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228949

MSc Conflict, Rights and Justice

Dissertation in Political Studies

Course Code: 15PPOC999

Academic Year 2014/2015

SOAS, University of London

Dissertation Title:

**Elastic communities: deconstructing the narrative of rape in
conflict**

Word count: 9,996 / 10,000

“Women do not get raped because they weren’t careful enough. Women get raped because someone raped them.”

Jessica Valenti, The Purity Myth, 2009

"It's really a tragic problem. The hatred between all three groups -- the Bosnians and the Serbs and the Croatians -- is almost unbelievable. It's almost terrifying, and it's centuries old."

Secretary of the State, United States, Warren Christopher, 1993

“War is tragedy. It seems to me that the tragedy is bigger after the war than during it. The evil thing is not the war, but those things which lead to the war and continue after the war”

Zeljko, Bosnian Croat who served in the HVO (Bosnian Croat Army), 2011

Introduction

The definition of rape has historically been contested by many societies. For the purposes of this discussion, the definition I will be focusing my research on is as defined in Part 1 (1) of the UK's Sexual Offences Act 1956. Rape is defined as an offence, committed by a man against a woman or another man (Ministry of Justice, 1956). A man commits rape if “...*he has sexual intercourse with a person (whether vaginal or anal) who at the time of the intercourse does not consent to it...*” (Ministry of Justice, 1956). Since 2003, UK law has changed to stipulate that rape is the penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth. If a man “... *intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis...*” (Ministry of Justice, 2003). The use of the term penis emphasises that rape is a crime only committed by men. As such this suggests an imbalance of power between the sexes as a man can be both a perpetrator and victim of rape, but the woman can only ever adopt the role of a victim.

Male on female rape is more widely reported than male/male or female/male rape, and it is for this reason that I am focusing on male on female occurrences in war for this analysis. This is not to dismiss the existence of male on male rape; it simply reflects the view of many, that a male's role in society is linked to their dominant nature. If they are victimised they lose their masculinity (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2015), leading to further humiliation for the victim and less opportunity to recover their original position in society. It could be argued that in wartime male soldiers committing rape are simply asserting this masculinity in an unstable environment. This concept will be explored further. The analysis in this document takes on a three-tier structure. Firstly, it will break down the narratives that surround rape and the motive and motivations behind it, secondly, how rape is used specifically in wartime, and finally rape in the context of ethnic conflict. In the last section, I focus on two key case studies of ethnic conflict, those that occurred in the former Yugoslavia, now known independently as Bosnia-Herzegovina and on Kosovo.

I. Understanding the narrative(s) of rape

To fully engage with the narratives of conflict and its relationship to rape, we must first assess how rape is categorised. There is no universal definition of ‘rape’ or ‘sexual abuse’ (Bourke, 2007), though it is important to note different classification categories. In addition, the narratives surrounding both sexual violence and rape are highly gendered. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (in Krug et al., 2002: 149) has defined sexual violence as a term that encompasses a range of acts, ranging from verbal harassment to forced penetration – with an array of differing kinds of coercion, from intimidation to physical force. Herman (1988) expands this by defining it as either a witnessed or experienced sexual action that is disturbing. In comparison, Kelly (1988) defines sexual violence as “... *a collective noun to encompass all forms of male violence against women, and girls...*”. Rape is also categorised by the WHO as the “...*physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration – even if slight – of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object...*” (cited in Krug et al., 2002). For some, rape is simply a political crime against women (Brownmiller, 1975), for others, it is a weapon of patriarchy (Millett, 1969) or control (Kelly, 2000). Therefore, it is central to address how sexual violence is understood and defined, as this determines how rape is understood in relation to how it is embedded into overarching power situations in times of conflict.

In addition to the classification of the act, there is a real difficulty with how to prove rape and to understand and define the legal paradigms that surround it. Bourke (2007: 8) observes that although in some jurisdictions proof of penile penetration might be required, others, in comparison, may insist on evidence of the emission of semen as proof. This confusion of how to categorise rape and its legal paradigms may result from the penis being traditionally coded as a weapon (Bourke, 2007: 14). It could be said that those who commit rape and those who make the law, which are both typically male ventures, benefit from this confusion. The penis remains one of the primary means of committing rape, but there are times when rape is not just categorised as penile penetration. Non-penile penetration can also be accepted as evidence of rape; for example Bourke (2007) highlights the use of fists, tongues, bottles and broom handles. This indicates that the vocabulary is crucial when

describing and understanding the narratives of rape; it must be broad, even though the danger here is that it is often misunderstood and even misrepresented.

Even if there was a consensus as to what constitutes rape, the question of proof still remains. There are various ways and differing forms of evidence required to prove rape, but it depends on whom the victim is and who the perpetrator is. In wartime, impartial evidence¹ to prove a crime of rape is difficult, if not impossible, to acquire. Not only are the lines between victim and aggressor blurred, but also proving the crime through evidence such as that of personal testimonies is problematic. Mottier (2008) argues that the normative ideas of masculinity in historic times valued aggressive, and dominant behaviour in various aspects of life. Masculinity was identified with the active, penetrative sexual role, similar to what Mottier (2008) observes as a 'double sexual morality'. Here it is commonly understood that women should be passive and chaste, with natural preference to monogamy, whereas male promiscuity is caused by the sexual demands of his nature. These narratives often match up with the traditional understanding of male-on-female rape and the evidential requirements compared to other forms of rape. It is understood that without evidence, the attacker could not be prosecuted, which gives little or no solace to those victims of wartime rape and a potential *carte blanche* to those who perpetuate the crime.

The motivations for rape during wartime could be different in some way from peacetime motivations, particularly if rape is not understood to be about power and control. However, rape *is* about power and control. Through linguistic practices, the rapist constructs himself as a human subject (Bourke, 2007), humanising not only themselves but also their actions. The 'cycle of abuse' argument provides a powerful explanation for sexual violence (Bourke, 2007). Here, if the attacker has experienced abuse in the past, it could manifest itself anew and create a situation where violence and abuse becomes the normative mode of behaviour. Men who attack women can experience a feeling of dissatisfaction, whether real or imagined, regarding their own masculine social or sexual performance (West et al., 1978). This dissatisfaction can increase in times of war, where masculinities become increasingly important (Wolf,

¹ i.e. medical evidence.

2013) and heightened. Research has shown that such ‘spiral of violence’ theories incite rape: individuals who feel humiliated, mistreated and victimised by the other become more prone to enact violence (Kassimeris, 2006; Weiner, 2006; Horwood, 2007; Baaz, 2009). It could be understood that due to their experiences, the rapists could be assumed to be, or feel, less human. Rapists then, could be seen as less responsible as they are victims themselves, from the cycle of abuse that they were subject to previously, thus legitimising their actions in turn.

What never should be forgotten in a discussion such as this is that rape is always a contested story and event (Beard, 2000). In wartime, the layers of subjective meaning and justification mean that it can be even more challenged. For Marcus (2002) the act of rape is a question of three things: language, interpretation and subjectivity. Palmer (2000) and Thornhill (2000) argue that rape is an act of sex, not violence. Farwell (2004) continues this argument by suggesting the female may be viewed as a vessel for the male seed. Compared to this, rape prosecutor Alice Vachss (1993) accuses people whom deem rape to be about sex with confusing the very weapon, with the motivation to the crime. Rape crimes are often retold many times to get answers, to seek justice and to gain closure. With the increased telling of the story, the truth and facts can become skewed. This can have a distracting effect on how rape is interpreted and dealt with, whilst also having the capacity to fuel a lack of faith in the truthfulness or interpretation of rape victims and their narratives. In turn, unless there is physical evidence, or witnesses that are willing to verify the rape – how can rape be understood or prosecuted?

Indeed, with rape, it is a common misconception often that the victim brought it on herself or himself. This narrative is also true in wartime, especially in ethnic warfare. Here, the victim’s birth location or ethnicity may be motivation for the rape, as she may be the ‘opposing’ party. In turn, the offender could legitimise his action by understanding that the woman was fair game due to her being of the other group. Brownmiller (1975) and others, suggest that such stigma and blame attached to the victim will actually in turn deter many women from reporting rape crimes. Henderson (1992) observes how overwhelmingly quickly the move is made away from ‘male

responsibility' and focuses on 'female responsibility'. Other reasons for not reporting sexual violence, that are especially poignant in wartime, include: inadequate support systems, shame, fear or risk of retaliation, fear or risk of not being believed, fear or risk of being blamed, fear or risk of being mistreated and/or socially ostracised (WHO, 2012). It can make rape seem to be an easy crime to get away with due to the lack of reporting and punishment. The National Sexual Violence Resource Centre (NSVRC) (2004) continues this argument, by noting that in societies where sexual violence goes unpunished, men are more likely to commit sexual violence. Therefore, violence against women becomes an accepted norm and further increases misogyny (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002).

Consequently, if violence in itself becomes a norm, rape is no longer shocking. Such an example is the understanding of rape being seen as a normal acceptable accompaniment of war - a "normally" violent situation. Rape has for some become a form of social performance in society, which in turn has become highly ritualised (Bourke, 2007). Studies cite widespread examples of men being socialised through particular constructions of masculinity into violence (Kandirikirira, 2002), whereas women are socialised in other ways. Garrett (1987: 153) argues that it is the aggressive male gender role socialisation that is a 'cultural precondition of rape'. This type of masculinity has been constantly negotiated through acts of sexual performance (Bourke, 2007), where men are understood to have an almost primal need for sexual intercourse, totally simplifying men to their genetic sexual organs. In keeping with this, Garrett (1987: 13) notes that the simplification of the male gender has been used to justify rape. Consequently, it can simplify women, reducing them to sex objects and in turn emphasising that men are the sole instigators of sexual relationships (Garrett, 1987).

Men and women are differentiated in society by a double standard. It determines how both men and women are supposed to act, engage with one another and fulfil their position in society. Women are supposed to internalise the desirable national image of mother and wife, as desexualised members of the community (Mostov, 2012). By comparison, the double standard allows men to express their sexuality more openly whilst also condemning women when they do the same thing (Garrett, 1987). Another

factor is the very limited space for the expression of positive masculine agency (Shepherd, 2008). In turn, this results in a one-size-fits-all notion of masculinity where men reaffirm their status of being masculine, through exclusion, humiliation and objectification of women (Kelly, 2000; Shepherd, 2008).

Alongside this, there is a notion surrounding rape that the victim reaps enjoyment from the act. For some sexually active women are seen as 'common property' (Bourke, 2007), further fuelling this assumption. Some historic descriptions of rape casually acknowledge that the women willingly approved each and every sexual intimacy (Goldberg and Goldberg, 1935); other accounts concede that the victim desperately pleaded for the men to stop, yet still refused to admit that the act was in any way forced (Bourke, 2007: 8). It seems that most victims themselves fail to recognise or recall their own victimisation (Greer, 1975). Garrett (1987) builds on Greer's argument by observing the negation of the victims' own victimisation, often occurring in seduction-turned-rape situations. In situations like these, the victim has the capacity to blame themselves for the crime.

In most contexts rape is rarely a sexual act, but instead an aggressive violent act, a clear demonstration of power, superiority and hatred (Askin, 1997). Kelly (2000) observes that violence against women is a way by which men gain and retain power. These men, the perpetrators, are individuals who assume power, who refuse to give up any historical privilege (Shepherd, 2008: 40). Rape is a crime of domination, and war has everything to do with domination. It is the very act of proving who is most powerful, where a man wants to engage in violence (Stiglmayer, 1994a). Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) continue to support this argument by noting that the extreme violence that women suffer during conflict is directly related to the violence that exists in women's lives during peacetime, not just under the conditions of war. Sexual violence and rape have been key features of war for many hundred if not thousands of years, so to address rape in wartime, we must look at how rape becomes embedded within the concepts of war itself.

II. The contextualisation of rape in conflict

War has been defined by Clausewitz to be an act of violence initiated to compel the opponent to fulfil the will of the other party; where the compulsory submission of the enemy to such will is the ultimate object (cited in Young, 1984: 21). We can see immediately that this definition of war could also be used as a description of a rape scenario. Therefore, we are addressing two situations that have a core similarity; the use of violence for compulsory submission. However, we also need to address the changing face of war itself. For Tilly (1985) war makes states; in turn however states also make war. Kaldor (2005) observes two types of wars: Old Wars and New Wars. Old Wars were between states fought by armed forces in uniform², where the decisive encounter was the battle, which was usually defined by place and time. They were also fought along certain rules codified in the Geneva and Hague Conventions – rules to minimise non-military casualties for example – that helped to establish the legitimacy of such wars (Kaldor, 2005). Although these rules were more commonly accepted in these wars, there was a considerable amount of sexual violence that took place, much of which was not identified or recognised.

So, rape has been a crime commonplace throughout Old Wars, where multiple crimes committed were not given the historical attention they should have. Stiglmeier (1994a) asserts that women have always been raped in warfare. Examples of such crimes are varied; actions of the Japanese, Russians, and Germans during World War II (Friedman, 1972), the United States during its war against Vietnam (Brownmiller, 1975), Pakistan against Bangladesh in 1971 (Brownmiller, 1975), and British troops in Iraq (Owen, 2014). Indeed, common rape committed by troops against the civilian population had been half-heartedly discouraged or just simply ignored in wartime (Askin, 1997). Following World War II the Nuremberg tribunals set standards for future war crime trials, yet rape was not explicitly criminalised nor were other forms of sexual violence deemed either war crimes or crimes against humanity (Mibenge, 2013). Rape was officially deemed illegal according to the Geneva Convention's IV Article 27, but was never included in the Geneva Convention 'grave breaches' area in

² Who were typically all male.

Article 147 (Robertson, 2000). Plesch (2014) argues that post-World War II prosecutions included crimes of sexual violence. However, it wasn't until after the Bosnian War that rape became categorised as something more: a specific war crime for which individuals could be prosecuted successfully.

The lack of specific prosecutions of sexual violence at the Nuremburg Tribunals created a poor precedent for future courts dealing with the issue. This is especially true for the ad hoc criminal tribunals of the former Yugoslavia (the ICTY) and Rwanda (the ICTR). It has been stated that rape during conflict only became a crime against humanity and a war crime, if and when it functioned to serve a political purpose (Robertson, 2000; Hirschauer, 2004). The ICTY became the first judicial body of law after World War II, to legally recognise wartime rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity (Hirschauer, 2014). This was in direct response to the war crimes that occurred during the Bosnian War. Nevertheless, the mass rapes were never recognised as part of the war's systematic ethnic cleansing (Hirschauer, 2014).

Compared to Old Wars, New Wars work very differently. Kaldor (2005) argues that New Wars operate in the context of the disintegration of states where conflict is fought by networks of state and non-state actors, often without uniforms or any other visual identifying factors. Consequently, as Berdal (2003) maintains, the 'newness' rests on a claim in the changes in nature of the global economy, especially during the period of 1980s and 1990s. However, he argues that a comparison 'newness' to a distinctive 'Clausewitzian' era of warfare is problematic as it ignores various historical experiences, such as early modern warfare in Europe, wars and phases of imperial and colonial conquest from the 16th – 20th century, alongside others (Berdal, 2003: 493).

What we can see is that these recent changes have meant that civilians are now more at risk than before. Rehn and Sirleaf (2002: 12) observed that civilians have now become one of the primary targets for groups who use terror as a tactic of war. Kaldor (2005) notes that New Wars operate where the distinctions between combatant and non-combatant, legitimate violence and criminality are all breaking down. For

Kalyvas (2001) however, the distinction between Old Wars and New Wars has often been based on an uncritical adoption of categories and labels that are grounded on a double mischaracterisation. Here, the information about current / recent wars is often both incomplete and biased; whilst at the same time the historical research on earlier conflicts is often disregarded (Kalyvas, 2001). It is clear then that the narrative around rape in war is often distorted and the data of those affected is incomplete.

Therefore, we must address how rape has come to be acceptable in wartime. As Baaz (2009: 496) argues, rape is often generally and simply referred to as a 'weapon of war', presented in such a way that it is somehow self-explanatory through the implied universalised storyline of gender and warring that comes along with it. This helps create a narrative where rape is acceptable for all parties and reinforces that raping someone is a common acceptable choice of behaviour. It establishes that rape is a norm of warfare. It could be said that the reason why rape is so disregarded in conflict is because the boundary between forced and consensual sex crumbles, and resistance by the woman is routinely conceptualised as a form of foreplay (Bourke, 2007). The ways in which to prove such a crime becomes even more difficult as there are typically more than two groups involved. It should also be noted that for some the crime becomes the war: where war *is* rape. Dayl (1978: 38, 357) argued that the 'War State's essential identity' was the 'State of Rapism'. Suggesting that when the nation-state goes to war, its identity expands to encompass what crimes its populace is committing and that also the crimes are very widespread indeed.

Conversely, rape in wartime may arise from different motivations than in peacetime. The gender narratives and the break down of the social structure that come with war are definitely major factors. It has been argued that rape in wartime is a direct result of weakened social norms (Keegan and Holmes, 1985; Goldstein, 2001). Among other reasons, a male soldier rapes because the war itself has given him a heightened masculinity, awakening his aggressiveness, which he directs at those who play a subordinate role in the world of war (Stiglmeier, 1994b; Goldstein, 2001). In war, the soldiers themselves may hold a simple understanding of sexual relations, as a way of simply countering battle anxiety (Littlewood, 1997). Bourke (2007) notes several

arguments to excuse sexual violence committed by soldiers; their lives are dangerous and being aggressive becomes their only way to survive; women *owed* them it and male sexual needs need to be met and finally, male fears led to rage. With all of this, it is clear to see that there are various complex narratives and embedded motivations at play when addressing rape in wartime. This is especially true when thinking of the distinct motivation for ethnic cleansing, namely to eliminate the rival group, sometimes with the core intention of impregnating the enemy women.

It is obvious, and necessary, that the masculinities found in warfare are considerably different from those in peacetime. In war there are different parameters, within which both men and women operate. Goldstein (2001) argues that war does not come naturally to men, where in order to fight effectively they require intense socialisation and training. This argument is continued by Keegan (1976), McCarthy (1994) and Ehrenreich (1997), all of whom concur that war is something which is imposed on men by societies. For Dayl (1978), rape is a dirty bounty shared by men on every side of the conflict. One of the most important aspects of a soldier is their strength and control. Soldiers use gender to represent domination and an assertion of power; here they assume a masculine dominant position relative to a feminine and subordinate enemy (Gray, 1997; Goldstein, 2001).

Add to this the notion that individuals are compelled to conform to groups. Enloe (2000) argues that the demands for group conformity, hierarchical structures, and the dictates of loyalty, which are integral to the ethos of the military as a globalised institution, further facilitate collective action for which individuals are seemingly not accountable. This is especially true in the case of rape in wartime, where gang rape was seen as essential in the process of bonding men together as men (Bourke, 2007). Bourke (2007) continues that group rape serves to reduce an individual's sense of responsibility for his own act. There is male bonding in the violence of mass criminal rape (Lomnitz, 1986; Jeffords, 1989; Mayer and Strikwerda, 1996; Goldstein, 2001). Woods (1969: 113-114) employed concepts of group psychology to pack rape. He observed that rape with multiple men becomes a "...*group activity...* [where] *mutual goading forces individuals to behave more extremely than they otherwise would do... the leader tends to become the repository and epitome of the qualities highly valued*

in the group ... and in order to demonstrate membership of the group, all members must behave in such a way to positively affirm these highly valued qualities...". Men who cannot rape individually do so as part of a display within the male group, to avoid becoming an outcast. There has often been difficulty when acknowledging that one's own side took part in such rapes (Bourke, 2007).

III. Rape in the ethnic conflict of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo

In an attempt to elucidate some pertinent factors of rape in wartime this discussion now turns to a specific form of war; ethnic warfare. Compared to other types of warfare, ethnic warfare differs. People that were typically co-located geographically are separated by their ethnicities rather than the nation-state in which they live. The essence of ethnic conflict has been identified as the struggle between mobilised identity groups for a greater power (Burg and Shoup, 1999). Here, it can be for the intent to gain equality within an existing nation-state or to lead to the creation of a fully independent national state (Burg and Shoup, 1999).

A distinguishing factor of ethnic wars is that people are potentially pitted against each other due to who they are, not necessarily what they believe in. Huntington (1993) argues that the divisions between people and the dominating source of conflict is cultural and could be seen as 'ancient hatreds'. Other explanations of ethnic conflict involve manipulative leadership, economic rivalries and so forth (Kaufman, 2001). In the case of the former Yugoslavia, Majstorovic (1997) argues that the focus on primordial hatred rooted in centuries-old identities misses the essential nature of the on-going struggle. In ethnic warfare, nationalism has an even more strategic importance. Enloe (1993: 240) argues that rape has been a part of many nationalist wars; as it creates boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. In order to understand the conflict in the Balkans, we first need to look at the history to try and understand why these groups of people hate each other to such a magnitude.

In ethnic warfare, the act of rape transcends not only being an act of violence towards the woman in question, but also to the social and ethnic group that the woman is a part of. To aid the analysis of the root causes of the wartime rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, we must assess the socio-political frameworks in which both of these countries are located. Both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo were a part of the former Yugoslavia (1948-1992). The former Yugoslavia contained six Socialist Republics: the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, SR Croatia, SR Macedonia, SR Montenegro, SR Slovenia, and SR Serbia (Judah, 2009). All entities in Yugoslavia had the same weighting; this includes the Serbian autonomous provinces Vojvodina

and Kosovo³, which had the same rights as the rest of Yugoslavia (Judah, 1999). The economic crisis in the 1980s, following Tito's death, gave rise to nationalism and the break up of Yugoslavia into five separate countries (Glenny, 1996, 2012). This then led on to the Yugoslav Wars – including the Bosnian War (1992 - 1995) and the Kosovo War (1999).

In the Balkans, individual ethnic identities had been pushed back to encourage the formulation of the 'Greater Yugoslavia' identity, even though at times widespread conflict and ethnic tensions prevailed. In both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, Serbian nationalism was always the predominant offensive group. But what is Serbian nationalism? Job (1993) observes a myth that is prevalent in Serbian nationalism: Serbs are presented as a magnanimous people, straightforward, brave, and the constant victims of Albanians, Croats and many others. All Serbs outside Serbia's borders have to be brought into a single state. Until then, the Serbian nation is persecuted, oppressed, threatened with 'extermination' (Pfaff, 1993). Here, the nationalism becomes a struggle for self-determination at the perceived 'threat' of others, who have for many years shared the same space and nation.

Here, it is important to note the difference between the state and a nation. The state is a political and geographical entity, compared to a nation, which is instead a cultural and ethnic entity. The ethnic state has been argued to be a product of the political imagination; it does not exist in reality and it is also a permanent provocation to war. Pfaff (1993) argues that ethnic nationalism is the product of a certain idea of a nation that originated from German romanticism⁴. However, feelings of ethnicity and culture predate German romanticism. As the feelings of the collective ethnic nation existed before, to join together to fight a common enemy, it also means that divisions, anger and hate are more entrenched than previously thought.

It has also been stated that nationalism is deeply connected with gender. Mostov (2012) argues that 'the nation' naturalises the constructs of masculinity and femininity; where women physically reproduce nature and men protect and avenge it. Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault (2003: 1) argue that "...the centrality of gender to

³ Both were granted full autonomy in 1974.

⁴ The German cultural and intellectual reaction to French Revolution.

resurgent nationalist forces and discourses continues to be striking... ”. Each nation assigns gender roles to its population; for Western societies men are allocated the roles of being the protector and the labourer, compared to women who are given the role of the mother and homemaker. In turn, by defining such roles for men and women, nationalism in addition denies the existence of a gender identity outside the traditional male or female.

The narrative of Serbian nationalism is important, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbian nationalists were chiefly, although by no means exclusively, responsible for the war (Pfaff, 1993). The Women in Law Project (1994) found that the Serb forces⁵ were the principal actors in the war and were responsible for the overwhelming number of documented violations. A U.S. Congressional report confirmed that although all parties in the conflict committed abuses against other ethnic groups, it was the Serbian side that had systematically targeted civilian populations (Rodrigue, 1993). This was especially true when talking about rape. While all parties to the conflict committed rape, the instances of Serbian forces raping Muslim women in Bosnia-Herzegovina far outnumbered those perpetrated by Muslim and Croatian forces (Amnesty International, 1993; Laber, 1993; Kohn, 1994).

The history of Bosnia-Herzegovina is complicated by historic and ethnic claims by both Croatia and Serbia; where Rusinow (1991) notes the Muslim population has been argued to either be Islamised Croatians or Islamised Serbians. The ‘*South Slavs*’ – Serbs, Croatians and Bosnian Muslims – are all the same people, speaking the same language (Pfaff, 1993). Serbian nationalists proclaimed a right to territories inhabited or claimed by Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, alongside claiming the right to defend Serbs wherever they were located (Job, 1993). The history of Kosovo is just as complicated as that of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The same Serbian nationalism was claimed for Kosovo. Serbia saw Kosovo as sacred (Rusinow, 1991), although unlike Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo has a 90% majority population of Albanians (Job, 1993).

In order to further understand why the divisions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo

⁵ Solely made up of men.

happened, we must delve briefly into the identities of all ethnic groups involved. Williams (1956/1957) observes that identity is often used to refer to a set of characteristics. Hogg (1995) defines identity as a concept which links social structure with individual action. For Richardson (1982) identity revolves around an individual's sameness or continuity; whereas what she defines as 'self-concept' is wider reaching, encompassing the key features of identity alongside more fluid aspects of self, which adapt themselves more readily to the situation, mood and expectations of others.

Collective identity as a term is grounded in sociological constructs; where members of a specific collective exhibit specific features or attributes, or properties, of specific geographical locations (Cerulo, 1997). A part of this collective identity is being distinct from other groups. This distinction is often associated with Orientalism; involving the examination of colonial endeavours where a clear dissimilarity is noted between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' (Said, 2001), where the term 'othering' developed (Said, 1985). This otherness is a structure of power; where parts only existed as if they were a part of 'communities of interpretation' (Said, 1985). The collective identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina is diverse, consisting of Serbians, Croatians and Bosniak Muslims.

Coupled with this is the concept of cultural identity, which Fong and Chuang (2004) argue is formed, produced, reproduced and challenged within a variety of contexts. Hall (1990) continues this by observing that cultural identity is based on a shared culture, which recognises points of similarity and also difference. In turn, as people define their identity through ethnic and religious connections, the divisions between themselves and people of other ethnicities or religions will be categorised as "us" verses "them" (Huntington, 1993). For Nagel (1994), ethnic identity is most commonly connected to the issue of boundaries, determining who is a member and who is not. In turn, this legitimises the divisions between people based on ethnicity and gender. It is these very boundaries that have helped to legitimise rape in warfare.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, rape was being used as a weapon of war on a massive scale (Post, 1993). The penetration in rape is an act of great symbolic significance by which the oppressor enters the body of the oppressed (Mottier, 2008). To dissect further

Dworkin (2008: 83) describes “...in the fuck, the man expresses the geography of his dominance: her sex, her insides are a part of his domain as a male. He can possess her as an individual ... and thus be expressing a private right of ownership...”. Thus by having a woman, *fucking* her or *raping* her, she is seen to be a possession. One of the fundamental functions of civilian rape is to display, communicate, produce or maintain dominance (Card, 1996). In wartime, this further reinforces social rifts between different ethnic groups as it promotes the idea that the ‘other’ group’s women are owned and in turn controlled by the respective group. The ‘other’ women become in turn associated with their occupying group through the act of possession and ownership, which leads them to be ostracised from their own communities. Bindler and Wing (1994: 850) state that rape in conflict situations is an act of “...aggression and humiliation of the enemy through an attack on his women...” to erase the woman from the nation and to efface her trauma.

It has been argued that warfare has taken on a new persona, often aimed specifically at women (Goldstein, 2001), which uses organised sexual assault as a tactic to both terrorise and humiliate the whole population (Human Rights Watch, 1995; Crossette, 1998). In war, rape has been used as an instrument to invoke territorial control and domination. In addition, women are often easier to target, or are seen as the entry point for invasion (Mostov, 2012). Rape is a strategy of actual physical and psychological control of women (Wolf, 2013). Controlling girls and women becomes man's way of protecting or reviving the nation (Enloe, 1993). For Card (1996), women who are raped are the primary instruments of the exploitation of other women. Goldstein (2001) argues that gender plays a role in ethno-nationalism; where rape and prostitution have been central to the male construction of the nationalist cause (Enloe, 1993). In the former Yugoslavia, rape across ethnic lines became an ‘ethnomarker’⁶ (Goldstein, 2001). Mexnaric (cited in Fontan, 2008: 112) argues that gender itself can be an ethno-marker. In the former Yugoslavia, rape sharpened intergroup boundaries around the propagandistic promotion of images of the other group as rapists to be feared (Rejali, 1996). Moreover, the rape of the female population and the related forms of sexual terror, which were employed against men⁷ by men, was the very

⁶ Denoting where ethnic boundaries are defined / maintained (Oxford Reference, 2015).

⁷ Here I am referring to both the man as the protector and also as the victim.

essence of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Schwartz, 1994). Although there is no way to specifically show how widespread the rapes were there are numerous testimonies to support this.

Women are deemed to have high strategic importance by men. Beyond their reproductive roles, women are keepers of a group's culture, expected to “...*preserve tradition in the home...* [and] *reflect the virtue of the nation...*” (Goldstein, 2001: 371). This is especially true as the language used to describe the nation, or the *motherland* establishes a very gendered passive image, contrast to when the nation is connected to masculinity. In addition, Mostov (2012) observes women's bodies are seen by some as territorial markers, as well as symbols of the fecundity of the nation and also as a vessel of the nation. It is precisely down to the gender of women, their ability to reproduce and their child-rearing skills that, with the rise of nationalism, men in such communities are more aware of their need to exert control over them (Enloe, 1993). Enloe (1993) continues to contest that irrespective of how women are represented; women can either acquire nationalist prestige or lose it. It is often the case that where a woman has been raped, she would automatically lose such prestige.

There is a significant rape narrative, which determines women of ‘*our*’ group to be different from the women in ‘*their*’ group. Mostov (1995) argues that the rape of ‘*our*’ women sometimes becomes a dominant metaphor of the danger to the nation from enemy males (Goldstein, 2001). Here, Mostov (2012) notes that the enemy male is assumed as threatening, trying to invade national space, kidnap ‘our women, steal our identity and dilute ‘our’ culture. Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) continue that one of the motivations of raping women in ‘*other*’ groups – is to humiliate the men that the women are related to. Mostov (1995) observes that women here are seen as devalued property, in turn the woman would signal defeat to men who were supposed to protect her. Many cultures view the rape of women as an affront to men and mass rape as a conspiracy against national honour and manhood (Brownmiller, 1993). With this spoiling of property – i.e. women – and the humiliation that comes with it, Wilden (1987: 179) argues rape then becomes “...*a stamp of total conquest...*”.

In any war situation, finding appropriate facts and figures can be problematic. The Boston Globe (1993) noted that a European community investigation team anticipated that between April 1992 and January 1993 some 20,000 Bosnian women were raped. This estimate is disputed, as Gutman (1993a; 1993b; 1993c) claims the estimated number of rapes goes up from 20,000 to 50,000 during the armed conflict by Serbian forces. Yet, a study of rape victims in hospitals in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina carried out by experts attached to the UN Human Rights Commission produced evidence of approximately 12,000 cases of rape, the majority of which were committed by Serbs (Burg and Shoup, 1999: 170) – this was estimated on the basis of pregnant rape victims in hospitals. In addition, as Rodrigue (1993) observes, the Bosnian government's figures of the number of rapes has been broadly supported by statements from women in refugee centres, in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"...As soon as one of them was done, the next one came. Twenty of them took turns with me..." (Hasiba, a Bosniak Muslim rape victim from Visegrad, Stiglmayer, 1994a: 126).

It is easier to sexually abuse or torture an enemy⁸ in campaigns where the enemy is regarded as racially and culturally foreign and inferior (Bourke, 2007). During the Bosnian war, there were reports of women being raped in front of their families. Fika, a Bosniak Muslim from Tuzla, recalled that *"...we were forced to watch each other being raped, and I still feel my pain and the pain of my sister..."* (Zuvela, 2012). There were also reports of the establishment of rape camps⁹ and a systemised operation to forcibly impregnate women through repeated rape and confinement (Stiglmayer, 1994a; Gutman, 1993a, 1993b; The Women in Law Project, 1994). Fontan (2008) argues that rape camps are built to attack the collective identity of the targeted group¹⁰. This is what Card (1996) believes is *'genetic imperialism'* where rape as a weapon is used to intentionally impregnate women of enemy ethnic group(s), and in this case Bosniak Muslims.

⁸ In this instance a woman.

⁹ These rape camps were various and spanned across Bosnia. In this dissertation I am solely focusing the rape camps located in Foča.

¹⁰ Here I am referring to the *enemy* or *'other'*.

“... they kept egging him on and telling him ‘you have to learn how to rape Muslim women like we are doing...” (quote from a victim living in Foča during the war; Hogan, 2011).

The rapes carried out by Serbian forces seem to demonstrate a systematic plan of intimidation based upon expelling Bosnians from their communities (Amnesty International, 1993). However, these rapes were not just a by-product of war; they were often direct orders (Enloe, 1993). It has been routinely documented that Serbian nationalist militias established numerous rape camps across Bosnia-Herzegovina to routinely and systematically rape Muslim women (Rodrigue, 1993). Melissa Zerín, a nurse working at a refugee centre in Zeniča, outside of Sarajevo, estimated that *“...virtually every young woman...”* who fled the towns of Donji Vakuf, Foča or Visegrad after the Serbian forces arrived was raped (Rodrigue, 1993). However it wasn't just Serbian forces who solely committed the crimes – it was also often men that the victim knew. One victim of multiple rapes explained that one of her rapists was actually a neighbour of hers, who was attacking her on orders of the other Serbians (Rodrigue, 1993). Another victim, ZR who was living in Foča during the war, recalled how a male neighbour whom her family considered family, raped her and killed her relatives in front of her. *“...He gathered all of us in to the kitchen and then he took a knife and cut off my clothes. He raped me and beat me in front of my father in law and mother in law...”* (Hogan, 2011).

The case of Foča is pertinent here, as some of the most extreme rape cases took place there. The municipality of Foča is located in the south-eastern part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The last census of Foča in 1991, documented a pre-war population of 40,513 inhabitants of whom 52% were Muslim. Only around 10 Muslims remained at the end of the conflict (ICTY, 2001). This symbolises how effective the ethnic cleansing implemented by Serbia was on the region and town. The ICTY (2001) notes that Foča was a strategic geographic asset to unite Serb lands, due to it bordering with Montenegro. Young Muslim women and girls were among Foča's principle victims, where they were enslaved and raped on a daily basis, during the first year of the Bosnian War (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The Human Rights Watch (2004)

continues to note that the perpetrators of these crimes were members of the Republika Srpska army and police, along with soldiers from Montenegro

“... He finished raping me ... and said that he could perhaps, do more ... but that I was about the same age as his daughter. ” (Witness 50¹¹ testifying on the 29th and 30th of March 2000, in the case against Dragoljub Kunarac, ICTY, 2010).

The Human Rights Watch Report of 1998, noted that between 1992-1993 *“...many non-Serb women were held in rape camps throughout the municipality, where they were systematically sexually assaulted...”*. Women and girls as young as twelve were forced into sexual slavery for the occupying Serbian soldiers; where they would be selected for nightly gang rapes and sexual torture (BBC, 2001). Witness 87 held for nine months captive by Serb soldiers in Foča, stated that; *“...I think that for the whole of my life, all my life, I will have thoughts of that and feel the pain I felt then...”* (ICTY, 2000b). Therefore it is clear to see that even years after the crime occurred, the victim is still affected deeply and the crime will stay with them for all of their lives.

There were reports that women imprisoned from Foča and surrounding villages were held in the town hall, where at night their Serbian captors would enter and select who they would rape in apartments close by (Pfaff, 1993, Kohn, 1994). One victim notes that where she was held, other young women were also kept in the same house and repeatedly raped (Laber, 1993). Witness 75 to the sentencing of Dragan Zelenović, stated that she was taken by a soldier to another room where ten soldiers raped her in turn for not answering Zelenović’s questions adequately (ICTY, 2007).

In societies where ethnicity is inherited through the male line, ‘*enemy*’ women are raped and forced to bear children (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002: 12). Médecins Sans Frontières (2004) argues that the systematic rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina were committed so that the Bosniak Muslim women would give birth to Serbian offspring. The mass rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina played a large role in the Serbian strategy of ethnic cleansing; as the patriarchal culture of Serbia believes that the nationality of the

¹¹ The numbers are witness numbers used when giving testimonies at the ICTY.

child comes from its father (Kohn, 1994). Thus, by impregnating Bosnian Muslims, they believed they were creating Serbian children (Kohn, 1994), such was the discourse used when describing the act as creating *'little Chetniks'*¹².

Many women were held until the children were born to ensure that the pregnancy was not terminated (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002). There are numerous testimonies that confirm this. A woman, Marija, was captured and repeatedly gang-raped by various men argued, *"...the aim of the rapists was to make babies..."* (Laber, 1993). One victim was informed by her Serbian rapists that *"...we will do anything to make sure you never come home... We want you to give birth to Chetnik children..."* (Kohn, 1994). Another victim, Besima, recalled her attackers saying *'...now you will be getting a little (Serb child)... You can't kill us all... We will multiply...'* (Rodrigue, 1993). This exemplifies how widespread indoctrination preached the desire to impregnate the *other*¹³ and create new Serbians. This forced impregnation created an influx of infants who are a product of rape and are a constant reminder to their mothers. Branson (1992) continues that thousands of women gave birth to babies they loathed and they were often abandoned. Lejla Damo, a baby who was born of rape explained that her mother *"... absolutely hated me. She thought I was evil . . . and that I would grow up to be like the men who abused her"* (Padoan, 2012).

To contextualise the division in ethnic conflict and the sheer degree of Serbian atrocities, we must also look at Kosovo. During the Kosovo war, rapes were commonplace, yet they were not on the systematic level as found in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Smith, 1999; Rohde, 1999; Human Rights Watch, 2000). Similarly to Bosnia-Herzegovina, during the war in Kosovo, rape was a prevalent tool of political terror (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000). Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) estimated that up to 20,000 Kosovar Albanian women were raped during this time, where many of them bore children. The International Red Cross estimated that in the month of January 2000 alone, 100 Kosovar babies conceived of rape were born (Smith, 2000). It should be noted that many other women would have given birth to

¹² Chetniks originally were a Serb guerrilla resistance group, which emerged out of Axis victory in the Balkans after World War II (Hart, 2011). These groups have been accused of committing war crimes and other atrocities, targeting and killing Bosnian Muslims and Croats as well as Communists (Ristic and Milekic, 2015).

¹³ Here referring to the Bosniak Muslims.

children born out of rape, but decided not to identify them as such. Much like in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the rapes of Kosovar Albanians led to an increase in abortion services after the war had ended and a severe problem of unwanted children (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000).

Even taking all of this evidence into account, many acts of sexual violence are neither reported nor recorded for a variety of reasons (Bourke, 2007). Rapes in wartime frequently go unreported because of the backlash against rape victims in societies where traditional understanding of gender roles is paramount. Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) note that women and girls were rejected by their families out of disgrace after being taken from their homes and abused by their kidnappers. There was also a low priority given to rape cases at the time by the authorities. One Bosniak Muslim woman reported her rape to the police, only to be instructed to come back after she was raped three times (Askin, 1997: 293). It is clear then, that the reluctance of women to report the crimes was not just down to them individually, but there was a systematic rejection on a societal level to deal with such cases – which comes to the fore especially in war.

The problem of shame associated with being a victim of rape in wartime, is connected with certain patriarchal cultural traditions in which family honour is stained by *any* violation of sexual property norms (Goldstein, 2001). Due to these traditions, many Bosnian Muslim women, especially those in small villages, were ashamed to come forward and testify publicly about the torture they endured (Kohn, 1994) – this is also true for Kosovar Albanians. In Kosovo, the increased difficulty is also due to societal inhibitions against reporting (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000). The Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000) found that there was insufficient attention paid¹⁴ to the impact of the conflict on women and the use of rape as a weapon of war. Dr. Mohammed Sestic, Chief of Neuropsychiatry at the main hospital of Zeniča argues that woman's fears are both moral and practical (Rodrigue, 1993). Most of the rape victims have been cast out of their homes by men

¹⁴ This insufficient attention both refers to the domestic society and the greater international community.

and left to fend for themselves and sometimes their children too, in battle zones without food, warm clothing or shelter.

“...I felt disgusted with myself. If I had known how to use that gun on myself, I would have done it...” (Sadžida, Bosniak Muslim, in *Uspomene 677*, Pincelli, 2011).

For the rape victims themselves, confiding or telling someone the truth of their experience is often too much. Williams (1992) highlights that victims are too exhausted by the degradation or too overwhelmed by the struggle to stay alive to confess what has happened to them. For one doctor from Sarajevo, Dr. Gordanjak, medical practitioners can often tell from the bruises or infections if a woman has been raped, even though they will rarely admit it (Williams, 1992); pregnancy is another indicator, as well as mental illnesses (Rodrigue, 1993). It is clear then that the full magnitude of rape crime is difficult to prove at best, and we will never know the full extent of rape crimes against women.

Although rape is often part of war violence, the mass rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina of Bosniak Muslim women has been characterised as unprecedented (Brownmiller, 1993). This is incorrect as mass rape has a long history, which the international community has never deemed to be *serious* enough to be included in scholarly history (Brownmiller, 1993), due to predominantly a patriarchal-led system. The Bosnian War resulted in the inclusion of rape for the first time in an international tribunal's indictments for war crimes (Gutman 1993b, 1993c; Copelon, 1994; Brownmiller, 1993; Enloe, 1993; Stiglmeier, 1994b; Drakulic, 1994; Bowery Productions, 1996; Nikolic-Ristanovic, 1996). The ICTY included sexual assault among those listed as 'crimes against humanity', whilst also setting up a separate unit to prosecute charges of rape crimes. Eight individuals were charged by the ICTY with crimes against humanity for the wartime rapes in Foča (Human Rights Watch, 2004). One of the most notable was the conviction of Dragoljub Kunarac in 2001, who was stationed in Foča during the war. The Kunarac case marked the first time where a war criminal was convicted of rape as a crime against humanity, which is a legal classification second only to genocide (United Nations, 2009).

The theme of sexual violence has been put on the international agenda since after the Bosnian War (Skjelsbæk, 2001). Yet, regardless of whether the issue has gained international recognition and incited action, both the global and national responses to such crimes remain disputed and insufficient at best (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2004). This is most clearly illustrated by the treatment and the lack of support for rape victims. On the international level, rape victims during the war from Foča were supposed to be granted anonymity and witness protection. This was granted in The Hague, yet when giving evidence, the case of ZR¹⁵ is important, as it is a clear example of the lack of protection. After giving evidence in the ICTY, she also gave evidence in domestic courts in the Serbian majority Republik Srpska. In the domestic court case, her anonymity wasn't acknowledged even though on paper it was suppose to be – she also was put in the same room as her perpetrator and it was an open trial where the press was invited (Pincelli, 2011). This has threatened her safety and is an example of one of the biggest issues with dealing with rape crimes in the law, the existing principles are not always applied.

“... I am the only survivor of the massacre of my entire family... Today I live in fear, I want to kill myself...” (ZR, after giving her testimony domestically, (Pincelli, 2011).

As such, it is clear to see that the international law processes are limited and are at times weak. The ICTY dealt with the rapes in the Bosnian War and has prosecuted war criminals directly. However, they themselves have acknowledged the limitations of the institution, where they will never be able to indict or try the majority of the Foča's perpetrators (Fiori, 2007).

¹⁵ Whom I have mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

Rape in war is a complex issue. Therefore it is likely that no single action alone can reduce the occurrence of rape and the ensuing forced impregnation of women during war. Numerous factors play a part in the difficulties linked to abolishing its use as a weapon of intimidation and suppression. Examples of such factors range from the difficulty associated with the collection of evidence at the time and the under reporting of rape to the complicated differentiation between the psychological and physical aspects of the war.

To compound this, in ethnic conflict situations women are subjected to both gender and ethnic discrimination. In these situations, if a woman is of a different ethnic group, it is likely she will be dehumanised and objectified and viewed as the 'other' group. The fact that rape is an act in the majority of cases perpetuated, facilitated and re-enforced (especially in a group situation) by men may lead us to the conclusion that is inherently a result of the failure of men. This argument is further supported by the fact that it seems that in the majority of cases women have little or no agency in this fight. They have modest power, unheard voices and minimal impact. For changes to take place it is crucial for all agencies involved; men as well as women, and the international community, to actively lead the way in any way they can by using their own power to encourage, support and ensure empowerment for women, facilitating women to release their own power, and increasing awareness of this issue for men. This could be achieved through the acceptance and recognition that rape is used routinely as a weapon of war, but mainly by strong international opinion being voiced and supported by prosecutions, which will show any potential perpetrator that this behaviour is not sanctioned by any agency, and so is no longer acceptable.

It is questionable whether a solid platform exists to discuss this issue. There have been noticeable advances in the discussion of the effect and consequence of rape in war recently. Examples such as the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, the United Nations Resolution 1820 and perhaps most importantly the appointment of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict at the level of Under-Secretary-General. All of these developments ensure greater sexual violence

awareness and responses and in doing this, the promotion of gender equality: but it is not enough. Women are still being seen as a tool of war – such as in the DRC currently. The progress has occurred more on paper than it has in practice, perhaps illustrated best by the stark demonstration of the disparity between international and domestic implementation of laws and conventions.

In order to combat rape in conflict, there needs to be greater accountability at the national and international level, through the documentation, investigations and prosecutions (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2014). One suggestion would be the establishment of country wide mobile courts, which has been very effective in Pakistan (UNDP, 2012). In the context of sexual violence, trials can be lengthy and it is difficult to obtain evidence. The implementation of mobile courts would cut down the length of trials, bring justice and the rule of law to the most remote and conflict-affected areas, whilst also offering an easy platform to obtain and retain solid evidence of the crimes committed, soon after they have been committed. This is paramount in rape in war situations as the evidence is often biological. If evidence was collected at the time by an impartial authority that was recognised internationally¹⁶, this may greatly aid later prosecutions.

It could be argued the eradication of war rape may rely on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. Although idealistic at best, it is a statement that has gained increased weight due to the connections between sexual violence in peacetime and war, as discussed previously. However, what must never be forgotten is that the prevention of rape in wartime is ultimately dependent on how rape is classified. The classification of starvation as an unlawful tactic of war (ICRC, 2015) has had a tremendous deterring impact; this logic can be expanded to include sexual violence as an illegal weapon/tactic of war under humanitarian law. Such a designation is a vital step toward ending the culture of impunity within war, however questions remain about rape in conflict situations. War and conflict are different and so are the laws revolving around sexual violence in both situations. There is no clear classification of rape or how to deal with it in conflict. Non-government forces (such as ISIS) do not uphold the rule of international law, nor do

¹⁶ Ideally a medically based organisation.

they sign up to conventions, as they are not sovereign states. Thus, there is a limited capacity for dealing with rape in conflict situations, as it is not as clearly defined as rape in wartime. Only by expanding the law and its application (to non-state actors) can rape in any conflict situation be successfully dealt with.

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