When "Boys Will Not Be Boys": Variations of Wartime Sexual Violence by Armed Opposition Groups in Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and Nepal

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WHEN “BOYS WILL NOT BE BOYS”: VARIATIONS OF WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS IN SRI LANKA, SIERRA LEONE, AND NEPAL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

By

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ABSTRACT


Wartime sexual violence is often assumed to be inevitable during conflict yet empirical evidence indicates that sexual violence varies in type and frequency within and across conflicts as well as among armed groups. A solid understanding of what variable(s) and causal pathway(s) permit the variation of systematic sexual violence in intrastate conflict situations by specific groups has yet to be developed. What factors explain the variation of sexual violence by certain armed opposition groups during conflict situations? This comparative study employs process-tracing and the congruence method to consider the utility of hypotheses drawn from the work of Elisabeth J. Wood and Kathryn Farr using data from the Sri Lankan (1983-2009), Sierra Leonean (1991-2002), and Nepalese (1996-2005) civil wars. It finds that insurgent leadership prohibition of sexual violence against civilians and equitable intragroup gender dynamics are correlated with a lower frequency of sexual violence against civilian populations by insurgencies during civil wars. The author theorizes that when leadership prohibits sexual violence, enforces strong internal group discipline, and frames women’s (equitable) participation as integral for achieving the broader ideological and strategic goals of the insurgency (i.e., nationalist, leftist, etc.), sexual violence against women and girls is less frequent during civil wars by armed opposition groups vis-à-vis government armed forces.

Key Words: wartime sexual violence, rape, variation, masculinity, female combatants, civil wars, insurgencies, repertoire of violence, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Nepal
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTC  All-Ceylon Tamil Congress
ANNFSU(R)  All Nepal National Free Student Union (Revolutionary)
ANWA(R)  All Nepal Women’s Association (Revolutionary)
APC  All People’s Congress
AFRC  Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BEIC  British East India Company
CDF  Civil Defense Force
CNC  Ceylon National Congress
CPN  Communist Party of Nepal
CPN(M)  Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
DoD  United States Department of Defense
DRC  Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG  Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
EPRLF  Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front
ERO  Eelam Revolutionary Organization
FARC  Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FGC  female genital cutting
GDI  Gender-related Development Indicator
GDP  gross domestic product
GEM  Gender Empowerment Measure
ICG  International Crisis Group
IGO  intergovernmental organization
IHRICON  Institute of Human Rights Communication, Nepal
IMF  International Monetary Fund
INBCGSI  India-Nepal Bilateral Consultative Group of Security Issues
IPKF  Indian Peacekeeping Force
LTTE  Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MNLF  Madhesi National Liberation Front
NAPF  Nepalese Armed Police Force
NGO  nongovernmental organization
NPFL  National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC  National Provisional Ruling Council
OAU  Organization for African Unity
PKOs  peacekeeping operations
PLA  People’s Liberation Army
PLOTE  People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
RAC  Royal African Company
RAW  Research and Analysis Wing
RNA  Royal Nepalese Army
RSLAF  Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF  Revolutionary United Front
SAP  structural adjustment program
SAPRO  Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>SCSL</td>
<td>Special Court for Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGI</td>
<td>Subcommittee on Gender Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Sri Lankan Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLAWC</td>
<td>Sri Lankan Army Women’s Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLC</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLFP</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Freedom Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLPP</td>
<td>Sierra Leone People’s Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLST</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Selection Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>STDs</td>
<td>sexually transmitted diseases</td>
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<tr>
<td>TELO</td>
<td>Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNT</td>
<td>Tamil National Tigers</td>
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<tr>
<td>TULF</td>
<td>Tamil United Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMSIIL</td>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNP</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFLT</td>
<td>Women’s Front of the Liberation Tigers</td>
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Nevertheless, all instances of lazy cognition in this thesis are my own.
Dedicated to Tyler Franklin Fint (3 March 1986 – 5 February 2007)

You saw the potential in me when I didn’t see it myself. I’ll see you one day, up in the sky.
1. Variations of Wartime Sexual Violence

“[L]ooking at rape avoidance to break the conceptual lock of violence as definitive of the matter of rape or sexual assault is important for advancing understanding of sexual violence itself.” – Robert M. Hayden

1.1. Introduction

Wartime sexual violence has received attention from the Western media and academia since the early 1990s with its widespread use by Bosnian Serbs against Bosniak women and girls in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1992-1995 civil war. Although wartime sexual violence is not a new phenomenon, its systematic use as a strategy of warfare has been noted by the international community only within the past two decades. Historically, sexual violence during warfare was treated as inevitable and rooted in men’s biological impulses for sexual gratification and reproduction—this is commonly articulated in the saying “boys will be boys.” Because of women’s traditional status as the property of men—fathers, husbands, or immediate male relatives—sexual violence has often been viewed as the “looting” of men’s property. Noticing that not all male combatants committed acts of sexual violence during wartime, psychoanalytical theorists pathologized perpetrators of sexual violence and regarded such behavior as deviant and

abnormal.⁵ During the 1970s, the U.S. feminist movement redefined sexual violence as a means of enforcing traditional gender roles and a gender hierarchy in which men were dominant (i.e., patriarchy).⁶ Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, scholars began to challenge biological and pathological explanations of wartime sexual violence, producing a plethora of feminist-influenced theories which seek to explain why sexual violence is used systematically as a weapon of war; these theoretical developments have challenged the validity of biological and pathological theories through various case studies and statistical analyses. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have both framed sexual violence as crimes against humanity, and genocide, respectively. Also, several intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) have allocated human and financial capital to prevent and/or monitor sexual violence during conflict and post-conflict situations.⁷ The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1820 in 2008, recognizing sexual violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations as a “tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.”⁸ These international developments have brought increasing media and academic attention to the issue of wartime sexual violence during conflict and post-conflict situations.

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⁵ Skjelsbæk, Inger (2001), op. cit., p. 212.
⁷ Skjelsbæk, Inger (2001) op. cit., pp. 211-2. Such IGOs include the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council, among other UN bodies that have implemented gender mainstreaming. Recently, several UN bodies have been created—UN Women and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women—to monitor violence against women during both conflict and post-conflict situations.
Interestingly, there have been some armed groups in now-discontinued conflicts—e.g., the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN[M]) in Nepal—that rarely employed sexual violence during conflict; this empirical pattern presents a theoretical challenge to many scholarly explanations of wartime sexual violence. Armed groups that refrain from sexual violence during wartime warrant academic attention because they may develop existing theories of sexual violence which do not account for variations in the frequency and type of sexual violence during wartime—particularly during civil wars. More importantly, the variation of wartime sexual violence by armed groups may have significant legal and political implications for promoting international gender justice. Elisabeth J. Wood argues that “[i]f some groups do not engage in sexual violence, then rape is not inevitable in war as is sometimes claimed, and there are stronger grounds for holding responsible those groups that do engage in sexual violence.”

1.2. The Research Questions

The literature focuses on which factors facilitate systematic sexual violence during intrastate conflict, but little has been said about factors and conditions that cause variation from the “expected” violence during intrastate conflicts. This study focuses on the variation of systematic sexual violence by opposition groups and its use by government armed forces in Nepal and Sri Lanka; similar patterns of sexual violence by armed opposition groups are found in the cases of Colombia and Peru—both of which warrant further academic study (see Kathryn Farr [2009] for details, pp. 20-1).

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10 This study focuses on the variation of systematic sexual violence by opposition groups and its use by government armed forces in Nepal and Sri Lanka; similar patterns of sexual violence by armed opposition groups are found in the cases of Colombia and Peru—both of which warrant further academic study (see Kathryn Farr [2009] for details, pp. 20-1).
of at least one state and a rival, non-state group that seeks to gain control of all or a part of the state’s territory.\textsuperscript{11}

Due to several armed groups refraining from the use of sexual violence during wartime, a puzzling research question arises: \textit{What factors explain the variation of sexual violence by certain armed opposition groups during conflict situations?} With this question posed, several corollary questions arise: How does the presence of women in armed groups shape the organizational norms and use of sexual violence during wartime? What role does leadership play in the prohibition of sexual violence and how does this contribute to its variation? What influence does popular support of civilians for opposition groups—both ideologically and materially—have on the variation of sexual violence? Finally, how do gendered norms and practices within insurgent groups affect the prevalence of sexual violence during intrastate conflict?

The above questions have been disregarded in the literature, with the exception of Elisabeth J. Wood’s and Kathryn Farr’s scholarly works.\textsuperscript{12} Analyzing cases of wartime sexual violence in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Sierra Leone, this study will identify what factors may have contributed to the variation of wartime rape by the CPN(M) in Nepal and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. This thesis will also contrast the CPN(M) and LTTE with the widespread use of rape by government armed forces in Sierra Leone, Nepal, and Sri

\textsuperscript{11} This study uses the terms “intrastate conflict” and “civil war” interchangeably; Farr, Kathryn (2009) “Extreme War Rape in Today’s Civil-War-Torn States: A Contextual and Comparative Analysis,” \textit{Gender Issues}, 26(1): 1-41, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{12} In her 2006 study, Elisabeth J. Wood analyzes variations in wartime sexual violence, including frequencies among armed groups and across conflicts, typologies of sexual violence itself (gang rape, torture, slavery, etc.), perpetrators of sexual violence, targets of sexual violence, and the intent of sexual violence as a strategy of war (morale-boosting, genocidal, tactical, opportunistic, etc.). Woods argues that wartime sexual violence varies across cases and that the dominance of single-case analyses of wartime sexual violence limits the ability of researchers to discover common causal mechanisms and patterns of sexual violence during wartime. This study aims to compare three cases of wartime sexual violence to uncover important variables and causal paths that may not be observable when single-case studies are employed. See Wood, Elisabeth J. (2006) “Variation in Sexual Violence during War” \textit{Politics and Society}, 34(3): 307-41, p. 308.
Lanka, as well as by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)—the primary insurgent group in Sierra Leone. Using a comparative, three-case research design, this study will employ process-tracing and the congruence method to identify relevant independent variables. Then, four hypotheses derived from the work of Elisabeth J. Wood and Kathryn Farr—(1) cultural norms of combatants regarding sexual violence, (2) leadership prohibition of sexual violence, (3) the material and ideological support of civilians, and (4) the presence and role of female combatants—will be applied to cases of sexual violence in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Sierra Leone using the congruence method to test the validity of these explanations. This thesis seeks to identify the specific variables, causal mechanism(s), and causal pathway(s) that contributed to the variation of wartime sexual violence by the CPN(M) in Nepal and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. It aims to test middle-range and contingent theories on variations of wartime sexual violence against women and girls by armed opposition groups during intrastate conflicts.13

1.3. Literature Review

The literature on wartime sexual violence emerged with Susan Brownmiller’s seminal work in 1975, titled Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape. Rooted in sociobiological theory, Brownmiller argues that wartime rape occurs because male soldiers’ biological impulses to rape are left unrestrained by social norms and judicial institutions found in peacetime. Also, soldiers have newly-acquired power due to their

13 Sexual violence that targets men during intrastate conflict, while important for the fields of conflict studies and gender violence, is beyond the scope of this study. A theoretical framework for the study of wartime sexual violence against male noncombatants can be found in Jones, Adam (2006) “Straight as a Rule: Heteronormativity, Gendercide, and the Noncombatant Male,” Men and Masculinities, 8(4): 451-69. This thesis may provide further insight as to what variables and causal paths explain the absence of wartime sexual violence against women and girls in conflict by armed opposition groups. It may also offer policy makers relevant and practical knowledge to prevent future acts of wartime sexual violence.
entry into elite military fraternities and their ability to employ state-sanctioned violence—thus soldiers must prove their power to women, themselves, and, most importantly, fellow male combatants through acts of sexual violence. Brownmiller, illustrating her sociobiological theory of rape, documents cases of wartime rape from the establishment of the Roman Empire to the end of the Vietnam War.\(^\text{14}\) Peggy R. Sanday, a feminist anthropologist, challenges Brownmiller’s argument by “depart[ing] from the familiar assumption that male nature is programmed for rape.”\(^\text{15}\) She contends that rape is constituted by sociological and cultural forces rather than solely by the biological impulses of men.\(^\text{16}\) Sanday argues that (1) levels of rape vary cross-culturally and (2) societies with high incidence of rape are distinguishable from societies with low levels of rape by cultural and social factors. Categorizing cultures as “rape-free” and “rape-prone,” Sanday finds that in “rape-prone” cultures, intergroup and interpersonal violence is perpetuated by male sexual violence, the nature of parent-child relations is enacted in male sexual violence, and rape is a reflection of “a social ideology of male dominance.”\(^\text{17}\) In “rape-free” societies men are conditioned to value female characteristics and experiences—which in turn provides less rigid guidelines for performing masculinity—and consequently they commit fewer acts of rape relative to men in “rape-prone” societies.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{16}\) Sanday strongly questions biological explanations of rape (e.g., testosterone as a catalyst for sexual aggression) because such theories cannot account for social and cultural factors that condone and perpetuate rape as well as the variation in the frequency and typology of sexual violence across societies.
Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, the literature on wartime sexual violence was limited to feminist scholars and activists. It was not until the early 1990s, when sexual violence was used systematically during the 1992-1995 Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict, that wartime sexual violence was studied among multiple academic disciplines in the social sciences, including political science, sociology, anthropology, and criminology. In 1994, an influential work edited by Alexandra Stiglmayer, titled *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, analyzed acts of systematic sexual violence that occurred throughout the conflict. The book contained chapter contributions from Susan Brownmiller, Ruth Seifert, Catharine MacKinnon, Rhonda Copelon, and Cynthia Enloe—scholars who continue to influence the study of wartime sexual violence.¹⁹ Inger Skjelsbæk systematically documented over 140 scholarly articles published throughout the 1990s on wartime sexual violence among myriad academic disciplines and social scientific methodologies.²⁰ Presently, Elisabeth J. Wood, Kathryn Farr, Robert M. Hayden, Jeremy M. Weinstein, Christopher K. Butler, Michele L. Leiby, and other scholars of sexual violence contend that wartime sexual violence varies in frequency and type across conflicts. The study of wartime sexual violence by political scientists has brought new insight into the literature on sexual violence during war since the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict.²¹ Conflicts in which sexual violence was relatively low in prevalence (e.g., Columbia) may be juxtaposed with conflicts in which rape was widespread (e.g., Democratic Republic of Congo) to gain new theoretical insights, via comparative political methodology, about the independent variables and causal

²¹ Ibid.
mechanism(s) that may explain the variation on the dependent variable, wartime sexual violence.

The literature on wartime sexual violence is diverse and beset with competing and contingent generalizations that seek to explain why sexual violence occurs systematically during intrastate conflict. The three themes prominent in the literature are: (1) militarized masculinity as the cause of sexual violence; (2) sexual violence as a strategy of war; and (3) the variations in frequency and typology of wartime sexual violence.

*Militarized Masculinity as the Cause of Sexual Violence*

The first theme in the literature analyzes the link between militarized masculinity and wartime sexual violence. Scholars such as Catharine MacKinnon, Susan Brownmiller, Maria Ericksson Bazz, and Maria Stern argue that masculinity predisposes men to commit sexual violence against women and girls during peacetime and exacerbates sexual violence during wartime. Also, this vein of research often asserts that women are disproportionately raped during conflict because stereotypically feminine women become the targets of hypermasculine combatants primed to rape. Academics who research masculinity and sexual violence argue that men and dominant discourses of masculinity induce men to rape primarily to achieve a more dominant masculine status within the group. Scholars of masculinity and sexual violence often emphasize a continuum between peacetime and wartime sexual violence, claiming that the former is invisible or normalized in the private sphere. Conflict makes sexual violence visible by increasing women’s vulnerability to sexual violence by groups of armed soldiers and
guerillas driven by hypermasculine group norms in the public milieu of intra- and interstate conflict.²²

Scholars often analyze gendered norms within military organizations to explain wartime sexual violence. Ruth Seifert asserts that the “glue” for the organizational structure of Western armed forces is masculine norms and performance, which in war zones includes the suppression of stereotypically feminine characteristics, such as empathy, sympathy, and gentleness. Through the processes of masculine and misogynistic socialization during training—which values physical power and heterosexual conquest—soldiers become inclined (not predetermined) to rape women and girls in conflict situations.²³ Seifert argues that during conflict a certain group psychology develops from a patriarchal society that associates masculinity with power and prestige and, conversely, devalues femininity. Women are targeted not because they are enemies, “but because they are the objects of fundamental hatred that characterizes the cultural unconscious [of patriarchal psychology] and is actualized in times of crisis.”²⁴ Catherine MacKinnon agrees, paralleling the pornography industry in Yugoslavia with the systematic rapes that occurred by Serbian military and paramilitary personnel during the 1992-1995 conflict. She stresses that “[w]hen pornography is this normal, a whole population of men is primed to dehumanize women and to enjoy inflicting sexual assault.”²⁵ Cynthia Enloe contends that the masculinity of soldiers is not as rigid and monolithic as portrayed by MacKinnon and Seifert. Enloe argues that militarized

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²⁵ MacKinnon, Catherine A. (1994) op. cit., p. 77
masculinity is “class-dichotomized,” with rapists being depicted as lower-class and lower-ranking soldiers—this stereotype shields and distances leadership (portrayed as upper-class and senior-ranking) from allegations of sexual violence. Thus, Enloe asserts senior leadership is able to orchestrate systematic sexual violence as a strategy of warfare with impunity.  

Sexual violence also occurs because soldiers are unable to realize traditional forms of masculinity and, consequently, overcompensate with sexual violence. Claudia Card asserts that rape reinforces patriarchal relations between men and women. She argues that the goal of rape, both during war and peace, is to (re)produce male dominance in society through patriarchal behavior and discourse. Card further purports that rape is employed against women during conflict due to their devalued social status and physical weakness relative to men, which makes women as a distinct group the most vulnerable targets of rape in a patriarchal society. Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, in their analysis of government soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), find that rape by soldiers is justified by dichotomized discourses of (heterosexual) masculinity which promote images of manhood that simultaneously require being economic “providers” for their families and “fighters” in the armed forces. Thus, soldiers in the DRC rationalize rape due to their failure to realize an aspect of (heterosexual) masculinity—particularly as an economic “provider” for their wives and children. As soldiers fail to realize their internalized concept of masculinity (adopted from Congolese  

29 Baaz, Maria Eriksson and Maria Stern (2009) op. cit., p. 497.
discourses of masculinity that position men’s sexual gratification as a reward for being a “provider”), Baaz and Stern argue that rape “serves as a performative act that functions to reconstitute their masculinity—yet simultaneously symbolizes their ultimate failure to do so.” Euan Hague and Silva Meznaric argue that ethnic groups can take masculine and feminine identities, as one group becomes dominant over another, which both authors assert contributes to systematic rape. The projection of power, domination, and violence, often associated with hegemonic masculinity, allows the masculine group to dominate the feminized, subjected group—the former includes Bosnian Serbs and the latter Bosnian Muslims in Hague’s study of wartime sexual violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Masculinity analyzed solely in terms of power provides additional explanations of wartime rape. Dubravka Zarkov argues that the main element of masculinity is power and that the use of rape is an attempt to construct the masculinity of (i.e., empower) the perpetrator and feminize (i.e., disempower) the victim. In her analysis, the focus is not on individual soldiers’ sexual orientation, but rather on a social construction of masculinity that assumes “masculine = heterosexual = power.” This argument, Zarkov contends, allows scholars to explain the rape of both women and men in conflict zones. In other words, rape is asexual and rather rooted in the perpetrators’ desire to produce dominance over individuals and communities. Zarkov’s argument on rape, power, and sexuality

30 Baaz, Maria Eriksson and Maria Stern (2009) op. cit., p. 514.
34 Ibid.
contrasts sharply with Baaz and Stern, who argue militarized masculine discourses value heterosexuality and prohibit male-on-male rape.

The ideological pressures of state nationalism and militarized masculinities, however, do not exempt perpetrators from culpability under international law. Lisa S. Price observes that “similarly-located” combatants who do not commit acts of sexual violence provides evidence that soldiers act out of choice when they commit sexual violence against women and girls in combat zones.35 Thus, Price writes, “where there is agency, there must be responsibility.”36

Wartime sexual violence may also serve as a group socialization tool among forcibly recruited combatants. Dara Kay Cohen considers why gang rape, as a typology of sexual violence, is employed so frequently during conflict but rarely during peacetime.37 She argues, using the case of wartime sexual violence in Sierra Leone, that gang rape is intended to socialize and create bonds of solidarity among forcibly recruited combatants who are initially uncommitted to the goals of the insurgent group and mistrustful of their fellow combatants.38 Such a theory can account for (1) why gang rape, which is rare during peacetime, occurs so frequently during wartime and (2) how female combatants (e.g., “bush wives”) may be active participants in gang rape. Using a cross-national data set of civil wars from 1980-1999, Cohen demonstrates through statistical analyses that insurgencies and government armed forces which forcibly conscript combatants are more likely to commit wartime rape.39

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The literature on wartime sexual violence and its link with militarized masculinities of combatants in armed groups is beset with competing arguments across a wide array of cases and methods. Scholars of masculinity and wartime sexual violence focus on military institutions and the perpetuation of militarized hegemonic masculinities, the fragility of militarized masculinities and soldiers’ overcompensation through acts of sexual violence, militarized masculinities analyzed exclusively as sociopolitical power, and rape as a socialization tool. Although scholars may disagree about how to link militarized masculinity with wartime sexual violence in a theoretical sense, indicated by competing arguments among scholars of masculinity and war, a gendered analytical lens is necessary during social scientific studies because it provides important insights about causes of wartime sexual violence in single and comparative case studies.

**Sexual Violence as a Strategy of War**

Sexual violence as a strategy of war became a focus of scholarly work in the mid-1990s after the exposure of systematic and strategic acts of sexual violence during the Bosnian and Rwandan conflicts. Silva Meznaric, Ruth Seifert, and other scholars contend that sexual violence is employed as an organizational strategy to eliminate enemies based on ethnic, political, or national group membership. The theme of sexual violence as a strategy of war is a dominant and well-developed component of the literature on wartime sexual violence.

Scholars argue that sexual violence is sometimes used as a strategy of war to destroy specific groups based on their ethnic and/or religious identities. Ruth Seifert and
Rhonda Copelon assert that wartime sexual violence is employed not only to destroy the physical and psychological existence of targeted women, but also functions to inflict harm on the collective identity of targeted groups, ethnicities, or nations. Women’s bodies are socially constructed to symbolize the nation as life-givers and guarantors of ethnic groups’ survival. Thus, the rape of women not only inflicts bodily harm on women themselves, but acts as a “symbolic rape of the body of that community.” Seifert states that strategic objectives of armed forces in specific conflicts—such as in Bosnia and Rwanda—include the complete destruction of collective identity, which makes wartime sexual violence a destructive means to realize organizational goals. In a similar fashion, Silva Meznaric argues that rape was employed to polarize the interactions between different ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia. She contends that rape can be labeled a political act—both in times of war and peace—because of the increasing polarization between ethnic groups after acts of sexual violence and its use as a tool of ethnic cleansing or genocide.

The analytical focus on religious and ethnic identities, some scholars contend, cannot explain why wartime sexual violence occurs primarily against women and girls. Inger Agger and Soren Buus Jensen state that the use of systematic rape during wartime is related to aspects of women’s identity in the social context in which they exist; women’s identities—ethnic and religious—are politicized during the uncertainty of violent conflict, sometimes leading to sexual violence as a strategy of ethnic cleansing or

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genocide. Allen strengthens the analytical emphasis on women’s ethno-national identities by demonstrating that the use of rape in the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict must be viewed as genocide. However, she views gender identity as an important aspect of the genocide, claiming that Bosniak women were targeted for sexual violence because of both their ethnic and gender identities. Furthermore, agreeing with Seifert’s argument on the symbolism of women’s bodies, Allen asserts that rape jeopardizes reproduction in patriarchal societies in which women are defined as men’s property and their virginity as men’s sustained honor by portraying survivors of sexual violence as “damaged goods.”

Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen concur with the genocide-themed argument regarding Bosnian and Rwandan wartime sexual violence, arguing that it was utilized to destroy Bosniak and Tutsi ethnic groups by killing women, preventing intraethnic births, imbuing fear in female members, and forcibly removing women from their traditional communities. Contrasting the scholars above, Rhonda Copelon warns against conceptualizing rape as genocide, instead contending that rape and genocide are two analytically separate crimes against humanity under international law. She argues that rape must be viewed under international law as an act intended to “humiliate, terrorize, and destroy a woman based on her identity as a woman,” not only as a tool of violence employed to destroy an entire ethnic population in whole or in part. Thus, according to Copelon, wartime rape in the context of genocide must be considered two separate crimes against humanity under international law.

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Focusing on one ethnic group’s victimization fails to explain (or may implicitly ignore) why additional ethnic populations are victimized by acts of sexual violence during the same conflict. Doris E. Buss warns against the asymmetrical emphasis on ethnic and religious identities during wartime rape in her study of the Rwandan genocide, contending that focusing on one ethnic narrative of rape during conflict diverts questions about why Hutu and Tutsi armed groups employed rape against both Hutu and Tutsi women during the Rwandan genocide. Buss believes the dominant rape narrative in Rwanda depicts the “raped Tutsi woman” as the definitive raped woman during the conflict, which renders Hutu women invisible in most analyses on wartime rape in Rwanda.\(^\text{47}\) She proposes that deemphasizing the interethnic element of wartime sexual violence allows one to consider “how other social, political, and economic structures”—such as gender identity, socioeconomic inequalities, combatant masculinities, etc.—shaped sexual violence against Tutsi and Hutu women.\(^\text{48}\)

Certain cases of sexual violence as a strategy of war may have strong ideological dynamics. Ximena Bunster-Burotto conceptualizes sexual and non-sexual violence against civilians in Latin America as a weapon against states’ political opponents, deviating from ethnic or religious arguments of state-perpetrated (sexual) violence in other regions. Bunster-Burotto argues that rape has an ideological element, as military regimes in Latin America targeted and systematically raped women because of their affiliation with guerilla movements resisting the policies and legitimacy of the state. She


\(^{48}\) Ibid.
asserts that being a spouse, daughter, or cousin to male opponents of the regime is viewed by the authoritarian government as associating with guerilla movements.  

But sexual violence may not serve the same purpose even within the same conflict, let alone across cases. Michele L. Leiby complicates the strategic logic of sexual violence, stating “[o]ne key finding is that sexual violence does not serve the same function in all civil wars across time and space” and can serve multiple purposes even within the same case. In other words, Leiby argues wartime sexual violence is employed for various functions other than genocide or ethnic cleansing; a study of wartime sexual violence “requires analysis sensitive to multiple and concomitant causal pathways.”

International law scholars focus on categorizing wartime rape as criminal acts. Rhonda Copelon, in her analysis of international law and acts of sexual violence, stresses that rape viewed as a “crime against dignity and honor” is problematic because acts of sexual violence are then considered a violation of men’s honor and their “exclusive right to sexual possession of [their women] as property.” To promote gender justice in international law, Copelon argues that all forms of wartime rape—not only tactical or genocidal rape—should be charged as a “grave breach” of the Geneva Conventions and a crime against humanity. Furthermore, the author states that international law must recognize violence based on gender (e.g., rape, forced prostitution, forced impregnation,

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51 Ibid.  
52 Copelon, Rhonda (1994) op. cit., p. 200.
etc.) as a unique crime against humanity—only then, she argues, will gender justice be prioritized in international law.53

National security goals and patriarchy prove an explosive mix which may promote sexual violence as a strategy of war during conflict situations. Cynthia Enloe conceptualizes “national security rape” as a strategy of wartime sexual violence. Rather than viewing wartime rape as ahistoric, nonpolitical, and inevitable, Enloe proposes that a more analytically useful approach is to determine the policy decisions made by leadership in concert with acts of wartime rape. By labeling women as “subversives” or other politically delegitimizing terms, military commanders and policy makers wrap local forms of patriarchy in the “flag of national security.”54 Thus, national security rape—a nexus of nationalist and patriarchal violence—is strategically employed to ensure strict intraethnic conformity to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles. Interethnically, national security rape is used to promote the power (and national security) of one group over another.55

The use of sexual violence as a strategy of war is a prominent theme in the literature and expands the analytical focus of wartime sexual violence in solely gendered terms to include additional identities, including political, ethnic, and/or religious memberships. Scholars of sexual violence as a strategy of war purport that groups are targeted for rape based on their political, ethnic, or religious affiliation; others contend that gender identity in part plays an important role in the use of tactical wartime sexual violence. Furthermore, other scholars, such as Leiby, challenge univocal explanations of

55 Ibid.
sexual violence as a strategy of war by pointing to the multiple purposes it serves within the same conflict, across conflicts, and among armed groups.

*Patterns and Variations of Wartime Sexual Violence*

Recent theoretical developments in the literature on wartime sexual violence explain why the use of sexual violence varies in level, type, and function across cases of conflict. The literature builds upon Sanday’s socio-cultural analysis of rape by extending her “rape-free” and “rape-prone” concepts during peacetime to acts of wartime sexual violence. Scholars who study variations of wartime sexual violence stress that not all armed groups commit acts of sexual violence against civilians during conflict.

Several scholars have pointed to the complete absence of violence against civilians to explain variations of wartime sexual violence. Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein argue that groups which exert little violence in general on civilian populations do not utilize systematic sexual violence against civilians.

They hypothesize that these soldiers are prohibited by commanders from employing violence, in all forms, because group leadership retains high levels of internal discipline—therefore such groups do not commit acts of wartime sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations. Furthermore, Humphreys and Weinstein argue that commanders prohibit violence against civilians in order to gain popular support and sustain links between the group and larger community. Popular support allows groups to acquire material resources, new recruits from the general population, and ideological support for their organizational goals.56

Seeking to explain variations in levels of sexual violence, Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer suggest that if soldiers have consistent access to women for sexual intercourse, they will be less likely to commit rape against civilian populations.\(^{57}\) Militaries have historically sought to restrain rape by facilitating access to prostitutes (or sex slaves) for soldiers—examples include the abuse of “comfort women” by the Japanese Army during World War II and the kidnapping and enslavement of “bush wives” by the RUF in Sierra Leone. While accepted among sociobiologists, Thornhill and Palmer’s theory is highly contested because of its cynicism, simplicity, and cases of wartime sexual violence that falsify their sociobiological hypothesis. For example, Wood notes that the RUF—despite having significant numbers of “bush wives” who served as sex slaves to male combatants—committed high levels of sexual violence against civilian women and girls.\(^{58}\) Past explanations of the variation of wartime sexual violence have been built upon by the theoretical insights of Wood, Farr, and other scholars who analyze the variation of wartime sexual violence.

The external and internal environmental factors of conflicts themselves may explain variations in wartime (sexual) violence against noncombatants. Jeremy M. Weinstein proposes that insurgent groups’ violence varies based on the initial environmental conditions that each group faces during civil wars. Weinstein argues that the availability of material resources to finance warfare shapes the type of individuals who participate, the kinds of organizations that emerge in civil wars to fight, and the type and function of violence that are employed—including sexual violence. His central finding is that rebel groups who engage in conflict in areas of high material wealth or


with external material support are prone to commit high levels of indiscriminant violence against civilians. Also, Weinstein suggests that insurgent groups who emerge from resource-poor environments engage less in violence and rather use violence selectively and strategically against state actors and sympathizers—and avoid utilizing sexual violence against civilians.\textsuperscript{59} Claire Metelits challenges Weinstein’s resource argument by stating that insurgent “violence is not so much a response to resources as it is a response to the threat of survival.”\textsuperscript{60} Rather than resources shaping the nature of insurgents’ violence against civilians, Metelits contends that the severity of insurgent competition determines the means by which actors access and utilize resources. As other armed groups challenge an insurgent group’s control over resources—and thus their organizational survival—the insurgency’s behavior will shift toward an escalation of (sexual) violence against civilians and rival armed groups to obtain resources by coercion.\textsuperscript{61} The debate over resources as a determinant of insurgent groups’ behavior toward civilian populations is a well-developed body of literature explaining the variation of wartime sexual violence among armed groups.

Ethno-national polarization or coexistence may in part explain the variation of wartime sexual violence. Robert M. Hayden, using Bosnian and Indian data, shows that sexual violence during ethno-nationalist conflicts is rare—what he terms as “rape avoidance”—when the state itself is not threatened by partition and the continued coexistence between ethno-national groups within the state is expected by all actors.

When the state is in an uncertain condition as polarized ethno-national groups vie for


\textsuperscript{61} Metelits, Claire (2009) op. cit., pp. 105-6.
control of state territory after partition, sexual violence during ethno-nationalist conflicts is more likely because future coexistence is not expected between ethno-national groups.  

Other scholars examine armed groups as a unit of analysis—rather than environmental factors—to explain variations in wartime sexual violence. Elisabeth J. Wood expands the current literature on sexual violence by analyzing the variation of sexual violence in frequency, type, and function. Wood argues that when opposition groups depend on the “provision of support” from civilians—i.e., supplies and intelligence—they do not engage in sexual violence if such groups have a strong command hierarchy and accountability mechanisms that deter sexual violence. She disagrees that armed groups with high levels of female personnel less often engage in sexual violence against civilian populations (e.g., “bush wives” in the RUF did not correlate with a decrease in sexual violence). Wood believes that the material support and intelligence from female civilians and personnel offered to insurgent organizations in part explains variations of wartime sexual violence across cases.  

Wood presents two additional hypotheses which seek to explain the rarity of sexual violence by certain armed groups. First, Wood argues that group leaders may forbid the use of sexual violence against women and girls because they view such acts to be counterproductive to the realization of the organization’s goals. She theorizes in her study of the LTTE that leadership prohibition of rape is the greatest deterrent of wartime sexual violence. Prohibition of sexual violence is enforced through a tightly controlled military command structure as well as severe punishment of LTTE personnel who are

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implicated in acts of sexual violence. Wood’s finding of leadership prohibition of sexual violence confirms Christopher K. Butler et al.’s discovery that contends that in security forces “where agents are more accountable and subject to tighter control [by group leadership], sexual violence is less likely.” Second, Wood asserts that “the observed (as opposed to commanded) repertoire of violence exercised by combatants may depend on their own norms concerning violence against civilians.” Wood highlights that macrosocial norms on sexual violence may prescribe male-perpetrated sexual violence, but she is unable to determine the influence of Sri Lankan cultural norms on LTTE group norms and their infrequent use of sexual violence. Nonetheless, the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) and LTTE existed within similar socio-cultural environments but sexual violence was disproportionately committed by the SLA.

In her comparative survey of wartime rape in 27 ongoing or recently ended conflicts, Kathryn Farr identifies four patterns of war rape, the fourth being “State-Led/Enemy-Targeted Pattern.” In the “State-Led/Enemy-Targeted Pattern,” Farr argues that war rape was prevalent by government security forces against women due to their ideological affiliations and activism against the state. However, the most powerful rebel groups in these cases “appear to have committed very little war rape.” Farr, deviating from Wood, argues that all of these rebel groups enjoyed considerable popular support from women (an independent variable) who are committed to the cause of the insurgent groups, a “factor which likely is related to the low rape rate [the dependent variable]

69 Farr, Kathryn (2009) op. cit., p. 20.
70 Ibid.
among them.”⁷¹ She also highlights that while these rebel groups engaged in violence against pro-government women, sexual violence was rare in these instances as well.⁷² Farr argues the variation of war rape in the four cases is likely related to the large presence (and combat support) of female personnel within the ranks of the CPN(M), LTTE, SL, and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).⁷³ Finally, except for the FARC, Farr notes that the insurgent groups are ideologically motivated (as opposed to materially).⁷⁴ Wood confirms this argument by pointing to the LTTE in Sri Lanka and other Marxist-Leninist groups that employed “significant levels of other forms of violence against civilians but rarely engage[d] in sexual violence” during intrastate conflicts.⁷⁵

Little has been written about the role that leftist and nationalist ideologies play in insurgent groups’ (non-)use of wartime sexual violence. Both Wood and Farr acknowledge that the four insurgencies which committed relatively few acts of wartime sexual violence—the FARC, CPN(M), LTTE, and SL—are ideologically as opposed to materially driven (although the ideology of the FARC is still disputed by scholars).⁷⁶ Ronald Osborn, in his study of Karl Marx’s and Abimael Guzmán Reynoso’s (the ideological theorist of the SL) writings on violence during proletarian revolution and a case study of the SL in Peru, finds that “revolutionary violence, even when apparently wasted in defeat, can actually serve as a progressive function by unveiling or unmasking

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⁷² Ibid.
⁷³ Ibid.
⁷⁴ Ibid.
⁷⁵ Wood, Elisabeth J. (2009) op. cit., p. 134. Other cases where insurgent groups utilized other forms of violence against civilians but refrained from the use of sexual violence include the CPN(M), SL, and FARC (see Farr, Kathryn (2009) op. cit., pp. 20-1.).
the bourgeoisie’s true character” by state overreaction to insurgent violence.\textsuperscript{77} Orthodox Marxism, Osborn claims, views \textit{surgical} violence against bourgeoisie (and state) actors as justified in realizing a communistic society. Thus the ideological framework of the SL justified the use of violence against state actors—including politicians, the army, police, and paramilitaries—and its civilian supporters (including the business elite).\textsuperscript{78} But indiscriminate violence wielded by an insurgency may be detrimental to the sustainability of its revolution. The SL was responsible for 53 percent of the 69,280 total deaths during the 1980-2000 conflict, in large part causing the insurgency to collapse “under the weight of its own internal contradictions as large numbers of Andean peasants reclaimed their own agency and took up arms against the \textit{senderistas} themselves.”\textsuperscript{79} Female members of the SL were respected by male SL combatants so long as they suppressed their feminine traits and killed without emotion or remorse, thereby adopting \textit{machismo} behavior and norms. Furthermore, women were allowed to participate in the “People’s War” in Peru if they rejected motherhood for the sake of the revolution.

Scholars who analyze the variation of wartime sexual violence point to the prohibition of sexual violence by group leadership, the prominent role of female combatants within armed groups, insurgencies’ reliance on popular support, and organizational ideology to explain variations in wartime sexual violence. Theories on the restraint of violence in general against civilians or soldiers’ access to prostitutes to explain variations in sexual violence have largely been disproved through various case studies by Farr, Butler et al., and Wood.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Osborn, Ronald (2007) op. cit., p. 127.
Brief Analysis of the Literature

The literature presents many explanations for the cause(s) of wartime sexual violence during intrastate conflict. Scholarship on wartime sexual violence tends to focus on: (1) the causes of sexual violence; (2) the function of sexual violence (e.g., as a strategy of war); and (3) variation in levels of sexual violence by armed groups. However, the last dimension of the literature is underdeveloped and its hypotheses remain largely untested. A solid understanding of what variable(s) and causal pathway(s) permit the variation of systematic sexual violence in intrastate conflict situations by specific groups has yet to be developed. Also, Farr’s and Wood’s hypotheses have only been applied to the critical case of Sri Lanka; extending the study to Nepal will allow further testing of the theories and comparative testing between the two cases.  

Furthermore, Farr’s and Wood’s hypotheses have not been tested in cases where sexual violence does occur in high quantity, as such comparative testing with “worst cases” of sexual violence (e.g., Sierra Leone) may strengthen the logic and theoretical rigor of Farr’s and Wood’s explanations. And finally, Wood and Farr have largely ignored the role that leftist and nationalist ideologies play in framing a group’s use of (sexual) violence against civilian populations—although they have highlighted empirical patterns in which leftist and nationalist insurgencies employ sexual violence less frequently. Such a study may yield surprising results for policy makers, scholars, and human rights advocates.

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80 Farr acknowledges that Nepal must also be tested as a critical case in which sexual violence varied wildly between armed opposition groups and government armed forces.

81 Leftist and nationalist insurgencies that less frequently committed acts of wartime sexual violence (in comparison to the levels of sexual violence employed by state security forces during each conflict) include the FARC, LTTE, CPN(M), and SL.
1.4. Case Selection

Three cases will be incorporated into the study: (1) a brief synopsis of sexual violence against women and girls by the SLA and other Sri Lankan pro-government groups and a more rigorous investigation of the variation of sexual violence by the LTTE in the 1983-2009 Sri Lankan civil war; (2) a thorough outline of the use of sexual violence by the RUF and a précis of sexual violence by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and additional pro-RUF and pro-government groups in Sierra Leone during the 1991-2001 civil war; and (3) a concise analysis of sexual violence against women and girls by the Nepalese Armed Police Force (NAPF), the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA), and Nepalese paramilitary groups, and a comprehensive analysis of the variation of sexual violence employed by the CPN(M) during the 1996-2006 civil war. These cases will provide the empirical data to test the hypotheses by Elisabeth J. Wood and Kathryn Farr, explained below. First, by presenting data from the cases of Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka this study intends to draw conclusions from a comparative analysis of each case, one in which sexual violence was widespread by the RUF and the other where a variation of sexual violence by the LTTE was evident. Second, data from the case of Nepal will be presented in which a variation in sexual violence by the CPN(M) occurred relative to state-perpetrated sexual violence against civilian women and girls. In the final chapter of the study, the Sierra Leonean, Sri Lankan, and Nepalese cases will be used comparatively to test four hypotheses—via the congruence method—derived from Wood’s and Farr’s theories of wartime sexual violence.
1.5. Variables and Operationalization

What factors cause the variation of widespread wartime sexual violence by armed groups during intrastate conflicts? The dependent variable is wartime sexual violence; the independent variables are: (1) the masculinities of soldiers; (2) overall levels of gender equity between men and women in each country; (3) intensity of class, caste, ethnic, or communal rivalries between armed groups; (4) the existence of laws and other accountability mechanisms to punish perpetrators; (5) the material, human, and ideological support of all armed groups from civilian populations; and (6) leadership policies on sexual violence for all involved armed groups.

Dependent Variable

Wartime sexual violence, the dependent variable, will be defined as a broader category that “includes rape, coerced undressing, and non-penetrating sexual assault such as sexual mutilation.”82 The study will consider acts of sexual violence, both random and systematic (i.e., employed as a deliberate organizational policy by armed combatants).83 Rape, a subcategory of sexual violence, is characterized by “the coerced (under physical force or threat of physical force against the victim or third person) penetration of the anus or vagina by the penis or another object, or of the mouth by the penis.”84 Sexual violence is notoriously difficult to measure due to underreporting and overreporting.85

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83 Buss, Doris E. (2009) op. cit., p. 149.
85 Leiby, Michele L. (2009) “Digging in the Archives: The Promise and Perils of Primary Documents,” Politics & Society, 37(1): 75-100, p. 80. See this piece for an in-depth discussion of underreporting and the methodological pitfalls that scholars of sexual violence face during the research process. MacKinnon, Catharine (1994), op. cit., pp. 75-7. Overreporting the level of sexual violence committed against Serbian women and misrepresenting Serbian rape of Bosniak women as Bosniak rape of Serbian women were two
Furthermore, difficulty accessing conflict zones often prohibits researchers from accurately measuring the prevalence (or variation) of sexual violence during conflict.\textsuperscript{86} Nevertheless, this study adopts Wood’s assumption that “the extreme variation in the incidence of sexual violence across conflicts and groups, together with the existence of well-documented low-incidence cases, suggests that there are cases of relatively low sexual violence: Not all the apparent absence is an artifact of our ignorance.”\textsuperscript{87} Utilizing an analytical framework developed by Wood, the dependent variable will be contextualized within each group’s “repertoire of violence.”\textsuperscript{88} Although underreporting and overreporting of wartime sexual violence may be a possibility within the three cases, a “repertoire of violence” provides an analytical framework that compares the frequency of wartime sexual violence in proportion to other forms of violence against civilian populations—e.g., kidnapping, assassinations, massacres, torture, and forced displacement.\textsuperscript{89}

This study will analyze reports on wartime sexual violence compiled by human rights organizations, truth commissions, international tribunals, and other IGOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).\textsuperscript{90} Aside from the quantification of frequency, which has severe limitations due to underreporting or overreporting of sexual violence, this study will record and fit wartime sexual violence into typologies—i.e., gang rape, sexual slavery, opportunistic rape, rape camps, rape in public to terrorize populations, etc.—and propaganda strategies utilized by Serbian commanders to enflame Serbian nationalism and hatred of Bosniaks during the 1992-1995 civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

\textsuperscript{86} MacKinnon, Catharine (1994) op. cit., p. 133.
\textsuperscript{87} Wood, Elisabeth J. (2009) op. cit., p. 133.
\textsuperscript{88} Wood, Elisabeth J. (2009) op. cit., p. 132.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} This study will obtain data from organizations that include Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, UN Development Fund for Women, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, among others.
report the context in which it occurred. In each act of sexual violence, there may be more
than one perpetrator and acts may fit into more than one typology of wartime sexual
violence. Repeated acts of sexual violence against the same individual will be treated as
multiple acts of wartime sexual violence. This work will present interview data of the
survivors and perpetrators of sexual violence, their socio-political identity (group
membership based on gender, ethnicity, and political or social affiliations), and, wherever
possible, when and where systematic sexual violence took place.91

Independent Variables

There are six independent variables that will be analyzed which may influence
the use of systematic sexual violence in intrastate conflict. First, I will employ Laura
O’Toole’s sub-cultural framework of sexual violence for analyzing gender relations
within each group to be examined.92 The masculine norms of armed personnel (both
state and non-state actors) will be assessed across the three cases, especially with regard
to the relative aggressiveness encouraged, levels and types of violence, group
socialization, beliefs about male sexuality, and gendered expectations of men and women
within the armed opposition groups to be examined.93 This study will also identify the
proportion of women in the armed groups and their roles, as this is important for

Quarterly, 53: 445-68, p. 452-3; Also, I will analyze the language used by survivors of sexual violence.
Leiby notes that survivors of wartime sexual violence will not use directly refer to their experience as rape,
but will rather call it “abuse, disturbance or bother, being taken, or being offended.” Thus, to ameliorate
this data caveat, I will rely on the judgment of human rights reports (from ICG, HRW, AI, etc.) to
determine when, where, how, and how many acts of sexual violence took place in the three case studies.
For a further discussion about analyzing primary documents of wartime sexual violence, see Leiby,
Society, 37(1): 75-100, p. 89.
92 O’Toole, Laura (2007) “Subcultural Theory of Rape Revisited,” in Laura O’Toole, Jessica R. Schiffman,
and Margie L. Kiter Edwards (eds.) Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, pp.214-22. New
93 O’Toole, Laura (2007) op. cit., p. 217.
determining the level of masculine socialization and the acceptance of women as legitimate actors in armed conflict. The number of female combatants in leadership positions will also be recorded. Also, the compiled ethnographic data of each armed group will be contrasted against macrosocial norms of gender relations (the second independent variable) to examine intragroup differences vis-à-vis societal norms and practices of gender. When testing the hypotheses presented by Wood and Farr, this work will explore leadership framing of gender equality in addition to various secondary analyses of the armed groups in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Sierra Leone. Process-tracing and the congruence method will enable the researcher to explore the context—and thus improve the external validity—of the cases to be analyzed. This method will be utilized to study the masculinity of opposition and government armed groups.94

Second, the relative socioeconomic status between men and women, and the socially-valued ideals of masculine and feminine gender roles will require an analysis of macrosocial gender relations. The macro-level analysis of gender relations in each case will complement the group-level analysis presented above and allow the study to contrast gendered norms and practices of armed groups against gendered societal norms and practices. The identification of this variable will consist of both qualitative and quantitative measurements. R.W. Connell states that “at any given historical moment there exists at a societal level an ordering of masculinity and femininity that produces

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94 Skjelsbaek, Inger (2001) op. cit., pp. 227-8. A masculine person—based on Kenneth Clatterbaugh’s definition—is “one who exemplifies those characteristics that have been shown to differentiate the sexes. A particular masculinity is the set of differentiating characteristics of a particular group of individuals determined by sex and some other set of ascriptive characteristics” (p. 32). To avoid circular theorizing, analyses of group masculinity must begin with an armed group and then identify behavioral traits and attitudes which are deemed masculine by the group. For a further discussion of definitions of men and masculinities, see Clatterbaugh, Kenneth (1998) “What is Problematic about Masculinities?” Men and Masculinities, 1(1): 24-45.
controlling conceptualizations for public consumption.” This gendered ordering is based on the structural dominance of men over women. Structural dominance explains how hyper-masculine men (“hegemonic masculinity”) are able to dominate men perceived to be less masculine (“complicit, marginalized, and dominated masculinities”) and all women (“emphasized femininity”) in society, as a cult of masculinity—composed of hypermasculine men that embody the most dominant and socially-glorified masculinities—forces most men and all women into marginalized socioeconomic roles and statuses. The use of Sanday’s indicators to determine between “rape-free” and “rape-prone” societies will be employed to determine relative levels of gender equity in each society. These indicators include: (1) which gender predominantly rears children (and is expected to); (2) behavior indicating sexual repression of a particular gender; (3) asymmetrical perpetration of interpersonal and intergroup violence by a specific gender; (4) sexual separation of the sexes; and (5) “glorification of the male role and an undervaluation of the female role.”

This study will refer to government and World Bank statistics to determine the percentage of men and women in the labor force (both formal and informal sectors), the percentage of women voting, women’s representation in government, and the percentage of men and women in poverty. Additional quantitative indicators, such as the United Nations Development Program’s (1) Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and (2) Gender-Related Development Indicator (GDI), will be documented. These indicators

96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
will help the researcher assess the relative levels of gender inequality and strength of patriarchy between the groups involved in each case and where these groups are situated vis-à-vis macrosocial norms of gender.

Third, the presence or absence of ethnic, class, or political conflicts will be important to identify, as this independent variable may encourage the use of systematic sexual violence to eliminate ethnic, class, and/or political rivals. This study will examine statements made by members of opposition groups and government declarations directed toward opposition groups in order to determine each actor’s political, ethnic, and/or class interests. Moreover, this work will investigate secondary sources and newspaper sources to establish public attitudes toward the government and opposition groups. Testimonies of sexual violence survivors will also be useful, as they often report on statements made by the perpetrator: these may contain explicit and/or implicit racist, ethnic, or political messages.

The fourth independent variable is the presence or absence of laws and their implementation as well as the existence of other accountability mechanisms to punish perpetrators of sexual violence. An absence of this variable may in part encourage the systematic use of sexual violence during conflict by promoting a culture of impunity. This study will compare accountability mechanisms in wartime to those found in peacetime to determine if a breakdown in accountability mechanisms for perpetrators of rape was present. Also, this work will identify existing intragroup accountability mechanisms that punish personnel who commit acts of sexual violence. To establish conviction rates for sexual violence in each case, this study will compare the number of

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wartime sexual violence convictions during the time period to the levels of sexual violence reported by NGOs.\textsuperscript{100} The treatment of survivors of wartime rape in the judicial process will be included in the analysis of accountability mechanisms. However, it must be noted, underreporting or overreporting (for political purposes and to win sympathy from specific ethnonationalist groups) of sexual violence may ultimately reduce the external validity of such a comparison and thus the internal validity of this study.\textsuperscript{101}

Fifth, this study will evaluate levels of civilian support for the government and opposition forces. The assessment includes a media analysis of the level of popular support for the tactics, operations, and ideologies of both government and insurgent actors. Also, this work will determine the extent of material support—both human intelligence and economic goods—that each insurgent group obtained from the general population, particularly women. Popular support, both ideologically and materially, will be an important independent variable to test Wood’s “provision of support” hypothesis in the three cases.\textsuperscript{102}

The final independent variable is the group leadership’s policy and directives on the use of systematic sexual violence as a weapon of conflict. The strength of leadership hierarchy and the authorization or prohibition of sexual violence will be important to consider, as leadership may give permission for the use of systematic wartime sexual

\textsuperscript{100} This study will assess the presence and robustness of judicial mechanisms for prosecuting perpetrators of sexual violence, NGO and government services provided to victims of sexual violence, and community attitudes and actions toward victims of sexual violence. For example, organizations that this work will obtain data from include the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.
violence as an organizational strategy. Also, group leadership may punish group members who have committed acts of sexual violence against women and girls. This study will analyze statements by the leadership of each group concerning the use of sexual violence and the ability of command hierarchy to influence the behavior of low-ranking armed combatants.

Table 1.1. Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Operationalization of Independent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intragroup Gender Dynamics</td>
<td>Gender norms of male combatants; intragroup interactions of male and female combatants; presence of women in leadership, combat, and/or support roles; forced or voluntary recruitment of women and girls; gender violence by male combatants; male attitudes toward female cadre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macrosocial Gender Dynamics</td>
<td>Prescribed gender role expectations and behavior predominant in society; percentage of women in the workforce; percentage of women voting; women’s representation in government; population percentages of men and women in poverty; GEM and GDI indexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic, Class, or Political Cleavages</td>
<td>Leadership and combatant statements on ethnic, caste, class, ideological, and/or communal rivalries between armed groups and state actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability Mechanisms</td>
<td>Levels of punishment of armed combatants by intragroup or governmental judicial mechanisms for acts of sexual violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Support of Insurgencies</td>
<td>Material, intelligence, and/or ideological support of armed groups by noncombatants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Directives on Sexual Violence</td>
<td>Statements by group leadership on sexual violence and gender equality/equity; strength of organizational hierarchy to enforce decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The aim of this research project is to analyze what independent variables and causal pathways cause the variation of wartime sexual violence by opposition groups. This research project aims to test Farr and Wood’s hypotheses—(1) “provision of support” from civilians, (2) macro-cultural norms of combatants, (3) leadership prohibition of sexual violence, and (4) the presence and role of female armed combatants. Although many other factors may in part explain rape in the three cases, there is one dependent variable and six independent variables that will be considered in the study. These variables were drawn from the literature because of their relevance to systematic wartime sexual violence and to retain some level of parsimony when process-tracing in each case.

1.6. Research Design

Using the cases of wartime sexual violence in Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, this study will use process-tracing to “uncover a causal chain” in the presence and variation of systematic wartime sexual violence by armed groups in the cases.\(^\text{104}\) This work will utilize a longitudinal study, over the course of each conflict, to observe changes in the variables—via process-tracing and the congruence method—throughout the development of the conflicts.\(^\text{105}\) Process-tracing “offers an alternative way for making


causal inferences when it is not possible to do so through the method of controlled comparison.” Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett argue that utilizing a comparative case study with the congruence method and process-tracing ameliorates the problem known as underdetermination or the degrees of freedom problem—i.e., “too many variables, too few cases.” This is important considering that the study has three cases, with one dependent variable and six independent variables in each case. Also, this work will account for equifinality (i.e., “multiple causality”) in each case of sexual violence, in which the same outcome can be present in various cases via different sets and/or interactions of independent variables.

Sexual violence during intrastate conflict is notoriously complex, but this research design will provide a rigorous means for identifying additional independent, antecedent, and intervening variables through process-tracing each case. Combining process-tracing with the congruence method may improve Farr and Wood’s hypotheses, which posit a

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106 George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett (2005) op. cit., p. 214. Although this thesis will utilize process-tracing and the congruence method to offset an absence of controlled comparison between cases, it is instructive to discuss briefly methods and logic of controlled comparison. The method of controlled comparison—designed to control independent or dependent variables to determine the causal effects of variables of interest within small-n comparative case studies—was originally developed by John Stuart Mill in his seminal work A System of Logic (1843). Mill’s “method of agreement” seeks to identify an independent variable possibly associated with the same outcome on the dependent variable of two or more cases (p. 153). This is similar to Henry Teune and Adam Przeworski’s “most different systems” method of controlled comparison, in which all but one independent variable differ between two or more cases while the dependent variable contains similar value across the examined cases (p. 165). In contrast, Mill’s “method of difference” aims to determine independent variables correlated with different values of the dependent variable (Ibid.). Again this reflects Teune and Przeworski’s “most similar systems” in which all but one independent variable are similar and the dependent variables differ in value across a study’s cases (Ibid.). Thus, in a “most similar systems” research design, the independent variable is ascribed causal power because of its correlation with different values of dependent variable across two or more cases while other independent variables remain fixed in value (Ibid.). George and Bennett clarify the confusion surrounding the terminology used in Mill’s and Teune and Przeworski’s methods of controlled comparison by stating that “Mill’s terms come from a comparison of the dependent variables, while Przeworski and Teune focus on comparison of the independent variables” (Ibid.).

107 George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett (2005) op. cit., p.156.

relationship between independent and dependent variables but have little to say about the
antecedent and intervening variables and the causal process that link them.¹⁰⁹

**Hypotheses**

This thesis will use the congruence method in concert with process-tracing to test
four hypotheses developed by Wood and Farr:

(H1) *When the macro-cultural norms of societies are gender equitable, sexual violence during combat is less frequent and vice versa.*¹¹⁰
(H2) *Group leadership may prohibit or authorize wartime sexual violence, which may explain the low and high frequency, respectively, of systematic rape by armed groups during conflict.*¹¹¹
(H3) *When armed groups depend on the “provision of support”—supplies, ideological support, and intelligence—from civilian populations and intend to govern them, such groups do not engage in widespread sexual violence against civilians.*¹¹²
(H4) *Insurgent groups with (a) high numbers of female combatants, (b) an equitable sexual division of labor, and (c) female combatants in leadership roles engage less in wartime sexual violence and vice versa.*¹¹³

This study will look for a presence of leadership prohibition or authorization of sexual
violence in each organization’s documents as well as human rights reports of the armed
groups in this study—for the armed forces of Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and Nepal with
précis analyses and the RUF, LTTE, CPN(M) insurgencies with in-depth analyses. It is
expected that this study will demonstrate that group leadership’s prohibition of sexual
violence (H2), armed groups’ reliance on material and ideological support from civilian
populations (H3), and female combatants’ presence and role in armed groups (H4)
explain, in large part, the collective variation of wartime sexual violence by specific

¹⁰⁹ George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett (2005) op. cit., p. 182.
¹¹¹ Ibid.
armed groups. It is also anticipated that the influence of macrosocial gender dynamics on insurgent groups’ use of sexual violence (H1) fails to explain, in part, the variation of wartime sexual violence in the Sri Lankan and Nepalese cases.

Ideology and Framing Processes

It must be noted that the four hypotheses may reflect the ideological influence of Marxist socialism—which both the LTTE and CPN(M) claim as ideological roots, although the LTTE was predominantly driven by Tamil nationalist ideology—if in fact these hypotheses are confirmed in the study. In short, left-wing ideology may frame the factors (i.e., as an antecedent variable) by fostering the presence and manipulating the levels of certain independent variables and causal paths which lead to variations in wartime sexual violence within and across conflicts as well as among armed groups.114 Framing processes for collective action—in this thesis, revolutionary insurgent mobilization—are defined as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization.”115

Several caveats in the linkage of ideology and framing processes for insurgent collective action, identified by David A. Snow, must be noted. The first problem with this linkage is that ideology must not be assumed away as a set of beliefs and values that function in a coherent, monolithic, and static fashion. The second pitfall is the assumption of univocal adherence by members of an organization to its ideological character—rather

114 For example, leftist ideologues may espouse policies of limited violence against civilians, intra-organizational gender equality, and a cult of personality surrounding top leadership, which, if translated into practice, present different values on the independent variables relative to non-ideological insurgent groups.

than the common phenomenon of intragroup dissent via discursive processes among group members. A third difficulty in the study of ideology and framing processes is the tendency for scholars to assume a greater correspondence between group ideology and members’ behavior than what occurs in practice.\textsuperscript{116} Even despite strong ideological coherence in some social movements, the fourth mistake by scholars is to associate collective action framing processes as solely derived from group ideology rather than cultural values and beliefs.\textsuperscript{117} These four caveats must be considered to examine carefully the effect of leftist and nationalist ideologies in the insurgent groups under study.

Ideology as an analytical lens highlights the factors by which groups are mobilized and how groups wield violence against both civilian and state actors.

\textbf{1.7. Chapter Outline}

Chapter one provides an introduction to the research question, a literature review of competing explanations of wartime sexual violence, and concludes with a methodological plan for the remaining chapters. This framework will guide the examination of wartime sexual violence variation by insurgent groups in the Sri Lankan, Sierra Leonean, and Nepalese intrastate conflicts.

The second chapter examines wartime sexual violence by the LTTE and the RUF. It considers a brief history of the conflict, the state and non-state actors involved, independent variables, and the variation of sexual violence by the two insurgent groups

\textsuperscript{116} This thesis will compare insurgent groups’ leadership and propaganda statements on gender equality against ethnographic studies of gendered intragroup processes of each insurgent group to determine if inconsistencies exist between ideological rhetoric of gender equality and actual combatant behavior.

throughout each conflict. Chapter two concludes with a comparative examination of the working independent variables and causal paths which may have influenced differing levels on the dependent variable—wartime sexual violence—in the Sri Lankan and Nepalese cases.

Chapter three presents a history of the Nepalese civil war, examines the armed groups involved, documents the independent variables, and traces the variation of sexual violence by the CPN(M) throughout the 1996-2005 period. It also briefly inspects sexual violence perpetrated by the NAPF and RNA—the state’s armed forces. In conclusion, chapter three examines the independent variables and causal pathways which influenced the variation of sexual violence by the CPN(M).

The fourth chapter compares the working independent variables and causal pathways found in the three cases presented in chapters two and three. It considers, via the congruence method, the explanatory power of Wood’s and Farr’s hypotheses on the variation of wartime sexual violence. Once these hypotheses are tested, the study aims to generate new theoretical insights and/or modifications for why sexual violence varied in the Nepalese and Sri Lankan cases. Chapter four concludes with an assessment of the explanatory power of Wood’s and Farr’s hypotheses, suggests areas for future research, and offers policy recommendations based on the study’s major findings.
2. Wartime Sexual Violence in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone

This chapter traces the variation of wartime sexual violence by insurgent groups during the civil wars in Sri Lanka (1983-2009) and Sierra Leone (1991-2002). It presents the historical backgrounds of the Sri Lankan and Sierra Leonean conflicts, outlines the armed groups involved in each case, traces the interaction of six independent variables throughout the conflicts, and observes the variation of wartime sexual violence by the LTTE and RUF insurgencies between the cases. Chapter two concludes with a comparative analysis of (1) macrosocial and (2) intra-group gender dynamics, (3) ethnic, national, and/or class rivalries, (4) accountability mechanisms, (5) level of reliance on civilian support, and (6) leadership directives which may have influenced the variation of the wartime sexual violence between the two cases. This chapter will provide the data to inform the hypotheses testing, theory development, and policy recommendations presented in the final chapter.

2.1. History of the Sri Lankan and Sierra Leonean Conflicts

The colonial policies of Great Britain set the stage for political conflict in both Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone by creating an environment where violence was viewed as a legitimate means for political change due to a politically unresponsive and repressive post-colonial state. This section uncovers the historical processes which led to the formation of violent insurgencies which participated in the protracted civil wars in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone.
The Historical Foundations of the Sri Lankan Civil War

The territory of present-day Sri Lanka (formerly called Ceylon) has a rich yet violent history. Mistakenly, the current ethnic tensions between Sinhalese and Tamils have been extrapolated from the ancient history of Sri Lanka by nationalist scholars, politicians, and activists. But communal tensions and violence, especially during the British colonial period (1796-1948), were based on religious, not ethnic grounds, between Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians. Sinhala-Tamil tensions were altogether absent until the late 1800s when communal policies implemented under British rule created the first divisions between the Sinhala and Tamil populations.\textsuperscript{118} Contemporary ethno-religious demographics are impossible to obtain due to the conflict preventing a national census since the early 1980s. Despite this, in the latest national census administered by Colombo in 1981, the population was 74 percent Sinhalese (predominantly Buddhist with a Christian minority), 12.6 percent Sri Lankan Tamil (predominantly Hindu, also with a Christian minority), 5.6 percent Indian Tamil (Hindu), and 7.5 percent “Moors” and Malays (Muslim).\textsuperscript{119} Christians comprised 7 percent of the total population and were from Tamil, Sinhala, and other ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{120} Figure 2.1 below provides a geographical break-down of ethnicity and religion in Sri Lanka from 1975 census data.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
What are the distinguishing characteristics of the two dominant ethnic groups in Sri Lanka? What, then, are the historical roots of Sinhala-Tamil polarization which led to the 1983-2009 civil war? It is instructive to consider how the dominant Sinhala-Tamil narratives of Sri Lanka influenced post-colonial Sinhala-Tamil tensions to the point of civil war.

The Sinhalese are said to be of Indo-Aryan decent and are attributed to the rise of Prince Vijaya, a mythical figure who is believed to have created the first Sinhala kingdom in Ceylon circa 543 B.C.E. – 505 B.C.E. after his migration from northeastern

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India. Individuals of Sinhalese identity speak Sinhala, a language derived from Indo-European languages specifically of the Indo-Iranian branch. But the Sinhalese have not always practiced Buddhism, and in fact largely practiced Hinduism before the third century B.C.E. (although this varied by geographical location). A noted Sri Lankan historian, R.A.L.H. Gunawardena, in his seminal study of Sinhalese Theravada Buddhist identity, found that “only after about the seventh century [A.D.] that prerequisite conditions matured making it possible to link Sinhala identity with Buddhism and to present Tamils as opponents to Buddhism [and proponents of Hinduism].” Sinhala narratives of Sri Lankan history emphasize that, although not the first settlers on the island, they were the first “civilized” settlers of the island they called “Lanka.” The Sinhalese did not convert in large numbers to Buddhism until the third century B.C.E., but a large and vibrant Sinhala-Buddhist population flourished on Lanka until the ninth century A.D. It is said that the state governing Lanka came under continuous threat from Indian Tamils (located in the present-day Indian state of Tamil Nadu), and eventually, by the ninth century A.D., Indian Tamil invaders had captured large swaths of the northern and eastern parts of Lanka. The dominant Sinhala historical narrative also claims that Tamil immigrants rarely, if ever, formed political units separate from the Sinhalese kingdom (a principal claim of historical legitimacy for the LTTE’s goal of an

122 These dates are rough estimates and are in dispute by scholars of ancient Sri Lankan history.
126 It must be noted that many of these Indian Tamils in fact stayed in Sri Lanka after their invasion. The present-day population of Indian Tamils is estimated to be 5.6 percent of the total population in Sri Lanka.
independent Tamil Eelam). Tamil “immigrants” accepted the legitimacy and directives of Sinhala monarchical rule.\textsuperscript{127}

The Tamils are the second largest ethnic group in Sri Lanka. A large majority of the Tamil population speaks Tamil, a Dravidian language originating from the peninsula of southern India. However, Tamils are sub-divided by Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils. Sri Lankan Tamils are said to have migrated from the present-day territory of Tamil Nadu during ancient times; Indian Tamils were exported from India by the British as forced laborers in the agricultural sector of Ceylon beginning in the early nineteenth through twentieth centuries. In regard to religious practice, it is currently estimated that 80 percent of Sri Lankan Tamils and 90 percent of Indian Tamils practice Hinduism.\textsuperscript{128}

The core claim of Tamil historical narrative is that, while not the first settlers on the island, Tamil populations formed autonomous political units in the northern and eastern parts of Lanka (after the ninth century A.D.). This narrative also claims that Sinhala peoples were originally of Tamil origin, only later gradually converting to Buddhism and adopting the Sinhala language in large numbers by the third century A.D.\textsuperscript{129} When considering Sri Lankan precolonial history, Elizabeth Nissan and R.L. Stirrat write that “[b]ecause much of Sri Lankan history is written from a partisan Sinhala or Tamil point of view, it is often difficult to disentangle the historical evidence from the nationalist framework imposed upon it.”\textsuperscript{130} Additionally, because the Sinhala population is the numerical majority, the Sinhala historical narrative tends to dominate historical discussions of Sri Lanka to the present day.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Nissan, Elizabeth and Stirrat, R. L. (1990) op cit., p. 20-1.
\textsuperscript{130} Nissan, Elizabeth and Stirrat, R. L. (1990) op cit., p. 22.
By the end of the sixteenth century, the island of Ceylon was divided into three major kingdoms: (1) the Tamils of Jaffna; (2) the lowland Sinhalese in Kotte; and (3) the highland Sinhalese in Kandy. During this time period, Portuguese conquerors subjected the regions of Jaffna and Kotte to their rule, sparing the central kingdom of Kandy from colonial rule.¹³¹ But Sinhala-Tamil relations were rarely violent and in general both groups coexisted in Sri Lanka. Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, an expert on Tamil nationalism, noted that “[u]ntil the 1870s, we thus find an awareness of being Tamil, even an awareness of a historical tradition that differs slightly from that of the Sinhala, yet attached to one political unit, Sri Lanka, and a wider cultural region, India.”¹³² In other words, the notion of an independent Tamil Eelam had yet to gain support among the Tamil population.

Sri Lanka, established as a British colony in 1802, is a small tear-drop shaped island off the southeastern coast of India with an ethnically diverse population of about 19.3 million. It was initially a Portuguese and later a Dutch possession (both states used the coast as a trade and shipping route) until the coastal territory of the island was captured by the British in 1796. The central Sinhalese kingdom of Kandy—stretching across the entire interior of the island—was eventually annexed by the British in 1815.¹³³ Colonial authorities differentiated the native population on communal grounds (race, language, dress, and religion)—a concept foreign to native Sri Lankans. Nissan and Stirrat point out that by the end of the nineteenth century:

“A large number of distinct ‘races’ were recognized by the [British] authorities in colonial Sri Lanka. Besides the Tamils and the Sinhala, who

were further divided into ‘Up Country’ and ‘Low Country’ Sinhala, and ‘Ceylon’ and ‘Indian’ Tamils, there were also ‘Moors’ (i.e. Muslims, again divided into Ceylon Moors and Coast Moors), Malays, Eurasians and Europeans. Furthermore, other groups were also considered ‘races’ at times: the Mukkuvars, the Vagga, the Rodiya and so on.\textsuperscript{134}

Sinhalese-Tamil tensions increased during the late 1800s until the final years of British colonial rule as a result of rising Tamil nationalism, Sinhala overreaction to electoral victories by Tamil parties, and British colonial policies of divide and conquer that exploited communal divisions. The initial event which is attributed to the rise of Tamil nationalism took place at Jaffna during the late 1870s. The Tamil population violently expelled the Sinhala and Moors from the territory, either because (1) Sinhala and Moors were deemed to be polluting temple grounds or (2) Sinhala populations had been fomenting Buddhist rebellions in Jaffna throughout the 1870s.\textsuperscript{135} Subsequently, Tamil-Sinhala tensions increased in this northern-most area of Sri Lanka. It was not until 1921 to 1924, when British Governor William Manning introduced policies that became known as the Manning reforms. These reforms implemented “communal representation” of all groups—the first time communalism became politically institutionalized in Sri Lanka due to British attempts to stabilize colonial rule.\textsuperscript{136} Additionally, central power of the colonial government was devolved—but only in the areas of local administrative services—to provincial governments. Therefore, as groups tried to define their ethno-religious identities to distinguish themselves from other communal groups, Tamil-Sinhala competition in the colonial government structure became increasingly intransigent as the

\textsuperscript{134} Nissan, Elizabeth and Stirrat, R. L. (1990) op cit., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{135} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, Dagmar (1990) op cit., p. 110. These two causes for Sinhala expulsion are still debated by historians of Sri Lankan nationalism and Tamil-Sinhala relations. It may be appropriate to acknowledge that both arguments are in part correct to explain the rise in Tamil nationalism in the Jaffna territory during the late 1800s.
\textsuperscript{136} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, Dagmar (1990) op cit., p. 111.
Tamils were disproportionately appointed to administrative positions in the colonial government.\textsuperscript{137}

Several communally-based political rifts arose after the Manning reforms. The Manning reforms, according to the Governor himself, were designed so that “no single community [could] impose its will on others.”\textsuperscript{138} Thus, throughout the 1930s and 1940s the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) advocated for communal quota system in which the Sinhala would receive 50 percent of parliamentary seats while other ethnic groups received the remaining seats. The Ceylon National Congress (CNC)—the Sinhala-dominated political party in opposition to the ACTC—refused to accommodate demands for ethnic quotas which would jeopardize future Sinhala preponderance in the colonial government.\textsuperscript{139} The founding president of the CNC and a Tamil, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, left the party and formed the Ceylon Tamil League, the first political party which mentioned Tamil Eelam (although he was speaking of increasing Tamil solidarity and welfare) in its stated aims for “Tamil evolution.”\textsuperscript{140} Aside from the Manning reforms, the British also formed the Donoughmore Commission, which was sent to Sri Lanka in late 1927 and early 1928 to investigate ways in which London could devolve political power to indigenous Sri Lankans. Although the British Governor would retain suzerainty, the Donoughmore recommendations established universal suffrage with Westminsterian winner-take-all parliamentary districts that disproportionately benefited the Sinhala majority. According to A. Jaeyaratnam Wilson, the failure by the British to establish a

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Cited in Wilson, A. Jaeyaratnam (1988) op cit., p. 7.
\textsuperscript{139} Wilson, A. Jaeyaratnam (1988) op cit., p. 17.
\textsuperscript{140} Wilson, A. Jaeyaratnam (1988) op cit., pp. 8-9.
stable, multiethnic system occurred because “the Donoughmore Commissioners tended to look the other way on the problems caused by multiethnicity.”

The northern Tamil population boycotted the first general election in 1931 because the new Sinhalese-led government, even after the Donoughmore proposals, showed no intentions of sharing power with Tamils and other minority groups when forming government and selecting ministers. More radical Tamil leadership boycotted elections until 1934 because they would not participate in the state as a “provincial elite or minority interest group”—a Sinhalese-proposed political alternative for Tamil participation in lieu of a communal quota system. It was during this time that the goal of Tamil Eelam as a separate political entity in northern and eastern Sri Lanka became increasingly attractive among many disenchanted Tamils.

Sinhalese nationalism rose during the 1920s and early 1930s in response to an economic crisis and high unemployment—which the Sinhalese population blamed on Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils who moved south seeking employment—which further strained Sinhalese-Tamil communal relations. Northern Indian Tamil migrants had dominated the labor-intensive work force on estates, whilst educated northern Sri Lankan Tamils became government and private sector employees. Rising unemployment led many Sinhalese to believe that “getting rid of the Tamil interlopers” would ameliorate Sinhala economic woes. British communal policies, rooted in the logic of divide and rule to promote stable colonial governance, highly polarized the post-colonial government and Sri Lankan society. Nissan and Stirrat note:

“What began as a series of claims by both Tamils and Sinhala against the British was transformed into claims directed against each other. While the British were present there was relative calm; but only eight years after Independence communal violence broke out between Sinhala and Tamils for the first time.”\textsuperscript{145}

By the time of Sri Lankan independence in 1948, Sinhala nationalism proliferated and elites in government refused outright to accommodate Tamils and other minority groups. British colonial policies—in the areas of political, religious, and educational practices—had caused widespread discontent among Sinhalese Buddhists. This counter-reaction to British policies, which challenged the core teachings of Buddhist doctrines, had “a profound impact on the shape and dynamics of Sri Lankan politics by the time the British granted Sri Lanka independence in 1948.”\textsuperscript{146} Tamil nationalism correspondingly rose during the post-independence period, largely in reaction and opposition to expanding Sinhala nationalism.\textsuperscript{147} Two major Sinhala political parties—the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP)—vied for Sinhalese votes by marginalizing the Tamil population and promoting chauvinist Sinhalese (and Buddhist) nationalism.\textsuperscript{148} The UNP, a reformist Sinhala party, governed from 1948 until 1956 when it was defeated by the MEP (People’s United Front) coalition in which the SLFP was the principal party. The SLFP promoted stauncher pro-Sinhala goals than the UNP, campaigning for the return of Buddhist preponderance and the establishment of Sinhala as the official language of Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{149} The predominant Sinhalese narrative at the time of independence accused the Tamils of disproportionately benefiting from British

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} Alison, Miranda H. (2009) op. cit., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Nissan, Elizabeth and Stirrat, R. L. (1990) op cit., pp. 34-5.
Colonial policies—particularly in the areas of government employment and higher education. This Sinhalese perception in large part led to post-independence politics which marginalized Tamils and other ethnic minorities.\(^{150}\) The Soulbury Commission, which failed to provide political institutions to protect minority interests, allowed the Sinhala majoritarian to implement pro-Sinhala policies in the period following decolonization because of a strong centralized government coupled with Sinhala preponderance in the legislative branch.\(^{151}\) Wilson describes the ethnocentric Sinhala philosophy formed during the first years of post-colonial governance:

“...The Sinhalese elite justify their claims on the national treasury by arguing that they were persecuted by foreign rulers over several centuries. The argument, therefore, is that they must now have it for good. The surest way of obtaining access to the coffers is by tight, well-knit centralized government, and an internal colonialism [i.e., Sinhala dominance of Tamils and other minority groups] which permits no alternative centers of power.”\(^{152}\)

Once in power, Sinhalese political parties implemented reforms which marginalized the Sri Lankan and Indian Tamil populations in the areas of citizenship, language, and education. The Citizenship Act of 1948 and the Indian and Pakistani Residents Act of 1949 usurped citizenship from one million Indian Tamils (eleven percent of the population at that time). As a result, from 1964 until 1988, over half of the Indian Tamil population left Sri Lanka for the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.\(^{153}\) The second reform imposed a “Shinala only” language policy that marginalized non-Sinhala speaking


\(^{152}\) Wilson, A. Jaeyaratnam (1988) op cit., p. 32.

ethnic groups. Initially, a 1953 policy under the UNP institutionalized a two-language system in the public sphere: Tamil for Tamils and Sinhala for Sinhalese. However, with the victory of the SLFP in 1956, the “Sinhala only” policy made Sinhala the sole official language in the public sector—excluding Tamil speakers from government employment and education.\textsuperscript{154} The third governmental policy was the standardization of university entrance examinations in 1970, which barred many Tamils from higher education entrance (who were disproportionately attending universities prior to the policy). The policy allowed university administrators to admit Sinhalese students over Tamil students of equal educational qualification. Even with an ethnic quota system installed in 1973, Tamils were disproportionately underrepresented in higher education from the mid-1970s onward.\textsuperscript{155} As a result of these post-independence policies, Robert I. Rotberg notes that “[f]rom 1956 to 1970, the proportions of Tamils employed by the state fell from 60 to 10 percent in the professions, from 30 to five percent in the administrative services, from 50 to 5 percent in the clerical services, and from 40 to one percent in the armed forces.”\textsuperscript{156}

A final policy implemented by the state ultimately tipped the balance toward widespread communal violence between the Sinhalese and Tamils. This policy, executed by Colombo in the 1950s, established government-sponsored land resettlement for Sinhalese populations in the northern and eastern (i.e., Tamil-dominated) territories of Sri Lanka. This eroded Tamil voting strength in these territories and caused many moderate Tamils who had advocated working with the Sinhalese to radicalize and support an


\textsuperscript{155} De Votta, Neil (2002) op. cit., p. 89.

independent Tamil homeland rather than Tamil provincial autonomy from the central state.\textsuperscript{157} There were outbreaks of violence by Sinhalese nationalists against Tamil populations in the riots of 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981, and 1983. The violence was perpetrated by Sinhalese rioters largely in reaction to Tamil electoral victories in the northern territories. This is not to say that all Sinhalese were radicalized and anti-Tamil. In fact, the majority of ethno-national polarization occurred in the border areas of Tamil-Sinhalese territories—e.g. the northern, eastern, and north central provinces of the island. This polarization occurred in these territories “where the conflict has been most brutal and population displacement has resulted in the construction of de facto ethnic enclaves [i.e., homogenized Tamil and Sinhala internally displaced person camps] and embittered identity politics.”\textsuperscript{158} The victory of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF)—a Tamil-based political party—in 1977 was the first instance of state security forces participating in violence against both Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils in the north. The rape and murder of Tamils were the primary forms of violence utilized by state actors from 1977 onward.\textsuperscript{159} On 24 July 1983, the LTTE killed 13 SLA personnel in Jaffna and, in response, the SLA killed approximately 50 civilian Tamils. Anti-Tamil riots spread throughout Jaffna in which over 400 Tamils were killed and over a million were displaced by Sinhalese violence. The SLA did nothing to quell the violence for over a week; some witnesses reported that SLA soldiers even participated in the anti-Tamil


\textsuperscript{159} Wilson, A. Jaeyaratnam (1988) op cit., pp. 107-8; Nissan, Elizabeth and Stirrat, R. L. (1990) op. cit., p. 36.
riots.\textsuperscript{160} The excessively violent riots of 1983 by the Sinhalese, which most scholars agree as the beginning of the 26-year Sri Lankan conflict, “was particularly instrumental in stimulating reactive militant Tamil nationalism.”\textsuperscript{161}

The logic behind Sinhala political preponderance during postcolonial governance was twofold. The first was that the Sinhala population felt threatened by the 60 million Tamils living in India in the state of Tamil Nadu. The historical legacies of Indian Tamil invasion during the ninth century A.D. no doubt inflamed this fear and led to the repression of all Tamils by Colombo. The second source of resentment fueling Sinhala chauvinism, and most importantly according to many scholars of Sri Lanka, was the Sinhala perception that Tamils had been disproportionately favored by the British colonists. Anti-Tamil policies from the 1950s through 1970s reflected the Sinhala elites’ desire to redress the perceived oppression experienced by the Sinhalese during the colonial period.\textsuperscript{162}

The history of Sinhala-Tamil relations is essential for understanding the roots of the Sri Lankan civil war. British colonial policies, which introduced the Western concept of communalism, ultimately hardened Tamil and Sinhala positions in relation to the other during colonial rule and served as a catalyst for Tamil-Sinhala communal violence in a post-colonial Sri Lanka. As a result, policies implemented in the 1950s through 1970s by a Sinhala-dominated government caused widespread Tamil rioting and violent overreaction by Sri Lankan security forces and Sinhalese paramilitaries. By 1983, an

\textsuperscript{161} Alison, Miranda (2009) op cit., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{162} Little, David (1999) op cit. p. 48.
outright civil war would devastate the country for the next twenty-five years as the LTTE consolidated its power and launched its revolution.

The Historical Foundations of the Sierra Leonean Civil War

Sierra Leone is a small, coastal West African state situated between Liberia to the south and Guinea to the north and east. The country has a diverse terrain including mangrove swamps along the coast, mountains in the east, and wooded hill country and sweeping plateaus throughout the center of the territory. Today, Sierra Leone is more commonly known for its poor governance, extreme poverty, and alluvial diamond deposits—a prime example of the “resource curse.” But alluvial diamonds were not what initially attracted European colonizers to the territory of Sierra Leone. The Freetown peninsula was initially utilized as a shipping center for slaves bound to Great Britain (and later to the Americas) by the mid-1400s.

Sierra Leone contains over seventeen distinct ethnic groups, many of which can be categorized by two distinct languages. On the one hand, there is the Mande group, which includes the Mende, Vai, Loko, Kono, Yalunk, Susu, and Mandingo. On the other hand, there is the Mel group, which includes the Temne, Bullom/Sherbro, Kissi, Krim, Koranko, and Gola. The remaining ethnic groups cannot be categorized by language, but include the Fula, who are present throughout West Africa, as well as the Limba, who are believed to be the original settlers of the region and speak a language different from other

ethnic groups. The last major ethnic group is the Krios, who are descendants of liberated slaves from Europe and the Americas.

**Figure 2.2. Map of Ethnic Groups in Sierra Leone (c. 1969)**

Bearing in mind these various ethnic groupings, Chris Coulter notes that “[e]thnic groups in Sierra Leone do not form bounded cohesive groups, and migration and intermarriage are and have been a prevalent feature of the region.”

Ethnic cleavages in post-colonial Sierra Leone were much less pronounced than in Sri Lanka’s post-independence period.

The legacy of Portuguese and British colonialism in Sierra Leone created a post-independence state that operated on patronage and corruption; its inability to administer the rural territories—where the RUF would launch its “revolution”—in large part allowed the RUF to consolidate power in the hinterland before it reached Freetown. The

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Portuguese were the first European power to make contact with the peoples of the territory in the 1400s, although the exact date is disputed by historians. In one of the first descriptions of what the Portuguese named Serra Leoa (i.e., “Lion Mountains”), Portuguese explorer Duarte Pacheoco Pereira wrote in 1506 about the successes of Henry ‘the Navigator,’ who had made first contact with peoples of the territory in the mid-fifteenth century:

“as far as, and including, Serra Leoa, when the trade of this country was well ordered, it yielded yearly 3,500 slaves and more, and many tusks of elephant ivory, gold, fine cotton cloth and much other merchandise” (emphasis added).167

The Portuguese government initially claimed a trading monopoly and built a military fort and trading post in Sierra Leone, although the center was later abandoned and Portuguese traders ignored the monopoly. These defiant individuals inhabited the territory of Sierra Leone’s coast, traded goods as intermediaries, and intermarried with the local inhabitants.168 In the mid-1500s, the coastal inhabitants of Sierra Leone, called Sapes or Çapijis by the Portuguese, were invaded by the inland Manes, who devastated the trading centers along the coast.169 Despite this, the Portuguese were able to gain advantage by enslaving inhabitants displaced by the warring ethnic groups in the traditional colonial modus operandi: divide and rule. The Manes’ king, “Flansiré,” (as the Dutch called him), knew the Manes were too few in number to occupy the conquered costal territory and thus devolved power to sub-kings as he retreated back to the Sierra Leone inland.170

168 Fyfe, Christopher (1962) op. cit., p. 1.
169 Fyfe, Christopher (1962) op. cit., p. 2.
170 Ibid.
The slave trade during the colonial period of Sierra Leone was a lucrative business that attracted many European merchants and traders. The total number of African slaves shipped to the Americas is estimated to have been 8 to 20 million.\(^{171}\)

According to John Matthew, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, in the areas between the Rio Nunez and the Sherbro (approximately present-day Sierra Leone), 3,000 slaves were traded annually.\(^{172}\) In a lucid description of the West African trade system, Laray Denzer writes:

“Such an immense trade was the result of mutual co-operation between African Kings, nobles, war-chiefs and merchants (the sellers of slaves), and the European traders (the purchasers). Only the West African political élites possessed the institutional means, political authority and wealth to organize the scale of enterprise required for the collection and delivery of slaves to the factories, forts and barracoons on the coast. This trade was a straightforward economic transaction. Slaves were exchanged for a variety of currencies (gold, cowrie shells, manillas, guines and iron bars), textiles, firearms, ammunition, and manufactured goods. The terms of commerce were dictated by African kings and merchants who maintained tight control over their interior sources of slave supplies. Rarely did they allow Europeans to travel freely, but confined them to their coastal settlements or ships while slave cargos were accumulated.”\(^{173}\)

The European powers that fostered the demand for slaves were unable to access the supply of slaves in the interior and thus exploited warring groups in the Sierra Leone hinterland by purchasing their prisoners of war as slaves. Along the coastal territory of Sierra Leone, it was common for indigenous elites to sell criminals to the European powers as slaves.\(^{174}\) When the price of slaves declined, the Fulas and Mande—the two dominant indigenous groups responsible for the majority of the internal slave trade—

\(^{172}\) Matthews, John (1788) *A Voyage to the River Sierra-Leone, on the Coast of Africa*. London: B. White and Son, pp. 145 and 175.
\(^{173}\) Ibid.
\(^{174}\) Drezner, Laray (1987) op. cit., p. 50.
forbade the shipping of slaves from the hinterland to the coast to artificially raise the
price of slaves, much to the dismay of European merchants. It was also during the early
nineteenth century that the domestic African slave trade grew as indigenous elites bought
slaves to labor in their vast swaths of farmland.\textsuperscript{175}

The Portuguese had exploited Sierra Leone by extracting precious metals, artwork, timber, foodstuffs, and slaves from the territory while thwarting indigenous resistance by providing vast amounts of wealth to indigenous elites. Yet Great Britain initially failed to establish a viable trade industry in Sierra Leone throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By the late 1620s, English traders of the Royal African Company (RAC) had established a trading post, but it was consistently plundered by local inhabitants. In the 1660s, the Company had built several stone forts with heavy armaments, all of which fell by 1704 to Dutch and French warships seeking to expand their influence along the coast of West Africa. The RAC, in a final attempt to control established trading networks, built a fort on Bence Island which had over fifty cannons. The governor of the territory sought to suppress all trading rivals, including mixed Afro-Portuguese and indigenous populations through a policy of divide and rule. Walking this tightrope proved to be impossible due to the governor’s insistence on violent suppression: this policy united the Afro-Portuguese with indigenous Sierra Leoneans. The fort was destroyed in October 1728; consequently, the RAC abandoned Sierra Leone.\textsuperscript{176}

The Sierra Leone Colony was founded in May 1787 by 377 white and free black settlers. Yet this colonial experiment would fail due to the harsh Sierra Leonean milieu of

\textsuperscript{176} Fyfe, Christopher (1962) op. cit., pp. 4-5.
the Freetown peninsula. By 1791, only forty-eight settlers remained alive, the rest having died from starvation and disease.\textsuperscript{177} When the English abolitionist movement succeeded in outlawing slavery in Great Britain, the abolitionists chose Sierra Leone as the territory to resettle former slaves who became known as Creoles and, later, Krios.\textsuperscript{178} Also in 1791, the Sierra Leone Company (SLC) was founded by British bureaucrats and businessmen to: (1) take control of the Freetown colony; (2) establish a government; and (3) trade with the colony and interior ethnic groups. Interestingly, as the British abolition movement gained momentum in England, the SLC Board of Directors sought to disrupt the slave trade—and replace it with a “legitimate” trade in commodities.\textsuperscript{179} However, the slave trade, much to the dismay of British abolitionists, would continue—and increase from levels (i.e., 3,000 per year) common in the eighteenth century—in the Colony until 1835. Additionally, the trade of slaves continued in the absence of Britain: Portuguese, American, and French traders continued to operate until slavery was abolished in each respective country.\textsuperscript{180}

However, it is estimated that over 68,000 to 70,000 British slaves were liberated and sent to Sierra Leone from 1803 until 1863, the majority coming from the Canadian territories or by Royal Navy interceptions of slave ships.\textsuperscript{181} The Creoles, as these freed slaves were then known, developed a unique socio-political system that mirrored a caste arrangement vis-à-vis indigenous groups in West Africa by the turn of the nineteenth century. Ethno-religious polarization, although rampant during the height of the slave

\textsuperscript{177} Drezn, Laray (1987) op. cit., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{179} Drezn, Laray (1987) op. cit., p. 60.
\textsuperscript{180} Drezn, Laray (1987) op. cit., pp. 64-5.
trade, relaxed during the last century of the colonial period; instead, intergroup tensions were present between (1) Creoles—who were disproportionately favored by colonial British administrators—and (2) multiethnic Sierra Leoneans in the rural interior. The Creoles adopted many traditional Sierra Leonean customs—such as polygamy—while continuing their practices of Christianity, western customs, and western-styled education, which ultimately led to their assimilation and participation in colonial governance and commerce. Fourah Bay College, founded in 1827, pioneered higher education in West Africa and Creoles were the principal ethnic group to attend the college. As a result of their rising power in the colonial administration, Krios, as they would be called, entered government service in rural areas of Sierra Leone that could not be filled by undereducated, indigenous populations.

London expanded its military presence into the hinterland of Sierra Leone as the entire present-day territory was declared a British protectorate in 1896. Additionally, a British company that was part of the De Beers’ diamond cartel—the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST)—obtained exclusive rights to diamond mining after bountiful alluvial deposits were discovered in the Kono district in 1935. The SLST monopolized the diamond trade until 1956 although illegal mining was widespread during this time period, as there were an estimated 70,000 Sierra Leoneans who were mining illegally by 1953. Consequently, violence between SLST security forces and Sierra Leoneans increased in frequency, as both groups were competing for diamond revenues.

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185 Ibid.
Widespread migration was also common during the diamond boom and rising cash crop production of the 1950s created a “floating population” that was impossible for the colonial administration to track and control.188

After World War II, the British began to implement measures toward self-rule and political decentralization in Sierra Leone, reforming political institutions to become more inclusive and representative—much to the dismay of the local Krio population who had asymmetrically benefitted from political appointments and monopolized economic opportunities during British rule.189 The British withdrew from Sierra Leone in large part because of their inability to finance the administration and security of the majority of their colonial territories after heavy economic and human losses during WWII.190 In addition, popular protests against British economic policies in Freetown put pressure on London to cede power to indigenous elites.191

Despite official independence, the SLST continued to operate in Sierra Leone for a decade. At the peak of its diamond mining operations during the 1960s, the SLST was exporting roughly 1.7 million carats per year on the world diamond market. By 1971, the SLST was nationalized by the Sierra Leonean government and renamed the National Diamond Mining Company under the post-colonial Stevens regime.192

During the early years of independence (1961-1968), the rise of a vibrant press and a quasi-competitive electoral system (which, with interruptions, was partly free and fair until the consolidation of Siaka Stevens’s power post-1968) politicized ethnic

188 Keen, David (2005) op. cit., pp. 11-12.
192 Ibid.
relations. Stevens, however, closed down media outlets and imprisoned political leaders who were critical of his _de facto_ policies of patronage and corruption. Because of ethnicity’s instrumental use by politicians to mobilize potential voters around ethnic identity, political liberalization backslid as an opportunist Stevens regime gained hegemony by the support of populist Temnes who were marginalized by the dominance of pro-Mende political parties from 1961 through 1967. David Keen explains the rise of ethnically-based electoral politics in Sierra Leone’s post-colonial system:

“Before independence, rivalry between the Temne speakers of the north and the Mende speakers of the south and east had often been subordinated to common opposition to the Creoles. But post-independence politics was to be significantly shaped by this Temne-Mende rivalry... After Sierra Leone acquired independence in 1961, appeals to ethnicity became one of the easiest ways to recruit supporters in elections.”

The politicization of ethnic identity during the post-independence period fostered the development of two ethnically-based political machines: the Mende were dominant in the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) while the All People’s Congress (APC) enjoyed widespread support from the Temne. Milton Margai, the first prime minister of Sierra Leone from 1958 to 1964, was a dominant force within the SLPP and provided patronage to the southern Mende population by disproportionately allocating government resources to the south and buying off corrupt northern chiefs who tolerated abuses against and economic deprivation among their Temne constituents. The second prime minister of Sierra Leone, Albert Margai of the SLPP who ruled from 1964 until 1967, increased the

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194 Ibid.
number of Mendes serving in the military and government administration by 52 percent (as opposed to Milton Margai’s 26 percent increase).\textsuperscript{195}

The dominance of the SLPP and disproportionate representation of Mendes in parliament, state bureaucracy, and the military caused widespread discontent among Temne peoples. This disgruntled population voted overwhelmingly for Siaka Stevens of the APC in 1967—who won by a narrow margin—because of his anti-Mende campaign which appealed to the economically deprived and politically-subordinated Temne population in the north.\textsuperscript{196} Immediately after the election, Siaka Stevens was ousted by a Mende-led military coup by Brigadier John David Lansana for a year-long period; however, junior Temne officers in the armed forces overthrew the unpopular Lansana regime and restored Stevens and the APC to power in 1968.\textsuperscript{197} After his return to power, Stevens purged the military and political administrations of Mendes, granting a disproportionate number of high-level officer and administrative positions to Temnes.\textsuperscript{198}

Thus Sierra Leone became a one-party state under Stevens’ rule, most notably after the SLPP withdrew from the 1973 elections because of widespread APC-instigated electoral violence against SLPP supporters in the south.\textsuperscript{199} A combination of political and economic patronage was provided to elite Temnes and Krios by the Stevens regime which bolstered their socioeconomic and political standing in Sierra Leone. Extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, and other forms of violence were directed toward both Temne and Mende opponents of the Stevens regime. Such state-sanctioned violence was employed

\textsuperscript{196} Keen, David (2005) op. cit., p. 15.
by Stevens regime against political opponents and dissidents until Stevens stepped down in 1985 and announced his successor—Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh, commander of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)—who continued the repressive policies of the Stevens regime.200

By the early 1980s, the Sierra Leonean economy was in shambles due to both internal and external factors. Because of poor domestic economic policies, the agricultural sector was privatized, which led to the growth of a large black market agricultural sector that avoided taxation by the central government. Through economic patronage, Stevens shored up his economic power—and those of business elites who were loyal to his regime—by controlling import and export licenses and monopolizing various markets in the private sector.201 While only a few political insiders of the regime benefited from the proliferating informal economy, the state exchequer was depleted of tax revenue and the rural areas of Sierra Leone experienced increasing levels of poverty vis-à-vis Freetown. Inflation became unmanageable and agricultural production declined, steeply increasing the cost of food for Sierra Leonean consumers. The supply of agricultural labor decreased due to the rising demand for laborers in the alluvial diamond industry which sharply increased the price of food commodities.202 Stevens’ hosting of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) summit during 1-4 July 1980 in Freetown—which cost the state $200 million to build infrastructure that was subsequently abandoned after the summit—is indicative of the state’s economic adventurism and waste during the

200 Keen, David (2005) op. cit., p. 32.
201 Keen, David (2005) op. cit., p. 23.
1980s.\textsuperscript{203} The unofficial slogan pejoratively adopted by Sierra Leoneans for the 1980 OAU summit was “OAU today, IOU tomorrow.”\textsuperscript{204}

External factors also brought disaster to the economic sphere in Sierra Leone. Predominantly an export-driven economy, Sierra Leone was highly vulnerable to oscillations in international commodity markets and the exploitation of natural resources by monopolistic enterprises associated with the Stevens and Momoh regimes. This situation was further exacerbated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which sought to impose structural adjustment programs (SAPs) on the Sierra Leonean economy. The IMF and World Bank, in an attempt to restructure the crippled economy, demanded the Stevens and Momoh governments to devalue the Sierra Leonean currency, reduce public spending in social services, repay a bulging national debt, and strengthen the “drive against smuggling” in the informal economy (e.g., Momoh’s 1987 “State of Economic Emergency” and 1990 “Operation Clean State”).\textsuperscript{205} Because of the economic crisis, exacerbated by Sierra Leone’s SAPs, David Keen found that “Sierra Leone was spending more on servicing its debt than on its combined budget for health, education, and other social services” during the 1986-87 fiscal year.\textsuperscript{206}

The dismal state of governance and the economy in Sierra Leone—predominantly driven by: (1) the impact of British colonial policies that pitted Krios against other multiethnic groups; (2) the instrumental use of ethnic polarization by dominant political parties in post-colonial Sierra Leone; (3) the rise of a repressive one-party state under Stevens; (4) patrimonial economic policies; and (5) SAPs imposed by international

\textsuperscript{204} Keen, David (2005) op. cit., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{205} Keen, David (2005) op. cit., pp. 25 and 33.
\textsuperscript{206} Keen, David (2005) op. cit., p. 27.
financial institutions—sowed the seeds for widespread discontent, particularly among Sierra Leonean youth, and the use of violence to exploit economic resources. The Sierra Leonean civil war would begin as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)—the principal insurgent group in the 1991-2002 civil war which was sponsored by Charles Taylor’s Liberian government—crossed the shared Sierra Leonean-Liberian border into Kailahun District of Sierra Leone on 23 March 1991.

2.2. The Formation and Hegemony of the LTTE and RUF Insurgencies

The LTTE and RUF were the dominant insurgencies during the civil wars in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone, respectively, and were responsible for the majority of non-state violence against civilians. This section seeks to explain the formation and eventual dominance of these two violent insurgencies while also considering their ideological objectives and organizational structure.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

When Sinhala was made the sole official language of Sri Lanka and barriers were raised to block Tamils from higher education, several Tamil political parties called for parity status for the Tamil language and proportionate quotas for Tamils in higher education. The Tamil Federal Party, the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, the Tamil

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207 The victory of the Sri Lankan Freedom Party at the polls in 1956 allowed this majoritarian party to pass the “Sinhala only” policy in which Tamil was banned in the public sphere and Sinhala was made the sole official language of Sri Lanka. This language policy prevented many educated Tamils from participating in the public service sector. By 1970, the Sri Lankan state had “standardized” university admissions policies to disproportionately benefit Sinhalese students. University admissions committees could now admit Sinhalese candidates based on their ethnicity, not their academic achievement (Tamils were much more highly educated vis-à-vis the Sinhalese because of their privileged socioeconomic status during British colonial rule). Additionally, the Citizenship Act of 1948 usurped citizenship from more than one million Indian Tamils living in Sri Lanka which caused dissent among both Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils.
Progressive Front, and Ceylon Workers Congress formed the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), and by May 1973 the TULF called for an independent “Tamil Eelam” to be obtained by constitutional amendment—a reformist rather than revolutionary process.\(^\text{208}\) Because the TULF was a reformist political party, it marginalized more extreme segments of Tamil society who viewed violence (and revolution) as an appropriate, if not the only, means for an independent Tamil Eelam. Jerrold M. Post observes that “[t]he Tamil base was loath to depart from the democratic system, but the state’s failure to protect them inevitably pushed them defensively to the path of nationalism.”\(^\text{209}\) Largely due to the failures of the TULF to secure Tamil rights via the legislative process—coupled with Sinhalese-perpetrated violence against Tamil populations after TULF electoral victories—violent Tamil insurgencies began to form by capitalizing on the rising Tamil popular support for their revolutionary cause in the early 1970s.\(^\text{210}\)

The Tamil armed struggle against the Sri Lankan state, although weak and disorganized, began in 1972. The LTTE, initially named the Tamil National Tigers (TNT) until 1976, was formed by Vellupillai Prabhakaran in 1973 and was a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization that spearheaded violent Tamil national separatism in Sri Lanka.\(^\text{211}\) Prabhakaran was born in 1954 in the Jaffna Peninsula and witnessed widespread discrimination of Tamils at the hands of the Sri Lankan state. In

\(^{208}\) Bloom, Mia (2003) op. cit., p. 61.
one of the few interviews he gave to journalists, Prabhakaran explained his path to revolutionary action:

“It is the plight of the Tamil people that compelled me to take up arms. I felt outraged at the inhumane atrocities perpetrated against an innocent people. The ruthless manner in which our people were murdered, massacred, maimed and the colossal damage done to their property made me realize that we are subjected to a calculated program of genocide. I felt the armed struggle is the only way to protect and liberate our people from a totalitarian Fascist State bent on destroying an entire race of people” (emphasis added).²¹²

Prabhakaran was influenced by the revolutionary philosophy of Che Guevara, and in particular he believed that guerrilla warfare was a legitimate means of revolutionary struggle. Although the LTTE espoused both Marxist-Leninist and nationalist (i.e., an independent Tamil Eelam) ideologies in public, Prabhakaran extolled violence and nationalist ideology as the appropriate path toward an independent Tamil Eelam. The number two man in the hierarchy of the Tigers, Anton S. Balasingham, spearheaded Marxist-Leninist ideology within the LTTE, much to the chagrin of Prabhakaran who viewed leftist revolutionary theory as ineffective in Sri Lanka compared to a nationalistic armed resistance.²¹³

As the government responded with state-sanctioned terrorism against Tamil populations suspected of supporting and/or participating in the escalating Tamil insurgencies, the LTTE (and other violent Tamil insurgent groups) adopted the goal of an independent Tamil Eelam in the northern and eastern territories of Sri Lanka in 1977.²¹⁴

In response to the 1975 assassination of a Sinhalese mayor in Jaffna peninsula (a Tamil majority district), allegedly by the LTTE, Colombo passed (1) the Proscription of

²¹² Cited in Post, Jerrold M. (2007) op. cit., p. 84.
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Other Similar Organizations and (2) the Prevention of Terrorism Act—and thus Sri Lanka was to be under a state of emergency for over fifteen years in which Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils were systematically discriminated, kidnapped, and/or killed.\footnote{Post, Jerrold M. (2007) op. cit., p. 87.} As noted above, the civil war is generally believed to have started in 1983 due to Sinhalese-initiated riots (in response to TULF electoral victories in Jaffna) against Tamil populations that became excessively violent.\footnote{Deepa M. Ollapally argues that Sinhalese-Tamil tensions are unable to be adequately explained by ethno-religious, socioeconomic, and political opportunity theories. Sinhalese extremism, which she argues drove the ethno-religious security dilemma, operated on a geopolitical level—i.e. the Sinhalese state’s viewpoint as a “majority with a minority complex” (p. 47). Ollapally contends that the Sinhalese “majority with a minority complex” was reflective of the implicit and explicit support of the Sri Lankan Tamil population (and LTTE insurgency) by both the Indian central government’s external intelligence agencies and the Indian state of Tamil Nadu (which contained a population of 60 million Indian Tamils). Colombo was wary of Indian hegemonic ambitions in Sri Lanka and viewed Delhi’s support of the Sri Lankan Tamils as a coercive means for India to undermine the Sinhalese state. Although the Sinhalese were the ethnic majority and politically dominant in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese perceptions of threat from Tamils arose from the nexus of domestic Tamil extremism and Indian interference. The Sinhalese “majority with a minority complex” radicalized Sinhalese attitudes and Colombo’s policies toward Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils and, in large part, Ollapally argues, led to the radicalization of factions within the violent, nationalist Janata Vimukti Peramuna and the Buddhist monk organization Eksath Bhikkhu Peramuna, both of which showed unwavering intransigence toward Sri Lankan Tamils as the conflict escalated. For a further discussion of this argument, see Chapter Six of Ollapally, Deepa M. (2010), op. cit., pp. 145-76.} Consequently, the LTTE and other Tamil insurgent organizations exploited a surge of Tamil popular support for their cause of, and revolutionary means toward, an independent Tamil Eelam.\footnote{Prior to the 1983 riots, the LTTE and other Tamil insurgencies received minimal organizational support—both ideological and material—from Tamil populations in the northern and eastern territories of Sri Lanka due to their hope in the electoral effectiveness of the TULF. After the violence during the 1983 riots, and as state-perpetrated disappearances and extrajudicial killings of Tamils increased drastically, the majority of Tamil popular support shifted from the reformist TULF to radical Tamil insurgencies. For more detail, see Narayan Swamy, M. R. (1994) Tigers of Sri Lanka, from Boys to Guerrillas. Delhi: Konark Publishers. Also, another important factor caused Tamil national identity to solidify: Tamils began, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, to migrate toward the northern and eastern territories of Sri Lanka, giving Tamils not only an ethnic identity, but a geographic one as well. The Tamil concentration in northern and eastern Sri Lanka provided a collective Tamil identity which increased LTTE membership “exponentially.” For a further discussion of the Tamil migration, see Post, Jerrold M. (2007) op. cit., p. 86.} The “Tamil Five,” as the principal revolutionary Tamil insurgent groups were called, were aided by Tamil politicians in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu (who had
political autonomy vis-à-vis the Indian central government) and the Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)—the Indian external intelligence agency, akin to the U.S.’s Central Intelligence Agency. The logic of the RAW’s support of the LTTE is best described by what Saubhagya Shah calls “strategic coercion.” By supporting Sri Lankan opposition movements, Delhi was able to coerce Colombo into compliance with Indian national security interests by weakening the legitimacy of a state beleaguered by a formidable insurgent movement. To strategically coerce Colombo into a weak bargaining position vis-à-vis Delhi, Sri Lankan Tamil paramilitaries received arms and combat training from the RAW and politico-military connections in Tamil Nadu. Once Tamil-Sinhalese and intra-Tamil violence escalated, India, shifting its support from the “Tamil Five” to the Sri Lankan government, sent the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) from 1987-1990 to quell Tamil-perpetrated violence in the northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka when linkages were discovered between the LTTE and violent groups in Tamil Nadu—which Delhi viewed as a national security threat.

Despite the increase of Tamil popular support for the Tamil insurgencies, ideological (and caste) differences in large part led to intra-Tamil violence among the “Tamil Five” throughout the mid- to late-1980s. These organizations included the LTTE, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and the Eelam Revolutionary Organization (ERO). The LTTE obtained hegemony over the other Tamil paramilitaries by destroying the TELO, forcibly

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disbanding the EPRLF and PLOTE, and coercively absorbing the EROS into the LTTE. By 1990, the LTTE was dominant in the north and east of Sri Lanka and was uncontested by the remnants of other Tamil paramilitaries. The Tamil insurgencies that survived LTTE violence became anti-LTTE (although, oddly enough, still retaining the ideology of Tamil nationalism) and participated in military campaigns with the SLA to defeat the LTTE. These new paramilitaries of the Sri Lankan state became anti-LTTE due to the excessive violence wielded against them by the LTTE and Prabhakaran’s unwillingness to cooperate with other Tamil insurgencies. The LTTE, once outbidding other Tamil insurgencies, remained the only Tamil insurgency striving for an independent Tamil Eelam by 1990. 220

The organizational hierarchy of the LTTE situated Vellupillai Prabhakaran as primus inter pares of the violent struggle for Tamil Eelam. In this centralized hierarchy—with Prabhakaran as the unchallenged leader—organizational units, or “wings,” were differentiated by function, with the LTTE leadership as delegators of the operational function of the various wings of the LTTE. 221 The organizational wings of the LTTE included the Black Tigers (suicide bombers), Sea Tigers (navy attack units), Baby Tigers (child soldiers), Air Tigers (air force), and the Women’s Front of the Liberation Tigers (WFLT). 222 Each branch of the organization was divided by gender and female leadership was present in every wing of the LTTE. Women were under the operational control of their respective wing, but under the administrative control of the WFLT leadership. 223

222 Bloom, Mia (2004) op. cit., p. 76.
Because of Prabhakaran’s cult of personality—and unchallenged leadership throughout the conflict—within the organization, the LTTE was not factionalized between various wings of the organization. Neil DeVotta describes the organizational prowess of the LTTE after it solidified its position as the vanguard of Tamil national-separatism:

“At its apogee between the mid-1990s and 2006, the LTTE controlled nearly one-quarter of Sri Lanka’s territory; comprised an army of over 20,000 with redoubtable conventional capabilities; commanded a navy with speedboats and nearly a dozen ships for ferrying weapons and supplies, as well as rudimentary submarine capabilities and an experienced sea cadre; and operated a nascent air force whose bombing raids embarrassed the government and caused the island widespread angst.”

Why was the LTTE successful in obtaining hegemony over other Tamil paramilitaries? The LTTE was wary of Indian intentions and built up arms separately from the stockpiles received from RAW and Tamil Nadu connections. Also, the asymmetrical frequency of violence wielded by the LTTE against rival Tamil organizations caused the anti-LTTE Tamil insurgencies to disband or seek Colombo’s protection by integrating into the Sri Lankan armed forces as paramilitary units.

Therefore, by 1990, the LTTE was the only remaining Tamil insurgency that sought an independent Tamil Eelam by employing violence against state security forces, soft targets, and Sinhalese politicians.

The Revolutionary United Front

How and why did the RUF emerge as a challenger to the Mohmoh regime in 1991? What was the ideological makeup of the organization? And what was the

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organizational structure of the insurgency? This section traces the formation of the RUF, its structure, and leadership.

The RUF initially sought to address grievances among marginalized youth who were discontent with patron-client relations that were rampant during the Stevens and Momoh regimes. The beginnings of anti-Stevens movements in the late-1960s and 1970s—from which the RUF (deceptively) claimed to have derived many of its officers—have been categorized by Chris Coulter as a “student movement or student culture.” During this time period, a Krio-based student movement at Fourah Bay College in Freetown—comprised predominantly of middle-class men—espoused a populist ideology and protested against the Stevens regime, which at the time was stifling inclusive political participation and equitable economic distribution. Unemployed male youth joined the Krios’ protests at Freetown’s Fourah Bay College and voiced their resentment against state repression of political opposition parties, increasing economic inequality between urban and rural regions, and the patrimonial hegemony of the ACP under President Stevens. As Sierra Leonean youth became active in Freetown, various revolutionary texts were circulated, including Muammar Qaddafi’s Green Book which argued that populist politics and pan-Africanist solidarity were vital aspects of revolutionary action. The student protests intensified as Sierra Leone became a one-party state under Stevens but ultimately they failed to create linkages with other segments of society, thus marginalizing the movement itself. Additionally, the ideological character

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226 Abdullah, Ibrahim (1998) op. cit., p. 235. In fact, there were no student protestors from Fourah Bay College who participated in the RUF’s revolution against the Sierra Leonean state.

227 Ibid.

228 Coulter finds that the student movement failed to create linkages because (1) they were largely inexperienced with mass mobilization and (2) the Stevens’ regime arrested and detained the leadership of the movement. For more detail, see Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., pp. 41-3.
of this movement was vague in that it emphasized opposition to Stevens’ regime yet offered no concrete means to overthrow Stevens. Many of these former protesters went to Libya where they received ideological and military training from the Libyan armed forces. One of these men was Foday Sankoh, who later became the undisputed leader of the RUF by the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{229}

During the late 1980s, after returning from Libya, Sankoh had not yet become \textit{primus inter pares} within the RUF and its organizational structure consisted of a loose coalition of individuals. Sankoh, along with Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray, the other cofounders of the RUF, decided to move their operations into rural Sierra Leone and began initial contact with Charles Taylor of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), who was waging a civil war against the Liberian regime of Samuel Doe.\textsuperscript{230} An agreement was crafted between Taylor and Sankoh which proposed that if the RUF aided the NPFL in its revolution against the Liberian state, Taylor would provide the RUF with a base from which to launch their revolution against the Momoh regime.\textsuperscript{231} The original RUF rebels first served as combatants in the NPFL, including RUF cofounders Kanu and Mansaray. The RUF, then an insurgency comprised of roughly one hundred combatants led by Sankoh, crossed the Liberian border into the rural Kailahun District of Sierra Leone on 23 March 1991 and began its military campaign against the Momoh government.

The ideological character of the RUF has been contested by many scholars of insurgencies. In its manifesto, \textit{Footpaths to Democracy}, the RUF argued that:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{229} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{230} Abdullah, Ibrahim (1998) \textit{op. cit.}, p. 220.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Abudllah, Ibrahim (1998) \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 220-1.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
“We can no longer leave the destiny of our country in the hands of a generation of crooked politicians and military adventurists… It is our right and duty to change the present political system in the name of national salvation and liberation… This task is the historical responsibility of every patriot… We must be prepared to struggle until the decadent, backward and oppressive regime is thrown into the dustbin of history. We call for a national democratic revolution—involving the total mobilization of all progressive forces. The secret behind the survival of the existing system is our lack of organisation. What we need then is organised challenge and resistance. The strategy and tactics of this resistance will be determined by the reaction of the enemy forces—force will be met with force, reasoning with reasoning and dialogue with dialogue.”

The ideological character of the RUF, shown above, was in direct opposition to patronage politics of the Momoh regime and sought to topple the status quo through mass mobilization. Yet mass mobilization against the Freetown government never occurred. Participants in the RUF were often forcibly conscripted and civilians did not support the means through which they pursued their revolution (although many supported the goal of a liberal democratic and distributive economic system).

The political agenda of the RUF was widely disputed by Sierra Leoneans due to the indiscriminate violence it committed against civilians throughout the war and the central government’s intransigence in recognizing that the RUF did in fact have an ideological agenda.\textsuperscript{233} The RUF permitted intellectual discourse in the early and mid-1990s, requiring “ideological education” of all new combatants using Qaddafi’s \textit{Green Book} (which exemplified the RUF’s Libyan roots). The “youth problem” of Sierra Leone was manifest by young, uneducated, and (previously) unemployed combatants within the RUF who blamed local “big men”—such as chiefs and the business elite who were labeled as cronies of the Momoh regime—for their miserable socioeconomic status.\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{233} Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., pp. 40-1.
Although the RUF may not have had strong ideological grounding in nationalism or Marxism, Ibrahim Abdullah notes that the revolutions in the hinterland (RUF) and urban areas (the AFRC overthrew the Kabbah regime in 1997 and formed an alliance with the rurally-based RUF) were “oppositional” in the sense that “[b]oth were products of a rebellious youth culture in search of a radical alternative (although without a concrete emancipatory programme) to the bankrupt the All People’s Congress (APC) regime.”

Young soldiers who voluntarily joined the RUF said that the ability to wield small arms and light weapons provided them with respect from their elders as well as food and shelter by coercing noncombatants. With their social and familial lives disrupted by war, child soldiers were “brave and loyal” combatants for the RUF, AFRC, Sierra Leonean armed forces, and paramilitaries. However, the vast majority of youth combatants who participated in the RUF were forcibly conscripted by rebel cadre.

The RUF’s emphasis on Muammar Qaddafi’s *Green Book* stemmed from its espousal of populism and pan-Africanism which was co-opted by Sankoh and RUF leadership during their ideological training in Libya. Sankoh initially believed this ideological view would resonate with marginalized Sierra Leoneans who grew frustrated with patronage politics and widening economic inequality under Stevens and Momoh. However, without a tradition of post-colonial radical politics in Sierra Leone to offer an ideological alternative for revolution, and compounded by the rebellious youth culture among RUF recruits, Ibrahim Abdullah argues that the RUF leadership valued

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combatants who would wield indiscriminate violence in the name of revolution. In addition, the RUF had no revolutionary intellectuals and the original student revolutionaries who participated in the Fourah Bay College movement were not involved in the RUF’s revolution. This lack of ideology and discipline among young RUF recruits in large part explains why the RUF espoused “terror and anarchy in the name of revolution.”

2.3. Government Armed Forces in the Civil Wars

Government armed forces that participated in the Sri Lankan and Sierra Leonean civil wars were also culpable of wielding violence against civilians, suspending civil and political liberties, and, in the case of Sri Lanka, committing asymmetric wartime sexual violence against women and girls during the conflict. This segment presents the organizational structure, ideological makeup, and other intragroup dynamics of the major state military forces during the Sri Lankan and Sierra Leonean civil wars.

The Sri Lankan Armed Forces

The Sri Lankan Army (SLA), under the auspices of the Sri Lankan president (who serves as both head of state and head of government), is the coercive apparatus of the state that grew increasingly authoritarian in character as the civil war raged throughout the island (see Table 2.1. below). Ideologically, the government of Sri Lanka extolled

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237 Among forcibly recruited child soldiers in the RUF and AFRC, the majority were given drugs—such as marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamine—to alleviate their fear of violence and death. In addition, RUF officers threatened child soldiers with unusually cruel punishments—such as amputations, rape (against female child soldiers), and even death—for those who fled from or challenged the authority of their captors. See Peters, Krijn and Paul Richards (1998) op. cit.
Buddhism: the 22 May 1972 constitution articulated that “[t]he Republic of Sri Lanka shall give Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism.” Since most Sinhalese practiced Buddhism—and viewed the entire island as sacred Buddhist territory—the government considered a potential Balkanization of Sri Lanka as an affront to the official religion of the state. Therefore, Colombo even viewed calls for provincial autonomy of Tamil Eelam as a threat to Buddhist religious values—a military solution was the only way to approach Tamil insurrections. As the Tamil insurgencies proliferated (before the LTTE emerged as the radical Tamil vanguard), military spending increased from 1.5 percent of Sri Lanka’s gross domestic product (GDP) and 4 percent of total government spending in 1983 to 5.79 percent of GDP and 18 percent of total government spending by 1987. Figure 2.2 shows military spending as a percentage of GDP by Sri Lanka throughout the 1983-2009 civil war. The initial increase in military spending arose as Colombo increasingly viewed the Tamil insurgencies as a national security threat and feared a Tamil-led Balkanization of Sri Lanka. The total number of personnel in the SLA—including both combatant and support personnel—rose from 37,660 in 1986 to 167,000 by 1996; with the Sri Lankan police included, this number was approximately 235,000 by 1996.

\[ \text{Figure 2.2} \]

\[ \text{shows military spending as a percentage of GDP by Sri Lanka throughout the 1983-2009 civil war.} \]

\[ \text{The initial increase in military spending arose as Colombo increasingly viewed the Tamil insurgencies as a national security threat and feared a Tamil-led Balkanization of Sri Lanka. The total number of personnel in the SLA—including both combatant and support personnel—rose from 37,660 in 1986 to 167,000 by 1996; with the Sri Lankan police included, this number was approximately 235,000 by 1996.} \]

\[ \text{Note: This number should be compared to the strength of the LTTE at the height of its organizational prowess in the mid-1990s, which was approximately 20,000 combatants.} \]

\[ \text{References:} \]

244 Kelegama, Saman (1999) “Economic Costs of Conflict in Sri Lanka,” in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.) *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation*. Washington: Brookings Institute Press, pp. 71-87. This number should be compared to the strength of the LTTE at the height of its organizational prowess in the mid-1990s, which was approximately 20,000 combatants.
The SLA was comprised almost entirely by Sinhalese personnel, as the anti-Tamil post-colonial policies left only one percent of SLA fighters consisting of Tamils. Because of the failure of multiple peace talks during the early 1980s, by 1986 the government viewed its SLA as the only solution for pacifying the LTTE. Yet the SLA has been characterized by Rotberg as “weak strategically, poorly led, poorly paid, demoralized by danger and sustained lack of success, and allegedly riddled with corruption.” When Lieutenant General Srilal Weerasoriya took command of the SLA in 1998, he pledged to “defeat [the LTTE] as a military force,” root out corruption, and enforce stricter discipline on an army that had been beleaguered by desertion, corruption, and unprofessionalism.

248 Ibid.
Table 2.1. Regime Type and Quality of Sri Lanka During the Civil War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Leader</th>
<th>Regime Duration</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Political Rights/Civil Liberties (FH)249</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranasinghe Premadasa</td>
<td>1989 – 1993</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
<td>4.0/5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingiri Banda Wijetunga</td>
<td>1993 – 1994</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
<td>4.0/5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandrika Kumaratunga</td>
<td>1994 – 2005</td>
<td>People’s Alliance</td>
<td>3.2/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahinda Rajapaksa</td>
<td>2005 – present</td>
<td>United People’s Freedom Alliance</td>
<td>3.8/3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women played a minor role within the SLA in the Sri Lankan Army Women’s Corps (SLAWC), founded in 1979, which situated women as unarmed support personnel—primarily as medics, nurses, clerical workers, lawyers, logistics personnel, information and communication technology technicians, and other noncombatant roles. Within the regular army, two units (the First and Seventh) of the SLAWC participated in support roles throughout the civil war; five units (the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth) of the SLAWC were part of the volunteer army, again, limited to support and technical roles. Lankapuvath, a pro-government news source, recently described how women were viewed by SLA leadership and Colombo:

“Though the number of women soldiers who sacrificed their lives on behalf of the country is meager in figures they have dedicated their whole life for the sake of the country. They did their utmost during the humanitarian operation in the battle field to serve civil people, tend

249 Using Freedom House indicators for political rights and civil liberties, I take the mean score for both indicators during each regime on a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being “free” and 7 being “not free.” Data accessed at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world.
children without parents and protect people as mother [sic] and as a daughter” (emphasis added).

Female personnel, as shown above, were viewed as traditionally feminine, particularly for their humanitarian tendencies, unwavering service, and motherly dispositions—despite their participation in the SLAWC. There were no instances of women participating in combat against the LTTE during the civil war, although the roles they filled were integral to the daily operations of the SLA. Female personnel were unable to marry during their military service and, both as enlisted and commissioned officers, women in the SLAWC were held to the same standards of military service as men—with the sole exception of rarely receiving training in the use of small arms and light weapons.

The SLA and its SLAWC corollary was a formidable opponent of the LTTE that extolled Buddhist ideology, viewed a military option as the sole solution to the Tamil question, and was riddled by unprofessionalism and widespread corruption. Women appear to have been paid lip service by the SLA yet were unable to participate in combat operations. Additionally, there were no reports of sexual assault against female personnel within the SLAWC. The role of women in the SLAWC was limited to support and technical professions, both as officers and enlisted personnel.

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) was a relatively weak, ceremonial army consisting of only 3,500 personnel before the civil war. Military spending was relatively low at only 0.7 percent of GDP in 1990 prior to the start of the civil war in 1991; spending subsequently rose as the RUF became a threat to the Freetown government, reaching its peak at 3.7 percent of GDP by the last two years of the civil war (see Figure 2.3). The patronage system, entrenched during the Stevens’ regime, guaranteed employment in the military for loyalists of the existing regime, while merit mattered little for promotion among officers of the RSLAF. The RSLAF lacked basic military hardware and the majority of its personnel were foot soldiers—there were no armored vehicles, tanks, or heavy weapons. When the civil war broke out in 1991, many officers in the RSLAF deserted their posts and remained in Freetown. As a result, the government hastily recruited opportunistic individuals as officers and enlisted personnel who were both unprofessional and disloyal to the Freetown government. A case in point was the sobel—soldiers who participated in the RSLAF by day and with the AFRC-RUF rebels at night—which was a common phenomenon among disloyal personnel in Sri Lanka’s military ranks. Rule of law was absent and civil and political liberties were greatly curbed (see Table 2.2 below). The instability of the Sierra Leonean state—and its legacy of corruption during the rule of the British and Siaka Stevens—in large part contributed to a culture of impunity in which human rights violations, and in particular wartime sexual violence, was rarely, if at all, prosecuted by state judicial mechanisms. Four regime changes occurred throughout the Sierra Leone war,

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complicating the state’s stance toward and strategic advantage against the RUF insurgency. Under Johnny Paul Koroma of the AFRC, the regime entered a power-sharing agreement with Foday Sankoh and the RUF, in which both armed groups, at one time adversaries, formed temporary peace to fight ECOMOG, UNAMSIL, and Executive Outcomes (a South African private military corporation).  

Table 2.2. Regime Type and Quality of Sierra Leone during the Civil War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Leader</th>
<th>Regime Duration</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Political Rights/Civil Liberties (FH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh</td>
<td>1985—1992</td>
<td>APC</td>
<td>6.0/5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Valentine Strasser</td>
<td>1992—1996</td>
<td>NPRC</td>
<td>7.0/6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad Tejan Kabbah</td>
<td>1996—1997</td>
<td>SLPP</td>
<td>4.0/5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Johnny Paul Koroma</td>
<td>1997—1999</td>
<td>RUF-AFRC</td>
<td>4.3/5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad Tejan Kabbah</td>
<td>1999—2002</td>
<td>SLPP</td>
<td>4.0/4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

255 The following scores are for political rights and civil liberties, based on Freedom House indicators on a range of 1 to 7, with 1 being “free” and 7 being “not free.” The measures presented take the average (by year) of the two scores for each regime over the course of their rule. Data accessed at: [http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world](http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world).
The military staged several coups throughout the civil war. After the election of Ahmad Kabbah and the SLPP in 1996, the SLPP regime, usurping power from Valentine Strasser’s National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military government, attempted to stabilize the government’s power and end the civil war. Executive Outcomes, a South African private military corporation (PMC), was hired by Strasser and the contract was continued by the Kabbah regime. The successful operations of Executive Outcomes routed the rebels from Freetown, but the multimillion-dollar contract could not be met by the fiscally-mismanaged Sierra Leonean government. Executive Outcomes withdrew and the RUF regained the majority of its territory previously lost to the PMC. But the SLPP-led government failed to restructure the RSLAF and in 1997, the AFRC—comprised of both RUF and RSLAF combatants—initiated a military coup and a fragile alliance was negotiated between the AFRC and RUF.

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256 Data drawn from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2012) “Military Expenditures by State,” accessed at: http://milexdata.sipri.org/. It must be noted that during the 1998 and 1999 calendar years, SIPRI researchers were unable to obtain data on military expenditures due to pervasive insecurity and lack of government records throughout this period of conflict.

External military actors prevented a complete AFRC-RUF takeover of Sierra Leone. The AFRC-RUF alliance survived until 1998 when the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeeping force restored power to the democratically-elected SLPP government. When General Maxwell Khobe, Nigerian Chief of Defense Staff and then-commander of ECOMOG died in 1999, Nigerian operations in Sierra Leone were greatly reduced by succeeding Nigerian officers (as Khobe was the primary advocate for Nigerian military hegemony in West African security arrangements). As a result, ECOMOG command withdrew from Sierra Leone and its personnel were integrated into UN peacekeeping operations.\textsuperscript{258} To prevent an RUF takeover of Freetown, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed in late-1999 (initially 6,000 personnel) and at its apex consisted of 17,500 peacekeepers with an annual budget of $744 million. Additionally, 600 officers from the United Kingdom trained 8,500 new recruits in the RSLAF throughout 2001 to build the capacity of the national army to enforce security in the country and maintain professionalism toward future civilian-led governments.\textsuperscript{259}

What was the role of women in the RSLAF? The RSLAF forcibly recruited women and girls into its ranks and findings suggest that 1,167 girls were participants in the RSLAF as support personnel and active participants in combat where they employed violence against noncombatants. Girl soldiers were particularly valued by RSLAF officers because of their obedience and ferocity in combat. Based on data compiled by Cohen, 1,167 individuals—approximately 8.8 percent of fighters in the RSLAF—were

\textsuperscript{258} Nelson-Williams, Alfred (2008) op. cit. p. 5.  
women (compared to 24.4 percent or 7,500 women in the RUF).\textsuperscript{260} Women were not, however, present in the upper-leadership of the RSLAF throughout the civil war—they were limited to field commanders of female-only combat units, enlisted combatants, or support personnel throughout the war.\textsuperscript{261}

Initially a ceremonial force, the RSLAF expanded greatly at the start of the Sierra Leonean civil war leading to its composition as a highly unprofessional and poorly paid national army a year into the conflict. Relative to the RUF, the RSLAF was similarly undisciplined yet committed only 8.3 percent of rapes throughout the civil war.\textsuperscript{262} There were no reports of sexual violence against female combatants (e.g., “bush wives”) in the RSLAF as well as their participation in sexual violence against civilians. Despite more equitable intragroup dynamics vis-à-vis the RUF, women in the RSLAF were underrepresented (8.8 percent of total personnel) and were relegated to field commander, enlisted combatant, and support roles.

\textbf{2.4. Gender Dynamics of the LTTE and RUF}

How were female combatants in the LTTE and RUF treated intra-organizationally vis-à-vis women and girls in broader Sri Lankan and Sierra Leonean society? What were their roles in relation to the men who participated in these two insurgencies? Were women able to participate in leadership positions or decision making during combat? This section aims to present both macrosocial and intra-group data on gender relations in order to determine the role and treatment of women within the two insurgencies.

\textsuperscript{260} Cohen, Dara K. (2010) op. cit., p. 87.
\textsuperscript{262} Cohen, Dara K. (2010) op. cit., p. 87.
Particular attention will be paid to the reasons why women joined the violent movements, their active participation in combat, and the insurgencies’ integration of women within their male-dominated ranks.

**Women in Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam**

In Tamil society in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, women inhabited a patriarchal society which circumscribed female behavior in their daily lives before the conflict. Predominantly Hindu in their religious practices, young Tamil women and girls were expected by their parents to enter “good marriages” while education was emphasized for their male siblings. Through the process of Sanskritization, high-caste Hindu norms and values (i.e., Brahmanism) were adopted by all castes, even by low- and backward-caste Hindus. According to Brahmanism:

“the goals of marriage are dharma (“religious duty”), praja (“progeny”) and rati (“pleasure”); thus sex is last in importance, and only a low caste sudra would marry primarily for pleasure... To sum up: according to Brahmanic theory the ideal woman is pativrata [wifely devotion]: its concomitants are virginity at marriage, chastity as the wifely goal, unassertiveness and submissiveness, and unquestioning loyalty to the husband” (emphasis added).

In addition, conservative Hindu beliefs prohibited the remarriage of widows and required that male family members be present at the burial of Hindu women. A “good marriage” depended on a woman’s social and sexual reputation as well as the ability of the family to produce a large dowry for a male suitor. To protect women’s sexual

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263 Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., p. 46.
265 Ibid.
266 Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., pp. 46-7. This meant that Tamil women from lower class and caste backgrounds were typically marginalized during the marriage process and were unable to rise through
reputations, Tamil families prohibited fraternization between men and women to prevent sexually impure behavior before marriage.\textsuperscript{267} Tamil women were expected to be passive actors in the private sphere (e.g., the home) while men were delegated active roles in the public sphere. Childrearing was seen as a women’s duty, while men were viewed as the breadwinners of households.\textsuperscript{268} The sexual separation of the sexes—via the public-private dichotomy—was, and remains, a gendered practice in broader Tamil society largely influenced by conservative Hindu religious beliefs.\textsuperscript{269} The gendered norms and practices of Tamil society in large part exemplify the qualities of Sanday’s conceptualization of a “rape prone” society.\textsuperscript{270} The only instance of Tamil women’s participation in the public sphere before the civil war was at Jaffna University in the 1970s, where they engaged in peaceful protests against anti-Tamil legislation with their male colleagues.\textsuperscript{271} Ironically, the Sri Lankan civil war was to provide a space for women’s empowerment as fathers, sons, and male relatives were killed, disappeared, or recruited into the ranks of the LTTE.

There were also localized Tamil superstitions—predominately in rural areas of northeast Sri Lanka—which proscribed women’s autonomy vis-à-vis men. Women were not allowed to ride bicycles, to go to the sea, or ride boats; these beliefs were grounded in the assumption that women would bring disaster to themselves and their families if they

\begin{itemize}
  \item class ranks because upper and middle class (and caste) families could provide a large dowry for the families of male suitors.
  \item Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 163; Schrijvers, Joke (1999) op. cit., p. 314.
  \item Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 167.
  \item Ibid.
  \item The qualities of a “rape prone” society, according to Sanday, include: (1) which sex rears children (i.e., “rape prone” societies prescribe women); (2) sexual repression of a particular gender (e.g. Tamil women); (3) asymmetrical violence perpetrated by a specific gender; (4) sexual separation of the sexes (e.g. Tamil familial practices with Tamil girls and young women); and (5) the glorification of the male role in society. For more details see: Sanday, Peggy R. (1981) op. cit., p. 19.
  \item Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., p. 46.
\end{itemize}
engaged in such activities. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 show that throughout the Sri Lankan conflict by year, women as a group were less equal than men (although they enjoyed more equality than women in Sierra Leone). The spike in the Gender Empowerment Measure during 2001 is indicative of widespread women’s political participation in anticipation of the Norwegian-led peace deal, the details finally agreed upon by both the SLA and LTTE by 2002. This lull in the conflict (2002-2007) caused a shift in LTTE supporters’ tactics from advocacy of violence (radical means) to politics and civil protests (reformist means): many Tamil and Sinhalese women protested the civil war and became more politically active; the LTTE established an effective de facto state in northern and eastern Sri Lanka; and Colombo refrained from challenging the LTTE’s administrative and military capabilities of the de facto Tamil state in the north and east.

However, when the category of women is complicated by divisions between Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups, Sinhalese women were much more socioeconomically empowered before and during the conflict than Tamil women. Sinhalese women—especially urban, middle-to-upper class, and university-educated—have participated in local and national politics in Sri Lanka with the help of male relatives who provide them access to political venues and resources. The world’s first female prime minister was Sirimavo Bandaranaike, a Sinhalese woman from an elite

272 Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 165.
273 Women’s involvement included both Tamils and Sinhalese as well as both pro-war and pro-peace stances.
275 This was in part due to the fact that language and educational policies of the Sri Lankan government disproportionately favored Sinhalese women and girls, leaving Tamil women and girls at a disadvantage while seeking employment in the civil servant and education sectors of the Sri Lankan economy. Additionally, Tamil cultural practices and gendered norms emphasized the education of boys over girls and young men were pushed much harder than young women by family members to enter the university to study for a professional career. The nexus of policy consequences and cultural practices problematized Tamil women’s socioeconomic position in Sri Lanka. For more details, see Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., pp. 46-50.
background, who succeeded her husband as prime minister of Ceylon after his assassination by a Buddhist monk in 1959.\textsuperscript{276}

Violence was overwhelming perpetrated by men leading up to the 1983-2009 civil war among both the Sinhalese and Tamils. Jonathan Spencer notes that:

“Overt violence is most obviously patterned in terms of gender: women very rarely have recourse to physical violence and very few murders are committed by women; more murders are committed on women, but generally speaking murder is something that happens between male acquaintances. A higher and growing proportion of women commit suicide, and suicide provides an alternative outlet for aggression against those whom it would be unthinkable to attack more directly, people like parents and husbands” (emphasis added).\textsuperscript{277}

This statement in large part points to the asymmetrical violence perpetrated by Sinhalese and Tamil men yet also highlights societal norms regarding women’s use of violence. Violence against oneself—rather than against others—was viewed as appropriately feminine and appears to have been exploited by the LTTE with its use of female suicide bombers in Black Tiger cadre throughout the civil war.

Sri Lankan women experienced gender inequality before the civil war, although Tamil women were disproportionately subjected to gender inequality because of the intersection of their gender and Tamil identities. Tamil women earned 10 percent less than their male counterparts in comparable forms of employment; other ethnic women, such as Moors, earn an average of 56 percent less than their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{278}

Because of women’s access to primary education (and social norms emphasizing its importance for both boys and girls), forced marriages are not as common, especially in

\textsuperscript{276} Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., p. 46.
town and cities; however, in rural areas, forced marriages are more common. The average age of marriage for Sri Lankan women during the 1990s was 25. Because of universal access to public health care services, the maternal mortality rate in Sri Lanka was 60 per 100,000 live births throughout the war, one of the lowest in the developing world (compared to 1,800 in Sierra Leone).  

![Figure 2.5. Sri Lanka Gender-Related Development Indicators](image)

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280 The Gender-Related Development Index is compiled annually by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and is designed to show macrosocial trends of gender inequality in the areas of: education, length of life, and gross domestic product per capita (divided between the genders). It is scored on a 0.0 to 1.0 scale, 1.0 being perfect equality, 0.0 being perfect inequality. For more information, see: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/).
Tamil women’s active participation in the LTTE began in 1984, when the LTTE aggressively recruited and trained women in Tamil Nadu, India. Why were women recruited into the LTTE? The shift in LTTE policy to the recruitment of women is largely a result of: (1) the need for additional combatants to engage state security forces; (2) the tactical advantage women provided against the Sinhalese states, particularly in passing through SLA checkpoints and engaging in suicide terrorism; (3) the ideological and symbolic need to demonstrate that the LTTE was in fact working for women’s emancipation; and (4) the in-group pressure female Tigers placed on leadership to participate in combat against the Sinhalese state.\textsuperscript{282} To avoid any loss of support from conservative Tamil populations, the LTTE initially utilized women in support roles while gradually liberalizing these restrictions to include women in combatant ranks as the

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{gender_empowerment.png}
\caption{Sri Lanka Gender Empowerment Measure}
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\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{gender_empowerment.png}
\caption{Sri Lanka Gender Empowerment Measure}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{281} The Gender Empowerment Measure is compiled annually by the UNDP and is intended to show macrosocial gender inequality trends in the areas of: political participation and decision making, economic participation, and control over economic resources. It is scored on a 0.0 to 1.0 scale, 1.0 being perfect equality, 0.0 being perfect inequality. For more information, see: http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/.

Tamil Tigers eliminated or absorbed Tamil insurgencies that claimed to be more representative of Tamil cultural (and patriarchal) values. Adele Ann writes that “great care was taken [by LTTE leadership] not to upset the cultural values of the society at large. First aid, cooking, etc. were the overt functions… As time went on, the birds of freedom [e.g., female LTTE cadre] began to participate in the fighting also.”

How were women integrated into the ranks of the LTTE? Tamil women were integrated into the highly-disciplined LTTE ranks via several policies: (1) male and female combatants were separated during daily operations and even during combat operations; (2) sexual relations and marriage (until Prabhakaran relaxed this policy in 1986 after his wedding) among LTTE combatants were prohibited; and (3) the official ideology of the LTTE was revised to include the complete emancipation of all Tamil women from patriarchy and the Sinhalese state. In short, the LTTE “mimicked [Tamil] familial relations” to maintain intragroup discipline and prevent the loss of conservative Tamil supporters. To garner conservative Tamil support, noncombatant Tamil women were treated differently by the LTTE as cadre reinforced patriarchal relations among them, particularly by policing Tamil women for sexual chastity and even banning women’s wearing of trousers to prevent sexual temptation among Tamil men. This paradox of gender (in)equality within and outside LTTE ranks is indicative of the

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284 There are also reported instances of men and women in the LTTE who were caught engaging in forbidden sexual activities and consequently reprimanded by field commanders. Punishment included forced labor, lashings, and even death. Two of Prabhakaran’s male body guards were caught engaging in sexual activity and as a result, and to deter future breaches of the intraorganizational prohibition of sexual intercourse, both were killed by LTTE cadre. For more details, see Stack-O’Connor (2007) op. cit., p. 50.
285 Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., p. 50. There are also reported instances of men and women in the LTTE who were caught engaging in forbidden sexual activities then being reprimanded by field commanders. Punishment included forced labor, lashings, and even death.
instrumental role that women played within the organization while LTTE rhetoric of women’s emancipation was subordinated to the nationalist struggle for Tamil Eelam.

Women’s early participation consisted of propaganda work, medical care, information collection, fundraising, and recruitment—traditionally feminine roles in Tamil culture. This was because initially, both male leaderships and enlisted combatants in the LTTE did not view women as capable of combat and the reinforcement of societal gender roles within the group made the LTTE more palatable to conservative Tamil supporters.\(^{287}\) However, in 1983 the LTTE formed a combat unit comprised entirely of female LTTE personnel called the *Vituthalai Pulikal Munani* (Women’s Front of the Liberation Tigers [WFLT]). The WFLT began training in Tamil Nadu in 1985 and by July 1986 a WFLT cadre engaged in their first battle with Sri Lanka armed forces.\(^{288}\) Sensing a growing need for additional combatants in the LTTE, Prabhakaran implemented the first all-women training camp in Jaffna in October 1987; the training camp was designed to expand the WFLT by increasing the number of combat-ready female cadre. Adele Balasingham, an Australian national and wife of the LTTE chief political advisor Anton S. Balasingham, was the undisputed female commander of the LTTE. She argued that women’s incorporation was a natural evolution of the Tamil struggle:

“Young women too experienced the horrors of the racial riots... The forces of social constraint which had obstructed their deeper participation earlier, had left them exposed and defenceless in the face of violent racist hatred and State terror. Deepening genocidal oppression now propelled them out of their established social life into a new revolutionary world. Young women broke the shackles of social constraints, they ripped open the straight jacket of conservatives images of women. The militant patriotism of Tamil women finally blossomed as they entered into a new

\(^{287}\) Ibid.  
\(^{288}\) Alison, Miranda (2003) op. cit., p. 39.
life of revolutionary armed struggle… The credit for providing and creating the facilities and opportunities for women to complete a comprehensive military training programme has to be given to the leader of the Liberation Tigers Mr. Velupillai Pirabakaran [sic].”

Therefore, the WFLT had a fully autonomous leadership structure by 1989, separate from the male-dominated leadership of the LTTE. The stated ideological goals found in the WFLT charter were:

“to secure the right to self-determination of the Tamil Eelam people and establish an independent democratic state of Tamil Eelam; to abolish oppressive caste discrimination and divisions, and semi-feudal customs like dowry; to eliminate all discrimination against Tamil women and all other discrimination, and to secure social, political, and economic equality; to ensure that Tamil women control their own lives; and to secure legal protection for women against sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence” (emphasis added).

The goals of Tamil women’s emancipation were reiterated by Prabhakaran in speeches which prioritized the national Tamil struggle and concomitantly claimed that women’s liberation from the structural patriarchy of Tamil society was dependent upon the broader independence movement. Thus, Alison argues that “it is clear that the independence struggle [for Tamil Eelam] fundamentally frames the struggle for [Tamil] women’s rights.” Similar instances of women’s emancipation from patriarchy as subordinate to or dependent on the nationalist struggle are common in other revolutionary nationalist movements, including the Irish Republican Army, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade in Chechnya.

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290 Ibid.
292 Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 162.
293 Ibid.
There was significant resistance by many male LTTE combatants when women first entered into the ranks of the LTTE in 1985. These men were products of a conservative Tamil society that forbade fraternization between young men and women and sexual relations before marriage. Miranda Alison interviewed fourteen Tamil women who had participated in the LTTE. She found that many young female combatants sought to “prove themselves” to male cadre, who were initially skeptical about their combat abilities and were uneasy with the prospects of women being killed or maimed in combat operations.294 Teresa, a female LTTE cadre, explains how mixed women’s reception initially was among enlisted men in the Tamil Tigers:

“Now there would’ve been other people in the Army who would’ve been very dismissive of women bein’ in the Army… I had a very positive experience in the Army but that’s not to say there weren’t men who were Neanderthals, you know, thought ‘what’s a girl doin’ in the Army?’”295

Teresa also explained how male cadre often argued for having better weapons than women and several men refused to go on operations with female colleagues.296 Women were also separated from men in the LTTE. Thamilvily, a female LTTE cadre, notes that:

“men and women train and live separately because the movement is very conscious of discipline. Society is not quite happy to have women join the movement, so to have men and women train together would raise eyebrows. It is better to have separate camps. Also, when girls first join they are shy and need coaxing—this is easier separately. Also there are problems specific to women. Also because the LTTE is so strong on discipline, they want to avoid questionable behavior.” 297

In the late-1980s and early-1990s, male LTTE combatants initially saw themselves as the protectors of women—rather than viewing their female comrades as highly trained and capable combatants. Thamilini, a female Tiger, argued that women’s active participation

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294 Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 163.
296 Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 188.
297 Cited in Alison, Miranda (2009) op. cit., p. 163.
in the LTTE provided opportunities for men’s acceptance of women’s role in the insurgency:

“When we do something then men get to know about our capabilities, but our country’s attitude towards woman [sic] is different and men are always praised for doing harder and clever jobs, so on seeing women doing the work it will kindle men’s ego and ego tends to stop women’s growth in this aspect, but on that situation we need to be courageous and patient.” 298

Tamil women were eager to engage in combat missions and LTTE leadership supported the deployment of women in combat operations; thus, Tamil women won the case to participate in combat by 1986 despite occasional protest by conservative male LTTE cadre. Adele Balasingham, also known as Adele Ann, notes that: “[a]s mutual confidence and comradeship grew from the battle experience the gender distinctions in the allocations of responsibilities and military duties started to melt away.” 299

The turning point for male cadre accepting the full participation of women in the LTTE was in the north of Sri Lanka (c. 1995-6) when the SLA conducted its victorious campaign to usurp the territory of Jaffna from LTTE control. The male LTTE members initially thought that women would be unable to bear the brunt of the fighting in such horrendous combat conditions, as the men themselves considered the situation extremely precarious. The female cadre, however, saw the defense of Jaffna as their duty and sought to prove themselves to the male colleagues. Tamilachi, who enlisted in 1991, and other female LTTE combatants “felt that the women proved their abilities and earned a lot of

respect from their male comrades” despite losing the territorial stronghold of Jaffna to the SLA.300

During the 2002-2007 period of fragile peace between the government and insurgency, the LTTE appointed five female officers with years of combat experience within the WFLT ranks to participate in the Subcommittee on Gender Issues (SGI)—a symbolic move initiated by Prabhakaran that emphasized women’s importance as combatants, leaders, and administrators within the LTTE ranks. The Sri Lankan government, in contrast, appointed only men to participate in the SGI, a committee which was tasked with including women in the Norwegian-led peace negotiations.301 By the time the Sri Lankan conflict ended in 2009, there were reports that five of the top twelve leadership positions of the LTTE’s central committee consisted of women, although little is known about their ability to influence decision making during the latter stages of the civil war due to the secrecy of central committee dynamics regarding decision-making processes.302 Adele Balasingham and Colonel Yarlini (Vithusha), commander of the WFLT throughout the civil war, were the two most influential female members of the central committee decision-making processes.303

Female combatants in the LTTE gained considerable agency via their participation in the WFLT and other women-based LTTE activities as the need for additional combatants rose during the mid-1980s. However, several scholars challenge the “liberation” of Tamil female combatants in the Tamil national struggle and have

questioned whether these women are “agents or victims, liberated or subjugated, emancipated or oppressed.” Kamala Liyanage argues that similar to women’s participation in other nationalist struggles, the LTTE viewed Tamil nationalism as a primary goal with women’s emancipation as a secondary consequence after Tamil independence. She points to previous national struggles in Algeria, Palestine, and Zimbabwe in which female combatants were relegated to their previous traditional gender roles after violent conflicts dissipated. As women become participants in nationalist struggles, Liyanage asserts, male leadership defines and projects nationalist visions while female combatants “fight to fulfill men’s nationalistic aspirations.”

Rajasingham-Senanayake challenges such a pessimistic analysis of women’s disempowerment through their participation in violent nationalist movements—and particularly in the LTTE. She argues that female Tamil combatants are neither truly liberated nor subjugated, but that:

“[t]he reality of LTTE women is probably somewhere in-between. For while they may have broken out of the confines of their allotted domesticity and taken on new roles as fighters, it is indeed arguable that they are held captive both to the patriarchal nationalist project of the LTTE leader Prabhakaran and the history and experience of oppression by the Sri Lankan military. However, to deny these Tamil nationalist women their agency because they are nationalist is to once again position them within the ‘victim’ complex, where the militant woman is denied her agency and perceived to be acting out a patriarchal plot.”

Thus, women in the LTTE joined the movement because the sought revenge against the Sinhalese state which they viewed as waging a genocidal campaign against the Tamil people (e.g., the perceived genocidal use of rape against Tamil women). The female

combatants were not subjected to sexual slavery, as in the RUF, and the LTTE leadership punished male combatants who raped or sexually harassed both civilian and combatant women. Additionally, female cadre wielded small arms and light weapons from 1986 until the LTTE’s defeat in May 2009.

These intragroup dynamics confirm Alisa Stack-O’Connor’s observations that women in the LTTE “refute popular portrayals of women as duped into terrorism or too emotional to make a rational decision” and would “often show rationality in their decision to take up arms.”307 By the mid-1990s, female cadre, in large part, had been accepted as full participants in the national struggle yet the organizational structure of the LTTE separated the sexes during combat and training. Despite opportunities for women’s empowerment during the civil war, it is impossible to argue that the organizational practice of “separate but equal”—separate training, camps, and combat units—amounted to true gender equality and liberation for LTTE women. It also shows how the influence of conservative Tamil cultural norms and practices limited the empowerment of women intraorganizationally despite the LTTE’s ideological rhetoric of gender equality.

Women in Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front

Although it is difficult to generalize the macrosocial gender dynamics of Sierra Leone due to the multiple identities which intersect with within Sierra Leonean society, gendered commonalities—both in gendered norms and behavior—are present across the population of Sierra Leone. 308 This section compares and contrasts macrosocial gender

308 A macro-analysis of gender in Sierra Leone is complicated by ethno-linguistic (e.g., Mende-Temne), class, age, and rural-urban divisions which vary throughout the country—a data caveat common to all macrosocial studies of gender dynamics. The common practice of intermarriage among ethno-linguistic
dynamics in Sierra Leone to intragroup gender dynamics of the RUF; traces the role of women in the insurgency; and analyzes the (in)consistency of leadership statements and directives on gender (in)equality.

Leading up to the civil war in Sierra Leone, men and women were assigned complimentary (i.e., binary) gender roles by older Sierra Leonean men and women (i.e., agents of patriarchy) who sought to uphold traditional notions of gender, but such gendered norms and behavior were not equitable, as men enjoyed dominance in the political and legal spheres. Restricted by customary tribal law in the rural north, women were unable to own property—especially land—as property was inherited via a patrilineal process. Older women in the rural north—acting as agents of patriarchy—often said that younger women should subordinate themselves to their fathers and husbands “because that is how we met [sic] it.”

Despite formal law (e.g., the 1991 Constitution) in Sierra Leone which granted women de jure equality with men, customary law deemed women as legal minors in judicial processes, including “adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death, or other interests of personal law.”

Age was another important aspect of identity which complicated the seemingly unequal status of women. Deference toward elders was a common practice in Sierra Leone, which allowed older women to exert power over younger Sierra Leonean men. The emphasis on age as an important aspect of identity also led to widespread rebellion of disgruntled youth (many of whom participated in the RUF, AFRC, or RSLAF) who

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309 Cited in Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., p. 60.
targeted local “big men” who were extolled for their elder status and/or wealth. As polygamy was a common practice in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, senior wives had authority over junior wives. Older sisters were often granted a higher status than their younger male siblings in the family hierarchy by fathers and mothers.311

A rural-urban divide between women in Sierra Leone was also present before and during the conflict. The experience of rural women contrasts sharply with educated Krio women in Freetown who have worked for socioeconomic equality and political participation since independence. Urban women knew the language of human rights discourse and were often involved in local politics as community organizers, politicians, or in secret societies; rural women, in contrast, were predominantly involved in the agricultural sector, performing the majority of manual labor.312 Rural women in Sierra Leone were extraordinarily resilient, engaging in the most difficult agricultural tasks such as planting, weeding, and harvest, in addition to meeting men’s expectations of their duties in the kitchen and childrearing. Despite women’s disproportionate participation in agricultural labor, Coulter finds that:

“Male stereotypes about women… were that they were always gossiping, they were lazy, they were also dangerous and needed to be controlled (which is why they are circumcised, according to both men and women), and they ‘belonged in the house.’ It was understood that a woman cannot be for herself; she is always of or for someone else” (emphasis in original).313

Compounding societal stereotypes of women’s behavior, the notion of rape as a crime was a relatively new phenomenon in Sierra Leone by 1991; rape was once recently defined to be perpetrated solely against virgins. Rape or sexual violence against non-

311 Ibid.
313 Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., p. 58.
virgins, according to Human Rights Watch, was justified by the misconception held among a dominant majority of men that “the woman must have consented to the act or is a seductress.”\textsuperscript{314} Within established marriages, “[m]arital rape [was] not recognized under either customary or general law in Sierra Leone.”\textsuperscript{315}

Two other forms of gender violence were widespread in Sierra Leone before and during the civil war. Forced early marriages were common in the rural provinces of Sierra Leone, and as these young girls’ bodies had not reached maturity, maternal mortality rates were 1,800 deaths per 100,000 live births.\textsuperscript{316} Young married girls were often economically vulnerable and dependent on their husbands due to their lack of education and/or vocational skills.\textsuperscript{317} Another socially-condoned form of gender violence common to Sierra Leone throughout the war was female genital cutting (FGC). During FGC, the genitalia of young girls are removed in order to ensure that they do not become sexually promiscuous as they reach puberty. Secret women’s societies and midwives usually conducted FGC for adolescents, teenage girls, and women. Men and women in Sierra Leone viewed this practice as an “initiation” into womanhood and bachelor men would not consider women marriageable until they had undergone FGC. Nearly 90

\textsuperscript{315} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{316} Ibid. This is an incredibly high rate of maternal mortality (data collected by the government of Sierra Leone throughout the conflict), which was exacerbated by the civil war and a systematic lack of health care infrastructure in rural Sierra Leone. One should compare Sierra Leone’s rates to 2011 data on maternal mortality in the United States (8 per 100,000) or Brazil (160 per 100,000) to situate Sierra Leone’s international position on maternal health. Data accessed at: http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/hea_mat_mor-health-maternal-mortality.
\textsuperscript{317} Human Rights Watch (2003) op. cit., p. 23.
percent of women in Sierra Leone have undergone FGC while they were young girls or adults.  

Despite gendered norms and practices that were detrimental to women, rural Sierra Leonean women (both Mende and Temne) often maintained separate economic livelihoods from their husbands and/or male family members. This was a traditional practice in Sierra Leone, Leach writes, as “[h]usbands and wives have always maintained separate income streams and expenditures.” Regardless of their economic independence, women were tied to the kinship structure which provided both benefits and disadvantages to Sierra Leonean women. Coulter found during the war years that “although women in Sierra Leone in general [were] less educated, [made] less money, and [were] legally and politically subordinate to men, and despite the fact that Sierra Leone [was] still a largely patriarchal society, many Sierra Leonean women [were] nevertheless both resourceful and ingenious” in their daily survival. Educated women from towns, suburbs, and the capital were also much more likely to divorce, although rural women increasingly divorced their husbands if they were unable to provide for their children. Thus, remarriage was common if potential suitors were willing to pay a “bride price” to the former husband, which was typically a considerable amount of money. Despite their resourcefulness, Sierra Leonean women were embedded in a highly

318 Human Rights Watch (2003) op. cit., pp. 23-4. The widespread practice of FGC is largely due to the fact that women view marriage as an important socioeconomic means for survival and their family members would ostracize them from their town or village if they refused to participate in initiation ceremonies which included FGC. Also, Sierra Leonean men would not marry women who had not undergone FGC because they believed women who still had their genitalia were sexually promiscuous.
patriarchal society, as evidenced by Sierra Leone’s bottom ranking of socioeconomic indicators for gender equity out of nearly 180 countries (see Figure 2.7).

![Figure 2.7. Sierra Leone Gender-Related Development Indicators](image)

Using Sanday’s indicators on “rape-free” versus “rape-prone” societies, the study finds that (1) women were predominately expected to rear children; (2) women’s sexuality was repressed via FGC and other patriarchal norms; (3) violence was overwhelming perpetrated by men before and during the conflict; (4) males and females were separated from a young age (e.g. women’s and men’s secret societies operated independently of one another); and (5) as Sierra Leone was a highly patriarchal society, men’s status and experiences were systematically valued over women’s. In short, Sierra

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322 The Gender-Related Development Index is compiled annually by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and is designed to show macrosocial trends of gender inequality in the areas of: education, length of life, and gross domestic product per capita (divided between the genders). It is scored on a 0.0 to 1.0 scale, 1.0 being perfect equality, 0.0 being perfect inequality. For more information, see: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/). The UNDP began to compile GDI data in 1995—four years after the start of the Sierra Leonean civil war—and during the last three years of the conflict, UNDP researchers were unable to collect GDI data due to access issues and widespread insecurity in the country.
Leone can be classified as a “rape-prone” society before and during the conflict using Sanday’s analytical framework.

How were women’s experiences in the RUF different and similar from those experienced by female non-combatants? Approximately 7,500 women were forcibly recruited into the ranks of the RUF which totaled 24.4 percent of RUF combatants. Women were coercively recruited into the RUF when it emerged in the Kailahun District of Sierra Leone in March 1991—although in low numbers initially—to serve in large part as domestic and/or sexual slaves to male cadre of the RUF. In many of their forty interviews with women who had participated in the RUF, Myriam Denov and Christine Gervais found that as RUF rebels entered villages and towns, they were ordered to join the RUF at gunpoint. One young Sierra Leonean girl told Denov and Gervais that:

“During one of their numerous attacks, the rebels succeeded in driving the progovernment forces from our community. We hid ourselves in our house. The firing was so intense. Most people were running helter-skelter. After the fighting and firing subsided, rebels entered our house and forcefully picked me among my brothers and sisters… Who would dare refuse? Not even if you were mad… So they took me away… I did not know what we were heading for and what they wanted to do with me. I was in total fear.”

Once captured by RUF cadre, many young girls were forced to do domestic labor, including cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for young children, and carrying various munitions (e.g., ammunition and small arms). A culture of violence within the RUF—ranging from verbal abuse to horrendous acts of (sexual) violence against RUF members, pro-government forces, and civilians—caused many women within the insurgency to

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become totally compliant with orders from male combatants. Not only was such violence intended to ensure compliance from abducted women and girls, it served as a form of “indoctrination into and desensitization to the RUF’s campaign of terror.” As a caveat, it must be noted that some women—all reports come from the southern areas of Sierra Leone—did in fact voluntarily join the RUF; however, Coulter and other scholars remain skeptical about how “voluntary” such cases were and point to the overwhelming number of forced conscriptions of women and girls into the RUF ranks throughout the war. Because rural women in the rural south of Sierra Leone were disproportionately impacted by the APC regime, Binta Mansaray argues that women may have joined the RUF for gender equality and the ability to wield small arms—she portrays this as a “revolt” against the feminization of poverty as well as patriarchal norms and customs.

This skepticism over the issue of women’s voluntarism is largely because of the phenomenon commonly known in Sierra Leone as “bush marriage” or “AK-47 marriage,” which was a violent form of gendered relations within the RUF that amounted to a form of sexual and domestic slavery. Women and girls captured by the RUF were assigned “husbands”—usually commanders within the organization—who would then

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327 Brett, Rachel and Irma Specht (2004) *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p. 8. Also important to bear in mind is that many women and men may have retrospectively claimed that the RUF abducted them, like the majority of women in the RUF, when in fact they had joined the rebels voluntarily. This, the former rebels argued, would allow them to be more accepted by their families and communities after the war during the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes conducted by UNICEF and the UNDP. Because the women Coulter had interviewed became accustomed to human rights workers post-conflict, they became more likely to alter their stories to gain sympathy from humanitarian workers and aid agencies and avoid social stigmatization. See Brett and Specht (2004) op. cit., p. 85 and Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., pp. 99-100.
demand sexual favors and domestic labor from them. In the absence of their “husbands,” these women and girls would commonly be raped by lower ranking combatants. One young Sierra Leonean girl informed Denov and Gervais that:

“I was twelve years old at the time. There was one man, a commander, who took me for his own. But the other rebels demanded sex from me too. Whenever the commander was away, the other men would come after me and rape me. Some were in full view of others. Sometimes they would take me into the bush and rape me. They seemed to do it more often when they were taking drugs.”

Such forms of sexual slavery often resulted in the pregnancy of women and girls in the RUF, fathered by male RUF combatants.

However, despite widespread sexual violence within the RUF, women and girls were given small arms and light weapons, rudimentarily trained, and ordered to engage in combat situations. This was a powerful form of resistance against male combatants who sought to rape them, as their weapons provided them with personal security from sexual violence. One girl said that “I was eager to become a soldier and have my own gun so that I would be able to resist threats and harassment from other soldiers.” Still more “bush wives” reported that they would hide food from their commanding officers and male combatants in order to avoid hunger and malnutrition. The “wives” of commanders were also able to distribute food and military supplies to female combatants, and in the absence of their “bush husbands,” would command rebel bases, plan and conduct reconnaissance missions, and raid villages and government depots for essential supplies to conduct future combat operations. Another common form of women’s resistance was escape from the RUF while fetching water, supplies, or on combat

331 Ibid.
333 Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., p. 103.
missions. Those women who were successful in their escape left the bush for Freetown or larger rural communities outside of rebel control; those who were recaptured would often be executed as an example for other female (and male) combatants who dared to desert the insurgency. A final form of resistance against intragroup violence was women and girls’ use of violence against civilians and progovernment forces to legitimize themselves as integral personnel in combat squadrons and thus become subject to less frequent sexual violence by male RUF combatants.

Women were given the opportunity for promotion to leadership positions within the RUF if they became respected combatants in the field, which usually meant that female combatants who wielded indiscriminant violence against civilians and pro-government forces were often respected, shielded from sexual violence by male combatants, and were promoted to the rank of unit commander. Often female commanders were in command of a squadron of eight to ten female combatants, which would operate separately from male RUF cadre (Coulter refers to this as a “violent meritocracy” in which women and young boys could become leader based on their tenacity during combat). Women who were promoted to commander in the RUF were often nostalgic about their accomplishments in the organization. One woman told Denov and Gervais during an interview:

“Very violent and obedient soldiers were given positions as commanders. You needed to show enthusiasm, be very active during combat and terrorize and abduct civilians… I was very active in combat and also captured a lot of people, including children. This contributed to my elevation to the status of commander.”

This meritocracy of violence in the RUF provided a means for women and girls to rise through the ranks of leadership in the RUF, although there are no reports of women exceeding the rank of unit commanders with 30 to 40 combatants under their command. It is widely documented that drugs—such as alcohol, heroin, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and marijuana—were given to girls who were part of the Small Girls Unit. The Small Girls Unit, in coordination with the Small Boys Unit, employed the most indiscriminant violence against civilians throughout the course of the war. Drugs were viewed—even in interviews with young female combatants themselves—as the only reason they were “brave” during combat operations.\textsuperscript{339}

Compounding gender inequalities within the RUF, the use of sexual violence against female RUF combatants and furthered the institutionalization of gender differentiation and inequalities within the insurgent organization.\textsuperscript{340} This form of violence—in addition to RUF-perpetrated (sexual) violence against civilian women and girls—will be explored in the second part of the section below. Women and girls in the RUF experienced a highly repressive organizational culture and widespread instances of sexual slavery; however, these women were able to resist such oppressive conditions by “marrying” high-ranking officers, escaping, wielding small arms and light weapons, or employing violence so indiscriminate that commanding officers valued their safety for future campaigns and considered them more fearless than male rebels.


2.5. Variation of Wartime Sexual Violence among Armed Groups

The aim of this section is to uncover and analyze what Elisabeth J. Wood calls the “repertoire of violence” by armed groups against civilians during the civil wars in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone.\(^{341}\) Although underreporting of wartime sexual violence may have been widespread during the conflict, a “repertoire of violence” as an analytical framework compares the frequency of wartime sexual violence in proportion to other documented forms of violence against civilian populations (e.g., kidnapping, assassinations, massacres, torture, forced displacement, etc.).\(^{342}\)

2.5.1 LTTE and SLA (1983-2009)

Wartime sexual violence varied dramatically throughout the 1983-2009 Sri Lankan civil war as the SLA employed such violence in greater frequency than the LTTE. The aim of this section is to briefly compare the use of violence—including sexual and non-sexual violence—by the SLA and LTTE.

Sexual Violence Utilized by the SLA

The SLA employed sexual violence against Tamil civilians throughout the conflict—in higher frequency in the early-1990s and slowly declining by the early 2000s (according to data on reported instances of sexual violence). This is potentially due to the prosecution and conviction of nine SLA soldiers for the rape and murder of Krishanthy Kumarasamy in 1996 at a security checkpoint. The soldiers also killed her brother.

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\(^{342}\) Ibid.
mother, and neighbor who had been seeking here whereabouts. Although the data on acts of wartime sexual violence by the SLA is glaringly incomplete, there are several NGOs in Sri Lanka which have documented cases of sexual violence found in Tamil- and Sinhalese-language newspapers. There is an absence of evidence which points to an *orchestrated* policy (especially by senior leadership) of sexual violence by the SLA against Tamil women; however, patterns appear *systematic* in the sense that rapes by the SLA were committed in three common locations throughout the civil war: at checkpoints, military barracks, and police stations. SLA leadership appears to have done little to halt the frequency of rape by its personnel, and in *acts of omission*, tolerated sexual violence against Tamil women and girls as part of its campaign against the LTTE and its supporters.

The most common form of wartime sexual violence employed by the SLA was the custodial rape and sexual torture of Tamil women, men, girls, and boys. Disproportionately, Tamil women were targets of sexual violence throughout the civil war—Sinhalese women were the targets of LTTE rape in only several documented instances. The location of SLA-perpetrated sexual violence was commonly in police stations and army bases. One woman was gang raped in a police station in the Amparai district by SLA soldiers and was murdered by a grenade intentionally placed in her vagina to erase the evidence of sexual violence.

Another form of wartime sexual violence utilized by the SLA is the “semi-custodial settings of opportunity” or, more directly, rape of Tamil women and girls at

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security checkpoints on roads and highways. One high-ranking SLA officer, interviewed by Wood, said that the frequency of checkpoint rapes:

“depends on the officer in charge… It depends on field commanders: Good commanders don’t allow it, keep tight rein on discipline. By and large [SLA] troops adhere to that. Weak commanders lead to excesses. It’s a matter of professionalism. At road blocks and check points, rape happens because of a lack of supervision and monitoring.”

This statement confirms that field commanders committed acts of omission by failing to forbid the use of sexual violence against Tamil women and girls by their enlisted personnel. The Women and Media Collective—a Sri Lankan women’s media NGO—found thirty seven instances of SLA-perpetrated rape in 1998. A Tamil nationalist website listed seventeen cases in 1996, eighteen in 1997, three in 1999, one in 2000, and six in 2001. In 1996, the infamous rape and murder of Krishanthy Kumarasamy occurred at an SLA checkpoint. Nine members of the SLA cadre which perpetrated the gang rape were charged and convicted with rape, which again may explain why reported SLA rapes decreased so precipitously after the court ruling. Elisabeth J. Wood argues that “sexual violence by state agents is decreasing, given the pattern of declining [reported] cases and increased likelihood of reporting” because of the conviction of the nine soldiers. However, there is little evidence that reporting would have increased after the conviction because Tamil women overwhelmingly viewed rape by state security forces as a free-for-all and believed they could not seek legal recourse for sexual violence in Sinhalese-dominated judicial systems (particularly if they were accused of supporting the LTTE).

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345 Ibid.
346 Ibid.
Repertoire of Violence Employed by the Tamil Tigers

In 1990, when SLA-LTTE violence was engulfing the northern Jaffna peninsula, Mannar Island, and other areas of northern Sri Lanka, the LTTE forcibly displaced 75,000 Muslim civilians from these territories. This occurred as the IPKF withdrew and left a power vacuum in the northern areas. The ethnic cleansing brought about more than one hundred Muslim deaths in August 1990 alone, with extrajudicial killings the most common form of violence against non-combatants by the LTTE. Muslims deemed to be collaborating with Sri Lankan security forces were targeted and killed by the LTTE. Although this may have seemed like an opportunity for LTTE cadre to engage in rape, there were no reports of wartime sexual violence documented by human rights workers, despite myriad cases of looting, murder, and torture in August 1990.349

The LTTE employed suicide bombing from 1987 through 2009 via its Black Tigers suicide bombing division which contained 114 female personnel (compared to 464 men). From 1990 to 2000, the LTTE perpetrated 88 suicide attacks against SLA personnel and Sri Lankan civilians (the highest concentration being in the capital of Colombo). The first documented suicide bombing by the LTTE occurred on 5 July 1987 when Captain Miller, an LTTE member, rammed a truck bomb into SLA barracks in northern Sri Lanka, killing 40 security personnel. The LTTE has also engaged in targeted assassinations of Indian and Sri Lankan politicians, including the 1991 assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a female member named Danhu of the Black Tigers. The Black Tigers, also known as the Karumpuligal, were the most ruthless

349 Ibid.
and violent wing of the LTTE, employing suicide bombers throughout the 1987-2009 period of the civil war.\textsuperscript{350}

Tamil women who had been raped by the SLA were generally approached by Black Tiger cadre and told that their sacrifice as a suicide bomber for the Tamil nationalist cause would bring them martyrdom status and reestablish their family’s honor—a blatant form of extortion and a strategic manipulation of patriarchal norms in Tamil society.\textsuperscript{351} For those who had not experienced sexual violence at the hands of the SLA, LTTE leadership selected female recruits and indoctrinated them by pointing to the importance of nationalism and martyrdom. In short, LTTE leadership extolled death as the ultimate sacrifice for the national struggle. As a result, more than 100 female personnel within the Black Tigers were killed in suicide missions (of the 4,000 women were killed throughout the civil war), with a small minority of them being sexually victimized by the SLA before joining the Black Tigers.\textsuperscript{352} Mia Bloom documents three additional cases in which Tamil men, not associated with the LTTE, raped three Tamil women who, several days later, were solicited by LTTE cadre to join the Black Tiger suicide division of the LTTE to reclaim their honor by sacrificing their lives for an independent Tamil Eelam.\textsuperscript{353}

The February 2002 cease-fire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces—brokered by the Norwegian government—held promise for a cessation of the bitter conflict, which had cost some 60,000 lives (both civilian and military) in Sri Lanka

\textsuperscript{352} Ibid.
from 1983 to 2002. Despite the ceasefire, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) documented 3,516 new cases of underage recruitment by the LTTE in an October 2004 report. By this time, the LTTE released only 1,206 children and “of the cases registered by UNICEF, 1,395 were outstanding as of November 2004.”

The International Crisis Group (ICG) documented various human rights abuses by the LTTE during the 2005 to 2007 period of the civil war. Reprisal killings of Sinhalese civilians increased dramatically during this time period (from 2002 levels which were low due to temporary peace), the worst case occurring in the June 2006 bus bombing in the north central town of Kebithigollewa in which 68 Sinhalese civilians were killed by a LTTE suicide bomber. Extrajudicial killings of suspected Tamil collaborators and Sinhalese opponents—mostly high-level Sri Lankan government officials—were also documented by ICG researchers. For example, an LTTE sniper killed Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgmar at his home on 12 August 2005. Throughout 2005 to 2007, the LTTE perpetrated kidnappings for ransom throughout Colombo, predominantly targeting wealthy Tamil and Sinhalese businessmen. According to the ICG, the kidnappings were not political, but designed to extract money from targeted individuals in order to finance LTTE operations in the north and east.

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355 Ibid.
357 Ibid.
358 It should be noted that after 11 September 2001, illicit financial transactions to the LTTE from the Tamil diasporas in Canada and the United States was subsequently targeted and reduced by government officials in Washington and Ottawa as the LTTE was labeled a terrorist organization by the U.S. Departments of State and Defense. This caused the LTTE to resort to more violent and extreme measures to remain financially solvent, such as kidnappings of wealthy Sri Lankans for ransom. International Crisis Group
During 2008 as the last year of conflict between the LTTE and SLA reached its peak in the LTTE’s northern stronghold, known as the Vanni, LTTE abuses against civilians rose as they became cornered by the SLA in a continually-shrinking territory of control. Human Rights Watch researchers found—by interviewing 35 civilians and human rights workers—that during 2008 in the Vanni, LTTE violations against Sri Lankan civilians included the forced conscription of civilians into LTTE ranks, widespread use of forced labor, and heavy restrictions on civilians’ freedom of movement to and from the Vanni.\(^{359}\) The forced recruitment of adults and children into the LTTE declined from 1,494 cases in 2002 to 166 in 2008 largely due to international pressure on the LTTE to halt the forced recruitment of Tamil adults and children. However, in 2008 the LTTE began a widespread campaign to recruit forcibly children from the Vanni in which LTTE cadre organized pro-LTTE rallies in northern villages and internally displaced person camps, specifically urging 15 to 17 year-old Tamils to join the LTTE. In several other documented cases, LTTE cadre went to different secondary schools in the Vanni to recruit students between the ages of 14 and 17.\(^{360}\) The forced labor of civilians by the LTTE was prevalent in the Vanni in late 2008. Civilians were required to pay tributes to the LTTE, which often resulted in Tamil civilians participating in the construction of bunkers, trenches, and other military defense infrastructure for the LTTE because they lacked the ability to provide cash payments to tax-collecting LTTE cadre.

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By January 2009, the LTTE was essentially defeated by the Sri Lankan security forces as the Tigers’ operations were restricted to the Vanni in the northern tip of Sri Lanka. Some 300,000 Tamil civilians were caught between a rock and a hard place as the LTTE engaged in forced recruitment and a severe restriction of movement to and from the Vanni and while the SLA intentionally shelled villages and hospitals with heavy artillery weaponry and its air force. The resulting four-month intransigence of the conflict was broken when the Sri Lankan security forces announced on 18 May 2009 that Prabhakaran had been killed by an SLA cadre and subsequently declared the war over.361

The data above on the LTTE’s repertoire of violence is instructive: while myriad human rights violations by the LTTE were documented extensively, there were only a few instances of sexual violence committed by the Tigers. However, the extortion by Black Tiger cadre of Tamil women who experienced sexual violence points to the manipulative tendencies of LTTE leadership to advance their cause despite weaving norms and narratives of stigma surrounding survivors of sexual violence in their nationalist rhetoric. Sexual violence by the LTTE was rare throughout the conflict yet the frequency of other human rights violations paralleled or exceeded the SLA.

The Absence of Sexual Violence by the LTTE

What was the frequency of wartime sexual violence employed by the LTTE against Tamil and Sinhalese civilians? While the data presented above traces the “repertoire of violence” employed by the LTTE against civilians throughout the conflict, two data caveats must be noted: first, instances of overreporting SLA rapes against Tamil

women may be a large possibility. Second, human rights workers and researchers were unable to document cases of (sexual) violence in conflict-ridden, inaccessible territory controlled by the LTTE in the east and north of Sri Lanka. Cases of sexual violence by the LTTE against Sinhalese women and girls appear, however, to be relatively low when one compares reports of sexual violence with other forms of LTTE-perpetrated human rights abuses. With this pattern of violence by the LTTE established, it is possible to argue that the LTTE did in fact commit very little sexual violence during the war.

The LTTE has been implicated in very few cases of wartime sexual violence throughout the 1983-2009 civil war. After a survey of various human rights reports (including the ones carefully detailing SLA sexual violence and LTTE non-sexual violence against civilians), the evidence suggests only a few instances of sexual violence by the LTTE. The most detailed report of rape by an LTTE cadre occurred on 15 June 2002 when the cadre raped a young girl who attempted to escape forced conscription. He was later killed as an example for other male cadre. In addition, an LTTE intelligence chief was accused of the rape and murder of a woman in December 2003. He was subsequently apprehended by an LTTE cadre and disciplined by his commanding officers. Four other reports of sexual violence by the LTTE are reported by University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) in Bulletin Nos. 10 and 44 as well as Special Report

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362 The LTTE used rapes by the SLA against Tamil women as a recruiting tool to ensure that more Tamil women joined the LTTE as combatants (and claimed that the LTTE would “protect” them against future SLA rapes). It also fit within their larger nationalist argument that the Sinhalese state was waging a genocidal campaign against Sri Lankan Tamils. For more details, see Stack-O’Connor, Alisa (2007) op. cit., pp. 55-6.
7, but no further details are given about the context of the LTTE-perpetrated rapes.\textsuperscript{365} In the few cases of richly documented instances of sexual assault by LTTE men, they were severely punished for their actions, which most often resulted in deaths by firing squad (and, even in instances where there was sexual consent, oftentimes both cadre were lashed, forced into hard labor, and/or killed).

2.5.2. The RUF and AFRC (1991-2002)

Using Wood’s “repertoire of violence” analytical framework, this section presents the various forms of sexual and non-sexual violence employed by the major actors—the RUF-AFRC and RSLAF-CDF—throughout the course of the Sierra Leonean civil war. The violent tendencies of these armed revolutionary groups serve as a “worst case” of wartime rape to juxtapose with the low variation of wartime sexual violence employed by the LTTE and CPN(M) insurgencies. Also, the case of sexual violence in Sierra Leone exemplifies a more orchestrated policy (i.e., acts of commission at the field commander level)—within the larger framework of the RUF’s campaign of terror—of sexual violence by the insurgent group to disperse civilian populations. Overall, during the 1991-2002 war in Sierra Leone, an estimated 215,000 to 257,000 women and girls were targets of sexual violence; such violence was committed by all armed groups involved, although the RUF committed the majority of sexual violence (85.6 percent of documented cases; the RSLAF and AFRC committed 8.3 percent of documented cases).\textsuperscript{366} There was a large variation of wartime sexual violence throughout the conflict in Sierra Leone. Survey data reveals that nearly 60 percent of rapes by all armed groups occurred between 1998 and

\textsuperscript{365} UTHR(J), Bulletin No. 10 (February 1996); UTHR(J), Bulletin No. 44 (March 13, 2007); and UTHR(J), Special Report 7 (August 29, 1996). Cited in Wood, Elisabeth J. (2009) op. cit., p. 159.

1999 at the peak of the fighting between progovernment forces and the RUF-AFRC coalition in Freetown and its surrounding areas.\textsuperscript{367} The remaining 40 percent of the sexual violence committed throughout the Sierra Leone war was committed outside of the 1998-1999 period at a lower—yet still at an incredibly high ratio of sexual violence relative to other conflicts (especially in Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Colombia, and Nepal).

\textit{Repertoire of Violence Employed by the CDF and RSLAF}

The CDF, a progovernment militia, was implicated in only 0.4 percent of human rights abuses against civilians in a Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) survey of 991 female households; the RSLAF, the government armed forces, were responsible for only one percent of the total reported violations (whereas the RUF was responsible for 40 percent of reported human rights violations and 85.6 percent of rapes).\textsuperscript{368} The Kamajors, an ethnic group of hunters from rural Sierra Leone, was the dominant ethno-linguistic group in the CDF and was a relatively disciplined fighting force in comparison to the RUF and AFRC, committing only 0.1 percent of reported rapes throughout the civil war.\textsuperscript{369} The only documented instance of CDF-perpetrated sexual violence was reported by Human Right Watch, which took place in the southern provinces of Sierra Leone during 2000. CDF combatants, many who sought revenge against the RUF for the death and rape of family members, raped women and girls who they deemed to be sympathizers.

\textsuperscript{367} Cohen, Dara K. (2010) op. cit., p. 93.
\textsuperscript{369} Cohen, Dara K. (2010) op. cit., p. 87. Cohen argues that rape by the CDF was so low because they were civilian-based militias who sought to defend themselves from the RUF and AFRC. Furthermore, because their recruits voluntarily joined the CDF, gang rape was not needed as a socialization tool to ensure intragroup solidarity within the CDF, in contrast with the RUF, where gang rape was employed frequently against women and girls.

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to the RUF as 330,000 internally-displaced persons flooded into the southern provinces of Sierra Leone.370 The CDF and RSLAF, however, also abducted children and forced them to become soldiers, especially as the RUF and AFRC were surrounding Freetown during the 1998 to 1999 period of the war and the need for additional combatants increased. As evidence of this practice, over 3,000 children were released at the end of the war by the RSLAF, CDF, and AFRC-RUF.371

The Use of Wartime Sexual Violence by the RUF and AFRC

The RUF was particularly committed to wartime sexual violence as an organizational strategy of terror and was responsible for the majority (85.6 percent) of wartime sexual violence during the Sierra Leone war.372 Rebel leadership launched “Operation No Living Thing” and “Operation Pay Yourself” during the 1998-1999 period in which the vast majority of rapes were perpetrated by rank-and-file RUF-AFRC combatants. Rebels often “paid themselves” by looting villages and raping women and girls in their areas of combat operations. During the war, the majority of reported rapes were committed by RUF, RUF-AFRC, or merely “rebel” combatants (as identified by rape survivors to interviewers). One national survey revealed that nearly 84 percent of the respondents identified AFRC-RUF combatants as the perpetrators of sexual violence while 16 percent of respondents identified combatants from other armed groups.373

Sexual violence by the RUF took varying forms and was widespread throughout the Sierra Leonean civil war. Gang rape typically occurred against young girls as male

combatants would take turns on the victim; the rapes were often so violent that these young girls commonly bled to death once the gang rape was completed.\textsuperscript{374} The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone ruled that:

“all of the armed factions, in particular the RUF and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, embarked on a systematic and deliberate strategy to rape women and girls, especially those between the ages of ten and 18 years of age, with the intention of sowing terror amongst the population, violating women and girls, and breaking down every norm and custom of traditional society.”\textsuperscript{375}

Also, in the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), \textit{Prosecutors vs. Sesay, Kallon, and Gbao (RUF Case)} found all three former-RUF commanders guilty of crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Convention—and were found, beyond a reasonable doubt, to have \textit{orchestrated} campaigns of sexual violence against civilians (i.e., acts of \textit{commission}).\textsuperscript{376} Documented in a cross-national survey of the Sierra Leone war, 75.8 percent of rapes committed during the time period were gang rapes.\textsuperscript{377}

Moreover, according to Cohen’s findings, gang rape acted as a tool for the social bonding of combatants—what she refers to as “combatant socialization”—who were forcibly recruited into RUF ranks and relatively uncommitted to the RUF when initially

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{374} Wood, Elisabeth J. (2010) “Sexual Violence during War: Toward an Understanding of Variation,” in Sjoberg, Laura, Sandra Via, Cynthia Enloe (eds.) \textit{Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives}. Santa Barbra: Praeger, p. 128. It must be noted that those who did survive the gang rapes were ostracized by their families and communities. Many young women and girls became pregnant from the repeated rapes while abducted in the bush of Sierra Leone. This further decreased rape survivors’ agency because of the lack of kinship support. A similar variant of shame and ostracization by the community of rape survivors existed in Sri Lanka. In the Sri Lanka case, the LTTE did not rape women and then force them to engage in combat or suicide operations; instead, Tamil women who were \textit{raped} by government security forces were manipulated into sacrificing themselves to restore honor to their family and for the larger nationalist cause.\textsuperscript{375} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{376} The Special Court for Sierra Leone (2010) “Case 15: The Prosecutor vs. Sessay, Kallon, and Gbao (RUF Case)” \url{http://www.scsl.org/CASES/ProsecutorsvsSesayKallonandGbaoRUFCase/tabid/105/Defaulult.aspx}.

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abducted. Gang rape served as a bonding tool to increase rebels’ loyalty to and trust of fellow combatants and RUF commanders.

Contrary to conventional theories on wartime rape and traditional notions of femininity, women in the RUF were also active participants in wartime sexual violence against women and girls in the Sierra Leone war. Women comprised over 24.4 percent of the RUF (as opposed to the SLA/AFRC at 8.8 percent and 1.9 percent of the CDF), yet the RUF was responsible for more than 85 percent of rapes. Female rebels reportedly held down noncombatant girls and women as they were raped by male combatants. Still other reports describe female rebels raping female noncombatants with objects such as knives, sticks, and the barrels of their AK-47s. Cohen argues that female rebels participated in sexual violence against noncombatants to garner respect from male rebels, gain loot such as jewelry for a reward, and ensure their value to the RUF leadership—in fact, because they severely deviated from traditional norms of femininity, they were deemed “monsters” and deployed in the front lines of the RUF’s campaigns of terror against civilians.

Young girls were the most common target of wartime sexual violence committed by the RUF. This process of “virgination”—the rape of virgins—was in large part drawn from values shared by many patriarchal, rape-prone societies around the world. According to Sierra Leonean cultural norms, women and girls who were virgins were deemed more marriageable relative to those who had already had sexual intercourse (something that is also universal in socially-conservative, patriarchal societies).

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381 Ibid; Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., p. 137.
“Virgination” proved disastrously effective in dispersing entire communities and destroying the social fabric of targeted communities (as rape survivors were stigmatized by and exiled from their communities).\(^{382}\) Some of these girls and women were hand-picked by rebels commanders to be their “bush wives” while the majority were left to die or suffer from their injuries incurred by the extreme brutality of the rapes.\(^{383}\)

The RUF committed various forms of non-sexual violence against civilian populations. Although sexual violence reached its peak from 1998 to 1999, the RUF committed the vast majority of its human rights violations (which were more often non-sexual violence) during the 1993 to 1997 period. According to a PHR report, of 991 female-headed households, 40 percent had experienced some form of human rights abuse at the hands of RUF cadre throughout the Sierra Leonean civil war.\(^{384}\) The RUF forcibly abducted thousands of children to serve within the rank-and-file of the insurgency, often providing them with drugs and small arms and light weapons before ordering them to combat. Rebel combatants also cut off the limbs of women, men, and children in order to prevent them from voting in national elections and working in agricultural jobs which were many peoples’ only livelihood.\(^{385}\)

Despite the considerable amount of female RUF combatants, intragroup gender dynamics permitted sexual violence against female personnel and “bush wives,” although there are instances of women who wielded small arms primarily for their own protection. However, the RUF was a much more inhospitable insurgency to its own female personnel than the LTTE and there was an absence of rhetoric for women’s emancipation by RUF

\(^{382}\) Human Rights Watch (2004) op. cit., p. 28.
\(^{383}\) Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., pp. 130-1.
\(^{385}\) Coulter, Chris (2009) op. cit., p. 54.
leadership. Also, in contrast to the LTTE, the RUF committed acts of commission by orchestrating sexual violence against civilians, while the LTTE rarely committed sexual violence (and those who were caught were severely punished). The importance of variations among leadership prohibition of sexual violence and equitable intragroup gender dynamics between the two cases will be analyzed in the following section.

2.6. Explaining the Variation of Sexual Violence among the LTTE and RUF

Four hypotheses were presented in chapter one as potential explanations for the variation of wartime sexual violence: (1) leadership prohibition of sexual violence; (2) intragroup gender dynamics which forbid or tolerate sexual violence; (3) macrosocial gender norms and behaviors in which sexual violence is absent; and (4) insurgent groups’ reliance on popular support of civilians populations which makes wartime sexual violence counterproductive to realize organizational goals. This section seeks to analyze the working independent variables in the LTTE and RUF cases in order to compile the data necessary to build a theoretical explanation of the variation of sexual violence perpetrated by the Tamil Tigers and RUF in chapter four. Why was wartime sexual violence employed less frequently by the LTTE than by SLA combatants? And what factors correlate with the RUF’s use of wartime sexual violence on a widespread scale vis-à-vis other armed groups during the Sierra Leone civil war?
The LTTE’s Limited Use of Wartime Sexual Violence

The LTTE rarely engaged in wartime sexual violence throughout the Sri Lankan war. What factors explain this variation in wartime sexual violence? What independent variables were present throughout part of or all of the conflict?

The macrosocial variable—that cultural norms on relations between men and women foster higher instances of sexual violence—appears to be present in the Sri Lankan case. Sexual relations between unmarried persons, cross-caste intercourse, or the rape of non-spouses are condemned in Tamil and Sinhalese cultures in Sri Lanka. But both Sinhalese and Tamil macrosocial gender relations are analytically conceptualized as “rape-prone” in this study, yet the LTTE engaged in few instances of wartime sexual violence while the SLA systematically committed sexual violence at checkpoints, barracks, and police stations.

On the other hand, equitable intragroup gender dynamics of the LTTE are present throughout the Sri Lankan case. Female LTTE personnel gained respect from male LTTE combatants in the late 1980s and such equitable relations continued until the end of the civil war in 2009. However, female LTTE cadre were largely separated from male cadre—in the guise of a “separate but equal” LTTE policy—to prevent sexual relations between male and female personnel. Despite some gains for women via their participation in the Tamil Tigers, it is an exaggeration to claim that intragroup gender dynamics were entirely supportive of women’s emancipation; Tamil separatism remained the primary goal of the LTTE throughout the conflict. Moreover, Tamil women who participated actively in the insurgency adopted stereotypically masculine norms and behaviors to effectively participate in LTTE combat operations—namely the suppression

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of weakness, demonstrations of bravery, and the use of small arms and light weapons. Although Wood rejects the hypotheses that women’s presence in an armed group is associated with less frequent acts of wartime sexual violence, there is an additional aspect of women’s participation in violent insurgencies that she did not consider. It is not solely the presence of women in the organization which is correlated with a low frequency of rape, but it is how women are treated and participate in the organization vis-à-vis male combatants. A low frequency of wartime sexual violence by the LTTE may best be attributed to the fact that female LTTE personnel were respected by male combatants and there was a strong need for additional recruits from civilian populations—many of whom were Tamil women.

The LTTE’s reliance on the popular support of Tamil populations in the north and east of Sri Lanka did not prevent the organization from committing acts of non-sexual violence against Tamil civilians. The LTTE’s reliance on popular support was present throughout the course of the conflict, although much of the financial support and intelligence was coercively extracted from the Tamil population in Sri Lanka and the Tamil diaspora in the U.S. and Canada. However, in order to attract female recruits, the LTTE released various propaganda statements promoting women’s equality and deploring acts of rape by SLA security forces. Thus, LTTE leadership may have intentionally prevented the use of wartime sexual violence in order to attract female recruits to the organization.388

387 In chapter four, I attempt to construct a theory of intragroup gender dynamics which links the quality of these intragroup dynamics with the use of wartime sexual violence. Such a theory may supplement the literature explaining variation of wartime sexual violence proposed by Wood, Farr, and Cohen. A study of intragroup gender dynamics and its correlation with levels of sexual violence is a large lacuna in the literature on wartime rape and a part of the puzzle that has been identified by Wood and Cohen that has not yet been theoretically developed or tested.

Ethnic and political rivalry between the SLA and LTTE was strongly present throughout the conflict, although Tamil-Sinhalese tensions did not lead the LTTE to engage in wartime sexual violence against Sinhalese women and girls in a widespread fashion or as an organizational strategy. However, the various other forms of violence utilized by the LTTE—such as suicide bombing, assassinations, abductions, torture, and murder—were framed as means to an independent Tamil Eelam. Tamil women who had been raped by the SLA, however, were approached by the LTTE and pressured to join the insurgency using patriarchal norms about honor—which exemplified the LTTE’s strategic manipulation of cultural norms to advance its organizational goal of an independent Tamil Eelam. Ethnic and political cleavages were unnecessary and insufficient conditions, despite being strongly present, to increase the LTTE’s use of wartime sexual violence against Tamil and Sinhalese women and girls.

Leadership prohibition of sexual violence and intragroup judicial mechanisms to punish perpetrators of rape were strongly present working independent variables in the case of Sri Lankan wartime sexual violence. There were several leadership statements which condemned sexual violence against Tamil women and girls. The organizational hierarchy of the LTTE was strong which allowed LTTE leadership to enforce a zero-tolerance policy toward acts of LTTE-perpetrated wartime sexual violence against Sri Lankan civilians. And finally, in the few cases in which LTTE cadre did commit wartime rape, they were quickly punished by LTTE officers and made examples in order to prevent future acts of LTTE sexual violence against Tamil civilians. This finding confirms Wood’s argument that “the observed absence of sexual violence on the part of LTTE cadre toward civilians is best explained by the theoretical framework’s top-down
implication: Such violence is banned by the leadership and the organization’s strict internal discipline enforces the prohibition [of sexual violence].” The Sri Lankan government also, in very rare instances, punished its own SLA soldiers who committed acts of sexual violence against civilians. A case in point was the prosecution of nine SLA soldiers after the rape of Krishanthy Kumarasamy at a security checkpoint in 1996. All nine men were convicted of rape and served prison sentences. Wood notes that after this judicial decision, cases of sexual violence decreased (and she further argues that there was a strong likelihood of increased reporting due to a successful rape prosecution by the state judiciary). However, it appears that SLA leadership, especially in the field, committed acts of omission by looking the other way when rapes occurred by personnel under their command. And compounding this issue, many Tamil women were fearful of pursuing legal recourse for sexual violence because they doubted its efficacy and feared being labeled LTTE sympathizers.

The RUF’s Widespread Use of Wartime Sexual Violence

Why did the RUF commit 85 percent of wartime rape throughout the Sierra Leone war? What were the working independent variables which influenced the RUF’s use of wartime sexual violence?

Inequitable macrosocial gender relations were present before and throughout the course of the civil war in Sierra Leone and analytically fit with Sanday’s “rape-prone” societal indicators. Gendered norms and behaviors ensured that men were dominant as a group over women in Sierra Leone. Additionally, Sierra Leone’s GDI score placed it at

the bottom of 180 countries in regards to women’s aggregate social and economic
equality to men (at a mean of 0.18 throughout the conflict while Sri Lanka scored a mean
of 0.71, with 1.0 being perfect gender equality). Sexual stereotypes about women and the
need for combat socialization to build solidarity via gang rape socially warranted the
widespread use of sexual violence against women and girls.391

Hypermuscule intragroup gender dynamics of the RUF was a highly present and
powerful mechanism for the use of sexual violence by the RUF. The abduction of women
and girls as domestic and sexual slaves (“bush wives”) was commonplace, and many of
these women and girls committed acts of violence—even sexual violence—against
civilian populations. Cohen’s theory of combatant socialization argues that the RUF
employed sexual violence on a widespread scale to socialize and indoctrinate newly-
abducted combatants, whether they were male or female, who were uncommitted to the
RUF.392 Indiscriminate violence and hegemonic masculinity was highly valued within the
organization and the expert use of violence against civilians and pro-government forces
provided opportunity for promotion to RUF leadership positions for both male and
female rebels.

The RUF’s reliance on popular support from civilian populations was absent, as
rebels often committed acts of sexual violence to relocate forcibly entire communities
through campaigns on terror in order to gain access to alluvial diamond deposits or basic
commodities (e.g., food and shelter) to sustain their insurgency against government
armed forces. The external support of the RUF by President Charles Taylor of the
Liberian NPFL also allowed the rebels to maintain autonomy from the popular support of

civilian populations. Newly acquired combatants were predominately abducted rather
than recruited, further decreasing the RUF’s reliance on popular support to sustain its
revolution against the state. Weinstein argues that when a group neither relies on popular
support nor intends to govern that population in the future, groups will be more likely to
commit violence against civilian populations. This is because such groups may rely on
the trafficking of valuable commodities—such as alluvial diamonds—and/or external
actors for financing to continue their combat operations in the absence of popular
support.393

Contrary to the Sri Lankan conflict, an ethnic rivalry was absent throughout the
course of the Sierra Leone war. Politically, the RUF was an “oppositional” movement
intended to destroy the status quo and assume power of the Sierra Leonean state. This
was largely because of excessive patronage wielded by the Stevens and Momoh regimes
before and at the outset of the civil war. In regard to ethnicity, the Mende-Temne rivalry
seems to have dissipated by the start of the civil war as ethno-linguistic categories did not
prevent Mende and Temne from joining either rebel or government forces, so its effect
appears to be minimal. Rape occurred in both ethno-linguistic geographical locations—
among the Mende in the south and east and the Temne in the north. An absence of ethno-
national rhetoric by the leadership of armed groups further confirms the minimal effect of
ethnicity during the civil war. According to Cohen, this empirical pattern offers little
support for the hypothesis which predicts increased levels of rape as ethnic tension
increases.394 Ethnic polarization as a cause of the proliferation of rape was not the case in
Sierra Leone.

393 Weinstein, Jeremy M. (2007) op. cit., p. 7
Leadership prohibition of wartime sexual violence was absent throughout the conflict. Upon searching leadership statements and interview data by Cohen, low-level RUF leadership only proscribed sexual violence during wartime because of the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Soldiers who became infected with STDs—such as gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV/AIDS—were reportedly shot by fellow combatants because of their inability to fight in combat due to debilitating symptoms. Patterns of sexual violence during the war suggest that rape was used at the cadre level to promote combatant socialization in the RUF as many abducted men, boys, women, and girls were initially uncommitted to the RUF. At the peak of the fighting during the war—when the AFRC-RUF junta battled the RSLAF, CDF, ECOMOG, and UNOMISL for control of Freetown in 1997 through 1999—67 percent of all instances of sexual violence were committed. This increase in wartime sexual violence was asymmetrically employed by the RUF during the time period, which suggests that mid- to high-level rebel leadership ignored the use of sexual violence (i.e., acts of omission) yet did not directly order the use of sexual violence as a strategy of war.

Intra- and extra-group judicial mechanisms to punish perpetrators of sexual violence were entirely absent throughout the course of the Sierra Leone war within the RUF and in the state apparatus. According to a Human Rights Watch report:

“[I]ack of faith in the system, as the few women who have decided to prosecute non-conflict-related rape, is fully justified. The judiciary— which, prior to the conflict, barely existed in the provinces, and in Freetown was only accessible to those who had sufficient funds— completely collapsed during the war. Many lawyers fled the conflict, and much of the infrastructure, including the law courts in Freetown, was

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397 Cohen, Dara Kay (2010) op. cit., pp. 76-7. Researchers have been unable to identify leadership directives on the use of sexual violence by the RUF during the civil war.
destroyed. The low salaries of personnel working in the judiciary have meant that magistrates, lawyers, and judges are easy targets for bribery and/or intimidation."

Further compounding impunity, the state was constantly in flux, the regime type and strength of the state varying wildly throughout the beginning and end of the Sierra Leone war. Prior to the start of the conflict, the APC regime was a one-party state that eroded state infrastructure—judicial mechanisms included—through its patronage policies.

The RSLAF were implicated in 8.3 percent of wartime rape (which contrasts sharply with the RUF’s 85.6 percent). A highly unprofessional military force, RSLAF combatants were poorly trained and paid—if they were paid at all. This led many RSLAF personnel to defect to the AFRC and/or act as sobels (i.e., soldiers during the day, rebels at night). There are no reported instances of RSLAF leadership reprimanding its personnel who were found culpable of sexual violence against women and girls.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter traces the history of the Sri Lankan and Sierra Leonean civil wars, explains the formation of the two principal insurgencies, analyzes their repertoire of violence vis-à-vis government armed forces, and considers six independent variables as influencing the variation of sexual violence between the two cases and among armed groups within each case—(1) macrosocial and (2) intra-group gender dynamics; (3) political, ethnic, and/or class rivalries; (4) accountability mechanisms; (5) (non-)reliance on civilian support; and (6) leadership prohibition. The data presented here informs the hypotheses testing and theory development found in chapter four. This thesis now turns

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to the variation of wartime sexual violence by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) and Royal Nepalese Army during the 1996-2005 Nepalese civil war.
Chapter three examines variations of wartime sexual violence—both in frequency and type—between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) (CPN[M]) and Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) during the 1996-2005 civil war. It first presents a history of Nepal prior to the conflict, considers the armed groups involved, analyzes the interaction of the six independent variables, and compares and contrasts variations of wartime sexual violence among the CPN(M) and RNA. Chapter three concludes with an analysis of the six independent variables—(1) macrosocial and (2) intragroup gender dynamics, (3) ethnic, national and/or class rivalries, (4) judicial mechanisms, (5) level of popular support, and (6) leadership directives—that may have impacted the variation of sexual violence in the Nepalese civil war. This final empirical chapter will provide data for the hypotheses testing, theoretical development, and policy recommendations presented in chapter four.

3.1. The Historical Foundations of the Nepalese Civil War

Unlike Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, Nepal resisted colonial domination by the British Empire yet the policies of the Ranas and the monarchy created a fragile, corrupt state which fostered a milieu ripe for armed rebellion by the 1990s. This section traces the historical processes of Nepal from the eighteenth century to the 1990s which set the stage for insurgent mobilization by the CPN(M) by 1996 in reaction to a corrupt, unresponsive government.
Situated in the Himalayan mountain range between India and China, contemporary Nepal contains a synthesis of Tibetan Buddhist and Hindu sociocultural traditions which has facilitated a unique and sometimes explosive sociocultural environment. But the current unitary political system of Nepal is only a recent development of the past three centuries and ethnic and regional cleavages still persist. The name Nepal is derived from the Kathmandu valley in which to be “Nepali” refers to inhabitants of the capital’s valley, whereas most individuals still identify with regions—e.g., Pahari (“hill people”) and Madhesi (“plains people”)—or ethnic groups—e.g., Magar, Gurung, Limbu, Rai, Tamang, Sherpa, Tharu, Newar, etc. Ethno-religious divisions may be conceptualized in two broad categories: (1) the hill areas east of Nepal are influenced by Mahayana Buddhist culture closely related to Tibet and contain Sherpa, Bhotia, Thakali, and other ethnic groupings; and (2) the hill areas west of Nepal are heavily influenced by the Hindu plains areas located in the south in which Pahari and Indian ethnic groups dominate. However, the geophysical landscape of Nepal severely complicates such generalizations due to the relative isolation of ethnic groups from one another.

According to 2001 census data, Nepal contains 29 million people. Of that population, 80.6 percent practice Hinduism, 10.7 percent practice Buddhism, 4.2 percent practice Islam, and 3.6 percent are of the shamanistic Kirant faith. While no ethnic group numerically dominates, Nepal contains 15.5 percent Chhettri, 12.5 percent Brahman-Hill, 7 percent Magar, 6.6 percent Tharu, 5.5 percent Tamang, 5.4 percent Newar, 3.9 percent

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401 Ibid.
Kami, 3.9 percent Yaday, and 35.5 percent mix of various ethnic identities. The divides between these ethnic groups were formed with territorial unification in 1789 by political elites who promulgated the first national caste system in Nepal (before 1789 three regional caste systems were present). However, in an ethnographic study of Nepal’s caste system, Nancy E. Levine notes that the caste and social systems in Nepal have been malleable rather than static:

“...ethnic divisions in Humla District, in Nepal’s far northwest Karnali Zone, are characterized more by interaction, interdependence, and mobility than contrasts and boundaries between groups. In Humla, individuals and entire villages readily change their ethnic affiliation and their position in the caste system. There, too, ethnic groups are linked by a regional economic and social system, and changes in a group’s ethnic affiliation are coincident with changes in their economy and style of life. Finally, the case of Humla reaffirms what other scholars have noted [about Nepal’s caste system]: ethnic relations today are the outcome of a historical process of accommodation between regional ethnic systems and the policies of a centralizing state” (emphasis added).

While ethnic divisions persisted before and during the conflict, the caste and social systems of Nepal were much less rigid than those found in Sri Lanka and India. The caste system was implemented after territorial unification by the Shah and Rana family elites who sought to protect their status as upper-caste Brahmans.

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What are the historical processes of Nepal which led to the rise of a revolutionary peasant movement in 1996? How did Nepal resist British colonial domination, unlike Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone, yet still perpetuate a corrupt, unresponsive state that sowed the seeds of the 1996-2005 Maoist rebellion? The three-hundred-year history leading up to the Nepali civil war created dire socioeconomic conditions before the Maoist rebellion and, in response to these conditions, forged the Maoists’ ultimate goal of creating a republican, multiparty state.

The rise of the Shah kingdom of Gorkha—of Hindu Brahman caste and Pahari ethnicity—led to the unification of contemporary Nepal in the late eighteenth century. Prithvi Narayan Shah, the king of the Gorkha kingdom, launched a military quest from the hill region of Gorkha in which his army conquered and absorbed various city-states in

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405 For brevity’s sake I have chosen to trace the historical processes of Nepal from unification onward because it created a corrupt, illiberal unity state that fomented the Maoist insurgency. Before unification, in large part due to geography, many ethnic groups did not come into contact and there was no national caste system.
the central and eastern Himalayas. In 1816, territorial expansion by the Shah kingdom was thwarted by the British East India Company (BEIC), which was operating contiguous to the swampy, malaria-ridden Tarai region in Nepal (and this geographic boundary played a large part in Great Britain’s failure to colonize Nepal). The BEIC sought to open trade routes with Tibet through the Himalayas to sell Indian goods on the Chinese market. At the same time, China was cracking down on Tibetan autonomy and sought to gain de jure suzerainty over Tibet and its trade routes to boost its economic position vis-à-vis Great Britain.

By the mid-1840s, a royal family later known as the Ranas—of middle-caste Hindu origins—rose to power in Nepali politics after the Kot Massacre in which powerful elites were killed or exiled by members of the Rana family. Jang Bahadur Kunwar, the leading patriarch of the Rana family who ruled as an absolute dictator after the death of Nepal’s former Prime Minister Bhim Sen Thapa in 1837, legitimized his rule when the honorary title of “Rana” was granted by King Surendra in 1858. The title of Rana was adopted henceforth as the official family name of the Kunwars. As prime minister, Jang Bahadur was in control of the domestic and foreign policies of Nepal and succession in the office of prime minister was now hereditary within the Rana family. Because of this legitimation by the monarchy, granted because of Jang Bahadur’s autocratic rule which threatened monarchical rule, the Rana family rose in status within

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the caste system and was able to intermarry with the royal Shah family to consolidate its position in Nepali politics.\(^{409}\)

Although territorial and political unification of Nepal was complete by 1789, three regional caste systems, a Tibetan population on its border with China, and extreme geophysical divisions created a highly divided territory. To unify Nepali society, a process of Sanitization (also known as Hinduization) was undertaken by the Rana family—and other elite families vying for power—in which high caste, Brahmanistic legal and social codes were adopted to create a national caste system. Unlike the caste systems in India, non-Hindu hill and mountain peoples were placed in the middle of the caste hierarchy, despite their deviation from Sanskritic cultural norms and values. They were ranked above the Hindu service castes (Dalits) but were ranked below Hindu, Nepali-speaking hill peoples (i.e., Brahmins), Newars, Cheteris, and the plains people of the Tarai contiguous to northeastern India.\(^{410}\) The centralization of the caste system allowed the Rana family to consolidate its power in Nepali politics via patron-client relations and hereditary succession of the prime minister and cabinet.

Despite the autocratic rule of the Ranas and the monarchy, factionalization drove Nepali politics after its unification. Although in theory Nepal was an absolute, divine monarchy, in practice the monarch was limited in power. The monarchy was considered a manifestation of the Hindu god Vishnu in which decision making on various issues was delegated to castes as “a right, not a privilege.”\(^{411}\) The Bharadari, a deliberative political institution, was set up in the post-1770 period and consisted of high government officials and elders of nearly 200 elite national families. For the Shah monarchy, approval from

\(^{409}\) Rose, Leo E. and John T. Scholz (1980) op. cit., p. 27.
\(^{411}\) Rose, Leo E. and John T. Scholz (1980) op. cit., p. 22.
the Bharadari was essential for the legitimacy of its rule and provided an arena for elite families to impact the decision making processes.\textsuperscript{412} It was also through the Bharadari and the monarchical court systems where members of the Rana family gained predominance in Nepali politics.

During the 1846-1851 period, the royal and familial elites developed an accommodation with the British which left Nepal free from \textit{de jure} colonial arrangements present in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone; British influence, however, was still present in \textit{de facto} terms throughout Nepali politics because of trade restrictions (e.g., tariffs) imposed by the British on Nepali goods. Nepal eliminated an insurgency in Oudh of the Indian colony (in the contemporary Terai territory) with 8,000 Gurkha troops in 1856. The British Governor-General of India subsequently granted this former territory of Oudh to Nepal, which had failed to usurp from the BEIC in 1816 during the expansionary campaigns of the Shah kingdom of Gorkha. From 1860 onward, the Tarai region and its peoples—predominantly Indian in national origin—resisted integration into the political system of Nepal which “was probably the most serious failure in the Shah dynasty’s policy of integrating highly diverse areas and communities.”\textsuperscript{413} The British had set up a Residency in Kathmandu and British imperialism was consistently on the political agenda of Nepali elites, with both pro- and anti-British factions vying for power. The former sought to use Britain to gain power while the latter played off widespread anti-India sentiment which was pervasive until the 1850s to entrench its socioeconomic and political power arrangements. However, only in a few instances—unlike in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone—did the British succeed in dividing these factions for its own benefit in

\textsuperscript{412} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{413} Rose, Leo E. and John T. Scholz (1980) op. cit., p. 21.
Nepali politics, particularly regarding trade relations with Kathmandu.\textsuperscript{414} The inability of British to colonize Nepal was in large part due to the inhospitable geophysical environment of the thickly forested and swampy Tarai (which troops were unable to cross) that stretched across 500 miles of Nepal’s border with India.

Once their power was solidified, the Ranas embarked upon modernization and centralization processes of the bureaucracy, military, and judicial systems throughout the 1850s and 1860s. A merit system, comparable to contemporary versions found in bureaucracies, was established along with new rules and procedures for each institution within the national bureaucracy. The legal code of Nepal was written in 1954 and regional courts were separated from centralized administrative units in Kathmandu.\textsuperscript{415} As prime ministers of Nepal, Jang Bahadur (1846-1877) devised the modernization and centralization schemes, Chandra Shamsher (1901-1929) consolidated the system and Juddha Shamsher (1932-1945) implemented Nepal’s first economic reforms.\textsuperscript{416} The military was monopolized by the Rana family which appointed junior members of its family to high-ranking officer positions to prevent the politicization of the military and ensure its loyalty (while senior members gained powerful position in the prime minister’s cabinet). As the power of the Ranas grew—and they continued to intermarry with the royal Shah family—they effectively isolated the power of the monarchy and Shah family in Nepal.

The greatest threat to the rule of the Rana family was neither domestic nor external, but within the family itself. As the number of Ranas grew and lineage became more complex with intermarriage among the Rana and Shah families, succession became

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{414} Rose, Leo E. and John T. Scholz (1980) op. cit., pp. 24-5.
\item \textsuperscript{415} Rose, Leo E. and John T. Scholz (1980) op. cit., pp. 29-30.
\item \textsuperscript{416} Rose, Leo E. and John T. Scholz (1980) op. cit., p. 30.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
more difficult to determine and was commonly contested. Chandra Shamsher, prime minister of Nepal from 1901-1929, divided the Ranas into A, B, and C classes—based on caste purity and lineage—with A Ranas determined as the highest caste Brahmins. In 1934, Juddha Shamsher, prime minister of Nepal from 1932-1945, banned all B and C Ranas from hereditary succession, thereby creating a strong opposition force in Nepali familial politics as the Ranas factionalized. Although there were several attempts by B and C Ranas to subvert A Rana rule, these plots were foiled by the military and police forces loyal to the A Ranas until the marginalized B and C Ranas linked with anti-Rana opposition movements during the 1950s.417

The centralized political model of Nepal left little room for political opposition yet a strong anti-Rana movement began to form in the early 1900s because of (1) a new generation of Nepalis studying abroad in India and Britain, (2) the return of Gurkha regiments after World War II who had witnessed diverse cultures during their service for the British, and (3) the proliferation of the Indian national movement led by Mahatma Gandhi which inspired educated elites in Nepal.418 Two leaders of the 1950-51 anti-Rana movement—who also happened to be brothers—Bishweshwar Prasad and Matrika Prasad Koirala, were schooled in Indian universities and were sympathetic to the socialist wing of the Indian National Congress party. Other important players in the 1950-51 democratic movement were also members of the 200 families which monopolized government employment under the Rana regime.419 In addition, many members of the B and C Ranas aligned with the anti-Rana movement in opposition to the increasingly authoritarian

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character of the A Ranas. Two opposition movements—the Prachanda Gurkha and Praja Parishad—were established in India with the intent of overthrowing the Ranas and imposing democratic reforms in Nepal.420

Although Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of a newly independent India supported the opposition movement in Nepal, the focus of the Indian National Congress was to build domestic political institutions and avoid creating an unstable Nepal which New Delhi viewed as a geostrategic buffer against China. However, an independent India did not support the anachronistic Rana regime and thus provided an opportunity for the anti-Rana movement to remobilize against the Ranas without Indian intervention. In 1946 the Nepali National Congress—which had strong links with the Indian National Congress—was set up in Banaras, India and the Nepali Democratic Congress was formed in 1948 in Calcutta, India by Nepali political exiles. Both opposition movements formed the Nepali Congress and launched an insurgency against the Rana regime with Indian territory as its base of operations. King Tribhuvan, who was also increasingly marginalized by the Ranas, allied with the Nepali Congress in an attempt to end Rana patrimony in Nepal. On 6 November 1950, King Tribhuvan, Crown Prince Mahendra, and the king’s grandson Birendra—three generations of monarchical succession—entered the Indian embassy in Kathmandu to claim asylum and four days later they were flown to New Delhi.421

The Delhi Compromise was brokered by India on 7 February 1951 after the Nepali Congress insurgent wing (with the support of King Tribhuvan and disgruntled B and C Ranas who were marginalized by the Ranas) and the Rana regime waged a low-

scale conflict that resulted in the capitulation of an autocratic Rana system. The Compromise included King Tribhuvan, the Ranas, and the Nepali Congress. Under the terms of the Delhi Compromise: (1) the monarchy would be restored to power with its original mandate (which had been eroded under Rana rule); (2) the Ranas and Nepali Congress would form a power-sharing interim government; and (3) the Ranas and Nepali Congress would hold elections for a constituent assembly to draft a democratic constitution. The Nepali Congress, like the Indian Congress Party, was a centrist umbrella party which in a liberal democratic fashion incorporated various socialist, centrist, and conservative factions that were committed to democratic reforms in Nepal. The Rana-Nepali Congress government proved short-lived when in November 1951, factionalization in the Nepali Congress—centering on a dispute over the appointment of Matrika Prasad Koirala as prime minister rather than his popular younger brother, Bisheswar Prasad Koirala—split the party. Because of the inability of party leaders in the Nepali Congress to foster party discipline, a decade of unstable, although democratic, politics ensued in Nepal. By 1959 the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal was drafted which granted absolute power to the monarchy—now King Mahendra after the death of Tribhuvan in 1955—coupled with faux democratic institutions. The Nepali Congress won nearly two-thirds of the vote in the relatively free and fair general election of February 1959 yet only two years later did King Mahendra invoke emergency powers in which he dissolved the parliament and arrested important Nepali politicians, such as Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, head of the Nepali Congress, based on the rationale that the Nepali Congress “had failed to maintain law and order and was endangering the

422 Hutt, Michael (2004) op. cit., p. 3.
sovereignty of Nepal.\textsuperscript{424} Thirty years of autocratic rule under Kings Mahendra and Birendra would follow.\textsuperscript{425}

Without initial opposition to his implementation of emergency powers, King Mahendra promulgated the 1962 constitution of Nepal which called for \textit{Panchayat} democracy (literally translated as “assembly of five” in Hindi) which forbade the participation of political parties.\textsuperscript{426} At the village and town levels, Nepalis were able to directly elect representatives while those elected representatives formed electoral colleges to select district representatives amongst themselves. District representatives then appointed delegates amongst the pool of district representatives to the national legislature (\textit{Rastriya Panchayat})—the remaining delegates were either selected by the government bureaucracy or nominated by the monarchy. Pressure mounted against the \textit{Panchayat} system because mass political participation was banned and Nepal remained severely underdeveloped despite the monarchy consistently paying lip service to economic development. Private industry was unable to expand the economic output of Nepal which led to the nationalization of many industries from eight in 1961 to 64 in 1989—which greatly increased rent-seeking behavior among business elites—yet only a handful of these industries were generating profits (and nearly 13 percent of the development budget was allocated for subsidizing insolvent national industries).\textsuperscript{427} To quell growing discontent, the monarchy expanded national development schemes from $12.48 million in 1962 to nearly $507 million by 1990 yet economic growth remained dismal and

\textsuperscript{424} Hutt, Michael (2004) op. cit., p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{425} Thapa, Deepak and Bandita Sijapati (2004) op. cit., pp. 16-8.  
\textsuperscript{426} Whelpton, John (2005) op. cit., p. 100.  
\textsuperscript{427} Whelpton, John (2005) op. cit., p. 147.
corruption vastly increased among nationalized industries which were the “most rapidly expanding sector in the economy.”

When King Birendra ascended to the crown in 1972, he consolidated the powers of the monarchy—because of the instability of Nepal’s political landscape during his ascension and the embarrassment of anti-establishment being elected to district and even national councils—by ensuring that he had the constitutional powers to vet and nominate candidates for all levels (i.e., town, district, and national) of the Panchayat system. On 2 May 1980, after opposition against the Panchayat system gained momentum, King Birendra allowed a national referendum to determine a continuance of the status quo or the return of multiparty democracy. With a vote of 2.4 million for the Panchayat system and 2 million against—along with reported instances of widespread vote rigging by the government—the status quo was upheld. Because of a fraudulent national vote, political opposition from banned political parties and student movements continued to mount against King Birendra and his Panchayat system.

In sum, although Nepal did not experience colonization by the British, 104 years of autocratic rule under the Ranas and 30 years of corruption and patronage under the Panchayat system rotted the government bureaucracy and led to economic stagnation and inequality. Economic growth remained at around two percent until the 1980s, when it rose to five percent, yet Indian imports had nearly quadrupled since the 1960s (severely hampering domestic industries), national currency reserves were depleted, and the rupee was devalued in 1985. Nepal’s national account deficits rose from $16 million in 1975 to

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429 Ibid.
$296.2 million in 1989 and external debt increased from $3 million in 1970 to an astounding $1.16 billion in 1988. Because of these economic conditions, Nepal took a structural adjustment program (SAP) to qualify for additional loans from the World Bank. With government spending decimated by the 1985 SAP, it is estimated that 7 to 9 million of Nepal’s 19 million citizens were unable to obtain their daily calorific requirements in 1991. In addition, Nepal ranked 152nd out of 173 countries in the 1993 UN Human Development Report, which the report credited to worsening economic inequality and low levels of government spending.

Opposition against the Panchayat regime grew in the form of a people’s movement (jan andolan) that was spearheaded by the Nepali Congress and United Left Front (consisting of seven communist parties) and ultimately led to the peaceful overthrow of the system by April 1990. Starting in February 1990, opposition had grown against the Panchayat system because of worsening economic conditions exacerbated by a trade and transit agreement with India that asymmetrically benefited Indian exporters. In response to peaceful demonstrations, however, the government’s police forces killed six unarmed protesters in Patan and Kirtipur as well as arresting thousands of protesters throughout the urban centers of Nepal. The people’s movement was in large part successful because it quickly attracted Nepali professionals as well as women and children who joined mass protests in Kathmandu which led to the capitulation of the Panchayat regime because protesters began to call for a violent revolution in reaction to

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431 Khadka, Narayan (1991) op. cit., p. 706. Nepal’s Gini coefficient—a rank of 0 to 100, with 0 being perfect economic equality and 100 being perfect inequality—was 30.1 in 1985 and rose to 35.2 by 1996. In comparison, Sweden ranks as the most equal economy with a score of 23.0 in 2005 and Namibia ranks as the most unequal economy with a score of 70.7 in 2003. Comparable states with Nepal in the Gini coefficient ranking include Algeria (35.3 in 1995), Latvia (35.2 in 2010), and Albania (34.5 in 2008). Data accessed at: [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html).
the government’s crackdown.\footnote{Hachhethu, Krishna (1990) “Mass Movement 1990,” \textit{Contributions to Nepalese and Asian Studies}, 17(2): 177-201.} In a conciliatory move by the monarchy to end mass demonstrations, a democratic constitution was adopted in November 1990 which established a bicameral parliament and relegated the monarchy to a ceremonial role. The Nepali Congress came to dominate multiparty elections, forming a government from 1991 until its collapse in 1994 over divisions within the large umbrella party that lacked the party discipline found in the Indian Congress. Party politics remained volatile, as more than half a dozen fragile coalition governments were in power from 1994 through 1999 as the Nepali Congress sought to forge coalitions with the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) and other leftist parties that ultimately undermined initiatives by Nepali Congress politicians.\footnote{Hutt, Michael (2004) op. cit., p. 4.}

The three centuries leading up to the 1996-2005 civil war—despite the absence of overt British colonial influence which created conflict-prone environments in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone—laid the groundwork for intense, and eventually violent, opposition movements in Nepal. The root causes of the conflict included: (1) 104 years of corrupt, autocratic rule under the Ranas; (2) two failed democratic experiments undermined by the monarchy; and (3) widespread underdevelopment and glaring socioeconomic inequalities. Gaining momentum in the early 1990s due to popular discontent with Nepal’s second failed democratic experiment, the Maoists would launch their revolution in the rural hill districts of Nepal on 13 February 1996.
3.2. The Formation and Hegemony of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

The CPN(M) was the armed insurgency which sought to overthrow the Nepali monarchy and replace it with a republican, multi-party democracy during the 1996-2005 civil war. This section traces the Maoist split with the non-violent Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), its ideological objectives, and the organizational structure of the insurgency.

The CPN, backed by Indian communists, first met in January 1954 at Patan and articulated its opposition to the 1950 Delhi Compromise and called for a republican state, formed by a constituent assembly, to replace the “feudalistic” monarchical system in Nepal.435 In the 1959 general election, the CPN only won four out of 109 seats in the parliament, with the Nepali Congress winning nearly two-thirds of the seats. However, deep divisions emerged over the issue of peasant class involvement in future revolutionary movements—largely an ideological disagreement in which Maoists favored peasant participation and, contrarily, Marxists favoring urban worker participation—with “revolutionary” elements arguing for their full participation and “revisionist” factions arguing for their exclusion and rather the incorporation of workers and unionists.436 Another point of contention was a pro-monarchy statement drafted by moderate CPN members in order to gain political legitimacy and lift the ban on the party; however, a radical faction led by Pushpa Lal Shrestha, an original founder of the CPN, voiced their opposition to the statement because it conflicted with ideological goals of the CPN (i.e., a republican state formed by a constituent assembly). After the CPN had split into three

separate factions by the third convention of the party in April 1962, Pushpa Lal Shrestha, the most radical leader within the central committee, formed and served as the secretary general of the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist) that publicly extolled violence as the only means toward democracy in Nepal. The principal goal of the organization was “to identify feudalism and imperialism as the chief enemy and act accordingly to build a disciplined revolutionary party that will work mainly among peasants” which strongly mirrored Maoist revolutionary ideology in China.\footnote{Cited in Thapa, Deepak (2004) op. cit., p. 29.}\footnote{Ibid.} By his death in 1982, Pushpa Lal’s party experienced similar factionalization and ideological incoherence that had plagued the CPN during its first three conventions.\footnote{Ibid.}

While mainstream political elements of the CPN were jockeying for political power within the party framework, an armed Maoist faction influenced by Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Chinese Communist Party—known as the Jhapa rebellion—broke from the CPN system and initiated an insurgency to eliminate “class enemies” in May 1971.\footnote{Thapa, Deepak (2004) op. cit., p. 33.}\footnote{Ibid.} The insurgency was inspired and aided by the Indian Naxalites which had waged a protracted insurgency against New Delhi with some success in India’s eastern provinces. However, the Jhapa rebellion was eliminated by Nepal’s armed forces only several months later after a total of seven “class enemies” were assassinated by the first unsuccessful Maoist insurgency.\footnote{Ibid.}

Throughout the 1980s, communist factions of the CPN vied for political legitimacy and the fourth convention of the CPN called for a people’s movement to be followed by an armed rebellion to overthrow the Panchayat system. Despite this claim,
mainstream elements within the CPN were wary of acting on such a radical ideological objective. The radical communist elements of the CPN formed the CPN Unity Center which called for a People’s War to be launched to overthrow what they viewed as an unresponsive Nepali Congress government and a feudalistic monarchy. One recently-formed faction, the CPN (Masal), was led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal (alias “Prachanda”)—who would later lead the Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2005—as general secretary and Babu Ram Bhattarai—who would become the theoretician of the Maoists—as the chief party ideologue, called for an armed revolution to overthrow the monarchy. Contrary to its radical ideological rhetoric, the CPN (Masal) also participated in the 1991 general elections in which the Nepali Congress formed a largely unsuccessful and divided government which was to rule until 1994.

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN[M])—the insurgency that launched the 1996-2005 civil war—was formed in 1994 under the leadership of Prachanda and Bhattarai after they split with more moderate factions of the CPN Unity Center. When the CPN(M) boycotted the general election of 1994, Prachanda called for a People’s War to be launched and the CPN(M) leadership and party cadre withdrew to the hill districts of Rolpa and Rukum in the midwestern hill districts of Nepal as its base for mobilizing the revolution. The Kahm Magars, a low-caste, indigenous ethnic group predominant in the midwestern hill districts of Nepal, were attracted to the Maoists because of their demands for ethnic autonomy, republican democracy, and the

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441 Ibid.
442 Upreti, B. C. (2009) op. cit., pp. 20-1. Despite their participation in the 1991 general elections, the CPN Unity Center won only nine seats whereas the Nepali Congress won 109 seats and the United Marxist Leninists won 69.
elimination of the caste system.⁴⁴⁴ In fact, the majority of the CPN(M)’s recruits in the 1990s were drawn from the Magar community.⁴⁴⁵ In September 1995, the Central Committee of the CPN(M) argued that the insurgency:

“…would be based on the lessons of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism regarding revolutionary violence. On the occasion of formulation of the plan for initiation of the process that will unfold as protracted People’s War based on the strategy of encircling the city [i.e., Kathmandu] from the countryside according to the specificities of our country, the Party once again reiterates its eternal commitment to the theory of People’s War developed by Mao as the universal and invincible Marxist theory of war.”⁴⁴⁶

The top leadership of the Nepali Maoists also sought to legitimize the use of violence to realize their ideological goals:

“The aim of the armed struggle is to solve the basic contradictions between feudalism and the Nepali people, imperialism—mainly the Indian expansionism—and the Nepali people, comprador and bureaucratic capitalism and the Nepali people, and in the immediate term the contradiction between domestic reaction which is made up of a combination of feudal and comprador and bureaucratic capitalist classes and backed by Indian expansionism and the Nepali people. This way it is clear, the target of the armed struggle will be confiscating the lands of feudals and landlords and distributing them amongst the landless and poor peasants on the basis of land-to-the-tiller theory and to attack them for the purpose…” (emphasis added).⁴⁴⁷

Prachanda, the undisputed leader of the CPN(M), served as general secretary throughout the Nepali civil war. The “Prachanda Path” is the ideological grounding of the CPN(M) which “assumes a kind of revolution that would be a fusion of the Chinese model of

protracted People’s War strategy (to expand from villages to towns) and the Russian
model of general armed insurrection. Such an ideological blend is idiosyncratic to Nepal because politics in Nepal were Kathmandu-centric before and during the civil war: historically, rural social movements have had less political impact than urban movements in the capital city. While the CPN(M) received covert support from Indian intelligence agencies, including arms, training, and territorial safe haven, there were no reported instances of Beijing aiding the Maoists in insurgent operations despite their ideological similarities. The CPN(M) also retained aspects of the original 1954 ideological goals of the CPN, including the demands for a constituent assembly to form a republican, secular state and the elimination of the monarchy.

The organizational structure of the Maoists was split into three prongs—the party, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), and various united fronts—with Prachanda as primus inter pares of the armed revolutionary movement with the title of general secretary of the CPN(M) standing committee. Under the standing committee (which was the most important decision-making body throughout the civil war) of the party apparatus, the hierarchy of the party, in order of importance and political reach, were as follows: the politburo, central committee, regional bureaus, sub-regional bureaus, district committees, area committees, and cell committees. The standing committee contained no

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449 Gobyn, Winne (2009) “From War to Peace: The Nepalese Maoists’ Strategic and Ideological Thinking,” Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 32(1): 420-38, pp. 422-3. The rationale of the “Prachanda Path” to launch a revolution in rural Nepal was indicative of the importance of Kathmandu for social movements that seek to affect Nepali politics. Rather than attacking the Royal Nepal Army at its source of strength in Kathmandu, the CPN(M) opted to sustain and grow the insurgency in the hill districts of Nepal and eventually surround the capital to pressure the monarchy into a political compromise. For more details, see Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., pp. 53-4.
more than ten members who were the primary decision makers for the Maoists; yet when
the committee was unable to meet due to security concerns, Prachanda was responsible
for all party and military decisions.\footnote{Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., p. 39.}

The PLA was initially a 5,000-strong force (which grew to 30,000 by the signing
of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006) that was the most powerful
military wing of the Maoists which was comprised predominantly of Kahm Magars,
Dalits, and other marginalized indigenous nationalities and caste groups.\footnote{Eck, Kristine (2010) “Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal,” in Lawoti,
Mahendra and Anup K. Pahari (eds.) The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First
Century, pp. 33-51. New York: Routledge, p. 33.} The central
military commission functioned as the central decision-making apparatus of the PLA and
Prachanda served as the chief decision maker of the commission. Similar to the party
structure, there were also regional, sub-regional, and district-level military commissions
that coordinated military operations throughout Nepal. In ascending order, the levels of
military units included the squad (9-11 members), the platoon, the company, and the
battalion. Each military unit was comprised of a military commander and a political
commissar who linked military operations with the party ideology by indoctrinating
recruits and espousing Maoist propaganda in the areas the PLA operated. Under the PLA,
the People’s Militia—comprised of thousands of poorly trained and armed villagers of
marginalized indigenous, caste, and gender identities—occasionally took part in guerilla
activities on an as-needed basis.\footnote{Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., pp. 40-1.}

While many mainstream parties in Nepal had shied away from identity issues, the
CPN(M) formed various regional, caste, and ethnic united fronts to incorporate all
segments of society into the ranks of the Maoists. Indigenous national minorities, Dalits

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\footnote{Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., p. 39.}
\footnote{Eck, Kristine (2010) “Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal,” in Lawoti,
Mahendra and Anup K. Pahari (eds.) The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First
Century, pp. 33-51. New York: Routledge, p. 33.}
\footnote{Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., pp. 40-1.}
(i.e., “untouchables”), and women were particularly attracted to the Maoists because of their ideological goals of ending caste and gender discrimination. Well over a dozen ethnic- and caste-based united fronts were formed to represent and incorporate these marginalized groups into the Maoist insurgency, such as the Madhesi National Liberation Front, the Nepal Dalit Liberation Front, the Kirant National Liberation Front, etc.\(^{455}\)

Ethnic- and caste-based fronts, however, were largely ineffective throughout the civil war and their impact was marginal at best. This is exemplified by the dissolution of the United People’s Front by 2000, which ineffectively linked and coordinated the myriads of fronts with the party and military wings.\(^{456}\) Another example is when the Madhesi National Liberation Front (MNLF)—which sought to link the Madhesh (“plains people”) ethnic groups of the eastern Tarai with the Maoists. It failed to integrate the Madhesh because it lacked “practice rather than advocacy [and rhetoric].”\(^{457}\) The Maoists subordinated the MNLF to the role of regional organizer and recruiter for the Maoists in the eastern Tarai; this infuriated the Madhesh, who have been historically more involved in democratic movements of 1951-1960 and 1990 rather than leftist politics. Because the Maoists failed to understand the intricacies of ethnic, regional, and political dynamics of the Madhesh, the MNLF was ineffective and resistant to Maoist integration.\(^{458}\) The two most effective specialized organizations of the Maoists were the All Nepal National Free Students’ Union (Revolutionary) (ANNFSU[R]) and the All Nepal Women’s Association (Revolutionary) (ANWA[R]). Both organizations integrated university students and


\(^{456}\) Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., p. 41.


\(^{458}\) Ibid.
women, respectively, within the organization of the CPN(M) from the outset of the conflict.\textsuperscript{459} Because the individuals within the ANNFSU(R) and ANWA(R) were, in general, of revolutionary mindsets, they were integrated much more successfully than ethnic and regional fronts, which were “eclipsed” or “associated” with the CPN(M) rather than given autonomy and decision-making powers.\textsuperscript{460}

In areas of Nepal that were out of the reach of Kathmandu, the Maoists formed people’s governments (or committees) in 21 districts in Nepal by the height of its influence in 2005. Such governments were present at the ward, village, area, and district levels. The Maoists, however, were unable to form a shadow, central people’s government—which would have competed with Kathmandu for political legitimacy—before the end of the civil war because of the deployment of the RNA in 2001 which greatly disrupted Maoist operations.

\textbf{Figure 3.2. Map of Maoist-Controlled Areas in Nepal by 2005}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{maoist_controlled_areas_map.png}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{459} Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{460} Lecomte-Tilouine, Marie (2004) op. cit., p. 113.

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As the Maoists gained vast swaths of rural territory outside of the capital and major towns, they eliminated state police stations and village development committees and replaced them with Maoist cadre, united fronts, and people’s committees. Local people’s committees were charged with economic development by providing banking services and agricultural programs as well as extracting tax revenues from Nepalis near Maoist strongholds. The state infrastructure that did remain—including schools, health centers, agricultural offices, and post offices—was tolerated by the Maoists because it did not interfere with the daily operations of the People’s War.

Similar to the Tamil Tigers, the CPN(M) established vast shadow government infrastructure throughout the civil war, raised a formidable military force, and espoused ideological propaganda throughout the rural areas under its control. Pranchanda served as the absolute leader of the party, military, and united front of the trifurcated structure of the Maoists. The Maoists recruited heavily from the midwestern hill districts in which the Kahm Magars—a highly impoverished and ostracized indigenous nationality—were the dominant group within the CPN(M) ranks. The ideology of the Maoists was based in a nexus of Chinese and Soviet communism and goals of the insurgency included (1) the formation of a constituent assembly to craft a republican state, (2) the elimination of class enemies, including elites and the monarchy, and (3) the end of caste, ethnic, and gender discrimination.

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463 Sharma, Sudheer (2004) op. cit., p. 44.
3.3 Government Armed Forces in the Civil Wars

This section examines the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), the government armed forces that combated the CPN(M) and its PLA from 2001 through 2005 which consisted of approximately 53,000 combatants. From 1996 through 2001, nearly 20,000 Nepalese Armed Police Force (NAPF) personnel played a marginal and ineffective role early in the conflict because of their rudimentary firepower and unprofessionalism. Because of the NAPF’s failure to quell the Maoist insurgency, by 2001 the monarchy deployed the RNA to counterbalance the Maoist insurgency which had easily routed the NAPF during the first six years of the civil war.⁴⁶⁴

The RNA had been established in 1748 by King Prithvinarayan Shah to expand his Ghorka kingdom throughout contemporary Nepal and Tibet. Mahendra Lawoti and Ashok K. Mehta lucidly describe the RNA’s loyalty to the monarchy:

“The RNA was very loyal to the monarchy. The structural and historical loyalty of the RNA to King and Palace was a legacy of the past when its forebears were used by the Rana and Shah rulers to prop up their feudal interests. The culture made state security synonymous with the security of the institution of monarchy (and national unity) and the security policy was fashioned by the Palace-monarchy-RNA trio.”⁴⁶⁵

The RNA was fiercely loyal to the monarchy because of its long relationship with the Shah and Rana families as well as high-caste Chhetris—all of which were embedded in the high-ranking leadership of the RNA. It would not be until an agreement to abolish the monarchy was reached in late 2007 that the RNA—by then renamed the Nepalese Army—shifted its loyalty to a civilian-led and democratically-elected Constituent

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Assembly in April 2008.\textsuperscript{466} The RNA was 53,000-strong when it was deployed in late 2001 after the Maoists had gained considerable momentum both politically and militarily. Because there was a lack of consensus as to how to address the Maoist insurgency, several civilian governments failed to deploy the RNA earlier in the conflict as the monarchy mistakenly viewed the CPN(M) as a “law and order problem” that could be eliminated by the NAPF.\textsuperscript{467} The unprofessional and underfunded NAPF was dispatched in the countryside, towns, and villages throughout Nepal to address the Maoist threat which led to its considerable growth without a serious military challenge until 2001.

Figure 3.2 below shows the increase in military spending after 2001 by the Nepali state when the RNA was finally deployed. To ensure an end to the Maoist insurgency, additional funding was allocated to the RNA by the monarchy to counterbalance the progressively professional and effective PLA.\textsuperscript{468}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{467} Mehta, Ashok K. and Mahendra Lawoti (2010) op. cit., p. 188.
\textsuperscript{468} Mehta, Ashok K. and Mahendra Lawoti (2010) op. cit., p. 189.
\end{flushright}
By 2005, the RNA had grown to nearly 90,000 personnel. The distribution of personnel across Nepal included: (1) one brigade, a Royal Guards brigade, and ten Special Forces brigades in Kathmandu; (2) three brigades in the Midwestern Division; (3) two brigades in the Far West Division; (4) three brigades in the Eastern Division; (5) three brigades in the Central Division; and (6) three brigades in the Western Division.470 The heavy concentration of the RNA in Kathmandu exemplified the armed forces’ primary commitment throughout the 1996-2005 civil war: The regime security of King Gyanendra, who was considered a reincarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu.471 Of the 25 operational brigades of the RNA, by 2005, 15 were combat-ready while the other ten provided logistical support during instances of conflict with the Maoists which were mostly concentrated in the midwestern hill districts. It must be noted that, upon searching

various sources and databases, no reports of female personnel in the RNA could be verified.

The RNA received vast amounts of external military support from India, the US, and the UK after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in which the monarchy opportunistically branded the Maoists a “terrorist force” to fit in the framework of the so-called global war on terrorism. New Delhi crafted the India-Nepal Bilateral Consultative Group of Security Issues (INBCGSI) in 2003 to modernize the RNA as it sought to suppress the Maoists. By the end of 2005, the RNA’s capabilities had increased considerably because of military exchanges—including human, technical, and financial assistance—within the INBCGSI framework which met twice a year to discuss RNA-modernization procedures. Indian military assistance to Nepal totaled nearly $70 million throughout the conflict. The transfer of Indian military technology included “two helicopters soon after the emergency was proclaimed and followed up with two more helicopters, nearly 100 mine-protected vehicles, 25,000 Indian-made rifles, and a number of military transport vehicles, all at heavily discounted prices.” The Bush administration provided two installments of $17 million and $14 million to Nepal, respectively, in early and late 2004 as part of its broader strategy of the global war on terror. The US also provided 5,000 M-16 assault rifles as a separate package to the RNA. The United Kingdom allocated £6.7 million from its conflict prevention fund to Nepal which was used to purchase military technologies that were essential for revitalizing Nepal’s outdated and underfunded internal intelligence services.

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473 Mehta, Ashok K. and Mahendra Lawoti (2010) op. cit., p. 188.
474 Thapa, Deepak (2004) op. cit., p. 190
475 Ibid.
While the RNA embarked upon a military modernization program once it became involved in the civil war from 2001 to 2005, the royal army was mired by political conflict between the monarchy and fragile coalition governments which greatly challenged its loyalty. Despite political setbacks, the RNA was able to bring the Maoists to the negotiating table by 2005 after a military stalemate thwarted an outright victory for either the RNA or Maoists.

3.4. Gender Dynamics of the CPN(M)

What were the macrosocial gender dynamics of Nepal before and during the civil war? And how did women participate—in particular what were the qualities of intragroup gender dynamics—in the Maoist movement? This section compares and contrasts the experiences of women inside and outside of the Maoist insurgency throughout the civil war in Nepal.

In general, Nepal is a highly patriarchal society both legally and culturally because of the integration of Hindu values throughout the country by past monarchical regimes. In fact it was this “Hindu patriarchal model that shape[d] Nepal’s state-building and development policies.” The highly unequal status of Nepali women is articulated in a common Nepali saying: “If my next life is to be a dog’s life and I can choose, I’d rather be a dog than a bitch.” Women from Tibeto-Burman ethno-nationalities who were relatively more equal with men prior to Sanskritization—

476 The qualities of a “rape prone” society, according to Sanday, include: (1) which sex rears children (i.e., “rape prone” societies prescribe women); (2) sexual repression of a particular gender (e.g. Nepali women); (3) asymmetrical violence perpetrated by a specific gender; (4) sexual separation of the sexes (e.g. Nepali familial practices with girls and young women); and (5) the glorification of the male role in society. For more details see: Sanday, Peggy R. (1981) op. cit., p. 19.
478 Cited in Machanda, Rita (2004) op. cit., p. 244.
including the Kahm Magars, Gurungs, and Rais from the midwestern hill districts who asymmetrically participated in the Maoist movement—saw their relative socioeconomic independence erode as Hindu sociocultural values were institutionalized by the state.\textsuperscript{479}

The Hindu patriarchal model implemented by the state severely curbed the status of all women in Nepal, although inequalities among women varied because of regional, class, and caste identities. In fact, Nepal was classified as the most gender inequitable state in South Asia before and during the People’s War. The macrosocial data confirm this claim: Nepalese women’s lifespan was two-and-a-half years shorter than men’s; women were responsible for four times the domestic work than that of men; literacy rates for women were 21.3 percent compared to men’s 54.3 percent; and maternal mortality rates were 905 per 100,000 live births (compared to 60 in Sri Lanka and 1,800 in Sierra Leone during the civil wars).\textsuperscript{480} Before the conflict in rural Nepal, 12 percent of women classified as middle class were literate whereas only five percent of women from lower classes were literate. This is largely due to educational participation, which in 1979 only 23 percent of girls in the countryside attended primary school while the rest participated in household and agricultural labor.\textsuperscript{481}

Despite Nepal’s accession to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Nepalese women faced 21 discriminatory laws before and during the

\textsuperscript{479} Machanda, Rita (2004) op. cit., p. 245.
conflict. Abortion was illegal throughout the civil war. Citizenship was passed only through male lineage. In Nepal’s civil code, a woman could not inherit property unless she remains unmarried until age 35; if a woman was married, she forfeited her claim to parental property inheritance. A bill that ensured women’s right to inheritance was defeated in the Nepalese parliament in 2001 because the majoritarian opposition argued that it would undermine Hindu values. In theory, the 1990 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal guaranteed that “all citizens shall be equal before the law… No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on the grounds of religion, race, sex, tribe or ideological conviction or any of these.” In practice, however, women were discriminated from the time of their birth because of the prevalence of patriarchal Hindu values among Nepali society.

Yet such a generalized picture of macrosocial gender dynamics simplifies the reality that myriad communities of women faced in Nepal before and during the civil war: “It is clear that not all women in Nepal have been sequestered in the realm of the domestic, nor has wage-labor, business and other realms of ‘the public’ been uniformly imagined only as masculine; neither has the sexuality of women been consistently and narrowly regimented.” Upper-caste, Hindu women faced the most extreme forms of gender discrimination (although they were privileged based on their caste and class identities), including the inability to remarry if widowed or divorced because their

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485 Poudel, Pratima and Jenny Carryer (2000) op. cit., p. 75.
identity as a woman was defined by patriarchal Hindu values. In contrast, female Janjatis are able to remarry if widowed or divorced because it “does not entail a loss of ritual status” in Janjatis communities, although they faced socioeconomic discrimination based on their lower class and caste statuses relative to upper-caste Hindu women.487

Another deviation from patriarchal norms was women’s role in entrepreneurial activity among the Magar (who would later become the largest demographic of women in the Maoist insurgency). Female Kahm Magars asymmetrically participated in informal entrepreneurial activities, such as the production of raski (country liquor), but they did not hold similar legal and political rights that were granted to Magar men. Because Nepal relies heavily on remittances, the migration of males is widespread, particularly in the Magar community (nearly one in two Nepalese households participate in seasonal migration for employment). This enabled Magar women to make many household decisions in the absence of their husbands, fathers, and other male relatives.488 Magar women also challenged men in local elections to posts on village development committees because of their relatively equal status vis-à-vis Magar men and the absence of men who sought employment out of the country or fled conflict areas (because they were often labeled Maoist sympathizers by the government and vice versa).489 In contrast to the rural milieu, women’s groups in Kathmandu—many of the participants had at least attended primary school and were of high-caste Brahmin status—were politically active in advocating for the social and legal equality of women. Yet by the time the conflict engulfed much of Nepal, paradoxically, women’s groups were marginalized in the political sphere until after a peace settlement was reached in 2005 because of a lack of

487 Ibid.
488 Ibid.
democratic outlets during the last years of the monarchy (which was intransigent toward challenges of patriarchal Hindu values).\footnote{Gautam, Shobha, Amrita Banskota, and Rita Manchanda (2001) op. cit., p. 227.} Interestingly, little difference existed between rural and urban literacy rates for Nepali women; however, literate women in Nepal were disproportionately of high caste and class statuses.\footnote{Gautam, Shobha, Amrita Banskota, and Rita Manchanda (2001) op. cit., p. 222.}

Violence against Nepali women was prevalent before and during the conflict in Nepal with instances of sexual violence by the RNA increasing dramatically after it was deployed outside of Kathmandu in 2001. Domestic violence was commonplace\footnote{Gautam, Shobha, Amrita Banskota, and Rita Manchanda (2001) op. cit., pp. 224-27.}. The Gender-Related Development Index is compiled annually by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and is designed to show macrosocial trends of gender inequality in the areas of: education, length of life, and gross domestic product per capita (divided between the genders). It is scored on a 0.0 to 1.0 scale, 1.0 being perfect equality, 0.0 being perfect inequality. For more information, see: http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/. The paradox of increasing gender equality during the civil war in Nepal is indicative of the widespread phenomenon found in many villages: “a village without men” (p. 224). This is because able-bodied men fled from many villages in Maoist-controlled areas which created a social vacuum that women filled in men’s absence. For example, while women were active in other agricultural work, men had traditionally ploughed the fields; but with the absence of able-bodied men in numerous villages, women engaged in such work. A large subsistence economy developed in which women earned small amounts of money to feed their children or elder parents. Women were also able to run for and hold offices in village development committees, because there were no men to contest them in elections. For more details about the paradox of Nepal’s civil war and opportunities for women’s participation, see: Gautam, Shobha, Amrita Banskota, and Rita Manchanda (2001) op. cit., pp. 224-27.
throughout Nepal, especially in rural areas, as it was not uncommon for unemployed men to drink *raski* and then violently beat their wives and children. (Many women who were drawn to the Maoist cause reported that they initially joined because of ANWA[R]’s anti-alcohol and domestic violence campaign; Maoist cadre would also punish men who beat their wives and children.)\(^{493}\) In a random and representative survey of 587 women and girls in Nepal, 35 percent had experienced intimate partner violence by a husband, boyfriend, or male relative.\(^{494}\) Trafficking in persons for the sex trade in India was also widespread in Nepal with 5,000-7,000 women and girls (20 percent of them under the age of 16), predominately from indigenous groups and the Dalit castes, trafficked each year across the border.\(^{495}\) Despite having two national laws to deter the perpetration of sex trafficking—e.g., the Human Trafficking Control Act (1987) and the Special Provisions of Human Trafficking Act (1996)—Nepal’s judicial system systematically failed to investigate cases in a quick manner and provided no protection for witnesses, including trafficked women and girls.\(^{496}\) Sexual violence against women is widespread, particularly in the rural areas of Nepal. In a cross-sectional survey of young married women (age 14-25) in rural Nepal, 46.2 percent reported that they had experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime.\(^{497}\)

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\(^{496}\) Poudel, Pratima and Jenny Carryer (2000) op. cit., p. 74.

Many harmful traditional practices were common in Nepal. Child marriage was a prevalent harmful traditional practice in Nepal, with 25 percent of girls in the 10-14 age group married in 1961 although this number dropped precipitously to seven percent by 1991. The highest prevalence of child marriage was in the Tarai plains of Nepal—as high as 26 percent in several Tarai districts in 1995—in which traditional Hindu practices are widespread.\textsuperscript{498} Although the 1990 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal banned polygamy, it was reported in a 2001 survey that 4.4 percent of women live in polygamous marriages. Domestic violence would often increase if women resisted polygamous marriages.\textsuperscript{499} Dowry is common in the Tarai region. Families from lower socioeconomic status are expected to pay $100-200 to marry their daughter—which is oftentimes more than a year’s salary for impoverished Nepalis. If a man is a highly educated professional, families of the bride are expected to pay $2,000 (for secondary education) or $5,000 (e.g., an engineer) to $15,000 (e.g., a medical doctor).\textsuperscript{500}

The women’s wing of the Maoists created in 2001 as part of the Prachanda Path, ANWA(R), was led by Hsila Yami, the wife of the chief ideologue of the insurgency, Baburam Bhattarai. Yami was the primary feminist ideologue of the Maoists. She argued that:

“Women are the most deprived in the existing feudal system despite their role in Nepal’s agro economy. They are denied parental property although they run rural households on their own when their husbands are away earning money. When the men return they marry other women and the wives are forced to leave… If the women marry someone else, they become outcastes… the CPN Maoist is reversing this feudal practice

through its People’s War. It is leading the new revolution to implement ideas like equal rights for parental property and tillers as landowners. Women are fascinated with this change. The People’s War has liberated women who otherwise had to spend their lives solely on domestic matters. Because of Hindu philosophy, girls are married off at an early age. They become grandmothers before they even reach menopause. The People’s War has brought women out of the vicious cycle of living as reproductive machines... Rural women who were once deprived of their rights are now at the forefront of the People’s War fighting as commanders. Now women are deciding not only when they live but also when they die...”

Despite the obvious generalization of Nepalese women’s perceptions of the Maoist insurgency—because many women did not support the Maoists even in their base areas—Yami articulates the ideological propaganda of the Maoists regarding women’s emancipation and female Maoists’ fight to end the Hindu patriarchal model in conjunction with creating a communist, republican state of Nepal. In fact, according to Yami, women’s emancipation could not be achieved until “the freedom of all other communities and classes” was ensured by the People’s War. Prachanda argued in 1997 that women:

“were not only fighting with the police or reactionary feudal agents but they were also breaking the chains of exploitation and oppression and a whole cultural revolution was going on among the people. Questions of marriage, questions of love, questions of family, questions of relations between people. All of these things were being turned upside down and changed in the rural areas.”

Despite this rhetoric, Yami argued that women’s issues were rarely discussed by the standing committee of the CPN(M) and, because of the absence of discourse on gender, the standing committee “neglect[ed] to implement programs developed by women’s mass

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fronts [e.g., ANWA(R)].”

Yami, providing an interesting internal critique of the male Maoist leadership, claimed that:

“While women cadre have the problem of asserting themselves, men cadre have the problem of relinquishing the privileged position bestowed upon them by the patriarchal structure. This is manifested in many ways. This is mainly seen in the form of formal acceptance of women’s leadership, while in essence not accepting their leadership. Thus there are delays made in establishing women’s leadership in the Party, PLA and United Front. This also results in their being impatient with women’s mistakes and general lack of skills in fields from which women have been excluded. Often they relegate women’s issues to women as if it does not concern them. This is manifested in not reading literature on women’s issues, and not taking part in implementing programmes given by the women’s mass front” (emphasis added).

Interestingly, Yami’s critique highlights the fact that in many circles of the Maoist leadership, gender roles were reinstitutionalized by male leadership because they were socialized in a patriarchal Hindu society that devalued the role of women in so-called men’s work, particularly in the highly masculine PLA.

Why were Nepali women drawn to the Maoist insurgency? It appears that the class struggle—the main ideological objective of the CPN(M)—was the principal reason women and girls joined the insurgency. The majority of women who joined the Maoists were from marginalized indigenous groups from the hill districts such as the Kahm Magars and Tamangs as well as from lower caste groups, such as the Dalits. In particular, Hisila Yami articulated a sentiment widespread among female Maoists from socioeconomically oppressed backgrounds:

“It is time and again seen that women masses do come in a tide to participate in revolutionary movements producing some potential women leaders. But this tide along with prospective women leaders seems to

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504 Ibid.


recede once the revolution is completed or is defeated. The chief reason behind this phenomenon is the existence of the concept of private property. As long as private property remains women will always have to go back to tend individual household activities, maintaining private property for men, no matter how many social revolutions take place. Hence the concept of continuous revolution until one reaches communism has strategic relevance for women, because it is only then that private property get abolished, unleashing the creativity of women” (emphasis added).507

This was a common theme in interviews with female Maoists in the Rolpa district of the midwestern region of Nepal, the epicenter of the Maoist revolution.508 However, there were many other reasons that women joined the Maoists aside from the class struggle, because “similar statements have been made and similar positions adopted by many other political parties and civil society groups for a long time in Nepal.”509

Another primary reason women and girls joined the Maoists was because it provided an opportunity for their empowerment. Yet many female cadre reported that were more keen to join combat units—rather than propaganda or party committees—because it provided them an opportunity to be “useful” in overthrowing a patriarchal, feudal system whereas party and propaganda committees were known to reinstitutionalize gender inequality by placing women in support roles.510 Some women also reported that they joined the PLA to prevent future acts of gender violence against themselves and other women, and those who participated in combat felt powerful and equal with male cadre. It was a widely held belief that the Maoists empowered women. A woman who was elected to a village development committee at the urging of Maoist cadre said:

“There are so many atrocities committed by the police in our village. The Maoists do not harm us. They are the people of our own village. These

509 Ibid.
510 Manchanda, Rita (2004) op. cit., p. 244.
days they visit door to door and conduct classes on many issues for us. We now know how to talk to people, why the Maoists are against the government and why it is important to support the Maoists."

Another young female cadre said that “I feel powerful with a gun.” In Maoist-controlled areas in rural Nepal, according to a report by the CPN(M) daily, *The Worker*, in 2003:

“Women owned land for the first time... Arranged marriages, polygamy and other feudal traditions oppressive to women are no longer practiced. Wife beating and rape are severely punished by the People’s Courts. Women are given the right to divorce, go to school, are equal participants in the new economic, political, and social life of the villages.”

This statement is confirmed by numerous journalistic stories that report the Maoists punished men who took dowries, married more than one woman, committed rape, abandoned their wives, or married young girls. Women and girls joined the Maoists irrespective of caste or ethnic background and most had shattered the myth that women could not do men’s work (because of their absence due to the conflict or seasonal migration) and became frustrated by the feminization of the agricultural sector. Because their confidence grew in absence of their male relatives, many women joined the insurgency to fight for the rights of oppressed classes, castes, and themselves as women.

The third reason for women’s mass participation in the Maoists was that cadre required every family in CPN(M)-controlled areas allow one member to join the movement—families, because of boy preference, were more willing to permit their daughters to join the movement. Binita and Jumna, two female Maoists interviewed by

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Rita Manchanda in rural Nepal, reported that they had been given by their parents to
Maoist cadre while their two brothers attended secondary school. This was indicative
of the pervasiveness of Nepali culture that seeped into the Maoist organization despite
attempts by the leadership to ameliorate gender inequality.

Another reason women joined the Maoists was because of its strict enforcement
of an alcohol ban throughout Maoist-controlled territory. Through ANWA(R), the
Maoists initiated an anti-alcohol campaign that was intended to reduce domestic violence
perpetrated by husbands against women and children. One young female Maoists said:

“My father is an alcoholic. After taking alcohol he assaults me and my
mother. Every day we are scared when he goes out for a drink. Two of my
brothers left home for India to escape this situation. It is embarrassing for
me too. I joined the women’s organization to join the anti-alcohol
campaign.”

Domestic violence is often catalyzed by men drinking alcohol. While men often spend
hours playing cards, drinking alcohol (usually raski), and gossiping, women are tasked
with agricultural work, collecting firewood, tending cattle, and taking care of children.
Many female Maoists viewed the anti-alcohol campaign as a component of their
liberation from patriarchy.

Revenge was another reason women joined the Maoists. Many women reported
that they had lost their husbands, brothers, or other male relatives to state-perpetrated
violence. One female Maoist cadre from the Rolpa district said that:

“Whenver the army enters the village, we get a few new women joining
the militia... Whenever the army enters the village they don’t just eat and
take away the chickens and food the villagers have, they also torture
women and rape them. They burn the houses and terrify the people. Those

515 Manchanda, Rita (2004) op. cit., p. 244.
517 Sharma, Madrina and Dinesh Prasain (2004) op. cit., p. 156.
poor people do not have any place to go to seek justice. So they come and join the party, in order to retaliate.”

Maya Chaudhary, a female Maoist from Udayapur, reported that:

“The police arrested my husband from the room. I was sleeping next to him when they came to arrest my husband. I asked for the reason and they told me that they were taking him for interrogation and would release him after some days, but next day they killed him. I lost the hope that I could get any justice from this system.”

The excesses of the RNA and NAPF—against women and men—proved a salient issue for Nepali women and led many of them to join the Maoist cause for revenge. They took up the gun because state violence had destroyed their families and livelihoods by killing male relatives suspected of Maoist participation.

What were Maoist women’s roles in the daily operations of the People’s War?

Despite the vast amounts of rhetoric on women’s emancipation, non-Maoist women in Maoist-controlled villages would commonly participate in traditionally feminine activities, e.g., fetching water or cooking, while male and female cadre would patrol outside of villages. In the top echelons of leadership such as the Politburo there were no women and during the 2001 and 2003 peace processes the Maoists did not have one female representative to negotiate with the government. But within the district-level party committees, women were oftentimes in charge of party operations. Hsila Yami led ANWA(R), the women’s wing of the CPN(M), and Pampa Bushal was co-leader of the United People’s Front until it was disbanded in 2000 due to its ineffectiveness. Yami was from the Buddhist merchant Newari community (which was upper caste) and Bushal

519 Ibid.
520 Sharma, Madrina and Dinesh Prasain (2004) op. cit., p. 163.
was from the upper-caste Brahman community—in fact, the majority of top female Maoist leadership was drawn from upper-caste groups—while lower-caste, non-Hindu women were more likely to participate in the PLA as combatants or in the CPN(M) as lower-level party members. Women widely participated in the central committee as party secretaries, office holders in village-level people’s committees, as area commanders in the PLA, and in Maoist militias as squad commanders. It must be noted that at the district level in mid-2001, no woman led a people’s committee within the party infrastructure although four women did serve as vice chairs.\textsuperscript{522}

Because of the classist and sexist nature of Nepali society, it appears that the Maoists—despite their rhetoric and female tokenism which garnered widespread popular support from female noncombatants and served as a recruiting tool—built an organization that was a classist and patriarchal microcosm of the broader society, although to a lesser extent. The impact of patriarchal Hindu values seemed to have a huge impact on the intragroup dynamics of the organization similar to the reinstitutionalization of patriarchy and classism found within the intragroup dynamics of the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.

Of the 19,602 cadre in the PLA during the civil war, the United Nations (UN) found that 3,846 of its personnel were women by the end of 2005. The Maoist leadership would often claim that this number was closer to 40-50 percent, although in reality it was approximately 20 percent.\textsuperscript{523} The CPN(M), at the start of the People’s War in February 1996, mandated that every combat unit of nine to 11 personnel contain at least two women. Rita Manchanda argues that this mandate may have “served as a check against

\textsuperscript{522} Ibid.
excesses against women” by Maoist cadre throughout the civil war, but other scholars, such as Elisabeth J. Wood, reject the hypothesis that the presence of women pacify male combatants’ use of sexual violence against noncombatants.524 Women in combat units were able to transcend gender stereotypes more so than their female counterparts in the party apparatus. They cut their hair short, wore plain kurta surals, and carried small arms and light weapons. Many women served as unit commanders of nine to 11 cadre, both male and female; several even served as area commanders of four combat units (i.e., 40 cadre at their command). As opposed to the LTTE in Sri Lanka, female Maoists were integrated with male combatants—women and men in the Maoists trained, patrolled, fought together, and intragroup punishments for sexual promiscuity were very harsh and often enforced. María V. Ariño argues that although the Maoists employed sexual violence, “the existence of strict codes of conduct in the armed group in order to prevent misbehavior, including that of a sexual nature, may have contributed to the lower incidence of this kind of violence” vis-à-vis the RNA’s repertoire of sexual violence and the deployment of other forms of violence against noncombatants by the Maoists.525

Similar to the organizational structure of the Tamil Tigers, there are also reports that all-female fighting units were deployed by the Maoists by 2001 until the conflict’s end.526

Women participated in many specialized agencies as leaders, as members of the central committee of the party, and thousands of women (estimated at nearly 3,000) participated in the PLA as full combatants. While the Maoists paid lip service to women’s emancipation to garner popular support from and recruit Nepali women and girls, only in the PLA did women and girls claim they had become more equal with their

male combatants—although not entirely equal as Yami argued when criticizing the failure of the Maoist leadership to prioritize women’s issues. In the upper leadership of the party there were no women. Deviating from the organizational structuring of the Tamil Tigers, female Maoists were not separated from male cadre and many women led combat units into battle with the RNA and NAPF.

3.5. Variation of Wartime Sexual Violence among Armed Groups

This section analyzes the Maoists and RNA’s “repertoire of violence” by comparing non-sexual violence (e.g., kidnappings, torture, assassinations, etc.) with instances of sexual violence by both actors. While the RNA appears to have committed widespread sexual violence, few documentations of Maoist sexual violence exist (yet the Maoists committed widespread non-sexual violence against civilians as well as NAPF and RNA combatants).

Sexual Violence by the RNA

Extensive survey data and field research in the districts of Banke, Bardia, Doti, Achham and Rolpa—where the majority of the conflict took place during the war—was documented by the Institute of Human Rights Communication, Nepal (IHRICON) in 2006. In the Doti district, after the RNA was deployed in 2001, many noncombatant women and girls reported that security forces raped those who were gathering firewood or fetching drinking water for their families. The RNA leadership was known to protect officers and enlisted combatants from judicial punishments who engaged in sexual

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violence against women and girls. Women in Nepal were skeptical of the judicial system to ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence were held accountable:

“Ms. Spana Pradhan Malla, Director of the Forum for Women, Law, and Development (Nepal), added to the discussion striking examples of women’s lack of faith in the legal system due to violations by police and security forces, cultural connotations of shame, lack of judicially acceptable evidence, and cases in which women were denied justice.”

This in large part bred a culture of impunity in which RNA personnel disregarded the legal consequences of committing sexual violence. For example, in a highly-publicized case, a major and two lower-ranking officers in the RNA raped and tortured two Muslim girls in Rautahat in 2003. In this case, as in many, these two girls were allegedly Maoist sympathizers and sexual violence served as a form of punishment for association with Maoist cadre. There are no reports of the RNA leadership orchestrating systematic sexual violence against women and girls; yet the culture of impunity as well as the widespread and systematic nature of RNA-perpetrated rapes leads one to believe that the upper hierarchy of the leadership at least implicitly (if not explicitly) condoned the use of rape (act of commission). In addition, most of the women and girls who were targeted by the RNA were suspected of supporting the Maoist insurgency which exemplifies the highly political nature of sexual violence perpetrated by RNA combatants. One woman from Rolpa reported that:

“[t]he Security forces used to treat us badly in the name of Maoists. Many young girls were afraid of being raped by the security forces. Army men used to misbehave and tease girls also in the name of Maoist [sic]. When

…one girl retaliated in response to such behavior, she was taken by the army and her status is still unknown till [sic] date.”

Young girls were frequently abducted by the RNA to be raped:

“While sleeping in her own home, a 13-year-old girl from Doti District was taken away by the security forces when no one was present. The young girl was raped and later released the following day. Despite local organizations reporting the case, it was dismissed by the security forces who gave an amount of money to the poor family. The issue became accepted in society afterwards and the matter did not proceed any further.”

A Maoist woman from the Rolpa District said:

“Whenever the army enters the village, we get a few new women joining the militia…Whenever the army enters the village they don’t just eat and take away the chickens and food the villagers have, they also torture women and even rape them.”

The areas surrounding RNA barracks or security checkpoints fostered an environment where RNA personnel committed sexual violence against women and girls with impunity. IHRICON reports that as:

“The army presence increased in the district headquarters [of the Doti District], the incidence of torture and rape cases had also increased. We were told that they used to hide in the areas of soil harvesting, fodder collection and abuse young girls, such as through touching sensitive body parts. The Army were [sic] also involved in the looting of private properties and all levels of army personnel were involved in those acts. It was reported that ‘people are not safe here,’ and women and children were mostly affected. It was reported that all levels of army personnel are involved in the act.”

532 Ibid.
When non-governmental organizations, such as IHRICON, attempted to approach women and girls who allegedly had been raped, these women were told to be silent by the RNA or otherwise face execution after human rights workers left the vicinity.  

Women and girls were also tortured by the RNA to extract intelligence about Maoist operations. The most publicized case was the torture and murder of Maina Sunuwar who was captured by squad of 12 RNA cadre on the morning of 17 February 2005 despite there being no evidence that linked her to the Maoists. She was repeatedly held under water and received electroshocks by army personnel in order to reveal information about Maoist activities, which she vaguely admitted that she was involved in such activity for “a couple of months.” She was dead by 11:00 p.m. from the injuries she had received throughout her day-long torture. Maina was put into a burlap bag and buried 50 meters from the RNA barracks where she was tortured. The RNA reported to the public that “Maina was arrested, tried to break the security cordon in Hokse and jump out of the vehicle... She was shot by the security forces while doing so, and died.” Many other “encounters” with civilians suspected of Maoist activity was commonplace after the RNA was deployed in 2001.

Not only did the RNA commit systematic and widespread rape, its personnel were often reported to abduct young girls as sex slaves or child brides. Girls between the ages of 14-17 were most vulnerable to such exploitation by RNA combatants. A young girl spoke of her marriage to a police officer in the NAPF: “He persuaded me to marry him which I did not agree. He then came to my home and asked my parents to marry me.

535 Ibid.
They accepted the offer and I got married with that police man.\textsuperscript{537} Because most girls were from the lowest castes (particularly Dalits), indigenous groups, or marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds, some family members believed that their daughters had the opportunity to improve their socioeconomic conditions via marriage to RNA personnel. However, in many instances, these girls were later abandoned as RNA combatants reneged on their promises after they were redeployed elsewhere in Nepal; such women and girls were often stigmatized by their family members for bringing dishonor upon the family (because of the prevalence of patriarchal Hindu values and a pervasive familial honor culture).\textsuperscript{538}

*Repertoire of Violence by the CPN(M)*

The Maoists also committed myriad forms of violence against civilians throughout the 1996-2005 civil war. Within their repertoire of violence, the CPN(M) committed forced disappearances, recruited child soldiers, assassinated landlords and other local elite, and executed members of the police and security forces. However, unlike the RNA, violence was employed selectively by the Maoists and when specific units did commit atrocities against civilians, CPN(M) leadership was quick to apologize and punish offending officers and cadre—this allowed the Maoist to “avoid large scale resistance” from noncombatants or anti-Maoist militias.\textsuperscript{539} Of the 13,190 documented deaths as a result of the civil war, 1,114 were civilians and it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the percentage killed by the Maoists. (In comparison, 1,962

\textsuperscript{537} The Institute of Human Rights Communication, Nepal (2006) op. cit., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{538} Ibid; Ariño, María V. (2008) op. cit., pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{539} Lawoti, Mahendra (2010) op. cit., p. 14.
security and police forces were killed while 9,270 Maoist cadre were killed during the civil war.\textsuperscript{540}

On 13 February 1996, the Maoists initiated the People’s War by attacking six different targets, such as police posts in Rukum, Rolpa, Gorkha, and Sindhuli as well as an agricultural office in Ghorka. As they expanded their areas of control, government workers were assassinated by cadre unless they pledged support to the People’s War. Fear and intimidation of civilians by the Maoists was common. The CPN(M) killed or tortured wealthy local elites to garner support from socioeconomically oppressed groups in rural villages. One villager noted:

“We heard that Maoists were starting to break into the houses of wealthy people, tax collectors and moneylenders, stealing their money and property and distributing it to the poor... We heard that the Maoists were breaking the arms and legs of moneylenders and tax collectors in the west of the country and were taking control of villages.”\textsuperscript{541}

Because of the threat of violence—and the Maoists’ ability to mobilize and deploy quickly in rural areas—civilians were fearful of reprisals for aiding security forces, refusing to feed and house Maoist units, and/or pay taxes to Maoist cadre for protection.\textsuperscript{542} At the outset of the People’s War, the CPN(M) avoided attacking the RNA, which was largely stationed in Kathmandu and other major towns and village in Nepal; rather, the Maoists fought and killed police forces who were less professional and ill-

\textsuperscript{540} Dhakal, Dilli R. (2006) \textit{A Decade of Disaster: Human and Physical Cost of Nepal Conflict 1996-2005}. Kathmandu: Community Study and Welfare Center, p. 5. Many of these “Maoist cadre,” however, could possibly have been noncombatants who were labeled Maoists by RNA and NAPF personnel to cover up the widespread nature of human rights abuses by the Nepali government.


\textsuperscript{542} Lawoti, Mahendra (2010) op. cit., pp. 14-5.
equipped vis-à-vis the RNA. It was not until late-2001 that the Maoists attacked the RNA, after they had grown into a considerable threat to the monarchy and Nepali state.\textsuperscript{543}

During a short and abrupt peace when the RNA was deployed and peace talks ensued in 2001, the government declared a state of emergency in which civil and political liberties of all civilians were severely curbed (e.g., indefinite detention without a criminal charge). Despite the state of emergency, Maoist violence intensified. The Maoists attacked the town of Mangalsen in western Nepal which resulted in the deaths of 100 civilians on 21 February 2002. Additionally, in April 2002 an estimated 48 policemen were killed by the CPN(M). In May 2002, 130 security force personnel were killed in combat by the Maoists in Rolpa district. The escalation of violence was so severe—and the government’s inability to address the Maoist threat was a harsh reality—that on 29 January 2003 the Maoists declared a ceasefire to begin the second round of peace negotiations. A comprehensive peace deal could not be reached and by 29 August 2003 the cease-fire was broken.\textsuperscript{544}

To gain recruits, the Maoists implemented a one-child-per-household policy in which each family must give one child to CPN(M) cadre to ensure the continuance of the People’s War. This guaranteed that the PLA had enough combatants, but, most importantly, it ensured that families in the rural districts of Nepal would support the Maoist movement because of their personal ties with the insurgency.\textsuperscript{545} Children were either abducted or deceived by the prospect of attending Maoist schools in villages which in reality were propaganda and recruitment forums. Human Rights Watch documented

\textsuperscript{543} Ibid.
nearly 3,500-4,500 child soldiers in the Maoist ranks by the end of 2005. These child soldiers often served as messengers, porters, domestic servants, sentries, or even as full-fledged combatants. Girls as young as 12 or 13 were present in the party apparatus or served in support roles for the PLA.\textsuperscript{546} Children active in combat were reported to be as young as 14.\textsuperscript{547} There were reports of sexual abuse of some child soldiers, especially young girls. The Maoists were allegedly still forcibly recruiting child soldiers by the time the 12-Point Agreement was signed by the Maoists and Seven Party Alliance on 22 November 2005.\textsuperscript{548}

\textit{The Infrequency of Sexual Violence by the Maoists}

The Maoists were not guilty of widespread sexual violence against women and girls yet there are several reported instances of sexual violence by Maoist cadre. According to IHRICON, “the sexual violence committed on part of the Maoists was much less than that of the security forces.”\textsuperscript{549} One woman reported, in an ethnographic study conducted in Maurigaun, that women “feel that they are more at risk from the security forces as they have heard stories of the mistreatment of civilian women by the army.”\textsuperscript{550} Rita Manchanda confirms this pattern of Maoist sexual violence by arguing that “there appear to be few reports of sexual violence by the Maoists.”\textsuperscript{551} However, there are reported cases of Maoist combatants wielding their weapons and subsequently raping

\textsuperscript{546} Manchanda, Rita (2004) op. cit., p. 243.
\textsuperscript{547} Human Rights Watch (2007) op. cit., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{549} The Institute of Human Rights Communication, Nepal (2006) op. cit., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{551} Manchanda, Rita (2004) op. cit., p. 250.
women and girls in rural areas. Like the RNA, Maoist commanders were also known to take sexual slaves. Women who refused sexual relations with Maoist combatants were sometimes tortured and killed, although such reports remain rare to date. However, when young girls were forcibly recruited into the Maoist ranks, such girls were raped and tortured by enlisted combatants while their unit or area commanders turned a blind eye (acts of omission) as opposed to the RNA which appears to have systematically orchestrated sexual violence against women and girls labeled as Maoist combatants or sympathizers.

Despite several reported instances of sexual slavery or rape by the Maoists, one focus group conducted by IHRICON reported that “Maoists behave normally. They have punished the culprit involved in rape cases.”\(^{552}\) In a case of sexual misconduct concerning Papmpa Bushal, leader of the United People’s Front, with a male comrade named “Badal,” Bushal was punished by suspension from her political post and sent to a rural village post for “re-education.”\(^{553}\) Badal was suspended yet quickly climbed the ranks to become head of the PLA. Bushal was later appointed to the Central Committee, although her re-ascension in the Maoist ranks took much longer than Badal’s.\(^{554}\) Despite their rhetoric on women’s emancipation, the Maoists also punished female cadre and noncombatants who were victimized by sexual violence: “A Maoist in a responsible post had sexual relations with a lady and made her pregnant when her husband was working in an Arab country. The lady became pregnant and was receiving discipline by the Maoist Party for having immoral relations.”\(^{555}\) In another documented case: “A Maoist cadre

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made a lady pregnant and left her. That lady later gave birth and killed her baby. The Maoist Party took action against her on the proposed crime. It appears that the strict policies on discipline within the Maoist insurgency—particularly regarding sexual misconduct—was much more lenient toward male cadre relative to female cadre who were engaging in consensual sexual intercourse (while those found to have committed rape or sexual harassment were severely reprimanded). A double standard appears to have been present as noncombatant women who engaged in consensual sexual intercourse were severely reprimanded by Maoist cadre who were, in essence, policing women’s sexuality in areas under their control.

3.6. Explaining the Variation of Sexual Violence by the CPN(M)

What factors are correlated with the infrequency of wartime sexual violence by the Maoists when the RNA committed sexual violence on a widespread and systematic scale? This section seeks to trace the working independent variables in the Maoist case in order to compile the data necessary to build a theoretical explanation of the variation of sexual violence perpetrated by the Tamil Tigers, RUF, and CPN(M) in chapter four. The six independent variables include: (1) macrosocial and (2) intragroup gender dynamics; (3) popular support; (4) ethnic, class, or caste rivalries; (5) leadership directives on sexual violence; and (6) judicial mechanisms.

Inequitable macrosocial gender dynamics were present before and during the civil war in Nepal. Women were culturally, economically, and legally subordinated to Nepali men. The findings fit with Sanday’s analytical conceptualization of “rape-prone societies.” Women were primary caretakers of children, were responsible for the bulk of

556 Ibid.
domestic labor (nearly four times as much work relative to men), and participated in a feminized agricultural sector. A Hinduization of society—codified through legislation—by the Nepali state reinforced women’s subordinate status. Nepal’s GDI average was 0.45 throughout the civil war (with Sierra Leone being 0.18 and Sri Lanka 0.7; a score of 1.0 is perfect gender equality while a score of 0 is perfect inequality in the socioeconomic sphere). While Nepali society was inequitable for women in the socioeconomic sphere and because of widespread patriarchal Hindu practices, the Maoists and the RNA treated women differently when they were engaged in conflict with one another. While one would expect the PLA and RNA to treat women the same—including engaging in wartime sexual violence—the frequency of sexual violence varied greatly between the two armed groups. Therefore, intragroup gender dynamics may provide a more compelling explanation as to why the CPN(M) committed sexual violence less frequently than the RNA.

Equitable intragroup gender dynamics were weakly present in the Maoists throughout the course of the civil war. Women trained, ate, patrolled, and engaged in combat with male cadre and there was not a separation of the sexes as there was in the Tamil Tigers (although there are several reported instances of all-female Maoist cadre). Women were able to participate in leadership positions within the PLA, although they never achieved a level higher than area commander (i.e., in charge of four units for a total of 40 combatants). Intragroup and regional judicial mechanisms—in the form of punishment by commanding officers or Maoist people’s courts, respectively—were present throughout the civil war in the Maoist insurgency. There were only several documented instances of sexual violence committed by top leadership of the Maoists—
even these individuals were not immune from punishment, signaling the robustness and legitimacy of these judicial mechanisms in ameliorating a culture of impunity. Sexual misconduct was prohibited by the top leadership of the CPN(M) to attract female recruits. Despite this reality, some female Maoists—especially those under the age of 20—faced instances of forced sex or sexual slavery from commanders and enlisted cadre. However, if cadre were caught committing rape or other forms of sexual violence, they were severely reprimanded by many commanding officers; other reports show that commanders turned a blind eye to the rape of female Maoists and noncombatants (e.g. act of omission). The data suggest that PLA commanders were more likely to punish their combatants who committed sexual violence rather than turning a blind eye (in order to enforce discipline among the personnel under their command). Despite the rhetoric in the party apparatus, traditional gender roles were reinforced and women and girls had fewer options for empowerment within the party vis-à-vis female combatants in the PLA.

The Maoists relied heavily on popular support of rural villagers throughout the conflict, and such a strategy—the Prachanda Path—enabled the CPN(M) to recruit individuals and extract resources from populations surrounding its base areas in mid-western Nepal. However, when villagers failed to comply with Maoist demands for food, shelter, taxes, and/or child recruits, they were often beat, tortured, or killed to serve as an example to other villagers. This created a culture of fear and respect for the Maoists that ensured that the populations in its stronghold would comply with Maoist demands for recruits and other resources. Additionally, the PLA relied on civilian militias to support it when it was engaged in heavy combat with the RNA although the capacity of the People’s Militia was limited due to their lack of professionalism and modernized
weaponry (despite their unprofessionalism, there are no documented cases of sexual violence committed by People’s Militia cadre). Yet despite relying heavily on civilian support, many civilians were killed by the Maoists—either intentionally or through friendly fire—throughout the 1996-2005 civil war.

There was a class rivalry present in the Nepalese civil war. The Maoists labeled the state as “feudalistic” and “imperialist.” The logic of Maoist violence was to eliminate class enemies and many landlords, tax collectors, and other business class elites were assassinated by the CPN(M) so that they would gain popular support from lower-class peasants throughout rural Nepal. Framing the conflict in terms of class rivalries also allowed the Maoists in recruit widely from lower castes or marginalized ethnonational groups throughout rural Nepal, especially in its western stronghold. Popular support and mass mobilization on behalf of Maoist ideological thinking was important for justifying the legitimacy of the People’s War and guaranteeing the sustainability of the insurgency.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter traces the history of the Nepalese civil war, explains the formation of the principal insurgency, analyzes the Maoists repertoire of violence vis-à-vis government armed forces, and considers six independent variables as influencing the variation of sexual violence between the two cases and among armed groups within each case—(1) macrosocial and (2) intra-group gender dynamics; (3) political, ethnic, and/or class rivalries; (4) accountability mechanisms; (5) (non-)reliance on civilian support; and (6) leadership prohibition. The data presented here informs the hypotheses testing, theory development, and policy recommendations found in the following chapter.
The intragroup gender dynamics of the RNA and CPN(M) were in stark contrast from one another throughout the civil war, with the Maoists providing opportunities for women and girls to participate in party politics, combat, and propaganda campaigns while there are no reported instances of women participating in the RNA, even in support roles. The Maoists committed sexual violence in a less frequent and non-systematic manner vis-à-vis the RNA which employed sexual violence against suspected Maoist women and girls near barracks, at security checkpoints, and while on patrol. Thus a combination of equitable intragroup dynamics and leadership prohibition of sexual violence within the CPN(M)—which were positively correlated with a lower frequency of wartime sexual violence—provides the most compelling explanation for the infrequency of wartime sexual violence committed by the Maoists during the 1996-2005 Nepalese civil war.
4. Conclusion: Explaining Variations of Wartime Sexual Violence

“We realize the crime of sexual assault erodes the very fabric of our profession... It’s based on trust, and this particular crime erodes that trust.” – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey

4.1. Introduction

This final chapter (1) tests the four hypotheses presented in chapter one using empirical data found in chapters two and three; (2) develops a theory on why intragroup gender and leadership dynamics correlate with the frequency and pattern of wartime sexual violence; (3) suggests policy prescriptions regarding combatant socialization in the U.S. military, government armed forces, and multilateral peacekeeping operations (PKOs); and (4) concludes with suggestions for future research on wartime sexual violence.

4.2. The Congruence Method: Hypotheses Testing

This section employs the congruence method to test four hypotheses drawn from the literature that have been utilized by scholars to explain the variation of wartime sexual violence in frequency and type across or within conflicts. Each hypothesis is applied to the cases of Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and Nepal with a concluding analysis that either rejects or fails to reject the hypothesis under question. The congruence method compliments the method of process-tracing used in chapters two and three. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett contend that utilizing a comparative case study with the
congruence method and process-tracing addresses the problem known as underdetermination or the degrees of freedom problem—i.e., “too many variables, too few cases.”\textsuperscript{558} This is important considering that the study has three cases, with one dependent variable and six independent variables in each case.

(H1) \textit{When the macro-cultural norms of societies are gender equitable, sexual violence during combat is less frequent and vice versa.}\textsuperscript{559}

If a society is highly patriarchal, is sexual violence more widespread and systematic by the armed groups involved in civil war? And, conversely, if a society is more gender equitable, does sexual violence occur less frequently by armed groups during civil war? If confirmed, one would expect sexual violence to be low in more gender equal societies and higher in more patriarchal societies during civil war.

Sri Lanka was classified as a patriarchal society throughout the 1983-2009 civil war yet the LTTE employed sexual violence against women and girls at a much lower frequency than the SLA. Because both Sinhala and Tamil cultures were patriarchal and categorize as “rape prone,” one would not expect the variation in frequency of wartime sexual violence between the LTTE and SLA if they existed within the same territorial space. However, relative to Sierra Leone (with around 250,000 women and girls who were targets of sexual violence), sexual violence was employed less frequently by all armed actors during the Sri Lankan civil war. Sierra Leone was the most patriarchal country—according to the Gender-Related Development Indicator (GDI) as well as other measures such as maternal mortality rates, women’s representation in parliament, and ethnographic data such as that presented in chapter two—during the 1991-2002 civil war.

\textsuperscript{558} George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett (2005) op. cit., p.156.
\textsuperscript{559} Wood, Elisabeth J. (2009) op. cit., pp. 140-42.
Yet the RUF was responsible for more than 85 percent of instances of sexual violence during the civil war whereas the RSLAF and CDF committed far fewer acts of sexual violence. Furthermore, 60 percent of reported acts of sexual violence fell within the 1998-1999 period of the war, suggesting that sexual violence was used as a deliberate strategy by the RUF-AFRC alliance during its bid to prevent the takeover of Freetown by the RSLAF and CDF.\textsuperscript{560} In Nepal, GDI data suggest that the society was highly patriarchal but the RNA committed the majority of sexual violence against women and girls while the CPN(M) was implicated in only several documented cases of sexual violence. Both CPN(M) and RNA combatants were products of a patriarchal Nepali society yet sexual violence was disproportionately committed by the RNA.

Based on the macrosocial data which suggest that all armed actors existed in patriarchal societies (although at varying levels) during their respective conflicts, this study rejects the hypothesis (H1) that suggests the (non-)patriarchal societal variable correlates with the (non-)use of wartime sexual violence by armed groups because of the disproportionate use of sexual violence by one group when others rarely employed this form of violence despite existing within the same patriarchal sociocultural environment. This variable may explain why sexual violence occurs at a greater frequency \textit{across} conflicts but it does not account for why sexual violence varies in frequency and type among armed groups \textit{within} the same conflict. Other variables and causal mechanisms appear to have been present during each civil war that provide a more compelling explanation of the variation in frequency of sexual violence among armed groups within the same civil war.

\textsuperscript{560} Cohen, Dara K. (2010) op. cit., p. 93.
Group leadership may prohibit or authorize wartime sexual violence, which may explain the low and high frequency, respectively, of systematic rape by armed groups during conflict.\textsuperscript{561}

If group leadership forbids sexual violence against women and girls, is an armed group less likely to commit sexual violence on a widespread scale? And on the other hand, if group leadership condones or orchestrates wartime sexual violence, is that armed group more likely to commit widespread sexual violence against noncombatants?

In Sri Lanka, the LTTE leadership forbade the use of sexual violence against women and girls in order to gain female recruits and garner female noncombatant support of the Tigers’ goal of Tamil national liberation which also included calls for Tamil women’s emancipation from patriarchal oppression. The LTTE was implicated in very few occurrences of sexual violence and those LTTE cadre who were culpable of wartime rape were reprimanded by commanders in the Tigers. In addition, the LTTE leadership hierarchy was centralized around Prakkaharan who was able to enforce decisions such as the prohibition of wartime sexual violence. In both acts of omission by the top leadership and acts of commission by low- to mid-level officers of the SLA, the Sri Lankan armed forces were guilty of the majority of wartime sexual violence during the 1983-2009 civil war. This appears to have been part of an organizational strategy to terrorize the Tamil population and prevent the movement of women and girls from the territory surrounding LTTE strongholds.

The leadership of the RUF during the Sierra Leonean civil war, particularly Foday Sankoh, encouraged combatants to terrorize civilian populations using violent tactics in which sexual violence was deemed a powerful tool of terror for targeting female

\textsuperscript{561} Ibid.
noncombatants. However, there is no available data which suggest that RUF leadership directly ordered sexual violence to be employed in the insurgency’s repertoire of violence. There were no reports of RUF combatants who were disciplined after they had committed sexual violence against women and girls. In contrast, the RSLAF and CDF committed very few acts of sexual violence vis-à-vis the RUF (around one percent) and were much more disciplined than the RUF.

In Nepal, the CPN(M) employed relatively little sexual violence compared to the RNA and NAPF and Maoist cadre who were found responsible for sexual violence were harshly reprimanded by commanding officers (although there are reports of several rogue officers who committed sexual violence). Even commanding officers who were found culpable of sexual violence against female cadre or noncombatants were punished by demotion and ideological reeducation. In the official ideology and rhetoric of Maoist leadership, they explicitly prohibited violence against women in order to attract female recruits and gain female noncombatant support. In addition, several women were in top positions of leadership within the Maoists and were able on many occasions to influence male leadership on issues of gender equality and violence against women. Because of the strong internal discipline of the CPN(M) fostered by Prachanda and other high-level leadership, it appears that sexual violence was utilized less frequently than the RNA and NAPF. In contrast, the RNA committed widespread and systematic sexual violence at security checkpoints, near barracks, and on patrols in Maoist-controlled territory. Commanding officers in the RNA were known to shield their enlisted combatants from punishment after they had engaged in sexual violence against suspected female Maoist sympathizers.
The data presented in chapters two and three points to a strong correlation between leadership prohibition of sexual violence and the infrequency of sexual violence by the Nepali Maoists and Tamil Tigers. On the other hand, it also highlights acts of omission and commission by RNA, SLA, and RUF leadership and the high frequency and systematic patterns of sexual violence against women and girls in each respective civil war. This study, therefore, fails to reject (i.e., supports) the leadership hypothesis (H2) as a positive correlation between the leadership variable and wartime sexual violence is present. Further study of these two variables is warranted to further the understanding of variation in frequency and type of wartime sexual violence.

(H3) *When armed groups depend on the “provision of support”—supplies, ideological support, and intelligence—from civilian populations and intend to govern them, such groups do not engage in widespread sexual violence against civilians.*

If an insurgency depends on civilian populations for sustaining its combat operations, is sexual violence against noncombatants rare? When an insurgency is externally backed by a foreign government or transnational organization, is sexual violence against noncombatants more frequent and widespread?

The Tamil Tigers relied on popular support to finance their insurgency against the Sri Lankan government yet much of this financial support was coercively extracted from Sri Lankan Tamils as well as the Tamil diaspora in the U.S. and Canada. As far as its ideological objectives, the Tigers sought to overthrow the Colombo regime in Tamil Eelam via its revolution and govern the northeastern territory of Sri Lanka. The LTTE also employed non-sexual violence against Tamil civilians as it sought to outbid competing Tamil insurgencies in the 1980s and during the 2007-2009 period of the war

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as its control of northeastern Sri Lanka was eroded by the SLA. Despite this reality, the LTTE implemented a propaganda campaign to attract female recruits by calling for women’s emancipation and deploring rape and other sexual misconduct by the SLA. Tamil women’s support of the LTTE was vital for its strategic and ideological objectives throughout the civil war.

In the Sierra Leone civil war, the RUF did not rely on popular support from the civilian population but was rather externally backed by Charles Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia and, eventually, the Taylor regime in Liberia. It was also able to finance its campaign through the illegal mining of alluvial diamond deposits found in the Kono district and the forcible extraction of resources—food, shelter, and recruits—from civilian populations. The RUF did intend to govern Sierra Leone, but Foday Sankoh would likely have autocratically ruled Sierra Leone if the insurgency was successful. Because the RUF was able to sustain its operations in the absence of ideology or popular support, it was able to wage gruesome and widespread (sexual) violence against Sierra Leoneans during the civil war.

The Nepali Maoists, in accordance with the Prachanda Path, relied heavily on rural popular support—particularly in the midwestern hill districts of Nepal—to surround Kathmandu and overthrow the monarchy. The PLA would often enter villages and extract resources such as food, shelter, taxes, and recruits from civilian populations (although recruitment was rarely done forcibly, as opposed to the RUF). The Maoists also received military support from People’s Militias that would mobilize during heavy combat with the RNA in the latter half of the civil war. However, the PLA was known to employ violence against Nepali noncombatants who were (1) viewed as “class enemies”
(particularly intellectuals and business elites), (2) suspected of collaborating with the RNA and Kathmandu government, or (3) caught in the middle of firefights between the CPN(M) and RNA.

It appears that the popular support hypothesis (H3) in part explains variation in wartime sexual violence by the Nepali Maoists and Tamil Tigers which both relied on popular support from civilian populations and intended to govern them after the realization of their respective revolutions. In contrast, the RUF, despite intending to govern Sierra Leoneans, neither sought nor needed the financial, human, and ideological support of noncombatants. Therefore, this study fails to reject (i.e., supports) the popular support hypothesis.

(H4) Insurgent groups with (a) high numbers of female combatants, (b) an equitable sexual division of labor, and (c) female combatants in leadership roles engage less in wartime sexual violence and vice versa.  

When an insurgency equitably integrates women into its ranks of combatant and leadership positions, is wartime sexual violence less frequent by that respective armed group? And, conversely, when armed opposition groups have few female cadre, relegate them to support roles, and lack female leadership, is wartime sexual violence more frequent by such insurgencies?

The Tamil Tigers began integrating women into its ranks two years after the start of the civil war and female cadre participated in combat operations until the Tigers’ May 2009 defeat by the SLA. Female cadre gained respect from their male colleagues through their participation in combat and their adoption of hypermasculine traits such as the suppression of emotion, ferocity in combat, and expertise in the tactics of war. However,

to appeal to conservative Tamil supporters, the LTTE separated female and male combat units to avoid fraternization between the sexes which was believed to lead to immoral sexual relations according to Hindu patriarchal norms. But because female cadre were respected as capable combatants and leaders as well as the LTTE’s need for additional recruits, intragroup gender dynamics were more equitable than most armed insurgent groups and government armed forces.

During the Sierra Leonean civil war, women and girls were integrated into the RUF but the interactions between male and female cadre were unequal and extremely violent. Women and girls were often abducted and served as sex slaves (“bush wives”), domestic servants, and combatants (e.g., the Small Girls Unit). The majority of women in the RUF filled subservient roles as sex slaves or domestic servants while a minority participated in combat. The RUF operated based on a stringent meritocracy of violence among enlisted combatants in which several reports document that female combatants were able to rise to low-level field commander positions. (High ranking officers in the RUF were promoted because of their unwavering loyalty to Sankoh, not necessarily by their use of heinous forms of violence.) Yet female cadre were unable to rise to the mid-to high-level leadership positions in the RUF because of hegemonic masculine values within the top leadership. Women in the RUF were known to commit egregious forms of violence against civilians and even raped female noncombatants with guns, knives, and other blunt objects or held victims down while male cadre committed sexual violence. But because few men in the RUF respected female cadre, it was commonplace for them to commit sexual violence against female (non)combatants throughout the civil war.
Women and girls were, in general, equitably integrated into the ranks of the Nepali Maoists. Female and male Maoist cadre ate, trained, patrolled, and fought together contrary to the separation of the sexes found in the LTTE. (Although there were reports of several all-female PLA units that were deployed after 2001 in the midwestern hill districts.) In the PLA, many female cadre were able to reach the rank of area commander in which they directed 40 personnel. Within the CPN(M), women were able to obtain higher positions of authority, although they were often relegated to ANWA(R)—the women’s wing of the party apparatus—in which they would launch propaganda and recruiting campaigns that addressed women’s issues such as domestic violence, sexual violence by the RNA, etc. While women were respected as equals during combat operations among enlisted personnel, female Maoists were unable to obtain mid- to high-level leadership positions in the PLA and within the CPN(M) women engaged in much of the support work similar to the RUF (which was a reinstitutionalization of gender roles within the Maoists).

Rather than merely focusing on the presence of women within insurgent groups (which Elisabeth J. Wood aptly dismisses as a supportable hypothesis because of the presence of women in the RUF), the gender dynamics hypothesis (H4) examines the quality of women’s experience within the three insurgencies under question. In the Tamil Tigers and Nepali Maoists, female cadre were respected by their male colleagues after they had trained and engaged in combat operations with one another. Women were able to rise to low-ranking field commander positions in which they commanded both male and female cadre. Women and girls also wielded small arms and light weapons and had considerable success during combat which garnered male cadre’s respect. Few women
and girls in the LTTE and CPN(M) were exposed to sexual violence by male cadre. Because of the need for additional recruits within both insurgencies, the leadership framed women’s participation as vital for achieving the ideological and strategic objectives of the insurgencies. In contrast, the RUF forcibly conscripted women and girls and they were subjected to various forms of sexual violence by male cadre. The top leadership neither valued the presence of women and girls within the organization nor did they believe female cadre to be integral to realizing the strategic and ideological objectives of the insurgency. Therefore, this study fails to reject (i.e., supports) the intragroup gender dynamics hypothesis (H4) as equitable intragroup gender dynamics are correlated with the infrequent use of sexual violence by armed opposition groups while inequitable gender dynamics are correlated with a high frequency of wartime sexual violence against women and girls among the three cases.

4.3. Bringing Intragroup Gender Dynamics into Wartime Sexual Violence Theory

This section briefly theorizes as to why wartime sexual violence was rarely employed by the Tamil Tigers and Nepali Maoists, focusing on an overlooked causal pathway in the existing literature. It is important to understand that small-n comparative case studies do not permit parsimonious theorizing that is generalizable to a large number of cases as in the case of large-N studies; however, the small-n comparative method allows researchers to develop middle-level theories that can be applied to a handful of other similar cases. In short, the theory below may be applied to other cases in which wartime sexual violence varied in frequency among armed groups within the same civil war (e.g., Colombia, Peru, Libya, etc.). Elisabeth J. Wood highlights this underspecified
an explanation of women’s presence in insurgencies in which this study attempts to expand
into a testable hypothesis:

“[A]n explanation sometimes made for the absence of sexual violence on
the part of some armed groups is the presence of many female cadre. However, the causal mechanism is not well specified; candidates include
the following. On is the substitution argument: The presence of female
combatants means that male combatants do not “need” to rape. Another
approach assumes that female combatants eschew sexual violence, but that
is not the case as they actively engage in it in some conflicts, as in Sierra
Leone and Rwanda. Moreover, some armed groups with significant
numbers of female combatants do engage in high levels of sexual
violence; the RUF of Sierra Leone is an example. Or perhaps the presence
of women disrupts male bonding through misogynistic training practices,
practices that are thought by some scholars to make sexual violence more
likely. However, the experience of female soldiers in U.S. forces is that
such practices continue in more muted and covert form, despite their
official banning. An organization might prohibit sexual violence by its
cadre for fear that the enemy would retaliate in kind, threatening its own
female cadre. Or an organization may pursue a strategy or ideology (for
example, recruitment based on sexual violence by enemy forces) that both
appeals to female recruits and also promotes the prohibition of sexual
violence” (emphasis added).564

The final “candidate” of explanations for the variation of wartime sexual violence is the
most compelling explanation yet Wood found less evidence to causally link the variable
of intragroup gender dynamics into her leadership prohibition hypothesis. This is likely
due to her single-case study of the LTTE which prevented the contrast and comparison of
wartime sexual violence across conflicts as well as among armed groups that is possible
with the comparative method.

This study’s empirical evidence leads one to theorize that when leadership
prohibits sexual violence, enforces strong internal group discipline, and frames women’s
(equitable) participation as integral for achieving the broader ideological and strategic
goals of the insurgency (i.e., nationalist, leftist, etc.), sexual violence against women and

The importance of ideological “frames” by insurgent leadership cannot be understated as a causal mechanism that led to the infrequency of wartime sexual violence. Because both the Tigers and Maoists linked women’s emancipation with the broader nationalist and leftist goals, respectively, of their revolutions, this created intragroup dynamics that valued women as unit commanders, cadre, and support personnel. (However, as David Snow notes, it is a common pitfall of scholars of collective action framing to assume perfect adherence of members’ behavior with group ideology—this may explain why some commanders and cadre in the LTTE and CPN[M] committed sexual violence against female cadre and noncombatants despite the official rhetoric and ideology championed by top leadership.)

Such a middle-level theory drawn from this study’s three-case comparative methodology explicitly links leadership prohibition with

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565 Snow, David A. (2004) op. cit. pp. 396-400. The U.S. military has consistently argued that sexual violence occurs within its ranks because of “rogue” noncommissioned officers throughout each branch of military service who shield perpetrators from punishment, although the frequency (estimated to be as high as 19,000 per year by the Department of Defense) of sexual violence points to a systematic policy failure and acts of omission by (non)commissioned officers. The Feres Doctrine also makes it impossible for survivors to sue military investigators that make false or misleading reports that smack of victim blaming. According to Kira Mountjoy-Pepka of Pack Parachute, a survivor advocacy group, the Doctrine “prohibits people from suing the military and/or petitioning any non-military legal authority for interdiction without the military’s prior and explicit agreement and consent.” Cited in Jamail, Dahr (23 December 2010) “Military Sexual Abuse ‘Staggering’,” Aljazeera, accessed at: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/2010/12/20101223113859171112.html.
equitable intragroup dynamics as the two most important necessary conditions for the infrequency of sexual violence by armed opposition groups.

This causal pathway provides an additional (and more complex) hypothesis that may be tested on other cases of wartime sexual violence rather than merely testing for the presence of women in armed groups. It contributes new insight into the existing literature because it links the intragroup gender dynamics of insurgencies with leadership prohibition of wartime sexual violence that could not be uncovered with Wood’s single-case study of the Tamil Tigers.

4.4. Policy Implications

Since sexual violence is not inevitable during wartime (and in fact, “boys will not be boys” during certain conflicts), there is greater grounds for holding groups accountable that do commit widespread and systematic violence against noncombatants. This section considers policies that may be implemented by government armed forces to prevent wartime sexual violence by their combatants with a particular focus on the U.S. military. It also reviews the recent conviction of Charles Taylor of Liberia by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) as an example of how group or state leadership may be deterred from employing or supporting widespread and systematic violence against noncombatants.

*Combatant Socialization and Leadership Prohibition*

The empirical evidence and theory development provided in this study point to the importance of the intragroup dynamics of armed forces whether they be opposition
groups or government armed forces. A study of intragroup processes that permit sexual violence within the ranks of the U.S. military and United Nations PKOs is beyond the scope of this study yet such a research project is warranted to understand why such a systemic failure occurs and continues to be unaddressed by the Pentagon and the UN. However, based on the empirical findings of this thesis, the following section considers policy options that may be implemented by the U.S. armed forces and UN PKOs in order to eliminate sexual violence against female personnel as well as female noncombatants in Afghanistan, U.S. military bases throughout the globe, and among PKOs in post-conflict environments.

Sexual violence against male and female personnel within the U.S. military is estimated to occur around 19,000 times per year, although reported sexual violence were 3,192 in 2011 and 3,158 in 2010 due to underreporting by survivors because of their fear of discharge from the military, harassment by male colleagues, male biases in military courts, etc.\(^566\) The prosecution rates are also dismal because of: “3,158 reports of military sexual assaults [in 2010], only 529 alleged perpetrators were convicted, while 41 percent were acquitted or had charges dismissed.”\(^567\) While female officers who are sexual assaulted are able to leave the armed forces if military courts fail to reach an equitable decision, enlisted female personnel are unable to leave and oftentimes, especially in combat zones, have to continue their service alongside their perpetrator(s). A recent peer-reviewed study indicated that nearly one in three deployed female personnel in the U.S.


military are sexually assaulted by male personnel during their period of service.\textsuperscript{568} In 2011, women comprised more than 11 percent of active duty personnel deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq and 15 percent of the total military ranks (around 200,000).\textsuperscript{569} The Department of Defense (DoD), despite continually paying lip service to sexual violence prevention within U.S. military ranks, has failed to ameliorate the high frequency of sexual violence against female personnel. The DoD implemented the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SARPO) in 2006 which tracks sexual assaults among all branches of U.S. military within the entire DoD. Yet SARPO, in the \textit{Report of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military December 2009}, compiled by the U.S. Congress, has consistently been underfunded and has failed to work with judicial arm of the DoD which have gave “its reports and findings little muscle.”\textsuperscript{570}

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, however, has recently announced several policy changes that will provide greater justice for female personnel who are sexual assaulted (if the policies are implemented). The most important change is that cases of sexual violence will be reported to a colonel or Navy captain who has court-martialing authority as opposed to lieutenants and noncommissioned officers who have been widely known to shield perpetrators from punishment.\textsuperscript{571} Several other changes include: (1) enlisted personnel must be taught the sexual assault codes within 14 days after they become active duty; (2) the establishment of a special victims’ unit within each branch of the armed forces; (3) annual assessments of officers to ensure that they are fostering an

\textsuperscript{568} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{569} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{570} Ibid.  
environment that promotes a zero tolerance of sexual assault; and (4) new training for military officers to handle sexual assault cases.572

Based on the empirical findings of this thesis, there are several policy recommendations that may be implemented by the U.S. military, UN PKOs, and other government armed forces to reduce the frequency of sexual violence by its personnel against noncombatants and male and female personnel within their own ranks. The U.S. military, UN PKOs, and other government armed forces must:

- Emphasize the importance of female personnel in the achievement of strategic goals and their record of success in combat which has been demonstrated in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- Eliminate military codes which prohibit female combatants from participating in active combat in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations;
- Integrate women into combat units as enlisted and officer personnel provided that they meet the existing requirements of physical, technical, and combat training;
- Appoint high-level female officers with experience and training in (sexual) violence advocacy to leadership positions that enforce codes of sexual assault and have the ability to court-martial perpetrators of sexual violence;
- Challenge and alter hegemonic masculine socialization among military personnel that is found in the initial stages of training in the military;
- Incorporate a zero tolerance policy for sexual violence against noncombatants as an essential aspect of “winning the hearts and minds” of populations surrounding counterinsurgency campaigns comparable to conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan;
- Enact harsher penalties for perpetrators of sexual violence in the armed forces to deter such violent crimes within the armed forces and against noncombatants;

572 Ibid.
• Increase the funding of SAPRO within the DoD to increase its consistency in the tracking of sexual assault cases against male and female personnel and link its work with military courts and other bodies with the ability to court martial perpetrators;

• Educate all personnel about rape myths (e.g., “she asked for it” because she was drinking or wore revealing clothing off duty), the impact of sexual violence (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder), and the damage that it causes to group solidarity and overall unit effectiveness particularly while in combat;

• Allow individuals targeted by sexual violence the ability to pursue cases in the civilian court system if their cases are dropped by the military judicial process;

• Expand the call for an end to sexual violence within the ranks of the military and against noncombatants similar to recent statements by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey; and,

• Urge the U.S. Congress to pass a federal law that mandates the above legal and procedural changes as well as federal funding to SAPRO so that sexual violence policy in the U.S. military is consistent despite changes in the executive administration.

These are policy recommendations that were drawn from the empirical findings of the infrequency of sexual violence by the LTTE and CPN(M) juxtaposed with the RUF. They are by no means exhaustive and the recent steps within the DoD appear promising although many feminists believe that Panetta is only paying lip service to the prevention of sexual assault within the military. However, the DoD, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and U.S. Congress must move past rhetoric and implement policies that will eliminate sexual violence within the U.S. armed forces and against noncombatants.

Conviction of Charles Taylor by the Special Court for Sierra Leone

On 26 April 2012 Charles Taylor—the former leader of the NPFL and ex-president of Liberia—was convicted by the SCSL for “arming, supporting, and guiding”
the RUF during its brutal campaign against Sierra Leoneans and their government.573 The SCSL found Taylor guilty of “crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, rape, slavery and the use of child soldiers” in the first conviction of a former head of state since the Nuremburg trials after World War II.574 On 30 May 2012, the Court sentenced him to 50 years in prison at a facility in the United Kingdom.575

Such a conviction and sentencing of a seemingly untouchable figure in African politics sends a clear message to other leaders of non-state actors or governments that commit widespread violence against civilians: they will be held accountable under international law once they are indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Because this study demonstrates that leadership plays an important role in shaping a group’s repertoire of violence, it is imperative that states sign, ratify, and implement the Rome Statute which gives the International Criminal Court legal jurisdiction in the territory of ratified states. While legal deterrence does not address the root causes of wartime sexual violence and other crimes against humanity, it serves as a legal apparatus that may prevent the occurrence of future Sierra Leones.

4.5. Conclusion: Suggestions for Future Research

This study has uncovered new insight as to why wartime sexual violence varies in frequency among armed group within the same conflict. As a new subfield of the study of wartime sexual violence, this avenue of research must be expanded upon by scholars.

574 Ibid.
The research design of this study has provided a comparative, three-case study on wartime sexual violence in which there is a variation in value of the dependent variable—wartime sexual violence—which avoids the pitfall of selection bias (i.e., selecting cases with only one value on the dependent variable) that prevents the positivistic, social scientific testing of hypotheses drawn from the existing literature. More comparative research must be conducted in which two or more cases that juxtapose instances of widespread and systematic wartime sexual violence with cases where sexual violence was less frequent by armed groups. This provides the ability to compare and contrast cases in a manner that deepens our understanding of causes of sexual violence (and conversely, its absence). If scholars employ such a research design, they may provide additional insights on variation that are beyond the scope of this study.

There are other cases of wartime sexual violence in which the variation in frequency and type have been understudied—e.g., Colombia, Libya, Bangladesh, the U.S. occupation of Vietnam, etc., are notable and understudied cases on the variation of wartime sexual violence. Scholars of wartime sexual violence must explore these cases (especially as more data becomes available in the case of Libya) to strengthen our understanding of the causal pathways and variables which are correlated with a lower frequency of sexual violence vis-à-vis government armed forces. Cases of wartime sexual violence are also in sore need of additional data. Field research will be a crucial avenue to understand why wartime sexual violence varies in frequency and type across conflicts as well as among armed groups.

A new independent variable has been identified in this study: intragroup gender dynamics. Future studies of wartime sexual violence may be strengthened by integrating
this variable into the research process to better understand why some armed groups rape and others rarely employ such violence. Compared to macrosocial indicators of gender (in)equality within cases of wartime sexual violence, intragroup gender dynamics—linked with leadership dynamics and group hierarchy which was a variable identified by Elisabeth J. Wood—allow for more externally valid measures of group dynamics that explain the variation of sexual violence within the same conflict (while macrosocial indicators explain why sexual violence varies in magnitude across conflicts). Researchers are able to measure intragroup gender and leadership dynamics by drawing upon ethnographic studies as well as conducting their own original field research via interviews with ex-combatants and leaders of insurgent groups.

The role of ideological frames within armed groups appears to have an influence in the variation of wartime sexual violence in the three cases presented in this study. Scholars must engage in comparative case studies of the (in)frequent use of wartime sexual violence by insurgencies sharing similar ideological frameworks (e.g., Peruvian Maoists and Nepali Maoists). This may better explain how ideology impacts certain groups’ repertoire of violence relative to this study which does find an impact of group ideology despite their differing ideological frameworks and goals (i.e., Maoist in Nepal and nationalist in Sri Lanka).

Using process-tracing and the congruence method in a comparative, three-case study of sexual violence during the civil wars in Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, and Nepal, this thesis finds that when leadership forbids sexual violence by its combatants, imposes robust internal group discipline, and frames female cadre’s equitable participation as essential for realizing the broader ideological and strategic goals of the insurgency (i.e.,
nationalist, leftist, etc.), sexual violence against (non)combatant women and girls is less frequent during civil wars by armed opposition groups vis-à-vis government armed forces. It is a myth that sexual violence is an inevitable byproduct of war. This study demonstrates that not all armed groups employ rape in their repertoire of violence during conflict situations. It provides a theoretical and practical extension of scholars’ understanding of the variation in frequency of wartime sexual violence across conflict as well as among armed groups. Since not all armed groups commit widespread and systematic wartime sexual violence, scholars and policy makers have begun to provide evidence and policy prescriptions that may greatly reduce the frequency of sexual violence by armed groups such as leadership prohibition, strong intragroup discipline and judicial mechanisms, gender equity within the ranks of combat units, etc. In short, the recent literature and this study validate that, in fact, boys will not always be boys.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


