

The Continuum of Violence

A Gender Perspective on War and Peace

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The Women in Conflict Zones Network, an international network of researchers, has generated empirical material and analyses from many regions and countries afflicted by war. The title of our group indicates a concern with women, and it has meant in practice both that the women we have studied have been situated in places of conflict and that many of our researchers live in such places. The word *women* in relation to *conflict* perhaps prompts a picture of passivity, of those who are injured, abused, and displaced. But what has emerged from our research and networking is not a victimology of women as a sex but something very different: a feminist analysis of gender.

In this chapter I suggest that a gender perspective on the successive moments in the flux of peace and war is not an optional extra but a stark necessity. It reveals features of conflict and conflict resolution that have to be understood if we are to develop effective strategies for mitigating the effects of conflict and for restoring and maintaining peace. I show what some of those features are and discuss relations between them that suggest a continuum of violence.

But first a question needs to be asked: Why is conventional analysis so often gender-blind? Feminist analysis often asserts that it is not enough just to add women and stir. "What is it, then, about everyday perceptions that must be changed to constitute a gender analysis? I suggest, first, that women

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can be understood only as part of a gender dyad, in which men and masculinity warrant as much attention as women and femininity. Second, beyond distributions by sex (men do this, women do that), we need to observe the functioning of gender as a relation, and a relation of power, that compounds other power dynamics.

GENDER: NORMALIZED OR INVISIBILIZED

This kind of analysis is rather rare in everyday discourse. Gender has a curious way of being simultaneously present and absent in popular perceptions. Very often in casual conversation, in media reporting, and even in academic work about incidents of violence on individual, group, or national scales, the sex of the actors is mentioned but not analyzed. Gender as a *relation* remains implicit, either taken for granted or altogether overlooked.

This can be illustrated by an example of violence at the level of the group. Many countries have recently seen outbreaks of murderous violence in institutions, particularly schools. In April 1999, for instance, at the Columbine High School in Denver, Colorado, USA, two students shot dead twelve other students and a teacher and then turned their guns on themselves. In the many pages of popular reports and analyses of this school massacre it was rare to find any mention of gender relations.

The *Newsweek* special report on the incident is a good example. Its cover text posed the question, "What can a nation learn from the latest high school horror?" The paper of course reported that the killers were boys. This was, it seems, widely anticipated, indeed taken for granted, because when the police came in and released the surviving students, "every *male* student had to be frisked and treated as a possible suspect" ("An American Nightmare" 1999: 76, italics added).

On the other hand, the significance of this gender specificity was overlooked. It is characteristic that when the unnamed authors of the *Newsweek* Special Report analyzed the likelihood of individuals turning to murder, they stated that "having any of the following risk factors doubles a *boy's* chance of becoming a murderer: coming from a family with a history of criminal violence; being abused; belonging to a gang; abusing drugs or alcohol" (82, italics added). Thus the report did not formulate its analysis in terms of the risk factors increasing *an individual's* chance of becoming a murderer. Had the authors taken this route they would have certainly found themselves obliged to include *being a boy* as a highly significant factor. Being male augments the chance of becoming a killer by several orders of magnitude.

Also invisible in news reports following the school massacre was the significance of gender as a relation, specifically as one involving a power dynamic between and among men. Reports immediately following the events described two main groupings of students in Columbine High School:

the "jocks," the dominant group of boys, admired by many girl students, and a subordinated category of boys who were despised because they were seen as being physically incompetent, "bratty" computer geeks and who were insulted for their "uncool" fashion sense. It was two of the latter category of boys who, in their killing spree, turned on the males they resented and some of the girls associated with them.

Subsequent reporting recognized that the school was a micropolitical world made up of differentiated subcultures in acute conflict and that the young killers had inflicted terror on people seen as "different" from themselves, as "other." What tended to escape analysis was the gender factor. Here, in fact, were the "multiple masculinities" identified in gender theory. R. W. Connell (1987) has stressed the complexity of gender regimes, with one form of masculinity tending to have hegemony over others, as well as over femininity. The concept of hegemony, deriving from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life through the tacit consent of other groups. "Hegemonic masculinity," writes Connell, "can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77). The jocks of the *Neusweth* report embodied such a hegemonic masculinity, and some girls were, it seems, their camp followers. The young killers were an interiorized and alienated masculinity, the nerds "expelled from the circle of legitimacy" (Connell 1987: 79). It was violent animosity not just between two cultures (as *Neusweth* has it) but between two masculine cultures (a gendered relation) that prompted the young men of the alienated group to kill others and themselves.

The *Neusweth* analysis of the killings focused on access to guns in the United States. A gender analysis would have dwelt not only on the dangers of gun ownership but also, and equally, on the dangers inherent in certain masculine cultures that foster it. This connection, once seen, would have informed an analysis of wider conflicts. The weapons that the young killers stockpiled in the family garage were produced by the armaments industry that stocks the arsenals of the U.S. Air Force and the Yugoslav government. The student subcultures were by no means separate from certain larger cultures and movements within U.S. society. These masculinities can be seen to play in every boardroom and software laboratory. If we were more alive to the gender factor in small-scale processes of this kind, expressed in such phenomena as bullying, exclusion, and an infatuation with weapons, we would have better conceptual tools for understanding and perhaps ending violence on the micro scale.

We might, for instance, have seen something gendered in the incomparably more destructive conflagrations such as the conflict in the Balkans,

which the Columbine tragedy only momentarily displaced from the headlines during the terrible spring of 1999. With a gender perspective we would have observed, in reports of the war in and against Yugoslavia, how men and women were differently positioned both in the conflict and in opinion polls concerning the conflict. We might have analyzed political discourses to see the gender cultures involved, the manly vigor and pride at stake for the leaderships of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and Yugoslavia as they balanced the advantages of negotiation against those of military action. And, furnished with a gender analysis, we might have anticipated that some women would organize against the war. And indeed some did. Women in Black in Belgrade outspokenly linked masculinity and militarism, publicly opposed their government's policies, sheltered army deserters, and maintained traitorous links with "the enemy" (Women in Black 1999).

I have used the Columbine story to illustrate how traditional perceptions of women and men, and of the relation between them, may be gendered perceptions without taking account of or questioning gender relations. Although there are varied inflections from one culture to another, a difference between men and women is, in two senses, *normally* emphasized. Difference between men and women is habitually represented. And simultaneously it is reinforced as a norm. It is *normally* represented as natural, rooted in biology, and confirmed in history. Sex roles and responsibilities are accepted, even idealized, as contrasted and complementary. The power relations of gender, however, are absent from this discourse.

In some environments traditionalism has given way to a new set of conventions: "sex-equality" thinking. Perversely, this too, out of a sense of fair play, can sometimes produce a version of gender blindness. Its exponents say, "It should make no difference whether you are a woman or a man," and this comes to mean "There is no difference." If the normalization of sex difference reflects traditionalism, this stress on the similarities of men and women and equality between them is associated with twentieth-century modernism, liberalism, and individualism. It is an important ideal. But deploying the concept often obscures the fact that, in practice, gender differentiation and male power live on.

FEMINIST GENDER ANALYSIS: EFFECTS OF POWER

What kind of gender analysis, then, can transcend both conservative assumptions and well-meaning egalitarianism and can produce new insights and changed behaviors? It is a specifically feminist gender analysis—one that, like much transformative knowledge, is born of a politicized experience of subordination and oppression. Today's women's movement is as strong as it

is precisely because it unites women, some of whom have struggled against relative positioning of women and men is seen as an important ordering principle that pervades the system of power and is sometimes its very embodiment. Gender does not necessarily have primacy in this respect. Economic class and ethnic differentiation can also be important relational hierarchies, structuring a regime and shaping its mode of ruling. But these other differentiations are always also gendered, and in turn they help construct what is a man or a woman in any given circumstance. So while gender is binary, its components have varied expressions. We might compare, for example, the particular masculinity of the English officer class polished in the Royal Military Academy with that of the unemployed youth press-ganged into a militia in Angola.

The universality of gender systems is perhaps not remarkable, given the reproductive dimorphism of human beings, two sexes, complementary coupling. What is noteworthy is that, while formulations of gender show rich diversity from culture to culture, a dominance of men and masculinity is pervasive. A feminist gender analysis has awakened wherever and whenever that reality has dawned. Women have started to ask, "Who differentiates and why?" and "Who gains?" In this way gender differentiation comes to be recognized as a social and cultural process. It can be seen going on in the most casual ways (through a coy smile or stiff upper lip), and in the most institutionalized ways (the military academy, the law courts, the religious seminary). Its part in the constituting of relations of power and powerlessness becomes visible.

To stress that a gender analysis is a matter of seeing, the metaphor of a gender lens is sometimes found to be useful (Peterson and Rumpin 1999). This viewpoint is most accessible to women who experience oppression and to others who can empathize with them. The interpretation flows from that to others who can see to shape the dynamics of every site of human interaction, from the household to the international arena. It has expression in and physique: how women's and men's bodies are nourished, trained, and deployed, how vulnerable they are to attack, what mobility they have. It has expression in economics: how money, property, and other resources are distributed between the sexes. It structures the social sphere: who has initiative in the community and authority in the family, who is dependent. And of

course gender inequality colors the statistics of political leadership. In most countries men predominate among government officeholders, the membership of representative assemblies, and senior executives.

Those distributions suggest statistics. A curious thing about gender, however, is that statistics never tell the whole story. It is, but at the same time it is not, a question of quantifiable distributions of male and female in this position relative to that. Sex distributions are often strikingly skewed, even extreme, but they always contain exceptions. Militaries may be almost entirely composed of men, but there are always women fighters you can point to.

More important than numbers in a gender analysis is uncovering the differentiation and asymmetry of masculine and feminine as governing principles, as idealized qualities, as practices, as symbols. One thing you can say about militaries is: they are not feminine cultures. This leads to a further perception: even in social worlds where one sex prevails, as in most military systems, a gender power system is not lacking. For male-dominant systems involve a hierarchy between men, producing different and unequal masculinities, always defined in relation not only to each other but to women (Pracman 1988).

Whether "equality" with men is a desirable goal (given prevailing gender relations), and how "different" women are from men, or want to be—on these things women are not always in agreement. As with all systems of inequality, some differences between women and men are inevitable, others are unnecessary. An emphasis on difference is more productive of equal outcomes at some times and in some places than others. But since a feminist gender analysis emerges from a political movement, we may legitimately build in a political principle here. It is a principle that can apply to all social differentiations involving a power difference. An assumption of equality and similarity should prevail except when those liable to suffer from differentiation (women in this case) say that difference should be taken into account (Cookburn 1991). When should women be treated as "mothers," as "dependents," as "vulnerable"? When, on the contrary, should they be disintegrated from "the family," from "women and children" (Enloe 1990), and seen as themselves, women—people, even? Ask the women in question. They will know.

A gender analysis alerts us to an intentionality in differentiation between the sexes. It also makes us hesitate to take at face value other distinctions, such as those of biological sex and sexuality. These things come to look less dichotomous, more graduated. And a gender analysis generates demands for change, for the satisfaction of women's needs, but which women, and what needs? Women differ from each other on many dimensions. But this does not invalidate a gender analysis. After all, there are some rich people in poor countries, and not all the inhabitants of rich countries are rich. But we do not allow these facts to invalidate our perception that some countries are poor

while others are rich and that the relations that bind them are exploitative. In the same vein, there is no reason why the perception of differences between and among women, and between and among men, should invalidate our perception of a gender hierarchy and gender oppression. Women have multiple and varied experiences and needs. So do men. Women's are less often heard and less often satisfied.

How, then, does armed conflict look when seen through a gendered lens? In violent conflict, as in other situations, gender relations can be seen producing effects at three interrelated sites: first, the specificity of male and female bodies; second, their relative positioning in society; and third, the gender ideologies in play. A gender analysis reveals imbalanced sex distributions (more men here, more women there). But these always take on meaning through more abstract but no less powerful phenomena at work in each situation: gendered imagery and representations, gendered ethical imperatives and political possibilities.

UNEASY PEACE: BEFORE THE ONSET OF VIOLENCE

If we look with hindsight at societies that have exploded into political violence or armed conflict, it is possible to see warning signs. Three such phenomena are economic distress, militarization, and divisive shifts in ideology; in the way identities are represented.

Economic Distress

It was Johan Galtung (1991) who first introduced the concept of "structural violence." He maintained that "[c]onflict is much more than what meets the naked eye as 'trouble,' direct violence. There is also the violence frozen into structures, and the culture that legitimizes violence" (viii). Violence exists whenever the potential development of an individual or group is held back by the conditions of a relationship, and in particular by the uneven distribution of power and resources (80). "Structural violence" usefully alerts us to look at the ways that strong states and economic actors can achieve their will over weaker countries, classes, groups, and individuals without recourse to weapons. Although this was not Galtung's main point, the notion prompts us to look again at male-dominated gender relations. Long before a man uses physical violence against a woman, she may experience "structural violence" in a marriage in which her husband or a constabulary patriarchal community holds power over her. *Structural violence* may refer to an oppression so life-threatening that outbreaks of physical resistance seem justified. It explains the persistence of struggles against very high odds, as in anticolonial insurgencies.

In many societies that experienced political violence or armed conflict in the 1990s, it was possible to see in the 1980s an intensification of structural violence, of inequality between nations and within them. There were adverse changes in the world economy. The abrupt rise in oil prices of the 1970s was followed in the 1980s by recession, falling commodity prices, higher interest rates, and increased protectionism in developed countries. Poorer countries were hardest hit. Their indebtedness grew (Ahoj-Parel 1991). We saw the stress induced by forced economic liberalization and structural adjustment pinning violence in societies continents apart: murderous communalism in India (Chenoy 1998), imploding power vacuums in Africa (Tushnet and Thagbamurthy 1998). Economic distress does not necessarily lead to violence, but combined with other factors, such as the rise of nationalist movements in the former Yugoslavia in the 1980s, it may precipitate it (Woodward 1995).

Feminist analysis of these and similar situations has pointed out many gendered phenomena. Depressed wages and high unemployment among male breadwinners destabilizes relations in the family. Young men are at risk of being attracted or forced toward crime and militarism. Reductions in welfare spending and loss of subsistence farming hit women especially hard. Female-headed families make up about one-third of rural households, and these rarely have access either to credit or to the labor inputs required to increase production (Vickers 1991: 61).

Militarization and Arming

In societies that will later know open violence, there is often a prior increase in militarization and the quantity of weapons flowing into the area. Militarization supposes a close relation between political and military elites, and sometimes the regime may actually be a military dictatorship. Men, and sometimes women, are subject to periods of compulsory military service. The police force grows in size, reach, and armed capability. A rhetoric of national security and secrecy, often embodied in censorship laws, limits freedom of expression and movement. A militarized society is necessarily undemocratic.

Cynthia Enloe (1993) notes the gendered decisions that sustain and flow from militarization: "When a community's politicized sense of its own identity becomes threaded through with pressures for its men to take up arms, for its women to loyally support brothers, husbands, sons and lovers to become soldiers, it needs explaining. How were the pressures mounted? What does militarization mean for women's and men's relationships to each other? What happens when some women resist those pressures?" (25). And, one might add, some men. For militarization often forces into imprisonment or exile those men who do not wish to fight.

Militarization is accompanied by high expenditure on arms. This is often at the expense of spending on public services, including health and education. In the main, poor countries spend a greater proportion of their national product on arms than rich countries. Daniel Volman (1998) has described the arming of the African continent. From his figures it is possible to total at least US\$60 billion of sales from the superpowers to African countries between the 1950s and 1980s. That flow dried up but was followed by an unquantifiable and unstarable deluge of cheap and recycled weapons. As a result, he says, "Africa today is literally awash in arms, particularly guns and other light weaponry of the sort that have much more impact on the security and daily lives of civilians, especially women, than tanks and combat aircraft" (199).

Domestic violence often increases as societal tensions grow and is more common and more lethal when men carry weapons. In the buildup to the war in the former Yugoslavia, groups providing support to women victims of domestic violence in Belgrade reported that demand for their services increased significantly and that violence occurred particularly after militaristic TV programs that hyped up "national honor" (Maguire 1998). Croatian women noted a shift related to increased weaponry: "No more wooden sticks, shoes and other 'classic' instruments of violence, but guns, bombs etc. . . . Everybody has weapons" (Borčić and Desnica 1996: 196). The shadowy and overwhelmingly masculine world of arms dealing is often linked to trafficking in drugs and in women. Military and nonmilitary trade becomes entwined in what Georg Elwert (1999) has termed "markets of violence," the system by which the lead perpetrators of violence survive and reproduce themselves.

Divisive Shifts in Ideology

One warning sign of impending political violence or armed conflict is a shift in discourse, particularly in media representations. Words chosen, tunes sung, and images painted increasingly drive people from each other. They stoke the fires of national patriotism against a rival nation, point a finger at "the enemy within," or deepen the sense of ethnic belonging in opposition to some "other" from whom "we" are different and by whom our culture or our religion, our very existence, is threatened.

Divisive discourse is often accompanied by a renewal of a patriarchal familial ideology, deepening the differentiation of men and women, masculinity and femininity, preparing men to fight and women to support them. Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) has carefully analyzed the ways in which the discourses on gender and on nation tend to intersect and to be constructed by each other. The more primordial the rendering of people and nation, the more are the relations between men and women essentialized. Women are

reminded that by biology and by tradition they are the keepers of hearth and home and are meant to nurture and teach children "our ways." Men by physique and tradition are there to protect women and children and the nation, often represented as "the motherland." Through this retelling of old gender tales, women are readied to sacrifice their husbands and sons, and men to sacrifice their lives.

The disintegration of the federal state of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s was preceded and accompanied by the reemergence of just such a gender ideology. Except by feminists, it was not heeded as a warning of war. Many women of the region have since described how the veneer of socialist modernization was stripped away and gender traditionalism refurbished by Croatian, Serbian, and other nationalist movements. Birthrates came to be seen as strategically important. Women were urged to leave paid employment and attend to their "natural duties." Maja Korać (1998a) notes that "the first instances of control and violation of women's rights during the transition from state socialism to ethnic nationalism were restrictions on their reproductive freedoms" (22).

In such preconflict moments, an ethic of "purity" may grip people's minds and legitimate politically "cleansing" the state of its internal enemies and ethnically cleansing the land of people who are seen as alien. Purity is a dangerous ethic for women. In extreme forms of patriarchy men's honor is seen as depending on women's "purity" to the degree that women who seek to escape this strict code, or who inadvertently fall or are dragged from it, may be killed by their menfolk with impunity. The prevalence of such "honor killings" in the context of communal strife in India has been vividly described by Urvashi Butalia (1997) and is explored in Chapter 5 of this volume by Shahzad Mojab. For women, in such circumstances, the threshold of war is lower than for men.

WAR AND POLITICAL TERROR

In the last century, more than a hundred million people have died in wars (Turpin 1998: 3). This does not include the many murdered by politically repressive regimes or the victims of the terror sometimes evoked in response to them. It is a drastic increase over earlier centuries; the figure represents about three-quarters of estimated war deaths since 1500 A.D. Turpin adds: "These deaths are not randomly distributed throughout the world—most of the wars since the 1960s have taken place in the less-developed countries, particularly in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Military intervention, on the other hand, is perpetrated primarily by the former colonial powers, mostly by the United States, followed by Britain and then the USSR/Russia, Belgium, South Africa and India" (4).

Let us look at three manifestly gendered elements of war: mobilization into the armed forces; the catastrophic disruption of everyday life; and brutalization of the body.

Mobilization

It is men who, overwhelmingly, have been the fighting personnel of national militaries, popular militias, political police forces, and armed gangs of warlords. Men take part in violence for many reasons—for money, for honor, patriotism, or brotherhood; in self-defense; for liberation; to liberate others. But male positioning in patriarchal gender systems and the masculine identities they generate underwrite all these reasons. Indeed, many versions of masculinity in the world's varied cultures are constituted in the practice of fighting; to be a "real" man is to be ready to fight and ultimately to kill and to die. It is often for the safety and honor of women and daughters that men are asked by their leaders to sacrifice themselves. Sometimes patriarchy requires them to kill these very women and children to keep them "safe."

Urvashi Butalia (1997) reports interviews with Sikh men in India recalling, sadly but proudly, how during Partition they "martyred" their own womenfolk to save them from being captured by Moslems and forced into Islam. But representation is one thing; practice another. As Sara Radclik (1998) puts it, "In all war, on any side, there are men frightened and running, fighting reluctantly and eager to get home, or even courageously resisting their orders to kill" (218). And armed forces have and probably always have had women nurses, provisioners, and camp followers. Increasingly, too, women are choosing to enter or are being enlisted into national armies. In some militaries (the Israeli Defense forces, for example), they are kept out of combat roles (Yvonne Davis 1985). In others, women do bear arms, by their own demand or, as in Libya, through an official concept of "modernization" (Graziell-Wassink 1994). The U.S. military has greatly increased the proportion of female recruits in recent years in order "to offset the end of the male draft and to forestall a reliance on black male volunteers" (Enloe 1994: 87). During the Gulf War, forty thousand U.S. women were deployed to the Middle East (Enloe 1994).

Some women have bloodstained hands, therefore. They have participated in uprisings for national liberation, such as the widely celebrated Palestinian *intifada* against the Israeli occupation (Sharoni 1995). They have also committed atrocities, as, for example, in the ethnic war in Rwanda (Lentin 1997). The forces of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, fighting for Tamil independence in Sri Lanka, include an entirely female elite battalion of suicide bombers. But research suggests that women do not gain equality through their active engagement in war, even at this extreme level of sacrifice (Peters

1998). Nor do the character, culture, and hierarchy of armed forces become more feminine because of women's presence. If they did, they would no longer fulfill their current function (see also Yvonne Davis, Chapter 8 of this volume).

Disruption of Everyday Life

Today's armed conflicts have ended any distinction there may once have been between combatants and civilians as targets of war. Civilians were half the casualties in World War II; they have been 90 percent in recent wars. Since men as a sex are more generally mobilized, *civilians* means predominantly women and children (Hauchler and Kennedy 1999). Besides, war and terror have the effect—sometimes deliberately achieved, sometimes incidental—of rending the fine fabric of everyday life, its interlaced economies, its material systems of care and support, its social networks, the roofs that shelter it. This affects women, who in most societies have a traditional responsibility for the daily reproduction of life and community in ways that are both class and gender specific. The poorest are least able to escape the war zone or buy protection.

The twenty-year civil conflict that followed Mozambique's independence struggle is an example. The combatants in this war, which resulted in one million dead and five million displaced, were the presiding government, led by the socialist movement Frelimo, and the counterrevolutionary Renamo, supported by the South African government. Ruth Jacobson (1999) analyzed this war from a gender perspective. Thousands of boys, some as young as seven, were forcibly recruited by both sides. "Mozambican women themselves," she says, "recount numerous instances of the highest self-sacrifice on the part of men seeking to protect their families" (180). Women's stories constantly point to the gendered nature of the outcomes of the conflict. For example, the collapse of primary health services led to appalling rises in maternal and child mortality and morbidity. Gendered mobility was most evident in the differentiation between the male and female population in rural areas (where 90 percent of the total population lived in the early 1980s). Men were more able, with sufficient warning, to flee to provincial towns and the capital city. Women, encumbered by dependents, were more likely to have to stay in situ, producing "taxes" in the form of food and providing domestic services to occupying forces (including those of government). As their workloads escalated, they became exposed to ever higher levels of debilitation.

Brutalization of the Body

It is perhaps in brutality to the body that the most marked sex differences occur in wars. Men and women die different deaths and are tortured and

abused in different ways in wars, both because of physical differences between the sexes and because of the different meanings culturally ascribed to the male and female body. Jacobson notes substantial evidence of large-scale rape and sexual servitude in the war in Mozambique at the hands of Renamo troops and supporters.

Ruth Seifert (1993) has suggested three explanations for the widespread rape of women in war. First is the booty principle. It is an unwritten rule of war "that violence against women in the conquered territory is conceded to the victor during the immediate postwar period. . . . Normally the orgies of violence toward women last from one to two months after a war and then abate (as in Berlin in 1945 and Nanking in 1937)" (38). Second, while rape serves to humiliate enemy women, it also "carries an additional message: it communicates from man to man, so to speak, that the men around the woman in question are not able to protect 'their' women. They are thus wounded in their masculinity and marked as incompetent" (39). This is a particularly powerful motivation in genocidal wars. Women analyzing the epidemic of rape in the wars associated with the breakup of Yugoslavia have noted how women's bodies have been used as "ethnic markers" in nationalist ideology (Meznaric 1993). When men too are raped or sexually humiliated, or their genitalia mutilated, the act is no less gendered: it is their masculinity that enemy men are denigrating. The third explanation proposed by Seifert is that rape (particularly gang rape and systematic rape) is sanctioned by officers, and engaged in by the rapists themselves, because it promotes solidarity through male bonding (39).

In warfare, but also in situations of political terror, the instruments with which the body is abused in order to break the spirit tend to be gender differentiated and, in the case of women, to be sexualized. Lois Ann Lorenzen (1998) studied the writings in which women political prisoners in El Salvador (1998) studied the writings in which women political prisoners in El Salvador bore witness to their incarceration. They reflect, she says, "the specific circumstances of *women* in prison. . . . In these 'secret' women's prisons, captors, guards and torturers were all male. Prisoners were female" (197). Sexual degradation, assault, and mutilation were the main forms of torture.

In some parts of the world, slavery is persisting or returning, and war is a primary source of slaves. Tens of thousands of women, mainly Dinkas, seized in the war in southern Sudan, have been sold by their captors into sexual servitude (Halin 1998). The Japanese government has recently acknowledged what was effectively institutionalized enslavement during World War II, in the extensive network of military brothels established throughout the Asian theater of war for soldiers of the Imperial Army. The estimated two hundred thousand "comfort women," as they were known, included Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Dutch women (Sancho 1997).

PROCESSES OF PEACE

Individual Refusal and Cross-Community Contact

In the midst of bloodshed there are always some people who negate its necessity. They may act in one of several ways. Some (mainly men) may dodge the draft or desert from the military. Some (often women) may shelter and feed people their side has defined as "the enemy." Some may give away sensitive information.

In wars involving inimical communities, as fighting diminishes, the ground is often prepared for cease-fire by purposive grassroots work, in which people of goodwill are keeping open lines of contact and communication. Adam Curle (1971) long ago identified "development" as one of the key components of peace building. He meant the restructuring of conflictual relationships from below "to create a situation, a society or a community in which individuals are enabled to develop and use to the full their capacities for creativity, service and enjoyment. Unless development in this sense can take place, no settlement will lead to a secure and lasting peace" (174). This is sometimes thought of as long-term *peace building* as opposed to momentary *peacekeeping*.

There is a war in the United Kingdom, a relic of colonialism, that is largely acted out in Northern Ireland. The violence involves the British state and two political movements, the one (associated with Catholics) an expression of Irish nationalism, the other (associated with Protestants) struggling to retain the union with Britain. Belfast, the principal city of Northern Ireland, is marked by deep territorial segregation and enmity between the two communities. Well ahead of peace moves between the (masculinist) paramilitary forces and the (male-dominated) political institutions, women were establishing working links across community boundaries.

Movements for Peace

Depending on the circumstances of the conflict, local counteraction of this kind is sometimes partnered by open protest against armed violence. Both men and women join antiwar movements, but women are often more numerous in them and sometimes form separate organizations. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, formed in 1915 and still at work worldwide, is a case in point (Rupp 1997).

There are several reasons for women's separatism. Sometimes the male leadership style of antiwar movements prefigures neither democracy nor nonviolence. The long-lived women's peace camp at the U.S. missile base at Greenham Common in the United Kingdom in the 1980s became women-

only partly because the women found that men often broke the code of passive resistance, reacting violently to the police and thereby provoking police retaliation. The women went on to develop their own expressive forms of nonviolent direct action (Rosenfelt 1995).

The politics inspiring women's activism for "peace with justice" or "against war and militarism" are gender specific, but they are not uniform. Some stress women's nurturing role. There have been many expressions of "mother politics" in peace movements (Ruddick 1990). In Yugoslavia at the end of August 1991, as the threat of civil strife loomed large, forty husbands of parents, mainly mothers, converged on the headquarters of the Yugoslav National Army, demanding the discharge of their sons. Identification as mothers can enlist generous feelings of care and love that powerfully contradict violence. But it skirts dangerously close to patriarchal definitions of women's role and can be co-opted by nationalists propagating that very ideology. Some of the Croatian mothers in the Yugoslav movement who had at first called for a mass gathering to surround the generals with a "Wall of Love" (Žarkov 1997) were before long perverting their original pacifism into a platform designed to ensure only that their own sons did not fight fellow Croats (Bracewell 1996).

Women in Black against War expresses a different ideology. Starting in Israel/Palestine in the late 1980s, it quickly caught on in Italy, Belgrade, London, and other centers. By the late 1990s it had become a worldwide network, using local demonstrations combined with Internet links to protest both Serb nationalist aggression in Kosovo and the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Women in Black groups everywhere were pressing their governments for creative diplomacy and genuine international peacemaking. They argued for a voice for democratic nongovernmental and women's organizations in negotiating a cessation of hostilities in the Balkan region. Women who engage in this strand of the antiwar movement do not see women as "natural peacemakers." Rather, they believe it is because they have escaped "masculine socialization" that women are freer to formulate a transformative, nonviolent vision.

Whatever their starting point, however, women can clearly see that their substantial work for peace is seldom recognized by their being given a seat at peacemaking negotiations. When women have dared to intervene at the level of states and alliances, as in the startling alternative diplomacy of the women's NATO Alerts Network in Europe in the late 1980s, they are given the cold shoulder (Rose 1995). But in many countries, women persist. In 1996 the Afghan Women's Network in Pakistan wrote to the special envoy of the UN Secretary-General responsible for establishing peace in Afghanistan. "The Network explained their view of peace, as something built up slowly in communities, based on mutual respect, cooperation and human rights" (Collett 1998: 327). They explained the importance of including

women in the peace process. The envoy must, they said, add a woman to his team. "Otherwise he cannot hear the voices of women, because in traditional Afghan communities women cannot meet with strange men" (327).

POSTCONFLICT: THE WOUNDS THAT REMAIN

There is no abrupt cutoff line between war and postwar. Armed conflict is often converted not into nonviolent political struggle but (as currently in Cyprus) into an icy noncooperation. Sometimes the postwar period is better called interbellum, a pause before fighting begins again. Survivors are traumatized and the trauma is gendered. Male wounded are doctored to a life of unemployment. Women and children in rural areas are especially vulnerable to losing limbs from unexploded land mines. Women continue to bear infants with birth defects due to nuclear testing in the Pacific islands in the Cold War (Ishiar 1997). I will focus here on three aspects of postconflict situations: displacement; economic and social reconstruction; and aid, justice, and reconciliation.

Displacement

Recent figures published by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR 1998) show a world population of refugees, including asylum seekers and as-yet-unsettled returnees who remain of concern to the UNHCR, of over twenty-two million. Some of these have fled famine, but the great majority were displaced in war. Of the world's long-term refugees, about half are female, half male. But sometimes the statistics of flight are strongly sex-skewed. In the ramshackle exodus from Kosovo in 1999, women predominated because young men had either gone to join the Kosovan Liberation Army or been imprisoned or assassinated.

Life in refugee camps can be squalid, dangerous, and stultifying. The displaced live with the memory of an earlier life lost and in despair of ever recovering it. They pursue the agonizing search for missing friends and family. Many are deeply traumatized. Only the luckiest receive skilled psychosocial help of the kind pioneered, for example, by Medica Women's Therapy Centre in Bosnia (Corkburn 1998). In some refugee camps (such as the Palestinian camps bordering Israel) two new generations have been born to the original refugees. Postwar also means deformation of home life for families who are obliged to take in refugees (Nikolic-Ristanovic 1996). Some of those displaced in armed conflict or political terror are obliged to resettle in distant countries and learn new languages and new livelihoods. They have to painfully evolve new identities and new attachments—a negotiated

belonging to the host country, to the diaspora, and to a now-distant home (Brab 1996).

The experience of displacement through war may differ for women and men (Giles, Moussa, and Van Eslerik 1996; Indra 1999). As Ann Brazeau remarked when she was Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women at UNHCR, "For refugee women all three of the traditional 'durable solutions'—voluntary return home, integration in the country of asylum, and resettlement in a third country—pose unique problems" (Martin 1981: 8). For women, mainly responsible not only for themselves but for rearing, controlling, and educating children, refugee camps and overcrowded lodgings are especially nightmarish. Female bodily processes—menstruation, gestation, parturition, lactation—become more burdensome, uncomfortable, and dangerous. Women and girls are vulnerable to molestation and rape from male police, local men, and even other refugees. Young men and boys risk being recruited into criminal gangs and paramilitary forces. Among the displaced who move to big cities, it is boys who are most often seen living rough in the streets. What happens to the girls? Many disappear into domestic sequestration or prostitution (Nordstrom 1998).

Economic and Social Reconstruction

After war, infrastructure must be rebuilt, mines cleared, vegetation reseeded, and livelihoods reinvented. Usually capital is lacking and a country incurs more debt to undertake reconstruction. It may even, like Iraq after the Gulf War, be subjected by other states to economic sanctions as a punishment for the sins of its leaders.

Like destruction, reconstruction presents itself differently to women and to men. All ex-combatants need retraining for employment, but women may also face ostracism in their community and betrayal by male comrades who expect them to revert to prewar gender roles. Many women will have become widows and single parents, dependent on their own earning power to support themselves and their children. In the absence of jobs of the kind they can do, training they can get access to, and capital, credit and land, many women fall deeper into the poverty they knew before war began. Prostitution is often their only hope of a living. Men may consolidate their gender power in such periods. A World Bank (1995) report shows that in El Salvador, for instance, men have benefited more than women from government land distribution programs. Considered a better risk by lenders, they get bigger bank loans.

The same World Bank report points out that men and women use resources in different ways—wood and water, for example. The environment is likely to have been damaged and neglected during the years of crisis. El

Salvador may not, perhaps, compete in this respect with post-Gulf War Iraq, where there has been massive contamination by radioactive materials, oil, and chemicals. But in this small country too, the environmental havoc resulting from economic policies imposed by international financial institutions has been exacerbated by war and militarization. The military conflicts were battles over land and models of development, clashes between peasants and the capitalist-export sector. The militias of both El Salvador and Guatemala followed Vietnam-style "scorched earth" policies where entire regions were deforested and burned, thus hastening environmental decline (Turpin 1998: 7). Despite the horrors of tyranny and war, women are sometimes empowered during such times. Take Chad, for instance. Until the outbreak of civil war in 1979, Chadian society was patriarchal, recognizing only men as breadwinners, property owners, heads of household, and decision makers. The war changed that. Women invented new ways of making money for their families to survive. They started traveling and trading over long distances, developing commercial networks and savings schemes (Women's Commission of the Human Rights League of Chad 1998: 127) (see also Preston and Wong, Chapter 7 of this volume).

But from all around the world come stories of women losing their hard-won autonomy when the crisis is over. Aya Baftoun (1994) has said of the Arab world, "[W]omen who have massively contributed in the nationalist movements of liberation have been relegated to political back scenes and inferior economic sectors, once the Nation-State has been established" (167). The story is repeated in Nicaragua (De Vito 1998), indeed from almost every anti-imperialist struggle (Jayawardena 1986) and many resistance movements.

Consequently, the civil society rebuilt after war or tyranny seldom reflects women's visions or rewards their energies. The space that momentarily opens up for change is not often used to secure genuine and lasting gender transformation.

Aid, Justice, and Reconciliation

As war recedes, war zones often see an influx of international peacekeeping forces and humanitarian agencies. They halt the gunfire and feed the starving but are themselves sometimes a problem. UN peacekeeping roles may offer the chance of a less masculine military. Cynthia Enloe (1993) tells us that Finland's new women volunteer soldiers serve in the Finnish contingent on loan to the United Nations, and Australia's military has recently deployed its first women soldiers to Cambodia on UN duty. But, she says, we know amazingly little about what happens to a male soldier's sense of masculine licence when he dons the blue helmet or armband of the United Nations

peacekeeper" (33). Complaints have been leveled against UN personnel for using underage prostitutes and for rape.

International humanitarian agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are indispensable in picking up the pieces of war, and women are more visible there than in many other spheres of employment. International agencies often operate downwards and outwards through regional and national organizations to local grassroots organizations (GROs) active in development. Women's contribution is strong at this level too. It is estimated that over two hundred thousand GROs exist in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, more than half of them organized by women (Durning 1989, cited in Fisher 1996). But not all agencies have a policy to build local capacity, and some inadvertently create dependencies. Humanitarian aid can create social imbalances, as in Guatemala, where uneven distribution of aid has fueled renewed conflict (Mauricio Valdez, deputy director of the United Nations Development Programme, Guatemala, quoted in World Bank 1998: 6), and women often do the work in agencies and NGOs without being involved at the decision-making level (Fisher 1996).

Hatred is the strongest survivor of war and of political repression. So processes of retributive justice, truth speaking, and reconciliation are important for social healing. Crimes committed in war and tyranny, as we have seen, have a gender dimension. And until recently, rape has rarely been prosecuted through war tribunals as a violation of women's human rights. The Japanese government's guilt for the enforced prostitution of thousands of women in World War II was not acknowledged in the peace treaties that ended that war, nor did the United States and Allied forces take account of it when assessing reparations (Sando 1997). It takes special diligence, in any case, to bring rape cases to court in a way that protects women witnesses from further harm.

There is no guarantee either that reconciliation processes will not be gender-blind. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission encouraged public debate on its terms of reference. Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Menjies (1998) decided to use that opening to put forward a gendered analysis. Their submission showed how women's position under apartheid meant that their suffering often took a form different from that of men. But they stressed that women, like men, are divided by race, class, and ideology—and that "women who were spies, informers, warders and even torturers were all strands in the complex web of our past" (44).

In postconflict moments there is much talk of strengthening civil society and democratic structures. Civil society benefits from widespread grassroots self-organization, where women are particularly active. But their energies are often used without recognition. Participatory democracy means including all voices, but women are seldom in positions of political power. Niloufar Pourzand points out that neither of the political parties who must make

peace in Afghanistan intends to give women the vote. "So if it comes to peace and to voting women will be out of the process" (personal communication, 1999).

A GENDERED CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

As I reviewed the work of members of the Women in Conflict Zones Network, and of many other feminist analysts, to enable me to illustrate the gender specificity and gender power relations of war, I became conscious of a connectedness between kinds and occasions of violence. One seemed to flow into the next, as if they were a continuum.

First, gender links violence at different points on a scale reaching from the personal to the international, from the home and the back street to the maneuvers of the tank column and the sortie of the stealth bomber: battering and marital rape, confinement, "dowry" burnings, honor killings, and genital mutilation in peacetime; military rape, sequestration, prostitution, and sexualized torture in war. No wonder women often say, "War? Don't speak to me of war. My daily life is battlefield enough."

Second, in emphasizing cultures, and therefore continuity between relations and events, a gender analysis suggests that it is meaningless to make a sharp distinction between peace and war, prewar, and postwar. I have separated, for convenience, phases I call preconflict, conflict, peacemaking, and reconstruction. But we saw gendered phenomena persisting from one to the next. Gender is manifest in the violence that flows through all of them and in the peace processes that may be present at all moments too. To consider one moment in this flux in the absence of the next is arbitrary.

Third, the continuum of violence runs through the social, the economic, and the political, with gender relations penetrating all these forms of relations, including economic power. Gender relations are sometimes enacted in the most intimately social of human relations. But a gender perspective should not thereby be allowed to deflect attention from forces and institutions that operate economically and politically. Gender power dynamics are as characteristic of multinational corporations (see Macklin, Chapter 4 of this volume) and of international financial institutions as of the family.

We know that the incidence and abuse of unequal power is a factor in violence by men against women. We know too that one way the major economic inequalities on the world scene exacerbate violence is by sustaining or deepening inequalities. Global processes, what some have called the New World Disorder, are creating a new and dangerous dynamic in the relationship between regions and markets. Wars in poor countries may be logical responses to economic marginalization and political disempowerment (Duffield 1990). Any

increase in inequality, any widening of the gap between nations and classes, between men and women, weakens the inhibitions against aggression. It legitimates violence toward people considered worthless. And those who are made to feel of scant value sometimes resort to violence to gain self-respect or power. This, I believe, is what Galtung (1996) means when he points to the violence that can be latent in unjust social and economic power structures (86).

The power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies creates cultures of masculinity prone to violence. These gender relations are like a linking thread, a kind of fuse, along which violence runs. They run through every field (home, city, nation-state, international relations) and every moment (protest, law enforcement, militarization), adding to the explosive charge of violence in them. If most, if not all, violence has a gender component, violence reduction calls for a feminist gendered strategy. It has to involve, first, an alertness to gender difference and specificity, to the way women and men may be positioned differently, have different experiences, different needs, and different strengths and skills, and how in different cultures these differences have different expressions. Second, our feminist strategic thinking for violence reduction calls for widespread consciousness of the power imbalance in gender relations, of the way patriarchal power infuses with violence institutions like the family, the military, the state; of the way gender power relations augment the violence in class and ethnically based associations. Finally, if violence is a continuum, our movements have to be alliances capable of acting in many places, at many levels, and on many problems simultaneously.

3

The Sounds of Silence

Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala

Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby

Decades of militarization and war created a profound culture of silence in Guatemala. Violent repression in varying degrees of intensity was used by the state between 1954 and 1996 to silence political challenges to military dictatorship. However, silence was also used by organizations representing civil society, and in particular the popular and guerrilla movements, as a strategy of resistance to the militarized state. Many subversive voices and practices of resistance named, identified, and remembered the causes and consequences of the violence. And this resistance has had deep historical roots. Dating back at least to the time of Conquest, Guatemalan indigenous communities have used silence as a political strategy of resistance to cultural assimilation within a hegemonic nation.

Yet political contestation engaged in and through silence has not proved a unifying, cohesive strategy of resistance. Silencing as a means of oppression and domination inserted fear and distrust into social relations, causing their fragmentation and polarization and the tearing of the Guatemalan social fabric. Enveloped by this culture of silence, resistance has been imbued with layers of meaning and knowledge of the causes and consequences of violent repression, creating "insiders" and "outsiders," those privileged with "truth," those not so privileged, and many other categories in between. Silencing through violent repression has not, however, been a totalizing and homogenizing process. The very fact that the most recent phase of armed conflict in Guatemala took place over more than three decades signals that hegemonic moments of "successful subversion," naming, identifying, and remembering, of silence within a society in transition. In comparing our research experiences across two distinct moments in Guatemalan history, the period of