



Gender dynamics in civil war and sexual violence

CDSN4002 POLITICAL VIOLENCE

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Agenda

- ▶ What is the role of gender/sex in war?
- ▶ What purpose does sexual violence have in wartime?

Gender based violence

- ▶ “violence that is targeted at women or men because of their sex and/or their socially constructed gender roles” (Carpenter 2006)
- ▶ Includes but is not limited to various forms of sexual violence
- ▶ Both men and women can be victims and perpetrators
- ▶ Role of gender ideas that justify or naturalize it

Wood 2006

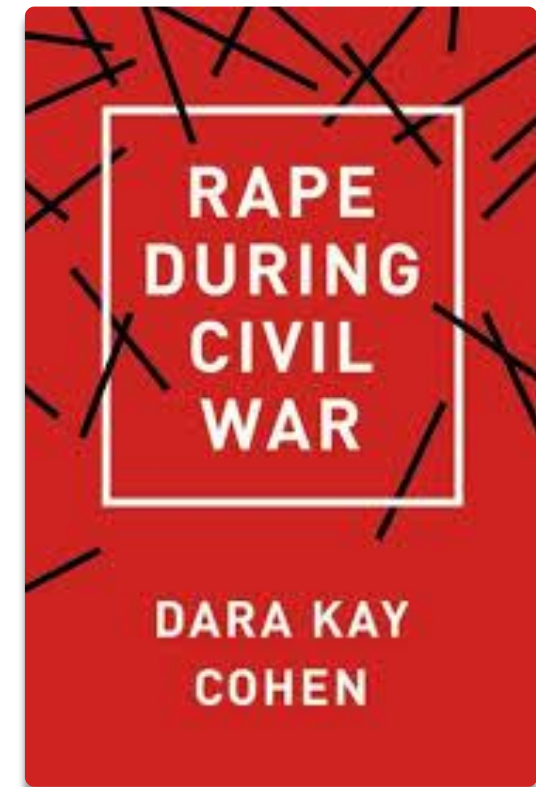
- ▶ Why is sexual violence more frequent in wartime?
- ▶ Three reasons: increases opportunity and incentives; instrumental role
 - ▶ Individuals in peacetime differ in their interest in sexual violence (different motivations)
 - ▶ Weakened social mechanisms/constraints
 - ▶ Promotion of sexual violence as a strategy of war

Why do women participate in wartime sexual violence?

- ▶ *Traditional view*: women are more peaceful than men
- ▶ *Substitution argument*: women in rebel groups reduce the need for rape of noncombatants
- ▶ *Selection argument*: violent types of people choose to join combatant groups in order to commit violence

Cohen 2013

- ▶ **Socialization argument:** sexual violence enables armed groups with forcibly recruited fighters to create bonds of loyalty;
- ▶ “Rape is a result of the practical needs of combatant groups faced with the challenge of forming a coherent fighting force of veritable strangers”



Carpenter 2006

- ▶ Adult men as most likely targets in wartime – based on gendered assumptions about male roles
- ▶ Forcible recruitment and collectively held assumptions about masculine identity
- ▶ Men are also victims of sexual violence; forced to assault others or watch assaults against relatives