continues long into the post-conflict and reconciliation process. Discriminatory taunts experienced by children contribute to the abuse and exploitation that can be detrimental to the physical and emotional development of the child. In other conflicts such as in East Timor, children born to Timorese women and Indonesian men are known as “children of the enemy,” in Bosnia-Herzegovina these children are referred to as “little
dughter of a German whore, or “krigsbarn” which literally means “war child.” Amerasian children were given names such as “bui do” (dust of life) or “con lai” (outcasts). Similar to the Vietnamese Amerasians, mixed children in the Philippines experienced various “forms of abuse and domestic violence” as well as racial, gender and class discrimination. They experienced discrimination through labels that identified the absence of their father such as “babay na sa” (bye-bye to Daddy), and racial slurs such as “negro,” “mulatto” (if they’re light skinned and born of a Caucasian American), or “kulot” (dark skinned with curly hair, with an African-American father).

70 McKinley, “Legacy of Rwanda Violence: The Thousands Born of Rape.”
72 McKinley, “Legacy of Rwanda Violence: The Thousands Born of Rape.”
Chetniks,”74 in Darfur these children are identified with their “janjaweed” fathers,75 whereas in Uganda they are given names that evoke their mother’s suffering at the hands of the oppositional military.76 Such labels evoke the children’s identity as one of the enemy rather than one that is formed based on their relationship within the community in which they are born.

The UNCRC relies on the actions of states to ensure that the rights of children are protected. However, the discrimination that children born of war experience is an example of how these children experience state-legislated and community-based discrimination. Many of these children remain stateless or lack basic membership within a community. The failure to acquire such basic rights of membership undermines the child’s ability to gain access to further rights in the future. More importantly, these children are constructed as “outsiders” of a community and are seen to be ineligible for the rights and guarantees enshrined in international law. The UNCRC, as it currently stands, relies on the actions of the state. However, in this case, these children do not hold the basic membership rights that allow for them to access the rights outlined in the UNCRC.77

“He was registered as No-Name”: The Right to an Identity and Nationality

The right to a nationality and citizenship is one of the most important and complex aspects related to children born of wartime sexual violence and exploitation. Article 7.1 of the UNCRC states that the “child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.”78 Birth registration establishes a child’s identity and is generally a prerequisite to issuing a birth certificate and confirming the citizenship of the child.79 Within the turbulent context of war, however, the act of registering children is often difficult to enforce.

76 Grieg, The War Children of the World.
77 Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism.
79 Lynch and Refugees International, Futures Denied: Statelessness Among Infants, Children, and Youth.
Contemporary forms of war have witnessed the dispersion of mass populations from their home, the destruction of institutions, and the disappearance of government documents. During the uncertain climate of war, resources such as legitimate institutions and personnel may not be available to record and register the birth of children. Children may also be born during the period in which a family flees from their home and are thus born in a different location from the one in which they are recognized as citizens. For instance, children of refugees from Darfur may be born in the refugee camps on the border of Sudan and Chad. Although their parents are recognized as Sudanese nationals, their children may not be beneficiaries of automatic citizenship in Sudan or Chad. The ever changing climate of war also means that state boundaries are subject to change or particular government institutions may be dismantled, only to be replaced by illegitimate structures in the post-conflict period.

The issue of wartime sexual violence complicates birth registration. Children born of wartime sexual violence are often not registered. The act of registering the child may be detrimental to the affected community, the mother, and the future of the child. Birth registration consequently requires a communal and statewide acknowledgement of the existence of the child. However, within the case of children conceived of sexual violence, it might not be in the best interest of the mother or the child that their existence and situation is acknowledged. Understanding the repercussions surrounding sexual violence in conflict, it is evident that registering the child further endangers the community. Registration provides a documented piece of evidence that rape occurred, and a child was born and exists. In many cases such as the one illustrated in Bangladesh and Rwanda, the legislation of abortion and cases of infanticide suggests that the birth of these children is not valued.

Rather than registering the child with the state, communities may choose to conceal the existence of the child. Protecting the identity of these children is often easier in cases where the child does not physically differ from the overall community.

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For instance, in Rwanda high incidents of mixed marriages between Tutsis and Hutus prior to the 1994 genocide means that children have a chance to blend in. Children born of the rapes during the genocide would not look any different to children of the intermarriage of Hutus and Tutsis. Thus children born to Tutsi women of Hutu men can blend into the community if knowledge that the child is the result of rape is not known. The identity of the child can be hidden from the community in order to protect the mother as well as the child. In cases such as Darfur, the physical differences between the children produced by the “Janjaweed” or Arab militia and black Sudanese women can be detrimental to protecting the identity of these children and their mothers. Survivors of sexual violence in the Darfurian case have revealed that the perpetrators often taunt them, calling them “slaves” and suggesting that the child they will produce will be “different” from the other children.\(^{82}\) Cases such as Darfur illustrates that the identity of children born of sexual violence remains difficult to protect because the evidence is written on their faces.

The protection of children’s rights is challenged by the case of children born of wartime sexual violence. Despite the right of registering children, human rights practitioners and signatory states need to maintain the sensitive environment concerning such children and their mothers. Guaranteeing that this particular group of children receive their right(s) is essential to ensuring the survival and identity of their mothers, as well as the children.

Although institutional silence can be seen as a cause of the marginalization of such children, in many respects, silence can suffice as a form of protection for children of war and their mothers.\(^{83}\) On the one hand, containing the identity of the child of sexual violence can protect the mother because it masks the fact that she had given birth to an illegitimate child and/or is a survivor of rape.\(^{84}\) It also helps to protect the identity of the child while they are growing up because it prevents or helps to reduce forms of discrimination as mentioned earlier. On the other hand, maintaining the silence of children born of wartime sexual violence can be detrimental to the formation of their

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\(^{83}\) D’Costa, “Marginalised Identity: New Frontiers of Research in IR?”

\(^{84}\) Watson, “Children Born of Wartime Rape: Rights and Representations.”
identities. The failure to register a child places the child in an uncompromising position as pariahs or stateless individuals within a system that continues to rely on states.85

The lack of formal citizenship can have socio-economic impacts on children born of wartime sexual violence and exploitation. The 2008 Refugees International report titled Futures Denied: Statelessness among Infants, Children, and Youth suggests that statelessness is detrimental to the livelihood and development of children. The report suggests that statelessness affects children of various ages. Infants who are stateless may not receive adequate pre-natal care or medical attention such as immunization. Children of school age may not have access to primary education because they are not formally registered or recognized.86 In addition, children who are stateless are often "forced into early marriage, harassment, sexual and physical violence, trafficking, and the denial of one's inheritance."87 On a structural level, children who are stateless are unable to obtain passports, to travel freely, or even acquire jobs in the formal sector. Children born of wartime sexual violence may share similar experiences with child refugees. However, unlike refugees, stateless children "receive neither international recognition nor aid, and they don't have the option of returning to a country of origin like migrants do."88 Without recognized citizenship, these children remain stateless and outside of the provisions of medical care, education and other social benefits. In countries where there is a large population of children born under such circumstances, the failure to educate these children can impact the socio-economic future of the country. Statelessness also affects an individual's freedom to movement, ability to achieve asylum, and chance of being formally adopted. The rights that are promised in the UNCRC remain pointless to children who do not belong to any state because the protection of such rights relies on the responsibility of the state.89

In patriarchal societies, the absence of a father makes obtaining citizenship difficult for children born of sexual exploitation and violence. Within patriarchal societies, a child's identity is obtained from the father, as seen through the adoption of

85 Carpenter, Born of War: Protecting Children of Sexual Violence Survivors in Conflict Zones.
87 Ibid.
the father’s family name. However, in many cases, the fathers of these children are absent or unable to formally register the children. ‘Rest and Recreation’ practices institutionalized by the American military, for example, have produced hundreds of thousands of children in places as diverse as Korea, the Philippines, Japan and Vietnam. Although the activity of R&R stations is one issue, the birth of children to absent fathers has complicated the status of an entire generation of children born to American soldiers who were stationed overseas. In the cases discussed earlier, states have hardly recognized the repercussions of relationships between local women and foreign troops.\(^{90}\)

The American presence in Vietnam produced tens of thousands of children. Despite the American government’s acknowledgement of their existence in the 1980s, these children who are now adults have not been recognized as rightful citizens of Vietnam or the United States. While growing up in Vietnam, these children, known as Amerasians, were often stigmatized, ostracized, and excluded from the rights that were allocated to children. These children were often not registered with the state. In doing so, their mothers would admit that they had associated with the Americans. Under the new Communist regime, any association with the Americans was considered a betrayal. Since these children did not have recognized citizenship in Vietnam, they were refused educational and medical benefits and were prevented from obtaining the required documents that were needed to travel overseas.\(^{91}\) The passing of the 1982 Orderly Departure Program and the subsequent 1987 Homecoming Act\(^{92}\) illustrated America’s willingness to take responsibility of “their” children. However, despite their relocation to the United States, many of them were not (re)united with their fathers, and more surprisingly, automatic citizenship was not granted to these children. Even in 2009, Amerasians who want to obtain US citizenship are made to go through the same process as other migrants. Requirements such as the English test, skills assessment, and the application fee are needed to apply for citizenship.\(^ {93}\) Unfortunately, having grown

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\(^{90}\) Enloe, Manuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives; Moon, Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korea Relations.

\(^{91}\) Nguyen, The Unwanted: A Memoir.

\(^{92}\) Bass, Vietamerica: The War Comes Home.

up as pariahs in Vietnam and then the United States often Amerasians do not possess

Most states identify nationality or citizenship rights according to the principles
of *jus soli, jus sanguinis,* or a combination of both. *Jus soli* (right of soil) is the right to
nationality or citizenship based on the fact that one is born within a recognized territory.
*Jus sanguinis* (right of blood) is the right to nationality or citizenship based on ancestral
membership to the particular state. The different rules mean that children could
Bosnia-Herzegovina civil conflict, for example, demonstrate the complexity of
citizenship rights. Both Bosnia and Croatia, for example, follow the *jus sanguinis*
concept. As discussed, during the conflict, women were abducted and placed into rape
camps in different areas of the region. Anecdotal research suggests that Muslim-
Bosnian women were impregnated and gave birth to children in Serbian territory.
Children who were born in this situation were not given citizenship of their mother’s
nation (Bosnia) or their father’s (Serbia).\footnote{Daniel-Wrabetz, *Children born of War Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Convention to the Rights of the Child.*} In another case, it is believed that the
citizenship of the women was also revoked.\footnote{Ibid.} These women were thought to have
associated with the Serbian men who were the “enemy.” Post-war Bosnia “has a
problem with identity, you cannot be a citizen in Bosnia unless you have a fixed ethnic
identity, and these children pose a huge problem.”\footnote{Doug Saunders, “Children Born of Rape Come of Age in Bosnia,” *Globe and Mail* (Tuzla, Bosnia-
Herzegovina, March 3, 2006), http://www.theglobeandmail.com/archives/children-born-of-rape-come-of-age-in-bosnia/article815852/, [March 26, 2009].} This situation was only changed
when, in September 1996 the Bosnian government amended Article 4 of the citizenship
law regulating *jus sanguinis.* The new paragraph states that if one parent is a citizen of
Bosnia-Herzegovina and if the other is a citizen of a former republic of the Federal
Republic of Yugoslavia, and the child was born abroad, the child should be given
Bosnian-Herzegovinian citizenship.\footnote{Daniel-Wrabetz, *Children born of War Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Convention to the Rights of the Child.*} The inclusion of this article seems to prevent the
stateless status of refugee children, especially those whose mothers were victims of rape.
Outside Adoption Not Allowed: The Right to a Family

A child's right to a family is recognized in the Preamble of the UNCRC. The Preamble states, "[c]onvinced that the family, as a fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibility within the community."

Recognition that the family is the primary unit for childcare is further emphasized in Articles 7, 8, 9, and 22 of the UNCRC. The subsequent Articles recognize the need for alternative care for children if the parents are not able to take care of the child. In this case, the state is responsible for "tracing" the family members of unaccompanied children. The UNCRC recognizes the family as an ideal structure of a child's personal growth and development. However, the structure of the family may not be a suitable possibility for children born of wartime sexual exploitation. Children who are born under such circumstances have often been abandoned by their mothers and communities in which they were born.

Mothers, for the reasons discussed above, leave their children in orphanages, with extended relatives, or in state/community run institutions. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for instance, the number of abandoned children has significantly increased after the conflict. Joana Daniel Wrabetz's extensive study of the children born of rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina notes that "[s]ome orphanages visited in [Bosnia-Herzegovina] reported that children were found simply abandoned; in these cases children were

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100 United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

101 See Pupavac, "Misanthropy Without Borders: The International Children's Rights Regime," 100. The point made in the UNCRC about families/adults is interesting. Even though adults are understood as the "rightful" guardians of children, Pupavac points out that the international children's rights regime has highlighted that children are treated as rights-holders. This she notes "separates their parents or guardians and effectively challenges the capacity of the latter to represent their interests." Despite the recognition that children should have parents, there is a general suspicion of adults as well. Pupavac argues that the overall impact of the children's rights regime is to empower outside professionals to represent the best interests of the children.

registered as NN – no name. In addition, Kada Pandur, a woman who runs an orphanage in Bosnia notes that:

Before the war, we had between 150 and 170 children in the orphanage at any time. ... But in the years of the war, we had at least 700 children at any time, mostly babies. We had to build an extra ward, and open a special baby department. ... Mothers would simply give birth, then leave the hospital without telling anyone.

In Rwanda, the Family and Promotion of Women Ministry of Rwanda estimated that eighty percent of the mothers raped decided to abandon their babies. According to reporters, some women abandoned infants on the doorsteps of ministries, with the message that “they are children of the state.”

In cases where mothers do keep their children, the mothers often face socio-economic problems that can threaten the survival of the children. The lack of appropriate health facilities caused “many women to deliver their babies in their homestead or other unsafe locations with no medical attention.” The absence of feasible health facilities for women can be detrimental to the survival and development of their children. In addition, mothers who have experienced sexual violence or are ostracized by the rest of society may not be physically or psychologically able to take care of their children. The psychological and emotional toll that rape and sexual exploitation has on women may have long-term consequences. Many women who have not emotionally recovered from the trauma of sexual violence may come to blame the child for their suffering or may further abuse the child because they act as a reminder of the trauma they experienced. The ostracization that the mother experiences for giving birth to an “illegitimate” child can be detrimental to her ability to financially support the child in the long-term. As a result, many children are often malnourished and exposed to various forms of diseases and health related consequences.

104 Saunders, “Children Born of Rape Come of Age in Bosnia.”
105 Mukangendo, “Caring for Children Born of Rape in Rwanda,” 42.
107 Mukangendo, “Caring for Children Born of Rape in Rwanda,” 43.
Mothers who believe that they are unable to take care of the child may leave them to the care of extended family members. Returning to the case of the Amerasian children, many Vietnamese women relied on extended family members to take care of their children. Some women had left these children to their care for a short period of time or abandoned them completely. With the passing of the 1982 Orderly Departure Program and the 1987 Homecoming Act that allowed these children and their families to venture to the United States, the identity of these children changed overnight from one who existed in the margins to “gold children.” Often families were seen to “adopt” these children to gain a ticket to go to the United States. These so-called families often abandoned these children once they arrived in the United States. Such cases sparked immigration officials to change the procedure in which Amerasians applied for immigration.¹⁰⁸

Even with the recognition that the “family” is the ideal unit for a child to grow up in, it might not be possible in cases where fathers do not recognize their responsibility to the child. While growing up, children may develop a sense of curiosity concerning their identities and origins. Although their mothers might be present, their fathers may be absent or not mentioned at all. In the case of the Amerasians, many of the children who arrived in the United States as teenagers and young adults wanted to find their fathers. The search took shape through the numerous websites, such as Amerasian ChildFind, Amerasian Foundation, and Operation Reunite that help to aid the search.¹⁰⁹ The Amerasian organizations are underfunded and have not had great success in tracing extended family members. Cases where children found their fathers varies – some fathers did not even realize that they had children back in Vietnam and had continued on with their lives upon their return to the United States.¹¹⁰

Article 22.2 of the UNCRC recognizes the need to trace the family of unaccompanied children. The Article states that international cooperation is needed to


¹¹⁰ Bass, *Vietamerica: The War Comes Home*; Nguyen, “Interview with Kien Nguyen.” In cases where Amerasians have been successful in finding their fathers, the image of their father might have been contradictory to what they had initially perceived. In an interview with Kien Nguyen, he revealed that assisting a friend to find his father was disillusioning. Upon finding the American father of a fellow Amerasian, he realized that the man who would fulfill his image of his father would never be suitable. He voiced that former soldiers who served in Vietnam often came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or became so as a result of the psychological and physical violence experienced in war.
ensure that the family of a displaced child is found. Whereas in cases where “no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment.” Tracing the child’s family can be an extremely difficult task that can be detrimental to the identity of the child (and possible family or community). The silence that surrounds rape and cases of sexual exploitation prevents those who are affected from speaking openly about it. Daniel-Wrabetz notes that in the former Yugoslavia, staff members at many institutions were unable to reveal that the children were the result of rape. Nor were they able to disclose any information on the origins of the child. Often these children were left on the doorsteps of orphanages or abandoned on the streets. In May 2003, her visit to orphanages in Bosnia revealed that “it is possible that many of those were babies of raped women, but there was chaos at the time and we were subject to the usual rules protecting their identities and those of their adoptive parents.”

In many instances, not only have states restricted the child’s access to information concerning their birth parents, the process continues to protect the identity of the adults. Article 30 of the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and the Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption restricts access to information concerning the identities of biological parents. This Article protects the rights of the mother in the case of a child trying to locate and identify family members. Those countries that maintain adoption secrecy in order to protect the mother would only be able to release information to the child with the permission of the mother. Although in cases where women were raped and gave the child up for adoption, this Article allows for the protection of the women’s identity. However, this comes back to the argument that the protection of the adult occurs over the right for the child to form an identity. Even when the child is old enough to demonstrate the supposed agency of an adult, this information remains restricted.

112 Daniel-Wrabetz, “Children born of War Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Convention to the Rights of the Child.”
113 Ibid.
In cases where children and mothers want to find information concerning soldiers, the state has often restricted access to such information. As discussed in Chapter One, children born to British and Dutch women who had relationships with Canadian military personnel during World War II have been restricted from accessing information on their Canadian fathers. The Privacy Act had protected former soldiers from the unwanted contact by the women and their adult children.\(^{116}\) Despite the fact that the Canadian soldiers had “liberated” Europe from the Nazi regime, the women who associated with the soldiers and their children that were produced experienced levels of discrimination. For instance, “young Dutch girls had a lot of interference from family. In those days it was a shame to have a baby out of wedlock, and many parents tried to hide the secret from their families, friends and neighbours.”\(^ {117}\) The children that were born were considered to be “different, they were not accepted, they were half-Canadian.”\(^ {118}\) The report on the turbulent liberation time in 1945 states that war children “spent money to place ads in the big papers in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and other big cities, but they never heard anything... The Canadian fathers have not looked for their children in Holland.”\(^ {119}\) Although military archival information concerning veterans opened up after twenty-five years, this information only allowed family members to have access to it.\(^ {120}\) Since the war children were not recognized as legitimate children of Canadian military personnel, they were not granted access to such information.

Although the state has not recognized the responsibility of these children, it has also prevented children from being formally adopted by families through an international adoption service. Article 21 of the UNCRC deals directly with issues concerning adoption. It suggests that states should permit a system of adoption that is in the best interests of the child. Inter-country adoption may be considered to be an alternative means of childcare if the child cannot be placed in a foster or adoptive family

\(^{116}\) Rains, Olga, Rains, Lloyd, and Jarrat, Melynda, Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War II; Ministry of Citizenship, “Taylor Decision”; Taylor, “Interview with Joe Taylor.”

\(^{117}\) Rains, Olga, Rains, Lloyd, and Jarrat, Melynda, Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War II; Grieg, The War Children of the World, 68.

\(^{118}\) Rains, Olga, Rains, Lloyd, and Jarrat, Melynda, Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War II; Grieg, The War Children of the World.

\(^{119}\) Rains, Olga, Rains, Lloyd, and Jarrat, Melynda, Project Roots and the Canadian War Children of World War II; Grieg, The War Children of the World.

from the child’s country of origin. In conflicts such as the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda, post-conflict efforts have been made to prevent these children from growing up outside of their home country. Rwandan government officials have claimed that allowing international adoption to find proper homes for these children in other countries will be “looting a country of their population.” Clearly, this point has been hypocritical since nothing has been done to improve the livelihood of these children. Even within the Rwandan family unit the children are often unable to integrate. A New York Times report states that “[t]he babies have created deep divisions in some families. Chantal I. says her uncle has threatened repeatedly to turn her out into the streets unless she gets rid of her child, whose father was a member of the interhamwe. They say I’m a wife of a interhamwe.”

Similarly, the case in the former Yugoslavia, children also faced difficulties in the adoption process. Although these children continued to be stigmatized, the state and religious authorities have resisted international adoption efforts to give these children families outside of the country. Muslim clerics believe that these children should not be raised by families that are not Muslim. Daniel-Wrabetz notes that in Bosnia preference was given to placing an unwanted child with family members. She notes that:

Article 20(3) is of particular importance for the present case because it presents the concept of Kafalah in Islamic law: the placement of children with relatives. Article 21 is related to the adoption of children within countries and inter-country adoption, it is only applicable to states “that recognize and/or permit the system of adoption.” If they do, they must ensure that “the best interests of the child” are the “paramount consideration.”

This point, however, is contradictory. On the one hand, these children are identified as belonging to the enemy, in this case belonging to their (Christian) Serbian fathers, and thus should be excluded from the community. On the other hand, these children are then thought to be “Muslim” because religious authorities have prevented the outside-adoption of these children to non-Muslim countries and families. In 1993, the Bosnian

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122 Lorch, “Wave of Rape Adds New Horror to Rwanda’s Trial of Brutality.”
123 McKinley, “Legacy of Rwanda Violence: The Thousands Born of Rape.”
government, claiming that 200,000 people had been killed in fifteen months of nationalistic aggression, refused to relinquish any more of its endangered citizens.\textsuperscript{125} One of the implemented measures was the ban on the international adoption of war orphans and, among these, children of forced impregnation. This attitude, in accordance with religious principles laid down by the Muslim community, was motivated not only by the hope that relatives of these children would take care of them and raise them as Muslims, but also the desire to repopulate the country.\textsuperscript{126}

According to the UNCRC, a child who could be harmed by the discovery of his or her parents’ identity should be prevented from having this information.\textsuperscript{127} However, in the case of children born of wartime sexual violence and exploitation, their identity as either being the “enemy” or in some cases a “mixed-breed” is physically inscribed onto their identity. In Vietnam, children who descended from American soldiers have different physical features than native Vietnamese children. Despite the fact that the UNCRC protects children from (unwanted) information, it is merely an ideal that cannot be met. The stigmatization that these children experience, because they are reminders of a nation infiltrated by an opposition, is written onto their flesh.

Exposing the child to the legal precedent of “finding their family” might also be detrimental if the child is not ready or if exposing the identity of their mother/father might further stigmatize the child. In many post-conflict communities, stigma surrounding sexual violence or the divisions caused by sexual violence and giving birth to a child that is considered an “enemy” has not been recognized. It would be difficult to deal with the repercussions of identifying the father/mother of the child without the adequate services or understanding to help the child make the transition from having “no” identity to their “new” identity in their community. As such, when families are found or identified, the support network for children born of such circumstances would be different from those of children who had families but were abandoned in war. Procedures and strategies towards such circumstances would need to account for the differences and context in which it takes place. The pressure to retain children born to victims of war rape without offering substantial rights to them remains a hypocritical

\textsuperscript{126} Daniel-Wrabetz, “Children born of War Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Convention to the Rights of the Child,” 25.
account of state policies and the inapplicability of the UN CRC to all children worldwide.

Conclusion

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary. As a tribute to the contributions made by the UN CRC, UNICEF published a report on *The State of the World's Children: Celebrating 20 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. In the report, UNICEF outlines the many successes of the UN CRC. First, the Convention has been ratified by nearly every country in the world. Secondly, some countries have incorporated child-specific rights into their constitutions and government policies. Lastly, the UN CRC has been successful in transforming the meaning of childhood. It has demonstrated its role in setting a universal standard of childhood as an ideal space that is protected and free from detriments that can harm the development and survival of children. More importantly, unlike previous documents, the UN CRC has recognized, at least in theory, the agency of children.

Despite the extensive outline of rights given to children under the UN CRC, it fails to offer options for specific groups of war-affected children. The second half of this chapter related the UN CRC to the case of children of wartime rape. It has shown that children born of wartime sexual violence are not compatible with the rights outlined in the UN CRC. Rather, children born of wartime sexual violence continuously face systematic forms of discrimination that prevent this specific group from achieving a position within the human rights discourse. Ironically, the UN CRC depends on a certain level of subsistence, “achieving” the right to survival, or even being recognized as “existing” by the state in order to be granted the right to such liberties. As discussed, many children born of wartime sexual violence are not recognized by their state or community as “human beings,” let alone the recipients of rights that are enshrined in the near universally ratified document that is the UN CRC. As a consequence, many children of war lack the basic right, that is membership to a particular state, to ensure that their rights are guaranteed. In other cases, despite the fact that children “belong”
to a state, the assumption that they are not legitimately recognized as being part of that community can also prevent them from achieving the right to have rights.128

With this in mind it remains questionable what possibilities can be made available to children born of wartime sexual violence. One option is to include an Optional Protocol that recognizes the socio-political situation that children born of war are in. In the past, the UNCRC has added two Optional Protocols to deal with specific groups of children. An Optional Protocol that deals specifically with war babies can help to address issues related to the right to life, non-discrimination, the right to a nationality, and the right to a family or membership in a community. Such issues are at the heart of the exclusion experienced by children born of wartime sexual violence. However, efforts at including an Optional Protocol concerning war babies are superfluous. The task of just adding this category of children to the existing UNCRC fails to recognize the root causes of the issue. At the root of the problem is the question of identity. Potentially, children born of wartime sexual violence can be benefactors of the rights regime if they are recognized by their communities and nation as rightful citizens. In most cases, children born of war are not recognized as rightful members of the community and, as a consequence, are not rewarded the rights that are associated with membership.

The biggest setback of the UNCRC is its dependence on state governments to ensure the well-being of children within its borders. As the example of children born of wartime sexual violence illustrates, the state has played multiple roles in the marginalization and silencing of this particular group of children. First, the state has participated in the use of systematic rape or sexual exploitation that resulted in the creation of these children. Second, these children are not considered legitimate members of the community because they embody the identities of the enemy, who is the father. Third, the child born of wartime rape is often forgotten or ostracized by the state in the post-conflict era. Thus, the UNCRC's reliance on the actions of state government is outdated. It assumes that the state is able to protect the needs of all children within its borders and ensure that the children's interests are included in its policies. This assumption, however, neglects that the state has often been responsible for the suffering of many children.

This chapter has concentrated on the role of the international children’s rights regime. In exploring the UNCRC, this chapter has shown that its weakness rests in its dependence on state action. As a result, particular groups of children remain outside the existing rights discourse. The next chapter takes this argument concerning children a step further. It will discuss the role of non-governmental organizations and their efforts in child-saving or child relief. The next chapter will specifically engage in the efforts made by Save the Children to show how organizations rely on simple understandings of childhood to justify and undertake their programs. Such stereotypes of childhood only help to assist children who are able to conform to the norms of existing childhood. Once again, the next chapter will reveal that children born of wartime sexual violence have not been included within the programs of major child-centric organizations. It will suggest that children born of war are unable to fit within the larger paradigm of childhood.
Chapter Seven:

No Place for a War Baby: Humanitarian Organizations and the Representation of War-Affected Children

Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it — say, the surgeons at the military hospital where the photograph was taken — or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be.

- Susan Sontag

The witnessing of children suffering as soldiers, refugees, or sex trade workers is supposed to evoke an emotional response from its viewers. International relief organizations that work specifically with children have used the emotive appeal children offer to help secure a level of response from the public. Children, such organizations argue, are supposed to enjoy a period of innocence, where they are free from violence, abuse, and suffering. Childhood is considered to be a time of innocence and development when children can be “children” without being exposed to the hassles of adult life. The suffering of children thus represents a breakdown of existing ideals concerning childhood and of society more generally. In response to this breach, the

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image of childhood as a time allocated to mental and physical development is used by humanitarian organizations to generate support from the public.

The purpose of this chapter is to question how childhood or children’s identities are framed by humanitarian organizations. It will argue that humanitarian organizations structure their programs based on an image of the “worthy victim.” Children who adhere to the stereotype of victimhood are included within the agenda of many organizations, however, those whose identities are too complicated are not. Children born of wartime sexual violence represent one such group of war-affected children who have not been included within the advocacy agenda of humanitarian organizations. Whereas child soldiers, child refugees, and child survivors of wartime rape have been adequately addressed by the advocacy agendas of humanitarian organizations, children born of wartime sexual violence remain absent.³ Humanitarian organizations rely on “simplistic” understandings of childhood where children are constructed as capable of being “saved.” As this chapter will demonstrate, child soldiers are included in advocacy programs because they can, in theory, be rehabilitated and reintegrated into everyday society. Children born of wartime sexual violence, on the other hand, cannot be included within existing advocacy networks.⁴ As discussed, the identities of children born of wartime sexual violence are complex and cannot neatly fit into existing programs of assistance, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Simply stated, it remains too difficult if not impossible to “save” children born of wartime sexual violence because the problem rests within how post-conflict societies define these children and their mothers. As a consequence, they are written out of the existing advocacy agenda of major child-centric humanitarian organizations.

In politicizing how childhood is framed by international relief organizations, this chapter will proceed in the following manner. First, this chapter will review how humanitarian organizations have structured “child-saving” throughout history. It will mainly concentrate on how programs of “child-saving” originated from nationalistic agendas to repair industrial English and American societies. Secondly, this chapter will

explore how organizations working with children such as Save the Children, UNICEF, and World Vision have sustained the ideas of their predecessors. For instance, these organizations have succeeded in using visual campaigns to facilitate donations and assistance to children. Such campaigns rely on the idea that children can be saved. Thirdly, this chapter will use Save the Children Australia’s 2009 exhibition campaign to help illustrate how children are framed in ways that depoliticize the cause of their suffering. As will be discussed, Save the Children Australia’s dependence on the image of children as victims robs the concept of childhood of its diversity, and most importantly, its agency. Finally, this chapter will question why children born of wartime sexual violence are not represented in the compassionate pleas of humanitarian organizations. The last section will highlight how children born of wartime sexual violence are not able to fit within the existing paradigm of child-saving.

**Saving Children: The Role of International Humanitarian Organizations**

The role international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) play in saving and assisting children worldwide is not new. Children have occupied a space within local and international organizations since the nineteenth-century. Although major contributions to protecting children’s livelihood came in the form of individual philanthropists, concerns regarding children had evolved into a state-centric and international concern by the early twentieth-century.

Modern forms of “child-saving” originated through the efforts of individual social reformers. Child-centric charities were launched in England in the 1800s. These organizations included Barnardo’s in 1867; the London Society in 1883; and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1889. England was not alone in efforts to prevent the suffering of children. During this period, Germany and France also established numerous child welfare institutions. In the case of Germany, most of its child welfare charities were established by private philanthropists. It was only later, in 1878, the German Legal Guardianship Code saw the state take responsibility over neglected children. Similarly, in France involvement in the welfare of

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5 Wells, *Childhood in a Global Perspective*, 27.
children shifted from private and religious organizations to the state in the late eighteenth-century. By the early nineteenth-century, the state had assumed complete legal responsibility for the care of “unwanted children.”6 Interest in the welfare of children quickly moved from the private sphere to the responsibility of the state in modern Europe. This expansion of the state’s power to include control over families allowed governments to separate children from “immoral” parents. By the turn of the century, judges had the power to remove children from their parents and place them in public guardianship.7

Organizations interested in the welfare of children emerged through the concern with the ills of modern society. Nineteenth-century England, for example, was concerned with the growing amount of children living on the streets. The breakdown of feudalism had given way to a society in which individuals relied on a wage to support their families. Under feudalism, “each person had a place in society and obligation of care, however limited.”8 When the feudal system gave away to a system of employment, the employers became responsible for providing for the employee through wages. However, when the employee was unable to work, the employer was no longer obligated to provide monetary assistance to the former employee.9

As a result of the growing number of poor in industrial England, the Poor Law was introduced to assist individuals who were not able to provide for their families. The Poor Law “formalized the concept of local community responsibility through local government for those unable to provide for themselves.”10 The parish was responsible for overseeing the population of poor and judge who was considered to be employable or unemployable. Family members who were not able to work, or children of parents who were unable to provide for them, were admitted into institutions. In urban centres, almshouses and workhouses were created to care for the dependent and the deviant. Orphan asylums were also created as a method to deal with the growing number of poor children in modern England. Children often worked as apprentices or “indentured servants” if they could, but many were placed in almshouses or poor

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6 Ibid., 27; Also see Murray Levine, Helping Children: A Social History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
7 Wells, Childhood in a Global Perspective, Levine, Helping Children.
8 Levine, Helping Children, 189.
9 Ibid., 189; Also see Wells, Childhood in a Global Perspective; Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
10 Levine, Helping Children, 189.
houses. Some children were placed with "families under an agreement to care for them in return for a sum of money."\textsuperscript{11}

Similar methods were adopted in the United States. The mid-nineteenth century witnessed a prolonged period of economic depression coupled with increasing numbers of immigrants seeking work. Following the Civil War, the problem intensified in urban areas. Irish and German immigrants who settled in the United States mainly concentrated in the East and did not migrate to the West. At this time, Charles Loring Brace, a minister and observer of poverty, noted that the Eastern United States suffered from the issue of "bands of homeless children, deserted by families, who lived where and how they could."\textsuperscript{12} Brace had initially worked with children from Irish and German immigrant backgrounds, and later with children from southern and eastern European families. He described these children as the "dangerous classes" because he saw in them the potential for social breakdown if not revolution. Brace later became the leader of the "child-saving" movement designed to rescue children from vice and degradation.\textsuperscript{13}

New strategies in dealing with disorderly children were introduced through the Children Aid Society, in which Brace was the executive director. Initial strategies, as seen in England, placed abandoned or orphaned children in almshouses and infants in foundling homes. However, in the 1860s, Brace suggested that states should help establish welfare boards to supervise private charitable organizations. These private boards aimed to find alternatives to placing children in almshouses. Consequently, removing children from almshouses also meant that families were broken up. During this time, the "child saving" movement often meant "saving" children from their poor parents. As a long-term solution, children were placed in facilities temporarily until they were boarded out or indentured to families.\textsuperscript{14} Institutional placement continued to be an important disposition however, "and in 1910, 108,000 children were in specialized institutions rather than almshouses."\textsuperscript{15} The Children's Aid Society provided an alternative to dealing with disorderly children in New York. Brace attempted to attract homeless and poor children to boys' meetings and evangelical prayer meetings.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 190.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Wells, Childhood in a Global Perspective, 191; Brocklehurst, Who's Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
\textsuperscript{15} Levine, Helping Children, 191.
Industrial schools were also set up to teach girls work skills and provided food and clothing.\textsuperscript{16} 

As part of the program to “save” children, both England and the United States adopted a strategy of child emigration.\textsuperscript{17} Despite the alternative provided by the Children’s Aid Society, Brace and other reformers of the time believed that the best solution for abandoned children was to place them with families in the under-populated West. As mentioned, immigrants arriving in the US mostly populated the Eastern urban areas, this left the West with a labour shortage. Relocating abandoned children to farming communities in the West would help to assist its economic growth and need for labour. From 1853 to 1882, nearly 68,000 children were placed in homes of farming families in the Western United States. This program was not without its issues. Critics of the programs renamed children and in some cases transforming, perhaps mistakenly, Catholic children into Protestants. This also resulted in brothers and sisters marrying each other because of their unknown background. There were also cases of children who were sold into slavery. Brace’s follow-up study indicated, “older children were not indentured but were free to leave if ill treated, or the farmers could send them away if dissatisfied.”\textsuperscript{18} Brace felt that his project was a success. However, this assumption of the program was not widely shared. Many of these children continued to suffer as they were rejected by families and moved to and from different parts of the United States. Some of these children even returned to their “real” families on the East Coast.\textsuperscript{19}

England engaged in a similar program of child emigration. The British government at the time felt that the large population of poor children drained services that could further strengthen “healthy” children.\textsuperscript{20} British nationals felt that a strategy of relocating children to the Dominions could help “save” children as well as help populate the colonies. Although child emigration had begun in the 1860s, this new wave of “forced or arranged mass migration of smaller bodies abroad dealt with unwanted children and acted as a safety valve on civil discontent, reducing numbers of the degenerate poor who posed dangers to respectable society.”\textsuperscript{21} Agencies in Britain,

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Alan Gill, Orphans of the Empire: The Shocking Story of Child Migration to Australia (Sydney: Randon House Ltd, 1997); Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations; Wells, Childhood in a Global Perspective.
\textsuperscript{18} Levine, Helping Children, 193.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations, 26.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
including Barnardo’s, the Catholic Child Welfare Council, National Children’s Homes and the Salvation Army, assisted in the transfer of children from England to New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. The transfer of children was seen as a method in building the Empire while also solving the degenerate problem in England.

Similar methods of “child-saving” can be seen in the transfer of children from poverty-stricken or war-torn countries to the West. For instance, the Fall of Saigon in 1975 prompted the “rescue” of children from the onslaught of the Communists. In March 1975, President Gerald Ford announced the US plan to evacuate 7,000 orphans, some of whom were half American. The plan was labeled “Operation Babylift” and saw 2,000 unaccompanied minors hastily rounded up and flown out in cargo planes. An unknown number of Amerasian and their mothers were also evacuated at this time because the Americans believed the rumour that the Communists would kill anyone who had associated with the United States. The success of “Operation Babylift,” however, was short lived. At 4.45pm on April 5, 1975, the first plane carrying 243 children and 62 adults tried to turn back after reporting decompression problems. It crashed in a rice field eighteen miles out from Tan Son Nhut. Among the casualties were seventy-eight children, many of whom as investigation proved, were not orphans or abandoned minors. Many of the children on board were simply those whose families had “connections” or had paid to get onto that flight.

Child-centric organizations that developed in the early twentieth-century embodied the values of social reformists and individual philanthropists. The changing nature of Europe during and after World War I (WWI) saw the plight of children as an emerging issue. As discussed, Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children, was one such individual who was interested in the well-being of children. In 1919, Jebb managed to secure the support of the churches to develop funding for children. She claimed that “[o]ur hearts bleed for those suffering little ones. Not only are they

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22 Ibid., 26-27; Also see Gill, Orphans of the Empire: The Shocking Story of Child Migration to Australia.
23 Yarborough, Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War, 34.
24 Ibid.
25 Within “child-saving” organizations, childhood later became known as a site that needed to be protected from the harms caused by adults. For instance, poverty-stricken children in industrial England who begged or sold themselves on the streets were later (re)constructed as engaging in “un-childlike” activities. These children were considered to participate in “un-childlike” activities that are detrimental to the creation of respectable citizens for the nation. Thus, childhood became accepted as a period of innocence where children were expected to play, explore, and live within an idealized space outside of the demands of adulthood.
completely innocent and even ignorant of the sanguine struggle which has saddened the whole world, but they are the seed of future generations which cannot but suffer from their debilitation.26 Furthermore, the suffering of Austrian children after WWI inspired Eglantyne Jebb to create the Save the Children Fund. Jebb's efforts first began as a charity to provide food for children who were starving in post-war Austria and Eastern Europe, and was later expanded to contribute to and influence the child's rights regime.27

Similarly, during this time organizations such as the Anti-Slavery Society in the United States and the International Committee of the Red Cross started dealing with issues related to children.28 The initial concern of the Red Cross was to deal with the tragic plight of children during armed conflict, namely children directly affected by WWI. As early as 1924, the Red Cross was supporting and ensuring that children were protected under the auspices of the League of Nations and the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. During this time, organizations such as the Red Cross were also involved in alleviating the suffering of children and ensuring that their welfare was looked after. The importance of children in the post-WWI era came with the emergence of organizations such as Save the Children, the International Red Cross, and UNICEF. Such organizations were directly responding to the plight of European children suffering from the repercussions of war.29

Organizations that either include children as a central component of their mandate or where children occupy one of the many overlapping issues can be divided into several groups.30 The United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) remains the overarching international organization dealing specifically with children. As the overarching child-centric organization, UNICEF is connected to activities initiated by states. Its connection to states involves implementing guidelines to protect children and ensuring that member states live up to the promises in the UNCRC. The organization also deals specifically with United Nations relief programs, donor

27 Ibid.
28 Watson, “Saving More Than the Children: The Role of the Child-Focused NGOs in the Creation of Southern Security Norms.”
30 Watson, “Saving More Than the Children: The Role of the Child-Focused NGOs in the Creation of Southern Security Norms.”
governments, and works to uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The mandate of UNICEF oversees the concerns of children and covers broad issues such as child development, HIV/AIDS, education, protection, and advocacy related work. In highlighting advocacy work initiated by UNICEF, its mandate suggests that its motivation comes with the recognition that children possess rights that are protected by law. Such rights include the right to a space that can promote healthy development, access to quality education, the absence of abuse, exploitation and violence, and being free from life threatening illnesses. In conjunction with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF also recognizes the agency children have in contributing to the future. The importance of children, argues UNICEF, is that they are direct contributors to the future and thus their development and protection is vital. The understanding that children should be allocated a specific space to develop is in agreement with earlier prescriptions offered by Rousseau.

Child-centric organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision have adopted ideas concerning children that were developed in the nineteenth-century. Programs initiated by such organizations outline the idealized state of childhood as a time of innocence that is free from adult-centric issues. In recognizing that children are not all protected by their parents or by the state, such organizations take on the responsibility to ensure that children are given the adequate time and space to fulfill the rights that are guaranteed to them.

World Vision’s child sponsoring program is one example where children who are seen to live in “un-childlike” conditions can be given a childhood. World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to the well-being of children, families, and communities around the world. Inspired by their Christian values, World Vision has been known for its child-sponsoring program where individuals are able to make monetary contributions to assist children throughout the world. Sponsorship through World Vision, according to its website, “provides resources that go into programmes that are usually 10 to 15 years in length and are custom-designed in collaboration with community leaders to address key needs.”

World Vision’s child sponsoring program offers children in poverty-stricken areas of

Africa and Asia the chance to attend school and develop into “normal” children. The organization does so by developing a relationship between donors and children. World Vision offers a method of exchange between the child and the donor. Donors receive pamphlets informing them of the background of the child. This gives potential donors the chance to see how their monetary assistance has helped the child develop.

Individuals who contribute to the program often receive drawings, photographs, and updates regarding their sponsored child. World Vision ensures the donor an active part in helping to alleviate the dire situation that many of the world’s children have found themselves in. The sponsorship program motivates interested sponsors to “personally reach out and connect with a child and community.” In doing so, World Vision hopes to promote this idealized state of childhood that is allocated to all children worldwide.

Organizations such as Save the Children, UNICEF, and World Vision rely on two existing understandings of children. First, NGOs portray children as innocent bystanders that need to be protected and cherished. The protection and maintenance of this stage of development is vital in guaranteeing the development of the child, raising respectable citizens for the nation, and to ensure that degenerative issues such poverty are not passed onto the next generation. However, enforcing an understanding of innocence neglects how children may make decisions to participate in “un-childlike” activities such as soldiering and prostitution because there is no other alternative. As will be discussed later, dependence on the idea that childhood is a period of innocence and that children are always victims to the harmful political acts caused by adults, neglects that such acts have structural roots that are difficult to solve.

Secondly, the programs initiated by child-centric organizations inadvertently blame the adults in developing countries for being unable to protect their children. Child-centric relief organizations have framed their narratives in ways that invest faith in

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33 Ibid.
34 Although child-centric organizations genuinely aim to help disadvantaged children, their methods depend on the idea that children are vulnerable victims of adult politics. In recognising children as rights-holders, earlier conceptions of children’s identities believed that children were “blank slates” that can be easily influenced and moulded. The removal of children from ill-families was seen as a way of rescuing children from families who were seen to be unable to provide ideal conditions for the growth of children. Returning to the enactment of England’s Poor Law, the government of the mid-eighteenth-century was given the authority to remove children from poor parents. Similarly, contemporary programs initiated by child-centric organizations rely on the idea that existing family members are unable to take care of disadvantaged children and such children are better off in institutions or assisted by foreign professionals. The programs initiated by child-centric relief organizations thus rely and continue to frame children as innocent, agency-less victims.
foreign professionals rather than parents who are the prime guardians. World Vision, for instance, neglects the fact that these children may have parents or other family members who may be of moral and/or psychological assistance. In the pictures and pamphlets that are sent to potential donors, children are often featured alone as if they are helpless and need the assistance of a professional agency or a distant stranger. This image relies on the idea that these children are neglected by their parents. Vanessa Pupavac writes that the shift of responsibility from the parents to international humanitarian organizations is used to undermine the moral agency of adults in developing countries, and the sovereignty of (particular) states.36

Children and the idea of childhood are framed by child-centric organizations as an idealized state that needs to be protected. Although it is true that children should not be exposed to harmful environments such as prostitution, poverty, soldiering, and labour; it is worth exploring how the identities of children are framed in ways that negate the role of adults within their own social circle. Organizations such as Save the Children have often relied on visual representations of children in order to generate donations from spectators. Campaigns such as the 2009 Exhibition by Save the Children Australia “We Must Make This A Thing Of The Past” play on existing stereotypes about children that can further detriment the issue at hand.

Framing Childhood: Save the Children Australia and the Visual Representation of Children

In 2009, Save the Children Australia launched a visual advertising campaign to raise awareness and funds for disadvantaged children worldwide. The visual campaign featured life-like models of children made out of plaster that were housed in a glass case. Each child model was strategically positioned in “un-childlike” contexts. The exhibition featured children as refugees, sex trade workers, and soldiers. Each child model in the exhibition told a story. The message encrypted in each piece of the exhibition was one of suffering, fleeing from conflict, or being subjected to socio-economic abuse. Based

in Australia, the exhibition also addressed the issue of abuse amongst indigenous Australian children.\textsuperscript{37}

The campaign was featured in major cities across Australia between July and October 2009. Placed at train stations such as Melbourne’s Southern Cross Station, everyday commuters were able to observe for themselves the dire situation children in distant lands experienced on a daily basis. The location of the exhibition allowed spectators to compare their own lives to that of the child’s. Spectators were asked to reflect on their own childhood and ask whether these children have a childhood. The exhibition also asked its viewers to help save and restore the childhoods of children who are soldiers, labourers, sex trade workers, and refugees. In each visual model, the child is the centre of attention, it is the child that catches the viewer’s gaze. Unlike other individuals who may be in the exhibition, it is the children that are featured within the glass cases. The glass acts as a barrier separating the Global South from the Western world and the “trapped” child from the global spectator who has the agency to move around and potentially “help” the child. The glass cases support the textual message of the exhibition. The visual campaign advertised itself as an exhibition that would “make this (the suffering of children) a thing of the past.” It was clear from the message of the campaign that the children exhibited were exposed to a life void of play, development and freedom from everyday violence. The exhibition highlights that “every child has the right to a happy and healthy childhood.”\textsuperscript{38}

Each piece of the exhibition captures children in a politically and economically disadvantaged position. The chapter will now discuss the three-specific pieces of the exhibition, this includes the child refugee, the child prostitute, and the child soldier. The three pieces, similar to other pieces in the exhibition, help to illustrate how Save the Children has relied on a specific script in bringing awareness to the situation disadvantaged children are in.

The piece on the child refugee features a young girl who is about 5 years old. The child refugee is draped in a grey blanket, which slightly covers her head and her upper body. The child is walking beside an adult who is most likely her mother. The female adult is carrying another child in a wrap around her neck. The wrap itself is


\textsuperscript{38} Save the Children Australia, “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past.”
stained, it is made out of rags. The background of the scene of the refugee child features other people who are also fleeing what could be a disaster or political upheaval. From the exhibition piece, it is difficult to tell what the child and the mother is fleeing from or where they are going. The inscription on the bottom of the exhibition piece reads “Child War Refugee, Democratic Republic of Congo.” The spectator is supposed to link the exhibition with the message that Save the Children is trying to communicate, that is, the need to make the displacement of children a thing of the past.

Source: Save the Children Australia “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past” Exhibition, 2009

The Convention on the Rights of the Child along with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees prohibits the displacement of children. Article 22 of the UNCRC outlines that a child seeking refugee status, whether accompanied or not accompanied by her parents, should receive appropriate humanitarian assistance. In addition, the United Nations promises that children who are not accompanied by their parents or guardians will be placed in a program where their family members can be traced. Unlike its predecessors, the UNCRC does recognize the importance of the

family as the appropriate sphere to raise a child. The UNCRC makes an effort to indicate that every child deserves to have a family, where the development of the child is its utmost priority.\textsuperscript{40} Save the Children also emphasizes in their exhibition featuring the child refugee that children should not be displaced. The message behind the exhibition states that it is “frightening to think that children today are still being displaced from their wartorn homelands.”\textsuperscript{41}  

\begin{figure}
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\caption{Save the Children Australia “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past” Exhibition, 2009}
\end{figure}

A similar message is conveyed in the piece featuring female child sex trade workers. Several young women are featured in the piece. The background appears to be a shantytown in a desolate area of the world. The inscription of the whereabouts reads Bangladesh. The girls featured in this piece are dressed in multi-coloured \textit{saris}, a traditional piece of clothing worn by girls in South Asia. In the background is a building with four separate entrances or doors. Each door is the entrance to a room in which the girls are forced to perform their work. One of the four girls is featured sitting down

\textsuperscript{40} United Nations, \textit{Convention on the Rights of the Child}.  
\textsuperscript{41} Save the Children Postcards, “Save the Children Exhibition.”
on the steps with her knees raised to her chest. Her arms are spread around her knees; her facial expression indicates that she is confident of her role yet worried at the same time. Her mouth is open as if to speak, but no words are heard because she is made out of plaster. The look in her eyes is one of wariness, she is probably awaiting the next client. Another girl, the one featured in the glass case, is sitting on a stool rather than on the floor like the other girls. Her eyes do not catch the gaze of the spectator; instead she is not looking at the gaze of the camera. Spectators can only see the side of her face. She looks angry, as if she has had a difficult life, and is in dire need of being taken to another place. Once again, the message reads that by supporting Save the Children, the spectator can help make child prostitution a thing of the past.

Child prostitution is prohibited under international law. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the extent of sexual abuse experienced by children. Under Article 34 of the UNCRC, children are to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The message behind Save the Children’s account of sex work in Bangladesh is that children should not be forced to work as prostitutes. Prostitution goes against the idealized form of childhood that all children should be free from.

The final exhibition piece features a child soldier from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The child is about ten-years-old and is wearing camouflaged army gear. The child soldier gives off a contradictory message with his body language. He stands up straight, his left hand is clutching his weapon, while the other hand stragglers behind him. He stares at the spectators, looking them in the eye. But the look on the child’s face is one of confusion. Similar to the other visual advertisements, the child soldier is the only one in the glass case. The visual advertisement includes other individuals; these men are a lot older than the child soldier. Unlike the child, these men do not make direct eye contact with the viewer. For instance, the soldier that is in the forefront of the advertisement holds up his rifle with confidence. Only the side of the man’s face is shown where the expression on this face is one of confidence, he is smirking. Even though this man is in the immediate forefront of the exhibition, it is the child soldier that catches the attention of the spectator.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and, more specifically, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child indicates that child soldiering is prohibited by international law. Article 38 of the UNCRC encourages states to
recognize that children should not be exposed to armed conflict. For instance, states are asked to take “all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take direct part in hostilities.”42 The UNCRC urges states that it is their utmost priority to protect the civilian population during times of armed conflict. Similarly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child encourages states to recognize that no child “shall take a direct part in hostilities in armed conflict which affect the child.”43 Despite the protections indicated by international law, it is apparent through the Save the Children exhibition that child soldiering continues to be an issue. Save the Children notes that the childhood of child soldiers are often stolen from them as they participate in the militia. It is the task of Save the Children to help “end these practices and give these children back the childhood that is rightfully theirs.”44

Source: Save the Children Australia “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past” Exhibition, 2009

44 Save the Children Australia, “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past.”
Returning to the refugee child, the image of the child is positioned along with other children and adults. The different individuals in the picture are shown to be fleeing from an assumed war, political upheaval, or prior displacement. In this image, it is only the child who is seen walking beside her mother that is confined in the glass case. Placing the child within the glass case is an indication that the child is the one who should be protected and prevented from such forms of violence. It is this specific child, who may be representative of other refugee children, who should be protected and saved. The refugee child is a symbol of a child fleeing from the harms of adult politics. Similar to the other children in the exhibition, the refugee child symbolizes the lament of lost childhood. A displaced child fleeing from home goes against the ideal form of childhood envisioned by Save the Children. The child's experience of lost childhood uses a Western perception of childhood as an idealized stage of life. Childhood is inherent, a blank slate in which children develop into citizens who can support the future of the nation. Children under this understanding are strategically protected and their rights guaranteed. This Westernized image is juxtaposed against the suffering of children in the Global South, whose childhood is seen to deviate from the Western ideal of innocence, protection, and development.45

The suffering of children functions as a call to restore childhood innocence. In her analysis of efforts made by World Vision's child-sponsoring program, Laura Suski writes that as "deviants from modern childhood, their fundamental narrative role is to plea for the restoration of their childhood."46 Although it is recognized that children should not suffer, this plea assumes that this is what the children want. Little is said about how adults or those working for the humanitarian agencies are constructing this message. Nor are there long-term solutions offered to help these children. The primary message that the viewer is left with is the fact that children suffer and we must invest into international agencies to help save them. In doing so, legitimacy is granted to the agendas of such organizations without truly questioning what the consequences of implementing their programs are. Similar to World Vision, the narrative used by Save the Children in this exhibition evokes the message that children's identities need to be restored. This narrative, however, does not often require a voice and is communicated

visually through vacant looks. The children displayed in the Save the Children exhibition do not have a voice, yet they voice their concerns through the vacant stares that appear to ask for assistance. When children do have the ability to speak about their concerns, it is often represented by the concerns of the adults rather than the children themselves. The opinions of children are thus not part of the message that professional adults within organizations such as Save the Children want to communicate.

The Save the Children exhibition indicates that children who work, flee from political injustices, and participate as armed combatants have deviated from the existing understanding of childhood. Save the Children Australia reinforces the idea that children who deviate from idealized forms of childhood can be “fixed” or “ameliorated.” Similar to initial efforts made by the social reformers or philanthropists who placed children from poor families in institutions, Save the Children uses the same image of lost childhood to legitimize its efforts overseas. Children in the Global South are constructed as in need of protection or assistance from distant strangers.

The distant strangers who take on the form of donors or spectators behave as surrogate parents. These parents who send money in envelopes and then receive photographs from children overseas behave in ways as if they have taken over the role of “parents” of these children. This juxtaposition of adults in the Western world taking on the role of authority works to reduce the role of adults in the child’s home countries. It suggests that adults in the country where the child is suffering are unable to do the job of alleviating the pain of the child, and as a result, adults from other parts of the world are required to take their place.

Engagement with the suffering of children through visual campaigns robs the situation of its complexity. The children placed in the visual exhibition are isolated from the political surroundings. They are placed on their own and rarely inscribed with the political-economic reasons behind their displacement from “normal” childhood.

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Spectators are expected to fill in the gaps of the story by imagining how the child became a soldier or entered the sex industry. These children are positioned as innocent bystanders of adult political events where they are seen to be unable to “choose” between being a soldier and a child. The images displayed by Save the Children Australia are used to isolate the situation of suffering among children. It evokes the message that once the suffering of the child is alleviated, the suffering experienced by others, as well as the complexity of the political events, will be solved. However, the efforts presented by Save the Children neglects how some children may choose to participate in armed conflict because it provides them with an alternative to their earlier modes of living, or that the sex trade may be a rational economic “choice” in a limited socio-economic environment. The exhibition presented by Save the Children neglects the complexity of the story and continues to paint a picture that children are inherent and unassuming victims of armed conflict and poverty.

The exhibition does enforce a sense of hope that injustices experienced by children worldwide can be changed. The message behind the exhibition is for spectators to be proactive and help make the suffering of children a “thing of the past.” For instance, on the exhibition’s website, spectators can learn more about the subject, read a personal story of a child soldier, and also donate money to the organization, all with a few clicks of the computer mouse. Viewers do not have to make a visit to the poorest regions of the world, nor are they required to truly understand the experiences and opinions of the child. Compassionate spectators can be proactive and save the child. This process of ‘saving’ the children can occur through a simple task of making an online transaction of donating.

The structure of donations is also broken up into sections so that donors understand where their money is going. For instance, on the homepage of Save the Children Australia, the icon to donate money appears four times, all with different messages. Donations can be illustrated through the “take action” icon, displaying the message that viewers are being proactive in helping these children or with the Survive to Five campaign, donors can donate by clicking the icon of “get knitting.” Donations can be divided between a general donation and a monthly donation. An interesting aspect of the exhibition is that viewers are directly connected to the process. Under

50 Save the Children Australia, “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past.”
donations, those who seek to donate can see exactly where their funds are headed. Donors who contribute $22 AUD can “buy 19 pieces of soap for school children,” whereas $61 AUD can provide “1 hygiene and clothes kit for a reunified child.” In addition, donations that directly contribute to rehabilitating child soldiers consists of denominations of $300 AUD which can “send an at risk youth on a diversionary camp” whereas $987 AUD can help to fully integrate a child soldier into society.52

The visual message behind some humanitarian relief programs can be contradictory. The use of visual images of children to communicate the message of suffering relies on existing understandings of childhood. Childhood, as discussed, is considered a site of sentimental loss when visualized through the images of child refugees, prostitutes, and soldiers. However, this form of sentimental loss is directly related to the image of childhood envisioned by the spectator’s own lives. The spectator, in the case of the Save the Children Australia exhibition, is someone in Australia. He or she is most likely to connect with the child in the image by relating the children’s suffering to their own experiences of childhood. Child saving is thus provoked by this child’s deviation from the spectator’s own experience of childhood.53

Child-Centred Organizations and the Non-Representation of Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence

The previous section of this chapter has shown that organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision sustain an aesthetic image of children as innocent victims. In programs initiated by child-centric aid organizations, the child symbolizes the epitome of victimhood. This child is innocent, vulnerable, and needs the help of others. It is this very image of the vulnerable and innocent child that generates donations from around the world. Consequently, the image of the child as an innocent victim is heavily dependent on a script of child-saving. Within this script, the vulnerable child has deviated from his or her pre-existing environment of “ideal” childhood and thus organizations must find a way to rebuild conditions in which the child can return to

52 Save the Children Australia, “We Must Make This a Thing of the Past.”
53 Berlant, Compassion: The Culture of Politics of an Emotion; Lilie Chouliaraki, The Spectatorship of Suffering (London: SAGE Publications, 2006); Moeller, Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famines, War and Death; Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others.
his or her rightful place. The efforts made by the organizations aim to correct notions of childhood that have deviated from the norm and re-position “deviant” children back into the private-protected sphere. This script of child-saving has been witnessed throughout the Save the Children Australia 2009 campaign as well as elsewhere in efforts made by other child-centric organizations.

Efforts made by humanitarian organizations concerning war-affected children have only focused on children who can be constructed as “rightful” victims. Rarely are children conceived of wartime sexual violence mentioned in the agendas or programs within child-centric humanitarian organizations.54 As this thesis has argued, children born of wartime sexual violence deviate from the norms of childhood. First, the sufferings of these children are deemed to be political because their identities are closely connected to the methods of conflict. The existence of children born of war is complicated by the fact that some of them are products of systematic campaigns of rape and forced impregnation. Secondly, these children slip through the cracks of human rights protection because of their complex identities. The identities of children born of war pit the rights of different groups against them. As mentioned, children born of war complicate issues related to women’s rights as well as the nation’s right to recover and forget. On another level, a child born of war reveals the complicated nature of the rights regime and how it addresses the role of perpetrators.55 The perpetrator is understood as a static identity, however, children born of war reveal that the perpetrator may also possess rights and civil liberties. This occurs through their identity as the ‘father’ of the child and not just a perpetrator of violence. Nevertheless, despite the availability of rights discourses and aid organizations they are unable to address the needs of these children. The politicized identities of these children consequently makes them unfit to don an identity of victimhood. As a consequence, these children have been conveniently written out of the script of children that can be saved. This section will evaluate why major humanitarian organizations have excluded children born of wartime sexual violence.

In 1996, UNICEF made a holistic attempt to evaluate the affect war has had on children. The result was the publication of the comprehensive Graca Machel Report on

55 Mertus, “Key Ethical Inquires for Future Research”; Mertus, “Shouting from the Bottom of the Well.”
the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. The report dealt with issues related to child soldiers, child refugees, children who are sexually abused, landmines, and children who are malnourished.\textsuperscript{56} A recent 10-year review process undertaken by the United Nations suggests that children continue to be victims of armed conflict where their rights remain unprotected and uncompromised. In 2007, the UN provided a study that took into consideration the views of children who were directly affected by war. The report *Will You Listen?: Young Voices from Conflict Zones* provides a comprehensive survey of some of the enduring atrocities that children experience in situations of conflict. The report was produced from the “views and recommendations of some 1,700 children and young people in 92 countries.”\textsuperscript{57} Participants in the study revealed that despite international efforts to protect children’s rights, some children remain exposed to the horrors of armed conflict. Repeating what the initial Machel report had suggested, children in conflict zones are exposed to gender-based violence, coerced into becoming combatants, exposed to threats that violate their right to survival, subjected to malnutrition, become orphaned, and have the right to an education taken away from them.\textsuperscript{58}

To mark the ten-year anniversary of the 1996 Machel Report, UNICEF produced a strategic review report and forward looking platform that was published in late 2009. The *Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review: Children and Conflict in a Changing World* further mobilizes attention to the effects of armed conflict on children. The Review addresses “all impacts, on all children, in all situations affected by conflict.”\textsuperscript{59} The Review recognizes that “armed conflict is more brutal than ever. War violates every right of the child.”\textsuperscript{60} The Report continues to recognize the detriments of conflict on children. Such consequences include “unlawful recruitment, sexual violence, displacement, killing and maiming, separation from family, trafficking and illegal detention.”\textsuperscript{61} Moreover, the Review also recognizes indirect consequences such as “the loss of basic services, such as water, sanitation, health and education, as well as the rise

\textsuperscript{56} Machel, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*.
\textsuperscript{57} UNICEF, "Will You Listen? Young Voices from Conflict Zones."
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.


of poverty, malnutrition and disease.\textsuperscript{62} The ever-increasing reports on the abuses children experience during war provides evidence that war continues to challenge the protection of children.

In “Theorizing Justice for Children born of War” (2007), Debra DeLaet questions the invisibility of children born of war in post-conflict processes of reconciliation. Drawing on the example of Sierra Leone, she notes that a UNICEF Report on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone (2001)\textsuperscript{63} has not mentioned the role of war babies. One of the key purposes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to “create an authoritative historical record documenting what happened to children during the armed conflict in Sierra Leone.”\textsuperscript{64} The mandate of the commission also involves “promoting the reintegration and reconciliation of children, a goal that is directed primarily at child soldiers.”\textsuperscript{65} The report was meant to provide guidelines on how to reintegrate children affected by the civil conflict. However, similar to other reports published by UNICEF, this particular report does not mention the issue of children born of war. DeLaet notes that “[g]iven the social isolation and ostracism apparently faced by many children born of war, this is a conspicuous omission in a report intended to aid a truth commission in fostering reconciliation and reintegration of children in a war-torn society.”\textsuperscript{66}

Children born of wartime sexual violence, although direct results of wartime violence, are often not mentioned in the reports issued by UNICEF. Nor are their concerns reflected in the programs and forward-looking initiatives UNICEF suggest in dealing with children. Although children born of wartime violence may experience a wealth of war-affected consequences such as being recruited into soldiering, exposed to sexual abuse and gender-based violence, displaced, and malnourished, their interests are not reflected in the reports published on war-affected children. Despite the wealth of reports produced on the subject, the focus continues to reflect children who were alive during war rather than born because of war.

\textsuperscript{64} DeLaet, “Theorizing Justice for Children Born of War,” 130.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 130.
Children born of wartime sexual violence are rarely mentioned in the efforts made by humanitarian organizations either. This is because their identities are complex. Unlike refugee children, children born of wartime sexual violence often are not legally recognized by any state. Whereas the refugee child once had membership to a state and is now seeking refuge in another, children born of wartime sexual violence are often born stateless. For instance, the issue of child soldiering has come to occupy the agendas of numerous child-centric organizations. As represented in the Save the Child Australia example discussed earlier, child soldiers are thought to have had their childhoods stolen from them. Discounting the structural reasons behind why children participate in conflict, child soldiers are understood to be forced, drugged, and coerced into engaging in war. The focus on rehabilitation and reintegration is therefore a central part in the collection of donations. Returning to Save the Children’s process of collecting donations, a child’s needs are broken down into monetary amounts. The message behind aid organizations such as Save the Children is that it is possible to “save” children through the simple process of donating. Whereas $20AUD can buy some soap for a child, $1000 AUD can help rehabilitate and reintegrate a child soldier. Through donating to the organizations, it is possible to give a disadvantaged child a piece of his or her childhood back. However, children born of wartime sexual violence present a different picture. It is impossible to “rehabilitate” or “reintegrate” a child born of war because he or she did not have the privilege to enjoy a “normal” childhood. Children born of war cannot return to a previous period of peace because the suffering is intrinsically tied to the method in which they were conceived.

Simply stated, children born of wartime sexual violence cannot neatly fit into the existing agendas of humanitarian organizations. In many respects, children born of war embody the identity of “victimhood.” At the very least, they are considered “secondary victims” who suffer as a result of the trauma their mothers experienced. Despite the wealth of suffering that children born of war experience, they are not used as “worthy victims” in the campaigns of humanitarian organizations. Their stories are not as “neat” and “straightforward” as the narratives that humanitarian organizations have traditionally used. Whereas organizations can attempt to rehabilitate a child soldier, it is difficult to rehabilitate or save a child born of war. Solutions to dealing with children

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67 Lynch and Refugees International, Futures Denied: Statelessness Among Infants, Children, and Youth.
born of sexual violence involve restructuring or redefining cultural values associated with gender, sexual violence, and the status of women and children.

Alternatively, children born of wartime sexual violence can directly challenge humanitarian efforts. Children born of wartime sexual violence blurs the existing difference between conflict and efforts to resolve the detriments of war. Humanitarian organizations typically rely on an image of a helpless victim, such as a child. Their programs are designed to generate public awareness of the consequences of conflict. Such efforts rely on stereotypes of the helpless victim who needs to be “saved” by the foreign humanitarian. The existence of children of sexual violence, however, directly challenges the capacity of humanitarian organizations to save all children. Thus, to an extent, the presence children born of wartime sexual violence blurs the programming initiatives made by humanitarian organizations.

Children born of wartime sexual violence have largely been missing from the programming agendas of larger organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children. However, smaller grassroots organizations have helped to pave a route to assisting this specific group of children. Organization such as Amerasian Child Finder, Amerasian Family Finder, and Amerasian Foundation are available to assist children born to American soldiers and Vietnamese mothers find their fathers. Amerasian Child Finder specifically aims to reunify Vietnamese Amerasian children with their fathers in the United States. Photographs and information of Amerasian children are posted up on the Amerasian website. Alternatively, former American soldiers who have knowledge of children and former girlfriends in Vietnam are able to post their details on the website with the hope that their distant families will find them. Additionally, smaller organizations, such as Give Hope 2 Children, have also been assisting children in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Children born of sexual violence is a large part of the assistance programs of Give Hope 2 Children. Many of these organizations, however, lack adequate funding to assist children born of war. For instance, organizations such as Amerasian Child Finder rely on the agency of the Amerasians themselves to register on the website. However, activities that require finding their relatives remain limited. More importantly, the availability of NGOs that

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68 Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death.*
assist children born of wartime sexual violence fails to remove the cultural barriers that accompany this specific group of children. The barriers of shame and stigma may prevent this specific group of children from reaching out to gain access to legal assistance.

Although it is no mistake that children should be prevented from being exposed to soldiering, displacement, and the sex trade, the method in which international relief organizations frame childhood works to devalue the political causes of such modes of suffering. Programs concentrating on children often isolate children from the socio-economic and political roots of issues. Thus spectators are drawn only to the suffering of the child rather than the more complicated structural causes. Simultaneously, organizations are also pressured to concentrate on relief cases that appeal to the public. Cases that generate mass appeal are typically engaged with the stereotypical gendered image of the helpless victim, often a woman or a child, who is an innocent bystander of violence. This image of the vulnerable victim helps to generate a mass appeal to those who are willing to offer assistance. Concentration on cases based on the helpless victim, however, neglects cases of children who do not adhere to the stereotypical image that such humanitarian organizations convey.  

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that child-centric relief organizations have framed children as innocent bystanders of conflict. Historically, organizations dealing with children have conceptualized childhood as a stage of innocence that should be protected from the everyday politics of adulthood. Childhood was thus constructed as a separate period of existence where children would be protected from harm, and given the space to develop into rightful and viable citizens. As a result, earlier programs initiated by governments sought to correct the injustices in society by addressing the issues concerning children. Children were often removed from families that were considered poor or were unable to properly take care of children. Children were thus placed in institutions where they were protected and cared for.

71 Brocklehurst, Who’s Afraid of Children: Children, Conflict and International Relations.
Contemporary child-centric organizations adopt a similar approach of humanitarianism when dealing with children. Childhood is thought to be an idealized state of existence that should be free from everyday concerns. However, children in the contemporary world are exposed to warfare, displacement, and continue to work in horrible conditions. Under such circumstances, the role of child-centric organizations has proliferated with the hope of assisting children who have been subject to unforseen suffering. Children who are suffering in distant lands are living beyond ideal or acceptable experiences of childhood. The role of such organizations is to restore and return these children to their rightful role as children.

Such organizations rely on a narrow ontological conception of children. Rather than taking the concerns of children into consideration, childhood is defined as a state that is synonymous with what the viewer expects of childhood. The voice of the child is often muted in visual exhibitions; we often see the sad child or the happy child, without really knowing what the child wants. Instead, the expectations of the child are written into the imagination of the spectator. The result is that children are used to evoke an emotional response in the form of donations, but only if there is reasonable expectation that the child can be saved.

However, specific groups of children are not suitable within this script of child-saving. Children born of wartime sexual violence represent one particular group of children who are considered to be “outliers.” Children born of war fail to fit into the existing network of child saving because their identities are too complex and fundamentally immutable. The network of child saving continues to rely heavily on achievable solutions of reintegration and rehabilitation. As mentioned, it is seen to be possible to reintegrate a child soldier or a child refugee to their existing childhood. This premise is based on the fact that child soldiers and child refugees had a childhood but it was stolen from them. Children born of wartime sexual violence complicate the agenda of pre-existing humanitarian organizations because they cannot neatly fit into their rehabilitation and reintegration programs. This issue also questions how humanitarian organizations have failed to deal with the structural reasons behind the suffering of war-affected children.

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On a final note, the role of children cast in these images is to make the spectator feel good about what they have had to confront. The spectators have witnessed the suffering of those who have deviated from the imagined norms of society. They are given the message that these children need to have their childhood restored. The spectators are thus given the power to do so in the form of being able to donate to the child in order to alleviate the suffering. Through the simple task of donating, the spectator can say that they have done something about the dire situation of the suffering of children. This, however, does not solve the complex political situation that many of these children are placed in.
Conclusion

Peace, for some, is convincing the world that no war orphans, no sorrow, no lingering effects of brutal violence mar the (political) landscapes.

- Carolyn Nordstrom¹

Children conceived of wartime sexual violence often exist in the margins of the already marginalized.² This thesis has explored the political and personal marginalizations experienced by this specific group of war-affected children. In doing so, this thesis has argued that children born of wartime sexual violence have fallen between the analytical gaps of mainstream International Relations (IR), feminist IR, and children’s human rights regimes. Primarily, this thesis has demonstrated the exclusion of war babies through feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence, the construction of childhood, human rights institutions, and humanitarian organizations. It has shown that children born of war have been exposed to various forms of exploitation at the local/personal and international/public level.

This thesis has demonstrated the political exclusion of children born of wartime sexual violence in two parts. First, it questioned why children born of wartime sexual violence have been absent from existing feminist IR discussions of wartime sexual violence. In doing so, it explored a number of feminist approaches to IR with particular focus on the discussions regarding the manipulation of women’s identities and roles in

¹ Nordstrom, _Shadows of War_, 182.
conflict, and the debates surrounding wartime sexual violence. The first section provided a case for how post-structural feminism can create a space in which the rights, experiences, and identities of children born of wartime sexual violence can be theorized. Second, this thesis addressed why children born of wartime sexual violence have been excluded from human rights regimes and humanitarian programs that deal specifically with war-affected children. It has shown that existing regimes and institutions have been mainly interested in children who can conform to the existing concept of childhood. Consequently, because children born of wartime sexual violence have a complex identity that cannot conform to existing identities of childhood, they have been left out of the international discourse concerning children.

In addition to the two sections, the argument of this thesis has been reliant on the five key themes of ontology, epistemology, gender, political exclusion, and identity. Each theme is meant to question the approaches of child-centric regimes, existing human rights frameworks, mainstream approaches to IR, and feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence. These thematic concepts connect the discussion of feminism in Part One to the subject of children in Part Two.

**Ontology**

The first major theme of this thesis is ontology. Ontology describes the concepts used to understand how the world is shaped. This thesis has highlighted that ontology has shaped the criteria used to conceptually frame knowledge within the discipline of International Relations. In doing so, it has shown that the deconstruction of foundational concepts reveals that specific groups are awarded more legitimacy within a field than others. Realism, for instance, has traditionally ignored the study of ontology thus taking their concepts of anarchy, self-help, and the state as a given. However, this thesis has taken a post-structural perspective that deconstructs the centrality of these concepts. A post-structural feminist approach has allowed for the questioning of why particular concepts are used and others are not. In this thesis, the theme of ontology has been interwoven with feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence and the concept of childhood used by human rights regimes and humanitarian institutions. Both parts of this thesis, on feminist IR and children, have illustrated that
the ontological framing of knowledge in International Relations has a direct impact on the experiences of children born of war.

The importance of ontology was first demonstrated in detail in Chapter Two. Chapter Two outlined three different feminist approaches to International Relations. Through the discussion of liberal feminism, radical feminism, and post-structural feminism, it was evident that each theory relied on a different set of ontological concepts. The different ontological concepts within feminism were further applied in Chapter Three's discussion of wartime sexual violence, which considered how victimhood was constructed, and examined strategies that have been developed to deal with survivors of rape.

Similarly, exploring ontology has also allowed for the deconstruction of existing feminist debates on sexual violence, child-centric regimes and institutions. Chapter Five to Seven discussed how the existing concept of childhood used by humanitarian organization and rights regimes is too narrow to include children born of wartime sexual violence. Critics have highlighted that the concept of childhood merely reflects a Western-idealistic perception of childhood and does not encompass a holistic image of the diversities of children’s identities. Children born of wartime sexual violence represent one such group of children who are not included within the existing category of children. The theme of ontology revealed how mainstream IR, feminist discussions of sexual violence, and child-centric human rights regimes and organizations have been unable to accommodate children born of wartime sexual violence as they have relied on narrow ontological foundations.

Epistemology

This thesis engaged in a second theme of epistemology. A consideration of epistemology enabled this thesis to demonstrate how mainstream IR, feminist IR, and children’s rights regimes have acquired knowledge. Epistemology helped to explain how theorists go about making claims concerning war, sexual violence, and children’s identities. It revealed that the epistemological approaches of mainstream IR, feminist IR, and child rights regimes have inadequately dealt with groups outside of their areas of
enquiry. As a consequence, particular groups have been written out of the discussion of war, wartime sexual violence, and childhood.

Part One of the thesis engaged in the questioning of feminist epistemologies. In doing so, it questioned why certain feminist epistemological approaches and discussions concerning sexual violence were unable to accommodate specific groups of war-affected children. In Chapter Two, the theme of epistemology assisted in demonstrating how different feminist theories constructed their method of understanding the world. Chapter Three further applied such methods in exploring how competing epistemologies addressed the issue of wartime sexual violence. Similarly, Chapter Four continued with the questioning of epistemology by revealing that recognition of sexual violence does not account for the personalized stories of rape. The theme of epistemology revealed that many feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence have not been able to accommodate the experiences and needs of children born of wartime sexual violence.

Questions related to epistemology were also addressed in regards to how children’s identities are constructed. Chapter Five addressed how the accepted identity of children evolved from idealistic notions of childhood. Moreover, Chapter Six discussed how the children’s rights regime has depended on childhood as existing within a protected and domestic sphere. Finally, Chapter Seven further applied this idea of childhood by questioning how children are represented in programs concerned with child-saving. Discussions of childhood reveal that the existing regimes have been unable to accommodate the interests of children born of wartime sexual violence. However, this thesis has also deconstructed how children born of wartime sexual violence help to question the concept of childhood used by existing human rights regimes and organizations. It reveals that existing human rights regimes and humanitarian organizations have not been able to help these children. Instead of creating programs that can help these children or adding these children to existing programs, these children are excluded as a group.
Gender

Gender is the third central theme of this thesis. A gendered analysis helps to reveal a world divided into masculine/public and the feminine/private spheres. In doing so, it suggests that the privileging of the public-masculine realm has meant that the private-feminine realm is subordinated or neglected. This thesis engaged in a post-structural feminist analysis that invites a socially constructed approach to understanding conflict. This approach has opened the field to a bottom-up rather than top-down perspective. It recognizes that the public/private distinctions are easily blurred and that groups traditionally belonging to the latter have legitimate experiences that can help expand knowledge surrounding international politics.

The subject of gender was thoroughly engaged with in Chapters Two to Four. Chapter Two introduced the subject of gender as an ontological alternative to the category of women. Gender is used as a category in understanding how social relationships have been constructed, structured, and applied. Chapter Three applied the category of gender in expanding the existing understanding of wartime sexual violence. Chapter Four further applies the notion of gender in exploring how the identity of the survivor of wartime sexual violence is constructed.

This thesis has also revealed that the construction of childhood is gendered. Children have traditionally been understood as belonging within the private sphere where they are consumers of the "feminine" space. As a result, children's identities have not been highly theorized because they are thought of as unimportant to the public-political sphere. Chapter Five discussed how children's identities have been narrowly constructed to one of development, protection, and learning. As explained, childhood is seen to be a state of innocence that is gendered feminine. Children are seen to occupy the private sphere where they are removed from the intricacies of politics. However, Beah's and Nguyen's accounts demonstrate experiences that are outside of this understanding of childhood. Consequently, as argued in Chapter Five, their experiences were automatically dismissed as inaccurate, irrational, and insignificant.

The theme of gender has revealed that particular ideas are privileged because of their association with the masculine field. It has revealed that the structure of the international sphere is gendered, that its traits are understood as masculine and are prioritized over the feminine. A post-structural gendered approach suggests that such
understandings are constructed rather than considered to be innate. Thus, the
discussion of sexual violence and children, which have been gendered feminine has been
constructed as irrelevant to politics. However, a post-structural gendered perspective
has demonstrated that children born of wartime sexual violence offer an important
aspect to understanding the politics of conflict.

**Politics of Exclusion**

The fourth theme of this thesis is exclusion. This thesis has revealed that
exclusion has a political purpose and is systemic in existing IR theories, rights regimes,
and humanitarian organizations. Exclusion has been used as a method to alienate actors
that fail to fit within the dominant framework of understanding. For instance, this
thesis has engaged in a discussion of the rape survivor. In doing so, it has revealed that
the rape survivor who does not identify with a paradigm of victimhood has been
excluded from the dominant discussions of sexual violence. Similarly, children born of
wartime sexual violence have been excluded from institutions that deal specifically with
war-affected children. The reasoning behind this is because both the rape survivor and
the child born of wartime sexual violence are unable to fit into the dominant
understanding of post-conflict recovery and reconciliation. Thus, in order for the
recovery to be successful, groups that fail to conform need to be ostracized.

The theme of exclusion was primarily explored in Chapter Four. Chapter Four
introduced the intricate process of exclusion through a discussion of *homo sacer*, bare life,
and the abject. Through a discussion of “bare life” and the abject, Chapter Four
illustrated how rape survivors are subject to the politics of exclusion in multiple ways.
The politics of exclusion, as Agamben notes, becomes more complicated as the nation
becomes more insecure. The nation starts to use the rape survivor to symbolize the
outsider or someone who is unable to fit in. In times of emergency, the sovereign needs
a scapegoat or someone who can be excluded in order to regain legitimacy over its
territory. Despite not having legitimate power over its own territory, having control
over the process of exclusion allows for the sovereign to (re)gain control over itself.

This process of exclusion was demonstrated in Chapter Two to Four of the
thesis. Chapters Two and Three discussed how some feminist theories rely on a narrow
idea of women's experience. For instance, the identity of victimhood removes any sense of agency from the survivor of rape. It suggests that the only identity the rape survivor can endure is one of victimhood. For example, the voices of women who survived the comfort system were often excluded from some feminist efforts in dealing with the issue of sexual violence. Their exclusion was largely the result of their inability to fit into the overarching movement to reconstruct the victimized Korean nation. This project of exclusion provides a framework for how nations or institutions frame their agendas.

Similar preconditions were seen in the definition of childhood and its use in humanitarian organizations. Childhood was seen as an exclusionary concept. Humanitarian organizations, such as Save the Children Australia, rely on this idea of childhood within their programs. Childhood is defined within its ideal state of development, protection, and learning. In doing so, it gives reason and hope to the programs initiated by such organizations. Child soldiers, for instance, are seen to be able to return to a form of childhood. Rehabilitation programs are available to deal with child soldiers and help give them back their childhood. However, children born of wartime sexual violence occupy a space of exclusion where there are no available programs to help "rehabilitate" these children and return them to a former identity of "innocence." Unlike child soldiers, there is no existing ideal childhood that children born of wartime sexual violence can return to. As a consequence, children born of war exist within the space of bare life. Within this space, they are left as the negative, the antithesis to defining what ideal childhood may be.

Identity Politics

At the centre of this thesis is the question of identity. While incorporating questions of gender, this thesis' consideration of identity has also included questions of race, nation, ethnicity, and age. It has considered relationships based on the intersection of identity and power in issues like national recovery, conflict and genocide, militarism, and political violence. Identity politics is an important theme of this thesis because it conjoins the existing themes of ontology, epistemology, gender, and political exclusion.
The theme of identity is apparent through the discussion of survivors of wartime sexual violence and children born of war. The identity of survivors of sexual violence is challenged at the time they are exposed to the act. As a survivor, women who have been exposed to sexual violence are often/can be (re)branded as social outcasts, traitors, and victims. This identity, however, has been socially assigned as a method of understanding what occurred in war.

Children born of war suffer from the complexity of identity politics. Children born of war exhibit a complex identity that fails to conform to existing understandings of childhood, sexual violence, or war. These children exist outside of the available discourses concerning international politics. In regards to mainstream IR, children cannot be understood within the interests of the state. Many of these children are stateless and, as a result, do not have access to rights and protections that are granted based on membership to a particular state. In addition, these children challenge existing feminist prescriptions concerning sexual violence. Finally, children of war are unable to fit within the preconditions of child-centric regimes of assistance. As a result of this complex identity, these children have been systematically written out of dominant discussions concerning war, feminist approaches to sexual violence, and children’s rights regimes.

**Addressing the Problem: Possible Solutions**

Overall, this thesis has asked why children born of wartime sexual violence have slipped through the cracks of mainstream IR, feminist IR, and children’s rights regimes. This thesis has argued that it is because existing ontological categories and epistemological approaches within mainstream IR, feminist IR, and child-centric regimes have been unable to accommodate the interests of these children. In response, there are several possible solutions that this thesis proposes.

The solutions proposed by this thesis emerge from a post-structural feminist approach. In doing so, this conclusion proposes that the problem rests in how relevant concepts are understood and applied. The solutions that are proposed involve unravelling dominant conceptualizations of sexual violence, the role of women in war, and the concept of childhood. Only through this deconstruction of the existing
ontological foundations of these concepts can the subject of children born of war and their relationship with global politics as a whole be understood.

Redefining the Categories of Enquiry

The identity politics surrounding children born of wartime sexual violence needs to be both deconstructed and reconstructed. This needs to happen on a number of levels. First, children as a whole have been excluded from the study of global politics. This exclusion assumes that children exist within the private-sphere where they are away from the workings of everyday politics. However, children born of wartime sexual violence challenge this understanding of childhood as a protected, private and apolitical sphere. As discussed, children born of wartime sexual violence complicate the subject of childhood. Their identities were constructed prior to their birth and they have come to symbolize the suffering and pain that was witnessed and experienced during the war. Secondly, the identities of children born of wartime sexual violence are misrepresented through their association with the enemy. As a repercussion of wartime sexual violence, many of the children experience physical and social discrimination because they have been associated with the violence, the perpetrator, and the rape survivor. Thus, these children are essentially constructed as social outcasts and used as scapegoats to explain what occurred during the conflict.

In order for the voices of these children to be heard, for them to properly integrate into a community, and to grow up within “normal” circumstances, their identities first need to be reconfigured and redefined. To ensure that children born of wartime sexual violence are recognized as a subject of enquiry, their communities first need to recognize that these children are not enemies. Rather the community needs to engage in “collective modes of responsibility” where the idea of victimhood does not override ideas of forgiveness. For instance, collective responsibility needs to ensure that this specific group of children survive and gain group membership so they can contribute to the society in the future. In order for this to happen, a community needs to recognize its responsibility and ensure that practices of human rights occur at the local level as well as the national and international level.3 Along with communal

acceptance, children born of wartime sexual violence need to be recognized as members of their community and not descendants of the enemy or perpetrator.

An example of how the identity of a child born of war might be redefined is illustrated in a case emerging in the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In this case, a young Tutsi woman was raped by the Hutu militia during the genocidal campaign. However, the woman recognizes that the rape and the genocide were not the responsibility of the child. The woman also states that this child that was conceived during the ordeal was the best thing that happened to her since the genocide. She notes that:

Some people had different hearts. But the whole time I was feeling happy for the first time in so long. Here I was with my son, and another child inside me. We had walked all of the way together. My love really grew for them, and I just wanted to get back to Rwanda and be together.⁴

Instead of the child being treated as responsible for the trauma and a symbol of the suffering from the conflict, the child was welcomed into the world like any other child.⁵ With the acceptance given by the mother and the community, this child was treated like other children. At the local level, the child’s fate was decided through redefining his identity as one of hope, rather than one of detriment and suffering. This is not to suggest that rape survivors must be forced to change their attitudes towards their experiences. However, it provides evidence that these children’s identities can be reconstructed in ways that are less detrimental to the child’s future.

*Gender as a Framework*

The important role that gender as a concept plays in war needs to be more readily acknowledged. This thesis has argued that sexual violence and children born of wartime sexual violence have not been adequately addressed because the discipline of IR

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⁴ Wax, “We Want to Make a Light Baby: Arab Militiamen in Sudan Said to Use Rape as Weapon of Ethnic Cleansing,” A01.
remains too narrow. However, the inclusion of gender as an analytical point of enquiry can help. Gender opens up the field of IR and acknowledges the issues of sexual violence and children born of wartime sexual violence in several ways.

First, a gendered framework illustrates issues traditionally associated with the private sphere. As argued, issues that have been associated with women, sexual violence, and children have long been ignored by the field of IR. A gendered analysis highlights how war is waged in ways that rely upon gendered politics. Incorporating a gendered approach not only helps to add to the existing picture of IR, but also questions the ontological foundations of the field itself. In expanding what is considered to be political, a gendered framework can open up the field to new possibilities of enquiry and voices that have long been neglected.

Secondly, research on gender relations have highlighted how masculinity is structured in war. Marysia Zalewski,6 V. Spike Peterson,7 and Sandra Whitworth8 have highlighted a critical approach to understanding masculinity within war zones. In doing so, their research brings to light how activities such as sexual violence are constructed acts that occur within a peer-setting. Incorporating gender as a framework of IR engages in this second project of re-evaluating existing stereotypes related to masculinity. Whereas femininity has been the engagement of many feminist IR scholars, attention needs to be paid to how masculinity is constructed. A gendered approach can highlight how soldiers are often “encouraged” or forced to participate in forms of sexual violence that are seen to be accepted within a warzone. It has shown that such actions are not innate or conducive to war. A gendered analysis of the actions of these men can help to understand that they are “ordinary” men who were placed within an environment where violence is accepted. This presents itself as violence that is not an innate part of masculinity, but a constructed part that adheres to existing gendered stereotypes. This understanding presents soldiers as having multiple identities – as men, members of their community, brothers, sons, and even as “fathers” of children who were conceived of rape.

6 Zalewski and Parpart, The "Man Question" in International Relations; Parpart and Zalewski, Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender, and Violence in International Relations.
7 Peterson and True, “Masculinist Practices and Gender Politics: The Operation of Multiple Masculinities in International Relations”; Peterson, “Feminist Theorists Within, Invisible To, and Beyond IR.”
8 Whitworth, Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: a Gendered Analysis.
A gendered understanding of masculinity can shed light onto the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence. As mentioned, understanding that men in war are not only rapists can help to uncover the different roles men can take on in post-conflict situations. McEvoy-Levy notes that, as controversial as it sounds, perpetrators of wartime rape in conflict should be understood as possessing human rights. In some cases, soldiers who commit rape are also child soldiers who are abducted, drugged, and forced to commit acts of violence. McEvoy-Levy suggests that “war rapists have human rights not just when they are children or child soldiers but throughout their lives, because of the nature of human rights, and those rights are not forfeited because of criminal acts, even the most violent.” Similarly, by undertaking a gendered analysis of conflict, the acts of men who are perpetrators of violence can also be understood as committed under limited choice. This “humanization of the perpetrator does not mean that perpetrators of war rape, particularly those who order such acts, should be immune from prosecution.” Similarly, understanding that the perpetrators commit violence because of the limited situation they exist in helps to understand that these men are not “madmen or devils but ordinary men acting out of comprehensive motives.” Understanding that perpetrators have roles outside of that of a perpetrator of violence can create a space where the rights of children born of wartime sexual violence can be theorized.

Understanding the construction of masculinity and actions of the perpetrators of sexual violence can help to expose the identities of children born of rape. Children born of wartime sexual violence are thought to embody the identity of their fathers. The stigma that children experience as “monster babies” or “children of the enemy” has largely been the result of their communities associating them with their fathers. But if the identity of the child as the “enemy” is deconstructed, the child might seem as something other than children of the perpetrator. In order to do so, the identity of the perpetrator first needs to be deconstructed.

Lastly, a post-structural gendered analysis can also help to reduce the tension between the rights of rape survivors and rights belonging to the children. Sexual violence and rape in conflict are seen as international crimes against humanity. The

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 McEvoy-Levy, “Human Rights Culture and Children Born of Wartime Rape,” 161; Enloe, “All the Men are in the Militias, All the Women are Victims...” Gender, Militarism and Nationalism in Bosnia.”
prosecution of such crimes would provide justice for the community and the women. However, the prosecution of forced impregnation as “wrongful procreation” complicates the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence. In doing so, it highlights the wrongs done to the woman through the creation of the child. As a consequence, the rights of the children have not been adequately addressed. It appears that giving women the voice to speak for their experiences of sexual violence in war comes at the detriment of the children.

Representation of the horrors of war and sexual violence has used the birth of the children as a method to illustrate the level of the atrocity. However, in doing so, the rights and recognition gained by the women and mothers comes at the expense of the child. Once again, a solution to this issue lies in the fact that recognition of sexual violence needs to occur within a setting that is sensitive to the repercussions experienced by survivors, their children, and the community. Recognition through the adversarial legal process has not always allowed for viable solutions. Rather the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and International Tribunal for Rwanda have shown that the process has often benefited the public more so than the survivors themselves. Survivors have been asked to accommodate an identity that is suitable for the audience rather than for themselves. Similar statements can be made about the children in relation to their mothers and the nation. A solution would be to allow for narratives to be generated from the bottom-up, rather than coercing existing narratives onto those experiencing the marginalization.

Ontology and the Children’s Rights Network

Reconceptualizing childhood and children’s identities can help bring light to the experiences of children born of war. At the centre of the confusion surrounding war children is the fact that they do not fit within existing understandings of childhood. As this thesis has explained, despite the emergence of the child-saving network, children’s rights regime, and humanitarian organizations, specific groups of children remain

13 Goodhart, “Children Born of War and Human Rights: Philosophical Reflections.”
14 Mertus, “Shouting from the Bottom of the Well.”

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outside of the existing discourse concerning children. Children born of wartime sexual violence are one such group because they are unable to fit within the innocent, non-political, and protected image of the child.

The exclusion of this specific group of children largely rests on the fact that the existing definition of childhood remains limited. Childhood is defined within the private domain as an identity that is innocent and protected, and a time for development. Children born of wartime sexual violence, similar to other precarious identities, confuses the status of children. Unlike child soldiers, children born of war cannot return to a pre-existing childhood. Children born of war cannot be rehabilitated and thus they provide a complicated addition to the category of war-affected children. The solution to this problem rests on expanding the definition of childhood to encompass experiences that are outside of the non-political. In doing so, stories that involve children as “political” beings can be incorporated.

Children born of wartime sexual violence, however, are political agents in multiple ways. On the one hand, these children are reminders of the violence in conflict. Even if they are aborted or killed, the memory of these children provides evidence of what occurred. On the other hand, the political agency embedded within these children offer a chance for the community to reinvent themselves. As the example of the Rwandan woman who saw the child as a hope for the future, a child born of sexual violence can also be agents in which change within the community is introduced and encouraged.

At the centre of the problem is the tension between the two sides of the conflict. Understood as consequences of the conflict, these children hold within themselves the detriments of conflicting sides who have failed to resolve their differences. However, these children can also provide a way to reconcile the differences. Children born of wartime sexual violence are not “enemies or friends, but both.” McEvoy-Levy notes that children born of wartime sexual violence provide a new category of war-affected child. Their hybridity or status as a child of two-cultures “leads to their greater insecurity, but it also holds the potential for them to shape new definitions of community, citizenship, and belonging that support human rights

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17 Ibid.
culture. Redefining the relationship between two opposing nations or groups through these children may appear to be unlikely, but it does present a possibility in addressing the needs of these children as well as the differences between the two groups. Rather than children of war, these children can be redefined to symbolize “children of peace.”

Overall, perhaps, this thesis has presented more problems than solutions. However, without understanding that the problem needs to be identified and analyzed, there can be no real solutions. This thesis has primarily drawn from the insights provided by feminist IR theorists. Like the multiple solutions available to deal with children born of wartime sexual violence, feminist IR offers opportunities and paths to understanding the problem. Although the identities of children born of wartime sexual violence provide more confusion to international politics than certainty, their existence invites the curious researcher or practitioner to “start something new.”

\[18\] Ibid.

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