



Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

A Cross-National Comparison of Circumstances Related to
State Forces' Use of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts

Swedish Defence University
Master thesis, 15 hp
Stockholm January 2016

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence is a well-known phenomenon in armed conflicts. The international attention from scholars and policymakers has substantially expanded during the last decades, but until today a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances that generate this violence is absent. This causes difficulties in the policy rhetoric of the issue, as well as in the development of effective measures to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual violence in current conflicts.

This study aims to explore and identify circumstances related to the use of sexual violence by armed groups, and by state forces in particular. The overall purpose is to contribute to an understanding of why state forces commit sexual violence in some armed conflicts and not in others. An analytical framework is created based on existing theoretical concepts and explanations to the varying frequency of sexual violence. Based on this, five hypotheses of possible correlated conditions are created. These conditional factors are: 1) Rule of Law, 2) Other Violence, 3) Ethnic Conflict, 4) Gender Equality, and 5) International Support. The hypotheses are translated into macro-level variables that are systematically applied and compared between ten cases of armed conflicts, five of which have high levels of sexual violence committed by state forces, respectively five with no reports of sexual violence committed by state forces. This is done by a cross-national comparison using descriptive statistics. Four hypotheses are to a varying degree strengthened by this study and the result suggests that sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur; in conflicts with low levels of rule of law; in ethnic conflicts; in conflicts with high levels of other violence, and; in absence of international support. The anticipation is that the results of this study will provide a platform for further conclusive research of casual factors to conflict-related sexual violence.

KEYWORDS

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Sexual Violence, Armed Conflict, State Forces/Military, Government Forces/Military, Cross-National Comparison

ABBREVIATIONS

CRSV – Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

GII – Gender Inequality Index

ICC – International Criminal Court

PITF – Political Instability Task Force

RLI – Rule of Law Index

SVAC Dataset – Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts Dataset

UCDP – Uppsala Conflict Data Program

UN – United Nations

UN SCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A BRIEF BACKGROUND

The history of conflict-related sexual violence is as extensive as the history of warring itself. Even so, it took until the 1990s before the international community recognized these actions as a crime against humanity and not a collateral damage of war. The wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995) and Rwanda (1994), and the mass rapes that were carried out during these conflicts, made it impossible for international policymakers to keep ignoring this issue. Since then, sexual violence has been defined as a serious threat to global peace and security, and gender dimensions of armed conflicts have gained focus on the international policy agenda. Women's equal participation in promoting peace and security have been acknowledged as a key issue by both policymakers and researchers, and is particularly manifested in the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in year 2000. The SCR 1325 has been followed by a series of UN Security Council resolutions that seek to prevent sexual violence in conflict situations and to increase women's participation in conflict and post-conflict settings (among them SCR 1820 (2008), SCR 1888 (2009), SCR 1960 (2010) and SCR 2106 (2013)). These resolutions reaffirm the UN's commitment to combat conflict-related sexual violence, and in year 2010 the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, for the first time appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Another milestone in the work of preventing sexual violence in armed conflicts has been the inclusion of sexual violence as both a war crime and a crime against humanity in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002. This integration of gender concerns in international criminal law has made it possible to prosecute cases of conflict-related sexual violence when national courts are unable, or unwilling to pursue (Kuehnast et al, 2011:74). In resemblance with the efforts to prevent impunity of perpetrators, the ICC has also worked to establish procedures for proper treatment and protection of witnesses and victims to sexual violence in conflict settings.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The above-mentioned developments, along with the increased attention from national governments, NGOs, scholars and media have resulted in a remarkable shift. Conflict-related sexual violence is no longer considered an inevitable part of war, but a threat to global security that must be combated and prevented. However, despite this shift in attention and the increased policy interventions on the international agenda, these gruesome violations proceed in many current conflicts. The difficulties in developing effective interventions and preventive measures are largely due to the lack of a comprehensive theoretical understanding of why sexual violence occur widely in some conflicts and not at all in other conflicts:

“Although substantial strides have been made in the area of sexual violence research, investment in responses and prevention efforts in the field are still inadequate. /.../ Very little research has been conducted on rape prevention and only a handful of theoretically-based interventions have been developed and evaluated.” (Sexual Violence Research Initiative)

Effective measures to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence are largely hindered by the absence of a common understanding of the causes and motives behind the violence (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2010:7). Most of the existing studies are case studies of conflicts where sexual violence is widespread, and there are few studies that focus on cases where there are no reports of conflict-related sexual violence. Cross-national studies would enable a comparison of the conditions in conflicts with massive reports of sexual violence to them with no reports, and perhaps illuminate interacting mechanisms and lead to a better understanding of the variations of conflict-related sexual violence (Cohen & Nordås, 2014:418). By exploring these variations, and by analyzing the conditions that seem to facilitate armed groups use of sexual violence, successful preventive measures and actions to mitigate the effects of conflict-related sexual violence can be obtained.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

At present there is relatively little research available on the variations of sexual violence. This is largely a result of the unilateral interest to portray cases with massive levels of sexual violence, shared by researchers, policy makers and the media. This focus has contributed to the discursive narrative of sexual violence as a *weapon of war*, neglecting cases where sexual violence does not occur (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:3). Though, in recent years, the number of researchers focusing on the variations of sexual violence in armed conflicts has increased. These studies contain suggestions of conditional factors that are believed to be connected, or even direct causes to the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence (further explained in Chapter 2). In this study, these suggested explanations are translated into macro-level variables that will be systematically compared between cases with reports of massive use of sexual violence and cases with no reports of sexual violence. The cases included in this study have been selected based on the level of sexual violence that was carried out by government forces during one year of armed conflict. The cases consist of two categories: cases with massive reports of conflict-related sexual violence; Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan and Guinea, and cases with no reports of conflict-related sexual violence; Mozambique, Comoros, Senegal, Niger and Mali. The purpose with this selection is to illuminate the variations in frequency of sexual violence in armed conflicts, and to evaluate some of the possible explanations to these variations that are available within the field today. This focus will also challenge the biased portrayal of these events as an inevitable weapon of war.

The main objective of this study is to contribute to an understanding of circumstantial factors that are associated with the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence. My aim is to explore and identify underlying conditions to the prevalence of sexual violence, and to

contribute to a better understanding of factors that potentially facilitate or prevent the use of sexual violence by armed groups. In this study, I will focus in particular on state forces as perpetrators, as studies have shown that they are the armed group most likely to commit sexual violence in armed conflicts (shown in Chapter 2).

The study is exploratory as it seeks to contribute to a more comparative perspective to the research problem, with the anticipation to form a basis for further conclusive research. I will not be able to pinpoint casual factors, as this requires more multifaceted studies than I am able to accomplish within the frames given for this study. Rather, my purpose is to identify some of the macro-level conditions under which conflict-related sexual violence is more likely to occur.

1.4 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The definitions of the central concepts in this study are based on the definition given by the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts (SVAC) Dataset, and are thus based on the same source that provides the basis for my selection of cases.

In the SVAC Dataset *sexual violence* is defined as; (1) rape, (2) sexual slavery, (3) forced prostitution, (4) forced pregnancy, (5) forced sterilization/abortion, (6) sexual mutilation, and (7) sexual torture. The observation of these events incorporates sexual violence with both male and female victims/perpetrators, and there will be no separation based on the sex of the perpetrator/victim in this study. Furthermore, the event of sexual violence is categorized as *conflict-related* when “the incident of sexual violence was perpetrated in a conflict territory” (Cohen & Nordås, 2013:7).

The classification of an *armed conflict* in the SVAC Dataset is based on the definition made by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). In UCDP an armed conflict is defined as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” (Gledisch et al 2002:619).

In this study I will focus exclusively on state/government perpetrators. In the SVAC Dataset the definition of *state/government military* or *forces* includes “all government actors with special status as representatives of the state” (Cohen & Nordås, 2013:6). Accordingly, sexual violations by government actors, such as security forces, interrogators, border patrol, and military units, have been coded and integrated in the SVAC Dataset. However, the violation committed by the government/state actor is only included in the SVAC Dataset if it is considered to be related to the armed conflict and/or directed at a member of an insurgent group, a close relative of a member of an insurgent group, or undertaken for the purpose of collecting information related to the prevalent conflict.

1.5 STRUCTURE

Chapter 2 will provide the analytical framework from which this study departs. Initially, the chapter will provide an overview of previous research and outline the theoretical concepts that will form the basis of my analysis. Thereafter, it will present five conditional factors that appear as common explanations for the prevalence of sexual violence in the reviewed literature. These factors will be translated into five hypotheses. The method chosen for this study, as well as the methodological and empirical challenges for the execution of this study will be discussed in Chapter 3. This chapter will also describe the process behind the selection of cases included in this study and the choice of data sources. The research results will be presented in Chapter 4, and the presentation of each conditional factor will be followed by an evaluation of the validity of the hypothesis. In Chapter 5 the results will be compiled into one table and the variables relative connection to the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence will be further discussed and summarized. Ultimately this chapter will outline the conclusions of this study, followed by recommendations for future research.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THE RESEARCH FIELD

As conflict-related sexual violence captured increased consideration on the international policy agenda in the 1990s, the interest of scholars has been fuelled and the body of literature on the subject thereby rapidly expanded. Despite the joint perception that this increase in documentation and analysis is desirable and highly needed, there are clear disagreements regarding how this issue should be studied, understood and explained.

2.1.1 Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – a Discursive Construction

Initially, conflict-related sexual violence was framed as an inevitable part of warfare, but the turning point in the 1990s was followed by a conceptual change in which sexual violence came to be considered as a *weapon of war*. As Inger Skjelsbæk highlights (2012a:60) the term “weapon of war” has not been given an explicit definition in this context, however the expression indicates that sexual violence is practiced upon shared beliefs and suggests that sexual violence is an established tactic of warfare within military groups. The narrative of sexual violence as a weapon of war has eventually become a universal framework for how conflict-related sexual violence is perceived, both by policymakers, researchers and the media.

Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern (2013:4) express concern against this construction of the problem. They hold that the discourse “may conceal and exclude subjects and accounts that could improve understanding of or add additional knowledge about how and why sexual violence in warring occurs, as well as what it may mean to those who are subjected to it”. Eriksson Baaz and Stern identifies two pillars on which the prevailing discourse of sexual violence as a weapon of war rests: 1) *militarization* and the production of *militarized masculinities* and 2) the existence of *unequal gender relations* and the understanding of sexual violence as a *gendered act* (p. 23). Further on they claim that the discourse of sexual violence in armed conflicts constructs preconceptions about the perpetrator and the victim, in which women and girls are generally portrayed as victims and where the perpetrator is portrayed as a dehumanized and brutalized "other", assumed to be a man (pp. 25-26).

According to Sandra Cheldelin and Maneshka Eliatamby (2011:1-2) the role of women in war has largely been associated with physically or/and mentally injured civilians. In other words, there exists a discursive practice regarding conflict and violence, where women – more than men – are described as victims. Without denying that women along with children are often the primary victims of conflict and war, this framing may limit women’s role in conflicts and sideline them as spectators instead of active participants in the peacemaking process (Cheldelin & Eliatamby 2011:286). Skjelsbæk (2013:1) raises critique to policymaker’s predominant focus on protection of women and girls and claims that it has “overshadowed the role of the perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence and need to focus on preventive measures”. Ragnhild Nordås (2013) also stresses the need to direct research and policies to prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place, and not solely to develop programs

for how to assist survivors of sexual violence. Both Skjelsbæk and Nordås inquire policymakers and scholars to shift from a *victim-centered focus* towards a *perpetrator-centered focus*. This shift in focus would promote further understanding of the conditions and circumstances that facilitate and motivate the use of sexual violence, and means to how it can be prevented (Skjelsbæk, 2012b:163).

2.1.2 Variations in Sexual Violence

The discursive construction of gender roles and the framing of conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of war affects the policies and methods used to prevent the sexual violence in armed conflicts. To ensure that these stereotypes do not hinder possible explanations and solutions, as well as to counteract a one-dimensional perspective on the problem, it is essential to make visible the variations in wartime sexual violence. Elisabeth Jean Wood (2006, 2009, 2010, 2012) has focused her research on highlighting these variations. Wood (2012) criticizes the fact that policy and academic literature mainly have drawn attention to cases with widespread rape of girls and women:

“While the focus on Bosnia and Rwanda contributed to the development of sexual violence as a crime under international law, the question of variation was neglected and the rhetoric of the time emphasized the supposed ubiquity of wartime rape.” (p. 396)

Wood (2012:392-393) holds that cases of sexual violence by armed groups vary in aspect of three dimensions: *frequency*, *targeting*, and *objectives*. In order to understand the motivations behind conflict-related sexual violence these differences must be acknowledged, which requires both studies of cases where sexual violence do not occur and cases where it is “widespread” (Wood 2009:133). In coherence with Wood, Dara Kay Cohen and Ragnhild Nordås (2013) claim that it is substantial to study variations in the prevalence of sexual violence both between and within conflicts. They suggest that cross-national analyzes can challenge the common explanation of conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of war, and thus contribute to the understanding of why it occurs (Cohen & Nordås, 2013:418).

Recent studies have challenged a number of assumptions and misconceptions about conflict-related sexual violence, and in particular studies by Wood (2009, 2012), Cohen et al (2012, 2013, 2014), and Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2010, 2013). In the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Special Report, *Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications, and Ways Forward* (Cohen, Hoover Green & Wood, 2013) the following misconceptions are recognized and contested:

1. *Sexual violence is a ubiquitous weapon of war*
2. *Rebel groups are more likely than state militaries to be reported as perpetrators*
3. *Conflict-related sexual violence is an African issue*
4. *All perpetrators are men, and all victims are women*

1. Is sexual violence a ubiquitous weapon of war?

The conventional perception suggests that sexual violence is an inevitable part of war, but recent research shows that the frequency varies widely between and within conflicts. Studies have also shown that an armed group that “refrains from sexual violence at one stage of war might perpetrate it on a large scale at other times” (Cohen, Hoover Green & Wood, 2013:2). A study of all African conflicts between 1989 and 2009, conducted by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), found that 72% of armed groups had no record of sexual violence during these conflicts (Cohen & Nordås, 2012). 39% of the conflicts exhibited asymmetry, which means that within the same conflict, an armed group conceded sexual violence, while another armed group did not (Wood, 2012:401). These figures indicate that there is a considerable variation in the degree to which armed actors commit sexual violence, and demonstrate that sexual violence is not an inevitable part of war. Besides, evidence indicating that there are a great number of armed groups that do not engage in sexual violence provides strong policy implications, and demand that armed actors that do commit this violence should be held accountable (Wood, 2009:132).

2. Are rebel groups more likely than state militaries to be reported as perpetrators?

Media reports often give the image of perpetrators of sexual violence as outlaws and unruly rebel forces and militias, however recent studies show that state forces are more likely to be reported as perpetrators. The SVAC Dataset shows that 42% of state forces was reported as perpetrators of sexual violence during the study period, 1989-2009, while 24% of the rebel groups and 17% of the militias were reported (Cohen & Nordås, 2014:425). In African conflicts the equivalent numbers showed that 64% of the government actors, 31% of rebel groups, and 29% of the militias engaged in sexual violence. This demonstrates that a majority of the actors who commit conflict-related sexual violence are state forces. However, the reason for the asymmetric occurrence among governmental forces remains unexplored. One possible explanation is that some rebel groups rely on civilian support for resources, and they are therefore less likely to take advantage of civilian populations in their quest to become the new leaders of the country (Cohen, Hoover Green & Wood, 2013:4). But this explanation may also be disproved. The Islamic State is one of the most recent examples of a rebel groups that exercise massive use of sexual violence against the civilian population.

3. Is conflict-related sexual violence an African issue?

Reports of conflict-related sexual violence are not limited to one geographic region, though both the media and the researchers' predominant focus on cases within the African territory contributes to the general perception of Africa as the most affected continent. Certainly, African countries have experienced a high degree of armed conflicts during the last decades and the continent can thus be assumed to be particularly vulnerable to the occurrence of sexual violence in connection to these conflicts. But during the period of 1980-2009 conflict-related sexual violence was reported in nearly every region of the world (Cohen, 2013a), and human rights reports from the U.S. State Department show that at least one year of high or very high prevalence of sexual violence could be found in the majority of war-affected countries (Cohen, Hoover Green & Wood, 2013:3). Data also shows that the relative prevalence of sexual violence is lower in sub-Saharan conflicts than in Eastern Europe, 36%

(10 of 28) and 44% (4 of 9) respectively (Wood 2012:400). These patterns suggest that conflict-related sexual violence should not be framed as an African problem, and that the occurrence of sexual violence must be linked to the circumstances of the specific conflict and not to the region as such.

4. Are all perpetrators men and all victims women?

As discussed, the current discourse on conflict-related sexual violence contains constructions of gender roles and stereotypes of both victims and perpetrators. In short, the victims are portrayed as women and girls in need of protection, and the perpetrators are framed as dehumanized and brutalized male soldiers. Cohen (2013b) challenges this male/perpetrator and female/victim dichotomy in her study of female combatants in Sierra Leone:

“While recent research on female combatants has found that women may sometimes be active fighters during conflict, the involvement of women in wartime rape has received far less attention. That female perpetration of wartime sexual violence has remained somewhat hidden may be due, at least in part, to the fact that researchers have simply not asked about the sex of perpetrators, with rare exceptions.” (p. 386)

While scholars and policymakers in large have ignored the participation of female combatants in sexual violence, evidence shows that female fighters face similar pressures within the armed groups to engage in physical violence, including sexual violence. In a population-based survey conducted by Johnson et al. (2010:557) in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 15% of the male participants reported to have been exposed to some form of conflict-related sexual violence, and the equivalent number for female participants in the study was 29%. Furthermore, the study revealed that 41% of the women who survived conflict-related sexual violence stated that female perpetrators had abused them, and the corresponding figure among male surviving victims was 10% (Ibid, 2010:558). Although both men and women are victims of conflict-related sexual violence, the ways in which men and women are exposed often vary. Charli Carpenter (2006) have identified three main ways in which men and boys are exposed: (1) by rape and sexual mutilation; (2) by being forced to rape or sexually assault another person; (3) by “secondary victimization” in which they are forced to watch the sexual torture of their female relatives.

Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2010:44) highlight the difficulties to obtain figures on how many victims of wartime sexual abuse that are men, mainly due to the stigma associated with sexual abuse of men and normative disjuncture between masculinity and victimhood. In the same way, the problem of stigmatization is also a highly acknowledge problem among female victims, whose testimonies are likely to expose them to shame and exclusion of the community.

2.2 A FRAMEWORK OF POSSIBLE CORRELATED FACTORS

In this study I seek to contribute to the comprehension of how variations in conflict-related sexual violence can be explained, as well as how they might be connected to circumstantial factors in the conflict setting. Why is sexual violence prevalent in one conflict and not in another? What conditions seem to facilitate and motivate armed groups' use of sexual violence? Within the time frame of this study I am not able to examine the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence at micro-level, through interviews or on-site presence, and I have chosen to focus on possible connections to factors at the macro-level, i.e. structural conditions in the conflict setting. In what follows, I will outline five hypotheses that will guide my cross-national comparison and analysis.

2.2.1 Rule of Law

Both scholars and policymakers often give impunity and the lack of punishment of perpetrators as reasons behind extensive prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence. Muvumba Sellström (2015:61) holds that the freedom of punishment and impunity of perpetrators has contributed to the normalization of sexual violence in war and conflict. Hilde F. Johnson (2009) shares this view and argues that:

“Mass impunity has kept rape off the historical record and under the security radar. /.../ Sexual violence has accordingly been side-lined by the world's most powerful security stakeholders as the private, inevitable or opportunistic excesses of a few renegade soldiers.” (p. 1)

According to these arguments, the implementation of successful prosecutions of perpetrators has an important role in order to change social norms on sexual violence in armed conflict. Consequently, political and legal efforts to end impunity could serve as a preventive measure at both a national and international level, as it deter individual soldiers and military leaders from committing these acts (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:57-58).

Internationally, the creation of permanent international criminal tribunals, including the International Criminal Court, is part of the progresses made towards greater accountability of perpetrators. However, Elizabeth L. Hillman (2012:423) is concerned about the limited success of international courts. She argues that international courts have practical barriers that prevent effective prosecution of perpetrators, and that domestic legal systems are better equipped when it comes to investigating and prosecuting conflict-related sexual violence. The success of national legal systems to counter impunity and ensure accountability, in turn, depends on the level of *rule of law* (Sellström, 2015:63). According to Sellström (2015:231) failures in the rule of law can be interpreted as “a cause of impunity” for combatants in state forces, and most probably for perpetrators of other armed groups as well. Consequently, rule of law can be interpreted as an indicator of impunity. The concept of rule of law can thus be linked to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, but also to a wider discussion on democracy:

“If considered not solely an instrument of the government but as a rule to which the entire society, including the government, is bound, the rule of law is fundamental in advancing democracy.” (Tommasoli, 2012)

Wood (2006:332) states that democracies “rarely engage in widespread sexual violence and generally punish rape for personal gratification”. Strong democracies, characterized by high state accountability and a reliable rule of law, are believed to combat impunity and bring perpetrators to justice (OHCHR Report, 2011). By this reasoning, the level of rule of law is assumed to have a direct connection to the impunity of perpetrators of sexual violence, and the level of rule of law is thereby expected to affect armed groups propensity to commit sexual violence.

Hypothesis 1: *Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of low levels of rule of law*

2.2.2 Other Violence

It is a well-established theory that violence can serve as an important function in the process of integration and socialization among members of military groups, as it strengthens the bonds and creates a sense of collective responsibility for violent acts (Cohen, 2013b:392). From this perspective, sexual violence can be understood as part of the military socialization process. However, sexual violence is rarely discussed in relation to other types of violence, such as battle-related deaths, political violence and other violent actions that can be related to the armed conflict (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:34). As a result, the possible connection between conflict-related sexual violence and other violations remains unknown, and there is no comprehensive understanding of how these violations are interrelated.

Wood (2012:395) argue that by neglecting the link between sexual violence and other forms of violence we fail to perceive the complexities and interconnections entailed in the wider repertoire of violence used in armed conflicts. Thus, by examining how sexual violence is connected to other forms of violence we may gain a deeper understanding of the conditions that reinforce government forces use of sexual violence. Additionally, Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2010:13) claim that other forms of conflict-related violence are “manifestations of the same systematic failures and mechanisms” as those contributing to sexual violence. This assumption implies that the military groups that largely engage in other types of violence are more prone to commit sexual violence on a widespread level.

The concept of other violence is defined broadly in the literature and entails several types of violent acts, such as extrajudicial killings, torture and kidnapping. In this study, two aspects will be used to cover the concept of other violence; battle-related deaths and political violence.

Hypothesis 2: *Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of high levels of other violence*

2.2.3 Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic tensions and conflicts can be found as a potential explanation for the prevalence of sexual violence among several researchers. According to this understanding, the act of sexual violence serves as an instrument of ethnic cleansing, and a way to humiliate opponents and force the adversary group to leave a given territory. Skjelsbæk (2012a) writes that:

“Women are often seen as the biological bearers of a given culture and/or ethnic group. When their procreative abilities have been manipulated, either by forced pregnancy or by making it impossible for girls to have children in the future, the biological basis for a given nation is destroyed.” (p. 62)

This approach is reinforced in the UN SCR 1820 (2008:1), which states that wartime sexual violence is “a tactic of war” used to “humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group”. This rhetoric fits into the discourse of conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of war. It also enhances the image of sexual violence as a war strategy, and in the case of ethnic conflicts as a strategy coherently used by the armed group to combat the appointed enemy.

If sexual abuse can be explained as an effective weapon of ethnic cleansing, we can assume that all military groups in ethnic conflicts are prone to use it, but that is not the case. In a study on sexual violence in the DRC, conducted by Eriksson Baaz and Stern in 2010, ethnic conflict did not emerge as an explanatory factor during their interviews with soldiers who had committed sexual abuse. Also Wood’s (2006) studies of wartime sexual violence in Sri Lanka and Israel/Palestine show discrepancies. Although these are two examples of ethnic conflicts that include the forced movement of ethnic populations, there is no widespread use of sexual violence by military actors. Ethnic conflict is thus a factor whose correlation to wartime sexual violence is debated, and therefore requires to be further studied.

Hypothesis 3: *Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in ethnic conflicts.*

2.2.4 Gender Equality

Feminist theorists within the field of international relations have contributed to a large amount of research that examines the impact and reinforcement of gender relations before, during, and after armed conflicts. Maud Eduards and Annica Kronsell (2013) accentuate that conflicts are gendered, and that wartime dynamics and power relations both reflect and recreate prevailing gender relations. Wood (2012) shares this approach and emphasizes that gender norms affect armed groups attitude to sexual violence:

“Incoming recruits carry with them cultural norms and beliefs concerning the appropriateness of different kind of violence, including sexual violence, against particular populations.” (p. 404)

Additionally, Wood (2009:138) suggests that these norms and beliefs are often altered in the process of socialization in military groups, and form the armed groups commitment to gender equality and ideals of masculinity. In this light, forced prostitution, sexual violence and rape are not events isolated to times of war, but rather events that may be exacerbated by the militarism and increased levels of violence that armed conflicts entail. Abusive gender stereotypes have a central function in the training process of some armies, and patriarchal ideals are often used to build group cohesion (Wood 2010:309). The symbolic meaning of sexual violence in armed conflicts depends on the existing gender ideologies and power inequalities, and ultimately these conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity determine the relative effectiveness of sexual violence (Cohen, 2013:463). That is, if femininity was not related to ideals of virginity and peacefulness, and masculinity was not associated with warring and killing, the act of sexual violence would probably have a different meaning in armed conflicts (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2010:41).

While it appears to be a comprehensive perception among many scholars that sexual violence is more likely to occur in armed conflicts in countries with lower levels of gender equality, there are few studies that can confirm this correlation (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:23). This theoretical gap supports the need of further studies of the association between gender power relations and the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence.

Hypothesis 4: Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of low levels of gender equality

2.2.5 International Support

National leaders and governments formally aspire good reputations in the international community, as it promotes the country's economy and ability to influence world politics. Hence, high levels of sexual violence committed by the state forces can have a negative impact on the government's credibility and international position. Wood (2012:411) suggests that leaders of state forces seek to avoid criticism by international human rights organizations, and that they are therefore likely to “prohibit sexual violence out of deference to international law”. This perception is also established in the USIP Special Report on *Wartime Sexual Violence* (Cohen, Hoover Green & Wood, 2013:4), in which it is recognized that international presence in the conflict deters the practice of sexual violence.

According to this perspective, international presence and support may be a contributing factor leading to decreased incidence of sexual violence perpetrated by state forces – in order to avoid criticism and maintain international credibility and funding. This argument presumes that the eventual providers of the international support have normative concerns about sexual violence (Wood, 2006:329). However, reports that soldiers serving in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations engage in sexual exploitation and abuse during their mission have been a present theme in the media during the last decade. Meaning that norms prohibiting soldiers to sexually abuse civilians are not guaranteed by international presence, but the global attention that comes with international supporters might. International monitoring by

media are thus another aspect supposed to have possible impacts on the level of conflict-related sexual violence, but this study will focus on the parameter of international support.

Hypothesis 5: *Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in absence of international support*

Table 1 provides an overview of the conditional factors and hypotheses that will be explored in this study.

TABLE 1. Conditional Factors and Hypotheses	
Conditional factor	Hypothesis
<i>Rule of Law</i>	→ H1: Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of low levels of rule of law
<i>Other Violence</i>	→ H2: Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of high levels of other violence
<i>Ethnic Conflict</i>	→ H3: Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in ethnic conflicts
<i>Gender Equality</i>	→ H4: Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of low levels of gender equality
<i>International Support</i>	→ H5: Conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in absence of international support

3. METHOD

3.1 A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON USING DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This study is a cross-national comparison using descriptive statistics to explore macro-level conditions that may be connected to the prevalence of sexual violence committed by government soldiers in armed conflicts. By a cross-national comparison I hope to identify structural similarities and differences in armed conflicts with high respectively no reports of conflict-related sexual violence. The aim is thus to create a platform for analysis that reveals circumstantial factors that potentially facilitates or prevents the use of sexual violence by state forces.

In political science the method of *cross-national comparison* is used to observe phenomena between nations, with the overall purpose of testing theories and better understand why a phenomenon occurs (Hantrais, 1999:93). Cross-national research involves a comparative evaluation of one or more units, in two or more countries, with the objective to identify, analyze and explain general factors in the contextual setting in which a phenomena exists (Uddin et al, 2012:210). The method generates a platform that allows comparison at the national level, and it enables an assessment of the social, cultural and political similarities and differences between nations. By selecting this method, I account for my intention to compare the manifestations of sexual violence in various conflicts, and to systematically compare conditions that might facilitate, or prevent, sexual violence in armed conflicts.

In the introduction to the SVAC Dataset, Cohen and Nordås (2014:418) highlight that a “systematic comparison of conflicts with reports of massive sexual violence to those with little or no sexual violence could illuminate causal mechanism and root causes”. However, my intention is not to pinpoint *causal* factors for the occurrence of conflict-related sexual violence, as this would require profound studies of both quantitative and qualitative factors, on both structural and individual levels. Rather, this study is exploratory as it seeks to identify factors that possibly have a correlation to the frequency of sexual violence in armed conflict, but not to provide conclusions of root causes.

Exploratory research is the initial research of a somewhat unexplored research problem, with the anticipation to form a basis for further conclusive research (Singh, 2007:64). Accordingly, this study is exploratory in the sense that it intends to give an *initial* understanding of circumstances in a conflict setting that potentially sanction and/or facilitate government forces' use of wartime sexual violence, since a comprehensive understanding of this issue is absent within the research field today. My anticipation is that this study will contribute to highlighting factors that may be correlated to the frequency of sexual violence, and to give an indication of the areas of focus for future studies. In the analysis of the study's results, I will evaluate the independent variables based on whether the result confirms or disprove the hypotheses developed in the analytical framework, and in this discussion I will sometimes use the expression: *indicate correlation*. However, I want to clarify that I do not aspire to establish correlations between the variables based on this inquiry. This is primarily a manifestation on whether or not there is reason to continue to investigate the connection

between conflict-related sexual violence and the independent variable based on this study's results.

In this study, conflict-related sexual violence is the main phenomena of interest, and sexual violence is thus the *dependent variable* whose varying occurrence I seek to explain. The *independent variables* are the conditional factors that, according to theories discussed and the hypotheses created in the analytical framework, possibly are connected to the variation of sexual violence in armed conflicts. In the implementation of the cross-national comparison the connection between the dependent variable (sexual violence) and the independent variables (the circumstantial factors) will be explored.

The study is conducted, and presented, using *descriptive statistics* of quantitative secondary data. Descriptive statistics is a research method used to describe the distribution and relationship among variables (Chambliss & Schutt, 2003:155). It provides a summary that visually describes a tendency and illustrates the strength of an association between variables. Descriptive statistics involve summarizing of data in a perspicuous way, mainly by graphic presentation such as charts, tables, and graphs, so that the variability between cases is made observable. Thus, the method provides no explanation of the significant correlation between the variables, as this requires a larger, and more detailed amount of data extending over time. Rather, it gives an illustration of the relationship between the variables, which is then interpreted and analyzed.

Quantitative secondary data is used in this study, as this is the only available data that is comparable for all of the cases/countries involved. Data used to measure the variables is taken from the same sources in all of the cases, which ensures that the data is gathered on a similar basis. This contributes to the reliability of this study.

Ultimately, this study aspires to identify *macro-level* conditions that might have a connection to state forces use of sexual violence in armed conflicts, meaning that the cross-national comparison will be performed at a large scale on several cases. It is therefore not factors at the individual or institutional level that are the focus in the assessment and evaluation of each hypothesis, but the structural and general circumstances that exist at the national level. The decision to use data at the macro-level is a consequence of the lack of reliable and comparable data at the micro and meso-level. I am aware that the explicit focus on general factors and widespread processes, accessible at the macro-level of the societies, might sacrifice the depth of my results. However, my hope is that this study will be followed by studies at a more detailed level, which also can include qualitative aspects at micro or meso-level, of the context in which conflict-related sexual violence occurs.

3.2 THE SVAC DATASET

The database that constitutes the basis for the selection of cases is the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts (SVAC) Dataset. The dataset was introduced in 2013 and covers all armed conflicts active in the years 1989-2009, as defined by the UCDP Armed Conflict Database (Cohen & Nordås, 2013:5). The dataset also includes post-conflict observations, though this information will not be of interest in this study. Only sexual violence by armed actors against individuals outside their own organization is included in the SVAC Dataset. The SVAC Dataset compiles data from three sources: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the U.S. State Department. It includes information about the prevalence of sexual violence, the type of perpetrators, victims, forms, timings and locations (the selection of cases in this study is based on the first two categories). The perpetrators are categorized in three types of armed actors: (1) government/state military, (2) militias and (3) rebel/insurgent forces. The prevalence of sexual violence is measured on a scale of 0 to 3, which estimates the relative magnitude of sexual violence perpetrated by an actor reported in a particular year:

3 = Massive: The occurrence of sexual violence is described as “weapon”, “a tool of war” or “systematic”

2 = Several/ Many: The occurrence of sexual violence is described as “widespread”, “common” or “extensive,”

1 = Some: The occurrence of sexual violence is described as “isolated reports” or “some reports”

0 = No reported sexual violence.

Additional information about the SVAC Dataset and how data is coded is provided in Appendix 1.

3.3 SELECTION OF CASES

The selection of cases in this study is based on the recognition of common, and increasingly contested, misconceptions that exist within the research field of conflict-related sexual violence (described in Chapter 2). The four conclusions from this discussion were:

- 1) Sexual violence is not an inevitable part of armed conflicts.
- 2) Government forces are more likely to be reported as perpetrators of sexual violence than rebel groups and militias.
- 3) Wartime sexual violence is not a problem concentrated to the African continent.
- 4) All perpetrators are not men, and all victims are not women.

In my selection of cases, I take these misconceptions into account with the intention to broaden the research field and contribute to the understanding of the variations in conflict-related sexual violence, as well as how these variations can be explained. This is done by:

- 1) Comparing cases with no reports of sexual violence to cases with massive reports of sexual violence, and thus challenge the perception that sexual violence is an inevitable part of war. This selection also helps my purpose to compare conditional factors and contribute to an understanding of what circumstances may facilitate, or prevent the occurrence of sexual violence.
- 2) Selecting cases where government forces are reported as perpetrators, in order to highlight the fact that governmental forces are more likely to be reported as perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflicts.
- 3) Focusing on armed conflicts in Africa, in order to show the variations that exist within the continent and challenge the biased perception that sexual violence occurs in most African conflicts.

The variation in male/female victims and perpetrators (described in misconception 4) will have no direct impact on my selection of cases, as there is no sufficient data available on the gender of the victims and perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence. For this reason, in the execution of this study, I will not call attention to the gender of victims/perpetrators, and thus I will not be able take account for the conflict-specific variations that exist on this matter. Gender equality, however, will be included as an independent variable whose correlation to the incidence of sexual violence will be examined, and the gender aspect will in this way be integrated in the analysis of the research results.

This study aims to identify structural similarities and differences in armed conflicts with high respectively no reports of conflict-related sexual violence. Therefore, I will include cases that holds a magnitude of 2 or higher (as coded by the SVAC Dataset), to represent armed conflicts with widespread/massive reports of sexual violence perpetrated by state forces, and cases with a value of 0, to represent armed conflicts with no reports of sexual violence perpetrated by state forces. Thus, in this study, the scale of sexual violence is dichotomous, meaning that the cases can only belong to one of two categories; either there are *no reports* or there are *widespread/massive reports*. I have executed the selection of cases from the SVAC database as follows:

1. Select African countries
2. Exclude post-conflict cases, and thus select cases with “active conflicts”
3. Select cases where government/state actors is reported as perpetrators
4. Calculate an average value of the magnitude of sexual violence reported from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the U.S. State Department, to access a level of sexual violence that is reliable and supported by all three sources.
5. Select cases that have an average value of 2 or above (armed conflicts with massive or several reports of sexual violence perpetrated by state military), and cases with an average value of 0 (with no reports of sexual violence perpetrated by state military).¹

¹ When several years appeared to have an average value of 0 or 2 (or higher) within the same country, I selected the last the year with reports to represent the case. Among the cases that showed a value of 0, I chose the cases that demonstrated an average value of 0 for all of the years during which the armed conflict was ongoing. I then selected the countries that had obtained a value of 0 for several years (not only one single year) in order to acquire as consistent and representative cases as possible. Consequently, Libya, Cameroon, Botswana, Lesotho and Morocco, all countries with a value of 0, is not included in the study as they only had a value of 0 during one year of armed conflict.

This process of selection resulted in the following cases:

TABLE 2. Cases	
Widespread/massive reports (2+)	No reports (0)
Rwanda, 1994 (magnitude 3)	Mozambique, 1992
DRC, 2008 (magnitude 2,66)	Comoros, 1997
Burundi, 2003 (magnitude 2,33)	Senegal, 2003
Sudan, 2004 (magnitude 2,33)	Niger, 2008
Guinea, 2000 (magnitude 2)	Mali, 2009

In relation to my selection of cases it is important to highlight that these cases do not necessarily represent the African conflicts where the overall level of sexual violence is highest, respectively the lowest. This selection is done in order to focus on the varying occurrence among government forces, and to specifically examine the factors that can be linked to the probability to perform sexual violence in armed conflict. Hence, there may be other cases that have a higher frequency of sexual violence in total that are not included in this study.

3.4 SELECTION OF DATA SOURCES

The selection of sources in this study is based on the ambition to find data that is relevant to test the validity of the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2. To do this, it is essential that the data allow accurate comparisons between the cases, i.e. that the data used to measure the independent variables is collected in an equal way for each case. To assure this, data for each case comes from the same source/database, and is therefore supposedly obtained and compiled in an equivalent way.

It is also important that the data is representative to measure the occurrence of the independent variables, since there are several aspects and types of measurements of each independent variable – all of which cannot be included in this study. The time factor was crucial in this selection, due to my quest to ensure reliable comparisons giving representative descriptions of the situation in the country at the given time for the reports of sexual violence. Therefore, I selected data that covers the specific year of interest for each case, or a nearby year if the specific year was lacking. Unfortunately, despite the intention to cover figures for all cases, data for some cases is missing in the assessment of; gender equality (hypothesis 4) and other violence (hypothesis 2). This will be noted in connection the respective chart. Additionally, I have limited my selection to data that derives from established and trustworthy sources/databases. More information about the sources, definitions of variables, and information about how data has been collected can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 3 provides an overview of the data sources that will be used to evaluate the possible connections between the conditional factors and the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence.

TABLE 3. Independent Variables, Hypotheses and Data Sources	
Hypothesis	Data Source
H1: Low levels of rule of law → high levels of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by state forces	<i>Rule of Law Index</i> found in Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) provided by the World Bank
H2: High levels of other violence → high levels of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by state forces	Parameter 1, <i>Battle-related Deaths</i> : Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Parameter 2, <i>Political Violence</i> : Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)
H3: Ethnic conflict → high levels of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by state forces	<i>Ethnic conflict</i> provided by Political Instability Task Force (PITF)
H4: Gender inequality → high levels of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by state forces	<i>Gender Inequality Index</i> (GII) provided by the United Nations Development Programme
H5: International support → low levels of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by state forces	<i>External Support</i> provided by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)

3.5 LIMITATIONS

This study is largely limited to what the empirical material available allows me to test. Gathering data on conflict-related sexual violence is difficult, due to the shame and stigma imposed on the victims, and the obstacles to the access areas where it occurs (Wood, 2012:390). Accessing information on the type of perpetrator is also problematic since it is common that they disguise themselves to avoid detection, and it may also be that the victim out of fear does not reveal the perpetrator's identity (Clifford et al., 2008:5). The SVAC dataset provides a unique compilation of information on sexual violence in armed conflicts, which has contributed to new opportunities to study the variations of sexual violence in armed conflicts. But still, the available data on victims, forms and location is limited and other elements of variations remain unclear. The aspect of frequency and perpetrator is substantially incorporated in the SVAC dataset, based on data from three different sources (Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and the U.S. State Department). This thereby forms the basis for the selection of cases in this study. However, the level of sexual violence is limited to a scale of 0-3, which narrows the possibilities of performing a more nuanced and detailed analysis of the connections between the varying degree of conflict-related sexual violence and the independent variables. Because of this restriction, I have chosen to create two representative categories of cases in this study: conflicts with massive reports and conflicts with no reports of sexual violence performed by state forces.

The study is based solely on secondary sources, and all data used to measure the presence of the independent variables describe phenomena at the national macro-level. Within the research field, there are several theories about the potential correlations between sexual violence and factors on the meso and micro-level, such as group dynamics, the effects of forced recruitments and military leadership. But the access to these factors is insufficient to conduct a cross-national comparison, and I have therefore chosen to focus on theories that describe potential correlations that can be interpreted through measurable factors at the macro-level. Consequently, there is a lack of qualitative perspectives in this study, which I hope can be supplemented in future studies. The advantage of using quantitative data from established sources is that it increases the study's reliability, since a similar comparison of the same variables, using the same method, would produce the same results (Eliasson, 2013:14).

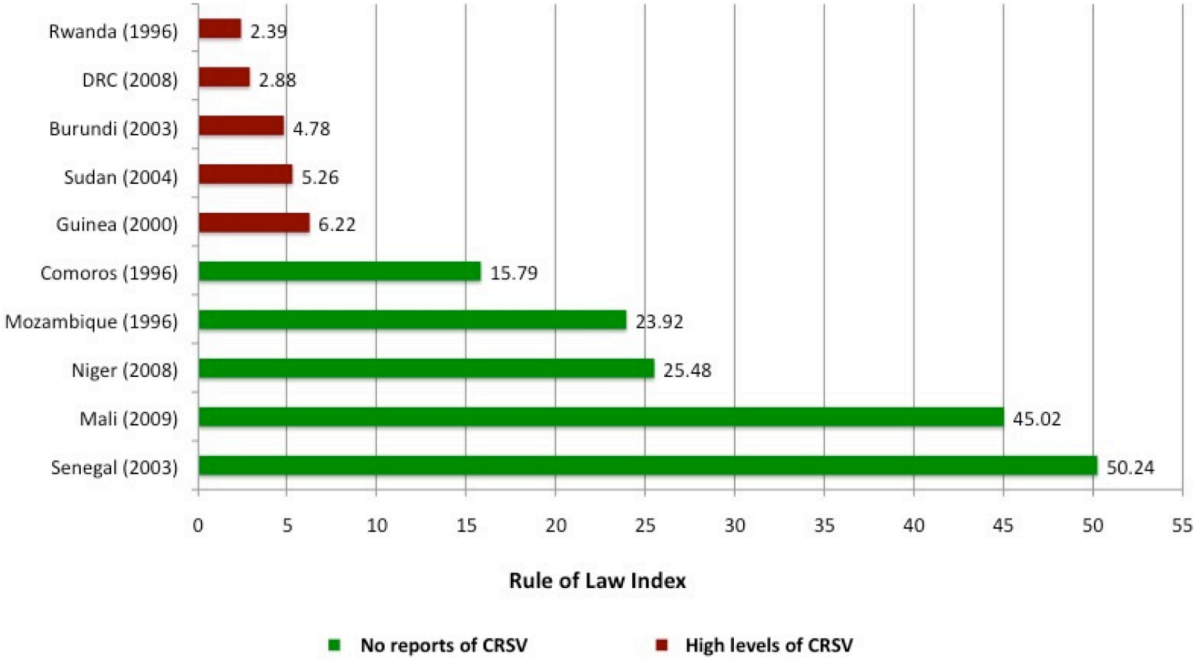
The study's validity, meaning that it actually measures what it intends to measure, is complicated to determine since there are several aspects of each independent variable that can be used to indicate their presence in the conflict context. This means that the result might have been different if other aspects had been used to examine the hypotheses. But, again, the availability of empirical data has largely determined which factors are included in this study. I am therefore cautious to generalize from my results and highlight need for further studies where qualitative aspects are included.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS & ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will use the acronym *CRSV* for conflict-related sexual violence, and the two expressions will be used interchangeably.

4.1 RULE OF LAW

Chart 1. Rule of Law



Facts: Chart 1. Rule of Law

Definition: Rule of Law Index captures “perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence” (Kaufmann et al., 2010:4)

Source: World Governance Indicators (WGI), Rule of Law Index

All five countries that possess lower levels of Rule of Law Index (RLI) are countries with high numbers of reports of CRSV, and consequently, the five cases with higher RLI are countries with no reports of sexual violence. The average RLI for countries with high levels of CRSV is 4,3, and the average RLI of cases with no reports of CRSV is 32,1.

Before evaluating the hypothesis, it is necessary to highlight that the RLI values presented for each country, as well as the calculated average, does not draw attention to the countries’ relative levels of rule of law and how these values relate to other countries in the world. Despite this, the results can reveal if a relatively higher or lower level of rule of law can be associated to the presence, or absence of sexual violence in armed conflicts, and thus if CRSV is more likely to occur in countries with lower levels of rule of law.

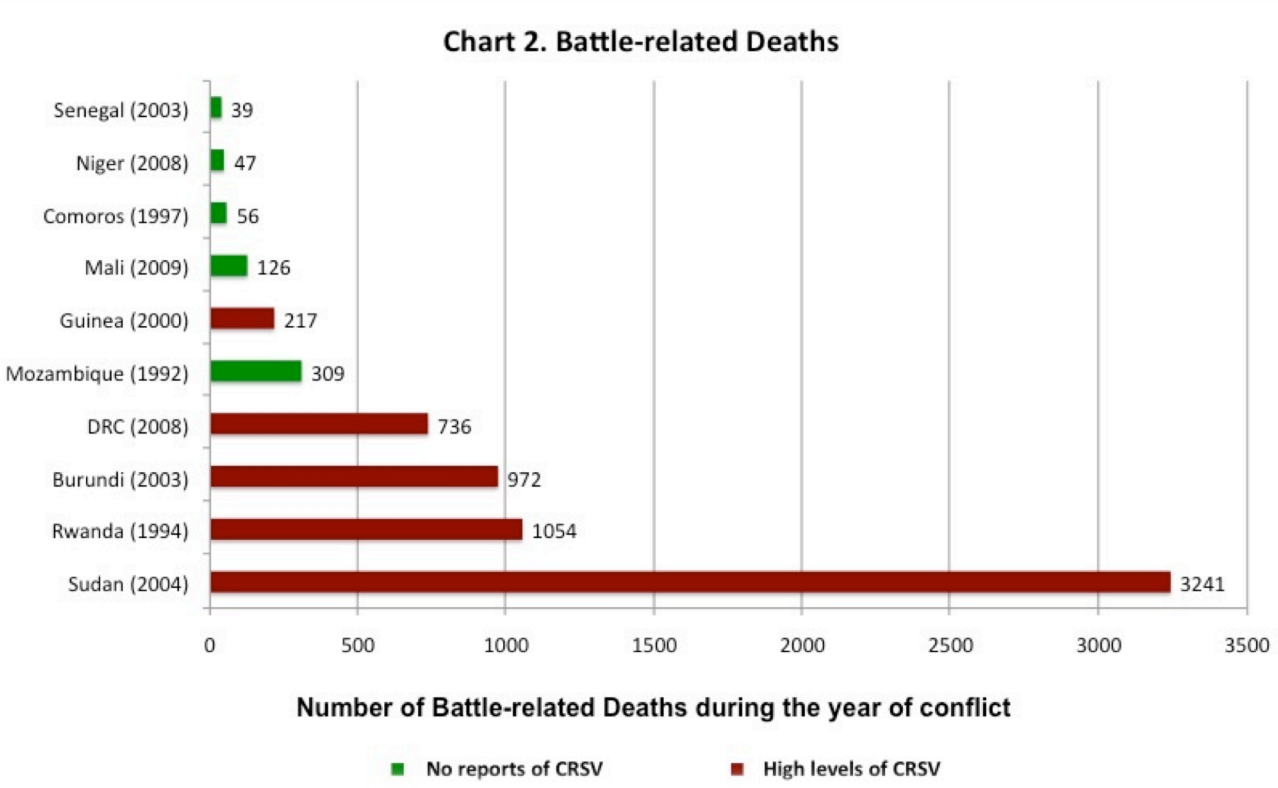
4.1.1 Evaluation of Hypothesis 1

The figures demonstrated in the chart indicate an association between the state's ability to ensure rule of law and the level of sexual violence. Hence, the result supports the hypothesis that governments that are unable to guarantee rule of law are potentially more prone to have a high levels of CRSV perpetrated by state forces. This implies that freedom of accountability, caused by low rule of law, could work as a facilitating circumstance leading to increased levels of sexual violence in armed conflicts. Accordingly, weak enforcement of rules and the absence of negative consequences for perpetrators are potential explanations to the variation in government forces' use of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

However, the belief that soldiers will engage in sexual violence unless they feel at risk of being punished rest upon opportunistic assumptions that cannot be explained simply by the level of rule of law. For that reason, impunity does not account for the probable motives and incentives behind the use of sexual violence by individuals or armed groups, but mainly for the, by the perpetrator, expected consequences (Clifford, 2008:5). The identified connection between the level of the rule of law and CRSV can thus contribute to the understanding of the context in which sexual violence is likely to occur, but tells nothing about the individual, strategic or institutional motives behind the sexual violence. To further evaluate the correlation, and to understand the relationship between rule of law, impunity and CRSV, additional studies of the number of prosecutions in each case are required, as well as qualitative studies of how the risk of being prosecuted affects soldiers' and military leaders' attitude to sexual violence.

4.2 OTHER VIOLENCE

4.2.1 Battle-Related Deaths



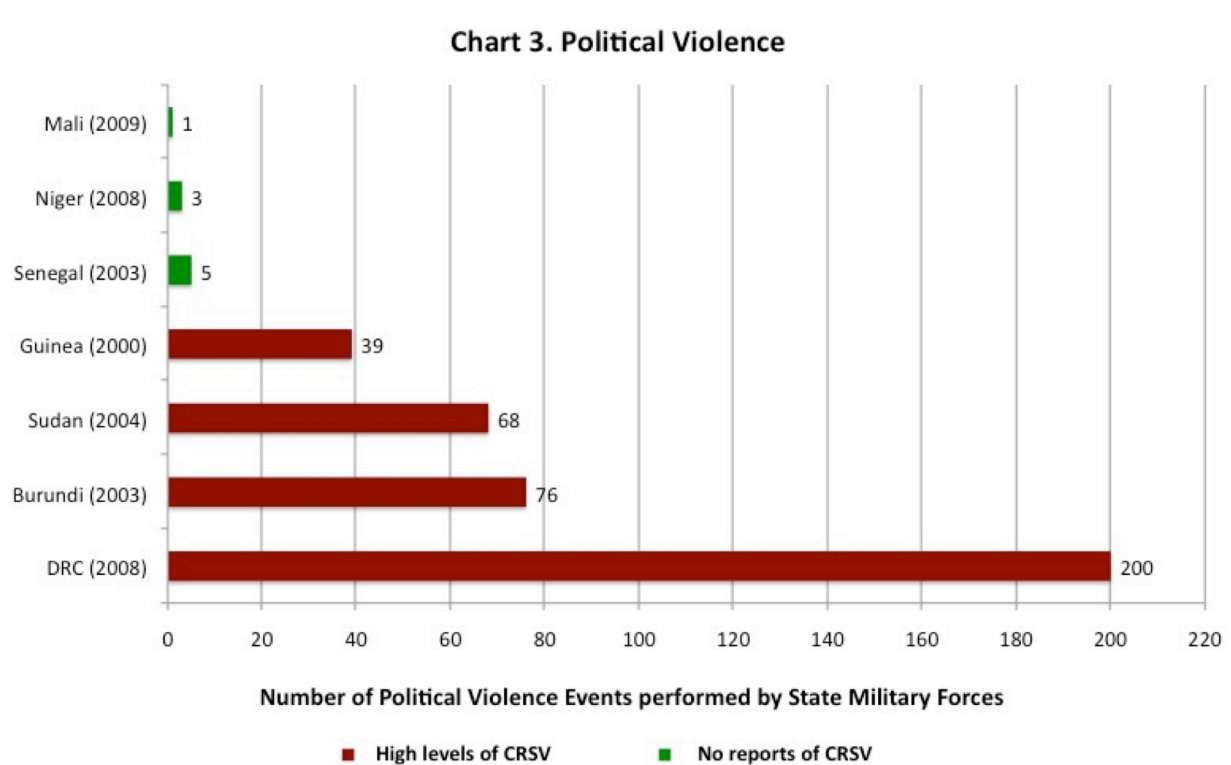
Facts: Chart 2. Battle-Related Deaths

Definition: “Battle-related deaths refer to those deaths caused by the warring parties that can be directly related to combat. This includes traditional battlefield fighting, guerrilla activities (e.g. hit- and-run attacks/ambushes) and all kinds of bombardments of military bases, cities and villages etc. Battle-related deaths, which concern direct deaths, are not the same as war-related deaths, which includes both direct as well as indirect deaths due to disease and starvation, criminality, or attacks deliberately directed against civilians only” (Pettersson, 2014).

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Battle-Related Deaths Dataset

The four countries with the lowest levels of battle-related deaths are all countries with no reports of sexual violence perpetrated by state actors; Senegal, Niger, Comoros and Mali. The four countries that show the highest numbers of battle-related deaths are Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC – all of which are countries with high levels of CRSV. A calculation of the average value shows that countries with high reports of sexual violence have an average number of 1,244 battle-related deaths, and the equivalent number for the countries with no reports is 115 battle-related deaths. Data in the UCDP does not distinguish the actor behind the battle-related deaths, and so these numbers do not account for the specific intervention of governmental forces. However, the numbers in the chart indicates a potential correlation between high rates of battle-related deaths and state forces propensity to commit sexual violence during armed conflicts.

4.2.2 Political Violence



Facts: Chart 3. Political Violence

Definition: Political violence is “understood as the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation”. A politically violent event is “a single altercation where often force is used by one or more groups for a political end” and may consist of violent activity such as riots, violence against civilians, bombings and battle of territory (Releigh & Dowd, 2015:7).

No to chart: there is no data collected before 1997 in the ACLED Database, thus there are no figures for Rwanda, Mozambique. Data for Comoros was missing.

Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Political Violence

Mali, Niger and Senegal, which are all countries with no reports of CRSV, only have a few cases of political violence during the time, while Guinea, Sudan, Burundi, and the DRC, cases with reports of high levels of CRSV, show significantly more cases of political violence performed by government actors. However, the fact that there are no data available for three of the cases, Rwanda, Mozambique and Comoros, prevents a more solid evaluation of the connection between conflict-related sexual violence and the level of political violence.

4.2.3 Evaluation of Hypothesis 2

The findings from the two aspects of “other violence” presented above indicate that governmental forces that are highly involved in and/or surrounded by other types of violence are prone to have higher levels of CRSV. Nevertheless, in the dimension of *political violence* data is missing for three countries, and in the dimension of *battle-related deaths* there is no

categorization of the actors behind the death rates, thus the numbers of deaths cannot be linked to the state forces specifically. These gaps in the data make it problematic to evaluate the possible connection between sexual violence perpetrated by state forces and the level of other violence in the armed conflict. Although, based on the facts available, there are significant signs of an association between sexual violence and other types of violence, and supposedly vice versa. This confirms the relevance of studying sexual violence in relation to other types of violence, and suggests that CRSV and other forms of violence may be the result of the same failures in the societal conditions and institutional structures. This implies that a singular focus on sexual violence could hamper our understanding of the relationship between different types of violence performed in the context of armed conflicts. Conceivably, as Wood (2012:395) suggests, new knowledge and preventive measures could be obtained if CRSV is studied along with the broader *repertoire of violence* used by armed groups.

4.3 ETHNIC CONFLICT

Table 4. Ethnic Conflict		
Country	Ethnic conflict	
High levels of CRSV	DRC (2008)	Yes
	Sudan (2004)	Yes
	Burundi (2003)	Yes
	Guinea (2000)	No
	Rwanda (1994)	Yes
No reports of CRSV	Comoros (1997)	No
	Niger (2008)	No
	Senegal (2003)	No
	Mali (2009)	No
	Mozambique (1992)	No

Facts: Table 4. Ethnic Conflict

Definition: Ethnic wars are defined as “episodes of violent conflict between governments and national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities (ethnic challengers) in which the challengers seek major changes in their status” (Marshall et al., 2015:6). The data presented in Table 4 relates to the specific year of interest for each case, meaning that an ethnic conflict may have preceded or followed the particular time-period outlined in this compilation.

Source: Political Instability Task Force (PITF), Ethnic Conflict

Figures from the Political Instability Task Force (PITF) Dataset show that four out of five cases with high frequency of CRSV are classified as an *ethnic conflict* during the specific year of interest. Among the conflicts with no reports of CRSV, there is no case that is categorized as an ethnic conflict. The only case that contradicts a connection between ethnic conflicts and high levels and CRSV is Guinea, which is categorized as a *revolutionary war* by PITF.

4.3.1 Evaluation of Hypothesis 3

The result confirms the hypothesis and implies that there is a correlation between the presence of an ethnic conflict and high levels of CRSV committed by state forces. The result also enforces the significance in the description of sexual violence as a *tactic of warfare*, as well as the strategic aspects of CRSV in the purpose of ethnic cleansing, control, domination and humiliation of selected groups given by Prescott et al. (2011:63). However, the result does not confirm that the mere existence of an ethnic war *per se* can be defined as a causal factor to the use of CRSV, as it is a fact that there are a number of ethnic conflicts in which sexual violence does not occur (for instance Sri Lanka and Israel/Palestine). Most likely, there are other factors and dimensions in these particular ethnic conflicts that simultaneously affect the government forces' use of sexual violence. Contemporary conflicts are generally complex and often consist of a combination of challenges, such as political, ethnic, religious, economic, environmental and famine (Werz & Conley, 2012:3). Thus, ethnic hostilities are possibly *one* of the contributing factors that motivate government forces to use sexual violence in armed conflicts, but it cannot be determined as a causative factor. Supposedly there are additional factors in the cases of Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC that add to the explanation of the high level of CRSV.

4.4 GENDER EQUALITY



Facts: Chart 4. Gender Inequality

Definition: The Gender Inequality Index measure countries level of gender inequality based on three aspects; (1) *reproductive health*, (2) *empowerment*, and (3) *labor market participation* (Human Development Report, 2015:8). Higher GII values indicate higher inequalities and disparities between females and males.

Note to chart: There is no Gender Inequality Index registered for Guinea and Comoros in the database.

Source: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gender Inequality Index

Burundi and Rwanda, both countries with high levels of CRSV, hold the lowest level of Gender Inequality Index (GII), which means that they are the two countries with the highest levels of gender equality among the cases. The countries with the highest GII, and thus the countries with the lowest levels of gender equality among the cases, are Mali and Senegal – both countries with no reports of CRSV during the time period. Visually, the chart shows no link between the occurrence of sexual violence and the level of gender equality.

By calculating the average value among the cases with no reports respectively among the cases with reports of massive levels of CRSV, it appears that countries with high levels of CRSV have a lower GII than countries without reports of CRSV, as they hold an average of 0,422 whereas countries with no reports of CRSV have an average of 0,465. This indicates that it is more likely that governmental forces perform sexual violence in countries where the level of gender equality is relatively higher. However, the fact that there is no data for Comoros and Guinea impede a more accurate estimation of the connection between the level of gender equality and the occurrence of CRSV.

Before evaluating the hypothesis, it is necessary to highlight that the GII values presented for each country, as well as the calculated average, do not draw attention to the countries' levels of gender equality in relation to other countries in the world. And it is essential to remark that all cases in this study show a relatively low gender inequality index in comparison with, for example, Sweden, which in 2013 had a GII value of 0,054. Additionally, the Gender Inequality Index is relatively equivalent for all of the cases, with a range between 0,369 and 0,506, which further complicates the ability to draw conclusions from the results.

4.4.1 Evaluation of Hypothesis 4

The chart visualizes no connection between lower levels of gender equality and high levels of CRSV perpetrated by state forces. The result rather reveals signs of an inversed relationship where lower levels of gender equality seem to be connected to lower levels of CRSV committed by state forces. This contradicts the hypothesis and challenges the assumption that patriarchy and gender inequality is a “necessary condition for the occurrence of widespread rape” (Cohen, Hoover Green and Wood, 2013:6).

One possible explanation for the result can be found in Cohen's (2013:463) cross-national study of rape during civil wars, in which she claims that CRSV may “be more likely in contexts where women are gaining rights and men feel threatened”. This view is supported by Larry Baron and Murray Straus (1989:467), as they emphasize that rape and sexual violence can be a reaction and an effect of men's declining social control over women. This would mean that countries that recently gained higher levels of gender equality are prone to have higher levels of sexual violence. Based on this perspective, and the ambiguity of the hypothesis shown in the result, the aspect of a country's patriarchal history and progress of gender equality is perhaps more appropriate to study in relation to the occurrence of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

4.5 INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Table 5. External Support		
Country	External Support	
High levels of CRSV	DRC (2008)	No
	Sudan (2004)	No
	Burundi (2003)	No
	Guinea (2000)	No
	Rwanda (1994)	Yes (France)
No reports of CRSV	Comoros (1997)	No
	Niger (2008)	Yes (France and China)
	Senegal (2003)	Yes (United States)
	Mali (2008)	Yes (United States)
	Mozambique (1992)	Yes (United Kingdom, France, Italy)

Facts: Table 5. External Support

Definition: External Support is defined as “support to a primary party (receiver of support) that is given to assist it in an ongoing conflict” and “the party providing the support should be a state or an organization (in the widest sense of the term) and not an individual” (Högbladh et al., 2011:5-6). The support can take a variety of forms, including the provision of sanctuary, financial assistance, logistics and military support. Only external support received by the national government is included in the table, i.e. where the government is the primary party.

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), External Support

The data from UCDP shows that only one of the cases with high levels of sexual violence has received external support during the specific time of interest, which is Rwanda. The corresponding amount among the cases with no reports of sexual violence committed by state force is four; Senegal, Niger, Mozambique and Mali. This indicates a connection between international support and the level of sexual violence perpetrated by government forces. Examining the specific type of external support received by each country (see Table 6) offers additional implications.

Table 6. Type of External Support					
Country	External Support	Weapons	Materiel /Logistics	Training /Expertise	Funding /Economics
Rwanda (1994)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Niger (2008)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Senegal (2003)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mali (2008)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Mozambique (1992)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), External Support

All of the cases with no reports of sexual violence (Senegal, Niger, Mozambique and Mali) received their external support in the form of *Material/Logistics* and *Training/Expertise*. In addition the case of Senegal received support in the form of *Funding/Economics* and *Weapons*. This suggests that there is a possible correlation between low levels of sexual violence in armed conflict and external support in form of training/expertise or material/logistics. Rwanda, which is the only case with high levels of CRSV that received external support, also received support in the form of material/logistics. This leaves training/expertise as the distinctive type of support solely received by cases with no reports of state forces engaged in CRSV.

4.5.3 Evaluation of Hypothesis 5

The results indicate that there are possible connections between the level of conflict-related sexual violence and international support. Four out of five cases with no reports of CRSV had received international support, but only one of the cases with high reports of CRSV was recipient of external support during the time of reporting. This strengthens the hypothesis that governmental forces that receive international support are less likely to commit sexual violence, perhaps, as Wood (2012:412) suggests, because they are afraid that it will affect their credibility and reduce their share of international funding and support. By looking at type of support that was obtained further conclusions can be made. Common to the four countries with no reports of CRSV and that received international support was that they all received such support in the form of *Training/Expertise and Material/Logistics*. However, the latter was also received by Rwanda, a case with high levels of CRSV, which makes training/expertise the type of support exclusively obtained by cases with no reports of CRSV.

5. SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

By compiling all the independent variables in a table (see Table 7), their relative connection to the prevalence of sexual violence may be explored. In the table, the independent variables have been categorized through their existence in form of *Yes* or *No*, depending on whether the variable is present or not, and *High* or *Low*, depending on whether the variable exist in a high or low degree based on the median/average value of all cases.

	Country	Rule of Law¹ (H1)	Other Violence² (battle-related deaths) (H2)	Ethnic Conflict³ (H3)	Gender Inequality⁴ (H4)	International Support⁵ (H5)
High levels of CRSV	Rwanda	Low	High	Yes	Low	Yes
	DRC	Low	High	Yes	High	No
	Sudan	Low	High	Yes	High	No
	Burundi	Low	High	Yes	Low	No
	Guinea	Low	Low	No	N/A	No
No reports of CRSV	Comoros	High	Low	No	N/A	No
	Niger	High	Low	No	High	Yes
	Mali	High	Low	No	High	Yes
	Senegal	High	Low	No	Low	Yes
	Mozambique	High	High	No	High	Yes

The aspect of rule of law appears as the independent variable with most indication of correlation to the frequency of sexual violence perpetrated by state forces. All five cases with widespread reports of CRSV manifest a lower Rule of Law Index, while all five cases with no reports of CRSV have a markedly higher Rule of Law Index. The result thus support the hypothesis that conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur in the context of lower levels of rule of law. In order to be able to observe how the level of rule of law in particular affects impunity of perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflicts in particular, and the impact this has on social norms about sexual abuse within an armed group, additional studies are required. Even so, this study shows that it is possible to assume that if the level of rule of law is low, so is the ability, and incentive, to prevent government forces from committing sexual violence in the context of an armed conflict.

¹ *High* = higher than median value, *Low* = lower than median value. Median value = 11.

² *High* = higher than median value, *Low* = lower than median value. Median value = 263. I have chosen to only include the aspect of *Battle-Related Deaths* in the compilation since data is missing for three cases in the aspect of *Political Violence*

³ *Yes* = an ethnic conflict, *No* = not an ethnic conflict.

⁴ *High* = higher than average value, *Low* = lower than average value, *N/A* = not applicable. Average value = 0,443 (median = 0,467, but it is the same value for the two cases in the middle, therefore average number is used instead).

⁵ *Yes* = there is external support, *No* = there is no external support

The second-most prominent variable, indicating a connection to the prevalence of CRSV, is whether there is an ethnic dimension to the armed conflict. The result forms a distinct pattern that, in nine out of ten cases, support the hypothesis that CRSV is more likely to occur in conflicts with ethnic disputes. Despite indications of correlation in this study, it is a fact that CRSV is not prevalent in all ethnic conflicts, and therefore, it should not be considered as a causative factor for government soldiers' use of sexual violence. However, based on this study, it is conceivably one out of several interconnected factors that appears to facilitate the occurrence, and motivate the strategic use of sexual violence in conflict settings.

Furthermore, the dimension of ethnic conflict could explain why the assumed connection between high levels of sexual violence and low levels of gender equality is not supported in this study. Women are generally assigned a symbolic identity within ethnic groups, and exposing women to sexual violence is thereby a way to attack the ethnic group that the woman is seen to embody (Skjelsbæk, 2012:89). Sexual violence is consequently an effective way to destroy ethnic cohesion and tear families and communities apart. Through this perspective, the targeting of women and girls is not necessarily correlated to low gender equality, as suggested in hypothesis 4, but rather to the presence of an ethnic conflict. This could explain why a connection between sexual violence and ethnic conflict appears in this study, while the result does not show any connection between high levels of sexual violence and low levels of gender equality.

There are two variables that to a similar extent points toward a correlation to the frequency of CRSV. These are: international support and other violence (in form of battle-related deaths). Table 7 shows that both hypotheses 2 and 5 are supported in eight out of ten cases, thus suggesting that the presence of international support and other violence have a probable connection to the prevalence, or non-prevalence, of sexual violence committed by state forces. The results indicate that governments that receive external support are more likely to show low levels of sexual violence. Assumingly, the governments' aspiration for international recognition and support may work as a deferring factor that prevents state soldiers from committing sexual violence. However, this explanation presumes that governmental interests can determine the actions of individual soldiers, meaning that there are likely additional effects of the international support that impact the structure of the armed group, which must be included in this explanation.

The observed association between sexual violence and other violence (both political violence and battle-related deaths) implies that more studies should focus on the whole repertoire of violence used by armed groups. The results of this study show that sexual violence is not a phenomenon separated from other forms of violence, but likely both a cause to, and a product of, other forms of violence. Thus, by creating an understanding of the common causes behind the violence used by state forces, the development of common preventive measures may be facilitated. In this study, the figures used to analyze the connection between other violence and sexual violence has not been calculated in relation to the size of the population in each country. I believe that an assessment of the number of events is enough to demonstrate the intensity of the other violence that exists in the conflict, in the same way as the UCDP defines

an armed conflict if there are at least 25 battle-related deaths, regardless of the size of the population. However, this is perhaps of relevance for future studies.

Gender equality is the variable whose theoretically supposed connection to the occurrence of sexual violence is not strengthened in this study. The frail tendency revealed in the result rather indicates that countries with higher levels of gender equality also have higher levels of sexual violence, which contradicts the hypothesis. But still, this pattern is not evident enough to be established. The Gender Inequality Index compiles the structural power relations between women and men in the aspect of reproductive health, empowerment and economic status. However, the discourse of war may change existing gender relations during armed conflict, meaning that a society's symbolic representations of men and women, femininity and masculinity, is contested and reconstructed (Buss et al., 2014:6). Perchance the act of sexual violence might not be a direct result of gender relations at the structural level, but a consequence of the gendered representations that exist within the national, regional, or even international discourse of war. In the traditional discourse of war, found among both academics and policymakers, the victims are females (with lower status) and the perpetrators are men (with higher status), and sexual violence is in this 'system of meaning' a way to oppress the opponent, regardless of whether the victim is male or female (Buss et al, 2014:11). Against this background, perhaps the hypothesis should be reformulated: Conflict-related sexual violence is more likely to occur in contexts where the discourse of war entails gendered expectations, where militarization includes the feminization of victims and the masculinization of perpetrators.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to explore and identify macro-level circumstances that appear to be connected to the prevalence of sexual violence, and sexual violence committed by government soldiers in particular. I have built my analytical framework on the research that focuses on the variations of conflict-related sexual violence, which interacts with the aim to get closer to an explanation of why the phenomenon occurs in certain conflict contexts and not in others.

The study has been conducted by the development of five hypotheses that reflect explanatory theories that exist within the research field (Chapter 2), whose validity has been tested and evaluated by a cross-national comparison using descriptive statistics (Chapter 3). Four hypotheses have, to a varying degree, been strengthened by the results of this study, as the variables examined in these hypotheses point towards a correlation with the magnitude of sexual violence in armed conflicts. These circumstantial factors are rule of law, ethnic conflict, international support, and other violence. Hence, my results indicate that conflict-related sexual violence committed by state forces is more likely to occur:

- in conflicts with low levels of rule of law
- in ethnic conflicts
- in conflicts with of high levels of other violence
- in the absence of international support

The fact that these factors can be related to the incidence of conflict-related sexual violence does not mean that they should be considered as independent causal explanations for the phenomenon. These factors coexist, affect and are affected by each other and by other contextual factors, and separated from each other they are only single aspects of the conditions that simultaneously create conditions and motives for government forces to use sexual violence. It is therefore impossible to isolate a single explanation for sexual violence, as all factors are probable, interconnected consequences of the same structural failures.

The hypothesis suggesting that conflict-related sexual violence is associated with low levels of gender equality is not recognized in the results of this study. The lack of connection can be explained by a number of circumstances, and it is important to point out that the level of gender equality is comparatively low in all cases included in this study (in perspective to the levels for other countries in the rest of the world). Measuring the Gender Inequality Index provides us with an understanding of gender norms and power relations between men and women at the macro-level. However, the results of this study are unable to expose how these societal gender structures affect the process of socialization and formation of norms concerning sexual violence within particular armed group. Additional studies at micro-level are required to understand how normative conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity shape soldiers' attitude towards sexual violence.

In summary, the results have contributed to the research field by an increased understanding of some of the circumstances that seem to facilitate, or prevent government forces from committing sexual violence in armed conflicts. The study has, to a varying degree, been able to confirm some of the common theoretical explanations for the variations of sexual, and my hope is that this will provide a direction in which further studies can be conducted.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has been largely limited to what the available empirical data has allowed me to explore. The difficulty of collecting data on conflict-related sexual violence is followed by methodological obstacles, which I have tried to circumvent by studying possible associated factors that are measurable at the macro-level of each case. This restricted focus is at the expense of a deeper understanding of the possible social and political aspects of the phenomenon. Therefore, my results should be supplemented with additional quantitative and qualitative studies, on both the micro-level (individual) and meso-level (institutional). Through interviews and field studies, both within and between cases, it is possible to further test the validity of the hypotheses and to evaluate how these factors affect the attitude to sexual violence within state forces.

For future studies, it would also be of great value if the particular numbers of reports of sexual violence for respective cases were accessible. This would allow a more precise analysis of the statistically significant association between the occurrence of sexual violence and the external factors than what is possible on the basis of the SVAC Database

classification between levels 0-3. Such a study would be enhanced by including a larger number of cases, as this would reduce the risk that fortuity influence the outcome.

I have focused on state forces as perpetrators in this study, as I based my selection of cases on the level of sexual violence committed by this specific group. My results can possibly be applied to other groups that commit sexual violence, but there is a theoretical purpose of studying the armed groups behind the violence separately in order to contribute to a *perpetrator-centered understanding* of the problem. By distinguishing the type of perpetrator we may better understand the motives, and thus generate better preventive measures addressed to that group specifically. It is therefore essential to conduct further studies to observe whether the same factors appear to be connected to the sexual violence carried out by rebel groups and militias.

My research has been exploratory and should primarily be considered a preparation for additional studies. It identifies macro-level factors and gives an indication of the contextual circumstances that create conditions under which state forces are more prone to use sexual violence. The variation of sexual violence in armed conflicts is still a relatively unexplored research area, and there are no comprehensive explanations for why this gruesome violence occurs in some conflicts and not in others. More research is required on this issue in order to understand the motives behind the violence and establish effective policy interventions to prevent conflict-related sexual violence.

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APPENDIX 1 – THE SVAC DATASET

The content in this appendix are extracts from *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) Dataset: Codebook and Users Instruction Guide* (Version 1.0) written by Cohen and Nordås in 2013.

“The SVAC dataset covers conflict-related sexual violence committed by the following types of armed conflict actors: (1) government/state military, (2) pro-government militias, and (3) rebel/insurgent forces. Peacekeeper and civilian perpetrators are not included as actors in the dataset. Additionally, only sexual violence by armed groups against individuals outside their own organization is included.”

“The SVAC dataset covers all conflicts active in the years 1989-2009, as defined by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database. Data is collected for all years of active conflict (defined by 25 battle deaths or more per year), for interim years when violence drops below the 25 battle-deaths threshold but restarts before 5 years have passed, and for five years post-conflict. The dataset also includes post-conflict observations for conflicts that ended less than 5 years prior to 1989. Sexual violence outside of this study period is beyond the scope of the project.”

“The unit of observation for the SVAC dataset is the conflict-actor-year: a particular actor involved in a particular conflict in a given calendar-year (e.g. conflict 118, Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), 2001). Conflicts and actors are defined in the following paragraphs.”

Conflicts

“The SVAC dataset includes all active armed conflicts in the period 1989-2009, as defined by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict database (Gleditsch et al. 2002) and the UCDP Dyadic Dataset (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen 2009; Harbom & Wallensteen 2010). We include conflicts that have either been active in one or more of the years 1989-2009 (the study period) OR were active in one or more of the 5 years preceding the study period. An armed conflict is defined as: “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” (Gleditsch et al. 2002).”

“The UCDP/PRIO definition includes both full-scale wars as well as lower intensity armed conflicts. The dataset includes three types of wars and conflicts, defined as follows (1) Intrastate armed conflict, which occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition groups without intervention from other states; (2) Internationalized internal armed conflict, which occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition groups with intervention from other states (secondary parties) on one or both sides; and (3) Interstate conflicts, which occurs between the governments of two states. In addition to the observations included in the UCDP Dyadic Dataset (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen 2009; Harbom & Wallensteen 2010), the SVAC dataset includes what we call “interim years.” These are conflict-actor-years that are not active (meaning that they do not reach the 25 battle-related deaths threshold) if the observation in question is less than 5 years after an active observation, AND the conflict actor resumes to be active within 5 years after the last active year. For example, if a rebel group was active in 1993, 1994, and 1996, we also

code for any sexual violence that occurred in 1995 and call this year (1995) an “interim year”.”

“Finally, we include the five conflict-actor-years after the last year that a conflict actor has been deemed active. Using the previous example, if a rebel group was active in 1993, 1994, and 1996, we also code any sexual violence by the group in the five years after the final active year: 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. We call these “post-conflict years.” An exception to this coding is if the actor changes status in terms of actor type (e.g. switches from being a rebel group to being part of the state side of the conflict). For more detail on actor types, see the next section.”

Actors

“The SVAC dataset includes the actors present in armed conflicts as conflict parties according to the UCDP/PRIO armed conflict data (Gleditsch et al. 2002) and the UCDP Dyadic Dataset (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen 2009; Harbom & Wallensteen 2010). We include all government/state actors (Side A), rebel/insurgent (Side B) actors, and all other state actors (Side A2 and Side B2) in all conflict years that reached the 25 battle-related deaths threshold. In addition, we code as actors any pro-government militias (Side Ax) listed in the Pro-Government Militias (PGMs) Dataset (Carey and Mitchell 2013). See the General Variables table below in Section 3 for the codes for each of the six actor types. We have assigned PGMs to relevant conflicts in the UCDP conflict dataset based on reading of the case material and the background documentation of the PGM dataset. PGMs in countries without armed conflicts according to UCDP dataset, and PGMs not reported to be involved in such armed conflicts, are not included in the SVAC dataset.”

“Some government/state actors with special status are not specifically named in the dataset; examples include special police, special units, treasury police, presidential guards, presidential units, and security forces. We include all government actors with special status as representatives of the state, unless that actor has been previously assigned a separate ID code as a pro-government militia. Violations by actors such as domestic police, interrogators, border patrol, border police, and checkpoint police were coded as committed by the government/state side (Side A) if coders found explicit evidence that the sexual violence was conflict-related and/or directed at an insurgent or suspected member of an insurgent group, a close relative of a member of an insurgent group, and/or undertaken for the purpose of collecting intelligence related to the conflict. Additionally, in cases where the incident of sexual violence was perpetrated in a conflict territory, such as at a border or a checkpoint in a clearly defined conflict area, the incident of sexual violence perpetrated by one of the aforementioned actors was considered conflict-related.”

“At the beginning of each Conflict Manuscript is an actor assignment table that reflects what parties are included as government actors (e.g. special police) for each year and the assignment of actors in transitional years (for example, when a rebel group changes assignment to a state/government actor).”

Sexual Violence

“Following the definition used by the International Criminal Court (ICC), we define sexual violence as (1) rape, (2) sexual slavery, (3) forced prostitution, (4) forced pregnancy, and (5) forced sterilization/abortion. Following Elisabeth Wood (2009), we also include (6) sexual mutilation, and (7) sexual torture. This definition does not exclude the existence of female perpetrators and male victims, both of which are observed in the data. We focus on violations that involve direct force and/or physical violence. We exclude acts that do not go beyond verbal sexual harassment, abuse or threats, including sexualized insults, forced nudity, or verbal humiliation.”

Sources and Data Collection Strategy

“Our data collection strategy relies on the three most commonly used sources in the quantitative human rights literature: U.S. State Department annual reports, Amnesty International annual and periodic special reports; and Human Rights Watch annual and periodic special reports. These three sources typically publish reports covering all countries and conflict years in the study period, but on occasion skip a conflict-year—usually due to the publication of a special report or to a severe crisis in the country that limits the organization’s access. The conflict years with missing data due to no report being issued are listed in the Appendix. The sources, and how they can be located, are described below.”

“The U.S. State Department (State) issues the “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices” for all countries (excluding the U.S.) on an annual basis. The reports are published during the spring following the calendar year covered in the reporting. For example, the 2010 Country Report on Human Rights Practices is published in April 2011 and covers the period January 2010 through December 2010. State Department reports are available online at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/> for calendar years 1999-2010. Older reports can be accessed online through <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld> (search by publisher) or through www.heinonline.org.”

“Amnesty International (AI) publishes two types of reports that are used as sources for the SVAC dataset. First, AI publishes an annual report called “Annual Report: The State of the World’s Human Rights.” Within the annual report, one can search for general reports, country reports, and special (topical) reports. Second, AI publishes on its website a set of “News and Publications,” including special reports by country and reports by human rights topic. Both types of reports are available online at <http://amnesty.org/en> for the periods 2007-2010. Reports from other years exist in hard copies. Coders reviewed annual and special reports and included data from both resources in the Conflict Manuscripts. AI publishes annual reports for most countries in most years and special reports for small number of countries in most years. Special reports often contain information about multiple years and sometimes multiple conflicts and/or actors. Coders noted in the Conflict Manuscript any years where AI annual and special reports contained conflicting information.”

“Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a variety of reports that are used as sources for the SVAC data. Annual reports called “World Reports,” issued by country, are available online at <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/79288> for the periods 1989-2010. HRW also publishes special

reports organized by human rights issue and/or country. Special reports are available on the HRW website and can be located using the report search function. As with AI, coders reviewed both annual and special reports and included data sourced from both resources in Conflict Manuscripts and coding sheets.”

“To ensure high quality, reliable data collection and coding, the coders met weekly with Dara Kay Cohen for a period of two years. During the meetings, the team discussed ambiguous cases and refined the coding rules. The Principal Investigators regularly discussed any issues related to data collection, data coding, data format, project scope, or necessary adjustments to the Coding Manual. To further increase transparency and information flow, the core project team used web-based document sharing software. “

APPENDIX 2 – DATABASES AND SOURCES

THE WORLD BANK – WORLDWIDE GOVERNANCE INDICATORS

The content in the following section are extracts from *The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues* written by Kaufmann et al. in 2010.

“The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) are a long-standing research project to develop cross-country indicators of governance. The WGI consist of six composite indicators of broad dimensions of governance covering over 200 countries since 1996: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption.”

“Rule of Law – capturing perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.”

“These indicators are based on several hundred variables obtained from 31 different data sources, capturing governance perceptions as reported by survey respondents, non-governmental organizations, commercial business information providers, and public sector organizations worldwide. These data sources include: (a) surveys of households and firms (e.g. Afrobarometer surveys, Gallup World Poll, and Global Competitiveness Report survey), (b) NGOs (e.g. Global Integrity, Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders), (c) commercial business information providers (e.g. Economist Intelligence Unit, Global Insight, Political Risk Services), and (d) public sector organizations (e.g. CPIA assessments of World Bank and regional development banks, the EBRD Transition Report, French Ministry of Finance Institutional Profiles Database). Table 1 identifies the full set of 31 sources used in the 2010 update of the WGI. Each of these data sources provides us with a set of empirical proxies for the six broad categories of governance that we seek to measure.”

“We report the aggregate WGI measures in two ways: in the standard normal units of the governance indicator, ranging from around -2.5 to 2.5, and in percentile rank terms ranging from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) among all countries worldwide.”

Table 1 identifies the full set of 31 sources used in the 2010 update of the WGI.

Table 1: WGI Data Sources

Code	Source	Type*	Public	Country Coverage	Represe												
					-nitive	1996	1998	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
ADB	African Development Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments	Expert (GOV)	Partial	53				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
AFR	Afrobarometer	Survey	Yes	19					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ASD	Asian Development Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments	Expert (GOV)	Partial	29					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
BFS	Business Enterprise Environment Survey	Survey	Yes	27					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index	Expert (NGO)	Yes	125													
CCR	Freedom House Countries at the Crossroads	Expert (NGO)	Yes	62													
DRI	Global Insight Global Risk Service	Expert (CBIP)	Yes	144				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
EBR	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Transition Report	Expert (GOV)	Yes	29				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit Riskw ire & Democracy Index	Expert (CBIP)	Yes	181				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
FRH	Freedom House	Expert (NGO)	Yes	197				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
GCB	Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer Survey	Survey	Yes	80													
GCS	World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report	Survey	Yes	134				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
GI	Global Integrity Index	Expert (NGO)	Yes	79													
GWP	Gallup World Poll	Survey	Yes	130													
HER	Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom	Expert (NGO)	Yes	179				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
HUM	Grignaneli Richards Human Rights Database and Political Terror Scale	Expert (GOV)	Yes	192				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
IFD	IFAD Rural Sector Performance Assessments	Expert (GOV)	Yes	90													
IJT	IJET Country Security Risk Ratings	Expert (CBIP)	Yes	185													
IPD	Institutional Profiles Database	Expert (GOV)	Yes	85													
IRP	IREEP African Electoral Index	Expert (NGO)	Yes	53													
LBO	Latinobarometro	Survey	Yes	18				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
MSI	International Research and Exchanges Board Media Sustainability Index	Expert (NGO)	Yes	76													
OBI	International Budget Project Open Budget Index	Expert (NGO)	Yes	85													
PIA	World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments	Expert (GOV)	Partial	142				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
PRC	Political Economic Risk Consultancy Corruption in Asia Survey	Survey	Yes	15													
PRS	Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide	Expert (CBIP)	Yes	140				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RSF	Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index	Expert (NGO)	Yes	170													
TPR	US State Department Trafficking in People report	Expert (GOV)	Yes	153													
VAB	Vanderbilt University Americas Barometer	Survey	Yes	23													
WCY	Institute for Management and Development World Competitiveness Yearbook	Survey	Yes	55				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
WMO	Global Insight Business Conditions and Risk Indicators	Expert (CBIP)	Yes	203													

*Types of Expert Assessments: CBP -- Commercial Business Information Provider, GOV -- Public Sector Data Provider, NGO -- Nongovernmental Organization Data Provider

UPPSALA CONFLICT DATA PROGRAM – BATTLE-RELATED DEATHS

The content in the following section are extracts from *UCDP Battle-related Deaths Dataset* (Version 5.0-2014) written by Pettersson in 2014.

“Battle-related deaths refer to those deaths caused by the warring parties that can be directly related to combat. This includes traditional battlefield fighting, guerrilla activities (e.g. hit-and-run attacks/ambushes) and all kinds of bombardments of military bases, cities and villages etc. Urban warfare (bombs, explosions, and assassinations) does not resemble what happens on a battlefield, but such deaths are considered to be battle-related. The target for the attacks is either the military forces or representatives for the parties, though there is often substantial collateral damage in the form of civilians being killed in the crossfire, indiscriminate bombings, etc. All fatalities – military as well as civilian – incurred in such situations are counted as battle-related deaths.”

“The data presented by UCDP is based on information taken from a selection of publicly available sources, printed as well as electronic. The sources include news agencies, journals, research reports, and documents of international and multinational organizations and NGOs. This includes documents of the warring parties (governments and opposition organizations) when such sources are available, since they serve as a crucial complement when identifying statements about the parties’ incompatible positions. Global, regional and country-specific sources are used for all countries. Both the independence and the transparency of the sources are deemed crucial. Each source is judged according to the context in which it is published, that is, according to the potential interests of the source in misrepresenting political or violent events. Since most sources are secondary sources, UCDP attempts to trace reports back to the primary source in order to decide whether they are reliable. In cases of biased sources or in situations where there is unreliable information, the events are normally only included in the high estimate.”

“Little information on the exact number of deaths in conflict is usually available, and media coverage varies considerably from country to country. It is important to emphasize that the fatality estimates given by UCDP is based on publicly accessible sources. Due to the lack of available information, it is possible that there are more fatalities than the UCDP high estimate, but it is very unlikely that there is fewer than the UCDP best estimate.”

“For every event, the following information is recorded: the date of the event, the reporting source, the primary source, the actors involved, where the event took place, what occurred, and an estimate of fatalities. Ideally, these individual figures are corroborated by two or more independent sources. These fatalities are later aggregated into a low, high, and best estimate for every calendar year.” The figures from “best estimate” is used in this study.

UPPSALA CONFLICT DATA PROGRAM – EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The content in the following section are extracts from *UCDP External Support Project: Primary Warring Party Dataset Codebook* (Version 1.0-2011) written by Högbladh et al. in 2011.

“The unit of analysis in this dataset is a yearly primary warring party / receiver of support (that is, an actor involved in an interstate or intrastate armed conflict, more specifically one of the parties who formed the incompatibility) and it lists all the actors supplying said party with support in any given year. Furthermore, the support received is divided into different categories. The UCDP External Support dataset is an integral part of the UCDP database, and thus contains all warring parties – both state – and non-state ones – included in the UCDP database. It is also compatible with the post- 1975 data in the UCDP dyadic dataset and the UCDP/PRIO armed conflict dataset and can be used together with the UCDP Actor Dataset.”

Armed conflict

“An armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.”

State actor

“A state actor is always the government of a state. A state is defined as an internationally recognized sovereign government controlling a specific territory, or an internationally unrecognized government controlling a specified territory whose sovereignty is not disputed by another internationally recognized sovereign government previously controlling the same territory.”

In this dataset UCDP divides external support in 10 separate categories:

1. Troops as secondary warring party

“This type of support indicates that a state has sent combat troops to fight alongside a primary warring party.”

2. Access to military or intelligence infrastructure / Joint Operations

“This type of support is coded when a supporter allows a warring party to use its own military infrastructure as if it would be integrated within the warring party’s chain of command.”

3. Access to territory

“This type of support covers support, by which an actor allows a warring party to set bases on the territory it controls, permits sanctuary or cross-border military action for the supported warring party or in any other way concedes its full sovereignty in favor of a supported party.”

4. Weapons

“Support covered here includes donations, transfers, supplies or loans of weapons or ammunition of any kind. Sales on conciliatory terms (such as deferred payments, offsets beyond what could be expected under terms of standard commercial agreements) are included in this category.”

5. Materiel/Logistics Support

“A range of different types of support is covered in this variable. Typical support covered by this category include non-weaponry and non-ammunition supplies that are used in conjunction with direct military operations and serve direct military purposes (vehicles, uniforms, tents, field hospitals, etc.)”

6. Training/Expertise

“This variable covers training of any kind, both in situ and in the supporter’s country. Furthermore, expert personnel and foreign military advisers present at HQ level or not directly engaged in combat operations are included in this category of assistance.”

7. Funding/Economic Support

“This type of support covers any form of economic aid that was extended by an external supporter in order to be used to fund the waging of the armed conflict or is given to the warring party. This includes military loans, military grants, and military/defense to be used towards improving the capabilities of the military. This also includes intercession or support in front of multilateral financial institutions (such as the WB or the IMF) or other lenders.”

8. Intelligence

“This form of support covers any form of intelligence material presented by an external supporter (maps regarding positions of the enemy, cryptographic codes and keys, satellite imagery, signals intelligence of any kind, information on troop capability, data on whereabouts of rebel leaders etc.)”

9. Other Forms of Support

“This form of support includes types not covered in the previous categories, such as e.g. recruitment opportunities, running, harboring and/or funding a radio station belonging to a rebel group, intermediating transfers of weaponry, etc.”

10. Unknown type of support

“This form of support is coded when reliable sources talk of support but do not specify of what type.”

In this study I only include the categories: Material/Logistics, Weapons, Training/Expertise and Funding/Economics, since none of the other types of external support was received in any of the cases.

ARMED CONFLICT LOCATION AND EVENT DATA PROJECT

– POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The content in the following section are extracts from *Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook* written by Raleigh and Dowd in 2015.

“ACLED collects and codes reported information on developing world political violence, with a focus on civil and communal conflicts, violence against civilians, remote violence, rioting and protesting. ACLED covers violent activity that occurs both within and outside the context of a civil war, particularly violence against civilians, militia interactions, communal conflict and rioting. It aims to capture the modes, frequency and intensity of political violence and opposition as it occurs in context across developing states.”

“All actors have an official name, a political purpose and use violence or protest for political means. For inclusions, organizations must be cohesive and are not assembled for single events, with the exception of riots and protests. Further, the events of organizations must be connected to each other as a means to achieve a larger political purpose. This necessary and sufficient definition of actors allows us to establish campaigns and trajectories of movements.”

Politically Violent Actors

“ACLED recognizes a range of actors including governments, rebels, militias, ethnic groups, active political organizations, and civilians. In ACLED, politically violent actors include rebels, militias, and organized political groups who interact over issues of political authority (i.e. territorial control, government control, access to resources, etc).”

“Governments are defined as internationally recognized regimes in assumed control of a state. Government actors are defined by ACLED as a series of separate regimes rather than a uniform body (e.g. Congo/Zaire (1965-1997), Democratic Republic of Congo (1997-2001), and Democratic Republic of Congo (2001-) as opposed to Congo/Zaire (1962-present)). As the strength, capacity and policies of governments can vary widely from one regime to the next, ACLED designates governments by their leading regimes. This enables researchers to capture the differences in government involvement and reaction to violence.”

Conflict Events

“Political violence is understood as the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation. ACLED defines political violence through its constituent events, the intent of which is to produce a comprehensive overview of all forms of political conflict within and across states. A politically violent event is a single altercation where often force is used by one or more groups for a political end, although some instances - including protests and non-violent activity - are included in the dataset to capture the potential pre-cursors or critical junctures of a conflict.”

“The fundamental unit of observation in ACLED is the event. Events occur between designated actors – e.g. a named rebel group, a militia or a government. They occur at a

specific named location (identified by name and geographic coordinates) and on a specific day. Coders work to ensure that the most specific location and time possible are recorded. ACLED currently codes for nine types of events, both violent and non-violent, that may occur during a period of political violence.”

ACLED Event Types

Event Type	Event Description
Battle-No change of territory	“A battle between two violent armed groups where control of the contested location does not change.”
Battle-Non-state actor overtakes territory	“A battle where non-state actors win control of location.”
Battle-Government regains territory	“A battle in which the government regains control of a location.”
Headquarters or base established	“A non-state group establishes a base or headquarters. This event is non-violent, and coded when a permanent or semi-permanent base is established.”
Non-violent activity by a conflict actor	“This event records activity by rebel groups/militia/governments that does not involve active fighting but is within the context of the war/dispute.”
Riots/Protests	“A protest describes a non-violent, group public demonstration, often against a government institution. Rioting is a violent form of demonstration. These can be coded as one-sided events.”
Violence against civilians	“Violence against civilians occurs when any armed/violent group attacks civilians. By definition, civilians are unarmed and not engaged in political violence, Rebels, governments, militias, rioters can all commit violence against civilians.”
Non-violent transfer of territory	“This event describes situations in which rebels or governments acquire control of a location without engaging in a violent act.”
Remote violence	“Remote violence refers to events in which the tool for engaging in conflict did not require the physical presence of the perpetrator.”

POLITICAL INSTABILITY TASK FORCE – ETHNIC CONFLICT

The content in the following section are extracts from *PITF – State Failure Problem Set: Internal Wars and Failures of Governance, 1955-2012 Dataset and Coding Guidelines* (Revision 6 May 2015) written by Marshall et al.

“Four distinct types of state failure events are included in the Problem Set: revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, adverse regime changes, and genocides and politicides. The coding rules covering each type of event are defined below. The basic structure of the data is the “case-year” format, that is, there is a separate case-entry for each additional year of a multi-year episode. The annual event records include the following information for each case: country, month and year of onset, month and year of ending (unless ongoing at the end of the update year), type of case, and annual codes on magnitude variables; only the first annual record for each event contains a brief narrative description of the event.”

Ethnic Wars

“Ethnic wars are episodes of violent conflict between governments and national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities (ethnic challengers) in which the challengers seek major changes in their status. Most ethnic wars since 1955 have been guerrilla or civil wars in which the challengers have sought independence or regional autonomy. A few, like the events in South Africa's black townships in 1976-77, involve large-scale demonstrations and riots aimed at sweeping political reform that were violently suppressed by police and military. Rioting and warfare between rival communal groups is NOT coded as ethnic warfare unless it involves conflict over political power or government policy.”

“As with revolutionary wars, there are the two minimum thresholds for including an ethnic war event in the state failure problem set: a mobilization threshold, wherein each party must mobilize 1000 or more people (armed agents, demonstrators, troops), and a conflict intensity threshold, whereby there must be at least 1000 direct conflict-related deaths over the full course of the armed conflict and at least one year when the annual conflict-related death toll exceeds 100 fatalities. The fatalities may result from armed conflict, terrorism, rioting, or government repression. “

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
– GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX**

The content in the following section are extracts from the *Human Development Report 2015: Technical Notes*.

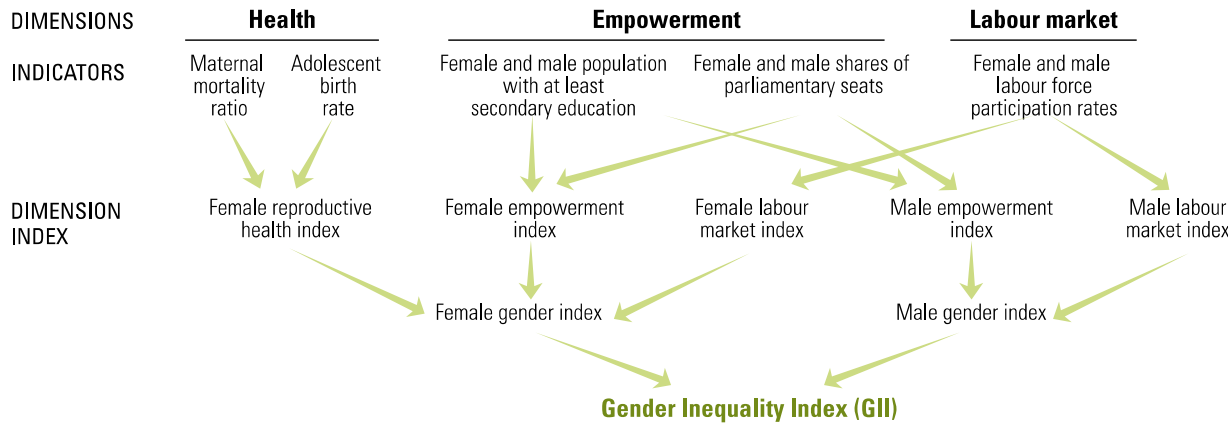
“The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based disadvantage in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market – for as many countries as data of reasonable quality allow. It shows the loss in potential human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. It ranges between 0, where women and men fare equally, and 1, where one gender fares as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions. The GII is computed using the association-sensitive inequality measure suggested by Seth (2009), which implies that the index is based on the general mean of general means of different orders – the first aggregation is by a geometric mean across dimensions; these means, calculated separately for women and men, are then aggregated using a harmonic mean across genders.”

Data sources

- Maternal mortality ratio (MMR): UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Group (2014).
- Adolescent birth rate (ABR): UNDESA (2013).
- Share of parliamentary seats held by each sex (PR): IPU (2015).
- Attainment at secondary and higher education (SE) levels: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015) and Barro and Lee (2014).
- Labour market participation rate (LFPR): ILO (2015)

Source: Human Development Report 2015: Technical Notes

Calculating Gender Inequality Index (GII)



Source: Human Development Report 2015: Technical Notes