# SITES OF VIOLENCE

## GENDER AND CONFLICT ZONES

EDITED BY WENONA GILES AND JENNIFER HYNDMAN

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# Introduction

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### *Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman*

The events and aftermath of September 11 ineluctably dissolved the already precarious distinction between domestic sovereign space and more global space where transnational networks, international relations, multilateral institutions, and global corporations operate. Feminists have long argued that private/public distinctions serve to depoliticize the private domestic spaces of "home" compared to more public domains. The attacks have exposed the limits of understanding the United States as a "domestic" space, somehow bounded and separated from the processes and politics of economic, cultural, and political integration. Likewise, boundaries between combatants and civilians, battlefronts and civilian spaces, cease to have much meaning in light of 9/11. Such distinctions, however, have long ceased to exist in conflict zones beyond U.S. borders.

Throughout much of the world, war is increasingly waged on the bodies of unarmed civilians. Where it was once the purview of male soldiers who fought enemy forces on battlefields quite separate from people's homes, contemporary conflict blurs such distinctions, rendering civilian women, men, and children its main casualties. The violence of such conflict cannot be isolated from other expressions of violence. In every militarized society, war zone, and refugee camp, violence against women and men is part of a broader continuum of violence that transcends the simple diplomatic dichotomy of war and peace. This continuum of violence resists any division between public and private domains. Battering and wife beating occur in the homes of Canadian soldiers (Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre and Resolve Violence and Abuse Research Centre 2000), while the so-called "honor killing" of female family members continues in Iraqi homes, despite laws to the contrary (see Mojab, Chapter 5 of this volume). While "home" was once demarcated as a "private" space beyond the purview of public

responsibility, violence perpetrated at home is increasingly understood as part of broader social, political, and economic processes that are embedded in state policies, public institutions, and the global economy.

This book forges connections between militarized violence that occurs before, during, after, and even in the absence of war. Sites of war and peace are ultimately linked; both can be sites of violence. Explicitly feminist analyses of gender in conflict situations address the politics of social and economic disparities and explore possibilities for changing power imbalances that include gender relations. This book presents original research illustrating feminist analyses grounded in particular conflict zones. Gender relations and identities are (re)produced by governments, militaries, militias, schools, sports, and media. Documenting the panoply of strategies that generate violence against civilian women and men in the name of the nation, the state, the economy, or the family is the first step toward changing these hegemonic, seemingly transparent notions of what it means to be a man or a woman in a given society. Conflict resolution, reconciliation, and prevention cannot begin until a lucid and comprehensive understanding of the gendered politics that perpetrate and perpetuate violence in the first instance is provided.

This book is motivated by several crucial and related circumstances. First, it is clear from the research presented here that gender relations have been deployed in sites of militarized conflict to incite, exacerbate, and fuel violence. Knowledge of the ways in which violence occurs provides crucial clues to its antecedents and consequences and ultimately may serve to prevent its repetition, particularly in the context of war. A common image in ethnic-nationalist conflicts, as well as in national liberation movements in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia, is the woman refugee gazing out hopelessly or witnessing the death of her child. Along with the woman victim, another prevalent war image is that of a woman with a rifle over her shoulder and a baby on her back, or, in similar fashion, images of nationalist Croatian or Serbian mothers and daughters protesting on the street to prevent relief trucks from reaching zones belonging to the "enemy." These prevailing war images of women have been largely spread by state institutions, media, and military organizations and have come to constitute iconic representations and/or symbols of women at/in war. As such, they tend to serve strategic, nationalist, or state purposes and tell us little about the diversity of women's experience during war, their role on the front lines, or their care in refugee camps.

A second compelling impetus for this book is the widespread incorporation of civilians into war. Very little attention to date has been paid to this highly gendered and racialized phenomenon. No longer are "womenand-children"—to use Cynthia Enloe's (1993: 165–66) apt expression—immune to or spatially separate from the waging of war.[1] In other words, everyone is

at the battlefront: "Total war has a thousand fronts. In such a war, everyone is at the front, even if one has never lain in a trench or fired a single shot" (Kapuściński 2000: 183).

These war "fronts" of militarized conflict are constantly shifting, their boundaries permeated by powerful cultural, economic, and political processes of globalization. The rise of ethnic nationalisms, contests over land and mineral wealth, and struggles for power have emerged as post–Cold War cartographies of conflict on these front lines.

The ways in which war is waged are vastly different now than during the early and mid-twentieth century, when international humanitarian law, which outlines the rules of war, was drafted. Most contemporary wars occur within the borders of sovereign states, not between countries as they once did. Notions of what constitutes a conflict zone are similarly outdated. The idea that (feminized) civilian and (masculinized) military spaces are distinct and separate no longer holds. Civilian homes may be technically out of bounds according to the rules of war, specifically the Geneva Conventions, but in practice they are often targets. Noncombatants are supposed to be safeguarded from war, with fighting duties assigned to armed soldiers, yet civilians compose the vast majority of casualties in current conflicts. Whereas most casualties at the turn of the nineteenth century occurred among soldiers at the battlefront, civilian deaths and injuries constituted 60 to 80 percent of casualties at the end of the twentieth century (Boutwell and Klare 2000: 52). Other estimates are as high as 90 percent (Weiss 1999). One can no longer distinguish between the spaces of battlefield and the home front. "[G]ender 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," writes Cynthia Cockburn in Chapter 2 of this volume.

The incorporation of civilians into contemporary conflicts has been a highly gendered practice. It has occurred on the finest spatial scale: that of the human body, a site always marked by relations of gender, class, nation, race, caste, religion, and geographical location. At a broader scale, wars persist as violent encounters between sovereign states, but increasingly these state-based international relations are complicated by more global concerns. Oil companies and states collaborate to secure lucrative sources of fuel and key access routes for their products at almost any cost. Economic crises precipitated by huge debt loads, currency devaluations, and new modes of governance have contributed to the rise of ethnic nationalisms. Diamonds and other mineral wealth provide the funds to purchase arms and fight for land or access to these natural resources in civil conflict. Movements for independence in a post–Cold War landscape incite military repression. The dynamics and strategies of waging war have changed, affecting people in disparate, yet predictable ways.

A third catalyst for this book, and one that laid the initial groundwork for the Women in Conflict Zones Network (the WICZNET or the Network), has been the massive scale of people's displacement due to conflict and subsequent research on the gendered experience of both conflict and asylum. Forced migration is a barometer of social, economic, and political struggle in a given place. Studies of the ways in which people's lives are uprooted and homes are forfeited in return for safety provide grounded insights into the otherwise abstract concepts of ethnicity, identity, state building, and citizenship. Several authors in this volume write about the lives of women and their families through the various stages of flight, exile, resettlement, and sometimes return (see, in this volume, Mojab, Chapter 5; Hyndman, Chapter 9; de Alwis, Chapter 10; Hans, Chapter 11; Korac, Chapter 12). These stories highlight inequalities and injustices inherent in the exclusionary practices related to borders and boundaries and address the relation of violence and displacement to broader economic interests, nationalist claims, and militarized maneuvers. Refugees and internally displaced persons are often the fodder of militarized conflict. They are the casualties in struggles over land, minerals, nations, homelands, and justice.

## SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA

The WICZNET was founded in 1996 at York University in Toronto to explore the gendered complexities of militarized violence. During several encounters, this international and interdisciplinary group of feminist scholars, activists, and policy makers deliberated concepts, argued definitions, and shared their insights on conflict zones around the world. Working across the activist-researcher divide was a central goal of the Network. One of the primary and ongoing questions for the Network has been how to define a conflict zone. An early commentary from one Network member proposed that a conflict zone is "a series of relative locations" that are subject to constant redefinition: "Dislocated by acts of violence, unable to return to their previous homes, people's relative locations change. As a result, locations that were once nearby become far away, i.e. a place where help is available can become a location where acts of violence occur" (Preston 1996).

Space constitutes social relations and is produced by such relations. Spaces imbued with meanings become places—places that are more than containers within which social processes occur (Massey 1995; see also Preston and Wong, Chapter 7 of this volume, and de Alwis, Chapter 10 of this volume). As groups struggle to shape the meanings of spaces and create places, they reconstitute and transform social relations. Conflicts are maintained at multiple spatial scales—local, national, and international; to

acknowledge "place" is to enable women and men to move past their experiences of conflict and transform these places. Preston cites the example of the Madres de Mayo in Argentina, a group of mothers whose sons had been "disappeared" during the Dirty Wars in that country. By seizing and occupying the space of the Plaza de Mayo, one of the most important public spaces, this group transformed many Argentinians' views about women's "place" in political participation (Preston 1996).

The war between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia not only deepened our understanding of comparative research but challenged, in a very poignant way, our attempts to define a conflict zone. In early 1999, as we organized a Network meeting with our colleagues in the region of the post-Yugoslav states, NATO bombings began in Serbia and Kosova/o.[2] The conflict in this region spread to western Europe and North America, where many people who considered themselves to be outside the conflict zone began to sense that they were very much within the boundaries of war (see Edith Klein, Chapter 13 of this volume). As described in Giles et al. (2003: xiii), the impact on the Network was immediate. Attempts to organize a meeting with Network members in the region under attack were abandoned. For those geographically outside the region, it was difficult to fathom that our colleagues were being targeted not only by nationalists in their own regions but by bombs dropped by the armies of NATO countries in which other members of the Network lived. Notwithstanding these difficulties (both practical and political), Network members succeeded in maintaining constant and often terrifying contact. Our solidarity with each other and with other antinationalist feminists around the world at that time was a form of defiance against NATO aggression, as well as the violence perpetrated by the Milošević regime in Kosova/o. The Network was also a conduit for members in the post-Yugoslav states to reach the rest of the world, circulate information, and make requests.

The Network's early debates and discussions focused on four interrelated analytical domains: (1) ethnic nationalism and gender relations; (2) violence in the context of women's rights; (3) gender and citizenship; and (4) women's empowerment in war.[3] Members of the Network also explored the differences and commonalities of research findings across and within various field sites, leading to the development of a comparative framework for collaborative research. Our work in this book analyzes the gendered, nationalized, racialized, and economic dimensions of violent conflict and the ways these phenomena shape the waging of contemporary war. Since 1996, these four analytical problems formed the basis of our substantive work and discussions within the Network. The research questions, however, have changed over the course of collaboration, as the researchers themselves have "rooted and shifted" (Yuval-Davis 1997: 130) to reach new understandings

and feminist perspectives on the politics of gender in conflict zones. The feminist process of "rooting and shifting," in which "each participant in the dialogue brings with her the rooting in her own membership and identity, but at the same time tries to shift in order to put herself in a situation of exchange with women who have different membership and identity," is part of what Italian activists have called the "transversal politics of coalition building" (Yuval-Davis 1997: 130, 17). It is a strategic move to navigate between an essentialist (and false) belief in universal sisterhood and an apolitical relativist position that emphasizes people's differences over connections—both of which reduce the ground for feminist political collaboration and change. "The process of shifting should not involve self-decentering, abandoning one's political and other sources of belonging. But neither should rooting render us incapable of movement, of looking for connection with those, among 'the others,' with whom we might find compatible values and goals" (Cockburn 1998: 9). Transversal politics recognizes the specific positioning of political actors and the situated nature (and limits) of knowledge claims (Haraway 1991). Such politics emphasizes empathy and openness to other positionings rather than differences from them. One goal of this book is to extend feminist understandings of transversal politics by focusing on their practice in conflict zones. Another is to ground transversal politics in gender relations situated in specific sites of violence.

Despite sustained theoretical and empirical writing on gender as a central category of analysis in the context of conflict (Hyndman 1998), gender identities and relations rarely, if ever, exist in isolation from other relations of power. The intersections of gender, race, nationality, and class have long provided an analytical lens for understanding who does what work during war and why (Enloe 2000). Gender is always enmeshed in a nexus of discursive practices—legal, political, and social.

## NATIONALISMS, ETHNIC NATIONALISMS, AND GENDER RELATIONS

One of the themes addressed in this book is the mutual constitution of war and nationalism and their respective gender dimensions. The nature, meaning, and impact of these phenomena on gender relations vary across different cultural, geographical, and political contexts. The mutually constitutive identities of gender and nation position women and men in particular ways: for example, rendering women the bearers of "tradition" and national culture and men the protectors of the faith/nation and its property (Moghadam 1994). Nationalism is concerned with both state and nonstate contestations for power that coalesce around particular identities. In Canada, for example,

state multiculturalism is imbued with a nationalist discourse that is gendered and familistic, masking economic restructuring and its consequences for immigrants and their descendants in very Anglo/Eurocentric-dominant ways (Giles 2002).

Multiculturalism tends to mute racism by unifying diversity under a banner of tolerance defined by the dominant settler society. Nationalist struggles for recognition and entitlement in Canada are also waged by the First Nations aboriginal people, who have little or no state power. Bottomley (1997) argues that while nation-states may be founded on notions of an ethnic collectivity, the ethnicity of the dominant group often shapes this nation-state to the exclusion of essentialized "Others" (46). Similar to nationalist struggles, ethnic-national movements are concerned with contestations for the cultural, religious, and traditional "authenticity" of a group. While these two phenomena are products of historically and geographically specific conditions, they are also analogous, both assigning roles and responsibilities for the reproduction of the group and for the custody of cultural values and cultural identity to women. In this respect, both contemporary nationalist and ethnic-nationalist movements and their struggles represent, to a large extent, a revival and celebration of traditional gender codes and male power. As Partha Chatterjee (1996) notes, nationalism is a project of asserting difference through internal unity, but one within which hierarchies of gender, race, class, and caste are hardly unifying. Gender politics and power relations are at the center of both nationalist and ethnic-nationalist projects. A consideration of the ways in which women are simultaneously incorporated into and oppressed by both kinds of movements, particularly with regard to their reproductive functions, has been a central concern of feminist research on militarized violence.

A great deal of feminist research on nationalism focuses on the role of gender in the construction and reproduction of ethnic-national ideologies (Enloe 1989; Walby 1992; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Yuval-Davis 1997; Moghadam 1994). Research has demonstrated that in times of social and political upheaval, women frequently become the "iconic representations" (Sen 1993) of cultural and/or ethnic-national identity, particularly during national liberation movements and the creation of nation-states (Einhorn 1993; Enloe 1993; Milić 1993). Studies have also emphasized that the self-definition of political groups and/or ethnic-national communities is markedly gendered (Pateman 1989). Moreover, the interrelations, connections, and conflicts of class, race, ethnicity, and gender, with respect to the different positions of women as members of ethnic-national and national collectivities, have been a matter of concern for feminist scholarship (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Moghadam 1994).

A decisive element of this analysis has been critiques of nationalism by

feminists from the South, who challenge the ethnocentric, racialized, and masculinist discourse of the fields of geopolitics and international relations (IR) (Mohanty 1991, 1997; Thiruchandran 1997; Jayawardena 1986). By respatializing the Eurocentric focus of IR to locations elsewhere, these feminists—among others—subvert dominant modes of representing international politics, critiques that have also been launched by feminists from the North (Pettman 1996; Peterson 1992; Kofman 1996; Whitworth 1994). The geographical location of debates about nationalism, socialism, racism, and feminism in postcolonial societies serves to challenge Eurocentric and orientalist theories of the state and international relations. The radical subaltern school, for example, espouses alternative epistemologies that tell different political histories of countries in South Asia. Feminists in the South have, for example, long examined the affinities and tensions between nationalism and feminism. Kumari Jayawardena's pioneering work demonstrates the links between feminism and nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, highlighting the ways in which the two served common ends in the struggle against colonial governance and underdevelopment by the imperial center. In her landmark tome, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1986), Jayawardena chronicles the emancipatory potential of nationalism, and its limitations for women, among certain segments of colonized societies fighting for their independence. In a more contemporary context, the meaning and deployment of nationalisms have changed dramatically: "[U]ltra-nationalist movements have used women as cultural representatives and constructed them in relation to western domination. Women are the carriers of 'authenticity'; this puts them in a difficult position vis-à-vis their gender and religious identities" (Jayawardena and de Alwis 1996: xiii).

While nationalism may seek to homogenize differences under the unifying discourse of the nation, it nonetheless generates contradictory positions for women as symbols of cultural purity, agents of resistance against Western domination, and "role models for the new nationalist patriarchal family" (Moghadam 1994: 4). Nationalism is not a fixed notion, nor can it claim a unitary subject that bears nationality separate from gender, caste, class, and religious identities.

Nationalist projects demand attention precisely because of the ways in which they construct and claim women as part of the nation: "If the nation is an extended family writ large, then women's role is to carry out the tasks of nurturance and reproduction. If the nation is defined as a religious entity, then the appropriate models of womanhood are to be found in scripture. Nationhood has been recast in these terms in the latter part of the twentieth century, and this has distinct implications for definitions of gender, for the position of women, and for feminism as an emancipatory project" (Moghadam 1994: 4).

Men too are cast in certain roles in relation to the nation. It is men who are generally expected to defend the "moral consciousness" and the "ego" of the nation (Mayer 1998: 6). The patriarchal, exclusionary nation characterized by a masculinized militarization defines feminist critics as traitors (Enloe 2000: 151). But masculinity is also shaped by class and other social locations. The most telling example of the way that class cross-cuts masculinity is the military command chain that can shield senior officers from charges of rape or torture, while their juniors are variously defined as "brutes" or "boys," as in "rapists must be [lower-class] brutes" or "boys will be boys"(Enloe 2000: 152; Whitworth 1997, 2003).

Nationalism, gender, and sexuality are socially and culturally constructed and often mutually constitutive. They play an important role in constructing each other by invoking and helping to create "us"/"them" distinctions and by excluding the "Other" (Mayer 1998). Feminists challenge the construction of simple binaries between "us" and "them" and contest the "either/or" dichotomies that efface political choices under conditions of war. But such politics are often turbulent in the midst of conflict. Lepa Mladjenović (1999) chronicles the work of feminist antiwar activists in Belgrade and highlights the contradictions and dilemmas they have confronted in practicing their politics throughout the 1990s. She poses the following paraphrased questions: "When a soldier comes to shoot at you or your daughter, what should you do: shoot back or not? Where is the line between nationalism and national feeling . . . ? If one belongs to a state or nation that produces terror, where is one's collective responsibility? How do you approach a woman who belongs to a national group that at the moment . . . is in a [less] privileged position [than one's own]?" Challenging masculinist constructions of woman and nation is one thing; making daily decisions about what action to take in the context of war and personal safety is quite another.

The antiwar activists from Women in Black in Belgrade have worked daily for more than a decade to stop the violence perpetrated in the name of the nation. In October 2000, their work was vindicated when widespread public protests against Slobodan Milošević, who lost a September election, led to his defeat: "There is great joy among us for this end, but our work is not done. We will continue to work on the elimination of militarism, nationalism and male violence against women!" (Women in Black 2000).

There was, however, little, if any, acknowledgment from the international media of the importance of feminist struggles and antinationalist efforts to defeat the dictatorship. Mladjenović (1999) points out that "feminists do small tribunals—workshops for women" (10). This scale of civil action is less visible, less accessible, perhaps less interesting to the media than dramatic images of farm tractors storming parliament buildings in Belgrade in 2000. But this does not tell the whole story. As one Network member queried during the final moments of the Milošević regime, "Where are the women?"

Women are present and have been active in critical ways all along, but their work and faces are often invisible. Nonetheless, these feminists have been vital to creating change and the conditions for a strengthened civil society.

By addressing questions about the character of current nationalist projects and the dilemmas raised by Lepa Mladjenović, among others, several authors in this book examine the gendered impact of nationalism and the role of the nation in shaping women's identities, status, and actions. The ways in which femininity and masculinity are used to construct ethnic-national identity and the mobilization of national consciousness are part and parcel of such processes. Furthermore, authors interrogate the ways in which women from different regions of the world have become symbols and reproducers of national and ethnic ideology. They demonstrate how nationalism and ethnic nationalism are exclusionary guises that hide extensive gender, class, racial, and regional inequalities. Nationalism positions women, in particular, as marginalized subjects, caught in contradictory situations in which they contribute to the productive sphere of paid work and civic life but are excluded from full citizenship (Pateman 1989; Giles 2002).

## VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The primacy of the state in analyses of conflict has been challenged by feminist critics of international relations (Peterson 1996a, 1996b; Pettman 1996; Enloe 1993, 2000), but the multiple levels, or scales, along the continuum of violence have rarely been made explicit. Violence can be perpetrated against one's body, home, community, or country. The chapters in this book explore conflict at a range of levels precisely because it is our contention that to focus on one level of inquiry is to efface or omit connections to others. Heinous acts of systematic rape during nationalistic battles for territory and property violate the security of a person in a way that claims for "national security" cannot capture. But the motivation and meaning of rape, and sexual violence more generally, vary across and within conflict zones. Contradictions between the militarized masculinity of soldiers trained to kill or maim and their frequent assignment to UN peacekeeping duties, where their roles involve the protection of a local population through preventative measures, are brought into sharp, brutal contrast from time to time.

The sexual assault and murder of an eleven-year-old Kosovar Albanian girl by a U.S. sergeant posted to Kosova/o on a peacekeeping mission raises glaring questions about the ways and means by which the U.S. army militarizes its forces, and the impact of militarization at home and abroad. In August 2000, Staff Sergeant Frank Ronghi, thirty-six, was sentenced to life imprisonment for sodomizing and murdering a Kosovar Albanian girl, Merita Sabiu, eleven (Cohen 2000; Erlanger 2000). It would be a mistake to think that this was an isolated incident by a single deranged soldier. The 82nd Air-

borne Division, one of the U.S. Army's elite fighting units, and the unit of which Ronghi was part, has been under investigation by the army for other reported abuses against Kosovars while on peacekeeping duty in Kosova/o. GIs reportedly beat, threatened, and assaulted civilians and officials. These incidents were attributed to a lack of training before the regiment left for Kosova/o (Myers 2000). Too much training in tactics of aggression and war are at the root of such violence, not too little.

It has been argued that ethnic nationalism, as a social phenomenon, engenders a kind of "structural violence" and gender-specific crimes. While all citizens technically bear the same rights as all others, women are exposed to different forms of sexual and nonsexual violence in the context of their relation to nationalist movements and to their respective nation-states. One such political context concerns refugee women (Korac, Chapter 12 of this volume; Indra 1996; 1999b; Giles, Moussa, and Van Esterik 1996; Van Esterik 1992). What does gendered migration mean in the context of violent nationalist struggles that seek to construct ethnically homogeneous territories and states? What kind of treatment and/or manipulation do refugee women and men experience in exile, and in what ways do these experiences shape their political consciousness? To what extent is the experience of exile also one of transformation? What kind of assistance is appropriate for women fleeing from conflict zones, as compared to men, particularly when their place of sanctuary is within a territory affected by the conflict?

Gender-specific crimes committed in war zones can become instruments of destruction in the political contests between nations. Testimony by women raped or sexually assaulted is used by political leaders to fuel nationalist fervor and hatred of the "Other." In this respect, it is important to ask whether the leadership of nationalist movements or nationalist governments is genuinely able to protect women's rights. If not, what should be done? A feminist analysis of the gendered outcomes of humanitarian law is also in order. Gender-specific forms of harm perpetrated during war are relevant (if not always recognized) considerations in refugee status determination. Accordingly, this collection includes analyses of women's (and men's) displacement due to conflict; their efforts to resist and condemn the conflict they confront; and their actions to reconstitute civil society in postwar conditions. If "women's rights are human rights," as UN organizations often promulgate, how can violent, gender-specific crimes be effectively addressed in a gender-blind international framework of rights?

## GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP

The effects of ethnic nationalism on women's legal and political status as citizens have been a central concern for feminist research on militarized vio-

lence. The point of entry into debates on the civil, political, and social dimensions of women's citizenship is the acknowledgment of its "dualistic nature" (Yuval-Davis 1994: 187).[4] That is, women are always included in the constructions of the general body of members of national and ethnic collectivities and/or citizens of the state; yet there is often a separate body of regulations (legal and/or customary) that relate to them specifically as women.

Within the context of the Network and this book, we focus on the differential positioning of women compared to men in relation to citizenship, taking into consideration their ethnicity, class, stage in the life cycle/age, urban/rural location, and refugee status, among other factors. Equality of rights, as codified in law, does not necessarily translate into equality of outcome in practice for all citizens of a nation-state. Various social, economic, and geographical locations construct positions for women as citizens. These differences become even more important in the context of ethnic-national upheavals, when they are accompanied by state interventions to ensure ethnically homogeneous territories. An examination of the ways in which ethnic-national projects and the consolidation of new nation-states are linked is crucial in determining their effects on groups marginalized by nationalist discourse.

Definitions of citizenship generally assume that all nationals bear the same rights and that the boundaries of the national collectivity and civil society are unchanging, or "organically whole" (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995; Yuval-Davis 1991a). This is clearly not the case, however, for many women, immigrants, refugees, and racial minorities throughout the world, who are technically equal legal subjects within the boundaries of civil society and the nation-state but who live in marginal spaces beyond the boundaries of the dominant nation, without access to protection and other citizenship rights. A more accurate definition of lived citizenship is articulated by Stasiulis and Bakan (1997), who draw a parallel between class and citizenship. Citizenship, like class, exists "specifically, historically, and changes continually as relationships are negotiated and re-negotiated in variable national and international conditions. . . . [C]itizenship and non-citizenship, like conflicting classes, emerge simultaneously" (118). They map the relationship between class, gender, and race/ethnicity and citizenship as follows: "[Citizenship] is a process which renders legal and legitimate discriminations based on whether individuals embody capital (e.g., as transnational capitalists benefiting from wealth creation in the NICs [newly industrializing countries]) or poverty (e.g., of the majority of those living in developing nations), as well as the dominant race/ethnicity and gender" (119). The analogy between class privileges and citizenship is clear. Access is uneven. Citizenship is historically, geographically, and socially contingent.

Gibson-Graham (1997) refers to "place" as increasingly "an important constituent of actual classes" (50). As Audrey Macklin reveals in Chapter 4 of this book, the transparency of this definition of internationalized market citizenship is evident in Sudan. There, until recently, the Canadian state had to all intents and purposes condoned the investment by the Canadian oil company, Talisman Energy Inc. Talisman, in turn, contributes to the displacement of a significant population of Sudanese, a small number of whom manage to find their way to Canada, where they become part of the Canadian "refugee" class.[5] As Saskia Sassen (1993) has argued, international migrations are embedded in broader social, economic, and political processes. Migrants use the bridges built through the internationalization of capital and the military activities of dominant countries.

The politics of mobility, by which we mean access to a particular country and the rights it promises, is also of concern to feminists. Both class and gender shape access and mobility in important ways (Hyndman 2000). Jacqueline Bhabha (1996) defines the salient characteristic of the modern state as its "control over which non-citizens can have access to the territory" (6). In the same way that access to and ownership of property is associated with a privileged class position, so too is access to certain territories associated with citizenship status. One of the ways that class is expressed on a global scale is through citizenship practices (Giles 2002).

Despite transnational linkages among both people and corporate entities, limits on migration and border restrictions have become increasingly tight. While nation-state boundaries and borders can enable the protection of indigenous workers, the place called home is not always a haven. Capital and citizenship processes are intertwined in complex ways contributing to class, caste, gender, and race/ethnicity formations nationally and internationally. Citizenship policies are an integral part of regional and international economic and trade relationships and must be understood as such.

In practice, immigration policy is actually "disguised labour policy" (Cockcroft 1986, cited in Kearney 1991: 71) and foreign policy (Giles 2000). A global economy, premised on capitalist accumulation, raises serious questions about "the nature of governance, the meaning of democratization, and the location of political accountability" (Peterson 1996a: 13). In this global context Stasiulis and Jhappan (1995) describe a "backlash" against the "third world origins of most immigrant newcomers," whose arrival is perceived as an economic and cultural threat by the "white settler colony" (124). This siege mentality becomes more obvious once the context of economic globalization comes into focus, and class relations and citizenship negotiations are continually being played out.

## FEMINIST EMPOWERMENT ACROSS
## A CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

Several chapters in this book address the issues of women's empowerment and agency in the context of violent ethnic-national conflicts and wars, driven by competing economic and social interests. They reveal how women, in particular, have subverted nationalist projects and developed solidarity movements across national, political, and economic divides, both locally and internationally. The relationship of local women's movements to ethnic nationalism and to antiwar activities is an important theme of this book: the history of local women's movements, their specific responses to violence waged by a range of actors, and the relations between local women's movements and women's groups worldwide make up feminist politics (see Blacklock and Crosby, Chapter 3 of this volume). In many cases, local women's initiatives and political actions are based on transnational bridge-building endeavors that cut across ethnic and national boundaries. These transversal politics and transnational links are crucially important, we contend, not just for improving the situation of women in ethnic-national conflict zones but for transforming gender relations within broader contexts. Two chapters focus on the relationship between women as refugees and the development of local women's movements (see Korac, Chapter 12 of this volume, and Mojab, Chapter 5, of this volume). An examination of this relationship reveals how women's experience of exile, as a form of both victimization and active transformation, can encourage and enable local women's groups to politically oppose ethnic nationalists in their regions.

In response to the salient representations of women in conflict zones (i.e., the woman warrior or the woman victim), several chapters in this book critically interrogate the issue of women's victimization in war. The authors explore the possibilities for women's agency through or as a result of war. Some examine the extent to which their involvement in war and with nationalist movements alters the roles they perform and the status they keep. As many feminists have argued, women's equal participation in war hardly constitutes female emancipation. In contradictory ways, women have accommodated, participated in, and opposed relationships with national movements, the state, their families, and the military (see Yuval-Davis, Chapter 8 of this volume). Where and to what extent have women who are refugees, soldiers, military wives and mothers, wartime rape victims, military prostitutes, nurses, and fashion designers been "maneuvered" by the militarized state? How does each of these groups engage consciously and/or unconsciously in the gendering of militarization and regard its own experiences as quite distinct from those of the others?

Feminist researchers and activists must also consider how they have been

maneuvered by other forces, including the state, to understand militarized violence in specific ways that are sometimes adversarial (Enloe 2000). Feinman (2000) describes two groups, "feminist anti-militarists," who address the ways in which wars oppress women, and "feminist egalitarian militarists," who address the lack of opportunity for women in the military. The two perspectives need each other "to create a dialog about women in the military that simultaneously acknowledges the horrors of militarism and the achievements, interests and longings of women soldiers" (2). Both Enloe and Feinman argue that it is possible to understand "the full range of gendered militarization" (Enloe 2000: 299) only by combining these two approaches with analyses of the gender relations of war and militarized violence. Feminists are at the forefront of forging ways of traversing such methodological and political divides. They seek to develop new understandings of the gendering not only of militarization (see Yuval-Davis, Chapter 8 of this volume) but also of demilitarization. Transnational, transversal feminist politics can open some of these doors, a prospect we return to in the concluding chapter.

The concept of diaspora—literally the scattering or dispersion of a people—has also proven useful as a framework that embodies a transnational approach, as well as one that accentuates economic, cultural, and political connections across space. In this regard, members of the Network contend that our analyses should account for material inequalities but must also challenge the dichotomization of differences through feminist and transnational analyses of conflict zones. By *transnational,* we mean that social, economic, and political differences are relational and link people, institutions, and processes across international borders. No person, society, country, or company can be viewed as isolated from transnational webs of power relations and the networks within which they operate.

## THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CULTURE

Just as gender is deployed in particular ways, so too is culture. Culture is not a static set of characteristics with unalterable "ancient" origins, despite essentialized representations to the contrary. Nor are "cultures" fixed entities (Yuval-Davis 1997). Rather, they are infinitely malleable maps of meaning within a material economy of nationality, sexuality, class, caste, religion, and gender. Making explicit the multiple antecedents to war and their links with one another is part of this feminist project, precisely because some commentators tend to essentialize the causes of war as inherent to particular cultures and regions, rendering them inexorable and unavoidable (Huntington 1998; for critique, see Ó Tuathail 1998). We find this position essentialist and untenable. Neither culture, custom, nor tradition is a sufficient explanation

for conflict and the gendered patterns of warfare: "The common conception is that decisions are driven by culture/tradition—rather than deliberate conscious thought. . . . Nowhere is this easy assumption more pervasive than where patriarchy and militarization converge—in the gendering of militarization" (Enloe 2000: 33–34).

The convenient attribution of war to "ancient ethnic hatreds," for example, serves not only to orientalize and "other" people who fall beyond the borders of Western geography and scholarship but to efface the very material effects of global economic integration and regional interdependence that are often linked to conditions of war. The political economy of conflict has never been more vivid than in wars that are dependent on the extraction and trade of resources located in or near a region of conflict. The diamond trade in Angola and Sierra Leone, for example, fuels conflict and pays for arms that deepen militarization among warring parties. These economies of conflict are no less vivid in struggles over oil and pipelines in Sudan, Chechnya, and Burma.

Conversely, riots and conflict triggered by the austerity of structural adjustment programs represent struggles over scarce resources and the acute insecurity that accompany such conditions. These struggles are racialized and gendered in violent ways, as demonstrated by the Indonesian uprising against International Monetary Fund austerity measures placed on the government and resulting in increases in fuel prices in 1998 (Spencer 1998). Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, often regarded as the well-to-do merchant class in the country, were targeted as scapegoats; their shops were looted and property destroyed. This violence was both racialized and gendered. As many as 168 women of Chinese ethnicity were targeted for rape during this period of economic crisis, while 1,200 were killed during the riots (Spencer 1998).

The historical and geographical contingency of nationalism and/or ethnic nationalisms in the context of globalization needs to be scrutinized. Susie Jacobs (2000) argues that ethnic nationalisms are always "integral" to globalizing processes: "In the same way, the Holocaust and modernity, seemingly irreconcilable, were all part of *one* process" (227). Nationalist movements seek the status of states in order to ensure the territorial integrity and well-being of their group. However, projects of globalization often weaken the power of nation-states to provide for the welfare of their citizens, and thus any claims on the part of nationalists to provide for the welfare of the group are highly suspect. This is especially the case for women, as nationalist movements already reproduce gender inequalities (Peterson 1996a: 13) and globalization exacerbates these inequities. Nationalist movements are frequently opportunistic, seeking statehood in some instances and sustaining their power through the market economy in others. We return to this issue in the final chapter.

## SITES OF RESEARCH AND STRUGGLE

In this collection, feminist authors from a number of disciplines analyze the politics of gender relations at specific sites of violence. The book is divided into four parts: "Feminist Approaches to Gender and Conflict" (Part One); "Making Feminist Sense of Violence against Women in War and Postwar Times" (Part Two); "Feminist Analyses of International Organizations and Asylum" (Part Three); and "Feminist Futures: Negotiating Globalization, Security, and Human Displacement" (Part Four). The chapters that compose these parts incorporate analyses of the four major research themes identified as part of the original mandate of the WICZNET but go further to analyze the gender politics of global political economy, ethnic nationalism, and resource wars from feminist perspectives.

In Chapter 2, Cynthia Cockburn considers the meaning and parameters of an explicitly feminist gender analysis. She discusses its importance vis-à-vis the concept of a "continuum of violence," from the gender violence of everyday life, through the structural violence of economic systems that sustain inequalities and the repressive policing of dictatorial regimes, to the armed conflict of open warfare. Her analysis draws on material from different countries and conflicts, describing the different parts played by women and men respectively: the contrasting representations of gender difference; the significance of familial positioning and ideology; and the hierarchical relationships of gender power systems in relation to violence, war, and peace.

Chapter 3 is a collaborative analysis of feminist methods and politics in conflict zones, specifically in Guatemala. Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby develop a comparative methodological framework of two different moments in Guatemalan history: the period of "democratization" (1985–96), and the post–peace accord era (1997–present). The authors discuss the Guatemalan "culture of silence" as a form of resistance, as well as its impact on their research during both time periods. Blacklock and Crosby ask pointed questions about who the beneficiaries of research are; what the nature of the relationship is between outsiders and insiders; and "how a wartime or post-war environment affects the possibilities of feminist research."

In Part Two of the book, Audrey Macklin uses the case of the Canadian company, Talisman Energy Inc., which operated until recently in South Sudan, to examine the impact of global capital investment on human displacement in Chapter 4. Interviewing women and men civilians affected by the war and the operations of the government-supported oil consortium, she discusses how security has been redefined, not as the protection of human beings and their most basic rights, but as the protection of oil company stock prices. She examines the ways in which women have been affected by the precipitous decline in human security. Rape and enslavement keep them constantly on the run from government military forces as they also try to avoid

the abduction, rape, and enslavement of their children. Her chapter raises serious questions about the complicity of the Canadian state in the war in Sudan.

In Chapter 5, the themes of globalization, ethnic nationalism, and militarization are further pursued by Shahrzad Mojab in her study of the lives of Kurdish women living in one of the major "conflict zones" of the world— Iraqi Kurdistan—in the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1990–91. She examines the relationships between political and gender violence, "honor" and nationalism, and war and honor killing and provides considerable insight into the complexity of oppression and resistance. Kurdistan, an imagined community, is a site where local, regional, and world powers are involved in an unceasing war for the military, economic, and political control of the Middle Eastern geopolitical order.

In Chapter 6, Mirjana Morokvasic-Müller analyzes the gendered effects of "mixed" marriage on women and men and on their respective families in the post-Yugoslav states. She argues that women, more than men, are socially classified by their marriage and that the positive or negative outcomes of interethnic marriage affect women more than they affect men. In the systematic erasure of the "Other," the first targets and victims of ethnic cleansing are people who are, or whose existence represents proof of the possibility of living together with, the "Other": the so-called mixed or interethnic couples and families and people of mixed background. They are thought of as "polluting" the ideologies of nationally "pure" states, challenging the myth of common origin and the idea of women as metaphors of nation.

Valerie Preston and Madeleine Wong, in Chapter 7, link the legacy of British colonialism and structural adjustment policies to recent militarized conflict in Ghana. This conflict has directly contributed to Ghanaian women's increasing social and economic marginality, as well as their vulnerability to various forms of gendered violence. Preston and Wong examine cases of the enslavement and prostitution of young girls, domestic abuse, and the plight of migrant/immigrant women workers in Ghana and beyond. This chapter probes the silence regarding gendered violence and oppression in Ghana and argues for analyses that examine how space and place mediate women's experiences of conflict at various geographical scales.

In Chapter 8, Nira Yuval-Davis examines the ways in which nationalist discourse is gendered and how this shapes and is affected by sexual divisions of labor in the military. She argues that only rarely are differential power relations between men and women in the military erased. Drawing on examples from the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine and elsewhere, Yuval-Davis traces the gender dimensions of state intervention and militarism in a charged atmosphere of nationalism on the "front lines."

In Part Three, the role of international organizations in refugee camps

and the struggles of refugee women beyond camps are chronicled in several chapters. In Chapter 9, Jennifer Hyndman looks at refugee camps as conflict zones and examines the operations of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in particular. She argues that the ways in which the organization conceives of gender and culture in the humanitarian context of Kenyan refugee camps is problematic because it tends either to essentialize "woman" and "culture" in the planning process or to minimize the meaning and implications of these differences vis-à-vis gender policies that focus on integration. Drawing on her research relating to gender policies and initiatives to combat violence against refugee women in camps situated in Kenya's Northeast province, she stresses the point that "place matters." Hyndman argues that no gender approach to humanitarian operations is viable without consideration of the contingencies of political geography and history.

In Chapter 10, Malathi de Alwis uses the context of camps for displaced Muslims in Sri Lanka to explore the production of space through social relations. She argues that social relations are generated through spatial arrangements in camps, and she illustrates this argument through insights gleaned from interviews with displaced women in Puttalam. Notions of home are constantly reiterated in the camps in material ways. In a country where war has raged for two decades between Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan state, a topography of violence has materialized. De Alwis explores the emergent meanings of front lines, border zones, and no-man's-land in the context of the conflict.

Asha Hans analyzes Afghan women's flight and temporary sanctuary in Chapter 11. She contends that women have fled more than one political regime in Afghanistan but that under the Taliban, women's space is all but annihilated. Through fifty interviews conducted with Afghan women, Hans documents the new social order of rural values imposed on urban people under Taliban rule. Women's bodies mark the boundaries of the state until they flee its violence. She also explores the meaning of "nation" to women once they are in exile.

Maja Korac chronicles changes in gender roles generated by politics of ethnic nationalism in the context of war and displacement in what once was Yugoslavia in Chapter 12. Her research focuses on in-depth interviews with ten women living in Serbia over a period of four years. Korac analyzes the ways in which women become the markers and boundaries of the nation. Their displacement, she argues, is at once symbolic and deeply felt in the exclusionary projects of nation building.

In Chapter 13, Edith Klein discusses the multilateral intervention of NATO in the interethnic conflict in Kosova/o, marked by the launch of an escalating military action and bombardments of strategic sites in the Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia and Kosova/o. This chapter begins a much-needed discussion of the gender politics of NATO by focusing on how multilateral militarism is taking place in a context of a globalizing world economy and within highly militarized (unelected) international organizations. Klein argues that this process leads to a shrinking of the democratic space, leaving women in postconflict society at "a difficult and potentially perilous crossroads."

In their entirety, these chapters offer innovative theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches to gender politics and the ways they are employed to incite, exacerbate, and fuel violence. In the final chapter, we conclude with a reflection on feminist politics in the context of militarized violence. In particular, we examine the gender implications of globalization, human security, and human rights. We contend that it is crucial to identify the gendered antecedents and consequences of violence, conflict, and war. Processes of globalization, for example, are gendered in specific ways that may contribute to or inhibit conflict. Likewise, new concepts, such as "human security," should be interrogated from a feminist perspective in order to understand the gender relations they imply. Feminist knowledge and practices connect global, national, and local levels. Recognizing the overlapping civilian and military spaces that constitute sites of violence is also crucial in deciding what counts as a conflict zone. The final chapter and the book as a whole make a concerted call for feminist approaches to conceptualizing conflict and contemplating action.

## NOTES

1. Enloe is critical of the ways in which women and children are collapsed into a common category of vulnerable, gendered subjects; in war and as symbols of nationalism, women are not defined as subjects in their own right but are reduced to their reproductive and traditional social roles as mothers.

2. We have allowed authors in this book to choose the spelling of the country or the region to which they refer.

3. Our discussion of these four approaches is indebted to and inspired by the ideas that Alison Crosby, Wenona Giles, and Maja Korac discussed and debated in the early days of the WICZNET, resulting in their joint paper that set an initial discussion agenda for the Network (Crosby, Giles, and Korac 1996).

4. We suggest that issues of citizenship be understood and explored, following Marshall (1950), as encompassing political, social, and civil rights and responsibilities insofar as these relate to ethnic, national, and state membership.

5. The displaced population in Sudan is huge. And paradoxically, while Canada invests in southern Sudan, it has also opened its doors to the flow of refugees from Sudan. In 2000, Sudan was the third largest source country for government-sponsored refugees to Canada. Between 1997 and 1999, Sudan is listed among the top ten

source countries of refugee principal applicants and dependents arriving in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1999: 57). The Canadian government has not yet acknowledged any connection between these two phenomena. However, under pressure from the international NGO community, Talisman has recently sold its Sudanese investment.

# The Continuum of Violence

## *A Gender Perspective on War and Peace*

*Cynthia Cockburn*

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 us 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

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 chances 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, "brainy" 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 them-selves, 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 *Newsweek* report embodied such a hegemonic masculinity, and some girls were, it seems, their camp followers. The young killers were an inferiorized and alienated masculinity, the nerds, "expelled from the circle of legitimacy" (Connell 1987: 79). It was violent animosity not just between two cultures (as *Newsweek* 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 *Newsweek* 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 at 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 macro 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 head-lines 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 lead-erships of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and Yugoslavia as they balanced the advantages of negotiation against those of military attrition. And, furnished with a gender analysis, we might have antic-ipated that some women would organize against the war. And indeed some did. Women in Black in Belgrade outspokenly linked masculinity and mili-tarism, publicly opposed their government's policies, sheltered army desert-ers, 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 per-ceptions without taking account of or questioning gender relations. Although there are varied inflections from one culture to another, a differ-ence between men and women is, in two senses, *normally* emphasized. Dif-ference between men and women is habitually represented. And simultane-ously 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 rela-tions of gender, however, are absent from this discourse.

In some environments traditionalism has given way to a new set of con-ventions: "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 dif-ference 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 dif-ferentiation and male power live on.

## FEMINIST GENDER ANALYSIS: EFFECTS OF POWER

What kind of gender analysis, then, can transcend both conservative assump-tions 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 disadvantage in "traditional" societies, others in "modern" ones. And of course those kinds of societies are not geographically distinct. Both are found in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Nor do they exist in a time sequence. Traditionalism and modernism are both emergent and in eclipse, depending where and when you look.

We should in fact use the plural here and speak of feminist gender *analyses* of society. Different feminisms have different slants. But there is one constant in a feminist gender analysis, whoever makes it: the differentiation and 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 whenever and wherever 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 Runyan 1999). This viewpoint is most accessible to women who experience oppression and to others who can empathize with them. The interpretation flows from that. Gender power is seen to shape the dynamics of every site of human interaction, from the household to the international arena. It has expression in 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 (Pateman 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 (Cockburn 1991). When should women be treated as "mothers," as "dependents," as "vulnerable"? When, on the contrary, should they be disinterred from "the family," from "womenandchildren" (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 (1996) 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-dominant 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 constraining 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 (Ahooja-Patel 1991). We saw the stress induced by forced economic liberalization and structural adjustment priming violence in societies continents apart: murderous communalism in India (Chenoy 1998), imploding power vacuums in Africa (Turshen and Twagiramariya 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?" (250). 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 unchartable 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" (150).

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" (Borić and Desnica 1996: 136). 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 divide 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 Korac (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 Shahrzad 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 Ruddick (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 (Yuval-Davis 1985). In others, women do bear arms, by their own demand or, as in Libya, through an official concept of "modernization" (Graeff-Wassinck 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 (Peries

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 fulfil their current function (see also Yuval-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 1994). 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 (1994) 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)" (58). 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" (59). 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 national-ist ideology (Meznaric 1994). When men too are raped or sexually humili-ated, or their genitalia mutilated, the act is no less gendered: it is their mas-culinity that enemy men are deriding. 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 soldierly solidarity through male bonding (59).

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 dif-ferentiated and, in the case of women, to be sexualized. Lois Ann Lorentzen (1998) studied the writings in which women political prisoners in El Salvador bore witness to their incarceration. They reflect, she says, "the specific cir-cumstances of *women* in prison. . . . In these 'secret' women's prisons, cap-tors, guards and torturers were all male. Prisoners were female" (197). Sex-ual 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 (Halim 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 *peacemaking*.

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 (Roseneil 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 busloads 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 nationalisms 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 Kosova and the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Women in Black groups everywhere were pressing their governments for creative diplomacy and genuine international peacekeeping. 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 doomed to a life of unemployment. Women and children in rural areas are especially vulnerable to losing limbs from uncleared land mines. Women continue to bear infants with birth defects due to nuclear testing in the Pacific islands in the Cold War (Ishtar 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 Kosova 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 (Cockburn 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 (Nikolić-Ristanović 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 (Brah 1996).

The experience of displacement through war may differ for women and men (Giles, Moussa, and Van Esterik 1996; Indra 1999a). 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: x). 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 (1996) 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 militaries 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. Alya Baffoun (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 Volo 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 (Sancho 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 Meintjes (1998) decided to use that opening to put forward a gender 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 actors 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 strong nations and powerful multinational enterprises and more vulnerable 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 (80).

The power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies generates 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.

# 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 homogenous process. The very fact that the most recent phase of armed conflict in Guatemala took place over more than three decades signals that hegemonic silence was incomplete, ruptured along the way by various significant moments of "successful subversion," naming, identifying, and remembering.

This chapter traces our relationship as outside researchers to the culture of silence within a society in transition. In comparing our research experiences across two distinct moments in Guatemalan history, the period of

Map 3.1. Guatemala. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

"democratization" (1985–96) and the post–peace accord era (1997–present), we have been repeatedly confronted by silence in two basic forms: as a condition of our respective research environments and as a tool for colonizing forms of knowledge production. First World academics have a long history of involvement in Guatemala, particularly in indigenous communities. This has profoundly affected the ways in which Guatemala has been represented in the First World. The issue of the generation, ownership, and use of and access to knowledge is of central importance in Guatemala today. The indigenous movement, for example, now asks of North American anthropologists, "What are you doing in Guatemala to benefit the Maya people?" (Warren 1998: 82; see also Nelson 1999 for discussion of this issue).

We have both been asked versions of this question during our work in Guatemala, and we take the challenge of responding seriously. This chapter is an attempt to unwrap the code of silence within research practices. Silence is often used as an instrument of domination by the researcher against the researched within social scientific research. It is assumed that an objective "truth" can be determined in studying social phenomena by using methodological practices inherited from the natural sciences. Within this context, the researcher is understood to be independent and neutral. The "self" of the researcher is ensconced in silence, with the investigative spotlight turned on the researched "other," whose own voice and power are in turn silenced. The modernist epistemology informing these methodological approaches to research has now been well critiqued.

The postmodern "turn" of the last twenty years is testimony to dissatisfaction with the modernist metatheoretical foundation of the social sciences. Nonetheless, modernity continues to have far-reaching and long-term consequences that we need to acknowledge and address as feminist researchers. It is our purpose to make ourselves visible within our research processes and acknowledge the influence our positioning has on shaping the research process. This chapter aims to further debate concerning transparency, mutuality, and accountability in research processes, both in feminist academic circles and, most importantly, in Guatemala.

Our participation in the Women in Conflict Zones Network over several years has aided us in the comparison of our respective research projects, since the value of comparative analysis is an issue the Network has collectively questioned. The need to develop a methodology for comparative feminist research and a framework for the analysis of research findings was identified very early on by Network members. As a group we wanted to move beyond the sharing of anecdotes to a more systematized and comprehensive manner of learning from our collective research projects, allowing us to more fully understand the gendered impact of war in conflict zones. Much of the Network's work on this issue has focused on comparing the dynamics and out-

comes of conflict across regions, in particular between South Asia and the post-Yugoslav states. This work has helped us think critically about our comparison across time within a single country. Our comparison aims to understand the political effects of historical processes on women's organizing in Guatemala and the shifting relationship of the researcher to this context.[1]

The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the thirty-six-year civil war in this Central American country. In the second section, Cathy Blacklock discusses the challenges of participant observation research with popular women's organizations in the context of democratization, a period during which a process of political liberalization occurred in an environment of continuing state repression. In the third section, Alison Crosby examines the challenges of undertaking feminist action research with organized groups within civil society in postwar Guatemala. In this technically postwar but still conflict-ridden era, questions of how and why knowledge is produced and for whom are of central importance. The concluding section of this chapter reflects on the insights to be drawn from a comparative analysis of these research experiences and considers whether silence does, or, more importantly, should, retain political meaning as a strategy of resistance within the post–peace accord era.

## THE NATION-STATE AT WAR

The photograph on the front page of the newspaper commanded complete attention: two indigenous women in a crowded room with tears on their faces. There was no need for the block-lettered headline "Xamán" stretched above the picture. The whole nation had been awaiting the verdict of the longest trial in Guatemalan history. Twenty-five soldiers and their commanding officer stood accused of massacring eleven refugees and injuring thirty more in October 1995, as the community of Aurora 8 de Octubre, Xamán, Alta Verapaz, celebrated the first anniversary of return from exile in Mexico. On Friday, August 13, 1999, after a judicial process described by many observers as a farce, where witnesses were intimidated and the judiciary was blatantly biased in favor of the defense, the soldiers were found guilty of culpable homicide, given between four- and five-year commutable sentences, and set free, since they had already spent two years in jail. They were acquitted of the charges of extrajudicial execution, attempted extrajudicial execution, and grievous bodily harm.

The courtroom space reflected that of the post–peace accord nation and its continuing, deeply entrenched, racialized and gendered divisions. The army elite, the "intellectual authors" of the attack, were not on trial. The accused, poor foot soldiers, were members of Guatemala's indigenous and oppressed majority, as were the victims. The participation of indigenous men

in the extermination of their own communities is one of the saddest features of the state's recently concluded genocidal counterinsurgent war: those historically constructed as outside the nation were forced to defend its hegemonic status by eradicating themselves.[2]

The construction and consolidation of difference have been integral to the formation of the modern Guatemalan nation-state. Historically, indigenous communities, women, and the poor have been perceived as threats to the "national" interest and therefore in need of containment, whether through segregation under colonialism or through the violent homogenizing practices of recent counterinsurgency campaigns. The extreme violence employed in the reinforcement of the hegemonic nation-state pushed the boundaries of difference to the very frontier of the nation and beyond. The scorched-earth policy perpetrated by the Guatemalan state during the late 1970s and the decade of the 1980s killed or "disappeared" over two hundred thousand people, with hundreds of thousands more forced to flee the country.

This strategy was clearly expressed in the April 1982 document that detailed the key phases of counterinsurgency. The immediate objective of the military was the annihilation of the basis of support of the armed insurgency. This meant scorched-earth tactics and terrorization of the populace to eradicate potential guerrilla support. By late 1982 the military had gained the upper hand in the war against the guerrillas, and by 1983 it was moving toward the institutionalization of military control of the rural population through, for example, the forced population of model villages and the system of civilian defense patrols (Jay 1993).

In the extreme repression of the early 1980s, the state, as a systematic violator of human rights, reached its pinnacle of achievement. This systematic violence was given ideological expression in the doctrine of "national security." By 1984 the military began implementation of the final phase of its counterinsurgency plan, which was the limited political liberalization signaled by the scheduling of a presidential election for 1985 and, subsequently, the inauguration of Vinicio Cerezo of the Christian Democrats as civilian president in January 1986. As part of the military's long-term strategy, political liberalization was implemented in an environment where repression, albeit increasingly systematic and "refined" in its elimination of subversion, continued to depoliticize society. In effect, this final phase of the counterinsurgency strategy made politics a continuation of war (Black 1985: 11–14).

The 1985 presidential election served, however, as a turning point in the long-standing civil war. For the guerrilla organizations and popular movement it foreshadowed the decline of revolutionary struggle and the ascendance of electoral politics as the central arena for negotiation and struggle. This was further underscored by the central role played by the

Cerezo government in the regional peace talks held among the five Central American presidents. These talks led to the Esquipulas II peace accords, which were ratified by Guatemala in August 1987. While the actual outcomes of these accords were much more limited than envisioned, they did signal the increasing importance of representation in such political forums as might be established, such as the incipient national dialogue to end armed conflict through the National Reconciliation Commission. However, through the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the consolidation of democracy was mitigated by ongoing violent repression and continuing economic crisis.

What is not well understood about this armed conflict in all its various phases is the important role played by women. An initial glance at the courtroom photograph might have led the reader to presume that the indigenous women's tears were for the victims—that they were mothers and daughters weeping for the loss of their loved ones, confronted with the tragedy of yet another miscarriage of justice. However, the tears were not of grief for the dead but of relief for the release of the guilty. The women, family members of the accused, formed part of the group of supporters who created such an atmosphere of intimidation in the courtroom prior to the verdict that its release was delayed several times.

The women in the photograph were defending the hegemonic nation as mothers and daughters. However, it is important not to allow the images in the photograph to become fixed and reified but rather to unpack their meaning. Women's roles and participation in wartime are often invisible (see Cockburn, Chapter 2 of this volume), with their participation reduced to the symbolic level as markers of the national and nationalist divide (McClintock 1991; see Mojab, Chapter 5 of this volume), responsible for reproducing difference, whether as keepers of the oppressed culture under threat or as mothers of soldiers. In Guatemala, "the images of Mayan women for the dominant society shift between the loose figure of the prostitute, also created by the repeated assaults and rapes of the soldiers, and the poor ignorant 'Indita' who, like a child, needs to be indoctrinated" (Fabri 1994: 133). Thus, as Nelson (1999) argues, the Mayan woman "is an important support for the national, ethnic, and class identifications and for the fashioning of both ladino and Mayan masculinities" (170).

When Rigoberta Menchú won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, after more than a decade of activism on the international stage on behalf of Guatemala's indigenous communities, she became a central political figure in Guatemala, using her international status and influence to jump-start a flagging peace process. Many Guatemalan indigenous activists credit the Peace Prize, as well as indigenous organizing around the anniversary in 1992 of the five hundred years since Conquest, with helping to increase the public influence of the indigenous movement in Guatemala, culminating in their participation within the peace process. The umbrella group Coordi-

nation of Organizations of the Maya People of Guatemala (COPMAGUA) was set up to represent Mayan organizations in the Assembly of Civil Society, which was formed by thirteen sectors of civil society in order to give their input into what was perceived as an elite negotiating process between the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG).

Although not one indigenous person participated in the drafting of the Accord on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (or any other accord, for that matter), indigenous representatives have been participating with government representatives in joint commissions overseeing the accord's implementation. The Accord for Firm and Lasting Peace was signed by the National Advancement Party (PAN) government and the URNG in December 1996. The main phase of implementation of the peace accords took place from January 1997 to December 1999. In January 2000 a new government was elected, and the accords increasingly came to be viewed as a particular agreement between PAN and the URNG.

A central issue within post–peace accord Guatemala has been the search for justice as the basis for a viable, read "peaceful," nation. On April 24, 1998, the Archdiocesan Human Rights Office of the Catholic Church (ODHAG) released its report on the Recovery of Historical Memory (REHMI), entitled *Guatemala: Never Again.* The four-volume report documents fifty-five thousand human rights abuses during the war, the majority committed by the armed forces. The majority of the victims (75 percent) were indigenous peoples. In the words of ODHAG general coordinator Monsignor Gerardi, "[W]e have wanted to contribute to the building of a country different from that of the past. For this reason, we recuperated the memory of the people" (World Council of Churches and Grupo Internacional de Apoyo al Retorno [International Group of Support for Return; GRICAR] 1998). Forty-eight hours after the presentation of the report, Monsignor Gerardi was assassinated outside his home in the center of Guatemala City. In the two years following the murder, the case came to be seen as paradigmatic of the conditions of impunity that continued to plague the nation. Arrests were finally made in the early months of the year 2000 and convictions in June 2001.

The REHMI report was originally conceived as a means of enhancing the mandate of the United Nations Commission of Historical Clarification (CEH), which was set up as part of the accords process. Human rights organizations and activists were concerned that the commission would be watered down by local and international political influences, particularly in the wake of the Gerardi assassination, which was widely interpreted as a reminder from the military of who retained control of the country. But when the commission's report was presented in February 1999, it exceeded all expectations. In strong, clear language it highlighted the cruel and unjust nature of the war. According to the report, the underlying causes of the armed conflict

included "structural injustice, the closing of political spaces, racism, the increasing exclusionary and anti-democratic nature of institutions, as well as the reluctance to promote substantive reforms that could have reduced structural conflicts" (United Nations Commission for Historical Clarification 1999: 19). It also clearly identified the racialized and gendered nature of the violence.[3] The report charged the Guatemalan army with genocide.

A key issue in postwar Guatemala is how to use the report to bring about justice. Although an amnesty bill for members of the army and the guerrilla implicated in atrocities was signed prior to the setting up of the commission, genocide was not included in the exemption from prosecution. Several cases are now underway in both the Guatemalan and Spanish courts to bring some of the worst perpetrators responsible for the violence to justice. The state is also under pressure to implement the commission's recommendations, which include a national reparations program for victims of the conflict; exhumations of clandestine graves and the determination of the whereabouts of the disappeared; and the establishment of a commission to examine the conduct of the military during the war, with the view to purging the security forces.

## POPULAR WOMEN'S ORGANIZING IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRATIZATION

While the process of democratic transition in Latin America has been the subject of much debate, the gendered nature of democratization has remained largely invisible. My understanding of democratization identifies the roots of regime transition in the economic crisis that developed through the late 1970s. Throughout Latin America in the late 1970s and early 1980s, burgeoning economic crises showed the dominant economic model to be increasingly unsustainable. Given the circumstances, it became ever more necessary to maintain social order by clamping down on increasingly radicalized and politicized sectors of civil society. This intense period of civil war and violent state repression, ideologically constructed as "national security," must be understood as integral to democratization. The general strategy of repression, across the spectrum from the selective targeting and disappearance of political activists to the massacre of entire villages, was to destabilize social relations at all levels (individual, familial, communal, and social). Violent repression had this effect by disrupting the social reproductive and economic functions and the social cohesion achieved through these relations. This disruption became an endemic feature of society as a result of the deliberate and systematic injection of fear and distrust into all social interactions. Perhaps unrecognized, at least in the early period of the military regimes, was the gendered dimension of this strategy.

As we know, social relations are gendered constructions, and gender-differentiated roles and work stem from the construction of social relations. In Latin America, as in most other places, the work entailed in daily and generational social reproduction is socially constructed as women's work. Furthermore, many women are significantly invested emotionally in the social reproductive work they perform. The strategy to deflate civil society through the violent destabilization of social relations thus disrupted women's gendered social reproductive work and their emotional relationship to this work.

The repression unleashed by the Guatemalan military caused tremendous social destabilization: families and communities disintegrated as people fled the country as refugees, became "internally displaced," or migrated to the shantytowns ringing the few urban centers to escape the violence. For women, as the members of society deemed responsible for maintaining family and community relationships, the social disintegration severely disrupted their gendered work and the ongoing social construction of their identity as the caretakers of social relationships. The impact of this social disintegration was particularly marked for the female relatives of the disappeared. Without a body as concrete evidence of death, many mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, and other female relatives of the disappeared nurtured a faint hope that their disappeared relative remained alive somewhere. The unknown fate of the disappeared was torture for these women, who were denied the process of bereavement and closure.

The gendered work of women includes not only the emotional and psychological, or "caregiving," work entailed in maintaining and reproducing social relations. It also encompasses activities that contribute to meeting the physical needs of individuals, most importantly family and community members, necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of society and social relations. The ability of women, and particularly *pobladoras,* or poor women, to perform this "caretaking" work was negatively affected by the economic crisis underlying democratization. Some of the immediate effects on women of the economic crisis and accompanying social disintegration were an increase in the rate of female single heads of households, a drastic increase in women's workload, increased participation of women in the informal economy, and an increase in the outmigration of women, especially young women, from rural areas to urban centers.

The politicization and mobilization of women as relatives of the disappeared and as human rights advocates, which began in 1983, stemmed from their reaction to and interpretation of the violent disruption of their family relationships and their social reproductive work. For many of these women, the impact on their lives of the disappearance of a relative was an immediate and deeply emotional sense of loss that impelled them to overcome their reticence about engaging in public political displays and to organize against the forces of oppression. An early example of this process of politicization in

Guatemala was the Mutual Support Group for the Relatives of the Disappeared (GAM), which formed in 1984. Led by Nineth García, and with a large membership of indigenous women, GAM was the most vocal critic of the human rights atrocities committed during the years of repression. This organization spearheaded a frontal attack on the Guatemalan state, demanding an accounting of the disappeared and an end to impunity. Although deterred by economic, cultural, and political forces, eventually other popular women's organizations began to form.[4] Between 1988 and 1993, approximately twenty-two organizations were established in Guatemala City, the site of national-level politics and the focus of operations of the popular movement. As part of this popular movement the women's organizations shared a goal to rebuild and repoliticize civil society. But as women's organizations their work was also focused on promoting the citizenship of women of the popular classes and their ability to demand their human and socioeconomic rights. Given these overarching objectives, the practical goals of the women's organizations have been to build women's self-esteem and sense of entitlement and to educate women politically.

### The Focus of Inquiry

My interest in popular women's organizations in Guatemala dates back to the early 1980s. It was a moment of intense international focus on Central America because of the civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala and the high level of U.S. military involvement in the region. At that time, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) had emerged victorious in the civil war in Nicaragua, and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) had significant support in and control of much of rural El Salvador. For those North American and European academics, students, and activists on the left who were concerned about the region, it was also a time of high hopes that the power of the elite in these countries could be challenged. A period of intense solidarity activity in North America and Europe stemmed from this optimism. Through trade unions, churches, universities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and various other channels of support, a variety of support measures were launched, such as urgent action campaigns organized to try to protect political activists at risk, underground railroads developed to bring refugees out of the region, and legal support and advocacy designed to aid refugees. During this time human rights organizations such as GAM in Guatemala and the COMADRES in El Salvador emerged. Solidarity organizations in North America and Europe worked to help build international awareness of the human rights situation in Central America and to help the work of groups like GAM by raising money and arranging international speaking tours for their leaders.

I learned about Central America through my undergraduate studies and through participation in solidarity work. As a student of political science I wanted to understand why women were so often at the forefront of human rights campaigns not only in Guatemala but also in other countries like El Salvador, Argentina, and Chile. In most Latin American countries women's political participation or political engagement, tending as it historically did to practical orientations within the so-called private sphere, has been largely unacknowledged. Consequently, the visible emergence of women into public, political spaces was, and is, a very important development, perhaps even more so because this has frequently occurred in the context of violent conflict and severe social crisis.

Women's political participation would affect the subsequent construction of both individual and organizational political identities around their status as relatives of the disappeared. Many of the human rights organizations were able to use to their advantage common gendered perceptions of women as passive and apolitical to engage in political activities, such as marching in public, that were not open to other popular organizations during the worst periods of repression. Frequently these women who marched and demonstrated constructed their political identity in terms of their relationship to a family member, as mothers and wives. Some, like the members of GAM, positioned themselves politically by refusing to accept the death of a disappeared relative until provided with evidence to the contrary. Many young women like Nineth García (now Montenegro) publicly refused to acknowledge the death of their husbands. How would the personal lives of such women be affected by their public politics in societies dominated by conventional social norms and machismo?

These were the questions that led me to conduct research on women's human rights organizations in Guatemala (see Blacklock 1996). I initially hoped to do a comparative analysis of GAM and the National Coordinating Committee of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA). By 1992, when I started my fieldwork, GAM had almost collapsed. Nineth García, subject to public attack and criticism for taking a new partner and having a child in this relationship, had withdrawn from political life, and the organization was struggling to survive. This answered some of my questions about the opportunity and cost structures of women's political participation. As I discuss below, however, it opened up others.

### Developing the Research Project

My fieldwork was informed by a number of research questions. Some of these were: What has been the impact of democratization on women of the popular classes? How can we explain the rapid growth in the number of pop-

ular women's organizations in the inauspicious context of the 1980s? How did these women's organizations form, and how can we characterize their work? What is the nature of the relationships between the women's organizations in Guatemala? And is there a women's movement? During my eighteen months of field research in 1992 and 1993 I was involved with five women's organizations as a participant observer in workshops, seminars, meetings, political forums, and commemorative and celebratory events.[5]

To learn to see through their eyes the Guatemala they confronted politically, I spent a great deal of time with the women of these organizations as they went about their daily work. I also attended many other events and activities put on by the entire range of women's organizations. I attended the weekly meetings of the Unity of Labour and Popular Action (UASP), at the time the most important forum of the popular movement, and a wide range of political events organized by the movement.[6] I investigated the relationships among the women's organizations by participating in the Coordination of Guatemalan Women's Groups (COAMUGUA) and for a period of eight months in the newly formed Women's Popular Education Network (Red de Educación Popular para Mujeres). Perhaps most importantly, I spent a great deal of time visiting, passing time, and talking informally with women at both the base and leadership levels of all the women's organizations.[7]

To supplement these participant observation activities, I conducted a series of interviews. These included a general organizational interview with twelve of the women's organizations, an interview with thirteen women leaders, interviews with approximately twenty-five women at the membership level, interviews with a representative sample of political actors in the popular movement, and interviews with women members of displaced peoples and refugee organizations in the countryside. Finally, I collected written material produced by or relating to the women's organizations in order to document how they represented their political identities over time.

### An "Outsider," an "Insider"

After four months of fieldwork, I had spent extensive time with the Feminine Group for Family Improvement (GRUFEPROMEFAM) and had connected with a number of other women's organizations. This early work showed me the complex nature of trust in Guatemala and the issues involved in moving from "outsider" to "insider" and gaining the confidence of Guatemalans, particularly those working in the popular movement.

Indeed, gaining the trust and confidence of Guatemalans is a challenge that every foreigner or "outsider" visiting the country faces. The reasons for distrust and suspicion are many. In the eyes of most Guatemalans every "outsider" has two advantages. For one, foreigners carry with them the right to

"exit" or leave the country if the political situation becomes too dangerous. Second, as First Worlders, they come with an inviolable status. This status carries with it the privilege of international media attention should anything happen and the concomitant reluctance of the state security forces to harm foreigners. In contrast, Guatemalans of the popular classes are invisible and can leave Guatemala only as refugees, and then only with great difficulty. In the eyes of many Guatemalans the advantages foreigners have as "outsiders" means they will never face having to put their lives on the line for their political beliefs. While the sincerity of well-intentioned outsiders is not doubted, their naïveté is silently derided.

Sometimes "outsiders" can parlay their advantages into assets. For instance, foreigners who work for accompaniment organizations like Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Project Accompaniment (PA) use their "freedom to exit" and inviolable status to obtain highly important advantages.[8] These organizations are dedicated to helping safeguard the physical security of political activists by physically accompanying them so that they can carry out their political activities. In the work of accompaniment, "outsiders" extend their inviolability, and the guaranteed international reaction should this be violated, to Guatemalan activists who are at high political risk.

I went to Guatemala as an academic associated with a research institution, however, and as such had little "trust currency" to trade. Many activists in the popular movement rightfully question how the research of First World academics can make any difference to their political work. Many are also concerned that the time and human resources asked or expected of them by researchers will take away from their own political work. The women's organizations share in the general distrust of foreigners, a distrust that is not to be equated with dislike. It is rather a political posture that is rational in an environment of oppression and repression, where the political stakes are not winning or losing an election but rather living or being killed.

Many women's organizations are also aware of the issue of silencing and appropriation of voice in First World research of the Third World. In my experience their awareness stands as a challenge to the patronizing assumption embedded in the thinking of many First World feminists. Our anxiety about the effects and consequences of our privilege and power as First World women turns on an assumption that Third World women are victimized by our relationship with them. Such an assumption presupposes a simplistic, univocal view of causality that robs Third World women of agency. We often think they are unable to withstand our exercise of power over them that, consciously or not, stems from our privileged position, and we never imagine that they may exercise power over us. Our assumption seriously underestimates the resources and strategies Third World women have developed to resist or contest their oppression.

In Guatemala, many of the leaders of women's organizations know very

well the theory and politics of First World feminism. This includes the feminist/postmodern/postcolonial critique of conventional research methodologies that, in objectifying their research subjects, render invisible the subjectivity of the "other." This conceptual silencing of the "other" makes possible the appropriation of voice that is the problematic result of so much of mainstream social scientific research. Alert to these intellectual transactions and their political consequences, many leaders of women's organizations, in their engagements with "outsiders," expect a relationship of reciprocity and demand this in proportion to the value they impute to the relationship.

*Pobladoras* (both indigenous and *ladina*) also mobilize silence to deflect and challenge the potential effects of the exercise of power in their interactions with "outsiders." Whether in necessary interactions with foreigners as market vendors, in uninvited interactions with often voyeuristically curious *gringo*-trail trekkers, or as political activists who need to interact with foreigners who come in solidarity, *pobladoras* rarely engage in fully transparent communication. Rather, they frame these interactions tactically by indulging in more or less communicative openness, imparting information in such ways as to minimize their victimization and their silencing by those with power and to maximize their own ability to struggle against their subjection. In my experience *pobladoras* engaged as informants by parceling out information according to their assessment of what the interviewer was interested in hearing and their decision about what they wanted to disclose. It was left up to the interviewer, whether academic researcher, journalist, or curious tourist, to interpret the information as the complete story or a clue, or something in between. This ability to manipulate the "truth," with no pejorative intent implied, reflects to a great extent what it takes to survive in an environment of ongoing repression, what I understand the Maya to mean by "five hundred hundred years of resistance."

I pursued a number of strategies to gain the confidence and trust of Guatemalan women and to develop a participatory and mutual research relationship with women's organizations. To some extent my acceptance hinged on the ongoing and consistent presence I maintained and my willingness to partake in mundane work. My acceptance also reflected my efforts to build reciprocal relationships with the women's organizations by sharing my knowledge, information, skills, and contacts. For instance, through my Canadian trade union networks I promoted solidarity linkages between Guatemalan women's organizations and Canadian unions. As well, I assisted in the development of project proposals, provided translation for visiting solidarity activists, and wrote popular education materials for distribution in Canada.

At times my strategies were problematic. As I developed more extensive connections to the women's organizations, I occasionally faced questions

about my allegiance to a particular organization. These challenges highlight several important issues in participant observation research. They indicated that in some organizations I had moved from being an "outsider" to an "insider": that is, that I had succeeded in gaining confidence and trust and hence was privy to many new layers of "truth." As with the popular movement, the women' organizations were divided amongst themselves by their ideological affinity to particular guerrilla organizations. Consequently, they did not always want information carried, either intentionally or not, to other women's organizations.

Being challenged about my allegiance also reflected the reality that the women's organizations are financially dependent on international development assistance. Many of the leaders of the women's organizations perceived the participation of a foreigner as a valuable resource, opening channels to international funding through personal contacts and networks. Because of increasingly scarce development assistance, the organizations were forced to compete with each other for project funds and consequently tended to select, cultivate, and guard their relationships with foreigners carefully. The pressure the women's organizations faced to procure international funding led some of them to challenge my participation across a number of organizations, perceiving this as a less-than-complete political commitment to their organization.

The consequences for the women's organizations of the imperative to secure international funding are far-reaching, and I highlight only a few here. Competition for funding has generated tensions among the women's organizations and inhibited collaborative work and the development of a popular women's movement. Dependence on international development assistance has also affected the construction of organizational identity. To succeed in the competition for funding, the women's organizations have had to carefully package and market their work using the development discourse of the First World—most recently that of "gender and development" (GAD). Furthermore, the organizational structure and solidity, time frame and character of organizational work, and capacity to effect change have been detrimentally affected by the demands of the international development community for increased accountability. This emphasis on accountability began in the 1980s with the widespread shift to project- rather than program-based funding. Project-based funding significantly reduces the financial security of the women's organizations and produces skeletal and precarious organizations in which even the core group of leaders must frequently work at one or several other jobs to subsidize their organizations. Despite the GAD-inspired commitment of First World donors to increasing women's political participation and to strengthening women's organizations, the effect is to produce increasingly "flexible" organizations that undertake specialized, depoliticized, and depoliticizing project-based work.

## WOMEN'S ORGANIZING IN THE POSTWAR ERA

The experience of refugee women upon return from exile in Mexico throws into sharp relief the gendered boundaries of the Guatemalan nation and can thus shed some light on the nature of women's participation in the post–peace accord era. During more than a decade in refuge, indigenous women organized in the camps in preparation for the return process and to ensure that their voices were heard in decision-making processes. They learned Spanish to communicate among themselves and with those external actors involved with the refugee communities (national and international NGOs and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR]). They also went through a process of learning about their rights as women. Several refugee women's organizations were formed, including Mamá Maquín, Madre Tierra, and Ixmucané, each relating organizationally to one of the three branches of the Permanent Commissions, the umbrella group set up to represent the refugees in the negotiation of the return process. Much was made by researchers and activists of the refugee women's trans-formation process in exile, and much hope was generated in terms of the role they could play upon return to the nation and the contribution they could make to Guatemalan women's organizing (see, e.g., Arbour 1994; Crosby 1999; Torres 1999).

The seven-year return process proved to be difficult, both for the returnees in general and for organized returnee women in particular. Given the socioeconomic conditions within war-torn Guatemala, the process of building return communities was arduous. With little basic infrastructure available, communities had to be built from scratch. Interactions with those who stayed were difficult. Returnees were often viewed with suspicion and mistrust by both local communities and the ever-militarized state. Women's organizing often took a back seat to the daily pressures of building homes and communities. More emphasis was placed on generating productive projects than on maintaining spaces for training and reflection. The orga-nizations' members were often geographically dispersed, weakening their ability to organize effectively.

One of the biggest problems faced by organized returnee women was con-flict with the male leadership within their communities. On return, in the face of a hostile "external" social environment, refugee men began to reassert more patriarchal roles within the family and community that they had occupied prior to exile. The cooperative structures set up in the return communities excluded the women's organizations from participation, and the cooperative leadership often sought to curb women's organizing. In 1999, the cooperative of the return community of Nueva Generación Maya in Barillas, Huehuetenango, closed down Mamá Maquín in the community, saying that the women's organization was too disruptive. Throughout the

years of the return process, organized refugee women were subject to threats and attacks and even had their offices burned by their own husbands, sons, and colleagues. The increase in social power and status experienced by women in exile was met with hostility by men who expected to resume the status quo upon return.

At the national level, returnee women participated in the work of the Office of the Coordinator of Uprooted Women, part of the Consultative Assembly of Uprooted Populations (ACPD). The ACPD was formed to represent the uprooted population on the technical commission created to oversee the implementation of the Agreement on Resettlement of the Populations Uprooted by the Armed Conflict, the peace accord signed between the PAN government and the URNG in June 1994. However, within the ACPD, women were not given leadership positions. According to one woman, "[T]he men never elect us or think of us. . . . We have to put women forward ourselves in order to be taken into account, and when we do achieve this, we are given secondary jobs such as secretaries, which are positions the men do not value" (Project Counselling Service 2000: 31). Through their membership of the ACPD, returnee women also participated in the National Women's Forum, which was set up to ensure women's participation within the implementation of the peace accords. The forum was an intercultural space, incorporating both rural and urban women. Decision making was by consensus, which improved women's negotiating skills. According to one of the forum's documents, it represented "a network of 25,000 women across the whole country, an unprecedented experience in Guatemala" (Project Counselling Service 2000: 31). It was an important space for returnee women to interact with nonreturnee women. However, to participate, returnee women had either to live away from home or to travel between four and twenty hours and spend several days away from home. This required support from partners and family members with respect to household and child care responsibilities, which was often difficult to obtain, given the many pressures on returnee families to survive.

Exile provided a temporary space in which Guatemalan indigenous women could organize and assert their rights as women, and this space was closed down upon return to the nation. Part of the explanation can be found in conflicts over power. Women's organizing in Mexico provided the refugee communities with increased access to local and international resources. International NGOs and the UNHCR played a particularly important role in the camps, providing women with support, both financial and moral. International support gradually evaporated during the return process. Within the return communities, conflict over increasingly scarce resources was gendered. As the returnee women put it, "In refuge, women's organizing was useful to the men; here it is no longer useful" (Project Counselling Service 1999: 31, my translation). It has been argued that the crisis generated by the

exile experience provided a "parenthesis effect" that facilitated changes in women's roles and relationships to the men in the camps (Lozano 1996). These changes were viewed as temporary, and male power was reasserted on return.

## The Focus of Inquiry

I first went to Guatemala in 1992, returning in 1994 to conduct research on the refugee return process (Crosby 1999). When I started fieldwork in Guatemala at the beginning of 1998, my central research question related to who was participating in the construction of the postwar nation. My approach to knowledge production took to heart the belief that "research which so far has been largely the instrument of dominance and legitimation of power elites, must be brought to serve the interests of dominated, exploited, and oppressed groups" (Mies 1983: 123). Thus, in examining how and by whom the Guatemalan nation was being imagined, I argued for a focus on the quality of the participation of those who historically had been excluded from that nation, namely women, indigenous communities, and the poor.

Attaching importance to the experiences of Guatemalan indigenous communities in exile, I intended to focus on the interaction between returning refugee women and women who were organizing within Guatemalan civil society. In varying roles as activist, researcher, and NGO worker, living in Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, and Canada, I had followed the path of Guatemalan refugees from their exile experience in Mexico to the beginning of the return process in 1993, the Xamán massacre in 1995, and the trial verdict in 1999. In 1994 I wrote a paper entitled "To Whom Shall the Nation Belong? The Gender and Ethnic Dimension of Refugee Return and the Struggle for Peace in Guatemala," based on fieldwork carried out in Mexico and Guatemala during that year (Crosby 1999). Rereading the paper six years later, I was struck by its overly hopeful perspective: I had attributed to returnee women a significant role in the construction of the postwar Guatemalan nation, given their experience of transformation in exile. However, as mentioned in the previous section, returning to the nation was anything but easy for refugee women, particularly those who were organized. Women's civic participation and agency in exile was no longer tolerated on return. My unease with the paper reflected the passage of history (hindsight is always 20/20) but also my different place within, and understanding of, the Guatemalan social.[9] The development of my research project, which was based on feminist action research, over twenty-five months of fieldwork reflected these shifting relationships.[10]

## *Developing the Research Project*

In beginning my doctoral fieldwork and seeking ways to address my research questions, I considered it fundamentally important to me as a feminist action researcher that my work not only contribute to the construction of new knowledge but also be needed by and constructed with the research participants themselves. One of the goals of action research is to contribute "both [to] the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable framework" (Rappaport 1970: 499).

I constructed such a "mutually acceptable framework" for my research within the context of my work for an international NGO, Project Counselling Service (PCS).[11] Between 1998 and 2000, I coordinated a program that focused on strengthening the ability of civil society organizations to participate effectively in the peace process.[12] Ten organizations participated in the program, representing various sectors of organized civil society. They included Mamá Maquín, Ixmucané, and Madre Tierra, refugee/returnee women's organizations; I'x Defensoría de la Mujer Indígena, an indigenous rural women's organization; Proyecto Conrado de la Cruz, an organization working with, and composed of, indigenous young women and girls employed in the *maquila* sector or as domestic workers; Defensoría Maya, an indigenous rights organization working in particular on customary law; Consejo Campesino Kabawil, an indigenous peasant organization working on land and labor rights; the Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC), a national peasant organization; the Legal and Popular Coordination (COJUPO), an organization providing legal aid to peasant groups and indigenous communities involved in land claims; and the Centre for Legal Action in Human Rights (CALDH), a legal aid, research, policy support, and human rights center.

The ten organizations were all participating in some way in the construction of the postwar nation. For example, the women's organizations were participating in the National Women's Forum, as well as lobbying for the creation of the Defensoría de la Mujer Indígena, a state institution designed to protect the rights of indigenous women, who have historically been the most marginalized within Guatemalan society. CUC and Kabawil participated in key peace accord initiatives around land, including the main government-indigenous negotiating body (the Land Commission) and the Land Fund. Given the state's refusal to assume the recommendations made by the Historical Clarification Commission, initiatives by human rights organizations, such as CALDH, which include prosecutions for genocide, are of fundamental importance. The force and impact of neoliberalism within the post–peace accord nation must also not be forgotten, making the protection

of the must vulnerable sectors imperative. One such sector is young indigenous women working within the *maquila* industry, with whom the organization Conrado de la Cruz works. In addition to participating in government-indigenous joint negotiating commissions, Defensoría Maya helped to increase indigenous participation within the public political sphere by fielding a vice-presidential candidate for one of the left-wing parties in the November 1999 general elections.

A particular focus of the program that I coordinated was the strengthening of the organizational elements of social processes. The realities of the postwar era required different strategies of resistance and consequently differing modes of organizing from those effective in wartime. Many groups were seeking to change the militarized forms of social relations that permeated their organizations. Organizational change is not a goal in and of itself but rather a mechanism to enable groups to effectively carry out their work and respond to rapidly changing sociopolitical contexts. The methodology of the program was participatory. The development of methodological tools to implement the program became a key element of the project itself. Rapidly changing and uncertain times require innovative ways of thinking and acting.

As the program developed, it became apparent that my work and research interests coincided. My work with the ten organizations addressed in a very practical way my research interest in the nature and form of participation in the construction of the postwar nation. My research shifted and developed to examine the changing, and gendered modes of organizing within civil society from the war to the postwar era. The main data came from my work experience with the ten organizations in the program that represented various sectors of civil society (women, refugees, peasants, human rights advocates, the indigenous movement). What strategies had these organizations adopted to address rapidly changing and uncertain times? I chose to examine women's agency (or lack thereof) within various sectors of civil society, rather than concentrating only on women's organizations per se. As a feminist action researcher, I took as an important area of focus the contextual boundaries that confronted different women within different sectors of organized civil society. I had a central interest in interactions across boundaries, and a particular focus of the research became the nature of interaction between civil society sectors, as well as their relationship to the state.

### *The Question of Power*

Guatemalan friends and colleagues have often expressed their frustration at the proliferation of foreign academics (particularly doctoral students) who come to Guatemala, extract information, and leave, never to be seen again.

What happens to the information they provided? Who benefits? Certainly not Guatemalans themselves, as they seek to understand the past and construct their own future. This issue was foremost in my mind when I started my fieldwork. When the job with PCS came up, I initially decided to put my own research on hold. I viewed the work with PCS as a chance to work with Guatemalan civil society on an issue they deemed to be important: organizational change. We worked together over a period of time, getting to know each other and gradually developing relationships of trust through constant dialogue and negotiation. This process involved learning to detect and understand the various levels of "truths" prevalent within a culture of silence. I benefited from the historical relationship that PCS has built with Guatemalan civil society over time, which has resulted in mutual respect and political engagement. There was always space in the process for discussions on *coyuntura* (the surrounding sociopolitical context). I learned of the frustrations of peasant leaders with the government's manipulations of discourses of peace while the reality of rural poverty and dispossession changed very little. I had discussions with indigenous feminists on their experiences of marginalization within the indigenous movement. I attended assemblies, marches, talks, and debates and had my ideas constantly challenged and questioned through my interactions with Guatemalan civil society.

As the organizational change project developed, and all involved realized how new and exciting the work was, I thought that it would be important to document and research the process itself, and this became the focus of my doctoral work. In discussions with the other participants, it became apparent that we could all benefit from the research, provided it was shared and discussed with all concerned. However, boundaries between the work and the research processes had to be drawn as well. There were certain confidential aspects to the work that I could not write about. I found that the boundaries were determined by discussion and dialogue with all the stakeholders in the process.

I also struggled with the negative implications of bringing my work and research together. I was in a position of power within an international development agency, which was a constant source of tension for me. How much was my relationship with counterparts overdetermined by the huge machinery of development? Was I being told merely what I wanted to hear? Was "organizational change" simply the new development buzzword? What significance did it have for Guatemalans as they struggled with the uncertainty of this period of transition, where the ending of the armed conflict did not herald an era of peace and security? The violence of war was replaced by the violence of neoliberal exploitation. Distrust toward outside intervention is inevitable within such a context. Silence retains its usefulness as a political strategy within this time of uncertainty and change.

As Cathy Blacklock has argued earlier in this chapter, the development

apparatus has had a tremendous influence on the way in which local groups organize, given that most are dependent almost exclusively on international sources of funding. Some organizations "reflect back" the prevailing development discourse of the moment. One such example is the "women in development" discourse (commonly referred to as WID) developed during the 1980s. Adele Mueller (1987: 1, quoted in Escobar 1995: 179) uses the work of feminist Marxist Dorothy Smith to argue that the components of the WID discourse "are not entities in the real world, merely there to be discovered, but rather are already constructed in procedures of rule" that are constructed by the institutions themselves. As Arturo Escobar (1995) argues, the "power of the development apparatus to name women in ways that lead us to take for granted certain descriptions and solutions has to be made visible, for in the very process of naming, as Mohanty (1991) says, habitates the possibility of a colonialist effect" (179).

In this chapter, we have identified the culture of silence as a major framework for our work. We argue that it can be a tool used by the academies of the North in the production of colonizing forms of knowledge. In the quest for so-called "objectivity," the presence and influence of the researcher within the research context are occluded. One of our objectives within this chapter was to locate ourselves within the Guatemalan social and outline the dilemmas we faced as outside researchers. An important component of my analytical work in understanding my research findings is an examination of the workings of the development apparatus itself as an institution of ruling. This analysis must be done from my position as an insider to the development apparatus, using my experience and location to examine "how our practices contribute to and are articulated with the relations that overpower our lives" (Smith 1990: 204, quoted in Escobar 1995: 181). Escobar (1995) argues that the "prescription of working 'in and against' development" can be "epistemologically and politically insightful," requiring an examination of "the modes of knowing that are intensified by participating in social systems (Mani 1989)" (181). Such a methodology works to unwrap the code of silence that surrounds the politics of my location.

I was able to bring my work and research together because of the philosophy and practice of PCS itself. PCS is unique, having developed collaborative and collective working methodologies at all levels: between its members, the European and Canadian NGOs; within and across each country team; and, most importantly, with local organizations. PCS defines the role of counseling as having five central components: political, technical, programmatic, organizational, and documentational. As stressed in an unpublished PCS working document, "[E]ffective counselling is always appropriate to the needs and experience of local organizations, and the national context in which these organizations are working. Such counselling activity is carried out using sensitive educational methods based on action-research method-

ologies, whereby the local organizations are direct and active agents of their own education—learning-by-doing." I share these values in seeking to conduct research that empowers, rather than colonizes. Within PCS, I was encouraged to critically reflect on the work I was doing, within a stimulating and challenging environment where there was a place and purpose for action research.

## SILENCE, DISTRUST, AND
## THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

In defining her project of "writing the social," Dorothy Smith (1999) describes how "the situated knower is always a participant in the social she is discovering. Her inquiry is developed as a form of that participation. Her experiencing is also active as a way of knowing, whether or not she makes it an explicit resource" (6). In this chapter we have highlighted how we each have made our experiences explicit resources in our research, analysis, and knowledge claims. As feminists we both focused our research on women, arguing that they form a sector of society that historically has been excluded from the nation and systematically repressed by the state. However, in working with Guatemalan women, we also took into account the interconnection of gender with other social relations of oppression, namely class and "race." Thus, we differentiated between the experiences of *pobladoras, ladinas,* and indigenous refugee women.

Our research experiences were very different. Cathy Blacklock became a participant observer with a number of women's organizations, while Alison Crosby chose to work within an international development agency, relating to women from different civil society sectors. Our different experiences brought with them different issues of power and different challenges to be faced. Cathy had to work to gain entrance into the organizations, building up relations of trust and finding a way to interact with the women that would be mutually beneficial. Alison had to bring together her working relationships with the organizations and her research interests in such a way as to ensure that the organizations would participate in and benefit from the knowledge being produced.

An important commonality of our research experiences was that we were both implicated in the "development apparatus"—that is, the institutional arrangements for the "development assistance" of the Third World by the First. Cathy worked with women's organizations solely dependent on development funding for their continued existence, while Alison worked for an international development agency. Dorothy Smith's work provides us with a useful methodological tool in unpacking our location within the "development apparatus." Smith (1974) states: "Our relation to others in our society

and beyond is mediated by the social organization of its ruling. Our 'knowledge' is thus ideological in the sense that this social organization preserves conceptions and means of description which represent the world as it is for those who rule it, rather than as it is for those who are ruled" (267). As Escobar (1995) comments, such an approach "has far-reaching consequences, because we are constantly implicated and active in this process" (108), which is what we indeed found in our work. As First World feminists, our interactions with Guatemalan women were influenced and mediated by the historical and continuing relations of imperialism and "colonial legacies" (Alexander and Mohanty 1997: xxi).

Using Smith's approach in a postcolonial and Latin American context, and drawing on the work of Adele Mueller on WID, Arturo Escobar (1995) argues that the "institutionalized and state-linked development structure has become the organizational basis for the production of knowledge about women in the Third World, filtering in important ways what feminists in developed countries can know about Third World women" (179). Smith's work is particularly important in urging us to question "the very procedures and structures of development as an institution of ruling. This is the only way to resist the bureaucratization of feminist knowledge and start the process of its decolonization" (181).

Taking on Smith and Escobar in an intellectually honest way raises some serious ethical questions and even suggests our relinquishment of research on Third World women. Yet if one continues to believe in the validity and importance of such research, as we do, how do we continue without colonizing knowledge and women of the Third World? We have come to the conclusion that feminist comparative analysis can mitigate the bureaucratizing and colonizing tendencies inherent in First World feminist research. Our analysis compares research experiences across time. A comparative interrogation of our filtered, partial, and implicated knowledges offers a methodology for systematizing these knowledges in a way that empowers rather than colonizes.

Both of us attached importance to the development of research relationships built on mutual trust and respect. In striving to build trust we were continuously confronted by the issue of silence, and we both encountered silences we choose to maintain. In environments characterized by militarized and repressive social structures and relations, maintaining silence—that is, actively *not* contesting, disclosing, naming, or even remembering what one knows—as a strategy of survival and/or resistance "makes sense." However, the culture of silence poses an intrinsic problem for Northern academics: they are trained to uncover and write about "truth," but within the context of war, this "truth" could endanger lives. It is a complicated balancing act because the "truth" about violence in Guatemala had to be told. It is important to point out that some Northern academics played a very useful

political role during the war: they were able to do research in areas where Guatemalans often could not go, and they could then publish their findings internationally. The human rights abuses perpetrated by the militarized state were thus put on the international political map. Research became a form of solidarity with those fighting oppression in Guatemala.

Our comparison of our research experiences across time revealed the changes, albeit slow, messy, and uneven, that were happening as the Guatemalan social underwent a transition from militarized democratization to post–peace accord neoliberalism. There is no longer a cohesive leftist project with which to link a politics of solidarity. The guerrilla movement has become a political party, and the relationship of civil society organizations to the guerrilla movement is being openly questioned by these organizations in an unprecedented way. Many groups are seeking to change the militarized forms of social relations that permeated their organizations. In the post–peace accord era, the foundation of popular organizing on a code of silence is beginning to break apart. The postwar era requires different strategies of resistance and consequently differing modes of organizing.

These changes affected our relationship to our research environment. There are differences between what could be said then and what can be said now. For example, we could not have written this chapter during the war. Moreover, the issue of who is doing the saying is of particular importance today. Guatemalans, and in particular intellectuals and activists within the indigenous and women's movements, are challenging how they are being represented by Northern academics and are speaking back. The role and position of the outside researcher are increasingly being challenged within the post–peace accord era: a politics of solidarity is no longer considered to be enough.

Research is political. As feminist researchers concerned about issues of power, we feel it is important to construct and maintain a politics of accountability with those with whom we work. Thus dilemmas concerning what "truths" can be told are not ours alone to resolve. Living in Guatemala, we learned to take our cues from those with whom we worked, and we learned how to pick up the subtle rules about what can and cannot be said. Research politics and methods do not stand outside the Guatemalan social as independent tools brought from the universities of the North. Instead, they must be worked through the social context within which they are deployed.

Silence is a defensive (and protective) rather than a progressive strategy and therefore is not a strategy that enables social change. Silence is not a strategy without costs and consequences. During the period of civil war, maintaining silence had a tremendous effect on organizational culture and the way people related to one another: the social fabric began to disintegrate. Here we return to the question we posed in the introduction: Does (or more importantly, should) silence retain political meaning as a strategy of

resistance within the post–peace accord era? The post–peace accord era opened up some spaces for the participation of the most marginalized in the public sphere of the nation. Between 1997 and 1999, indigenous communities participated in joint commissions with government representatives to determine the implementation of key peace accord initiatives, in particular around indigenous people's access to land, education, and justice. While women were still grossly underrepresented in the public sphere of the nation, certain spaces were created to increase women's public participation, namely the National Women's Forum and the Institute for the Defense of Indigenous Women's Rights.[13]

At the beginning of the year 2000, Nineth Montenegro (the founder of GAM) was in her second term as a member of Congress, sitting across the aisle from many who gave the orders for her and others' loved ones to be disappeared, including the president of Congress, General Efraín Ríos Montt, whose right-wing FRG (Guatemalan Revolutionary Front) party formed the first post–peace accord government after winning the November 1999 general elections. Ríos Montt was named by the UN Commission for Historical Clarification as having presided over a period in Guatemala's history where genocide was committed against indigenous peoples. The "truth" was told, yet justice has yet to be served.

The post–peace accord era has been characterized by the predominance of a certain discourse of peace and participation. We have been careful in this chapter not to refer to the post–peace accord era as "postconflict," however, because our research has demonstrated that conflictive social relations are a constant across these two moments in history. The dominant discourse has changed from "democratization" to "postconflict reconstruction," and some space for civil society participation has been regained. Social control premised on coercive domination has not, however, been supplanted with social cohesion premised on hegemonic consensus. The structures of exclusion and oppression remain intact. And to a significant extent, so too does the power of the institutions of repression, as was so aptly demonstrated by the assassination of Archbishop Gerardi. As during the period of democratization, the elites of both the military and oligarchy maintain their control over government, the state, and the economy. The structures of inequality are utilized to neoliberalize the Guatemalan economy, while the elite exploit the political opportunities of a more distant relationship to the repressive apparatus allowed by the logic of the neoliberal market. Spaces for participation are not enough to eliminate fear and the need for certain silences in this context.

We cannot locate ourselves outside our research context. Researchers must challenge the metatheoretical underpinnings of modernist social science and question how we influence the framing and composition of our research "findings" and their representation and use in the First World, which in this chapter we have done through a comparative analysis of

research methodologies in different moments of Guatemalan history. Our very similar research experiences, where distrust and silence characterized our "different" research environments, lead us to conclude that democratization and the post–peace accord era are not so "different." The discipline of the market may have replaced the discipline of the military. But while inequality and oppression remain, and "truth" is not accompanied by justice, silence retains political meaning.

## NOTES

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1. We first began our comparative discussions of our research experiences within the context of our participation in a collaborative project between Canadian and Guatemalan scholars that examined the refugee return within the context of the peace process in Guatemala. See North and Simmons (1999) for more details of the project. We both contributed chapters to this volume.

2. The civil defense patrols, in which the men in rural villages were forced to police their own communities, were an example of the Guatemalan military's strategy to create "the enemy within" during the armed conflict.

3. At the beginning of his speech at the presentation of the report, CEH director Christian Tomuschat stated, "[I]t is with profound sadness that the Commission learned of the extreme cruelty with which many of the violations were committed; of the large numbers of girls and boys who were victims of violent cruelty and murder; and of the special brutality directed against women, especially against Mayan women, who were tortured, raped and murdered" (United Nations Commission for Historical Clarification 1999).

4. Mario Lungo Uclés (1995) provides a useful discussion of the significance of *popular.* He suggests that "[p]opular in its sense in Spanish is not just an economic or social class distinction. Rather popular is characterized by an identification with social transformation in economic, political, cultural, and social terms that benefits the marginalized" (153). In my use of the term *popular classes,* I invoke Uclés's idea of political consciousness. I also use the term to refer collectively to the unemployed, the underemployed, workers in the informal sector, peasants, and the working class.

5. The organizations were Support Centre for Domestic Workers (CENTRA-CAP), Feminine Group for Family Improvement (GRUFEPROMEFAM), Women's Committee of the Labour Federation of Food and Allied Workers/International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations of Guatemala (COMFUITAG), Guatemalan Women's Group (GGM), and Living Earth (Tierra Viva).

6. Many of these events were organized in support of (1) Helen Mack's campaign to bring to trial those responsible for the disappearance of her sister, Myrna Mack, renowned Guatemalan anthropologist; (2) the campaign for Rigoberta Menchú's Nobel Peace Prize candidacy; and (3) the campaign seeking prosecution of those responsible for the rape and torture of the American nun Diana Ortiz.

7. Upon completion of my fieldwork, I (Cathy Blacklock) continued my involvement in the Guatemalan popular movement in exile by participating in the Guatemalan Community Network (GCN) in Toronto and Nuestra Voz, the women's group associated with the GCN.

8. See Barry Levitt (1999) for a useful discussion of the role of accompaniment organizations in Guatemala and of the concept of accompaniment.

9. My usage of the concept of "the social" is informed by the work of Dorothy Smith (1999). She conceptualizes the social as "the ongoing concerting and coordinating of individuals' activities" (6) and thus as "the discursively constituted object of sociology's inquiry" (6). As a space constructed through the fluidity of concerted action, the social is neither individuated nor structurally overdetermined. As Smith tells us, the only proviso for working with such a concept is to maintain "a commitment not to reduce the social to properties of individuals or to reconstitute it as a supra-individual blob" (7). This understanding of the social allows us to conceptualize a space of dialogical interaction between people. Change thus occurs in the interaction between people.

10. It is important to point out that I (Alison Crosby) wrote this piece during the research process: that is, while the process was still developing and changing. I was not reflecting back on an accomplished project but instead trying to explore the ethics and dilemmas inherent in the research as I conducted it.

11. PCS is an international consortium composed of five NGOs, four from Europe (the Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Dutch Inter-Church Aid, and Swiss Inter-Church Aid) and one from Canada (Inter Pares). Since 1979, PCS has been working with local counterparts, NGOs, and popular organizations to find durable solutions to the problems faced by refugees, displaced persons, and others affected by armed conflict throughout Latin America.

12. Such a "peace process" should be viewed not merely in terms of the implementation of the peace accords signed between the PAN government and the URNG but as the wider project of dismantling militarized social structures and relations.

13. At the time of writing in January 2000, the FRG was about to take power, and it was uncertain whether these spaces would be maintained. It was within the new government's power to close down these key peace accord initiatives, thus reflecting the fact that the peace accords were not institutionalized at the level of the state and indeed came to be regarded as a particular agreement between the PAN government and the URNG.

# Violence against Women in War and Postwar Times

# Like Oil and Water, with a Match

## *Militarized Commerce, Armed Conflict, and Human Security in Sudan*

*Audrey Macklin*

The growing body of feminist literature on women in conflict zones powerfully exposes and theorizes the ways in which war is gendered in its discourse, its institutions, its execution, its agents, and the damage it inflicts. A diverse collection of scholarship also documents the gendered impact of economic globalization, including restructuring, free trade, and the international division of labor. This feminist research challenges women living within zones of relative peace and economic prosperity to contemplate their location in the matrices of globalization, patriarchy, and colonialism and to ask whether and how one can build feminist alliances across these divides.

I wish to pursue these questions in a context that remains relatively unexplored by feminists, namely the articulation of global capital investment from the North with armed conflict in the South, which itself may contain the residue of earlier colonial intervention (see Map 4.1). What are the gender implications that flow from these contemporary configurations of economic and military power? Or, to put my query in concrete terms, what does protecting overseas Canadian oil workers from attack have to do with share prices on the New York Stock Exchange or the jailing of a Dinka woman for producing bootleg liquor in Khartoum?

My objective is not to theorize these questions in the abstract. Rather, I reflect on them through my experience as a member of an independent assessment mission to Sudan appointed by then–Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy. The central component of our mandate required us to "investigate and report on the alleged link between oil development and human rights violations, particularly in respect of the forced removal of populations around the oil fields and oil related development"[1] (Harker 2000: 1).

Sudan has been at war with itself since the departure of the British colonial power in 1956. Apart from an eleven-year hiatus from 1972 to 1983, the
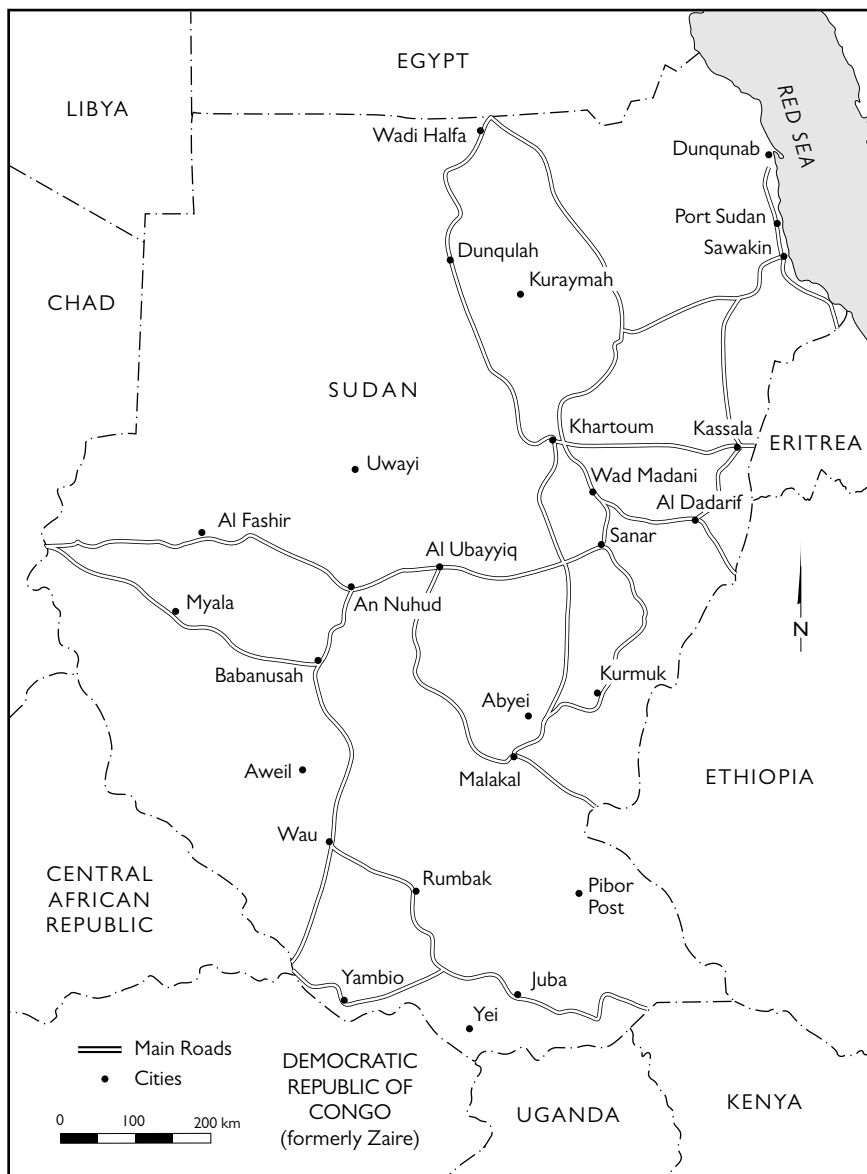
Map 4.1.  Sudan. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

civil war between North and South Sudan has continued unabated and largely unnoticed by the West. Too few know that almost two million Southern Sudanese have died since the war resumed in 1983, or that almost four million Southern Sudanese, the world's biggest population of internally displaced people, have been cast adrift in Africa's largest country. Devastating famines, wrought more by politics than by nature, occasionally attract the kind of media attention that some dub "disaster pornography," but the camera lens and the West's restless attention soon shift elsewhere as Sudan fades from sight and memory.

A small aperture opened up recently, when a few Christian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) based in the United States and the United Kingdom exposed practices of slavery in Sudan and waged a highly public campaign of "redeeming" slaves by purchasing them from so-called slave traders. The proximate impetus for our mission, however, arose out of intensified public condemnation of the activities of Talisman Energy Inc., a Canadian oil company operating in partnership with the Government of Sudan (GoS) in developing oil deposits in the region of Western Upper Nile (also known as Unity State).

In 1998, Talisman acquired a 25 percent share of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC), a consortium consisting of Talisman, the GoS, Malaysia, and China. GNPOC is situated in the transition zone between North and South in the province of Western Upper Nile, but the pipeline carries the oil northward to the Port of Sudan. Although jurisdiction over the territory is contested, it has historically been considered part of the South, and the local population consists primarily of members of Dinka and Nuer tribes. Talisman acknowledged the ongoing state of conflict but disclaims to this day any responsibility for causing or exacerbating it. It insisted throughout that the wealth and revenue generated by oil would catalyze development and prosperity throughout Sudan.

Critics of Talisman maintained that the oil operations furnish motive, opportunity, and resources for the GoS to decimate Southern Sudanese in the Western Upper Nile region through brutality, intimidation, and terror. Indeed, on the same day the first shipment of crude oil from GNPOC left the Port of Sudan, some twenty Russian T-55 tanks entered Port Sudan.[2] Put simply, critics allowed that while oil may not have ignited the war, oil currently fuels it. Even the conservative *Economist* magazine bluntly stated that "oil, far from providing an opportunity to make peace, is giving the war a new cause. The present production area is around Bentiu, the northernmost tip of the oilfields. But the main deposits lie further south, in rebel-held territory. If the government is going to exploit them, its army will have to drive the rebels out of their heartland" ("Sudanese Contradictions" 2000).

According to its opponents, Talisman was complicit in the GoS's human

rights and humanitarian violations in at least two ways: first, through partnership in a business venture that created incentives to use military force to "secure" territory for commercial exploitation; and second, through revenue generation and the creation of infrastructure that enhanced GoS military capacity. While not the proximate perpetrator of human rights violation, Talisman was effectively an abettor. More ominously, some rebel leaders warned that Talisman's partnership with the GoS in oil extraction rendered Talisman and its staff a legitimate military target. Since the pipeline was completed in August 1999, Northern opponents of the GoS attempted to sabotage it, though without inflicting permanent damage.

In recounting what we learned about the activities of a Canadian oil company, the waging of war, and the experiences of women of Southern Sudan, I hope to begin the project of "connecting the dots" between commerce, war, and gender. Competing and contradictory discourses of "security" furnish a useful vehicle for exposing these linkages and ruptures. The shared feature of security across different discursive domains is that it signifies both a valuable condition of well-being and a precondition to the attainment of other ends.[3] Security is a utility that states, corporations, and people seek to maximize.

The account I present is not purely analytical; it is also inflected with concerns about methodology and about my positioning as a Canadian woman in Sudan. I did not go to Sudan in my capacity as an academic, or even as an activist. I was not sent to provide material assistance in the face of profound need. My designated role as a member of the mission was to assess the accountability of a Canadian corporation for complicity in abuses committed against the people of Southern Sudan. Our mandate was set by the Canadian government. International human rights and humanitarian law (as articulated and defined by Western liberal conceptions of rights) provided the normative framework within which we organized our findings.

Occupying this official position allowed us to visit people and places that would have otherwise remained inaccessible. At the same time, it delimited the range of inquiry to an agenda not of our making and confined us to a form of interaction constrained by the official nature of the mission. The fact that we were a high-profile group of foreigners literally dropping in (by helicopter or light plane) for a few minutes or hours precluded us from developing ongoing relationships. We arrived, we inquired, we observed, we listened, and then we left. There was absolutely nothing natural about our intervention, our presence, or the manner in which we interacted.

To complicate matters further, government and GNPOC officials accompanied us in our travels through Northern areas under GoS control, and their presence (even when they remained at the aircraft) cast an indelible shadow over our interactions with local people. Southern Sudanese civilians and humanitarian aid workers would occasionally disclose certain facts to us

once we were out of earshot of our "chaperones." In addition, on at least one occasion, I believe that the Northern Sudanese head of GNPOC Security deliberately prevented us from observing evidence probative of military attacks by the GoS on civilians near the oil patch.[4] Elsewhere, we saw evidence of informants being coached in their responses to our questions.[5]

Although the women on the mission shared a commitment to soliciting women's experiences, the dearth of female Dinka and Nuer interpreters meant that our interactions with women were always mediated by a man, a factor that (along with many others) may have limited women's candor. I infer that the absence of female interpreters reflects gendered patterns of access to higher education for Dinka and Nuer girls and women. This circumstance in turn precipitated a methodological impediment to learning more from women about what it meant to live as a woman in this particular conflict zone.

Beyond these external constraints on the process of information retrieval, each of us on the mission filtered the information through our own lenses of identity, experience, and location. We were all Canadian, middle class, academics, lawyers, and NGO activists. One of us originated from North Africa, the rest from Canada or England. Half the mission was female. And, of course, we were all products of transnational historical, economic, and cultural processes whose impact could not be wholly transcended by individual self-consciousness about our political, racial, and economic privilege relative to the Sudanese people we encountered.

Finally, the focus of our concern was on alleged human rights and humanitarian law violations committed, condoned, or tolerated by the GoS and the role played by Talisman Energy Inc. in facilitating, exacerbating, or indirectly benefiting from those violations. Our mandate did not encompass potential violations committed by various antigovernment rebel groups and militia, such as the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and their rival factions.[6] Nor were we able to systematically examine the impact of war on gender-related violence and abuses within communities or the role of women in peace building and peacemaking at the local or national level.[7]

It bears emphasizing that the mission was a transparently political project, from the perspectives of both the government that sent us and the people who spoke with us. No one harbored an illusion that we were engaging in a neutral process of information gathering. Indeed, the short duration and highly structured nature of the mission frequently precipitated relatively formal performances by all participants. Given the limited scope of our investigation and the various practical, institutional, and personal constraints, it would be disingenuous to assert an unencumbered ability to attend to the voices of the Southern Sudanese women we encountered. Logistical and methodological constraints diminished our ability to hear from more women, to hear more from the women who did speak, and even to fully

understand what we heard. The official report issued by the head of our mission was entitled "Human Security in Sudan: The Report of a Canadian Assessment Mission"[8](Harker 2000). Though I cite many of the findings of the report, what follows is not the "official story."

The reference to human security in the title and text of the report reflects the growing influence of "human security" in framing the Canadian foreign policy agenda. The traditional Westphalian conception of security takes the state as the unit of analysis and measures security by the state's ability to protect itself and its institutions from military threat (Daudelin 1999). In contrast, the conception of human security takes people—especially marginalized and vulnerable groups—as the referent and measures security in terms of safety from "such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression . . . [and] protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life—whether in homes, in jobs or in communities" (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 1994: 23). A background paper by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) provides an even more expansive definition:

> The range of potential threats to human security should not be narrowly conceived. While the safety of people is obviously at grave risk in situations of armed conflict, a human security approach is not simply synonymous with humanitarian action. It highlights the need to address the root causes of insecurity and to help ensure people's future safety. There are also human security dimensions to a broad range of challenges, such as *gross violations of human rights,* environmental degradation, terrorism, transnational organized crime, *gender-based violence,* infectious diseases and natural disasters. The widespread social unrest and violence that often accompanies economic crises demonstrates that there are clear *economic underpinnings* to human security. (Canada, DFAIT 1999b: 3, italics added)

By shifting the focus to people, a human security agenda dislodges the state and its interests from its privileged position at center stage. It opens up space to recognize the tension between the objectives of state security and human security and implicitly challenges the normative primacy of the former. It reaffirms states' responsibility to ensure their citizens' security, while acknowledging that the causes of human insecurity are not delimited by borders and that only global collaboration can address and alleviate them. Indeed, a human security agenda broadens the range of actors from states to include civil society, nonstate actors, and multilateral institutions (Daudelin 1999; Woroniuk 1999). States are no longer the only agents authorized to define, promote, and implement human security policies. Civil society, composed of the kind of actors who led the campaign against Talisman and in favor of sanctions, also claims a voice in articulating what security is and ought to be about. The fact that Talisman was the object of accusations over

corporate complicity in human rights violations also illustrates that the state is no longer the only party implicated in impairing human security because it is not the sole, or always the most important, locus of power. Indeed, in announcing the appointment of the mission to Sudan, Foreign Minister Axworthy declared that Canada "supports Canadian participation in the economic development of Africa, [but] has grave reservations concerning private sector involvement that may heighten tensions or otherwise fuel ongoing conflicts. . . . The private sector has an ethical responsibility to ensure their operations do no harm, but rather contribute to fostering a climate conducive to building a durable and just peace" (Canada, DFAIT 1999a).[9]

Recognizing gender-based violence as a threat to security not only enables recognition of the gendered forms and causes of violence but also denotes that gender "affects people's ability (both men and women, individually and collectively) to both articulate their security needs and mobilize resources to meet those security needs" (Woroniuk 1999: 5). Moreover, by sweeping human rights, gender-based violence, armed conflict, and even corporate activity into the ambit of concern and scrutiny, the concept of human security offers a discursive framework that can link structures, institutions, and practices that seemingly operate in wholly discrete spheres, yet converge to produce tangible life-and-death outcomes.

## WHAT SECURITY? WHOSE SECURITY?

Security mattered enormously to all the actors encompassed by our mandate. The Northern-based GoS still devotes an inordinate amount of its meager budget to waging a war of subjugation against the South. Military security supersedes virtually all other state functions, despite the appalling destitution and underdevelopment plaguing the country. The GoS and its partners in GNPOC—notably the Canadian company Talisman Energy Inc.—were especially anxious to secure the pipeline, the Heglig oil fields, and oil personnel against attack or sabotage by rebel forces. These opposition militia (largely drawn from Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk tribes of the South) view the GoS as an illegitimate presence that is robbing the South of its oil, converting that oil into revenue, and using the revenue to purchase weapons that are unleashed on the people of the South. One Nuer commander explained his motivation in stark terms: "We as Nuer have to reconcile with each other in this area and take control of what is ours. If the companies continue, we will attack the fields and we will attack the workers" (Amnesty International 2000c: 10–11).[10]

Talisman Energy Inc. also worried about enhancing another type of security—namely its stock. Almost immediately after Talisman entered

Sudan, a civil coalition of NGOs, church groups, unions, and other activists led a campaign to encourage institutional shareholders (unions, pension funds, etc.) to divest from Talisman in protest over its collaboration with the GoS. The more adverse publicity Talisman attracted, the more stock prices tumbled.

Through our meetings with individuals and communities, we learned that the people of Southern Sudan agonize about their security too: about living from one day to the next without fear of being bombed, burned out of their huts, killed, or abducted. Men worry about being killed by the GoS or its allies, whether as civilians or as combatants in rebel forces. Women worry that they and their children will be abducted and enslaved by government-sponsored militia—if they are not killed outright. They also dread the moment when their boy children will be turned into child soldiers to fight in rebel armies against the GoS. Women fear rape by militia, rape by men who distribute aid in exchange for sex, and rape by husbands who demand that they replace dying children by producing still more children who will grow up to wage the national struggle (Jok 1999)—that is, if the women survive their pregnancies and the children survive to adolescence.

Women worry about finding food in the bush where they have fled to escape attacking armies. If they make it to a refugee camp or to Khartoum, they wonder how they can generate income to survive and support their families. They struggle to care for children and elderly relatives after death and displacement have shattered kinship and communal support networks. Because war rips families apart, most often separating men from their spouses and children, women often bear these burdens alone as heads of households. Men go off to join the militia or seek work, or they are killed. Women remain behind, chronically seeking safety. Yet this destination has become illusory in Sudan. The country has spent thirty-five of the last forty-six years at war. The life expectancy of a Southern Sudanese woman is forty years. If the civil war does not kill her outright, it will almost surely outlive her.

The GoS has its military to secure its territory. GNPOC can rely on its security team, working in cooperation with the GoS military, to protect its oil installations. Talisman Energy has its profits and its retinue of public relations people to buoy up investor confidence. The people of Southern Sudan have little more than their own endurance and humanitarian relief supplied by Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), a consortium of UN and NGO organizations that operate in both Northern and Southern Sudan. But aid dependence is not security; in the long run, it may even undermine recipients' individual and collective ability to sustain themselves, which ultimately erodes human security (Jok 1995: 32). As the report of the Canadian assessment mission concludes about Sudan, "There are few other parts of the world where human security is so lacking" (Harker 2000: 21).

Before we encountered the people affected by armed conflict and oil

operations, we spent days in Khartoum meeting government officials. The National Islamic Front (NIF) party controls the GoS and rules Northern Sudan with its own brand of Islamic fundamentalism, one that subordinates and discriminates against women and relegates them to the margins of public life. Most recently, the local governor of Khartoum passed an edict barring women from employment in any public domain that would bring them into contact with men. The effect is to prohibit women from employment in the service sector (Human Rights Watch 2000).[11]

Internationally, Sudan (along with Libya, Iran, Pakistan, and the Vatican) consistently obstructs attempts to advance women's rights in UN forums (Crossette 1999: 26) and refuses to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Domestically, the lives of women in Northern Sudan (including non-Muslims) are regulated and restricted by Shari'a law. Some 80 to 90 percent of females in Northern Sudan are subjected to genital mutilation.

Not surprisingly, we encountered few women in our meetings with government officials. Women were also absent from the ranks of Southern Sudanese political and military officials. No Sudanese woman (from North or South) has a seat at the negotiating table in Nairobi, where the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) brings various players in the conflict together to broker a peaceful settlement to the civil war. Soldiers fighting on all sides of the conflict are men and, too often, boys. At the GNPOC oil field at Heglig, Canadian, Malaysian, Chinese, and Northern Sudanese men work in the same place, though they inhabit different social worlds. I could not help but think of the GNPOC oil rigs as an industrial analog of a prison, a ship, or an army barracks—that is, a self-contained male universe. In all these places, one could always find a few female exceptions— a lawyer representing the Department of Justice, a Chinese technician employed at the GNPOC oil refinery, an advisor to a rebel commander. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Cynthia Cockburn, one thing you can safely say about armies, governments, and oil rigs is that they are not feminine cultures. Moreover, though the sex distribution is overwhelmingly male, each social domain reveals "a hierarchy among men, producing different and unequal masculinities" (Cockburn 1999: 4). Like women, the token Southern Sudanese male politicians co-opted into the Northern GoS regime clearly held no real power. Nor was it difficult to detect a racialized segregation and stratification of workers at the GNPOC oil field at Heglig, with Canadian men at the top, Malaysian and Chinese in the middle, and Northern Sudanese at the bottom. The place of Southern Sudanese in this hierarchy is manifested by their absence.

We had little direct contact with Sudanese women active within the realm of civil society, although I knew of their presence. Some were anti-GoS activists allied with the broader Northern opposition movement. Others

worked for international and local NGOs and church groups in the South or outside Nairobi.[12] The Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative, composed of women from North and South Sudan working together, actively lobbies IGAD to engender the peace process. These women highlight the impact of the war on Sudanese women, the need for women's leadership and representation in peace negotiations and conflict resolution, the importance of peace education, the integration of women's perspectives in governance, the provision of health and basic education in war-affected areas, and respect for cultural diversity. Their goals include conveying how war deprives Sudanese women of human security and the importance of involving women in the peacemaking process. Though we did not meet with the Sudanese Women's Initiative, the impact of conflict on women's security was delivered to the mission graphically and directly via our visits to the villages of the South, in and near Talisman's oil concession.

## MILITARIZED COMMERCE AND DISPLACEMENT

Like many large corporate enterprises, GNPOC employs security to protect it from external sabotage. At the Heglig oil operations, the threat does not take the form of business competitors stealing trade secrets or computer hackers breaking into data banks. The main threat to GNPOC's security comes from political opponents of one of the consortium partners, namely the GoS. Indeed, the head of GNPOC Security is a former high-ranking member of the GoS military, and GNPOC Security works in collaboration with the GoS army to "secure" GNPOC operations. This means that Talisman, as a partner in GNPOC, relied on a militarized security service drawn from former GoS military personnel, and also on the GoS army, to protect its commercial operations.

Cynthia Enloe (2000) describes militarization as "the step-by-step process by which something becomes *controlled by, dependent on,* or *derives its value from* the military as an institution or militaristic criteria" (291). As Craig Forcese (1999–2000) explains, resource companies investing in politically unstable regions increasingly acquire security services provided by military or paramilitary forces. Through its dependence on GNPOC Security and the GoS army, Talisman has become the latest participant in the growing phenomenon of "militarized commerce."[13]

To Southern rebel groups, whether Dinka or Nuer, GNPOC operations represent a GoS incursion into contested Southern territory for purposes of seizing oil from that territory and transporting it via pipeline to the North. Certainly, Southerners see no economic benefit from current oil operations. Royalties from oil extraction flow northward, just like the oil. Despite claims to the contrary by Talisman, GNPOC systematically refuses to employ local

Southerners. Indeed, several Nuer were reportedly murdered by the GoS when they tried to seek work at the oil fields. Talisman promised to investigate the deaths. To date, no report has emerged. The lack of employment prospects leaves no alternative for unemployed Southern men but to travel farther afield in search of work, fragmenting families and leaving women behind as sole heads of households.

From the perspective of GNPOC Security and their GoS military partners, civilians living in the vicinity are inherently objects of suspicion. Men may support or fight in antigovernment forces. Local village women may provide food, protection, and organizational strength to the rebel groups. All are potential sympathizers. The logic of the GNPOC/GoS security strategy blurs the line between civilian and military and constructs the Southerner as a security menace by definition. In effect, the oil operations turn Nuer and Dinka people into outsiders on their own territory. This antagonistic presumption materializes at various points along a spectrum from economic marginalization to surveillance, to physical expulsion. In contrast, GNPOC Security allows northern Arab nomads to graze their cattle freely in the oil region, using them as informants to report on the movements and activities of local Southern inhabitants.

Casual labor is recruited by Northern contractors, who hire Arab Jallaba traders and Bagarra nomads but, as noted earlier, do not hire local Southerners. Hiring practices encourage resettlement of Northerners in the South, and this labor market/demographic manipulation also serves to consolidate GoS authority and facilitate future appropriation of the territory as "Northern." It also reinforces the character of GNPOC as a Northern enterprise run by and for the benefit of Northerners.

Most deadly of all, "securing" the oil fields also means physically eliminating the perceived security threats, which amounts to driving Nuer and Dinka inhabitants from the region entirely or into "peace camps" where they are confined under the surveillance and control of the GoS.

One tactic of dispersion involves manipulating access to humanitarian relief. We heard that the GoS refused landing permission in 1999 to OLS flights attempting to deliver humanitarian assistance to Nuer and Dinka living in villages and towns around the oil fields. In particular, the GoS imposed a flight ban preventing OLS from landing at the Heglig airstrip, which was built by and for GNPOC. The GoS also denies OLS access to other airstrips in the area and refused the International Committee of the Red Cross access to critical communication equipment, impeding their functioning in the region.

Furthermore, it emerged that the GNPOC landing strip was used by the GoS to launch Antonov bombers and helicopter gunship raids on villages in Talisman's oil concession or in nearby oil concessions held by other international oil companies. The bombers and the helicopters were temporarily
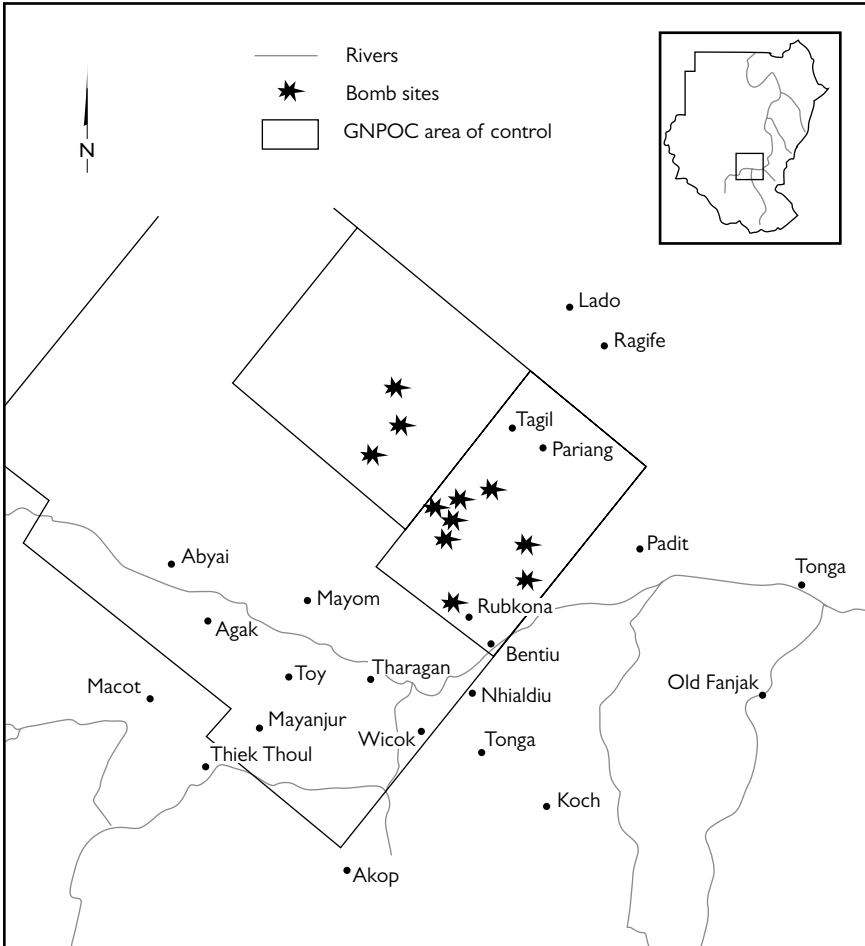
Map 4.2.  Bomb sites in south central Sudan. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

relocated prior to our arrival, as they were during a junket organized earlier in the year by Talisman Energy for Canadian journalists and oil industry analysts.

The GNPOC landing strip is available, then, for commercial and military purposes but not for humanitarian purposes. Talisman would register its objection to the use of the airstrip to advance the GoS military campaign and present this as proof of its corporate conscience. In the next breath, it would admit that it really lacked the leverage to do anything, retreating behind terms in its contract with the GoS and the GoS's status as a sovereign nation. These

contractual and sovereignty arguments, supplemented by a stupefying dose of willful blindness,[14] constituted Talisman's strategy for refuting the existence of—or their complicity in—human rights and humanitarian violations happening in their backyard.

I came to see the Heglig airstrip as an object lesson in the conjuncture of corporate and military security in Sudan and the disjuncture of human security from this new regime of "militarized commerce." Aerial bombardments by the high-altitude Antonov bombers leaving Heglig airstrip are relatively inaccurate at striking specific targets but are highly effective at terrorizing people. Helicopter gunships fly low and can target people, huts, and cattle. Ground troops transported by helicopter attack villages, burn down *tukuls* (huts), kill some villagers, abduct women and girls and drive the rest away, and loot and kill cattle.

Rape, and the menace of rape, is also a weapon of dispersal. We heard about this when we visited the GoS-controlled town of Pariang, close to the oil fields. We asked a village leader about reports of GoS destruction of nearby villages and the forcible displacement of thousands of civilians in May 1999. In the presence of the head of GNPOC Security and a Sudanese Foreign Ministry representative (who insisted on accompanying us), he responded obliquely, citing "disturbances" and a government "sweep" operation in response to a hostage-taking incident involving the SPLA. He mentioned quietly and in passing the damage wrought on an individual and community basis by rape of women and girls by armed forces.

He said no more at the time. Later, out of earshot of our GoS and GNPOC companions, we learned of an incident at a nearby village[15] where GoS soldiers had ransacked a village and raped six young women. The event not only terrorized the victims but demoralized the entire community to the point where the whole village uprooted itself and fled. This deliberate administration of sexual violence to humiliate individual women and girls and the community at large resonates with patterns of male violence in war across space and time, from Bangladesh to ex-Yugoslavia, Korea, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, as several chapters in this volume illustrate.

The ubiquitous threat of violence—attack, abduction, rape, looting, and death—hangs in the air in Southern Sudan. Women's ability to detect atmospheric changes in that air is particularly acute, according to one African aid worker (Drumtra 1999). That women might be especially sensitive to signs of impending danger does not surprise me. It is a quality often attributed to abused women, who become highly attuned to subtle shifts in their partner's behavior that precede and signal the eruption of domestic violence. If women develop this sensitivity through habitual exposure to personalized male violence, why not in the face of habitual exposure to militarized male violence? Indeed, one of the many gendered impacts of militarization on the lives of women is not only a heightened risk of public violence inflicted by

the external enemy but also an elevated risk of private violence inflicted by men of the community as the masculinized, nationalized aggression on the battlefields is transferred to the home front in the form of escalating domestic violence and coerced sex and reproduction (Jok 1999, 2000).

### *Where Do Displaced Women Go? Snapshot from Khartoum*

Close to two million Southern Sudanese have made their way from the South to Khartoum since the resumption of the war in 1983. Although Khartoum is Sudan's capital, firmly in the control of an Arab and Muslim political elite, displaced Southerners go there in the hopes of escaping the violence of war and finding work. As such, their movement also reflects a global trend of rural to urban migration.

Khartoum's population is estimated between six and seven million. It sprawls into the barren, arid desert until the desert engulfs it. As one moves to the edges of the city, away from the permanent buildings and toward the squatter settlements and refugee camps, concrete structures give way to walled compounds constructed of handmade earthen bricks. They rise out of the hard, red ground from which the bricks are made. When heavy rains come, some of these rough-hewn buildings simply melt away. At other times, the authorities demolish them because they are "illegal." People end up seeking shelter in hastily assembled shacks or tents, or else they end up with nothing.

One afternoon, the Sudanese minister of housing proudly escorted us in his Land Rover on a lurching and aimless tour of an area allegedly slated for permanent resettlement of squatters in accordance with a UN-designed urban plan. We eventually insisted that he take us to a nearby refugee camp run by international agencies, which had been our original destination. He did so with evident petulance, allotting us fifteen minutes to spend there.

In the few minutes we had, we learned from an NGO employee working with war-displaced people in Khartoum that 40 percent of households in the camp (and surrounding squatter areas) are female headed. Humanitarian agencies operating in internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps in South Sudan also report a predominance of female-headed households and a growing number of families headed by children caring for younger siblings (Franco 1999: 19–20).

Many women who came to Khartoum with their children had lost their husbands—figuratively or literally. The men may leave to join a military force or may abandon their families to escape recruitment or death. Some remarry. Many men are, of course, killed. One way or another, women end up without male partners, without an extended family, and with sole respon-

sibility for children. When we asked a woman in the camp what she needed most, she replied that she needed medicine for her children and the means of generating revenue for herself. Quite simply, there is nothing for displaced women to do. They squat illegally or huddle in refugee camps too far to commute into Khartoum for day work. Lack of Arabic and discrimination against non-Muslims make paid employment even scarcer. The UN Special Rapporteur on Sudan reported in 1999 that "food security in camps such as this one is precarious and malnutrition among children under five ranged from 12 to 24% in 1997–1998" (Franco 1999b: 15).

Later, a group of NGO workers candidly admitted to us that international agencies addressed inadequate attention and resources to enabling displaced women to develop the skills necessary to attain income security. We were told that even when couples remained together, the gendered dynamics of displacement meant that once men had lost their traditional means of supporting the family, they would not or could not locate alternative means of subsistence. This placed additional pressure on women to find ways to provide for the basic needs of their children *and* husband, a cycle that grinds the women down emotionally and physically. Many experience severe health problems.

One of the few income-earning opportunities for displaced Southern women is brewing and selling traditional liquor. The Shari'a law imposed by the GoS strictly prohibits production, sale, possession, and consumption of alcohol by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. As with Prohibition in North America, the Sudanese law does not eradicate the liquor industry, it simply drives it underground. This means that the women who produce liquor live in constant fear of detection, arrest, and imprisonment. According to reports we received, local law enforcers often raid the home of a suspected "bootlegger," loot cash, seize, damage, or destroy any possessions, and physically abuse the women and anyone else around. Arrested women are liable to fines far beyond their ability to pay and may be sentenced to months of imprisonment in Omduram prison. As many of the women are single parents, their children sometimes accompany them to prison because there is no one else to care for them. Prison conditions are horrific: maltreatment, abuse, disease, and malnutrition are rife. In 1999, sixteen children incarcerated in the prison with their mothers died from poor health conditions and overcrowding. The authorities released over eight hundred women as a result, but the arrests and imprisonment continue (Franco 1999b).

Religious laws imposed by the state provide a mechanism for criminalizing the activities of non-Muslim Southern women, whose presence in Khartoum is directly attributable to the war waged by the state against the South. There is no security to be found: first the regime forces women to run for their lives, then it jails them for trying to find a way to stay alive.

*Where Else Do Displaced Women Go? Snapshot from the South*

Not all displaced women have the will or resilience to undertake the journey northwards to Khartoum. Some flee into the "swamp" or the "bush" in the hopes that the soldiers will not find them. Some head for other villages, often discovering that human security is precarious wherever they go. Some eventually return and try to rebuild, knowing they may be driven away again at any moment. The displacement may be immediate, total, and permanent, or partial, gradual, and incremental.

Many women and children find their way to IDP camps, whether in government-held pockets or SPLA territory. In GoS-controlled Wau, the Special Rapporteur described how women in nearby IDP camps are "taxed" every time they enter and leave the camp and then "exposed to uncurbed abuses" when military, police, and security personnel "go on the rampage" after curfew (Franco 1999b: 20). Sexual blackmail, in which displaced men hired by relief organizations extort sex in exchange for food rations, puts women at risk from men who are notionally nonmilitarized members of the community. For these women and their children, the IDP camps bring little security.

Some women seek refuge in other villages. In the village of Koch, one recent arrival described her journey to us:

> I arrived in Koch yesterday after a three-day walk from near Duar. I only had pieces of wild fruit to eat on the way [she opens her hand to show us small fruit that resembles a crabapple or a fleshy nut]. I came because we were being bombarded by the GoS. They were using Antonovs and gunships. We thought this area would be peaceful. People in the village are dying of hunger and gunship fire and the fighting is continuing. (Harker 2000: 87–88)

Some of her companions died along the way. The community in Koch was barely subsisting. Signs of illness and malnutrition were visible, especially among the children. But the village women took her in and she sat among them, at least for the time being. No one knew how long she or anyone else would remain safe in Koch.

In Mayom, a decimated village within the Talisman oil concession, a man who spoke a few words of English described the toll that inadequate food and medicine were taking on women and children. Relief agencies no longer had regular access to the village because the GoS refused landing permission to the humanitarian aid flights. As he said this, we walked past a woman seated on the ground. Without warning, he approached the woman, lifting up her top to reveal to me a sickly baby suckling the woman's shrunken breast. The woman was visibly taken aback, then abandoned herself to a kind of weary indifference. I turned away, appalled at her situation and at my own role in this latest indignity.

Displacement unleashes a downward spiral in human security: first comes the physical loss of home, livestock, livelihood, family and communal life. Then follows chronic food insecurity, as IDPs resort to gathering wild fruit and, if possible, catching fish. The swamps are home not only to fish but also to malarial mosquitoes. Disease comes next.

Mass displacement strains the food supply of relief organizations, and the combination of dispersal and GoS flight bans makes it difficult for any type of relief to reach people on the move. Malnutrition, fear, and disease hound displaced people. Women, men, and children all suffer, and we learned about both the commonalities and differences of experience along axes of age and gender. One pattern was that men were more likely to migrate in order to escape attack, seek work, or join the war as combatants. Women seemed more likely to be forcibly removed and displaced by the war, along with their children. That is not to deny the agency of women caught in conflict zones but rather to emphasize how war and gender roles combined to constrict the scope of their agency to a very small compass. Here is the story of one woman, which could be that of any number of Southern Sudanese women:

> I am very tired. We have a big problem here. We left Koch for the fishing camp in May because of the fighting. Since May, we have been living in the fishing camp [located in the swamp area] that we built in the rainy season. We were living on water lilies. We came back to [this village of] Koch recently but we are here with no food. The GoS and [GoS-sponsored militia leader Paulino] Matiep's forces looted the village and raided the livestock. They took all of our personal belongings. If any soldiers found villagers they were killed. There was no forgiveness. The Head Chief of the area and the Commissioner were killed. Matiep's forces took women and girls. We don't know how many. Some they killed and some they kept. Some people are still in the fishing camp hiding. Others ran to the White Nile, others to Bahr el Ghazal and some to Nyal. The displaced here are accommodated with the residents. Most of our husbands are dead. . . . It is obvious that the GoS will come again in the dry season. When our husbands are away fighting, we depend on fruit for food. Before the fighting we were cultivating but now we can't cultivate because of the fighting. A lot of things kill us—hunger, water, sanitation. Since we have been looted and raided there are not enough medicine kits, mosquito nets and we have no clothes. (Harker 2000: 88)

## OF FENCES AND NEIGHBORS

A top Talisman executive in Sudan earnestly explained to us how they view a "good neighbor" policy with the local population as the best means to enhance their security in the region (and their reputation at home). If people benefit tangibly from Talisman's presence, they will have little incentive to attack GNPOC or to support those who wish to do so. In other words,

Talisman claimed the ability to marry corporate and human security without disturbing the relationship between corporate and military security.

The Talisman initiatives translated into a range of small-scale aid and development projects, such as water wells, education and health care. It was unclear whether Talisman believed that these projects would refute the allegation that militarized commerce is inimical to human security or whether Talisman pursued these activities as a form of mitigation that somehow balanced the ledger and rendered their presence neutral or even beneficial.

Whatever Talisman's motives and expectations, one cannot exaggerate the need for basic food, health, and education services in the region. Nevertheless, I was astounded to learn that many Talisman projects were devised and implemented by GNPOC Security. These were the very people who, in collaboration with the GoS army, actively pursued policies that strip Nuer and Dinka of any vestige of social, economic, food, and health security.

Some of us on the mission commented that it might be difficult for local Dinka and Nuer to welcome or trust "aid projects" imposed by GNPOC Security, who are correctly identified as allies of the GoS army. The Talisman executive seemed genuinely incapable of comprehending the problem. He insisted that the head of GNPOC Security really loved doing good works and that surely the people would see and appreciate that. Besides, the internal politics of GNPOC dictated that Security control these "outreach" activities. Privately, I marveled at how this Canadian's myopic personalization of the situation allowed him to depoliticize this militarization (and privatization) of aid, especially in light of the use of GNPOC airstrip for military purposes and the denial of landing permission to OLS aid flights.

Talisman was keen for us to visit the town of Pariang, in part to showcase a health clinic it had built there. The CEO of Talisman boasted in the Canadian press that "the village governor [of Pariang] advises that over the past two years, the village has grown from 8,000 to 11,000. Early development projects, funded by the oil project, have brought hope and stability to the area" (Harker 2000: 50). I saw little evidence of either in the short time I was in the area.

Several days after our tour of Pariang, we visited the village of Biem, which is under Southern control. There we learned that Pariang town was also the site of a "peace camp." One variation on forcible displacement involves compulsory consolidation of rural populations into so-called peace camps in or near GoS garrison towns. Here the GoS army can control both the movement and the activities of Southerners driven out by the army or its proxy militia. Since the Nuer and Dinka are traditionally seminomadic, pastoral societies, resettlement and confinement in peace camps also constitute yet another step toward the economic and cultural dispossession of Southern Sudanese. Like many other military euphemisms, *peace camp* represents an

Orwellian perversion of language, revealed clearly by the fact that Pariang is also a military base.

This is how a woman we interviewed in Biem described her experience in Pariang:

> I came [here] from Pariang in May. My family was repatriated to Pariang from Khartoum by the GoS and the GoS would not let us leave Pariang town. The GoS forces mistreated us. We were not given any services, we had to find our own food and make our own living. When the women would go to gather wood and cut grass to build shelters, the Arab militia followed us to take what we had and rape us. I tried to escape with three others from the town. The GoS shot at us. The others were killed. I was hit in the leg but managed to escape.[16] (Harker 2000: 84)

We saw relatively few women during our visit to Pariang. Perhaps they were kept away from us deliberately, perhaps they were out trying to gather food, water, and wood. Perhaps some were being violated in the fields while we met with the local male administrator in the government compound. In our brief and "managed" visit, we did not have the opportunity to interact with any of the women we did encounter. We had no female interpreters, and time was short. Given these obstacles to communication, the women in Pariang remained barely visible to us even when we were in their physical presence.

The clinic was built by GNPOC Security, financed by Talisman, and located in the GoS garrison town/"peace camp" of Pariang. As Harker (2000) writes, "Even when people are coerced [into peace camps] by the promise of limited food security or basic health care, it essentially remains forcible displacement, it is pacification, not peace, and definitely not project-driven development" (50). Nobody could contest the need for basic health care, clean water, and sanitation, but in this context, Talisman's clinic and well water operated only secondarily as aid; their primary purpose was to function as bait. It was violence wrapped in gauze and bandaids.

The clinic in Pariang is not Talisman's only health care project. Talisman also completed a gleaming new hospital near Heglig, a village now populated by Arab laborers who have migrated southward to work for GNPOC. Talisman proudly pointed out that the hospital had two incubators—one more than the entire country of Ethiopia. The mission visited the clinic once and flew over it once. On both occasions, the hospital appeared virtually unused. Health care is so scarce in many parts of Africa that it is typical to see scores of people waiting outside an open health facility on any given day. Talisman officials could not quite explain why the clinic was underutilized. Did it require one of us to raise the question to alert them to the anomaly of an empty hospital in sub-Saharan Africa? Later, after making inquiries, Talisman officials offered that attendance might be low due to Ramadan. Ramadan is, of

course, a Muslim religious holiday not observed by the Christian and animist Nuer and Dinka. In essence, the hospital served transplanted Arab laborers from the North; it appeared to serve few or no African Southerners.

A few days later, we visited displaced Southerners near a village named Nhialdiu, about 100 kilometers from the oil fields. A woman pointed to another woman next to her wearing a garland of leaves around her neck and spelled out the link between human security and access to health care: "We are eating leaves. If they are not cooked well, it causes diarrhea. . . . We don't want pleasure, we want to survive. If human rights matter, we need medical services to sustain life."

The health care situation in Southern Sudan is dismal. People regularly die of Kala Azar—a disease that is 100 percent curable if treated and 100 percent fatal if not. Malaria is rife. Women suffer the same health risks as men and children, but their socialized role as mothers often relegates their needs to the lowest priority. Moreover, sexual violence—whether perpetrated by attacking militia, by male authorities in IDP camps who extort sex in exchange for food, or by soldier-husbands demanding sexual services in the name of "reproducing the nation"—inflicts special damage on women's physical and mental health. The consequences include unwanted pregnancies, adolescent fertility, sexually transmitted diseases, and increased maternal morbidity and mortality (Jok 1999). It would be impossible to overstate the urgent and overwhelming need for medicine, for nurses and doctors, and for health care facilities.

Of course, Southerners most desperately in need of medical care have no means of getting to a hospital anyway. Southerners measure distances in terms of hours' or days' walks. The roads built in and around the oil fields are used by GNPOC to transport equipment and personnel and by the GoS to launch attacks on civilians, much like the airstrip. As of the time of our visit to Sudan, they were not being used to transport sick people to the medical clinic at Heglig.

We were also informed that the GoS did not permit people from Bentiu, Mayom, and other garrison towns near the oil fields to leave, even to seek medical treatment at the clinic, because they did not want Southerners getting too close to the oil operations. Once again, military security and corporate security conjoin to trump human security, and the incubators in the Talisman hospital lie vacant while nearby, women watch their babies waste away.

## WHERE DISPLACED WOMEN ARE: SNAPSHOT FROM AN ENCOUNTER

On the last day of our mission, we met with a large group of men, women, and children who had been driven out of their villages by GoS and GoS-spon-

sored militia.[17] They were, in effect, living in the bush. A rebel commander and his force were located nearby, and we were able to notify them of our visit through radio contact. When our small plane descended onto the makeshift landing strip used for relief flights, we were greeted by about two hundred Nuer women, men, and children. Half the mission plus foreign service officers went off to interview the commander, while three of us stayed behind with an interpreter to hear from the community. As it happened, the three who remained were the three women members of the mission.

The people began by pointing out shrapnel, shells, and bomb fragments that they had assembled into a display for us: "Look," they said, "the bombs the government drop on us come from Russia, they are not coming from Arab countries. Why are you [the West] supporting them?"

Handmade chairs were produced for us to sit on, while people gathered around us in a tight semicircle. People were thin and serious. The chiefs stood out in their threadbare suits crossed by a sash, ironic and jarring souvenirs of the British colonial era. The others wore ripped and dirty clothes that were a surreal jumble of traditional garments and outdated Western clothes—from red nylon slips to sweatpants—that had somehow passed from closets in North America and England to the flat plain of Southern Sudan. Some children had no clothes. The larger humanitarian assistance organizations focus their energies on food, medicine, seeds for cultivation, fishing equipment, and mosquito nets. With so many urgent needs, clothes do not get much attention except from smaller agencies acting on an ad hoc basis. Women pointed to their naked children and fingered the rags that hung off their own bodies, exposing their breasts and their buttocks, and let us know that while clothes are not a matter of life and death, they are a matter of dignity. And dignity matters.

Each of us was given a string of beads as a gift to honor our presence. We expressed our gratitude, explained why we had come, and listened. The [male] chiefs spoke first. They produced a list of villages bombarded by Antonovs and described how children had been scattered and lost, entire villages displaced. People are dying of hunger, the cattle are gone, and cultivation is not possible. They need medicine, food, fishing equipment, blankets and mosquito nets, veterinary drugs. They used to cultivate in the rainy season, but because of the fighting and the insecurity, they cannot cultivate or graze animals. This discovery of oil has caused a big problem, they tell us. Until the 1980s the Arabs could not exploit the oil, but now they can with the help of the West. They use oil against us. If the oil is taken peacefully, it can be good, but not in war.

One of the chiefs said: "We don't know if we are included in the human rights of the world. If we are included in the human rights of the world, why are the Arabs able to kill us? We have been dying here since the 1980s and you are the first team to visit us."

Then the women spoke—directly and with anger. From time to time, the speakers were interrupted by others clapping or signaling support. Sarah spoke first:

"We women are happy to see women and men together as equal people in the world. We women are suffering because of trouble between men. We lose our children who flee bombardment or become soldiers. We thank God he has brought women to see our problems. We eat these leaves, we run to the swamps, mosquitoes kill us. Don't think we are the only ones. It's hard to get people to come talk to people who don't bring food."

Martha (these names are pseudonyms) addressed us:

"You are my children. I have given birth to many children and most have died. If the world is willing, it can stop this oil crisis. We suspect the world of co-operating to kill us and take our oil. Why not take the oil in a peaceful way?"

All the women, and the men too, discussed basic needs—food, medicine, mosquito nets, blankets, veterinary drugs for the cattle. We were told that "women are not having babies anymore." Infants are stillborn, born prematurely, miscarried, never conceived at all. The men are gone, the children have disappeared—killed, separated in the frantic scramble into the bush, conscripted as child soldiers.

Martha insisted that bringing food and medicine would not suffice, for without guns the government will still kill them anyway. "How can you fight people who have guns when you don't? Even if you bring food and medicine but no guns, they will kill us." She is the only one who spoke openly of wanting to fight back, but it was clear that she was not alone in her view.

"We are waiting for death," she told us. "We are being killed, chased, burned out of our homes. If you leave these people for a year and come back, many of us will be dead."

Dora wore what looked like a man's raincoat. The way she appeared—tall and solemn—and the way she spoke—with subdued force—created an aura of stillness around her that compelled rapt attention:

Greetings, sisters. We are living in a war-affected area. The place from where we ran was burnt. Our sisters from stable countries: this problem of our country is caused by men. Most people have not come to see you because they fear bombardment. Since we ran away, we have lost cows, children, and men. The people coming to you today are here not because they think you have food, but because they want you to convey our problems to the world. Since our tukuls [huts] were burnt, elders have died without blankets to keep them warm. If women have come to interview us, we know women are equal. (Harker 2000: 86–87)

I want to tell the Nuer chief that yes, you are included in the human rights of the world. But I am expressing an aspiration, not making an empirical claim. Perhaps progress includes the growing consciousness on the part of

both perpetrator and victim that there exists (in principle) a global standard of human rights against which their actions and experiences can be measured and may be judged. But in the end, is all this human rights discourse merely talk?

### Women Are Not Having Babies Anymore

I assumed I knew why these women were not bearing children: absent men, illness, malnutrition, and disease all precluded conception or precipitated miscarriages and stillbirths. Only later, long after leaving Sudan, did I learn of a supplementary narrative about women, militarization, and reproduction in Southern Sudan.

In research conducted among the Dinka, ethnographer Jok Madut Jok (1999) documents how the war has not only placed increased pressure on women to reproduce the nation and compensate for high infant mortality but also corroded the social rules, taboos, and mores regarding when, with whom, and how often to engage sexually. Women have lost much control over sexual and reproductive decisions and are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and to unwanted pregnancies. Women in conflict zones are at highest reproductive risk at the time of enemy raid and capture, but another period of heightened peril occurs when soldier/spouses return home from a long absence and breach traditional rules of sexual access in their determination to reaffirm militarized masculinity and/or conceive another child before they resume their military duties. Extramarital or premarital sex also increases during such intervals. Women are then left alone to cope with another pregnancy and rear another infant under conditions of extreme material deprivation.

Under these circumstances, the physical and psychological damage of bearing yet another child prompts some women to resist by terminating their pregnancies surreptitiously, often by resorting to unsafe methods in unsanitary conditions. As a statistical matter, these abortions appear as miscarriages. Jok Madut Jok (1999) contends that abortion emerges as a means of negotiating and emending hegemonic ideologies of gender, militarism, reproduction, and the nation. He concludes that the experience of abortion is also politicizing, for "it is also within the domain of individual experience that these women are beginning to struggle with awareness of the connections between their suffering, on the one hand, and community-level gender relations and the military environment on the other" (209).

After reviewing my notes and rehearsing in my memory what the women said to us that day about bearing children, I realize that there were discursive gaps, fissures that I had not noticed at the time. Even now, I do not know how much was simply lost in translation. Moreover, the women we met on

this last day were Nuer; Jok Madut Jok's research concerned Dinka women, and I do not know whether the social circumstances and strategies of resistance of Nuer women are analogous to those of their Dinka cohorts. I no longer know what material realities lurked behind the statement "Women are not having babies anymore." Kamala Visweswaran (1994) writes that "in interrupting a Western (sometimes feminist) project of subject retrieval, recognition of the partially understood is not simply strategy but accountability to my subjects; partial knowledge is not so much choice as necessity" (99). One irony revealed to me is that the partiality of prior knowledge may not become apparent until more knowledge is acquired, and even then, meanings remain in flux. And so Gayatri Spivak's (1984) question persists for me: The subaltern can indeed speak, but can I attend to what she is saying?

> *"Greetings, Sisters. . . . We Are Happy Today to See Women and Men Together as Equal People in the World."*

What kind of gender equality did we signify to the women before us? If equality is about access to the social, economic, and political resources that permit each of us to actualize our human potential and well-being, then yes, I believe I do enjoy a greater measure of equality of opportunity in my relation to Canadian men than did the generation of Canadian women preceding me. So does Senator Mobina Jaffer, Canada's envoy to the IGAD peace talks. And so does Jackie Sheppard, then–vice-president of Talisman Energy, a woman whose public relations role seemed to involve putting a kinder, gentler—dare I say more feminine—face on Talisman. As Canadians, Senator Jaffer, Jackie Sheppard, and I all benefit in a myriad of material and symbolic ways from the past legacy and current practices of North-South economic exploitation, racism, and colonialism. The fact that Jackie Sheppard, as a directing mind of Talisman, appeared most directly implicated in the particular circumstances of these Nuer women hardly suffices to disentangle me from the web of interconnections. And so, looking across to the Nuer woman, this sex equality she invoked reflected back on me as the glare of extraordinary and illicit privilege. Inwardly, I winced.

The women could have addressed us not as sisters but as foreigners, as successors to British colonial oppressors, as co-nationals of Talisman, as the beneficiaries of oil stolen from their land and over their dead bodies. They could have reproached us as the oppressor/Other. As a Western feminist educated and admonished by critiques of universalized discourses of "international" or "global" feminism, their address startled me. The claim that our presence signifies to them women's equal status in the world presupposes a unity of identity qua woman that everything about the context of that encounter seemed to refute utterly and unequivocally.

Why did they greet us in this way? Obviously, I can never know the answer

with certainty. Yet it seems important to consider the question in context. "We have been dying here since the 1980s, and you are the first team to visit us." The gravity and the formality of the occasion and the determination of these women and men to make the best possible use of it continue to reverberate in my memory. In the months that followed, I have speculated on the motives animating the women's discursive strategy.

In choosing their words as they did, the women were not merely flattering us; they were issuing a challenge. In the context of our mission, casting our presence as symbolic of women's equality could not fail to render this apparent equality a signifier of power in relation to the women before us. It is precisely because the material and social disparities between us were so flagrant that their reference to sex equality compels this reading. Equality as such typically denotes a relation, a status, but not an action. Power, on the other hand, manifests through its exercise, and we judge and are judged by how, when, and to what end power is used.

Indeed, feminists everywhere lobby powerful women in the hopes that such women will at least try to exercise to advance gender equality and freedom from oppression. There is no guarantee that these women in fact possess feminist consciousness and commitments, but clearly the attempt is made to draw on a shared identity as woman (however problematic the category may be) as a strategically useful basis for dialogue and persuasion.

Given this, I interpret the women's introductions as setting before us a gendered lens that would not only focus our gaze upon particular aspects of Sudanese women's militarized lives but also map our relative positionings as women onto a normative landscape: we owe a distinct responsibility to those with whom we share a special relationship. We are accountable to those who are disempowered for how we exercise our power, especially (though not exclusively) when we are implicated in their oppression.

The people who participated in that meeting did so at great peril. By coming out of the bush, they exposed themselves to possible detection and attack by GoS military, which tracks humanitarian relief deliveries in order to locate and target civilian populations. Martha was blunt in her declaration of our utility: "The people coming to you today are here not because they think you have food, but because they want you to convey our problems to the world."

Their charge to us was unequivocal. The task of meeting their challenge felt and feels overwhelming: the complexities of testimony, the problematic tension between re-presenting (speaking for) and representing (speaking about) in the context of First World–Third World power relations makes paralysis simultaneously tempting and inexcusable. Robert Carr (1994) cautions that the process of testimonial "is itself caught up in the mechanisms of production, the shift of value/labor power from a Third World to a First, and the operations of a deep capitalist, patriarchal structure working to produce

a commodity that may ultimately help to undo it" (157). Perhaps the most I can hope for is that my role in the production of that commodity (the report of the Canadian assessment mission) was and continues to be constructively subversive.

## CONCLUSION

On the connection between oil exploitation and human rights violations, the report found that oil extraction was exacerbating the armed conflict in Sudan in several ways: First, concerns about oil field security were causally connected to forcible displacement, pacification, and human insecurity in the Western Upper Nile; second, oil activity intensified internecine conflict within the South as well as combat between North and the South for control over this resource-rich territory; third, resource development has generated infrastructure (such as roads and airstrips) available to the GoS to prosecute the war against the South (Harker 2000: 64).

A recent Amnesty International (2000c) report concurs with the Canadian mission's findings. It asserts that companies in partnership with the GoS "expect the government to establish security and law and order in a war zone. By turning a blind eye, in the name of security, to the violations committed by government forces and troops allied to them, they indirectly contribute to violations continuing" (11).

These conclusions return me to my speculations on relationships of affinity and aversion between military, corporate, and human security. The findings of the Canadian mission's report and my personal observations lead me to postulate the following. Talisman's corporate security and the GoS's military security enjoyed a symbiotic relationship: securing the oil fields through military means is a prerequisite to the profitable extraction of oil. The obverse is that the greater the financial success enjoyed by the GoS qua Talisman's business partner, the greater its incentive and ability to strive for military conquest rather than peace through political negotiation. And military security in Sudan is, of course, inversely related to human security.

To reprise the questions posed in my introduction: given the context of civil war, securing an oil field operated by and for the Northern GoS (and its international partners) in a region that belongs to Southern Sudan means controlling, killing, or displacing the civilian population. A secure operating environment permits oil to be extracted and pumped via pipeline to the Port of Sudan, where it will enter the international market, fetch a high price, and boost the profits of Talisman Energy Inc. This in turn will yield more credit that Sudan can obtain to purchase arms. Meanwhile, the women of Southern Sudan flee, they die, they are raped, they starve, they get sick, they are abducted into slavery, they struggle, they despair, they

resist. Some make it as far as Khartoum, where they brew liquor, get arrested, and go to prison.

These are the dots connecting oil field security to share prices to displaced women in jail. The chain of causality may be indirect, partial, and, from Talisman's perspective, sincerely unintentional—none of which makes the impact of militarized commerce on the women, men, and children of Southern Sudan any less devastating.[18]

The process of drawing connections and identifying disconnections has proved deeply discomfiting, in part because I have been forced to locate myself in the picture, sometimes in an unflattering aspect. My reflections have been informed by the incisive critiques of many scholars and activists about the tendency of white women to position themselves as the progressive and liberated "saviors" of their unfortunate, downtrodden sisters in the South, as innocents abroad. Acknowledging their critique does not, of course, immunize me from it.

Our task as a government-appointed mission embodies a paradox: we were not there as agents of emergency aid or development assistance, demonstrating Canada's generosity and benevolence. We were there mainly to inquire into whether and how a Canadian company exacerbated the very conditions that torment and kill the people of Southern. The very mandate of our mission accepted the premise of First World moral (if not legal) accountability for the consequences of private capital's unregulated conduct on Third World countries. Yet it is undeniable that the mission also functioned as an exercise in legitimation, a putative demonstration of Canada's international conscience and moral superiority. Indeed, one might well conclude that missions of this nature are not really intended as a prelude to the state's response to a given problem. Rather, by giving the impression that the government is doing something tangible by appointing an independent inquiry, the mission itself becomes the policy response. The aftermath to the report's release lends a certain credibility to this hypothesis. The factual findings of the report are unequivocal: "We cannot but conclude that our own observations and investigations only add to the growing body of evidence and information that identifies Sudan as a place of extraordinary suffering and continuing human rights violations, even though some forward progress can be recorded, and, significantly, that the oil operations in which a Canadian company is involved add more suffering" (Harker 2000: 66).

In the end, however, the report vacillated on the question of imposing sanctions against Talisman to force withdrawal from GNPOC. On the one hand, the report did not advocate immediate application of sanctions. On the other hand, it emphasized that none of the alternative measures it proposed precluded the application of sanctions by the Canadian government.

When the report was issued, then–Foreign Minister Axworthy announced that Canada would not apply any sanctions to Talisman Energy Inc. or any

trade restrictions respecting Sudan. Shares in Talisman immediately bounced back from a low of $35 per share to $50 per share in response to the news that the government of Canada would take no action against the company.

Oil flows from the Heglig oil fields in Southern Sudan to the Port of Sudan in the North at a rate of 160,000 barrels per day ("Canada Opts Not to Sanction Talisman" 2000: 22). Royalties flow in the same direction, ending up in the coffers of the New Islamic Front GoS. The International Monetary Fund, which suspended Sudan's membership in 1993 for defaulting on interest payments, recently lifted its suspension, satisfied that the GoS had proved itself a more secure financial risk ("Sudanese Contradictions" 2000). Even the United States, which for years vilified Sudan as a terrorist lair and pariah state, is reopening its embassy in Khartoum, while European governments, "keen to take commercial advantage of Sudan's new oil industry, have beefed up their embassies and toned down their criticisms" ("Sudanese Contradictions" 2000). Canada appears to be taking a "constructive engagement" approach to Sudan, raising its profile in Khartoum, investing more money in the IGAD peace process, and inviting Sudan to a conference in Canada on recruitment of child soldiers, a practice in which Sudan can claim considerable expertise. As one commentator notes, "Canada's human security agenda has taken a backseat to the interests of Canadian oil companies in Southern Sudan" (Daudelin 2000: 2).

Military expenditures by the GoS have increased, and the army recently took delivery of arms from China, Poland, Libya, Qatar, and Bulgaria, in violation of a UN embargo on arms transfers to the GoS (Amnesty International 2000c: 12).[19] Meanwhile, the onset of the dry season unleashed a new offensive around the oil fields, as all parties to the conflict vie for control over the future wealth of Sudan. By summer 2000, the ominous threat of famine loomed large as tens of thousands of civilians were displaced by aerial bombardment by GoS forces.[20] In a brazen display of scorn for the United Nations, the GoS granted permission to UN-led OLS aid flights to operate and then bombed them as they unloaded emergency relief at rebel-held airstrips in Southern Sudan. The United Nations suspended relief operations for over a week and resumed with trepidation.

The lesson suggested by this vignette is that the international community's support of the United Nations as surrogate provider of human security will falter in the face of national policies designed to advance the commercial interests of corporate citizens. Or, as an *Economist* article ("Sudanese Contradictions" 2000) trenchantly remarked, the GoS guessed, "probably rightly, that the West will not jeopardize its new relations with Sudan for the sake of a few bombs dropped on the UN." The same conclusion applies perforce for bombs dropped on the people of Southern Sudan. To the extent that humanitarian intervention in Kosovo represents a highly problematic attempt by the North to harness the modalities of military security in the ser-

vice of human security (see Klein, Chapter 13 of this volume), there is little likelihood that it will be deployed on behalf of the Southern Sudanese. Blood may be thicker than water, but oil, it seems, is thicker than blood.

For its part, Talisman launched its own campaign in late 1999 to evince a positive correlation between corporate security and human security in Sudan. In December 1999, it signed a voluntary corporate code of conduct. Talisman also attempted to ingratiate itself with the United Nations and with the various NGOs providing relief and development assistance to Southern Sudanese in the area. It offered to work in cooperation with these organizations and to donate large sums of money. The United Nations and NGOs consistently declined these offers, for various reasons. Many saw Talisman as complicit in provoking a humanitarian catastrophe and refuse to lend their name or support to Talisman's gambit of extending localized assistance to a few victims of that catastrophe. The corporatization of assistance gives rise to additional anxiety. Desultory relief efforts provided by amateur actors acting on transitory concerns about their public image and profit margin risk undermining the work of credible, committed, and independent humanitarian assistance organizations by giving regimes such as Sudan a pretext for expelling international organizations.

Finally, many organizations feared for the safety of their personnel. Talisman has many detractors in Southern Sudan, including militia leaders who had declared Talisman a legitimate military target. Aid organizations carefully guard their independence from parties to a conflict in order to protect their personnel and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in contested territory. Understandably, NGOs resisted any appearance of collaboration with Talisman lest they become targets by association. Seen in this light, it is unsurprising that while the United Nations and NGOs acknowledged that Talisman engaged in its own relief and development undertakings, they desired no relationship of cooperation.

Given its failure to forge/make institutional links between corporate security and human security, Talisman elected to forge/fake those links instead. In early 2000, a Talisman press release described an initiative, dubbed "Project Care," that distributed so-called "Care-Sacs" to needy children in Sudan (Talisman Energy Inc. 2000). In August 2000, in the midst of heavy fighting between GoS and Southern militia around the oil region, Talisman issued a press release on its corporate Web site entitled "Talisman and Relief Agencies Work Together." A Talisman spokesman announces in the text that "we're working alongside the non-governmental agencies as part of a team," then proceeds to outline the nature and extent of the cooperation.

The United Nations and NGOs operating on the ground were blindsided by these last missives. Within days, however, the United Nations issued its own press release, entitled "UN Sudan Disclaims Collaboration with Talis-

man Energy Inc." (UN Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator 2000). The press release declared that "contrary to [Talisman's] media propaganda, UN agencies involved in humanitarian relief activities in Unity State and other areas of Sudan are not working with Talisman, do not have any agreements with them and have not received any funding from them." A group of six NGOs, including CARE, released a public letter disclaiming any past or present relationship with Talisman.

Several institutional shareholders divested from Talisman in protest over Talisman's involvement in Sudan. Dissident shareholders retain stock in Talisman in order to challenge the company's directors from the inside. In summer 2000, they put forward a resolution calling on Talisman to institute an independent human rights monitoring regime and report the results in six months. Although the motion was defeated, it attracted significant support, and Talisman publicly committed to investigate and report back to shareholders on human rights in oil concession.

While share values in Talisman rose considerably following the Canadian government's reaction to the assessment mission's report, oil analysts still consider the stock undervalued, owing to the maelstrom of controversy swirling around Talisman. In May 2000, another Canadian company intending to develop the Melut oil fields in Sudan backed out of the project, citing the reason as negative publicity generated by a human rights campaign against it.

The objective of these strategies is to make it unprofitable for corporations to pursue corporate security at the expense of human security, or, to put it another way, to use market incentives to reprimand companies for the bad company they keep. They supplement but do not replace activism directed at the international community. In October 2000, Sudan was denied an anticipated seat on the UN Security Council.

The actions of individuals, coalitions, and organizations are vital in exposing and destabilizing the warped triangulation of corporate security, military security, and human security. These campaigns transpire in the interstitial spaces between individual states, corporate entities, and the UN system. However imperfect the translation, however partial the communication, it is within these spaces that women can and do form alliances that arise within, because of, and despite hierarchical global power relations.

### POSTSCRIPT

In October 2002, Talisman announced that its intention to sell its 25 percent share in GNPOC to a subsidiary of India's national oil company for approximately $US750 million. Talisman President and CEO Jim Buckee explained Talisman's decision as follows:

> We have consistently said that we liked our position in Sudan, the people and the project. But, we have also always said that we would sell at the right price. Talisman's shares have continued to be discounted based on perceived political risk in-country and in North America to a degree that was unacceptable. . . . Shareholders have told me they were tired of continually having to monitor and analyze events relating to Sudan.

The sale was finalized in the spring of 2003. The dogged and tireless efforts of NGOs in raising awareness, promoting market-based sanctions by shareholders, and maintaining the pressure on Talisman Energy are widely and rightly credited with catalyzing Talisman Energy Inc.'s withdrawal from Sudan. Human rights organizations have vowed not to abandon their monitoring and advocacy in light of the transfer in ownership.

In the United States, Sudanese individuals and the Presbyterian Church Sudan are attempting to use U.S. law to hold Talisman Energy Inc. accountable for complicity in gross human rights violations committed by the GoS in and around the oil fields (*Presbyterian Church of Sudan v. Talisman Energy, Inc.,* 2003). The U.S. courts have thus far refused to dismiss the action against Talisman, despite the juridical novelty of holding corporations accountable under international law for complicity in genocide, slavery, and displacement. At the same time, the Bush administration has expressed its intention to press for an interpretation of U.S. law that will effectively prevent private actors from using U.S. law to hold corporations to account for their conduct abroad. While the Justice Department cites the protection and advancement of U.S. foreign policy interests as its motive, human rights lawyers suspect that the U.S. government is merely serving the interests of the corporate lobby.

Meanwhile, the conflict continues unabated in Sudan, accompanied by rumors of—or even spasmodic attempts at—a negotiated settlement. Human security remains as elusive as ever, the need for transnational alliances remains as crucial as ever, and the condition of Sudan and its people remains as tragic as ever. The best the author can hope for is that the preceding sentence of this postscript will soon become outdated so that a new and better postscript can be written.

## NOTES

1. The other element of our mandate involved investigating allegations of slavery and slaverylike practices in Sudan. The present text will not address this issue.

2. It would be simplistic to infer that oil revenue directly finances the purchase of arms. Given Sudan's debt, revenues are more likely to flow to creditors. However, the promise of future oil revenue can be used to secure more credit, which can be used to buy arms.

3. With respect to corporate securities (stocks, bonds, etc.) it might be more accu-

rate to say that highly valued stock, rather than the existence of the stock, denotes the well-being of the corporation.

4. The man ordered our helicopter pilot to divert the helicopter from the path we had requested him to fly. We later learned that we were approaching the site of two GoS helicopter gunships that had crashed nearby.

5. One member of our mission spoke Arabic and reported that one of the Sudanese security officers for GNPOC coached a villager in his responses to questions regarding compensation for relocation of a village.

6. Until very recently, internecine conflict within the South has exacted a terrible toll in terms of the South's ability to resist the North and in sheer loss of human lives. It is estimated that more of Southern Sudanese have been killed during the most recent phase of the civil war by competing rebel armies than by the GoS army. Southern Sudanese civilians are often caught in the middle when control over contested territory shifts back and forth, as each militia accuses the civilian population of collaborating with the enemy.

7. Women are targeted for rape as a means of "punishing" the local population for their alleged collaboration with the "enemy." The diversion of humanitarian aid, including famine relief, by [male] rebel armies also affects women and children disproportionately (Jok 2000). After decades of civil war, a culture of militarized gender violence has inevitably seeped into and corroded the social fabric of familial and communal relations. Southern Sudanese women have the highest rate of maternal mortality of all African displaced populations. Jok Madut Jok (1999) concludes that "what threatens women's reproductive well-being most, especially in 'pronatalist' societies in transition such as south Sudan, is that society responds to increased rates of infant mortality by urging women to maximize their reproductive activity in order to replace the lost ones" (197). Women's reproductive role is exploited as a "duty" to serve the national struggle, and the psychological and physical coercion exercised within their communities to reproduce leads to violence, increased STDs, and declining health for women.

8. John Harker is the sole author. The members of the mission contributed data, analysis, critique and Appendices 3 and 7, but Harker retained authority over the final content of the report, including the recommendations.

9. In a vaguely worded allusion to the role of corporations, an earlier Department of Foreign Affairs policy statement raised the prospect that "the business sector, potentially a key actor in enhancing human security, could be more effectively engaged" (Canada, DFAIT 1999b: 5).

10. Interestingly, the pipeline carrying oil from the oil fields in the South to Port Sudan in the North has been sabotaged by Northern opponents of the National Islamic Front regime at least three times since it was completed in mid-1999.

11. Interestingly, sources report that the edict was sparked by Shell Oil's decision to hire women to work in gas stations.

12. In his 1999 report to the Commission on Human Rights, Special Rapporteur Leonard Franco also reports that he was "encouraged by his meeting with Sudanese women of various ethnic, religious and political backgrounds who, within their respective organizations and through the implementation of different projects involving and empowering women at the grass-roots level, are making their own valu-

able contribution towards the common goal of peace-making and building in the Sudan" (31).

13. In practice, these forces are drawn from two different sources: the national militaries of the country in which the firm operates and incorporated mercenary armies, or "private military companies" (PMCs), as they prefer to be known. Although Amnesty International and others claim that Talisman relies on PMCs, the mission was not able to verify the claim.

14. Talisman's arguments often reduce to the claim that no displacement is happening because if it were happening they would know about it. In one instance, Talisman senior management insisted that it had thoroughly investigated and refuted reports of forced removal. In fact, no such investigation was ever conducted. My strong impression is that Talisman does its best not to ask GNPOC Security personnel how it does its job of "securing" the oil fields and that it readily accepts any rendition of events supplied by GNPOC Security at face value.

15. This particular community leader was a young Dinka man who had been educated in Khartoum and spoke English. The university would not grant him the law degree he had earned unless he first did military service in the GoS army, a requirement imposed on all Sudanese males. He refused to serve and returned to his community in a semiofficial capacity.

16. A UN report on the situation in the Nuba Mountains (technically in North Sudan) documents widespread rape of Nuba women by GoS forces and, to a much lesser extent, by SPLA forces. The assaults typically occur when the women are cultivating their farms or gathering water. When asked whether men in the community might take over these tasks, women responded, "Men get killed if caught, we only get raped" (MONEE Project 1999: 10).

17. On the suggestion of another woman on the mission, the final report contains an appendix excerpting quotes from the Southern Sudanese women and men who spoke to us about the conditions of their lives. Beyond identifying them by sex and location, the appendix does not contextualize, or interpret, their statements (all names are pseudonyms). The passages constitute translated testimony transcribed by us in our notes. The passages were selected for inclusion in the appendix on the basis of our perception that they were informative and powerful. Many of the statements emerged from a single meeting with a displaced community, and in what follows I attempt to furnish some of the context missing from the appendix. Quotations that are not cited to the report are drawn from my personal notes.

18. Of course, as defenders of Talisman are quick to point out, Talisman's exit would not break the chain; the flow of international capital would simply originate from a new source, probably Europe or China.

19. China denied media reports that it was amassing troops in Sudan to assist the GoS in its counteroffensive against Southern rebels.

20. Among the combatants, only the GoS possesses bombers.

# 5

# No "Safe Haven"

## *Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan*

### *Shahrzad Mojab*

Violence against women occurs throughout the world. It takes numerous forms depending on the context in which patriarchal gender relations interact with social formations such as culture, religion, class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Annual reports on the state of women published by the United Nations provide a grim picture of the ubiquity of violence. Our knowledge about the exercise of this form of patriarchal power is growing, and in some countries state and nonstate initiatives against violence have already begun.

Violence against women sometimes takes the form of killing. In the Middle East, for instance, "honor killing" is prevalent. Amnesty International (1999b) reports that "[i]n Pakistan, hundreds of women, of all ages, in all parts of the country and for a variety of reasons connected with perceptions of honor are killed every year. The number of such killings appears to be steadily increasing as the perception of what constitutes honor—and what damages it—steadily widens" (5).[1] The Taliban regime in Afghanistan unleashed the most brutal forms of violence against all the women of the country. The unceasing conflicts of the post–Cold War era have promoted violence against women in the Persian Gulf region, the former Yugoslavia, Kurdistan, and several African states.

In this chapter, I will examine the practice of honor killing in the "safe haven" that was created by the allies of the 1991 Gulf War in Iraqi Kurdistan. During that war, the United States encouraged the Kurds of Iraq to rise up against Saddam Hussein's regime, but when they did so, Washington abandoned them. The Iraqi Army was then free to unleash its air and ground forces against the Kurds and forced some two million people into an exodus to the mountains, resulting in the death of tens of thousands from exposure to cold and hunger (see Map 5.1).

Map 5.1.  Kurdish areas of Iraq, 1991–2000. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.


The tragic Kurdish exodus, televised throughout the world, pressured the United States and its allies to intervene. Under the aegis of the United Nations, they created a no-fly zone in the northern parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, which prevented Iraqi army operations against the Kurds. In a northwestern enclave there, they set up a "safe haven" to encourage the return of the refugees to their homes. Under the protection of the United States, Britain, and France, the Kurds of Iraq created an autonomous government called the Regional Government of Kurdistan. However, a situation of intermittent war continued to ruin the lives of the people there. Under these conditions, vio-

lence against women increased in scope and frequency. One common practice was "honor killing."

In this chapter, I will document the way that this "safe haven" turned into a slaughterhouse for women. Numerous forces—local, regional, and international—were involved in these crimes. Resisting "honor killing" is a challenge to feminists and other actors interested in the democratization of gender relations. I will briefly examine these challenges to feminist theory and practice.

## THE KURDS: A NONSTATE, DIVIDED NATION

With a population variously estimated between twenty and thirty million, the Kurds are often identified as the world's largest nonstate nation. Their homeland, Kurdistan, was forcibly divided between the Ottoman Empire and Iran from 1639 to 1918. The larger, western, half of Kurdistan was redivided, in the wake of the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, among the newly created states of Iraq (under British occupation and mandate, 1918–32) and Syria (under French occupation and mandate, 1917–46), and the much reduced Ottoman state (Republic of Turkey since 1923). The modernizing nation-states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria pursued coercive centralization policies aimed at integrating the Kurds into the dominant Turkish, Persian, and Arab languages and cultures. This project of state and nation building entailed genocide, ethnocide, and linguicide, especially in Turkey, Iran ( in the 1930s), Iraq (since the 1980s), and Syria (since the 1960s) (Levene 1998; van Bruinessen 1995; Fernandes 1999).

Kurdish responses to the practice of forcible assimilation have been based on nationalist resistance, including numerous revolts aimed at achieving self-determination and other struggles for maintaining and creating national language and culture (McDowall 1996). While the right of the Kurds to self-determination has been recognized in international law (Falk 1994; Bring 1992), the United Nations and regional and world powers have refused to endorse their attempts to achieve self-rule. The Kurdish people have been, for centuries, diverse in terms of social and economic organization. Rural, tribal, and urban ways of life have coexisted symbiotically in Kurdistan. Until the 1960s, the majority were nontribal peasants tied to the land under conditions of feudalism. A small portion of the population was nomadic-tribal, engaged in animal husbandry, and moved between summer and winter pastures. Urban life flourished under conditions of feudal relations of production. The Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi, who lived in the city of Bitlis for a few months between 1655 and 1656, provided a detailed account of urban life in seventeenth-century Kurdistan. The city, with a population of about

twenty-five thousand, was the seat of the ruler of Bitlis principality and was rich in natural and human resources; it had a flourishing trade with the world outside Kurdistan and was a prominent center of learning.[2]

At the turn of the twentieth century, at least half of the population in Kurdistan lived in urban centers. About a dozen cities have populations ranging from half to one million.[3] Outside Kurdistan, the number of Kurds living in Istanbul is estimated at about one million; more than half a million immigrants and refugees live in various cities of western Europe, mostly in Germany. Tribal forms of organization have either declined or disappeared, although in Iraq tribalism was reinforced by developments in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War.[4] Nomadism is virtually nonexistent, and the rural population is sedentary, although transhumance may be found in some places.

The Western media and academia generally present the Kurds as a tribal or nomadic people. I argue that this tribalization of a socially diverse nation is at best simplistic and at worst politically motivated. For some—especially Arab, Persian, and Turkish nationalists—the tribalization of the Kurds involves a political mission that denies them the status of a nation entitled to the right of self-determination. For others, it may be a problem of inadequate information or even romanticization. For feminists studying gender relations in Kurdish society, the purchase of the tribal myth will constrain them in adequately understanding the complexity of the patriarchal organization of Kurdish society and the conflictual relations between nationalism, feminism, and the women's liberation movement.

The diversity of Kurdish social organization and its changing structures pose serious challenges to feminist scholarship. Patriarchy has appeared in diverse forms in tribal, rural, and urban social formations. While gender relations are unequal, with males in a position of power, in both rural and urban contexts, the exercise of patriarchal power is embedded in relations among and between social class, religion, nationalism, modernity, and the state. For instance, Kurdish women have been members of parliament in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, and Europe since the 1990s, while many women continue to be violently punished if they associate with or even talk to men. While rural women in Kurdistan have never veiled, Muslim clergymen have been able to impose the *hijab* (head and face covering) in some areas where Iran's Islamic regime wields influence. There is a century-long culture of opposition to women's oppression, yet some political organizations, nationalist as well as Islamist, promote feudal and religious patriarchal relations as "national" or Islamic culture. This chapter examines one form of the exercise of gender power: the killing of women as a means of disciplining them into subordination, controlling their sexuality, and maintaining the purity, propriety, and honor of the family and the nation. This form of gendered violence is called "honor killing."

## HONOR KILLING IN TIMES OF PEACE

The forms and scope of violence against women vary according to the circumstances in which they occur. War and peace are two contexts that call into play different sources of violence. Wars, for instance, turn the women of the "enemy" into a target, leading to mass rape and other forms of abuse. Honor killing also operates differently in times of peace and war. In the following pages I examine the culture, politics, laws, and traditions of honor killing in times of peace in Kurdistan and in the states that rule over the Kurds.

In spite of the radical transformation of Kurdish society from largely rural social formations to a predominantly urban and transnational community, the practice of honor killing connects the old with the new and the homeland with the diaspora. While this form of violence is nurtured by socioeconomic constituents such as class, its continuity cannot be explained by economic factors alone. In Kurdistan, the culture of honor killing has outlived the demise of feudal-tribal relations. Problematizing the continuity rather than the rupture in the history of honor killing is not simply an "academic" issue. Indeed, it would be difficult to uproot this form of violence without understanding its ubiquity and persistence. Today's vindications of honor killing by its perpetrators clearly follow the pattern established by tradition in the past centuries, first exposed by Mela Mehmud Bayezidi, a learned Kurdish mullah, in 1858–59 (Bayezidi 1963). He wrote that the Kurds were strongly against killing and did not kill men who were taken prisoner during violent conflicts such as war and robbery: "But of course they do kill men who commit bad deeds *(şûla xirab)*. They even kill their own wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters. And to [punish] such bad deeds, women also kill; for instance, mothers strangle their daughters in the night or poison and kill them, and mothers-in-law do it to their daughters-in-law, and sisters to sisters. No chief *(agha)* and no village elder *(rîspî)* asks why you have killed this [woman]" (191–90).[5] Bayezidi used the words *bad deeds* to refer to premarital or extramarital sexual intercourse by both women and men. He noted that Kurdish "women and girls do not hide away from anyone and are free, too, like the people of Europe. However, [they are free] because it is believed that they do not engage in bad deeds; otherwise, if one of them commits a bad act, there is no alternative to killing her" (190).[6] He notes that there is much respect for Kurdish women. Even during a war, no one kills women. However, "when they [i.e., women] commit a bad deed, no one will intercede, and they are killed, since if this is not done this way, Kurdish women will not abstain from people [i.e., men] and will then be involved in many bad deeds, but they are scared of *(ditirsin)* being killed" (175–74; see, also, p. 113). Women were killed for adultery, eloping (181–80), and not being a virgin at time of marriage (80–79). Bayezidi emphasized that killing

instilled fear in women and that because of this fear they self-disciplined their modesty (174, 113). He noted that in nonsexual "hideous acts" *(qeba-het)*, families claimed blood money and also interceded to save a killer or a thief but that in cases of adultery the family of the adulterous woman would kill both of the adulterers immediately.[7] Even if the family of the woman did not witness the act of adultery but found out about it, "they will immediately kill the woman by stabbing and burying her. None of the neighbors and relatives and no other person will ask the killer why you [he or she] did this (the killing), and there will be no condolence and no mourning. And then the woman's family will always be on guard to find the opportunity to kill the man who was involved in the bad deed" (113–12).

In describing the conditions under which women were disciplined by killing, Bayezidi mentioned three situations that would lead to unquestionable killing—premarital sex (loss of virginity), extramarital sex (adultery) and eloping. The common thread that connects these forms of violence is the almost total control of the sexuality and body of the woman by the feudal patriarchal system. A woman, married or unmarried, must be chaste, loyal, pure, obedient, and subordinate. In the feudally and tribally organized rural environment described by Bayezidi, women were not veiled, secluded, or segregated. However, a woman was the carrier or embodiment of the honor of her husband and, through him, that of the family and the whole community. In the absence of the husband, other male members of the family, namely the father, brothers, and uncles, acted as the guardians of honor. Bayezidi emphasized the participation of mothers in killing their daughters. The codes of honor were clearly inscribed in culture, tradition, custom, religion, and the economic system.

In the labor-intensive agrarian and transhumant economies of rural Kurdistan, women constituted a major economic resource. Not only were they needed to reproduce the male lineage, but their labor was vital in domestic work as well as agrarian production. As Bayezidi aptly noted, nomadic women were the best of all, since they were good, obedient wives and at the same time were slave-type laborers and guardians of the household (99–98). However, the patriarchal order made a clear distinction between women and all other forms of property. A woman was the *namûs* or "honor" of the whole family but especially of its male members. The loss of property due to theft, natural disaster, and other factors was tolerated, as was the loss of a woman due to natural death or accident. However, there was no tolerance for the loss of honor.

Bayezidi wrote about honor killing as a component of "Kurdish customs and manners." I will examine below the reproduction of this sociocultural phenomenon by the nation-states that rule over the Kurds, by Kurdish nationalists, and by individuals who commit this form of violence.

*The Killing Fields of the Nation-State*

Honor killings in the traditional society of Kurdistan were committed by individuals, families, tribes, and communities without the intervention of the state. Killing women was an ʿ*urf* (feudal and tribal tradition), *resm* (custom), and ʿ*adet* (habit), all of which were sanctioned by religion. Until the mid-nineteenth century, much of Kurdistan was under the rule of Kurdish principalities, which were patriarchal feudal ministates. Under this political regime, a man was free to kill his wife, sister, or mother in the name of defending his "honor." By the time Bayezidi was writing, the system of principalities had been overthrown through the military offensives of the Ottoman and Iranian states.

   The extension of Ottoman and Iranian state power to Kurdistan did not change patriarchal gender relations. For one thing, in spite of the proclamation of European-style constitutional regimes in both countries (Ottoman Turkey in 1876, suspended in 1878, restored in 1908; Iran in 1906), the political system remained undemocratic and patriarchal. In Turkey, the nationalists (Young Turks), who had shared power with the Sultan since the 1908 bourgeois democratic revolution, introduced in 1917 a Family Law that brought the religious courts under the jurisdiction of the secular Ministry of Justice. However, these reforms did not challenge the patriarchal order and could not deter widespread violence against women. Moreover, state power was extended primarily to urban centers, and feudal-tribal customary law *(ʿurf )* and Islamic canonical law *(şerîʿet)* continued to be practiced in the largely rural society of the time.

   The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I (1914–18) led to the redivision of the Western part of Kurdistan between the newly created states of Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In Turkey, nationalist forces, led by Kemal Atatürk, seized state power and founded a secular republic in 1923. Iraq and Syria were formed as modern nation-states under the direct rule of Britain and France. In Iran, a secular, centralizing, and dictatorial monarchy was established by Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925. These constitutional regimes turned "subjects" *(raʿāyā)* into citizens, but only on paper. The nationalist regimes of Turkey and Iran declared secularism, modernization, and Westernization as the cornerstones of their project of nation building. Women were to play a prominent role in this process. They were unveiled, often forcibly, and encouraged to enter the nondomestic spheres of work, education, and politics.

   Unlike the early nation-states of the West, such as Britain, France, and the United States, the nationalist regimes of Turkey and Iran advocated "women's emancipation" as a priority. Turkish and Persian nationalisms had acquired state power, suppressed the nascent women's movements, and launched their own "state feminisms." Much like the West, however, the exer-

cise of state power remained patriarchal.[8] Legal reforms borrowed European traditions and combined them with *şerî^et* (the canonical law of Islam), which treated men and women unequally. Violence against women, especially honor killing, was tolerated. When the Islamic Republic of Iran was established in 1979, the legal system was de-Westernized and fully Islamicized with vengeance. For instance, married women and men who engaged in extramarital intercourse were stoned to death; the punishment for lesbian women and gay men was execution.[9]

Republican Turkey, founded on the principles of Kemal Atatürk's nationalism, has taken an uncompromising stand in favor of the separation of state and religion and the modernization of the legal structures. However, like many of the European models emulated by Turkey, the juridico-political system remains patriarchal. Although the killing of women for reasons of "honor" is not sanctioned by law, the culture of "honor" continues to frame the legal structure of the secular state. According to one study, "Turkish criminal law makes female honour the state's business. Many sex crimes are defined by Turkey's criminal code in terms of their impact on women's virginity and honour. In fact, sexual assaults against women are classified by law as 'Felonies Against Public Decency and Family Order.' In contrast, other forms of battery are considered 'Felonies Against Individual' " (Human Rights Watch 1995: 422). Under this system, honor killing continues to be practiced, especially in the Kurdish provinces. Several cases of killing were reported in the late 1990s (Turgut 1998). The focus of this chapter is, however, on the Kurds of Iraq, who achieved some degree of self-rule in the "safe haven" created, under UN auspices, by the two allies of the 1991 Gulf War, the United States and Britain.

### The Kurdish Nationalist Movement and Honor Killing in Iraqi Kurdistan

Kurdish nationalists, like many Western observers of the Kurds, claim that Kurdish women enjoy more freedom than their Turkish or Arab and Persian sisters. This distinctiveness is visible, they claim, in the way they combine loyalty to the husband with the freedom to associate with other men, in the absence of veiling, in mixed dances, and even in a tradition of ruling a tribe or territory. This claim of relative freedom by Kurdish women, however, has been questioned (Mojab 1987, 2001).

Nationalists are interested in women as vehicles of nation building. From the nationalist perspective, Kurdish women are the reproducers of the nation, the source of "pure" language, the guardians of "authentic" culture, and even freedom fighters. Although Kurdish nationalists do not constitute a homogenous political tendency, their policy on women displays striking consistency. While leftists within the movement generally oppose killing

women on charges of honor "crimes," others either ignore the policy or sanction it as national and religious tradition. I will briefly examine the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, where a system of self-rule was in place between 1991 and 2003.

I have not been able to collect official statistical data on honor-related violence committed against women in any of the states that rule over the Kurds. There is broad agreement, however, that honor killing in Iraqi Kurdistan, before it was transformed into a war zone in 1961, was mostly conducted in the rural areas, although it was also an urban phenomenon. This form of violence increased sharply in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, when Western powers formed a "safe haven" in order to "protect" the Kurds from Saddam Hussein's army. The following section examines the formation of a war zone, as well as the extension of Turkey's zone of genocide to Iraqi Kurdistan.[10]

## HONOR KILLING IN THE WAR ZONE: IRAQI KURDISTAN AFTER 1961

Iraqi Kurdistan has been a war zone since 1961. The republican government that had assumed power in the course of a coup d'état in 1958 initially promised the formation of a regime of equal partnership of the two main nationalities, Arabs and Kurds. However, by 1961, Baghdad was cracking down on the Kurds and the political organizations of the opposition. The conflict led to armed resistance in Kurdistan, which continued intermittently throughout the thirty years preceding the U.S.-led Gulf War of 1991. In September 1961, armed conflicts began between the Iraqi army and the Kurdish nationalists who were organized in the only Kurdish political organization of the time, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). During this period, much of the countryside was in the hands of Kurdish guerrillas, especially during the night, while the government ruled over the major urban centers.

A period of relative peace ensued between 1970 and 1974, during which the two sides agreed to work toward a gradual transition to autonomy. However, the Iraqi government unilaterally declared war on the Kurdish side after the termination of the four-year period. The United States, Iran, and Israel encouraged the Kurdish leadership to reject any compromise with the Iraqi regime, which they considered to be in the Soviet orbit. The three countries helped the Kurdish leadership throughout the war from March 1974 to March 1975, when Iraq and Iran resolved their differences in a meeting of Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran in Algiers. At this point, the United States and Iran abandoned the Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, who announced the end of the struggle. More than two hundred thousand Kurds

took refuge in Iran, and the Iraqi army conquered the Kurdish countryside. Within a year, some of the leftist nationalists reorganized and resumed guerrilla war under the leadership of a new coalition group called the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). This was followed by the reappearance of the Kurdish Democratic Party under the same leadership, which called itself the "Provisional Leadership." One of the targets of its military activities was PUK. The war zone was thus further militarized in two fronts, the first between the Iraqi state and Kurdish nationalists (now organized into the KDP and the PUK) and the second between the two political organizations: the KDP and PUK.

A third front was opened in 1980 when Iraq attacked Iran and launched the longest war between the two countries. The two Kurdish political parties wanted to benefit from the war between the two states by helping Iran against Iraq. Under the aegis of Iran, they formed a front in 1987 with the participation of minor Kurdish groups. The Iraqi government responded by exercising an unwritten, internationally denied, punishable "right": this was what Leo Kuper (1981) calls the sovereign territorial state's "right to genocide." Iraq punished the Kurds by unleashing the *Anfal* genocide of 1988, which took about 180,000 lives, including a massacre in the town of Halabja by chemical bombs, the elimination of some 8,000 male Kurds of the Barzani tribe, and the destruction of many villages (Middle East Watch 1993). Western powers supported Iraq's war against Iran and refused to take measures restraining Iraq's chemical and genocidal war against the noncombatant population of Kurdistan (McDowall 1996: 361–63).

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 to "liberate" this oil-rich country. Following this invasion, the United States formed a coalition with twenty-eight states, conducted a forty-two-day war in January and February 1991, and forced Iraq to withdraw from the country. During the war, the United States encouraged the Kurds and Shi'ites of southern Iraq to revolt against Baghdad, and when they did, the Iraqi army launched a brutal offensive against them. As a result, some two million Kurds escaped into the mountains, seeking refuge in Turkey and Iran. However, Turkey refused to allow the refugees into its territory, fearing they would destabilize its own Kurdish population. Under the pressure of world public opinion informed by the televised tragedy, and to save Turkey from the perceived threat of the refugees, the United States, Britain, and France decided to intervene. This was facilitated by the UN Security Council Resolution 688 of April 5, 1991, which condemned the "repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas." This was the first time the United Nations had mentioned the name *Kurds,* and it was the first departure from the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of the member states. The allied powers imposed a no-fly zone in the north and the

south and created a "safe haven" in the northwestern region bordering Turkey (Adelman 1992).

### Reorganization of the War Zone: War and Peace in the "Safe Haven"

The exodus of the Kurds to Iran and to the borders of Turkey came to an end within a few weeks when most of the refugees returned to their homes. Within a year, the nationalist Kurdish parties conducted parliamentary elections to form an autonomous region in the no-fly zone. In the absence of any Iraqi government presence, they founded the Regional Government of Kurdistan, which formally remained a part of Iraq. This was a rather new form of governance called by some researchers a "de facto state" (Cooke 1995).

Two nationalist political parties, the PUK and the KDP, virtually divided the executive and legislative powers of the Regional Government, forming what was popularly called a regime of "fifty-fifty." They kept intact their own guerrilla forces, which had fought the Iraqi army for decades. It soon became clear that all power resided in the two parties rather than the autonomous government. Kurdistan also suffered from a "double embargo," that of the United Nations over Iraq and of Iraq over the Kurdish region. Another selective embargo was imposed by the neighboring states of Turkey, Iran, and Syria, which had perceived a threat to their own territorial integrity from a functioning autonomous Kurdish state. The economy of the region, devastated by decades of war, did not recover, and poverty, malnutrition, and hunger continued to destroy the lives of the majority of the people.

A situation of peace and poverty prevailed until May 1994, when an internal war broke out between the two parties. This was the beginning of a new round of armed conflict, which culminated in the KDP's invitation to the Iraqi army to help it against the PUK in 1996. The Iraqi army crossed the borders of the no-fly zone with heavy artillery and tanks, pushing the PUK out of the region. As a result, the ineffectual Regional Government of Kurdistan came to an end. Failing to resolve their differences, both sides formed their own governments in 1999. The KDP was in control of the northwestern part of Iraqi Kurdistan centered at the city of Hewlêr (Irbil), and the PUK controlled the southeastern part with its capital city of Sulêmanî (Sulaiymaniya).

While internal war between the Kurdish forces plagued the "safe haven," Turkey, Iraq, and Iran continued to destabilize the Regional Government in various ways, including military action, an economic blockade, and assassinations. Throughout the latter part of the 1990s, the Turkish army sent tens of thousands of troops into Iraqi Kurdistan to suppress the guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which had sought independence from Turkey's Kurdistan and used Iraqi Kurdistan as their bases. Ankara and the

United States put pressure on the KDP and the PUK to help the Turkish army against the PKK. The KDP did not hesitate to engage in this offensive, which gave it a new war front in the safe haven. The Turkish army frequently invaded Iraqi Kurdistan.

*Honor Killing in the "Safe Haven"*

In spite of all the economic and political hardships in the safe haven, Iraqi Kurds were pleased to be free of Saddam's rule. For Kurdish political parties, postwar developments allowed a radical transformation of the guerrilla organizations into ruling political parties that exercised state power. While the United States warned the Kurds in the safe haven against any political moves that would threaten the territorial integrity of Iraq, they enjoyed extensive freedom in creating a different legal and political structure. The nationalism of the nonstate Kurds was thus put to the test of practice. Now in power, could they do better than the Arab, Turkish, and Persian states?

In May 1992 in the safe haven, Kurdish political parties conducted elections for the first parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan without the interference of the central government. Only five of the 105 elected members of the parliament were women. Of the five members, four were on the PUK ballot list and one on the KDP's (Hoff, Leezenberg, and Muller 1992). Women and men were forced to line up separately to cast their votes. This gender segregation contravened normal practice among the majority of Kurds, whose women and men socialize freely in the rural areas. It also contradicted nationalist claims regarding the freedom of Kurdish women to associate with men, the ubiquity of mixed dancing, and the absence of veiling. With only one woman member, the gender composition of the cabinet was equally patriarchal.

While Kurdish legislation could not compromise the territorial integrity of the Iraqi state, the Kurdish parliament was free to abolish or reform any laws that did not touch on the integrity of the Iraqi state. One law that turned into a site of struggle between the RGK and Kurdish women was the misogynist personal status law of Iraq. The Iraqi state under Baʿth Party rule was secular, nationalist, and patriarchal. Women were encouraged to join the nation-building projects of the state but were not allowed to engage in independent organizing. Soon after the Islamic state had come to power, the Iraqi regime, like other Middle Eastern states, accommodated more Islamic laws, especially those dealing with the regulation of gender relations. The personal status laws, for instance, allowed men to engage in polygyny and to kill their wives, sisters, and female cousins for violating the honor of the family.

There was a sharp increase in the number of Kurdish women who were

killed by the male members of their families and relatives soon after the for-
mation of the safe haven. Some of the women abused by the Iraqi army dur-
ing the genocidal campaigns of the late 1980s returned to Kurdistan; there
were reports of mistreatment and even killing of these women. Honor
killing and self-immolation were, however, most prevalent. The dead bodies
of women were found in the streets and on the roads. The frequency of these
murders was unprecedented.

Soon after the opening of the Kurdish parliament, women demanded the
repeal of Iraq's civil codes in a petition with some fifteen thousand signa-
tures. They demanded the abolition of polygyny, the recognition of women's
right to divorce, and equality of inheritance. However, parliament refused to
pay attention to these demands (Begikhani 1996).

The RGK and, later, its two successor governments in the northwest and
southeast of Iraqi Kurdistan have not provided any statistical data on the
murder of women. The evidence available has been collected by women's
support groups. Although they have compiled the data independently and
from diverse sources, there is no disparity between them in terms of the
scope and frequency of the crimes committed against women.

A study conducted by the Independent Organization of Women (Rêkxi-
rawî Serbexoy Jinan) reports that, according to incomplete data, 538 women
lost their lives due to honor killing and self-immolation between 1991 and
1998 (see Table 5.1). This figure does not cover all parts of Iraqi Kurdistan
and is based on field research and press reports. Brief information about the
names of the killers and their victims, the reason for killing, location, and
some photographs are provided.

According to a study published by *Jiyanewe* ("Revival"), a women's
biweekly paper in Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurdish government offices are not even
aware of the scope of killings. The police in Sulêmanî put the number of
assassinated women at 32 for the period from the beginning of 1998 to
March 1999. The figure provided by the courts was 3, while the Human
Rights Association (Mektebî Mafî Mirov) counted 140 assassinations and 36
deaths due to burning (Jiyanewe 1999:5). Most of these figures are from the
eastern parts of Kurdistan. Another study by *Jiyanewe* provides data for 1999
in the eastern region of Iraqi Kurdistan. There were 155 cases of burning and
self-immolation and 50 cases of assassination (Jiyanewe 2000: 29–38, 49–57).
In 2001, the Teaching (Fêrkarî] Hospital of Sulêmanî received the burnt
bodies of 105 women who had committed suicide for such reasons as family
problems (80 cases), forced marriages (13 cases), and conflict with their hus-
band's family (7 cases) (Mihammad Amin 2002: 6).

The situation in the western region was apparently worse. According to
one report, the Republic (Komar) Hospital in Hewlêr received in 1992 the
bodies of 160 murdered women, half of whom had been shot and the rest

TABLE 5.1. Assassination and Suicide in Southeastern
Iraqi Kurdistan, 1991–2000

| | Assassination | Suicide/Self-Immolation |
|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 6 | 2 |
| 1992 | 2 | 2 |
| 1993 | 14 | 5 |
| 1994 | 22 | 12 |
| 1995 | 41 | 16 |
| 1996 | 48 | 38 |
| 1997 | 166 | 65 |
| 1998 | 49 | 50 |
| 1999–2000 | 50 | 155 |
| **Total** | **398** | **345** |

The organization of the data in this study (Raouf and Mohamadi 1999) and the two pamphlets by *Jiyanewe* (1999, 2000) leaves much to be desired. Also, printing errors are abundant: for instance, the total number of cases of murdered women is given as 518 in the introduction (Raouf and Mohamadi 1999: 1), while it should be 538 when the various categories of assassination and suicide are added up. See also "Honour Killing" (2000).

strangled or stabbed (Qeredaxî 1996: 3). The number of women who lost their lives due to self-immolation in Hewlêr was 280 from September 1, 1991, to October 10, 1993 ("Jonbesh-e baraberi-talab-e zanan" 1998: 11). According to one account, in Iraqi Kurdistan, one woman was killed or committed suicide every twenty-four hours ("Hewalekanî têror û xokujî" 1998: 4). Fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, father-in-laws, brother-in-laws, and uncles, as well as mothers and sisters, all were implicated in these murders. Many suicides were due to marriages imposed on women by the family, including the practice of daughter or sister exchange in marriage *(jin-be-jine).* Under conditions of abject poverty, prostitution was also widespread. Prostitutes were also a target of honor cleansing.

Another form of violence was *etik kirdin,* the "defacing" of a women accused of violating the codes of propriety, honor, or modesty. This included the cutting of the nose, ears, and lips of the victim. One of the victims, Kajal Khidir, was able to take refuge in Canada in 2000. Her case is reported in the Kurdish press. She told the *Toronto Star* that she was "a mother of two sons, was four months pregnant when her former husband's relatives falsely accused her of having an improper relationship with a neighbour. She was beaten and bound by six of her husband's male relatives who chopped off her nose and left her lying on the street. Only her pregnancy prevented them from killing her. Her attackers were jailed, but released after

a day without charges" (Infantry 2000: B2).[11] This case was not unusual, and reports about other cases appeared in the Kurdish press in Iraq and abroad.[12]

### Honor Killing as a National Tradition

Before the two major parties shared power in the Regional Government of Kurdistan, they conducted a guerrilla war against the Iraqi state. Although they had their own women's organizations, both parties consciously denied women any role in their political and military ranks. Their women's organizations functioned primarily as cosmetics on extremely patriarchal party structures. Progress in women's emancipation was relegated to the future, after achieving self-rule. The nation came first, and women, workers, peasants, and children came last.

Kurdish nationalist parties discarded the more positive elements in rural gender relations—relatively free socializing of men and women and the absence of veiling—and did not hesitate to treat the most oppressive aspects of patriarchy as genuine national culture. Thus the KDP argued that tribal-feudal and Islamic forms of women's oppression were integral parts of the national culture of the Kurds. Honor killing was also given the status of national culture. To give one example of this line of thinking, I quote from a 1993 interview with four leaders from the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Yeketêtî Afretanî Kurdistan), which belongs to KDP. One of the interviewees denied the extensive killing of women and claimed that only a couple of women might have been killed in Sulêmanî (Çingiyanî 1993: 122).[13] Asked about their position on eloping *(redû kewtin)* as a means of avoiding arranged marriage, daughter or sister exchange *(jin be jine)*, and the selling of daughters, one interviewee opposed the practice because she considered it against the tradition of the Kurdish people. Another leader of the women's organization opposed eloping and said: "I cannot say, directly, that it [eloping] is a good thing. We should understand clearly the society in which we live. What culture do we have? If we talk about women's rights within a very extensive framework, the society *(komeĺ )* itself will stand against us. We should walk with society step by step. The Islamic culture and Kurdish culture have become social law *(yasay komeĺayetî)*; if we cross this border, we will not succeed" (Çingiyanî 1993: 124).

This is a typical statement of the conservative nationalist position. The interviewee conflates the patriarchal politics of her women's organization with the androcentrism of the whole nation. She treats Islamic and feudal gender relations as social and national norms that defy change. Asked about why women prostitutes were killed and male participants in prostitution were spared punishment, one of the interviewees argued that both should be punished not by death but by a flogging of a hundred lashes.

The Iraqi civil codes adopted by the Kurdish parliament allow a man to kill a female member of his family (wife, sister, daughter, mother) on charges of violating *namûs* (honor). Working within this legal framework, the Regional Government of Kurdistan refused to interfere in cases of honor killing. Men were thus allowed to judge and kill any female who they believed had violated their honor. Even if the killer of a woman was taken to the court, the murdered woman would be charged with adultery, and the murderer would be freed according to Iraqi civil codes. This violated even Islamic rules, which require the verdict of four "just witnesses" to prove a case of adultery. Medical examinations of the murdered women have shown that a large number of the victims were between thirteen and twenty years old and had not engaged in sexual intercourse (Begikhani 1998).

The absence of adequate data on honor killing in Iraqi Kurdistan and many Middle Eastern countries is an obstacle to research and action. While data for times of peace are also not available, the incomplete evidence for the 1990s is seen by most observers as extraordinary. The situation has been called, in Kurdish, *reşkujî jinan,* "massive murder of women." This mass violence is distinguished from the cases in former Yugoslavia by the fact that it is committed not by another ethnic group or state but rather by the male members of the women's own nation.

Several factors contributed to the unleashing of violence against women in the post–Gulf War period in the safe haven. The very fabric of social and gender relations was torn apart by the uprooting of the entire population of the Kurdish cities in April 1991, the resettlement of many in Iran, and finally their return. This major upheaval occurred in the context of the destruction of several thousand villages by the Iraqi regime from 1975 to the Gulf War. These events had already changed the demographic composition of Kurdish society and had swelled the size of urban areas. The abject poverty in the aftermath of the Gulf War was also an important factor. Women, often considered to be the property of the family, were further commodified in a system of gender relations that was based on the codes of propriety, chastity, and modesty, all inscribed in the phenomenon of *namûs.*

Another factor that played a retrogressive role in the increase of gendered violence was the rise of Islamic "fundamentalism," which was promoted among the Kurdish clergy by Iran. In Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish nationalist parties, which were always secular, sought the support of Iran in their conflict with the Iraqi government. In their negotiations with Tehran, the two major parties (the KDP and PUK) helped in the formation and operation of pro-Iranian Islamic organizations. Although both parties had always discounted religion as an element of Kurdish national identity, the KDP introduced Islam as a component of national life, while the secular PUK made compromises with religious forces.[14] The KDP began its official pronouncements with "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful . . . "

Wherever the Islamic groups became dominant, they imposed the veil on women in parts of Kurdistan where women had generally not experienced segregation or the Islamic veil.

## RESISTANCE TO HONOR KILLING

While the conservative nationalists treat feudal-Islamic patriarchy as the national norm of gender relations, they refuse to accept the tradition of resistance against patriarchal oppression as another component of the nation's political culture. There is no inconsistency here. The nationalist defense of repressive gender relations can thrive only on denial of the rapidly changing Kurdish society, denial of the emergence of new social forces, and denial of a history of resistance against feudal-Islamic patriarchy. However, even the rather rigid tribal and feudal gender relations allowed resistance, albeit minimal, against oppressive marriage relations, which turned women into property to be exchanged in marriage. I will briefly look at elopement, a form of resistance against this type of marriage, which is the norm in rural Kurdish society.

### *The Case of Eloping*

The autonomous Kurdish Republic of 1946, formed in Iranian Kurdistan, banned the practice of eloping and made it a punishable crime. According to one participant in the military administration of the republic (Mihammad-Amin Manguri), the ban on abduction/elopement was in conflict with the traditions of the Bilbas tribal confederacy occupying the territory to the west of the capital city Mahabad and across the border in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to this well-informed source, the people in the region considered the ban an "oppressive and unpleasant" ruling because it did not allow "freedom of loving, flirtation, falling in love, mixed dancing, and abduction. . . . [I]t would turn the youth into hermits *(wişkesofî)* and would hide from them the world of love" (Manguri 1999: 137).

The ruling was resented in the tribal region because, according to Manguri, elopement was considered an honor. If a woman had not eloped, she would not have been respected. The same was true for men: "[I]f a man had not abducted a woman, he would have been told, 'You are not a man, had you been a man you would have abducted a woman' " (138). Manguri claimed that the Kurds were ahead of the Europeans in the freedom of "loving and sexual desire" (138). He also mentions that the practice had an economic function. The adventure of elopement is always risky, sometimes ending up in the murder of the couple, but all sides are familiar with how to resolve the conflict. The man and the woman seek sanctuary (with a tribal

chief or landlord, a religious authority, or any respected and neutral person) in a safe place until a settlement is negotiated; the father of the girl is usually given a "bride-price" or "milk-price" *(şîrbayî)*, and others, too, may gain materially (Manguri 1999: 140; Edmonds 1957: 226).[15]

Edmonds, a British political officer assigned to Kurdistan during the British Mandate over Iraq, linked elopement/abduction to the "incurably romantic" women of the Bilbas tribal confederacy. Among the Bilbas, "many spirited girls would never dream of getting married" without eloping (Edmonds 1957: 225–26). However, elopement "may violate the prior right to the girl's hand of her paternal first cousin or blast the father's hopes of a good bride-price" (226). While the eloping couples risked their lives, all sides involved would benefit from a settlement. The father of the woman would get a bride-price while the mediating person, usually the *agha* ("landlord or tribal chief") or a religious figure (e.g., a *sheikh*), would collect fines *(cerîme)* and/or a "marriage fee" *(sûrane).*[16] Elopement allows a woman to choose her lover, albeit at the risk of losing her life. The "romanticism" of the Bilbas women may thus be buried in the brutality of the patriarchal order.[17] However, even this liberalizing of the tribal-feudal regime of gender relations is not tolerated by the nationalist KDP (see above).

### Honor Killing

A considerable number of poets, writers, journalists, and women's organizations have questioned the oppressive gender relations of Kurdistan throughout the twentieth century. A powerful indictment of honor killing and other forms of women's oppression is recorded in the works of Abdullah Goran, the greatest writer of modern Kurdish poetry. The following poem (Goran 1980: 209–11) is undated, although it was certainly written before 1962, the year of his death. The poem tells the story of how a young girl fell in love but the lover, a boy from a rich family, slept with her and refused to marry her. Staining the honor of the family, she was killed by her father. The poem dramatizes the horrors of a tragedy in which fathers, brothers, and mothers kill their own souls, their most beloved, their daughters, and their sisters.

*A Tombstone* (Berde-nûsêk)
*Inscribed on the Gravestone of an Adolescent Girl*

In the soil of my grave, O walker-in-the-cemetery,
Bury a sigh;
On my marble gravestone,
Shed wet tears.

In your bright world, I, too, was a soul,
In a beautiful body.

Like a butterfly, I was coming and going,
Among flowers!

The warm lap of my mother was the site of my coyness,
I was soul for my father;
The fame of my black eyes was my secret,
It had become a song.

But, alas, the shrilling songs of boys,
Soon intoxicated me
I bowed to clean love, and guilt
Diverted me.

I came across a treacherous youth, on my way,
By oath and promise,
He coiled like a snake, slept in my bed,
Shred my honor.

After the snake spat its venom,
It slipped back into the nest . . . [18]

The pale beseeching faces of my mother, my father, and myself
Were of no avail,
He, like his father, spat
Turned a deaf ear on us!

He was a boy, and, moreover, was influential,
According to popular tradition,
The meanness of his deeds was not questionable.
But, O fate!

I was a girl, the gazelle of the prison-house of life.
As punishment for my guilt,
I was beheaded by my own father . . . !
My scattered hair

Was soaked in blood and covered my eyes,
Thus I did not see
How in the heart of my father, my cut-off head
Became his wound?

Or, did my fond mother dare, without shame, to
Mourn warmly, like a mother,
Her youthful dead [daughter],
And wear a black dress . . . ?

A landmark in the protest against honor killing, this poem was written at a time when violence against women was not seen as a serious problem and resistance against it was not, therefore, on the agenda of democratic and socialist movements. Another milestone is the Kurdish filmmaker Yilmaz Güney's well-known movie *Yol* (Road) (1982), which strongly condemned this form of patriarchal violence.

The 1991 Gulf War, much more than the Iraq-Iran War of 1980–88, seriously disturbed the political, economic, and social order of the entire region without replacing it by a more democratic and just order. Violence became part of the daily experience of everyone in Iraq.

If war unleashed more violence against women in Iraqi Kurdistan, it also produced resistance against it. Individuals and organizations have participated in protests against male violence. Some of the organizations have offered support services. The Women's Union of Kurdistan, established in November 1989, has promoted women's rights and helped vulnerable women to cope with trauma.

The Independent Women's Organization (IWO), formed in May 1993, has been active in exposing honor killing and other forms of violence. In March 1998, it opened in Sulêmanî a Women's Shelter Centre, which saved many lives. In 1999, this group of activists, who are affiliated with the Worker Communist Party of Iraq, launched, in London, an "International Campaign for the Defence of Women's Rights in Iraqi Kurdistan." According to their newsletter, the shelter handled 233 cases in six months in 1999: 18 women were murdered, 57 threatened with killing, 38 committed suicide, 69 suffered from different pressures, 6 were raped, and 3 were dismembered (*Newa* 1999: 8). In February 2000, the representative of IWO in Britain wrote a letter to Kofi Anan, the United Nations' Secretary General, to seek the organization's support in replacing the Iraqi personal status law and the penal law in Kurdistan. It also launched an international petition campaign against these laws. The IWO has used the network of women's groups around the world as well as Internet opportunities to collect petitions and mobilize international women and human rights groups in support of Kurdish women.

The Women's Union of Kurdistan established the Women's Information Centre in April, 1997 in Sulêmanî with a mandate to educate women about their rights through media campaigns and to provide leadership training for women. The center has been active in organizing panel discussions, holding seminars on violence against women, and organizing March 8 International Women's Day rallies. In a campaign against honor killing it collected 50,025 signatures (Jiyanewe 2000: 53). It also formed a committee in defense of Kajal Khidir and participated actively in the court case of Sabiha Abdulla Ahmed, who was shot dead by an armed group with the assistance of her husband on October 14, 1997. In a memorandum to the president of the Regional Government of Kurdistan, the center presented the following demands:

1. Eradication of tribal family relations, which treat women as property.
2. Prohibition of violence against women by bringing the murderers to trial. This includes even the intention of killing.

3. Prohibition of Kurdish political parties as sanctuaries for killers. Political parties that shelter killers should be considered as accomplices in the crime.
4. Abolition of the Iraqi state's personal status law.

Equally significant is growing activism in the Kurdish diaspora. For example, a seminar was organized by Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killings in London on June 18, 2000. Attended by Kurdish specialists, lawyers, activists, and others, it was another public recognition of the widespread phenomenon of honor killing in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Another indication of resistance and growing consciousness among women is the formation of a Kurdish women's press in the 1990s. Most of the journals are published in Iraqi Kurdistan, Europe, and Turkey by women's organizations affiliated with political parties.[19] While it is difficult to depict in these presses a vibrant feminist "public sphere," some of these periodicals break the silence, and a few actively fight against patriarchal violence. These pressures and lobbying led to modest "legal" reform in the eastern region of Iraqi Kurdistan in early 2000.

In the absence of a parliament, the PUK's Jalal Talabani, the leader of the regional government in eastern Iraqi Kurdistan, issued two resolutions in April 2000, which aimed at reforming the personal status laws of Iraq. Approved by the "council of ministers," Resolution 59 treated honor killing as a punishable crime, while Resolution 62 restricted polygyny. Although praised by many, the resolutions have not changed the harsh realities of the killing fields. In August 2002, the Kurdish parliament in the KDP-held region amended Iraqi criminal law in order to criminalize honor killing.

## CONCLUSION: HONOR KILLING IN A NO-WAR-NO-PEACE ZONE

In the Kurdish experience briefly outlined above, honor killing is produced and reproduced by a host of social, economic, cultural, political, and religious structures that have a vested interest in the subjugation of women. Historically tied to the feudal-tribal organization of society and currently promoted by resurgent Islamisms, it rapidly increased in the growing urban centers of Iraqi Kurdistan under Kurdish self-rule. Not at the margins of Kurdish society, this form of violence has survived the secular legal systems of Turkey and Iraq. Honor killing is thus not only or primarily a legal issue; it has economic, social, religious, political, and cultural implications. It has also survived the extensive transformations of Kurdish society, especially urbanization, in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Honor killing occurs in times of peace and war. War, however, breeds

more violence against women. The increase in the scope of violence in Iraqi Kurdistan can be explained by, among other factors, (1) the unraveling of the political, social, and economic fabric of Kurdish society under conditions prevailing in the war zone; (2) the failure of Kurdish self-rule to democratize gender relations; (3) the nationalist politics of gender relations; (4) an upsurge in Islamic political activism; (5) a revival of tribal and feudal relations; and (6) the weakness of feminist consciousness, especially women's organizing.

As regards the first factor, Kurdish society broke down under conditions of intermittent war after 1961, suffering from forced urbanization (the destruction of several thousand Kurdish villages), a major genocidal campaign (1988), and the great exodus of the entire population to the mountains in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. The "safe haven" created under conditions of embargo by the United Nations, Iraq, and the neighboring states did not lead to recovery and in many ways continued to cause disruption. Gender relations, already patriarchal, were also affected, leading to the further aggravation of conflicts that breed more male violence against women.

The Kurdish nationalist leadership represented by the two major political parties (the KDP and PUK) failed to create a viable, democratic system of governance. Under conditions of anarchy, tribalism, already reinforced by the Iraqi state in the 1980s, turned into a powerful force.[20] After the formation of the "safe haven," the two political parties tried to incorporate the tribal leaders and their armed men into their organization. When the Regional Government of Kurdistan was established in 1992, the two parties did not delegate power to this government and reinforced instead their own armed *peshmarga*s. Already patriarchal in outlook, this relationship with the tribes resulted in a major compromise regarding the status of women. Tribal and feudal relations thrived on violence against women, and the two parties, even the urban nationalist leadership of the PUK, complied. The first Kurdish parliament refused to discard the personal status and penal laws of Iraq and by doing so denied the women of Kurdistan the right to life; they could be killed even when suspected of talking to a stranger.[21]

Although the two nationalist parties were secular before the coming to power of Islamic theocracy in Iran, they took on Islam-friendly postures, allowing Tehran a free hand in buying influence, setting up Islamic groups and parties, building mosques, and arming their Islamic groups. Under these conditions, the Kurdish parliament avoided legislation aiming at a secular regime of self-rule based on the separation of state and religion. At the same time, some Kurdish mullahs, sponsored by Iran, moved to Islamize Kurdish society by imposing the *hijab* head covering on women who had never experienced it, promoting gender segregation, intimidating feminists and women activists, and advocating violence against women.[22]

Although the PUK issued two resolutions in April 2000 to reform the Iraqi penal codes (see above regarding Resolutions 59 and 62 concerning the

punishment of honor killers and the restraining of polygyny), the absence of effective governance has left only a paper trail of reform. In interviews about the impact of the resolutions three months after they were issued (conducted and published by the PUK daily paper *Kurdistanî Nö*), women from the Germiyan region revealed that nothing had changed in the wake of the resolutions. According to one interviewee, her husband took a second wife as soon as he heard about Resolution 62, which restricted but did not ban polygyny. He did so to prove to his first wife that she remained powerless in the wake of the resolution. When she went to the court, she was told that they had not yet received the resolution. In this case, one of the problems regarding the application of the resolution on polygyny was the unfamiliarity of the first wife with law and the lack of support from her family should she decide to take legal action against her husband. Soon after Resolution 59 (regarding honor killing) was issued, a woman was killed, but her murderer was not identified. According to one interviewee, while male killers did not hide themselves before the resolution, now they no longer showed off, and it was difficult to identify them. One woman, a government clerk in the agriculture department, said, "The implementation of the resolutions required much struggle since our women don't know how to seek justice in the courts" (Saʿid 2000: 10).

In conclusion, the war zone of Iraqi Kurdistan has unleashed the forces of patriarchal violence and has enhanced the forging of alliances between nationalism, religion, and tribal-feudal male power. At the same time, this alliance has invited resistance from women and men who are interested in democratizing gender relations in Kurdistan. Although brutal national oppression continues to rally support for the nationalist cause, women have already begun resisting "their own" oppressors. Feminist consciousness is emerging in Kurdistan as a force that challenges rather than accommodates nationalism. It remains to be seen if Kurdish feminists will allow the nationalist movement to remain the watchdog of patriarchy.

## POSTSCRIPT

The first draft of this chapter was prepared in 2000. The book goes to press after the 2003 U.S.-led war against Iraq, which overthrew the Baʿthist regime and allowed the KDP and PUK to extend their power over all Kurdish regions of the country. This chapter was updated to cover the period up to the 2003 war.

## NOTES

1. For an account of violence against women in Bangladesh, see Habiba Zaman (1999b).

2. The sections of Evliya Çelebi's "travel epic," known as *Seyahatname,* that deal with Bitlis are published in an English translation with excellent supporting material in Dankoff (1990).

3. For instance, Diyarbakir (Turkey), Hewlêr (Iraq), Kirmanshan (Iran), and Sulêmanî (Iraq) have populations of near or more than a million.

4. See, e.g., McDowall (1996, 385–87) on "neo-tribalism" in the "safe haven."

5. Pages are in descending order because of the way the Arabic script text has been paginated as a supplement to Cyrillic texts.

6. Bayezidi (1963) repeatedly refers to the freedom of Kurdish women to socialize with men including strangers and the absence of veiling (see 106–5, 116–15, 147).

7. The word *family* is used here for Bayezidi's *waris.* The latter means "inheritor" or "successor," which implies that anyone in the woman's immediate family or even extended family is in a position to kill her.

8. There is a growing literature on the ties that bound nationalism, racism, and patriarchy in the construction of Western nation-states. See Nelson (1998).

9. According to Article 83 of the Islamic Penal Code, adultery is punishable by stoning in the following cases: "(1) Adultery by a married man who is wedded to a permanent wife with whom he has had intercourse and may have intercourse when he so desires; (2) Adultery of a married woman with an adult man provided the woman is permanently married and has had intercourse with her husband and is able to do so again." Article 82 lists other cases of adultery that, "regardless of the age or marital status of the culprit," are punished by "death." According to Article 131, "If the act of lesbianism has been repeated three times and punishment has been carried out each time, the death penalty shall apply if the act is committed a fourth time" (from "The Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Excerpts Relating to Women," Appendix II in Afkhami and Friedl (1994: 180–87).

10. See, e.g., McDowall (1996: 385–87) on "neo-tribalism" in the "safe haven."

11. See also "Honour Killing" (2000).

12. Kazhal Jamal Majeed, a twenty-eight-year-old woman from the town of Diyana, was attacked by her in-laws, and her nose was cut off ("Kejal Cemal" 2000). See also the Kurdish Media report "Another Woman Disfigured in Kurdistan" (2000).

13. The four interviewed women were leaders of the organization and were on a trip to Europe to rally support for their work.

14. The relationship between the PUK and the Islamic groups has at times been strained. Well armed and financed by Iran, they have been on the offensive, a situation that has led to armed conflicts between the two sides.

15. Mihamad-Amin Manguri, the author of the book to which I refer, was himself from the Mangur tribe of the Bilbas confederacy and inquired about the impact of the ruling on the people of the region while he was in hiding there soon after the fall of the republic.

16. *Cerîme* means "fines for misbehaviour or, less objectionable, a fee for settling a dispute." *Sûrane* is a "marriage fee taken from the parties or their parents, varying from a few shillings to ten pounds or more according to their wealth" (Edmonds 1957: 224).

17. For a more detailed survey of this case, see Mojab (2001). For a brief survey of the complexity of "wife kidnapping and elopement" in Turkey's Kurdistan, see Yalçin-Heckmann (1991).

18. Two lines, ambiguous in the text, were not translated.

19. The Kurdish Democratic Party–Iraq published, clandestinely, in 1953 the first issue of *Dengî Afret* (Voice of Women) as the organ of the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Yekêtî Afretanî Kurdistan); only six issues appeared between 1953 and 1990 (see *Dengî Afret,* no. 13 [August 15, 1997]): 34). However, many Kurdish women's magazines emerged in the 1990s, although most of the publications continued to be initiatives undertaken by the women's organizations affiliated with political parties. The following is an alphabetical list of some of the periodical publications I have been able to identify. In Turkey, two magazines appeared in 1996. *Jujîn* appeared as a "bimonthly Kurdish women's journal" (year 1, no. 1, December, Turkish/Kurmanji Kurdish, Istanbul, 40 pages). *Roza,* too, was launched as a "bimonthly Kurdish women's journal" (year 1, no. 4, September-October, Turkish/Kurmanji Kurdish, Istanbul, 40 pages). Another magazine appearing in Turkey was *Jın û Jiyan* ("Woman and Life"), described as a "monthly magazine of Kurdish women" (no. 13, year 3, March–April 2001, Turkish and Kurmanji Kurdish, Istanbul, 50 pages). There was more activism in the flourishing media environment of Iraqi Kurdistan in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War. *Ayinde* ("Future") was published in 1998 by the Unity of Islamic Sisters of Kurdistan (Yekgirtûy Xoşkanî Îslamî Kurdistan) as a "monthly general cultural newspaper" (year 2, no. 19, Kurdish/Arabic, March 1999, 8 pages). *Dengî Afret* (see above) continued publishing in the 1990s as a "general cultural magazine" (no. 18, Kurdish, Hewlêr, 1999, 42 pages). *Dengêk* (Back cover reads *Dangek*) ("A Voice") is a women's quarterly "cultural magazine" (vol. 2, no. 4, July 1997, Sorani Kurdish, Sulêmanî). *Dengî Jinan* ("Voice of Women"), a "monthly cultural publication" of the Women's Union of Kurdistan–Zhinan (Yekêtî Jinanî Kurdistan (vol. 4, special March 8 issue, 1999, 4 pages, Kurdish, Sulêmanî). *Jîyanewe* ("Revival") was launched in 1997 by the Information Center of the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Senterî Rageyandinî Yekêtî Jinanî Kurdistan) as a biweekly "cultural newspaper" in Sulêmanî (vol. 1, no. 4, August 5, 1997, Kurdish, Sulêmanî, 8 pages). *Mafî Afret* ("Rights of Women") was published in 1998 by the International Committee for European Security and Cooperation (Lijney Nêwdewĺetî Asayiş û Harîkarî Ewrûpî) as a "monthly general cultural magazine" (no. 1, May, Kurdish-Arabic, Hewlêr, 32 pages). *Tewar* ("Female Goshawk") appeared in 1993 as a "quarterly cultural magazine" published by the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Yekêtî Jinanî Kurdistan) in 1993 (no. 8, September 1994, Kurdish, Sulêmanî, 94 pages). *Yeksanî (Yaksany)* ("Equality") was launched by the Independent Women's Organization (Rêkxirawî Serbexoy Afretan) in the mid-1990s (no. 39, January 1, 2000, Sorani, in Sulêmanî, 4 pages). *Şawuşka* (the name of an ancient goddess) is a "quarterly intellectual magazine special to women" (no. 1, June–July 2002, Sorani Kurdish, Irbil, 74 pages).

In Europe, a number of women's journals have appeared: *Jin: Kurdisk Kvinnobulletin* ("Woman: Kurdish Women's Bulletin") appeared in 1994–95 (no. 1, 1994, Swedish, Stockholm, 30 pages; 3 issues only). *Jına Serbılınd* ("Proud Woman") was published in the early 1990s by the Union of Patriotic Women of Kurdistan (Yekîtiya Jinên Welatparêzên Kurdistan) as a monthly magazine (no. 4, May 1993, Turkish, Leverkusen, Germany, 30 pages). *Jiyan* ("Life") was published as the "Magazine of Union of Women of Kurdistan" (KOMJIN: Yekıtiya Jinên Kurdıstan—Kurdische Frauenzeitschrift) in the early 1990s (no. 1, March 1991, German, Turkish, Kurdish (Kurmanji), Köln, 12 pages). *Nawa (Newa)* ("Melody"), is published by the Interna-

tional Campaign to Defend Women's Rights in Iraqi Kurdistan (no. 1, May 1999, 4 pages, Kurdish). *Yekbûn* ("Unity") appeared as the "magazine of the Union of Kurdish Women" (Yekêtî Afretanî Kurd) in the Netherlands (no. 2, Kurdish year 2600 [1989?], Zoetermeer, Sorani and Kurmanji Kurdish, 40 pages; no. 2, 1990). *Awêze* ("Chandelier") was published by Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organization in London (no. 3, November 2001, Sorani Kurdish, 8 pages).

20. For information on this "neotribalism," see McDowall (1996: 354–57, 385–87).

21. In my visit to one of women's shelters in Sulêmanî (Iraqi Kurdistan, September 29, 2000), I was told by a young woman that although the PUK was against patriarchal violence, it was not in a position to prosecute a member of a certain tribe for honor killing because the tribe provided the organization with three hundred riflemen.

22. For information on the policy and practice of Islamists about Kurdish women, see Begikhani (1997).

# From Pillars of Yugoslavism
# to Targets of Violence

## *Interethnic Marriages in the Former*
## *Yugoslavia and Thereafter*

### *Mirjana Morokvasic-Müller*

The Yugoslav wars of the 1990s displaced millions of people. Most were obliged to flee persecution within or from the territory of the post-Yugoslav states just because they had a "wrong" name or a "wrong" religion or had married someone from a "wrong" group (see Map 6.1). The absurd idea of ethnically pure states has won, while the idea of life in common, of togetherness, of respect for the "Other," has become a taboo or considered as a sign of disloyalty. Not only undesirable "Others" but all traces of the "Other," their material culture—from architecture to literature and history books—have been systematically eliminated. This process has taken place not only in so-called "war operations" or on the front lines but also without any military involvement and in periods of relative peace. The destruction of churches, mosques, and cemeteries and the systematic destruction of cities and of urban life were meant to destroy all memory of the "Other" and of living with the "Other" (Morokvasic 1992).

The "Other" is, of course, always constructed. The generation of people who were brought up as Yugoslavs have become victims, followers, or leaders in a national hysteria. It seems as if Yugoslavs have failed to imagine themselves as a community (Anderson 1991: 6–7) and instead have tended to imagine themselves as "natural" national collectives of Croats, Serbs, Albanians, Muslims, and so forth. Some of those who used to be considered "Us," have been turned into "Others." Whereas the media war was crucial in developing aggressive nationalism and readiness to use violent means in drawing boundaries between "Us" and "Them," the violence produced by the wars was decisive in constructing and legitimizing new divisions. Nationalism thus created "Others" from within and then sought to reduce their presence by forced assimilation, physical annihilation, or deportation. The aim has been to cleanse "Our" territory of "Others," whose allegiances were considered to

Map 6.1.  The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and surrounding countries. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

be disturbing and incompatible with the nationalist project of ethnically pure states, entities, and territories. Among the first targets and victims of cleansing were people whose existence was a living proof of the possibility of living with the "Other": the so-called "mixed" or interethnic couples and families, people of mixed background. These people[1] were considered doubly traitorous and were often rejected as "Others" by one group and as "disloyal" by the other.

A mixed marriage is both a potential bridge between communities, a cradle of new identities, *and* a place for potential direct confrontation of contradictions. Because of this, the meaning of a mixed marriage/union will depend on the circumstances in which it is being realized and experienced. These circumstances may be favorable to such unions or may ban them or

discourage them. Yugoslav couples experienced both the supportive context of the brotherhood-and-unity ideology in the socialist Yugoslavia and the hostile environment of nationalism thereafter.

What is the meaning of interethnic marriage in the Yugoslav case in particular? Is it different for women and men? Who are the people in these marriages? Why did they become targets of discrimination and violence, verbal or physical, in times of exacerbated tension and conflict? How do they cope with the imposed division that cuts across their own identity and that of their families, and what are their strategies of escape and survival in the hostile milieu? Are their coping strategies gender specific? These are the questions I wish to address. My analysis is based on census data (Petrović 1985; Mrdjen 1996), on my own interviews with refugees, women and men,[2] and on field accounts by colleagues and students (Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 1995).

## A MODEL OF INTEGRATION AND A "FORBIDDEN COUPLE"

Interethnic marriages, or intermarriages, unite persons coming from groups other than those that would be culturally conceived of as appropriate to the choice of the spouse (Merton 1966). Therefore, they are like a communication laboratory and a magnifying mirror reflecting intergroup relations (Streiff-Fénart 1989). They both embody an exemplary integration and signal disruption. The act of a mixed marriage can be considered as the highest level of acceptance of the "Other" and as an indicator of the integration of groups in contact with one another. Such unions may be politically favored or at least not disapproved of, particularly if integration of different groups is the ultimate societal and political goal. But the underlying meaning of integration is at least twofold: (1) the forging of a new character out of the mixture of distinct ones (here, I refer to creolization in the Hannerzian sense) and (2) the eradication of differences. For many authors, intermarriage is a "test of assimilation," as Thode-Aurora (1999) suggests and as in the assimilationist tradition of France: without intermarriages there is no integration (Braudel 1986). In the same vein, an immigrant's marriage to a French citizen represents the highest level of adaptation and a chance to forge definitely the French character of children (Girard and Stoetzel 1953). Recent favorable attitudes on the part of the government of Sri Lanka toward intermarriages of Sinhala (majority) men with Tamil (minority) women can also be interpreted as a politics of assimilation (Silva 1998).

But intermarriage, implying the transgression of established boundaries, also carries disruptive forces and brings a risk of conflict and disintegration. By definition, it disturbs the social order and jeopardizes the reproduction of family and ethnic identities. It may be considered as "polluting," chal-

lenging the myth of common origin and the idea of women as metaphors of the nation. Therefore, an interethnic marriage can be socially and politically undesirable, and even banned, or forbidden in some religions (Polyakov 1980), and may be considered as treason. Some laws, without directly prohibiting the union of citizens with foreigners, can effectively nullify their legal existence. For example, according to the French Civil Code of 1804, women marrying foreigners lost their citizenship, and foreign women marrying Frenchmen became automatically French.[3] Even today in our modern societies where the free choice of a partner apparently prevails, the norm remains homogamic; when the choice is distant, it is suspect and poses problems (Alber et al. 2000).

On the individual level, therefore, in negotiating their multiple differences and identities, partners have three options. First, they may act primarily as individuals rather than as members of a national collective. This entails an affirmation of specificity and difference vis-à-vis both origins by overcoming the contradictory influences of respective families, groups, cultures, and religions (i.e., by negotiating languages, names given to children, religious and other practices, etc.). Second, one of the partners in the couple may assimilate, giving up some dimensions of his or her identity. Usually it is the one who has a minority status who does this, a fortiori if it is the wife. Third, disruptive forces may take over and lead to the separation and division of couples.

Women and men, their respective families, and the ethnic/national/religious groups to which they belong are not in equal relation to mixity. Women more often than men are classified socially by their marriage, and therefore positive or negative outcomes of interethnic marriage affect them more then they affect a man. For women, marriage may mean social mobility or social regression, but it can also put into question membership in a group. In other words, a woman who marries out of the group is lost to the group, whereas a woman who marries into the group is gained by the group. A man, on the contrary, usually preserves his position in his social group, and his descendants will in principle continue to belong to his group (when patrilineal transmission prevails).

Empirical evidence suggests that groups are usually more hostile to their women than their men marrying the "Other," and they are more willing to admit other women than other men to the group. In the case of Franco-Maghrebi marriages in France, for example, Maghrebis are willing to approve of their men marrying French women, particularly if these women accept the role the family offers them, adopting the educational and cultural norms of their husband's family for their children and giving up those of their own milieu (Streiff-Fénart 1989). If a woman marries "out," however, this may lead to irreversible family ruptures and rejection by the whole group.

## THE FAVORABLE CONTEXT OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

A number of political, social, and economic factors favored interethnic marriages after 1945 in Yugoslavia. They were the same as those identified as favoring Yugoslav integration: rapid urbanization, education, geographic mobility, an ideology of equality among different nationalities, and an ideology of brotherhood and unity as a remedy for the memories of genocide and interethnic violence in the last war (Sekulić, Massey, and Hodson 1994). Furthermore, the institution of civil marriage as the only legal form (religious marriage ceremonies were permitted, but only after the civil marriage) reduced the influence of religion in everyday life and thereby lessened its negative influence on interethnic mixing. These factors ultimately proved insufficient as far as the Yugoslav integration was concerned. Let us consider their effects on interethnic marriages in particular.

There are no data concerning intermarriages before 1945, but it can be assumed that the rate was extremely low in the period of the First Yugoslavia (1919–41) due to the very low degree of urbanization, the strong influence of religion, and the quasi-exclusiveness of religious marriages before socialism (civil marriages had legal importance only in some parts of Vojvodina). If there were ethnically mixed marriages at all, it can be assumed that they were contracted within the same religious group.

The proportion of marriages in Yugoslavia that were interethnic was at its highest in 1990 (13.5 percent), one year before the disintegration of the country.[4] Interethnic marriage increased rapidly from the postwar period (8.6 percent in the late 1940s) until the 1960s (over 12 percent) and increased at a slower pace after that. This trend affected all regions and groups throughout Yugoslavia. From 1965 on, however, not only did the overall process slow down, but the change in matrimonial behavior did not affect all parts of the country and all groups in the same way. Petrović (1985) argues that interethnic marriages "were a measure of ethnic relations in Yugoslavia" during the downward trend of the late 1960s and the 1970s (75). She places the beginning of the deterioration of ethnic relations as early as the late 1960s.

To understand the full meaning of the slowdown in the rate of increase of interethnic marriages that began in the late 1960s, one must keep in mind two basic factors that from a demographic point of view are highly decisive for the rate of interethnic marriage. One factor is ethnic diversity: the more diversity there is, the more opportunity for mixing. Yugoslavs had considerable opportunities to mix during this period. The other factor is the size of each individual group in the ethnic mix: the larger the group, the lower its rate of heterogamy (although, in absolute figures, marriages between members of that group and outside groups may account for a considerable

proportion of the total number), and vice versa: the smaller the group, the higher its chances for heterogamous unions.

In this light, the trends observed in the country from the late 1960s onward can be characterized as follows:

- Given the ethnic diversity of Yugoslavia, the proportion of interethnic marriages was much lower than expected. This was particularly true in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the proportion of 11 percent was lower than the Yugoslav average even though diversity was above average. For the sake of comparison: the proportion of intermarriages in France was 8.8 percent in a context that by Yugoslav standards would be called ethnic homogeneity (i.e., a population that was only 7.8 percent foreign) (Mrjden 1996).

- In spite of their size, the two largest groups, the Serbs and the Croats, had a higher rate of heterogamy than expected, and some small groups, such as the Turks, had lower heterogamy rates than expected (Mrjden 1996). However, Serbo-Croatian unions were declining.

- Although the average rate continued to increase (from the late 1960s till the 1980s), this was mainly due to interethnic marriages among minorities in Vojvodina and between minorities and the Serbian majority. The slowdown in increase was especially pronounced among Muslim populations, where the rate was already generally low, as well as in Serbo-Croatian marriages.

- There were three ethnocultural clusters of heterogamous marriages (Mrdjen 1996): the first of these, in the West, grouped Croats, Slovenes, Italians, and Czechs; the second, in the East, grouped Serbs, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Rumanians; and the third, in the South, constituted the Islamic circle with Albanians, Turks, and Muslims. This last cluster was the least open to marriages with other groups and the most focused on groups of the same cultural and religious tradition. In this cluster, women married out of their ethnic group much less frequently than men, especially among Albanians and Turks.

- The heterogamy, or openness, of a group was gender specific and related to the position of women in each group. It seems that marrying out of the group was more common among men than among women in the less developed areas in the south, where women's status was lower and the rate of employment of women was also low. By contrast, women were more open to interethnic marriage than men in more developed areas in the north, where women had a more equal status and were active in the labor force (Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian groups). The Albanian group, which appeared to be the least

open to marrying out, also had the highest difference in heterogamy rates between men and women (i.e., men married out three times more often than women). Among the Serbs, men married someone from another group only slightly more often than women did (Mrjden 1996).[5]

This brief overview demonstrates that the rate of intermarriage in Yugoslavia from the late 1960s onwards was lower than what it theoretically could have been, given the ethnic diversity of the country. As well, some groups were more open than others to intermarriage. Group openness depended on size, but also on the degree of urbanization, as well as the religious and cultural milieu, with marked ethnocultural preferences visible along religious lines. The openness to interethnic marriage was also gender specific.

What then, is the meaning of interethnic marriage? And what was the societal impact of annual intermarriage rates of twenty thousand individuals or more (who also had children) over the course of forty-five years of peace, prior to the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia? We need to know the answers to these questions to understand better what happened when peace and peaceful coexistence turned into open tension and war. In other words, what are the implications for national integration and for the transmission of Yugoslav identity? Did interethnic couples in Yugoslavia produce Yugoslavian children? As noted above, interethnic unions can have an integrative function in two ways. First, they can create something new and specific, a space of mediation where new interests and identifications are stimulated (Centlivres and Giordano 2000). Indeed, the mixed marriage in the Yugoslav situation could have been one of the sources or carriers/pillars of Yugoslav identity. Second, such unions can be integrative by contributing to assimilation, when one of the two partners imposes his or her identity on the family and offspring. In this case it can be assumed that the identity of the dominant or majority group usually prevails.

According to the available census data, the nationality of children in homogamous families usually reproduced that of the parents (except for a small minority of 2 percent who declared a nationality different from that of their parents or who considered themselves Yugoslavs). In families where parentage was mixed, however, the situation was more complex. Theoretically, the children could have the father's or the mother's nationality or might consider themselves as having "Yugoslav" or any other nationality. The census data show that 55 percent (the majority) took the father's nationality, 26 percent took the mother's nationality, and only 12.7 percent registered as Yugoslavs. A small minority (3.8 percent) claimed a nationality that was neither their father's nor their mother's, and in 2.5 percent of interethnic marriages, the children did not all choose the same nationality (Mrdjen 1996).

Both patrilineal transmission (dominant) and matrilineal transmission favored assimilation into the majority culture in the republic, province, or region concerned in the post-Yugoslav states. The majority group might be extended to include others of the same religious or cultural background. In all the regions except Slovenia, the dominant pattern of interethnic union involved a man from the ethnic majority and a woman from the ethnic minority. This pattern was pronounced among certain majority groups in the south, where interethnic marriages were rare and men married out much more frequently than women, but also in a developed region like Vojvodina, with a high rate of interethnic marriage. Most such marriages were of majority men (Serbs) with indigenous minority women (Hungarians, for example). In Slovenia, it was more often the majority women who married minority men (usually not members of the indigenous minority population but immigrant workers from Bosnia and Serbia). Here matrilineal transmission predominated. This could be explained by the immigration context and the immigrant men's orientation toward permanent residence. Most of the immigrants came from the poorer south: the family adopted the dominant majority's identity, and they Slovenized the children with a view to remaining in Slovenia (Mrdjen 1996).

There were several sites where a higher-than-average proportion of children of mixed couples declared themselves Yugoslavs: Bosnia and Herzegovina (22 percent), Croatia and Vojvodina (15 percent each). These proportions reflected the existence of the mixed Serbo-Croatian families in Croatia, mainly Serbo-Hungarian families in Vojvodina and Serbo-Muslim families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The children seemed most prone to consider themselves Yugoslavs when the parents belonged to different ethnocultural clusters (e.g., Serbs and Muslims, Muslims and Croats, Hungarians and Serbs) (Mrdjen 1996). In such cases, Yugoslav identification might have a "defensive" character, as Sekulić, Massey, and Hodson (1994) suggest. In other words, the individual (or his or her parents) opted for neutrality rather than assimilating to the dominant majority.

Another interesting example was the Albanian group, which had the lowest rate of interethnic marriage of all, especially among women. In Kosovo, where Albanians had been a majority, the patrilineal transmission of ethnic identity to children was not surprising. What was surprising was the existence of matrilineal transmission in couples uniting an Albanian woman with a man from another group (Mrdjen 1996). I would suggest that this concerned a small number of cases, probably involving quite exceptional individuals, and did not represent a prevalent tendency. Thus it might depend on factors related to individuals and might not be explainable in terms of the majority or minority status of their respective groups.

These data show that interethnic couples in most cases fostered assimilation of minorities into the numerically dominant local group. Throughout

Yugoslavia this assimilation has contributed to ongoing tendencies of ethnic unscrambling and local homogenization, which in the long run has had a disintegrative outcome for Yugoslavia as a whole. Only in a minority of cases did interethnic marriages—which, as we have seen, have been more rare than might have been expected given the theoretical opportunities yielded by ethnic diversity—become a space for the rise and the development of Yugoslav identity and consciousness. However, Yugoslav identity tended to be a marginal, local development that did not have a broader impact. This finding fully corroborates other data (Sekulić, Massey, and Hodson 1994). Considering that these unions were also generally less stable (i.e., they had higher divorce rates than endogamous ones),[6] their impact on overall developments has been small indeed.

### WHEN MIXING BECOMES UNDESIRABLE

What happened to interethnic marriages after 1991? There are no census data[7] that permit a comparison with earlier tendencies regarding the rates of interethnic marriage and transmission of national identity to children. However, my qualitative data for this study suggest that the context became favorable to division and to disruptive forces. Mixed marriages became taboo, something to be eliminated, something disturbing. According to one of the women interviewed in my fieldwork, "I used to think it was all the same, it did not matter who was which nationality, but now, now I think it is no longer good. We can be friends, meet each other, but marry, no. The people from these marriages suffer the most, they are as if between two fires" (Vera from Croatia, 1994).

The military conflict was preceded and prepared by a media war. For several years, the population had been exposed to the systematic broadcasting of news and reports that not only carried the message that it was impossible to live together but also directly fomented hatred and violence against the "Other," including the "potential Other." The media promoted views that contributed to building distrust and hatred in the population by carrying the basic message that "we cannot live together any longer and we are prepared to kill each other in the name of a higher cause, the Nation." When a neighbor, a friend, even a husband and wife are ready to kill, what can one expect from a distant "Other"? Once an atmosphere of fear and distrust is established, a neighbor or a friend from the "other side" is no longer trusted, regardless of any apparent readiness to help. The separation becomes total, and people are more prepared to accept war and violence as legitimate solutions to existing tensions, which originally may not have had an ethnic component at all (Morokvasic 1997).

"Symbolically, women more than men represent the space of 'mixity,' the

cross-roads, the confluence. More than women themselves, it is this mixture that women accept, create, and represent (as a feminine principle) that is attacked by those who want to purify their origins, to get rid of Others, to negate Others" (Ivekovic 1992: 191).

With the more and more prevalent norm of militarized masculinity, men are expected to accept conscription and be prepared to die for their nation, and women to sacrifice their sons and brothers for the cause of the nation. Women tend to be constructed as symbols and reproducers of the nation, as mothers of the nation. As Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) states, women embody the nation, they are bearers of its honor and love. They guard the mythical unity of imagined national communities that divides "Us" from "Them":

"Nationalist projects which focus on genealogy and origin as the major organizing principles of the national collectivity would tend to be more exclusionary than other nationalist projects. Only by being born into a certain collectivity could one be a full member of it. Control of marriage, procreation, and therefore sexuality would thus tend to be high on the nationalist agenda" (23).

The nationalist media have promoted the idea that interethnic marriage is worse than rape. Such a marriage implies a *permanent dimension,* and it is disturbing for nationalists when a woman who is one of "Us" *deliberately chooses* a partner who is the "Other." The woman is thus transgressing her attributed role of guardian of the national identity, whereas in rape "Our" women are *merely victims* of "Their" aggression (see below).

## GENDERED VIOLENCE AND PERSECUTION

The first targeted victims are the weaker ones, and, as a Serb refugee from Krajina said, "It is in the nature of things that women are weaker." Men from "the other group" are often left in peace, especially when they are in positions of power: "As in peacetime, contentious men would rather pour out their rage on women than on men. Women have experienced a real scale of violence, both before and during the war. Croats used to turn their heads away from me, but not from the Serb party dignitaries" (Serb refugee from Krajina, Croatia, now in Serbia, cited in Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 1995: 104).

However, types of violence are gender selective. Men are usually those who are abducted, killed, or tortured (Jones 1994), and women, as symbols of the nation and as markers of national boundaries, are raped. This tendency follows the pattern, although not invariably, that "Other" men married to "Our" women are eliminated (i.e., forced into exile or killed), whereas "Other" women married to "Our" men tend to be accepted, assimilated, and absorbed. It is also similar to the more general tendency whereby

women who marry out of the group are lost to the group and women married into the group are gained for the group (see above). There is evidence for this both in the gender-specific pattern of violence and in the strategies adopted to cope with violence, persecution, and conflict: specifically, in the ways women and men negotiate identities and in the refugee/migration patterns they adopt, which will be dealt with in the next section.

Rape itself is related to the dimension of absorption of women into the group (Morokvasic 1997). In most narratives, the act of rape implies the eventuality of the birth of a child (possibly a son). The raped woman is thus a mere receptacle, the bearer of a child for the rapist's nation. Rape is a part of the war strategy. It is a message from men to men, intended to humiliate the enemy men: "You were not able to protect your women." But at the same time it is also an extreme act of forced ethnic mixing. By dishonoring their women, the rape (and the resulting pregnancy) is meant to dishonor the enemy, the other national collective. Such offspring are usually labeled "bastards" by women victims and by those speaking in their name and in the name of the "soiled" nation. But from the rapist's point of view, the raped women produce a "pure" offspring belonging to the rapist's nation. This is a paradox in most narratives of rape, but in line with the prevalent patrilineal transmission.

This paradox is also reflected in the verbal violence and humiliation toward "Our" women who are considered traitors because they are married to the members of the enemy nationality: Croatian women married to Serbs were called "Serbian prostitutes" or "Četnik mothers" by their fellow Croats, whereas Serb women married to Croats were labeled "Ustaša mothers" and "Croatian prostitutes" by their fellow Serbs.

Women in mixed marriages are potential victims of violence by men of their own nationality, of their husband's, and also of others, who see them as wives of an enemy. They are easier to attack than their husbands are, who are stronger and might respond violently, and thus are the targets of violence and revenge that is directed against their husbands. The following examples illustrate the above situation. After the Slovenian war, Slovenian women married to former army officers were the targets of violence by Slovenians and by Bosnian Muslims in Slovenia. When Croats raped a Croatian woman married to a Muslim, it was a message to her husband, the enemy. In another case, two sisters were raped by Croatian soldiers who assumed that the husband of one of them, a Serb, was fighting on the Serbian side against Croats. Or in yet another case, a rape was meant as punishment for a husband, a fellow Croat who did not get rid of his Serbo-Muslim wife (from my interviews, 1993–94; see note 2). In a situation of ethnic conflict, women married to men of an "Other" ethnicity may also be victims of violence by their own husbands. These women symbolize the enemy; they may

become a source of their husband's shame and problems in contact with his own ethnic group: "They used to tell him—how come, with all these Serbs around, you found a Muslim? For Serbs, she thus became the guilty one; he started quarreling and beating her up" (from my interviews, 1993–94; see note 2).

## GENDERED STRATEGIES OF NEGOTIATING IDENTITY, VIOLENCE, AND CONFLICT

In periods of exacerbated tensions, strong nationalism, and open violence, interethnic marriages crystallize hostility and become targets of intolerance and violence from all sides. What is the response of couples in mixed marriages, and how do they cope with this situation? Not all mixed couples face brutal violence, but as proof of the possibility of living together with the "Other," they are constantly reminded in the nationalist context that there is no more room for them in projected nationally pure states.

One can assume that in a situation of ethnic tension and war, when there is no longer room to express a hybrid, Yugoslav identity, the tendencies toward exclusive choices might increase. Such exclusive choices would be either assimilationist or disruptive. In the former case, most interethnic couples would tend either to choose one nationality (usually the husband's), in line with what we have seen of patrilineal transmission and assimilation into the dominant majority. In the latter case, those who cannot choose will have a hard time surviving and may try to escape by going abroad (mixed couples, along with young men resisting military service, were among the first to flee the country in 1991 and 1992), destroying the partnership, or engaging in self-destructive behavior.[8]

The memories of prewar experiences, as something solid to lean on, are those of living together, celebrating each other's religious and other festivities, and supporting a mutual understanding among various communities. My research demonstrates that until 1990, the majority of women and men alike considered national feelings to be a personal matter. They told me that nationalism had never played a role in their lives as they grew up and that nationalism was a recent development—the result of new circumstances. Perhaps the most striking difference between them was in their views of the causes and inevitability of war as an outcome of nationalist tension and conflict. Men tended to find reasons for the war in the past mix of peoples, in ignorance, in conflicting interests, and in the desire for a national state. Women did not find any "good" reason for war, and some claimed that the interests of major powers coincided with irrationality in the post-Yugoslav states. Whereas for some men "war was inevitable," women said there was

nothing to justify bloodshed (from my interviews, 1993–94; see note 2). Thus, the men were more categorical than the women in denying the possibility of coexistence in the future.

> What nationality? I am Yugoslav, but where I used to live for thirty years they considered me a Serb. And yet I was not brought up with strong national feelings. I read, I know the literature, poetry, but I thought that in the name of Yugoslavia one has to forget traditions. I thought that traditions and nationalities caused much trouble in the Second World War. I say when there is war, no matter how Yugoslav I feel, if someone sees me as a Serb and has something against Serbs, then I fear him because he sees me as a threat to him . . . and so on . . . there is no end. (Engineer, age forty, from Mostar, 1993)

The men who were interviewed did not believe that they could have an ambiguous national identity. An identity was ascribed to them, and if they were perceived as the "Other," they had to leave. Thus they gave up their Yugoslav identity because it was perceived as ambiguous and instead were increasingly forced to choose a national group. When perceived as "Others," men were not allowed to become part of "Us."

> Yugoslavism had some meaning as long as Yugoslavia existed. If there is no more Yugoslavia—if no one else besides the Serbs wants to stay in Yugoslavia, then it makes no sense to be Yugoslav any more. I used to think there was some sense in giving up some traditions in the name of Yugoslavia. I was Yugoslav, but as I said, no one saw me as a Yugoslav, but as a Serb. And it is a totally normal reaction to choose the group in which I feel secure. (Serb from Mostar, 1993)

> I was chased out of town (Sarajevo). I was among the numerous citizens who demonstrated for peace, who tried to prevent war. . . . When the war started, I stayed normally in Sarajevo with my family, I shared with other neighbors the horrors of destruction; bread queues; I experienced life without electricity, water. . . . Then one day I was taken to prison. I never knew why. I spent a long time thinking about what I might have done. . . . After a while I could only accept the fact that I was in prison because I was a Serb. That it was a dirty war; it brought the dregs of society to the surface. Those who lived underground, did not work, never built this city, took up guns and started shooting. It was humiliating to see old people standing in a queue, some respectable professors, and these vulgar types in their uniforms hitting them with their guns. (Economist, age fifty, Serb, from Sarajevo, 1994)

Women, on the contrary, can claim their hybrid, Yugoslav identity, even today. The widow of a Serb, originally Muslim, declaring herself Yugoslav, who left Sarajevo for Belgrade, said:

> Why am I Yugoslav? My language, culture, education, everything in me is Serbo-Croatian-Muslim, and I cannot renounce any part of me. I would lose my integrity if I were to choose, I would go against myself. I was in shock when in

Sarajevo the nationalist parties won the elections. I know I am a tiny minority, but I always was. I was born in a small place in Herzegovina where Muslims were a minority; it was otherwise a purely Croatian area, which was pretty dull. Yes, dull: I like it when people around me are diverse. (Teacher, female, age fifty, 1993)

In the literature on interethnic couples and their strategies in negotiating identities, the scrutiny of names given to infants is a central issue (Streiff-Fenart 1989; Varro and Lesbet 1986; Centlivres and Giordano 2000). Choosing a name creates tension and is the very first confrontation with two identification options: either trying to avoid standing out or wanting to affirm group membership and fidelity. It can be a turning point whereby adopting an "Other" name is also the adoption of a new identity. Several examples show how the use of names as identity markers can be gendered. Goran O., who escaped from Croatia to Serbia, told me in 1994 that with his typically Serbian surname (O.), he had no peace in Croatia.

"But my first name, Goran, however, was Croatian, so there was ambiguity about my identity. My colleagues at work could not stand this: they gave me the Serbian name Stevan."

Now renamed Stevan, Goran became a pure "Other" to the Croats and had to leave Croatia. Brought up as Yugoslavs, those who are unable to choose a national identity—to "cut themselves in half"—may under pressure seek an extreme form of escape. Young soldiers have been known to commit suicide rather than confront a choice of deserting the army or killing those who have until recently been their fellow Yugoslavs.

The situation for women is often different. In circumstances analogous to Goran's, minority women, when married to majority men, may take or be given majority names. Thus a Serbian woman, Jovanka, married to a Croatian, became Ivanka; Stojadinka became Dubravka; and Snezana became Snjezana. Women sometimes have the option of adopting this assimilationist strategy if they stay in the "enemy" territory. However, this is not always a successful tactic, and there are cases of women married to men of the local nationality who have been brutally killed despite showing a will to assimilate. One such case was that of a Serbian woman, working in a Croatian army kitchen, who was murdered with her child while her husband, a Croat, was fighting in the Croatian army. Similarly, the Muslim wife and child of a Serb were killed on the border by Serb paramilitaries while trying to escape from Bosnia to Serbia, while her husband and their son, who had a Serbian name, were spared.

Women tend to adopt similar assimilationist strategies when following a husband who joins the majority group. They change their names if necessary, adopt customs and religious practices of the new community, and give their

children names that are typical for the husband's community. This assimilationist approach involves attempts to be as invisible as possible and to avoid disruptive forces in the partnership. Thus Zumra, a Muslim woman married to a Serb, changed her name to Svetlana to safely escape with her husband from Bosnia via Serbia to Sweden. While her principal goal was to preserve her marriage and family, she also realized that the orthodox Serbs would remember her as Zumra, while in the eyes of the Muslims, she had betrayed her religion. However, changing her name back to Zumra would be an admission that she had used false documents, so Zumra remained Svetlana. A similar case is that of Fatima, formerly Gordana, a Serb from Croatia married to a Muslim from Bosnia. At the time that she married her husband, he was a communist, but as he became a devout Muslim she adapted, changing her name and her style of dress, praying, and raising her son as a Muslim. Z., from central Bosnia, who came to Croatia as a refugee with her Bosnian Croat husband, did not have to change her name. But her children are Catholic and attend religious classes, and they have Croatian names. She is considered fully integrated and hardworking and is well accepted in the community that is not particularly tolerant toward male "Others." The fact that minority women can gain acceptance if they abandon their national identity markers is also illustrated by a case from Kosovo. On the now all-Albanian Pristina television station, the only Serb who appears on the screen is a woman who is married to an Albanian, has an Albanian name, and took part in the exodus to Macedonia during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing (*Le Monde,* March 28, 2000).

More examples are found in the northeastern province of Yugoslavia, Vojvodina, where one out of four marriages is ethnically mixed. During my fieldwork in that province in 1993–94, I was told that because of the war and rising nationalism, mixed marriages were now being avoided. I was unable to verify this statistically, but it was frequently repeated as conventional wisdom. During that time, however, a prominent marriage apparently contradicting the reported trend was celebrated in Subotica, a multiethnic town on the Hungarian border. The granddaughter of an Orthodox Serbian priest married a Croat. But was this a contribution to ethnic mixing? Probably not, as the Serbs were a minority in Subotica, and this was once again a case of a minority woman marrying into the majority.

## REFUGEE PATTERNS AND DILEMMAS

Refugee marriage patterns and attitudes toward exile are also gender specific. As mentioned above, mixed couples were among the first to leave the country. Among those refugees who stayed on in the territory of the post-Yugoslav states, minority men fled from majority areas, while women tended

to stay put if their husbands were members of the majority or to flee with their minority husbands. The evidence from a field study in the region of the Croatian-Yugoslav border suggests that couples moved so that the men could live in areas where they were members of the majority and that women followed as their minority wives (Petrić 1995). In a small ethnically mixed village (M.) in Vojvodina, Serbia, near the border with Croatia, inhabitants exchanged houses with the inhabitants of a similar village (I.), on the Croatian side. Croatian men left M. for Croatia with their Serbian wives, and Serbian men from Croatia came to M. with their Croatian wives. On both sides of the border, the villages are still formally "mixed," but now the minorities on each side are women. On the Serbian side the village is now perceived as predominantly Serb, not "mixed." The women are not looked down upon as "Others" because they are subsumed under the nationality and the religion of their husbands. A daughter in one such mixed family that arrived from Croatia says she had not even known what her parents' nationality was until the tension started: "My mother said she was a Croat. But we could not stay in Croatia, mixed as we were, so we came here to Vojvodina. . . . My father told me he was a Serb, but that I should be whatever I like. . . . I decided I was a Serb, that is how things should be now" (sixteen-year-old girl, quoted in Petrić 1995: 36).

For some women, escaping into exile is a legitimate decision. One woman interviewed in 1994, a thirty-five-year-old Yugoslav former literature professor from Sarajevo, stated, "Flight? Of course it is an absolute human right. . . . If only many more had escaped . . . there would be nobody left to fight." For men, however, escaping into exile posed a dilemma:

> Fleeing is justified and it is not justified. If a man lives in one milieu in a town where the population is mixed, and he is a member of one nation, he might find himself in the situation of having to fight and kill his best friend, a member of the other nation. Naturally he wants to escape that; he does not want to be a criminal, so he is justified in fleeing. On the other hand, he may have to defend his home, his family: then he should stay. (Man, Yugoslav, 1994)

## CONCLUSION

Interethnic unions were, of course, not the only form of mixing and forging Yugoslav identities. Even during peacetime, their contribution was less than one might have expected. In a patriarchal society, the patrilineal transmission of national identity prevails and usually entails assimilation into the dominant majority. In periods of tension and open conflict, interethnic marriages are regarded as a form of treason to the national collective and ambiguous "Others" and thus become the first targets of violence, persecution, and exclusion. This violence is gendered and so are the ways of con-

fronting it. Sexual violence against women in war is a message from men to men. Women in interethnic marriages can be victims of violence by men of their own and of their husbands' nationalities—in the former case as "traitors" and in the latter as "Others." Strategies adopted in facing and escaping persecution suggest a gender-specific pattern in which women seem to be more adaptive and to be more readily accepted as minorities by the majority. Men, on the other hand, have little choice but to remain in or join the majority group.

Nationalism constructs a male nation. Mixing used to be the privilege of a dominant male, a "privilège phallocratique" in colonial times. But even in the almost half-century of peaceful Yugoslav experience, the "mixtures" have not always produced new identities. There were fewer interethnic couples than one might have expected forming the cradle of new Yugoslav identification. Because of the prevalent patrilineality, interethnic couples were mostly transmitters of the man's identity, guaranteeing the reproduction of his group. This trend was exacerbated in the period of ethnic tension and open conflict. Thus interethnic couples who have not left the country are threatened with the stigma of betrayal. They contribute to the integration of the dominant group by assimilating and ceasing to appear as "mixed." The nationalist project of cleansing the territory of those whose identities and loyalties are considered incompatible has prevailed, even among interethnic couples.

## NOTES

1. Approximately two million people are directly concerned.

2. I am drawing on my own fieldwork in 1993–94 in Yugoslavia (Belgrade and surroundings as well as Vojvodina), which represents forty-two testimonies of twenty-three women and nineteen men who are refugees from Croatia and Bosnia/Herzegovina. The majority of those interviewed were young (under thirty), and two-thirds were of urban origin, with a high educational and skill profile. Fourteen women and twenty-three men were students, social scientists, or other professionals. The others were unemployed, having irregular employment. Twelve women and eleven men were single. Most of the women were married to a man of the same nationality, whereas most men were in a mixed marriage The majority of these young people were without children (eleven men and twelve women). Most of those with children had only one child, four of them had two, and one woman had three children. Most declared themselves Yugoslavs or "former Yugoslavs"; defining themselves now as Serbian, Muslim, or Montenegrin was new to them, and they used these labels reluctantly. Religion played a secondary role in their identity.

3. The situation changed in 1927 and 1974 respectively.

4. However, this figure masks great regional disparities. Two extremes are to be found within the territory of Serbia, where Kosovo had the lowest rate and still con-

tinues a downward trend, and the province of Vojvodina had the highest rate (28.2 percent) and still continues an upward trend (Petrović 1985; Mrdjen 1996).

5. But men were more "open" to women from the more developed areas, whereas Serbian women were more open to men from the south: for instance, there were six times more marriages of Serbian women with Albanian men than of Serbian men with Albanian women.

6. As for the disruptive forces in mixed couples, there is evidence that mixed marriages are generally less stable (152 divorces out of 1,000 marriages, compared with 135 divorces out of 1,000 for endogamous marriages), especially when they bring together members of two groups in which marriage stability is very low in general. However, social class and educational level play an important role. Ethnocultural difference may be a factor for instability in the less educated strata but is unimportant among the educated (Petrović 1985).

7. Only Macedonia carried out a census in 1994. Most other post–Yugoslav states carried out censuses in 2002.

8. We do not have statistics, but stories of suicides all concerned young men.

# 7

# Geographies of Violence

## *Women and Conflict in Ghana*

*Valerie Preston and Madeleine Wong*

Conflict uproots and recasts the lives of millions of men, women, and children. The pain suffered during the immediacy of conflict is often preceded by months and years of growing tension and anxiety. Turmoil continues for many who flee, provoked by fear and sometimes prodded by combatants. For the displaced, sheltered in temporary accommodation, the terror of conflict persists even when they are rehoused and resettled in a new location or after they return to the place that was home. Despite the profoundly geographical nature of conflict in which men, women, and children are displaced, travel long distances, settle in new places, and rebuild homes in transformed landscapes, little attention has been given to the geographical aspects of conflict.

The literature about gender and conflict (Charles and Hintjas 1997; Cockburn 1998; Franks 1996; Enloe 2000; Giles, Moussa, and Van Esterik 1996; Sharoni 1995; Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999) rarely has a spatial perspective. A few studies have noted that attempts to link nation and territory through gender roles and women's bodies are often premised on incomplete and simplified claims to territory (Walby 1992; Enloe 1993; Sharoni 1995). However, the social processes that give rise to these claims have been examined only as case studies. Experiences in various places are often mentioned, but few researchers have sorted out the various impacts of local, national, and international forces. There is little comparative analysis that examines similarities and differences in women's experiences of conflict from place to place. Walby's (1992) discussion of gender and nationalism is an important exception, since she compares explicitly the histories of women's citizenship between British, European, and American countries and developing countries. Enloe (1993) also calls for comparative analysis to understand gender

and militarization, advocating an inductive approach by which women will be empowered through speaking of their own experiences.

In this chapter, we explore the social, political, and economic processes by which spaces and places are gendered and the implications of these processes for our understanding of conflict zones as a continuum of violence stretching from domestic violence within the household to armed conflict between nations. A geographical approach is advocated on the grounds that it disrupts discourses that simplify and reify the links between territory, ethnicity, and gender. Place-based comparisons also focus attention on the interplay of social processes operating at international, national, and local scales (Tesfahuney 1998; Hyndman 2000).[1] Using case studies from the West African country of Ghana, we illustrate how social processes operating at various geographical scales in specific locations heighten women's subordination.

The Ghanaian case studies that address gendered violence were chosen with three issues in mind. First, in the growing geographical literature about conflict in Africa, little attention has been paid to women's experiences outside refugee camps (Hyndman, 1998, 1999; Kenzer 1991; Bascom 1993). Second, experiences in Ghana illustrate the multiple dimensions of conflict, which include economic impoverishment and social repression in addition to armed conflict (Indra 1996). Finally, analysis of Ghanaian women reveals the complexity of patriarchal social relations, which take various forms at different locations within Ghana. Conflict in Ghana is manifested differently in each part of the country. In southeastern Ghana, patrilineal groups predominate, while matrilineal groups dominate in the rest of southern Ghana. The interactions among armed conflict, economic marginalization, and patriarchy in each region contribute to regional differences in women's subordination.

Before presenting the case studies, we describe Ghana's social and political geography and summarize the recent political and social history that contextualizes women's experiences of conflict. Examples of sexual abuse and domestic violence are discussed to illustrate how current economic, political, and social conditions exacerbate women's vulnerability to violence. Then we examine how Ghanaian women's geographical mobility in response to economic hardship and armed conflict heightens their subordination. The examples illustrate the gendered nature of place and space, highlighting the complex ways that economic hardship and patriarchal societal structures interact with armed conflict to subordinate women in distinct ways in each region of Ghana.

The analysis relies mainly on secondary sources of information, including the mass media, institutional reports, academic journals and books, participant observation in Ghana, and personal interviews with key informants,

including lecturers and professors at the University of Ghana and Ghanaian immigrant women in Toronto. In choosing examples, we were sometimes struck by the lack of attention given to gender issues in Ghana's popular media. In 1999–2000, a series of articles highlighted high-profile murders of women in the Accra metropolitan area and the sexual abuse of young girls and infants. Other forms of gendered violence such as spousal abuse have been mentioned rarely. Little academic research about gender and conflict in Ghana has been published. The scant information that exists about gender relations and conflict in Ghana indicates that violence affects many Ghanaian women's lives. The silences suggest that gender inequality in Ghana is still pervasive and taken for granted, despite the pioneering efforts of Ghanaian feminists.

## PLACING GHANA: A REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

Ghana, the first African colony south of the Sahara to achieve independence (March 6, 1957), is divided into two distinct demographic and socioeconomic regions (see Map 7.1) characterized by ethnic, religious, economic, and kinship differences. In the southwest are the large numbers of similar cultural groups to which the generic term *Akan* is applied. These groups, which together constitute about 44 percent of the country's population, are linguistically and culturally homogeneous. The Akan occupy most of the wealthy and more developed third of the country stretching from the lower fringes of the northern savannah through the entire semideciduous forest region to the southern coastal savannah (Ninsin 1998). Akan groups practice a matrilineal system of kinship and inheritance. Each woman traces the descent group to which she belongs through the female line. Moreover, inheritance and succession pass through the female line (Nukunya 1992). In the southeast, the Ewe, the Ga, the Adangbe, and the Krobo are patrilineal societies in which a woman belongs to the father's descent group.

Compared with southern Ghana, the northern part of Ghana is relatively poor and disadvantaged (Ninsin 1998). The northern region is often regarded as a country unto itself, remote from the national government in Accra on the south coast. In the central states of the north, the Gonja, the Dagomba, the Mamprusi, and the Wala have a bilateral, nonunilinear system of kinship in which paternal and maternal ties are used pragmatically and conveniently to determine domestic organization and residential location. Paramount chiefs control the distribution of lands among members of each ethnic group.[2] Other ethnic groups living in the north, namely the Tallensi, the Konkomba, and the Lowiili, have no paramount chiefs. Without paramount chiefs, these groups were unable to claim tribal lands under British colonial rule. Highly patriarchal practices that exclude maternal relatives
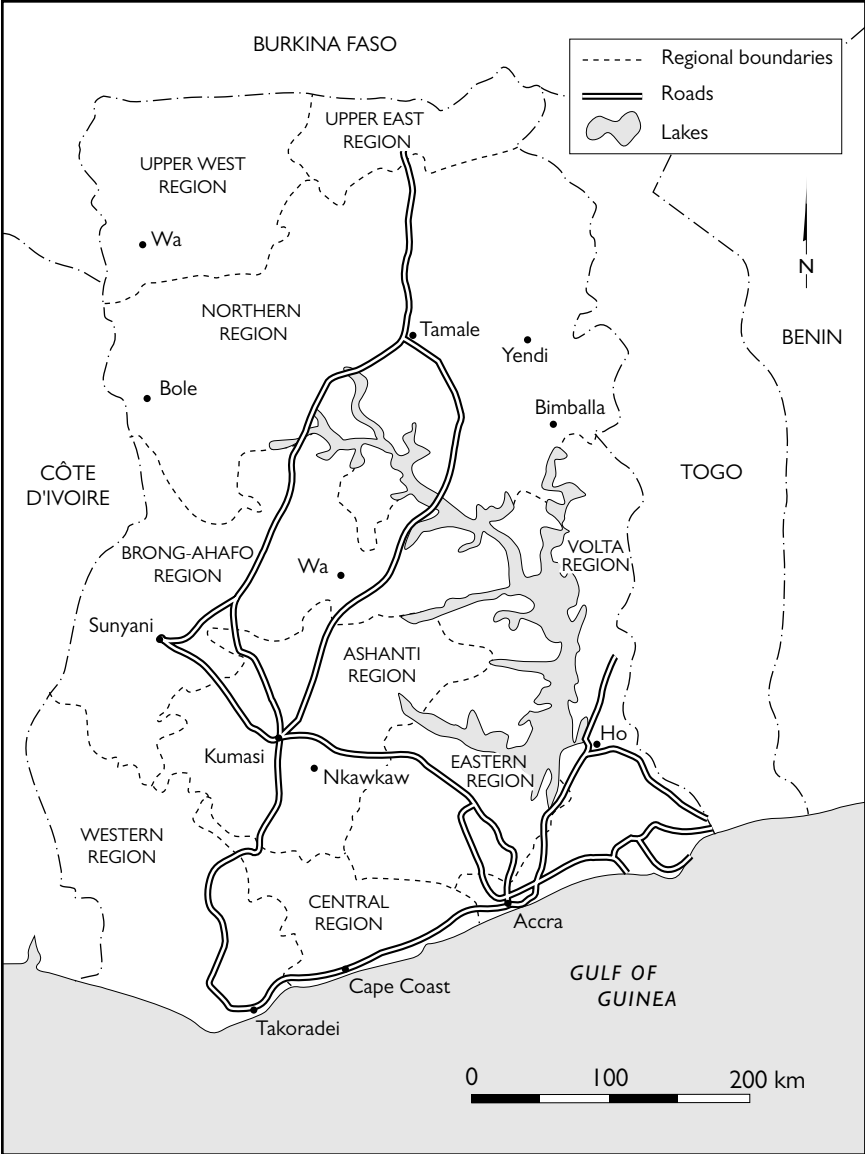
Map 7.1. Regions of Ghana. Adapted from P. Briggs, *Guide to Ghana.* (Old Saybrook, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 1998).

from access to lineage property are the norm among these groups. The division between northern and southern Ghana is heightened by religious differences. While Christians and animists predominate in the south, Moslems and animists live mainly in the northern part of Ghana.

The regional differences in economic development, ethnicity, kinship systems, and religion affect women's access to resources. For example, among the Akan in the wealthier southern coastal region, women may seek financial and other assistance from maternal relatives, while in northern Ghana, the poverty of many women is exacerbated by patriarchal kinship systems that exclude women from any claim to lineage property. Regional differences in women's resources influence the ways that violence is gendered in each region.

## CONTEMPORARY GHANA

Economic hardship and armed conflict have intensified the difficulty of women's lives in all regions of Ghana. In the current period of globalization, Ghana's economy is tied increasingly to the world economy as a primary producer and supplier of agricultural products and minerals and an importer of foodstuffs. At independence in 1957, Ghana had a promising future, with its economy based solidly on cocoa, timber, gold, and other materials. It had a relatively well-developed infrastructure, large amounts of foreign exchange, a civil service generally recognized as one of the best in Africa, and one of the very highest per capita incomes on the continent. Herbst (1993) notes that in 1957, Ghana had the same per capita income as South Korea. Within twenty-five years of independence, however, the average Ghanaian was significantly poorer, while Koreans had quintupled their per capita income.

Ghana's economic decline culminated in the government's inability to mitigate the effects of a severe drought in much of West Africa in 1983 (Manuh 1994). The expulsion of over a million Ghanaians from Nigeria exacerbated widespread food shortages and already high levels of unemployment in Ghana. Attempting to reverse economic decline, the government at the time—the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)—embarked on a program of economic liberalization, adopting structural adjustment programs under the guidance of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other donors. The structural adjustment programs involved the following measures: reducing public expenditures, shifting public expenditures to the export sector; increasing domestic savings to promote investments; reorganizing state-owned sectors to make them competitive, self-supporting, and profitable; liberalizing the economy to allow the free play of market forces; promoting exports to generate foreign exchange; and promoting foreign investments (Owusu 1998). As a result,

Ghanaians saw extensive retrenchment of civil servants; declining average wages; rising unemployment; cutbacks in health care, transportation, and other public services; and the introduction of user fees for health and education. Adoption of these measures over the past fifteen years has led to improved macroeconomic conditions while exacerbating regional and social disparities. By 1997, Ghanaian industries were operating at higher capacities than in 1983, exports and Gross Domestic Product were growing, and inflation had declined (Konadu-Agyemang 2000a; Herbst 1993; Kraus 1991). During the same period, growing regional disparities in the availability of health and education services and incomes contributed to much higher rates of malnutrition, wasting, and stunting among children living in northern districts than among those living in southern Ghana. While the standard of living of rural Ghanaians may have declined mostly as a result of structural adjustment programs, the programs also adversely affected the urban poor, whose numbers increased dramatically (Konadu-Agyemang 2000a).

Women were particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of structural adjustment programs because of gender relations in the domestic and employment spheres. Domestically, Ghanaian women have few claims on their partners' resources. Partners, whether legal spouses or not, do not often pool their wealth and incomes. Until 1985, a wife had no automatic claim on a husband's resources even upon the husband's death (Manuh 1994). As structural adjustment policies took hold in the 1980s, deteriorating employment opportunities for women compounded the adverse impact of limited access to familial resources. Jobs were lost in sectors on which women had relied for stable, well-paid work—for example, in public services. Rural women employed by state-owned agricultural companies and plantations also lost their jobs. New job openings mainly intended to improve infrastructure for production were rarely in female-dominated occupations. Structural adjustment programs also harmed the informal sector, the key sector for the survival of a large proportion of the population, especially women. As banks revised their lending practices, women traders lost access to credit sources. The promotion of export crops and the competition from imports reduced profits for women who were agricultural producers and traders. In this context, women were increasingly unable to meet their obligations to children and other dependents. Most women could no longer adequately meet the needs of their households, particularly in the absence of any social security benefits (Manuh 1994).

Political instability that contributed to the economic crisis in 1983 continued into the 1990s. After 1966, there were four successful military coups that led to loss of life and property and population displacement. Under the military regimes that were in place between 1966 and 1992, human rights abuses involving repression of political opinions, false imprisonment, and harassment were common (Opoku-Dapaah 1993). The election of a new

president in 2000 marks Ghana's return to participatory democracy. In accord with the constitution, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who came to power in a military coup on December 31, 1989, gave up power in 2000 after two terms as president. His successor, John Agyekum Kufour, was chosen by elections that foreign monitors declared free and fair.

Armed conflict in northern Ghana has compounded political uncertainty, accentuated the adverse economic impacts of structural adjustment programs on Ghanaian women, and displaced women within Ghana. In February 1994, the northern region of Ghana erupted in a violent armed conflict in which more than two thousand people were killed and about two hundred thousand were displaced (Ofori 1995). More than 322 villages were devastated; farms, herds, and produce were destroyed; and the economy was severely damaged (Toonen 1998). The armed conflict in northern Ghana physically harmed many women, displaced them and their families, and created economic hardship that has forced women to migrate. Even women in wealthier southern districts distant from the sites of armed conflict have been affected adversely. The northern conflict has exacerbated the impacts of agricultural failures in the north, reduced already shrunken government spending on social services throughout Ghana, and heightened political instability.

Our case studies illustrate how social and economic changes at various spatial scales, international, national, and regional, create conflict zones that are mobile in two respects. First, the geographic boundaries shift as structural adjustment programs interact with political events and armed conflict. For example, the sexual enslavement of young girls for religious reasons occurs mainly in southeastern Ghana, while in other parts of southern Ghana young girls are dealing with economic hardship by exchanging sexual favors for gifts and money. Second, Ghanaian women who migrate to escape conflict and to pursue better economic opportunities find that gendered violence travels with them, even beyond the national boundaries of Ghana.

## THE CASE STUDIES

### *Violence Close to Home: The* Trokosi *System, Spousal Abuse, and Sex Work*

Current economic difficulties, the repressive political climate, and the armed conflict have aggravated women's marginal positions in Ghanaian society, as the various forms of violence suffered by women illustrate. Despite equal rights under the law, Ghanaian women suffer societal discrimination that is particularly serious in rural areas, where opportunities for education and wage employment are limited. Currently, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as International Needs Ghana and the national human

rights commissioner (CHRAJ) are campaigning against one form of gendered violence, the *trokosi* system.

*Trokosi* (pronounced TRO-KOSI) in the Ewe language means "fetish slave" or "slaves of the gods" and is currently practiced by some of the Ewe groups in southeastern Ghana (Aryeetey and Kuenyehia 1998). Trokosi is a religious practice that forces young girls into indefinite servitude to religious priests to atone for the crimes committed by family members. The following quote from Equality Now, an international human rights organization dedicated to improving the civil, political, economic, and social rights of girls and women, illustrates the vulnerability of young girls:

> Abla Kotor is one of thousands of young girls in southeastern Ghana, enslaved by the trokosi tradition. Abla Kotor is 13 years old. At the age of 12, she was given to a local priest in atonement for the rape that resulted in her birth, the rape of her mother by her mother's uncle. As soon as Abla Kotor has completed three menstrual cycles, the priest to whom she was given will almost certainly rape her. Meanwhile, she works his fields and farmlands, cleans his home and cooks his meals. (Equality Now 1998: 1)

According to the tradition, families give virgin girls to priests as a way of appeasing the gods for crimes allegedly committed by relatives, sometimes generations before. The offenses may range from serious crimes to minor offenses such as stealing fruits, vegetables, and personal effects. Alternatively, the girl may be given to improve a run of bad luck. For serious crimes, families give up generations of girls in perpetual atonement. The practice, linked with certain gods and shrines, dates back to the seventeenth century (Duff-Brown 1997), when livestock and other goods were given to the priest in atonement. In the eighteenth century, priests began asking for young virgins as reparation. The reasons for the new form of reparations are not well understood, but the victimization of young girls who could be used as domestic workers as well as sexual partners coincides with the peak of the African slave trade that was the basis of subsequent British colonization of Ghana.

Currently, International Needs estimates that up to ten thousand girls are dedicated as *trokosi*. Girls as young as eight are sent to shrines by family members, where they are bonded to the priests for life, becoming domestic and sexual servants who are often raped and abused as temple prostitutes. Even when released, a girl or woman may be unable to marry, since she is stigmatized by loss of her virginity. Sacrificed to the priests for life, *trokosi* who have been released may be required to render services at the shrine after release. Those who try to evade these obligations may be ostracized and threatened by their families and communities.

The *trokosi* practice is a form of slavery that violates the Ghanaian constitution. Article 14 of the constitution provides that "every person has a right to personal liberty," and Article 16 provides that "no person shall be held in

slavery or servitude; or be required to perform forced labor." Although the Ghanaian government passed a law in June 1998 outlawing the practice, and some *trokosi* have been freed, many women remain enslaved because of the political and sociocultural barriers hindering its enforcement (Heymann Ababio 2000). First, the large share of the population that is Ewe insures that the Ewe have substantial political influence that has been deployed to oppose attempts to ban *trokosi*. Some Ewe view the *trokosi* tradition as part of their culture, so banning *trokosi* is seen as the equivalent of banning Ewe culture. Second, the *trokosi* system is maintained with the tacit support of chiefs fighting to retain their power in the face of recent social and economic changes in contemporary Ghana that threaten chieftancy. Third, the *trokosi* system instills fear that is the basis of priests' and chiefs' power to control people. Women's rights advocate Audrey Gadzekpo was quoted in a January 20, 1997, article of the *New York Times* as follows: "This is something rooted in a very powerful superstition. The trokosi are not recruited or captured; they are sent to the shrines by people who fear that something bad will happen to them if they do not atone in this way. This will continue to be true for a time regardless of the law" ("The Ritual Slaves of Ghana" 1997: A1). Boateng (1995) argues that the fear is so intense that people do not appreciate the danger, the disgrace, and the dehumanization inherent in the *trokosi* system. He notes that in a patrilineal society, where little value is placed on women, offering a virgin daughter to a shrine is not associated with much loss or pain. Thus, by operating coercively on their fears, the *trokosi* system regulates the behavior of individuals. Finally, isolation perpetuates the *trokosi* system. The geographical locations of some shrines are so remote and inaccessible that people are ignorant about the abuses suffered by *trokosi* girls.

The *trokosi* system is one of the most obvious indications of girls' and women's vulnerability and subordinate status in Ghana, a status that is also reflected in women's experiences of spousal abuse. Spousal abuse against women is said to be common in Ghanaian society, but it is often unreported. The pervasive silence reflects the absence of public recognition that spousal abuse is a violation of women's rights to security of person. In response to lobbying by the Federacion Internacional De Abogadas (FIDA, International Federation of Women Lawyers), the International Federation of Female Lawyers in Ghana, and the 31st December Women's Movement, the Women and Juvenile Unit of the Police Services was established. Subsequently, a number of newspaper articles and radio and television reports about domestic violence have heightened public awareness, but its invisibility is perpetuated by patriarchal relations in several aspects of Ghanaian society (Ampofo 1992; Ofei-Aboagye 1994).

Ghanaian society holds that a husband has the right and duty to secure the obedience and the fidelity of a wife by disciplining her. The norm was rein-

forced by the adoption of British common law that authorized the husband to use reasonable and justifiable force to discipline his wife. Although this norm is not discussed very openly, it encourages many women to stay in abusive relationships. Ofei-Aboagye (1994) notes that a woman who leaves her husband because of domestic abuse is labeled *bad* while the man does not leave the home and acts as the wronged and indignant husband. Police and other agencies are also reluctant to intervene in the "private" home when women need protection.

Some marriage practices also hinder women from leaving their husbands. Marriage represents more than the joining of a man and a woman—it also bonds two families. Although kinship systems differentially affect men's and women's access to property, Whitehead (cited in Aryeetey and Kuenyehia 1998) argues that in marriage contracts, women are being exchanged between men (from one patriarchy to another). In the process, they become "objectified" or "commodified." Women in abusive relationships fear that their families will be disgraced if the women divorce because of abuse. Dowry monies *(tiri nsa)* that are paid to secure the hand of a bride reinforce the husband's authority by giving the impression that the woman is purchased and owned by her husband.

The economic hardship that has accompanied the implementation of structural adjustment is thought to have exacerbated spousal abuse in Ghana at the same time that it has limited women's abilities to leave abusive relationships. Although many women are employed and make meaningful contributions to their households' financial survival, their incomes are not improving or are increasing more slowly than living costs. In the current period of economic difficulty in Ghana, many women cannot earn enough to be the sole supporter of their dependents and themselves, so they continue to live in abusive relationships. Thus women's fears of being ostracized by their families, of economic hardships should they leave their marital home, and of losing their children prevent many from leaving the abusive home (Ofei-Aboagye 1994).

A culture of silence surrounds spousal abuse. Woman who wish to discuss marital rape, for instance, are told they must not wash their dirty linen in public (Adjetey and Osei-Boateng 1998). The public silence surrounding domestic violence conceals many of the hardships women suffer and prevents serious discussion of the incidence of spousal abuse and prevention strategies.

Faced with limited employment opportunities and financial obligations to children and other family members in Ghana, some women have resorted to commercial sex work, particularly in urban centers that are concentrated in southern Ghana. Although publicly condemned, sex work is tacitly tolerated. When women who engage in sex work are apprehended, they are prosecuted while their male clients are not charged. Commercial sex work in

Ghana, as elsewhere, has contributed to rapid increases in the numbers of HIV/AIDS cases (Oppong 1998). Hoping to avoid transmission of HIV/AIDS, men have sought relationships with young girls who are still virgins. Young girls whose families are struggling economically obtain gifts in kind and financial support from older men in exchange for a sexual relationship. The parallels between these informal arrangements and *trokosi* are startling. Unlike the bonds between *trokosi* and priests, which are compelled by families, the relationships between young girls and older men are publicly condemned. Nevertheless, some families turn a blind eye, tolerating individual relationships silently. In hard times, the economic benefits of a sexual relationship may outweigh the family's outrage, while silence insures that the girl's marriage prospects are unharmed.

The *trokosi* system, the silence concerning spousal abuse, and the sexual exploitation of women and young girls are stark evidence that women's rights are not yet recognized fully in Ghana. Ghanaian women suffer specific forms of violence that violate their rights. Although some types of violence suffered by Ghanaian women are similar to those suffered by women in many other societies, even in societies that struggle to end spousal abuse and other forms of violence against women, *trokosi* is distinct. Embedded in the patrilineal kinship system of the Ewe, *trokosi* has been encouraged by male chiefs whose power is threatened by recent political and economic changes.

### *Leaving Home to Make Ends Meet:* Kayayoo *and Ghanaian Women Abroad*

While heightening women's vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual abuse, deteriorating economic and political conditions in Ghana have also intensified the economic marginalization of women. Recent policies have hampered the activities of traders, farmers, and petty entrepreneurs, women's typical occupations. Consequently, many extended families that relied on women's earnings have suffered financial hardship. With few alternatives, women have attempted to fulfil their familial responsibilities by migration, regionally within Ghana and internationally. In many cases, the result has been greater exploitation and increased victimization. Migration is a common response to the economic crisis (Konadu-Agyemang 2000b), but it has not proved to be an emancipatory experience for many Ghanaian women.

From northern Ghana, girls and women, some as young as six, move south to acquire assets that will improve their marriage prospects or ensure greater economic stability for their families (Agarwal et al. 1997). Many end up working as *kayayoo,* girls and women who carry goods, usually in a large pan on their heads, for a fee. Traders use *kayayoo* to move their goods between markets or between purchasing points and transportation facilities.

Many *kayayoo* are part of a circuit of labor circulation between the north of Ghana and Accra that is embedded in complex social and economic relations. The migration of young girls from the north to the south to obtain work is determined by the family. Families exert extreme pressure on girls to work, even if it means working at a substantial distance from home. Family connections that will protect the children in the urban location are only one consideration in a complex decision-making process where family needs and resources also weigh heavily. Families in the north who have little access to cash income finance their daughters' trips from the north to Accra to undertake employment as *kayayoo* to obtain more income. The girls' employment is a family survival strategy, and their income is a family resource. Agarwal et al. (1997) summarize this web of relations and expectations as follows: "[T]he family is operating an economic portfolio with the parents in the north being responsible for the provision of the household's housing and the production of foodstuffs while the exiled girl children in the south are generating the cash income necessary for, amongst other things, health care, clothing and education (of other siblings)" (248).

Most young women from the north aspire to marriage and local gainful employment in the north. Marriage requires a dowry, and financial resources are also needed to ensure future employment. Staying in school to gain skills that might improve the girls' prospects for local employment is incompatible with these financial needs, so many migrate at their families' behest. However, the aspirations of many girls and women from the north are not fulfilled. As *kayayoo,* many end up sleeping on the streets or in low-grade accommodations where they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Head panning leaves the *kayayoo* vulnerable to commercial exploitation, as they are at the mercy of the traders who collude to minimize the fees paid to *kayayoo.* Earnings are so low that many are trapped in poverty, unable to return home.

International migration is a second strategy for seeking better economic opportunities (Konadu-Agyemang 2000b). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a substantial exodus of economic migrants to neighboring countries, primarily Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. Since the imposition of structural adjustment programs beginning in 1983, many Ghanaians have also migrated to Europe and North America in search of economic prosperity (Konadu-Agyemang 2000b; Oppong 1998; Owusu 1998). Migration often involves a lengthy stepwise process that begins with an initial move to a nearby African country, followed by subsequent moves to northern Africa and selected western Europe countries with less stringent visa requirements. The migration process culminates in a final move to Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, or the United States (Konadu-Agyemang 2000b).

While some Ghanaian women migrate independently, many others enter

European and North American countries as dependents of male immigrants. Their status as dependents heightens Ghanaian women's vulnerability to abuse. The experiences of Rose,[3] a Ghanaian immigrant mother of two in Toronto who lived in a shelter to escape physical abuse by her husband, illustrate this vulnerability. In an interview, she discussed the difficulty of finding housing for herself and her children while far from her family and separated temporarily from her husband, who had sponsored her entry to Canada.

> Sometimes it [finding housing] was hard for me. Especially 1994, it was hard for me that time because I have problems with my husband and stuff like that so I went to shelter . . . and I have my daughter . . . she was a year and a half and I was pregnant with my son. So I went to shelter and you know . . . it was hard at that time. . . . Yeah, yeah, at that time I left him and went. It was hard because. . . . have no relative here.

The migration experience itself heightens spousal abuse. Rose's husband had difficulty finding a full-time job in Toronto, so she went out to work. When she refused to quit her job, the abuse increased. Rose was unwilling to quit her job, adamant that she needed to work to provide the basic necessities for her children.

> He told me . . . when I get my job, full-time job, he told me to stay home and . . . take care of the kids. And I say, well, when I'm not working he not taking care of this and this . . . we have a lot of problems. We have too many bills and you can't buy clothes for me, at the same time you pay rent, cable, and everything . . . so I have to provide myself. And I have my kids . . . you don't buy nothing for the kids. Everything I have to do, by myself, the kids, and the household.

Rose felt that her husband's heavy drinking in Toronto, which absorbed most of his income, also exacerbated the conflict. Nevertheless, after spending some time at the shelter, Rose returned to live with her husband. She felt it was important for her children to have a father in their lives. Her decision to return to her husband also reflects pressure from her family in Ghana. Too far away to offer material assistance, her family encouraged her to remain in the marriage to protect the family's reputation and social standing in Ghana.

In another case, Biama, who migrated alone to Canada as a refugee claimant with the assistance of a family friend, was sexually abused by an acquaintance of the friend. "One morning I was in my bedroom, I came to the kitchen, made a cup of tea and then went back to the room because I wasn't working. So that was in '91, October '91. So I just woke up and felt that someone right beside me. So I said why are you here. He said you don't have to talk. And I said, why shouldn't I have to talk. I started struggling and this

guy raped me." Biama did not report the rape immediately because the perpetrator was remorseful. Later, when the perpetrator threatened to report her as an illegal immigrant to Canadian authorities, she filed a police report (Wong 2001b).

The experiences of Rose and Biama illustrate how migration abroad heightens women's vulnerability to gendered violence. Far from family who might offer shelter and economic assistance, Rose is less able to escape spousal abuse. Her return to her husband also illustrates how patriarchal relations in Ghanaian society perpetuate violence against women, even across long distances. Although Rose returned to her husband for many reasons, one of the most important was pressure from her family in Ghana, who wanted to avoid the loss of reputation and status associated with a separation and divorce. In Biama's case, her uncertain status as a refugee claimant was the basis of her abuser's efforts to silence her. Many immigrant women are less knowledgeable than Biama about their legal rights and less able to be assertive. As a childless, single woman, Biama was not affected by concerns about children, an important factor in Rose's decisions.

Confronted by limited employment opportunities in the country of destination, some sponsors encourage women to take up sex work. Fearful that opposing the wishes of their male sponsors will lead to forced deportation (Adomako 1991; Ampofo 1992), some women comply. Other women take up sex work when they can see no alternative way of earning sufficient income to support them and to remit sufficient funds to support families in Ghana. Ghanaian women have encountered numerous barriers in the labor market that range from employers' unwillingness to value foreign work experience and their insistence on Canadian experience to few social contacts who can inform Ghanaian women about suitable job vacancies (Wong 2001a). Desperate to earn enough money to support their families in Ghana, some women take up sex work, at least in the short term, while they look for more remunerative employment.

Women working abroad as sex workers see themselves as victims of the deteriorating economic situation in Ghana (Adomako 1991). The aim of many women is to become economically independent, able to support themselves in the country of destination and their families in Ghana. Economic success enables women to return home to acclaim and acceptance that, in turn, legitimize prostitution and other sex work. However, commercial sex work is legitimate only if conducted abroad. Sporadic cleanup campaigns in Accra often target prostitutes on the grounds that they "come back to infect others in the country" (*Spectator* 1991, quoted in Ampofo 1992).

The economic desperation felt by many Ghanaian women is apparent in their efforts to make ends meet by migrating long distances. However, spatial mobility, which is often associated with expanded citizenship rights, has

the opposite effect for many Ghanaian migrants. The *kayayoo* from the north earn a marginal living under the most destitute circumstances, while some women who emigrate to other countries are driven to engage in sex work. In both cases, difficult and long moves to gain access to better economic opportunities and to avoid serious and severe social sanctions have rendered girls and women vulnerable to serious forms of exploitation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Violence against women is deeply rooted in gendered power relations, identities, and social institutions that are shaped and transformed by spatial relations and territorial struggles. Space often constrains gender relations, limiting the interactions between women and other people, things, and phenomena in different locations (Dear and Wolch 1993). For the *trokosi*, the isolation of the temples makes it easier for Ghanaian authorities to avoid enforcing laws designed to protect girls and young women. Gender relations are also mediated by space, such that the spatial separation of activities and their temporal sequencing provide opportunities for some social interactions while precluding others. Ghanaian women who emigrate only to find themselves driven into commercial sex work depend on the spatial separation of their places of origin in Ghana and places of settlement abroad to maintain their social status and to avoid social sanction. Finally, space may constitute gender relations (Massey 1995). As women struggle to shape the meanings of spaces and create places, they reconstitute and transform gender relations. In Ghana, the efforts of activists to legislate greater protection for Ghanaian women from spousal abuse are altering the meaning of home, slowly transforming it from a place of domination to one of greater equality. Over time, these efforts will contribute to the transformation of gender relations within Ghanaian society.

Our place-based analysis underscores the complex origins of gendered violence (Meertens and Escobar 1996). While the commencement of armed conflict draws public attention, armed conflict often has a much longer genesis in events that often passed unnoticed (Morokvasic 1997; Cockburn, Chapter 2 of this volume). In northern Ghana, the roots of conflict are in the British colonial period, when colonial authorities allocated tribal lands only to ethnic groups with paramount chiefs, thereby disenfranchising acephalous groups. Decisions that on the surface seem unrelated to armed conflict often heighten women's inequality, rendering them more vulnerable in conflict situations. In the Ghanaian case, the failure of government officials to enforce laws against enslavement has left young girls and women in southeastern Ghana vulnerable to the *trokosi* system, a form of violence that has

been reinforced during the current period of economic and political uncertainty by chiefs anxious to maintain their authority (Heymann Ababio 2000). Economic deprivation that is largely the result of structural adjustment policies contributes directly to women's persistent inequality in Ghana. Women who migrate from northern Ghana, becoming *kayayoos* in the markets of southern cities, are motivated by family needs for money, particularly for their own dowries. Northern families are unable to generate these funds in the north, where the economy has been devastated by armed conflict and public policy failures. In both examples, young women's rights are violated to maintain political structures that subordinate women.

Our case studies illustrate the spatial extent and mobility of conflict zones. Although the word *zone* connotes a fixed geographical territory with well-defined boundaries, the violence that women suffer is the result of social and political processes that operate across militarized and nonmilitarized places (Cockburn, Chapter 2 of this volume). Armed conflict may heighten gendered violence, as seems to be the case for northern Ghana, but our case studies show that armed conflict is only one of several contributing social processes.[4] Ghanaian women suffer violence at home, in their workplaces, and in civil societies that are not militarized. Even after they move from a militarized location, women in Ghana are often unable to escape violence. Girls and women migrating from northern Ghana to earn money for their dowries and other family responsibilities do not escape the subordination of patriarchy. Low wages and social isolation leave them vulnerable to all types of abuse in southern Ghana. The women who flee Ghana to other countries in Africa, Europe, and North America also find that unequal gender relations are relocated with them. Indeed, international migration with its uncertainties may exaggerate women's inequality. Entering foreign countries as dependents, Ghanaian women are more vulnerable to the demands of their male sponsors than they would be in Ghana, where some of the women's families could offer support.

The analysis also reveals regional differences in women's experiences of gendered conflict. Academic researchers and activists in Ghana have investigated the sexual abuse of Ghanaian girls and women that is associated with regional and international migration. Public and legal campaigns around these issues have led to small but significant changes in public policies and growing public awareness of women's exploitation, particularly in Accra and other cities in southern Ghana. Less attention has been given to women's experiences of armed conflict in Ghana. There is little academic literature about the conflict in northern Ghana, and media reports rarely mention women. International organizations such as the United Nations and Amnesty International report the numbers of people displaced by the conflict with no gender breakdowns. Women's roles as reproducers of the various ethnic

groups involved in the northern conflict have not been discussed publicly. Furthermore, there has been no public discussion of rape and other acts of violence against women during the conflict.

Our research only allows us to speculate on the reasons for the silence about gender and armed conflict in Ghana. We do not know whether the silence indicates that women did not suffer rape and other acts of violence during the conflict or whether it indicates that violence against women is such a taken-for-granted aspect of armed conflict that it does not warrant mention. Underreporting of violent incidents against women and inadequate and ineffective recordkeeping certainly hamper attempts to assess the extent of violence against women in Ghanaian societies (Aryeetey and Kuenyehia 1998). The silence concerning women's experiences of armed conflict may also be strategic. Although currently Ghanaian politics are fairly stable, the period of coups and political oppression is still part of the popular consciousness. People who remember those who were killed and exiled for expressing political opposition to the government in power may be cautious about any public discussion of armed conflict within Ghana's national borders. In this respect, the Ghanaian situation is similar to that in Guatemala, where women maintained silence about incidents of armed conflict as a strategy of survival and, in some cases, as a strategy of resistance (Blacklock and Crosby, Chapter 3 of this volume).

Geographical isolation probably contributes to the limited discussion of gendered violence and armed conflict in Ghana. Northern Ghana is distant from the political and economic center in Accra and, simultaneously, from international media. Its remoteness has been heightened by declining public investment in transportation and communications facilities. Only a few outsiders have visited the region to investigate and report on the conflict. Since the conflict was confined within national borders, it has also garnered little attention from international refugee organizations. In this silence, women's experiences are likely to be disregarded. Patriarchal relations in Ghanaian society, particularly in the north, discount the importance of women's experiences. Any strategy to eliminate gender violence must therefore confront the underlying cultural beliefs, social structures, and spatial relations that perpetuate it.

A geographical perspective on gendered violence and conflict zones takes seriously the spatial nature of social and economic processes that oppress women and examines women's local circumstances where conflict occurs. In so doing, conflict zones are transformed from passive containers in which military actions occur to places where dynamic social processes operating across many aspects of women's lives contribute to their experiences of violence (Massey 1994a; Harvey 1996). By recognizing the complex, diffuse, and mobile nature of conflict zones, we also acknowledge the possi-

bilities for women to resist violence and, by acts of resistance, to create new spaces of greater gender equality.

## NOTES

1. Tinkler (2000) recently demonstrated how the geographical diversity of Rwanda undermines the notion that the recent genocide was inevitable, arising from irreconcilable ethnic differences. She notes that the genocide was concentrated in specific regions that had distinct social, political, and economic geographies, different from those of regions where fewer were killed.

2. In northern Ghana, tribes and ethnic groups are synonymous. We use the term *ethnic group* to indicate groups in which membership is defined on the basis of a common culture, language, and normative behaviors. By adopting the term *ethnic group,* we recognize variations in the political and social organization of these groups.

3. All names referred to in this chapter are pseudonyms.

4. Geographers need to pay more attention to armed conflict, but their analysis must take account of various social processes operating in a place (Hewitt 2000).

# 8

# Gender, the Nationalist Imagination, War, and Peace

*Nira Yuval-Davis*

Rumor has it that Enoch Powell, the right-wing maverick British M.P., once defined a "nation" as "two males defending the women and children in a specific territory." Women and children, or "womenandchildren," to use Cynthia Enloe's (1990) expression, and territories are constructed together in nationalist imaginations, as the cause, point of departure, and point of return for men and war. The reason for this division of labor is closely related in the nationalist imagination to the biological differences that exist between the sexes. John Casey (1991) claims: "Males were selected for the role of warriors because the economical and physiological sex-linked differences that favoured the selection of men as hunters of animals favoured the selection of men as hunters of people" (quoted in Kazi 1993: 15). Moreover, Chris Knight (1991) has argued that men have bonded together and developed their roles as hunters and fighters to empower themselves with the brotherhood of blood as a defense against women's magical powers in their menstrual blood! While men have been constructed as naturally linked to warfare, women have been constructed as naturally linked to peace. The image of women resisting war has been in existence in the Western public imagination at least since *Lysistrata* was first shown in Athens in the fifth century B.C. This Greek comedy by Aristophanes describes the coming together of Athenian, Spartan, and Corinthian women to declare a sex strike against their husbands until they stopped fighting each other.

In other places (e.g., Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997) I discuss the overall relationships between gender relations and national and ethnic phenomena, the gendered ways that national and ethnic collectivities are being reproduced biologically and culturally, and the gendered politics of citizenship. The particular focus of this chapter, however, is the sexual divisions of labor in militaries and in wars and

how they relate to these gendered aspects of nationalist projects. In the final section of the chapter I turn to debates on women and peace and the role of biologistic constructions in that debate. Throughout the chapter I use examples from a variety of case studies, but in particular the case study of Israel, the first state in which women have been recruited to the military with a supposedly "universal" draft law.

As Cynthia Cockburn explains in Chapter 2 of this volume, violence is not confined to military conflicts and wars, and one can find what she calls a gendered continuum of violence, from everyday domestic life to open warfare. While describing it as a continuum might create an illusory impression that these modes of gendered violence are additive rather than often interactive (domestic violence in Israel, for example, grew considerably during the Gulf War), it is important to bear in mind this overall picture when we look at specific gendered characters of militaries and wars.

## FRONT AND REAR

Fighting, whether physical, verbal, or by other means, seems to be an almost universal social behavior. Freud claimed that aggression and sex are the two universal human instincts that are controlled and regulated in one way or another in all human societies. Ritualized fights to preserve or change social hierarchies or to secure access to territorial or water resources have been part of routinized social repertoires throughout human history, together with other means of negotiating settlement for various conflicts. Women did not always participate directly in fighting, although it was not uncommon for them to do so (see Macdonald, Holden, and Ardener 1987: 148–65), but they always had specific roles in combat, whether it was to take care of the dead and wounded or to become the embodied possession of the victorious. Sometimes the two roles went together. Cynthia Enloe (1983: 4) describes the great demand in the seventeenth century for women to take care of soldiers. A good caregiver like Kate Keith, the pretty Scotch woman, was not allowed to remain outside wedlock more than two days after her soldier husband died. Similarly in the Iraq-Iran War, the Ayatollah Khomeini instructed war widows to marry war invalids and to become their caregivers.

A clear sexual division of labor in war, however, usually disappears when there is no clear differentiation between the "battle front" and the "home front" or "rear" (Yuval-Davis 1985). The Spanish reported, for instance, that in the fight against the Incas they saw women fighting alongside men using slings. However, as Penny Dransart (cited in Macdonald, Holden, and Ardener 1987: 62–77) comments, slings were commonly used by both men and women for herding animals, and thus the way Inca women fought during that war for survival cannot be assumed to represent their routine mili-

tary role. Similarly, during the siege on Jerusalem by the Romans, Jewish women participated in fighting activities such as pouring boiling oil on the Roman soldiers—again an adaptation, not a routine part of their usual social roles.

Once a separation between "front" and "rear" exists, and the social collectivity accumulates enough surplus value to be able to sustain war in the absence of the warriors from the "home front," a more routinized sexual division of labor between men and women in the military emerges. An illustrative example is the situation during the time of the *yishuv (*the Zionist settlement in Palestine before the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948). In the yishuv, the central military organization was the Hagana, which crystallized as a national centralized organization at the time of the Arab Rebellion in the years 1936–39. In the *kibutzim,* the frontier collective settlements, women took part in the Hagana guard shifts, side by side with men (although to a lesser extent because they had to take shifts in the children's homes as well). However, once the military strategy of the Hagana changed from defending the settlements to attacking the enemy away from the settlements, women remained behind to guard the settlements and the children. The men, on the other hand, went to the "front," which might have been only a few miles away, in settlement fields (Goldman and Weigand 1980).

## MODERN WARFARE AND THE DIFFERENTIAL INCORPORATION OF WOMEN INTO THE MILITARY

Modern militaries have tended to fulfil two potentially contradictory roles. On the one hand, especially in times of national crisis and war, they become a focus for national bonding and patriotism, which cuts across differences of class, region, geographical origin, and sometimes age and gender. On the other hand, they may develop as modern corporations, structured and geared toward perfecting the ability to produce death and destruction in the most efficient and innovative ways. The incorporation of women into the military can take very different forms, depending on which goal is the political priority.

Women often become the symbolic bearers of modernity. Unveiling women in Ata Turk's revolution of 1917, which was aimed at constructing Turkey as a modern nation-state, was as important as veiling them has been to Muslim fundamentalists in the contemporary Middle East. The incorporation of women into the military has fulfilled similar roles in Libya, Nicaragua, or Eritrea, for example, where it contains a double message. First, women, at least symbolically, are equal members of the national collectivity. But second, and more importantly, *all* members of the national collectivity are incorporated, at least symbolically, into the military. This was why,

despite the objection of the religious parties, Israeli Jewish women were drafted by law into the Israeli military.

Any contemplation of gender relations in the military, however, should not lose sight of the fact that it is never all men and all women in the society who fill particular roles within the military or outside it. Ethnic membership, class, age, and ability play crucial roles in determining who is included and who is excluded from these roles. As mentioned above, these differentiations become blurred when the war takes place on the "home front." Reports from the Russian army's attack on Chechnya in 1994–95, for example, point to the fact that although the operation was directed against the Chechens demanding national autonomy, local Russians did not escape the systematic destruction directed toward the whole of the local population.

This inclusive construction of women in the military is very different, for instance, from their incorporation into contemporary North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) militaries, especially in the United States. There, women were encouraged to enter the military in high numbers when the national draft was stopped and the military became completely professional. Women, in this instance, are not so much symbols of social openness as the least undesirable human pool of the reserve army of labor. One of the most important reasons for the decision to mass-recruit women into the U.S. military has been to keep it voluntary rather than based on the draft, so as to prevent a recurrence of the popular revolt against the Vietnam War. In other words, women's recruitment into the military, rather than enhancing their citizenship, was aimed at transforming the military service from a citizenship duty into a "job" and to make it less dependent on the cooperation of all citizens—women and men.

Cynthia Enloe (personal correspondence, cited in Yuval-Davis 1991b: 222) claims that following the decision to make the military based on "voluntaries," one of the most important considerations in opening the American military ranks to women was to avoid "flooding" them with blacks:

> Women were being weighed as a counter-balance to a foreseen non-white military; . . . women's recruitment was expanded in 1973 at a time when many White and Black policy makers were predicting that, if left a primarily male force, the all-voluntary army would soon become a primarily Black male force because it was Black young men who had the fewest economic alternatives to military enlistment in post-Vietnam America. This type of sexist and racist thinking is a common phenomenon. bell hooks (1981) has pointed out that in such a construction the assumption is that all Blacks are men, and all women are white. In the 1990s, 48 percent of American women soldiers are black.

The most important factor, however, that has enabled the entry of women in mass numbers into an increasing number of military tasks has been the changing nature of modern warfare. As discussed above, women have always

fulfilled vital and specific roles in militaries but have been largely excluded from the public military domain. Modern warfare has brought with it, first of all, the need to formalize and control the military's channels of sustenance and support. It was Napoleon who was rumored to have declared that "the military marches on its stomach." With the modernization of the military, those supplying food, clothing, nursing, clerical and communication services, ammunition, and sexual services have all needed, at least to an extent, to establish formal relationships with the military. Moreover, with the continued development of military technology, engaging in face-to-face combat has become a smaller and smaller part of military action. Lighter and easier-to-handle personal arms have made even that more accessible to women (and children). Differences of physical strength between men and women have become, therefore, of significantly less importance as an obstacle for women's participation in the military on an equal footing.

Not all militaries follow the same route of incorporating women. As I discuss elsewhere (Yuval-Davis 1985: 32), one of the factors that makes comparison between militaries and the number of women they include difficult is the fact that the classification of what is a civil and what is a military task varies from one military to another. For example, in Germany, only the fifty female military medical officers were considered to be formally part of the military in 1980, while all the female clerical workers servicing the army were considered to be civilians (Chapkis 1981: 89). In Israel, on the other hand, all clerical workers were considered to be part of the military, while doctors and nurses could be civilians. In other words, apparent changes in the number of women in the military could be just a side effect of a bureaucratic or ideological redefinition of the boundaries of the armed forces. Another example is statistics based on veteran registration, as in postindependence Algeria, where the complex documentary requirements attached to registration requests have made it very difficult for the bulk of peasant or working-class illiterate people to register (Helie-Lucas 1987). This has been especially true for women, not only because of their partial social exclusion and the fact that a larger percentage of them are illiterate, but because the prime motivation for registration has been for paid employment benefits that would not have been relevant to many of these women who were engaged in the unpaid domestic labor market.

The more sophisticated the weaponry, transport, and communication systems in the military and the more elaborate the bureaucracy, the more specialized and professional the members of military forces need to become, and the more similar the organization of the military is to that of large civil corporations. An inclusive definition of "people's army" under such conditions can become constructed as inappropriate and wasteful. The connections between patriotism and militarism become obsolete. Such a debate, for

instance, is being carried out in Israel, where there are growing voices to end the so-called universal draft, especially of women, in favor of constructing a "leaner," more professional military.

The military in Israel, which is composed of a relatively small professional army and a large regular one, has always played a central role in its national formation and reproduction. Zionism, a settler society project, has encountered political and military resistance from the local Palestinian population since very early on in its history (see, e.g., Abdo and Yuval-Davis 1995; Bober 1972; Kimmerling 1983; Shafir 1989). For this reason and to fight the British, who ruled the country under a League of Nations mandate after World War I and the demise of the Ottoman Empire until 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel, several military organizations developed, the largest of which was the Hagana. The Israeli military, ZAHAL (Israeli Defense Force [IDF]), was established after 1948 and in many ways was a hybrid, modeled on the Hagana and the British military, in which many of the members of the Zionist yishuv participated during World War II. It was constructed as a popular army that combined the military task with the nation-building task, "absorbing" the major Jewish immigration to Israel during several periods in its history.

As a rule, after two or three years of regular service, men continue to be called for reserve service, one or two months a year, until the age of fifty. Women have also been drafted, usually for a somewhat shorter period than men. Their reserve service is usually minimal and stops altogether once they get married or become pregnant. As elaborated elsewhere (Yuval-Davis 1985; Izraeli 1999), the Israeli military, symbolic "universal" draft laws notwithstanding, has never been universal and all-encompassing, even for Israeli Jewish men. Ultraorthodox Jewish men were allowed to avoid serving in the military by declaring themselves as engaged in continuous religious studies. This concession to the ultraorthodox, many of whom reject the legitimacy of Israel as a Zionist state, has been one of the major contradictions in the construction of the Israeli Jewish nation. It is secular but dependent on an orthodox religious definition for its boundaries.[1] In relation to women, the formal inclusiveness of the draft encompasses only about two-thirds of the Jewish women of recruitment age and none of the non-Jewish citizens of the state (in 1999, 62 percent of eighteen-year-old women were drafted and 80 percent of the men). However, because women serve less than two years and the men three years, women constitute only 32 percent of the soldiers in the regular army and 13 percent in the professional army (Izraeli 1999). Significantly, women have been excluded, not only on national, religious, and reproductive grounds (which affect women from different ethnic and class backgrounds in different degrees), but also on "quality" grounds. They are required to obtain higher educational levels

than the men in order to be called for national service. The military has never been as prepared to invest in women's education as it is to invest in that of men.

Another "twist of the tale" relates to the fact that women are allowed to declare themselves as "conscientious objectors," an extension of their right to refuse to serve in the army on religious grounds, while men, formally at least, are not constructed as having "a conscience." When they resist serving in the military on moral and political grounds, they are usually sent initially to prison, and if they don't change their minds, they are often released from the military on mental health grounds.

Even this differential incorporation of men and women in the Israeli military has not been well received. Voices have started to emerge inside and outside the military, calling for the abolition of the mandatory recruitment of women. The majority of women in the military are engaged in clerical tasks, and given that computer and other technological developments have radically reduced the demand for clerical workers in the military, the universal recruitment of women into the military has been cited as one of its main causes for hidden unemployment and inefficiency. General Gershon Hacohen caused a national scandal when, lecturing before high school students in 1995, he argued that "men have always been warriors and women whores." And most of the women in the IDF fulfill clerical roles that computers and calculators could perform with the same level of efficiency (*Ma'ariv,* January 26, 1995).

A discussion about whether the Israeli military should be transformed from "the people's army" into a professional military that recruits whomever it needs has become part of the agenda of the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign and Security Affairs. One of the most important arguments against such a change has been that "in a society which absorbed 700 thousand new immigrants during the last five years, the military is significant as part of the process of absorption and identification with the Israeli society" (M.P. Or, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign and Security Affairs, as quoted in *Davar,* February 13, 1995). The fact that new female immigrants above the age of regular service, unlike new male immigrants, have not been called to serve in the military reflects the masculinist character of the social relations within the military, even in the rare cases where formally equal access supposedly exists.

## WOMEN AS SOLDIERS

As the statement of General Hacohen above shows, the formal incorporation of women into the military as soldiers has encountered a lot of prejudice and male fear. This is despite the fact that women have always constituted an inte-

gral part of military life and that the overwhelming majority of women sol-
diers are positioned in roles that largely reflect the gendered civil labor mar-
ket. They are usually secretaries, nurses, and teachers, and very few fulfill
roles that are specifically military and/or that directly relate to the military's
main "business"—that is, fighting and killing (Enloe 1983, 1989, 1993; Yuval-
Davis 1985, 1991a).

It is not incidental that in the celebrated novel *Portnoy's Complaint* by
Philip Roth, the continuously randy American Jewish hero becomes impo-
tent when he tries to have sex with an Israeli woman soldier. If the experi-
ence of the military is supposed "to make men from the boys," womanhood
cannot be easily incorporated within such imagery. Jacklyn Cock (1992),
who studied military women on both sides of the South African war against
apartheid, describes how, in the South African army, woman hating and
homophobia have been an active part of the male soldier's training:
"Recruits who do not perform—who are not up to standard—are often
labelled 'faggots' or 'homos' or 'murphies'; they are told to 'go back to your
mothers and play with the girls' " (WREI 1992: 65). Sandra Gilbert (1983)
points out how, in World War I, the military women nurses evoked images of
omnipotence and "sinistry" ("Does male death turn women nurses on?"), at
the same time as they were portrayed as ministering angels (436).

These dichotomous images of women soldiers have been central to the
ways in which women have usually been incorporated into the military. They
are threatening unless controlled and distinguished from male soldiers by an
emphasis on their femininity. In Israel, for instance, the only state in which
women have been regularly recruited to the military in a national draft, the
Women's Corps[2] has been called by its initials *Khen,* which in Hebrew means
"charm." One of the formal duties of the members of Khen, as described by
an Israeli military spokesperson, was "in the areas of crystallizing the morale
of the units and taking care of the soldiers of the units" (Yuval-Davis 1985:
661). It is arguable that the high rate of rape and sexual harassment of
women in the American military is intended to distance and secure the male
soldiers' fears from the "Portnoyan" omnipotent woman soldier.[3]

In national liberation armies, where the hierarchical and organizational
framework of the forces is much less formal, a strong common ideological
stance might help to transcend some of these tensions, especially where
women's emancipation is seen to symbolize the emancipation of the people
as a whole. Still, strict rules of nonfraternization or execution of soldiers who
are found guilty of rape may be found to be necessary to enhance ideologi-
cal elements of "political correctness," as has been the case in the Eritrean
national liberation army (Zarai 1994).

Although very few women soldiers see themselves in the "castrating" roles
male imaginations might impose on them, one of the main motivations for
women to join the military is an opportunity to empower themselves, both

physically and emotionally. As Gilbert (1983) points out: "A number of texts by men and women alike suggest that the revolutionary transformations wrought by the [First World] [W]ar's 'topsy turvy' role reversals did bring about a release of female libidinal energies, as well as a liberation of female anger, which men usually found anxiety-inducing and women often found exhilarating" (436). Interviews with women soldiers, especially those who have joined various national liberation armies, reveal that many escaped to the guerrilla camps from intolerable personal situations caused by colonial and loyalist forces and/or their own families (Bennett, Bexley, and Warnock 1995; Zarai 1994). In the military they were able to establish new identities, skills, and respectable social positions, as well as to struggle for causes they believed in.

The American film *Private Benjamin,* with Goldie Hawn, tries to portray joining the U.S. military in such a light (Chapkis 1981). The film tells the story of "poor little rich girl" who feels lonely and rejected and who finds her salvation by joining the American military and surviving the tough military training. The difference between Private Benjamin and women in the Eritrean or Tigris army, however, is that her position in the military is described in completely personal terms rather than in the context of what the American military does. The military in *Private Benjamin,* as in the propaganda campaigns of most Western militaries, is seen purely in terms of a good career move—an opportunity to get training, to see the world, and to earn more than one probably could if one would have chosen another career. In a more recent film, *GI Jane* (with Demi Moore), "seeing the world" also involves a furtive raid into "an enemy country," but even this is used only as a dramatic backdrop to the heroine's personal journey toward "empowerment" through equality with the boys.

One of the unresolved debates about women's participation in the military, which the film *GI Jane* highlights, is whether it would be better for women to be part of women-only units or to be incorporated into the mainstream (i.e., mostly male) military units. On the one hand, moving from separate women's corps into integrated units has meant that many of the formal barriers for women to perform certain military tasks (and get the appropriate rewards and promotion attached to them) have been removed and their equal potential as soldiers (as well as their training for higher-paid jobs in the civil labor market at a later date) has been recognized. One sign of this development is the devising of specific fitness tests to determine whether a particular soldier—male or female—is suitable for certain military combat tasks. Rather than stating a priori that particular tasks are suitable only for male soldiers, skill is thought to be measurable by an objective test. However, as those with experience in this area have commented (WREI 1992: 43), this in itself may not secure an equal chance for men and women because the choice of tests is often political. For example, standards in stretching, in

which women do better than men, may be lowered, while standards of physical strength, in which men do better, may be kept high. Yet one might argue that both of these abilities are necessary traits for successfully fulfilling a specific military task, such as getting out of hatches in ships.

Those who oppose the abolition of separate women's units point out that these units often provide safe and comfortable social environments for women. Women, especially as they tend to be the minorities in mixed units, often have to perform better than men to prove that they are equal. In the Palmakh, for instance, the military units of the Hagana, which were the prestate military units of Labour Zionism, women succeeded, after a long fight, to gain the right to be included in mixed fighting units during the 1948 war. Later, women soldiers met and decided to ask for separate women's units because of their frustrating experiences in the mixed units (Yuval-Davis 1985).

Beyond these problems, there is, of course, the issue of sexual harassment, which is much more prevalent in mixed units. One of the safeguards for women soldiers in the Israeli army was the fact that women officers rather than their male officer bosses were responsible for disciplining them, thus making them slightly less dependent on the whims of their bosses if frustrated in their sexual advances. An alternative to such a partial or formal separation is the imposition of strict rules on fraternization. In the Eritrean Liberation army, for instance (Zarai 1994), men and women were strictly forbidden to fraternize, and the punishment for rape was execution.

Another factor affecting separate women's corps is that they are conducive to the development of a comfortable lesbian subculture. Lesbianism and male homosexuality have been a major topic of debate in Western militaries recently, and the regular practice of discharging anybody who is "discovered" to be gay in the British military has been overruled in court on the basis of equal rights. It is too early to assess whether this change signals a more general change in the attitude to sexuality in the military in general.

Homosexuality is but one issue of public debate in the West concerning specific groups' incorporation into the military. Women's roles in marriage and motherhood have also proven difficult for militaries to handle. In Britain the military has had to pay millions of pounds in compensation to women who were automatically discharged when they became pregnant. Most militaries have relied on "military wives" to bear and rear the children of soldiers as well as to carry out other supporting roles. In some cases, such as in guerrilla wars (e.g., in Eritrea and Palestine), the liberation armies have taken it upon themselves to rear collectively the children and orphans of the fighters. However, in most armies, "normalizing" motherhood for women soldiers is but one facet of the professionalization of the military and the transformation of soldiering from the ultimate civic duty (of the male citizens) into just another professional career.

## SERVICE IN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LIFE

A study by Elizabetta Addis (1994) has shown that indeed women usually benefit economically, both individually and collectively, from becoming soldiers. She claims that the military generally is an equal-opportunity employer in terms of wages and that the relative benefit of women soldiers depends on the differential level of payment for men and women in the civil labor market. As male soldiers do not have such a wage benefit from becoming a soldier, the marginal benefits for women becoming soldiers are higher than those for men. Moreover, to the extent that women get opportunities to train and to be upwardly mobile once they leave the military and enter the civil labor market, women soldiers achieve collective benefits for women in the labor market as a whole.

One of the additional reasons, Addis claims, that women benefit more than men from serving in the military is the fact that they run less risk of being killed or maimed than men, as they are usually prohibited from engaging in combat roles. This is a controversial point, not only because the definition of combat becomes narrower and more meaningless with time and technological advancements of warfare and because recently women have been allowed to join combat units in more and more militaries. The technological advances in warfare also mean that the chance of being hit on the battle front is not necessarily larger than it is at the rear. In the Gulf War most American casualties occurred as a result of an Iraqi missile hit on a bunker in Saudi Arabia rather than during the bombings on Iraq itself.

Feminists fighting for equal rights for women in the military argue that their exclusion from combat roles prevents them from benefiting fully from promotion opportunities in the military (and consequently outside it) on an equal footing with men. Recently in the United States, a legal battle took place regarding the rights of women to participate in combat roles, especially the rights of women pilots to bomb the enemy. During the Gulf War and up to the present, women have been allowed to fuel bombing airplanes in the air because this has not been defined as a combat role. After a long and arduous process of political lobbying and the establishment of a presidential commission to investigate this issue, the Clinton administration conceded the rights of women to participate in all combat positions except those of ground infantry and submarines. The extent to which these policies are going to be implemented on the ground, especially after the Republican presidential victory, is still an open question.

Given the context of the general antifeminist backlash in the United States (Faludi 1992), U.S. women's increased involvement in combat positions should not be seen as a major new achievement for women's rights. Moreover, a whole new light could be thrown on the issue when one remembers that in World War II Russian women pilots successfully performed thou-

sands of bombing missions and that many survived to tell the tale. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, their nickname was "the Night Witches" (exhibition of Yevgenny Kaldei's photography, Riverside Studios, London, May 1995). What is probably even more significant in this tale is that after the war women became virtually excluded from any significant public positions in the Soviet Union. A study by Hanna Herzog (1998) also found that women in Israel find it much more difficult than men to "convert" their achievements and rank in the military into civil and political life.

## WARS AS GENDERED CONSTRUCTIONS

In discussions about women soldiers' lives and their aspirations for equal rights in their profession, it is easy to forget the nature of the profession. Jeanne Holm, a retired woman major general, found it necessary to remind participants in a conference on women in the military in Washington, D.C. that "anyone, male or female, who considers joining the armed forces, must be made aware, before taking the oath, that contrary to some of the recruiting razzle-dazzle, being in the military is not about uniforms and parades and it's not about benefits or adventure. The military is about going to war and war is about killing and maybe dying for your country" (WREI 1992: 59). And indeed media reported that some of the women soldiers who were sent to the Gulf in 1992 were shocked to find out that they were actually being sent overseas to fight. Many of them said that they had joined the National Guards as a way of getting fit, gaining extra income, and adding a bit of adventure to their lives. The Gulf War was to the American soldiers, however, a very different experience, not just from that of the Iraqi soldiers and civilians, who were the other party in that war, but also from that of American soldiers in other wars. It has been said (Boose 1993) that one of the main reasons the United States was so keen to go to the Gulf War was to win the Vietnam War there. An interesting study (Boose 1993) compared the experiences of bomber pilots in World War II with those of the Gulf War and discovered that while the dominant emotion of the World War II pilots was terror, that of the Gulf War pilots was the excitement of playing games in an arcade (see Hyndman 2000). This phenomenon was even more noticeable during the Kosova/o campaign, where the bombing from the air was constructed as an alternative mode of war in which the Western powers were omnipotent. Unlike when ground troops are involved, no "body bags" of Western soldiers may be a necessary result of the military intervention.

Not only the sophisticated technology but the national security discourse has produced this difference. Both have created the illusion that directed missiles can hit only their predestined targets, that the exact location of these targets, as in arcade games, is fully known, and that it is all about hitting

objects rather than people. Indeed, during the Gulf War (and the Kosova/o bombing), the official discourse never mentioned people getting hit but rather spoke about "collateral damage."

The official discourse of the Gulf War has also been much more gender neutral than that of previous wars. As was noted at the time, women soldiers dressed in battle fatigues were hardly distinguishable from men under all the protective layers. Similar images appeared again with the delivery of British forces to Bosnia. Unlike the usual discourse of war, the Gulf War was not constructed as a war fought by men for the sake of the "womenandchildren" (Enloe 1990) but was carried out by "our boys and girls." Indeed, in Israel, this was the first war in which "the boys" were not able to fight but were locked in sealed rooms together with the women and children. This created a deep national trauma that was swiftly repressed. At the same time that reports of domestic and other violence in Israel grew significantly, the masculinist image of the Israeli fighters as invincible superheroes was seriously damaged and probably created the space that enabled Rabin's government to engage in the "peace process" with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, however limited and subversive and essentially doomed to failure.

Most wars, however, are experienced very differently than the Gulf War. The Kosovo bombing and processes of dehumanization were much less "sanitized." Given the available sophisticated technology, it was enough in 1995 for the Bosnian Serbs to catch a few UN officers and use them as a human shield to render the technological discourse completely inept and to stop the air bombing. While the enemy can become (and some say necessarily becomes) dehumanized, it is different when "the human shield" is made with one's own "boys."

This feeling of loyalty to "one's boys" serves a central role in the experience of the fighting men. Whatever the context and scale of the war, it is the "warriors' camaraderie," often also referred to as "male bonding," that is almost universally emphasized. Patriotic convictions and material and status rewards can be more or less important in different experiences of fighting. Yet the feeling that one can rely upon one's fellow soldiers and loyalty to them in situations of life and death is a sustaining sentiment in the daily lives of the warriors. In Israel, this reluctance to betray fellow soldiers is the main reason that many Israelis continue to serve in the reserve army, despite objecting to Israel's continuous occupation of the Palestinian territories or its invasion of Lebanon.

In the same way, American generals objected to the recruitment of women into combat roles in the military, stating their fear that "male bonding" would be disrupted. Indeed, given the nature of most soldiers' socialization (in the case of either sex), such a sense of bonding is easier to achieve in men-only or women-only groupings. However, long shared training and an emphasis on professionalization tend to neutralize these feelings signifi-

cantly, as has been the case in the civil labor market, although the latter rarely involves such intense engagement. It is an open question as to what extent rules forbidding fraternization enhance or complicate such processes.

Fighting a war can involve short, orderly periods of "going on a mission," or it can involve endless months of living in trenches or bunkers. It can involve desperate chaotic and hellish situations of fighting for survival, mutilating and being mutilated, killing and being killed, but it can also involve working in supportive roles in the actual fighting, on or off the battlegrounds. One study found that only 15 percent of World War II soldiers were ever shot, even once, during the war ("Special Issue on Women and Violence" 1983). Given the nature of modern warfare technology, this ratio would probably be even smaller now. However, in cases of guerrilla and other small-scale warfare, the situation is quite different, and the warriors themselves may be required to fulfill many more of the maintenance roles of preparing food and providing education, for example, when not actually fighting.

Wars also affect the lives of the people on the "home front" in many different ways. At one extreme, war can have little or hardly any effect if the war is taking place away from the home front, the military involved is professional, and there are few casualties. Much of the experience of the colonial countries has been of this nature. While some women have had husband soldiers, especially officers, who have visited them from time to time, most of the gendered support network has been composed of local people and a few colonial women, in or outside the military. At the other extreme, most or even all of the determinants of one's daily life and personal identity before the war can disappear in a few hours—place of work, property, homes, personal artifacts, and worst of all, friends, relatives, and members of one's family. Even if one is not injured, abused, or tortured by the enemy, the brutal stripping of all that has been nearest and dearest can have a devastating long-term, if not permanent, effect on people's lives. Life becomes solely about survival. Many people become refugees in this process, and this is a gendered experience. Up to 80 percent of the total refugee population is composed of women and children (although, given masculinist international asylum policies, most of the refugees in Western countries are men). Women and old men are left in villages to look after the house and children, to work the land, and to keep the social life of the community going. The women left behind become vulnerable to rape by enemy soldiers.[4] Rape is perhaps the most gendered act of violence in war, although its meanings vary across conflicts (see Morokvasic-Müller, Chapter 6 of this volume, and Preston and Wong, Chapter 7 of this volume). Nationalistic efforts to shame or eliminate an enemy nation generate particular motivations for rape, whereas militarized masculinities, even among peacekeepers, create cultures of violence that may be perpetrated against women during conflict (Whitworth 1997,

2001). However, as Women in Black in the post-Yugoslav states have pointed out (Zajović 1994), losing the entire basis of their former lives is often the most devastating experience of the war for women. Nevertheless, in the case of pregnancies resulting from wartime rapes, the effects can be devastating. Paradoxically, once a pregnancy is public knowledge, a raped woman may lose the respect and support of her surviving family and community as a result of traditional codes of honor and shame (see Mojab, Chapter 5 of this volume). For this reason, the overwhelming majority of the reported cases of systematic rape have been of widowed or single women rather than married ones, who have often preferred to keep their experiences to themselves (see Hans, Chapter 11 of this volume).

But it is not just the experience of war that is different for men and women. As Cynthia Enloe (1993, 2000) and others have pointed out, during a war, militarized images of femininity, whether they call women to stay at home and be good wives and mothers or to volunteer for the military industry and become a "Rosie the Riveter," are highly necessary for the maintenance of militarized images of masculinity, which themselves can vary within and between societies (see Cockburn, Chapter 2 of this volume). Wars are seen to be fought for the sake of the "womenandchildren," and the fighting men are comforted and reassured by the knowledge that "their women" are keeping the hearth fires going and are waiting for them to come home. Even within the military, one of the goals of women's military service was "crystalizing the morale of the units and taking care of the soldiers of the units" (according to a 1973 publication by the Official Israeli Military Public Relations Representative, quoted in Yuval-Davis 1985). This is probably why a lecture and demonstration on cosmetics was included in the women's basic training program. With the recent changes and expansion of the roles of women in Western militaries, there may be a certain shift in this area. Demi Moore's decision to shave off all of her hair in the film *GI Jane* is symbolic of this shift. ABC (Atomic, Biological Chemical) uniforms do not allow for women soldiers' femininity to show, and their growing (still small, but symbolically important) incorporation into combat units undermines the Powellian argument about war's existence.

If the relationship between "the feminine" and "the masculine" in the military and war is changing, the relationship between these two phenomena and "peace" needs to be problematized as well. The link between women and peace, which has been central to feminist and other antiwar movements, needs to be examined in this light.

## WOMEN'S POLITICS AND ANTIWAR MOVEMENTS

The British "Greenham Common" women's groups (Roseneil 1995), the Argentinean "Mothers of the Disappearing Children" (Fisher, 1989), and the

Israeli, Italian, and post- Yugoslav states' region "Women in Black" groups (Lentin 1995; Zajović 1994) are but some of the better-known women's groups that have been active in recent years. These groups have constructed antimilitarism, not as a women's-only issue, but as an issue in which women, due to their specific positioning in society, have a specific message to transmit, around which they should organize separately from men. While some women in these and other movements have colluded with the essentialist notion of "women as the peaceful sex," most have rejected such notions, which are so prevalent in militaristic constructions of femininity (Leonardo 1985; Enloe 1983, 1989; Pettman 1996).

The essentialist construction of men as aggressive and violent fits the nationalist-militaristic "protected-protector" myth (Stiehm 1989) in which men fight for the sake of "womenandchildren" (Enloe 1990). Feminists, like Judith Stiehm, have argued that the best way to demolish this myth is for women to participate in the military on an equal footing to men. Others, like German feminists, continue to object to the inclusion of women in the military (Seifert 1995). Many feminists, from Virginia Woolf onwards, have argued that women should publicly reject the claim that the men are fighting for their sake and withdraw their support and legitimation. Thus in Israel, for example, during the war in Lebanon in 1982, a group called "Mothers Against Silence" claimed that they were not prepared to support the state sending their sons to the war, allowing their lives to be sacrificed for the sake of a military occupation, which they did not agree was vital for the survival of Israel. A more political manifestation of the same movement, called "Four Mothers," was active in the popular movement against Israel's military involvement in Lebanon until its withdrawal in spring 2000.

Motherhood has played a very important role in feminist antimilitary thinking. One of the most developed and theoretically sophisticated voices in this camp is that of Sara Ruddick (1983, 1989), who has claimed that some inherent characteristics in the ideology and practice of mothering can become the foundation of an antimilitaristic movement. She calls it "maternal nonviolence: a truth in the making" (Ruddick 1989, title of chap. 7) and argues that the centrality of life preservation in the task of mothering colludes with peacemaking practices and would be against life destruction.

Although Sara Ruddick denies her arguments are essentialist, they nevertheless have an essentialist tinge to them that is similar to the decoration of the fences of the American Missile camp in Greenham Common with nappies in the early days of the antimissiles peace movement. What is particularly problematic is Ruddick's attachment of life preservation to the kinship system. Ruddick, like Carol Gilligan (1982), from whom she draws inspiration, presents a certain paradox in her construction of women's morality. On the one hand, Ruddick presents women's psyche, especially that of mothers, as universal, not constructed historically by ethnicity, class, age, culture, and

so on. Although Ruddick (1989) recognizes that not all women behave as she would like them to behave, she continues to use the generic *women* out of respect (to the many women who do pursue nonviolence) as much as out of what she calls "stylistic laziness" (164). Through this "idiom of achievement" (164), women are assumed to view the world and to judge it in a way that differs from the more abstract, universalistic way in which, she claims, men's view of the world is constructed. However, if women's view of the world is so particularistic, then obviously their family, community, and ethnic and national collectivity should matter to them more than to men. The archetype of such a construction of motherhood is that of Berthold Brecht's *Mother Courage,* whose sole interest and struggle, during wartime, is the survival of her own children. Such a construction of "preservative mother's love," to use Ruddick's term, heroic as it may be, can hardly be a basis for an antimilitaristic women's peace movement that opposes war because of a general concern about human life, a concern not just for their own children but also for the children of the "enemy."

In reality, of course, there are many women and mothers whose "preservative love" transcends their love of their children. A recent example is the mothers of soldiers in Chechnya who traveled from Moscow to Chechnya to plead with the Russian soldiers, their sons, to stop their atrocities in Chechnya—just to be taunted and pushed away by those same soldiers (National Peace Council 1995).

The specific positioning of women in peace movements can be explained by rationales that are very different from the biological and social constructions of women as mothers. First, women, unlike men, are virtually nowhere drafted and forced to fight in wars of which they don't approve. They always join the military as volunteers. Even in Israel, where they are drafted, they are not drafted to the reserve army, which constitutes the bulk of the military, nor are they allowed to serve in the battle front lines. M.P. Geula Cohen has pointed out that in Israel, if women are not soldiers, they are mothers or sisters or wives of soldiers and as such are all entrenched in the military system (Yuval-Davis 1985). Nevertheless, they are somewhat freer to protest against militarism and war without being subjected to the same pressures and sanctions as those who are actually members of the military.

Second, some women prefer to organize autonomously within antiwar and antimilitaristic movements as part of a more general feminist conviction that this autonomy allows them to be more assertive than they would be in a mixed organization. Even so, they often tend to cooperate and work closely with men's and mixed groups and organizations with similar political goals.

Third, some women's antimilitaristic and antiwar groups see their work as a spearhead in the fight against the patriarchal social system as a whole that they see as dominated by male machoism and violence. "Take the toys from the boys"—one of the slogans of the Greenham Common women—typifies

such an approach. Such a standpoint might lead activists to an automatic link between feminism and antimilitarism and pacifism (Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group 1983). A debate around this question has often arisen in international conferences whenever First and Third World feminists come together. Feminists from the Third World justifiably argue against simplistic universalized notions that some First World radical feminists, such as Robyn Morgan (1989), hold of "the terrorist" and their automatic condemnations of all acts of violence that do not take into account who carries out the violent campaigns and why. They also contend that they cannot afford the luxury of being antimilitaristic because the national liberation of oppressed people can only be carried out with the help of an armed struggle. Interestingly, Sara Ruddick (1983) has been sympathetic to this claim because "fighting is significant for any powerless or stigmatized group" (472). Such a concession might be interpreted, however, as encouraging women to resist patriarchy by using violence, which does not seem to be in line with her general politics.

There is no space here to enter into this debate in detail (see Yuval-Davis 1997). However, this Fanonite ideology of the oppressed, who are called "to reclaim their manhood" by violence, has been to the detriment of many black and Third World women who have suffered from the misogyny that has been central to the macho ideologies sustained by most interpretations of this sentiment. As long as the struggle of the powerless is to gain power rather than to transform power relations within the society, so-called "national liberation" often brings further oppression to women and other disadvantaged groups within the new social order. While armed struggle may sometimes be the only way open to fight against oppression and occupation, the ways this struggle is organized, its targets and social structures, are crucial.

It is perhaps not incidental that during the second Palestinian *intifada,* which relies much more on gunfire and the armed Tanzim, women's participation is much more marginal and less visible than during the first *intifada,* which was focused much more around civil disobedience. However, while the huge Israeli military machine is engaged in attempts to suppress the *intifada* and, while doing so, is continuously destroying the economic, political, and civil infrastructure of the occupied territories, the voice of Israeli women's peace activists is central in resisting the Israeli occupation. In June 2001, the Israeli Women in Black managed to organize simultaneous vigils against the Israeli occupation in 157 global locations, as well as in various locations inside Israel. These locations included a couple of places within the Arab world, as well as in the region of the former Yugoslav states, where Women in Black has been very active. In 2001, in a rare moment of recognition of the power and effectiveness of women's peace movements, the Nobel Prize committee nominated the international Women in Black movement as a formal candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the gendered relations of militaries and wars. The specific tasks that women fulfill in different militaries in different historical contexts vary, as does the extent to which they are formally incorporated into the military. Yet it is only very rarely, if at all, that differential power relations between men and women have been erased, even in the most socially progressive national liberation armies or in Western professional militaries. Moreover, except for a few liberation armies, such as the Eritrean and Tigrean, where women are "allowed" to a lesser or greater extent to fulfill "men's roles," some sexual division of labor continues to operate. This is true even when technological innovations in modern warfare have made biologistic rationalizations of women's exclusion mostly obsolete. Technological innovations not only make physical strength less important in combat roles but also have phased out many of the manual clerical roles that women have traditionally filled in the military.

These considerations, however, are still only marginal in most contemporary wars, especially those that Miriam Cooke (1993) has called the postmodern ones. It is men, in these wars, who are mostly selected to fight and to be killed, and it is women who continue to sustain all other facets of social life, often finding themselves in the aftermath of brutal attacks and rape as displaced refugees who must continue their fight for survival for themselves and their children.

Feminists have been divided on the question of whether, as feminists, they should struggle for the entry of women into the military on an equal footing with men in order to gain equal access to the social power and social resources it can offer and thus to become citizens in the Marshallian sense of "full members of the community." Others have argued that, as feminists, they have a special role to influence their community and state against militarism and war. Some, like Sara Ruddick, have called for both: that is, for women to volunteer for the military in order to stop it from being militaristic.

Many people support a draft on the grounds that conscripts are less eager for battle than self-selecting volunteers. Women conscripts might be especially reluctant to fight, conscious that their families might be particularly appalled to see them on the battlefield. Ruddick (1983) argues that a "peaceful" army fights "only the most necessary and clearly just battles, fights them as humanely and briefly as possible, and in its fighting does nothing to increase chances of escalation to more destructive conventional weapons or to nuclear arms" (477). This is, of course, a hopelessly idealized notion of womanhood because it has been found again and again (and not just by pointing at Margaret Thatcher) that when women's positioning is not different in power terms from that of men, their behavior is not necessarily different from men's.

However, this does not mean that women's presence in the military could not affect its social and political role. If wars are fought "for the sake of womenandchildren," then the presence of women next to the men on an equal footing might undermine at least part of this macho myth (Stiehm 1989). Moreover, while I do not see, as many feminists do, the necessary connection between women "fulfilling their patriotic duty" and their entitlement to full citizenship rights, I do feel that citizenship, as full membership in the community, does or should involve responsibilities and duties that might include a national draft in a specific historical context. Being excluded from the military, like being excluded from night shifts and other so-called dangerous jobs in the civil labor market, has been paternalistic and often to the detriment of the social positioning of women.

No discussion of gender relations in the military can remain on this general level of discussing "women" and "men." National, ethnic, race, class, regional, age, and ability divisions are crucial in the positioning of specific individuals and groupings of women—and men—in militaries and wars. If we do not explore these specific social relations, our understanding of how women or men will affect and be affected by these major social and political arenas can only be partial and misleading.

## NOTES

An earlier but different version of this chapter appeared as part of Chapter 5 of my book *Gender and Nation* (Sage, 1997).

1. Over the years, however, this practice has produced its own contradictions, with the growing resentment of the secular sector and the growth of a fundamentalist religious nationalist sector, especially among the settlers in the occupied territories. Recently the Supreme Court declared this state of affairs illegal, and the Israeli parliament is in the process (deferred as a result of political pressures) to legislate special ways for ultraorthodox men to take part in the national service.

2. The Israeli Women's Corps has recently been dismantled, and the women soldiers have been integrated into mixed frameworks as is the structure in the American military.

3. Recent press reports put the rate of rape as high as a third of women soldiers.

4. A lot has been written in the last few years about rape in war, especially since the systematic rape of women by Bosnian Serbs has been exposed by the media (e.g., Amnesty International 1995; Pettman 1996; Zajović 1994). Similar reports were made about Rwanda (Bonnet 1995) and the war in Bangladesh in 1981 (see the film *The War Crimes Files,* directed by Gita Sahgal, shown on Britain's Channel Four on March 5, 1995). Significantly, as feminist human rights activists like Rhonda Copelon have pointed out in debates at the NGO Forum of the UN Conference on Human Rights in 1995 in Vienna, rape was defined by the Geneva convention as "a crime against honor" rather than as a mode of torture. Honor—of the men and the community, rather than necessarily that of the women themselves (see also Mojab, Chapter 5 of this volume).

# Feminist Analyses of International Organizations and Asylum

# Refugee Camps as Conflict Zones

## *The Politics of Gender*

*Jennifer Hyndman*

Refugee camps can be conflict zones. Sanctioned by the governments who host them and governed by UN agencies, they tend to be temporary cities of sanctuary, often dependent on external economies of international aid. Relations between refugees and the local populations they come to join are fraught with competition for resources, feelings of unfair treatment, and questions about political instability where large numbers of refugees settle. In Kenya's Northeast Province, where a history of systematic political and economic marginalization includes banditry and sexual assault, widespread insecurity has increased with the temporary settlement of more than 125,000 mainly Somali refugees. Those who leave the camps in search of fuel with which to cook—predominantly women and girls—are at risk of being attacked.

Gender policies in camps are also contentious, given the confluence of different players—refugees, local people, staff from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), UN employees—each with a distinct political status and rationale for being there. Just as development projects have often provided a number of planning tools to ensure the incorporation of gender into their work, humanitarian assistance sometimes aims to pay attention to gender differences in the delivery of its services and protection strategies, but in no way is this approach a straightforward one. Less attention is paid to the everyday ways in which the institutional culture of humanitarian organizations is gendered. NGOs and UN agencies produce profiles of refugee culture a priori, from their own perspectives as international organizations and based on their experience elsewhere.

This chapter examines the ways in which gender and culture are conceived and applied to improve the safety of refugee women affected by violence in camps situated in northeast Kenya. The United Nations High Com-

mission for Refugees (UNHCR) has a mandate to respond to crises of human displacement on a global scale. The ways in which UNHCR conceives of gender and culture in this humanitarian context invite analysis because of its tendency either to essentialize "woman" and "culture" in the planning process or to efface the importance of differences vis-à-vis gender policies that focus on integration. I contend that shortcomings of humanitarian aid and its delivery in acute situations are generally outweighed by a political consensus that humanitarian action must be taken. My own feminist analysis focuses on the transformation of unequal relations of power across relations of culture, sexuality, nationality, class, gender, and other differences. My approach emphasizes the ways in which particular groups and categories are constructed in subordination, but it is also attentive to cultural location and material inequalities. The major difference between my position and that of UNHCR is that UNHCR policy subsumes cultural difference within a single framework of emergency planning. In this chapter, I draw on research conducted on UNHCR humanitarian operations in three Kenyan refugee camps. In 1994–95, I met with and interviewed refugees, NGO staff, UNHCR staff, and local authorities involved in administering the Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera camps. The insecurity of these camps provides a context to investigate gender policies and initiatives that address violence against refugee women.

## HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES: INTRODUCING UNHCR

Responding to humanitarian emergencies is fraught with logistical and political difficulties from the outset. Human displacement created by conflict, ethnic cleansing, or politically induced famine often emerges with little warning, rendering it difficult to plan for in the first instance. At the end of 1999, more than thirty-five million people were affected by displacement, both within and beyond the borders of their home countries (U.S. Committee for Refugees [USCR] 2000). Humanitarian responses invariably involve communication between several languages, interpretation across more than one cultural divide, and the negotiation of political agreements, often in highly contested space. Increasingly, assistance is being provided by UN agencies and NGOs in war zones where work conditions are far from ideal. Despite these obstacles, governments that make up the international community often, but not always, designate crises of human displacement as "emergencies" worthy of international intervention. Selected governments then fund humanitarian assistance and protection measures—often through UN agencies—to help those rendered vulnerable by conflict and war.[1]

The concept of "complex humanitarian emergencies" arises from the distinct geopolitical landscape that emerged after the Cold War. The conditions

precipitating displacement and human insecurity were no longer driven principally by superpower rivalry and conflict. Rather, they were shaped by a number of factors, including the uneven effects of globalization, the rise of nationalisms, and the reality that conflict was largely intranational, not international. Both the meaning and value of "refugee" were transformed by the changes, which no longer rewarded superpowers with political "points" for providing sanctuary to asylum seekers. Instead, the end of the Cold War coincided with economic austerity and the rise of neoliberalism in many of the traditional refugee-receiving countries. Provisions of the welfare state were pared back, and the political will to accept refugees who might lean on state support waned. First World support for Third World development also declined (Thérien and Lloyd 2000).

Humanitarian emergencies, then, are largely an invention of the 1990s, one that sought to underscore the urgency of international response but also to delineate the situation as time-limited. Examining assistance provided under such conditions is doubly important, first because actions otherwise considered unacceptable may be deemed justifiable in an "emergency" and second because there may be an implicit assumption that intervention is short term and therefore need not incorporate, for example, the gender or cultural politics of the place and people being assisted. Emergency handbooks are often developed by UN agencies on the basis of "lessons learned" from staff experience and evaluations (see UNHCR n.d.).[2] These are valuable to the extent that staff posted to an emergency situation will not have to reinvent the wheel. However, it is important to be cautious in employing these tools because they generalize from a small number of cases and define an approach that may efface the defining historical and geographical features of a particular place. Evaluations of past humanitarian crises and responses often result in the creation of agency modules, or models, that may facilitate certain kinds of understanding but diminish the significance of others (Grosz 1994). This conundrum begs the question: How can institutions with global mandates conceptualize issues that differ across cultural and other contexts? And how, if at all, can they act without systematically privileging organizationally defined notions of gender over other, more geographically and culturally circumscribed relations of gender?

While crises associated with conflict often emerge unannounced, humanitarian work is rarely short term. Emergency planning must incorporate an analysis of gender, local geopolitics, and cultural politics from the outset because the patterns established on the basis of early planning are likely to shape humanitarian assistance programming in the long term. In Sri Lanka, civil war continues after almost two decades; UNHCR and NGOs have been in place for more than a decade. In Bosnia, the Dayton Accord ended the war, but relocation and return efforts continue at a slow pace, facilitated by UNHCR, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE),

and UN peacekeepers. Hundreds of thousands of Burmese refugees in Thailand, not all of them recognized as such, wait hopefully for resettlement, having been forced to flee their country in the late 1980s. The Kenyan camps I analyze have been occupied by Somali refugees, as well as a few Sudanese and Ethiopian refugees, since 1992.

Care in conceiving camp policies, layout, and programs is imperative, given their daily impact on the refugees who reside in these temporary cities. The gender division of labor among refugees in camps, cultural practices related to women's and men's differential mobility in accessing facilities, and the physical safety of camp layout are critical considerations in early planning stages. Many of these considerations are outlined in UNHCR's guideline for the protection of refugee women (UNHCR 1991) and its people-oriented planning framework (UNHCR 1991), yet in UNHCR's second edition of the *Emergency Handbook* (n.d.), the local politics of refugee reception, the significance of gender relations, and the importance of different cultural contexts are hardly mentioned. Instead, the book privileges valuable but limited logistical advice. But every humanitarian intervention embodies culturally coded concepts and actions. Gender assumptions and relations are embedded in emergency procedures, whether explicitly acknowledged or not. Because initial strategies of providing assistance often become de facto permanent ones, integrating these social and political dimensions into emergency planning from the outset is not optional.

Having introduced humanitarian emergencies and some of the considerations UNHCR and other agencies face in addressing such crises, I now turn to politics in the Horn of Africa to situate the refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya, within a larger geopolitical context.

## SITUATING CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Few regions of the world have experienced as much continuous conflict, strife, and human displacement as the countries that make up the Horn of Africa (see Map 9.1).[3] Independence struggles for autonomy from colonialism in all countries except Ethiopia constituted one round of conflict in the region.[4] Within the context of the Cold War, the United States and the USSR established alliances with and provided arms to both Ethiopia and Somalia because of the region's proximity to the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf. This superpower involvement coincided with a war in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in 1977, with arms provided by both the United States and the USSR. While Somalia lost in its bid to annex the Ethiopian Ogaden, hundreds of thousands of people fled that region for Somalia, where they became refugees
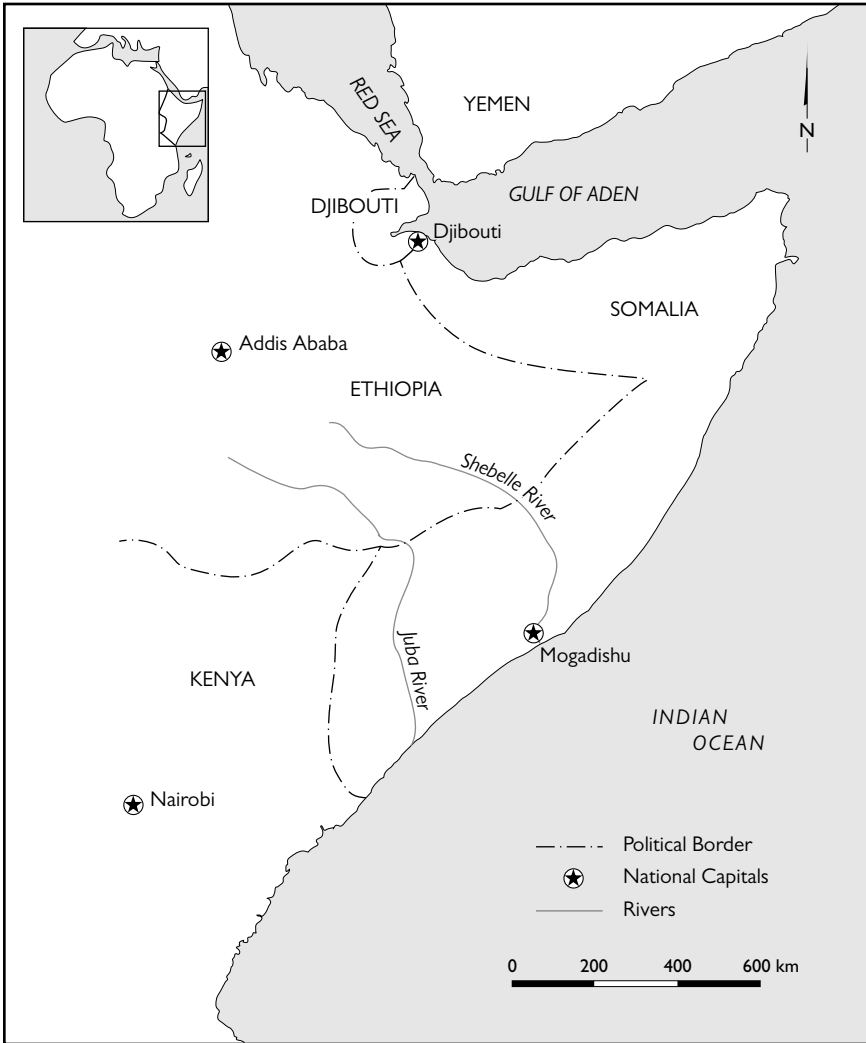
Map 9.1. The horn of Africa. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

in camps throughout the 1980s, funded by donations from the United States and its allies.

In the 1990s, a new round of politics claimed center stage in Ethiopia and Somalia.[5] In 1991, the repressive government of Haile Mariam Mengistu was toppled in a coup, an event that generated a relatively small refugee move-

ment of people affiliated with his government to Kenya. A coalition of liberation movements provided some political leadership that eventually led to the election of President Meles Zenawi. In 1991, another coup pushed Siad Barre, then president of Somalia, from power. In this case, the coup left a political vacuum in terms of national leadership, as rival clan factions began to wage war against the former president's Marehan clan and against one another.

In 1991–92, the conflict began to spill across borders as hundreds of thousands of Somalian citizens—many suffering from acute famine in Somalia—arrived at the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders seeking asylum. UNHCR was present in Kenya at the time and contracted builders to construct three refugee camps at Dadaab: Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera. These camps provided temporary housing for refugees who initially arrived at border posts and in towns ill equipped to handle large numbers. The refugee population in Kenya peaked at more than 400,000 in 1994 but has since leveled off at just over 250,000 (USCR 2000). The majority of refugees living in Kenyan camps today stay in Dadaab. (See Map 2.)

While my research on the operations of UNHCR was conducted in the Dadaab camps in 1994–95, insecurity and sexual violence, in particular, continue to be a pervasive problem for refugee women in the camps (Crisp 1999; USCR 2000; V. Thomas, personal correspondence regarding the Dadaab Firewood Project, January 3, 2001). In particular, the need to collect firewood for cooking and housing materials for building *tukuls* (portable huts) means that refugee women, and often their children, must travel beyond the perimeters of the camps. In many refugee camps, women have few choices about which cooking fuel they may use. Cooking fires require wood, and it is generally women who walk long distances, far from the camps, to forage for wood. Here they are vulnerable to sexual assault (Fitzgerald and Lowman 1998).

Given the considerable size of the camps, with a total of more than one hundred thousand residents, and the semiarid environment in which they are situated, it is not unusual for women to cover up to 30 kilometers (round trip) to get wood. The types of food items provided by donor countries make firewood an essential commodity. Whereas the indigenous economy of most refugees prior to their displacement revolved around livestock (including a diet of meat and milk), the camp rations generally consist of wheat flour, sorghum, corn, corn-soy blend, or occasionally rice as the staple food item. All of these require wood and water to prepare, both of which are in limited supply. The gender division of labor among the Somali refugees dictates that collecting both wood and water is women's work, with few exceptions. Women and girls are thus vulnerable to attacks by so-called bandits when they leave the camps.[6]
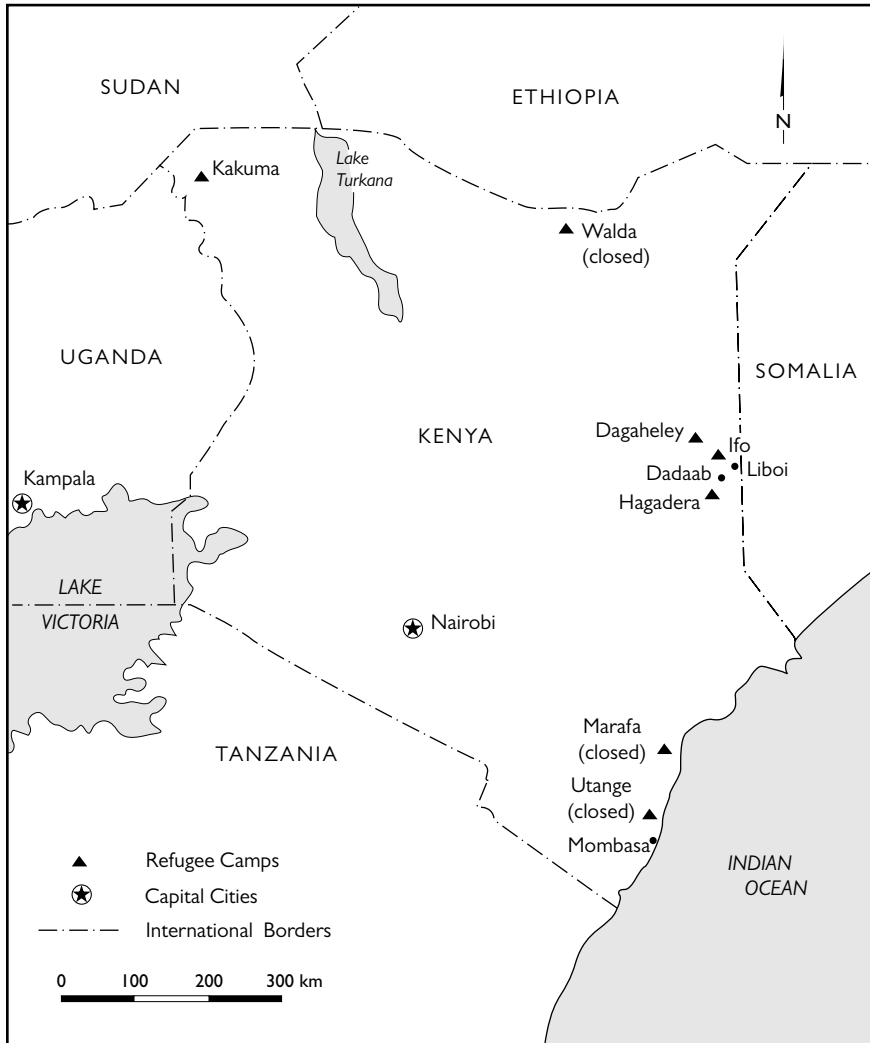
Map 9.2.  Refugee camps in Kenya. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

## GENDER POLICY AT UNHCR

A primary purpose of UNHCR's gender policies is to promote women's well-being and protection within the organization, as well as in refugee camps and conflict zones. While vast improvements have occurred over the last decade, the implementation of UNHCR gender policies and projects aimed

at protecting women in the 1990s remain incomplete. On paper, UNHCR's gender-based initiatives are an impressive collation of feminist analyses and recommended action.[7] They include principles from liberal feminism and more socialist feminist sensibilities that address issues of discrimination, violence, and economic inequality affecting women (UNHCR 1993a, 1993b). On one hand, the frequent use of the category "woman" by UNHCR as a primary organizing concept essentializes and reinforces the primacy of female difference over ethnic, clan, caste, and other dimensions of difference (UNHCR 1993a). On the other hand, this usage seems contrary to the liberal feminist principle articulated in UNHCR policy, namely mainstreaming and integration. "It is the intention of UNHCR to integrate the resources and needs of refugee women in all aspects of programme planning and implementation. This does not mean that separate *women's* projects are to be initiated or added on to existing general programme activities" (UNHCR 1990: 5; italics in original).

The above policy document, *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women,* makes it clear that women are not to be treated separately or specially (see also UNHCR 1991; Anderson, Brazeau, and Overholt 1992). Yet other UNHCR planning documents do just that, noting that women-headed households tend to be more vulnerable, as are women with young children (UNHCR 1994a, n.d.). The two positions both have merit but nonetheless highlight a tension in UNHCR's gender policies.

Furthermore, these two approaches to women and gender are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, the same Somali refugee woman may find herself separated from her family as she flees conflict at home and later upon arrival in a refugee camp may emerge as a leader and decision maker—say, as a health professional. In the first scenario, she is justifiably "vulnerable" because her family—an accepted cultural form of protection—is absent. Conflict and displacement often destabilize social relations, and it is possible that this person could be at risk. In the second scenario, however, the skills and experience she brings to the camp make it equally possible that she will become part of the decision-making apparatus in the health sector. While they appear contradictory, concepts of women as equal partners and as part of a vulnerable population can coexist. The appropriateness of either approach must, however, be analyzed in the contingent historical and geographical context of a particular humanitarian situation. "Women refugees" are not vulnerable in any essential way, nor are they all equal participants in the daily governance of a refugee camp. Often male refugee elders will include one or two women on various committees that meet with humanitarian organizations, not because the women contribute to the conversation, but because the male elders know that the institutional culture of organizations with which they must work requires it.

The "people-oriented planning process," or POP, as it is called, refers to

UNHCR's gender training, which employs a community-based approach (Anderson, Brazeau, and Overholt 1992; UNHCR 1991). Both POP and the "Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women" identify the physical spaces in which refugee women live as important to ensure safety and equitable access to basic services and supplies. UNHCR recognizes that women refugees are often more susceptible in camp situations because family protection and traditional authority structures break down and economic support is less available (UNHCR 1993d). Camp layout and location are also acknowledged as significant gender considerations in planning refugee camps.

POP provides a helpful conceptual grid that renders social relations among refugees intelligible. However, one risk of employing such a grid is that it fixes gender relations and cultural identities. POP reveals certain aspects of social relations, such as gender roles and the division of labor, but it conceals others. UNHCR's institutional production of social reality works because it is represented and thus preserved through a series of textual and documentary forms. "Texts are invariably detached from the local historical context of the reality that they supposedly represent" (Escobar 1995: 108). Following the feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith (1990), facts are an aspect of social organization, a practice of knowing that employs categories familiar to the knower but not necessarily to the "known." It is a normalizing practice that constructs a person, or group of refugees in this case, as external to the one inside the organization.

In such situations, the culture of the institution—in this case, UNHCR—produces a profile of refugee culture from its own external perspective. "The various agencies of social control," writes Smith (1993), "have institutionalized procedures for assembling, processing, and testing information about the behavior of individuals so that it can be matched against the paradigms" (12). The UNHCR guidelines and POP approaches are, then, part of an institutional bureaucracy that attempts to create a grid of intelligibility for the agency without necessarily linking the complications of local histories, cultures, and conflicts to their considerations (Sassen 1996). POP may well have the potential to provide information and insights useful to UNHCR's organizational culture, but it is unlikely to capture the cultural and political complexity of all pertinent social relations in a historically and geographically contingent refugee population, or to change it. This is not to say that every refugee camp has to be treated as a "case study" of particularities, but rather that, as humanitarian practitioners, we should know what we sow. Pertinent analyses beyond our common grids of intelligibility must also be sought.

The POP framework advocates a three-step approach to camp planning: preparation of a refugee population profile to analyze context; analysis of previous and existing patterns of activities among refugees, such as the gender divisions of social and economic responsibilities; and a comparative

analysis of what resources refugees controlled and used before they arrived and what they control and use in the current context. These analyses, grounded in local conditions and cultures, are to be applied to the organization of food distribution, physical layout of camps, and medical assistance for refugees. To its credit, the POP framework illustrates that "both protection and basic needs are *gendered* issues" (Anderson, Brazeau, and Overholt 1992: 12, italics in original). However, POP does not seek to document practices seemingly unrelated to food distribution, physical layout, and medical assistance, practices that may well be relevant to these concerns. For example, boys may be getting more food than girls in camps if feeding practices are gendered, which they often are. Such practices reflect the value of women and girls to a society but are also central to the basic nutrition and well-being of girls. Likewise, the physical layout of camps may be assessed as "safe" by UNHCR logistics experts, but is it culturally appropriate, given gender relations in a specific refugee population? Situating toilets at one end of a camp and fresh water for drinking and washing at the other may make sense from a sanitation point of view, but refugee women's privacy may be challenged by such spatial arrangements, and such facilities may be abandoned accordingly (see de Alwis, Chapter 10 of this volume).

The POP framework has much in common with "gender and development" approaches to planning: where women's participation and integration have been taken for granted on the basis of gender-blind assumptions, systematic collaboration between women and men has been promoted. At UNHCR, POP is a tool that emphasizes gender sensitivity but does not name it. For whatever reasons, UNHCR has shied away from using the word *gender,* a mystery that conceals other power relations within the organization.

UNHCR's gender policies provide a grid of intelligibility for field officers and other staff working with displaced populations. They provide concepts and checklists to assist in the organization and functioning of camps, but they do not allow dimensions of gender or culture to change the assumptions of the overall planning framework in which field staff work. Within the POP framework, historical context, regional geopolitics, cultural dynamics, and gender relations are left for field workers to "fill in" or ignore once posted to the refugee camps. This is a considerable leap of faith. It assumes that implementing POP can and will occur in a relatively systematic fashion regardless of the ways in which gender roles are defined differently across refugee populations. Such "variables" *can* transform the overall POP framework on the basis of different cultural practices or political conditions.

An alternative to POP would mitigate the ethnocentrism of this particular humanitarian approach by connecting the social, political, economic, and cultural locations of people who have been displaced, recognizing the geographical and historical contingency of these locations. UNHCR has

taken partial steps in this direction by, for example, offering POP training to African women who are community workers and encouraging them to "interpret" and change the planning framework within an appropriate cultural context. While this is a positive development, it is nonetheless the adaptation of an approach without rethinking of the assumptions embedded in such programming and their practical implications (Parpart 1999). An alternative perspective might recognize that humanitarian assistance does not have the same meaning in all places, does not include all groups, and may not have equivalent outcomes, despite similar policy and application. The POP initiative does attempt to include the specific dynamics of people and place, but it needs to go much further. Cultural politics, prejudice, and the historical layers of conflict and coalition in a given place cannot simply be *added* to such a framework. POP promotes "unity in diversity" but does not allow diverse knowledges about the world to alter the master plan or narrative of which they are a part.

UNHCR policies and documents pertaining to refugee women and to refugees of other cultures (UNHCR 1990, 1991, 1993b) fail to recognize the ways in which "women" and "culture" are constructed together and in subordination. Diagnosing the needs of refugee women is itself a political act, shaped by the questions asked and the appropriateness of answers given. Refugee women are often assumed to be caregivers who are vulnerable, "at risk," and encumbered by their gendered responsibilities. Cynthia Enloe (1993) draws attention to the common, yet problematic practice of referring to women and children together. "Womenandchildren" (165–66), as she refers to this phenomenon, essentializes social relations that vary across time and space. Men are not identified as parents, nor do they appear to share in the work of maintaining the household. To employ this turn of phrase is to play into this essentialist construct, one that does nothing to increase women's status. Likewise, the truism that 80 percent of the world's refugees are women and children tells us nothing about their specific circumstances or ability to cope with such conditions.[8] Rather, it lumps "womenandchildren" together, essentializes the maternal relationship, and connotes that they deserve to be helped.

Refugees and other displaced persons have to become part of the implicit "we" in the "us"/"them" (humanitarian worker/refugee) equation in order to take apart the paternalist narratives, frameworks, and planning policies that organize their lives. As it stands, refugees remain the objects—rather than the subjects—of humanitarian planning. "[T]he long-established notion that refugees should be active participants in the management of their camps and assistance programmes is quietly being set aside. Increasingly, donor states assess humanitarian organizations in terms of their capacity to deliver emergency relief, rather than their ability to empower margin-

alized populations and to bring a degree of dignity to their lives" (UNHCR 1997: 67). Evidence suggests that "bottom-up" approaches to delivering assistance are changing.

Having traced some of the shortcomings of POP, and gender policy more generally, I now turn to a different strategy for assisting refugee women who face threats of sexual violence.

## WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE PROJECT: COMBATING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual coercion, torture, and rape are relatively common occurrences in conflict zones. Despite being recognized places of asylum for people fleeing persecution, refugee camps can also be unstable environments where residents are susceptible to sexual and physical violence. In the Northeast Province of Kenya, where a history of systematic economic marginalization includes banditry, widespread insecurity has been exacerbated by the arrival and temporary settlement of tens of thousands of refugees (Hyndman 1997). While theft and other criminal activities were not uncommon before the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees in the early 1990s, the presence of this new population has created new tension and given rise to more insecurity. Those who leave the camps for hours at a time in search of firewood with which to cook—predominantly women and girls—are vulnerable to bandit attacks. After nightfall, unarmed households—especially those known to be headed by women—have been the easy targets of bandits from within the camp itself. During my stay, several attacks of rape, defilement, and "spouse assault" were reported and documented.

In October 1992, the U.S.-based human rights monitoring group Africa Watch documented sexual violence against Somali refugee women in the Dadaab camps. This report fueled international concern about rape against refugee women in the area. In the same month, UNHCR hired a consultant to investigate the allegations further. Seven months in the making, her report documented 192 specific cases of rape among refugee girls and woman living in the camps, noting that these were "only the tip of the iceberg" (UNHCR 1993c). She proposed a comprehensive response to this sexual violence that became the "Refugee Women Victims of Violence" (WVV) special project. The project outlined four specific objectives: (1) the provision of counseling, therapy, and medical services for those affected by sexual violence; (2) improved physical security in and around the refugee camps to prevent future violence; (3) material assistance and skills training to enhance the livelihood of "victims"; and (4) increased awareness of the problem among law enforcement personnel, as well as staff and the general public.

Based on these objectives, WVV was a *special* project and a contradiction of UNHCR policy. It focused on "women" refugees rather than all refugees affected by physical assault and sexual violence in and around the camps, and it aimed to assist those affected by rape but not by other types of trauma. A senior manager in Geneva admitted that by focusing on vulnerable women, WVV contravened UNHCR's own integrationist policy on refugee women (UNHCR 1990; personal interview with UNHCR senior staff member, October 25, 1994). The project fell prey to some of the critiques made of development literature relating to women: "Much of the WID [Women in Development] and Gender and Development (GAD) literature represents Third World women as benighted, overburdened beasts, helplessly entangled in the tentacles of regressive Third World patriarchy" (Parpart 1995: 254). Nonetheless, in the case of WVV, Western funders of the project could at least do something toward protecting and assisting vulnerable Somali women from the chaos and calamity of the camps.

The WVV project initially provided specified services and potential material assistance to refugees who could demonstrate that they were raped, creating a dilemma for many women. The problematic denotation of women as "victims" in the project's title was a minor issue next to the inscription of shame and of violence on the bodies of the Somali women who were "found out" and often disowned by their family. I borrow here from Teresa de Lauretis's (1990) notion of the body as the site of material inscription of power. In the case of rape, a woman's body can be thought of as the site of a double inscription: of sexual violence and of institutionalized therapies to treat the affected body. The project's designation "victims of violence" introduced yet another layer of problematic power relations to the incident of rape.

The WVV project posed a number of related problems from the start. On the one hand, if a refugee woman sought assistance through a WVV counselor, she could easily become stigmatized as a rape victim and ostracized by her family and/or community. On the other hand, if a woman could access the resources or opportunities available through the UNHCR-sponsored WVV project—such as a transfer to one of the better coastal refugee camps, or even a chance at resettlement abroad through the Canadian or Australian "Women-at-Risk" programs—she might maintain family approval. This kind of speculation led to a number of what were thought to be false claims of rape on the part of Somali women refugees (personal interview with UNHCR junior staff member, Geneva, October 25, 1994).

To be prosecuted, incidents of rape in Kenya must be reported to police within twenty-four hours of their occurrence. A medical certificate, based on a physical examination conducted by a physician to verify clinically that rape occurred, is also required. These legal and medical procedures at once legitimize and invariably publicize acts of rape. They seek to institutionalize women's assaulted bodies at a number of levels. Legal testimony, medical

examinations, and the provision of therapy for "women victims of violence" are all constitutive of power relations that tend to create institutionalized subjects. Whereas the rule of law and the enforcement of human rights are usually the articulated *reasons* for projects such as WVV, the microphysics of power that manage the politics of the body occur on a more local scale. The legal, medical, and therapeutic practices that name, authorize, and organize the treatment of sexual violence are the transfer points of power in the camps.

The stigma of rape for women within Somali culture is severe. A system of blood money—or *diya*—is often invoked when accepted codes of behavior among Somalis are violated, as in the case of rape. The family of a woman who is raped, for example, might seek compensation from the family of the culprit in the form of cash or other assets, such as livestock. Although such agreements are often negotiated in the Dadaab camps, every effort is made by UNHCR staff and Kenyan legal counsel—provided by the Federacion Internacional De Abogadas (FIDA, International Federation of Women Lawyers)—to utilize official channels so that prosecution in court remains possible. Universal codes of human rights and national provisions in criminal law come face to face with Somali codes of justice. Depending on the context, women and girls who experience rape may approach UNHCR and report the crime, or they may choose to deal with it privately. Evidence suggests, however, that many of the Somalis affected would prefer to settle these matters out of public purview, through more discreet agreements of compensation, usually between the men in the families affected by the woman's rape (personal interview with lawyer from FIDA, Dadaab, November 22, 1994). Conflict between the human rights/international law approach of UNHCR and the socially accepted, culturally specific laws of the Somali refugees in the camps continues be a problem for the WVV project.

During my fieldwork in the camps, the aftermath of sexual violence posed other questions. Genital mutilation or female circumcision—depending on the discourse one employs—became the focus of complex cultural politics after a young refugee woman was raped in Dagahaley camp. While accompanying the WVV counselor during a follow-up visit, I met the girl who had been raped and her mother. Her mother wouldn't allow the girl to stay in the hospital after the attack. A local UNHCR employee at the scene interpreted the situation: "She has to be stitched up; the wound is healing. They will do it the traditional way; it is more dangerous." The act of rape tore the vaginal opening, which had been sewn together during the process of circumcision/genital mutilation and was sewn up again after the rape. Her family and community discouraged her from becoming involved with UNHCR and other agencies unless she could get some personal, material benefit. Accordingly, the genital wound was to be treated by a local woman trained in circumcision rather than a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) doctor. While

MSF flatly opposes the practice of genital mutilation—as does UNHCR—its staff are usually prepared to perform the surgery required for women who are raped. Their rationale is that women who have been raped are less likely to risk infection if the operation is performed in the hospital than in the community.

One's choice of words is intensely political: Does one employ a discourse of cultural autonomy or of universal human rights? Is protest against practices of female genital mutilation, or circumcision, a morally coded cultural imperialism or a bid for social justice? It is not surprising that much agreement on the issue across cultures in refugee camps is elusive.

The financing of the WVV project raises other political questions. The initial estimate for WVV as a three-month project was US$1,119,401, of which more than 50 percent was to be spent on improving the security of the camps. Police escorts during refugees' firewood collection, extensive fencing around residential sections of the camp to prevent bandit access, and assistance to Kenyan police by providing communication equipment and vehicle maintenance were among the measures proposed to achieve this goal (UNHCR 1993c). The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), a major funder of a subsequent phase of the project, issued a mission report assessing the project's achievements late in 1994 (CIDA 1994). Canada alone had contributed $3.25 million, a sum that represented 36 percent of total project funds. While the project was assessed as having "an important impact" on security by improving safety for refugees *in* the camps, the mission report observed that its funds were used to fill major gaps in UNHCR's general program budgets. The CIDA report noted that major project expenditures did not appear to be specific to women.

One of the main WVV budget items and one of the more effective strategies of improving security in the camps has been the construction of "live fencing." Live thorn bushes are transplanted around the perimeter of camp compounds as a means of keeping bandits and potential assailants out. Ninety-seven kilometers of fencing for the three camps was scheduled for construction, and as of September 1994, 43 kilometers of fencing had been completed (UNHCR 1994b). There is evidence that the fencing has a positive impact on general security within the camp. Nonetheless, it does not address the insecurity faced by refugee women when they leave the camp to collect firewood.

In 1997, a high-level U.S. congressional delegation visited Dadaab and was shocked to find that rape and other violence were so widespread, especially among those collecting wood for fuel. In meetings with local staff and refugees, the solution apparently proposed to the delegation was the provision of firewood by UNHCR. A cost of US$1.5 million was discussed, a figure that reappeared before the U.S. Congress in a bill proposed to allocate funds for one year in an effort to stop the violence. The bill passed, and

UNHCR was obliged to apply the funds to firewood purchase and distribution, even though questions about the sustainability and potential efficacy of the approach were raised (V. Thomas, personal correspondence, January 3, 2001).

Despite good intentions, the firewood project was a short-term effort to address a web of endemic problems in the region (Hyndman 1997). "The firewood distribution . . . is like throwing a very expensive log at a very subtle and complex problem—the solution to which requires going to the root of the poverty and violence in the area, where local Somalis and some refugees seem to have very little stake in working for peace" (V. Thomas, personal correspondence, January 19, 2001).[9] The issue of sexual violence is an expression, and symptom, of geopolitics, discrimination, and poverty in this border region between Kenya and Somalia.

### CONCLUSION

The WVV project was launched to protect refugee girls and women, who needed to collect firewood and housing materials from the vast outlying areas surrounding the Kenyan camps, from violence. The solution remains elusive despite generous funding and persistent efforts on the part of UNHCR. Rather than simply criticize UNHCR's gender policies and the WVV project as imperfect approaches to solving the problems of insecurity, I have analyzed their modes of implementation as responses predicated upon certain assumptions and constructed within a framework that accommodates but does not engage gender and cultural dimensions. Differences are acceptable insofar as they can be adapted within the existing master plan. Gender and cultural politics that demand a rethinking of that plan are largely effaced. On a finer scale, violence in and around the Dadaab camps has historical and political meanings that exceed the policies and practical efforts made to assist refugee women. The Kenyan government's systematic economic and social discrimination toward this province and its people has generated conditions where crime is rampant. This is not to condemn current efforts within UNHCR to recognize difference and "do something" but to point out some of its limitations in humanitarian situations on the ground.

UNHCR is an organization that responds to both the protection needs and practical needs of displaced people. It does so within an institutional and legal framework that situates the people it aims to assist in specific ways. Gender policy is subject to the discipline of these norms and cannot wholly represent the range of possible responses that might be worked out in the field. Differences in culture and gender cannot simply be added to an overarch-

ing framework of humanitarian assistance, nor can the development of a single set of gender policies be applicable to all humanitarian situations. The meaning of gender, of what it is to be a woman or man and the behaviors associated with masculine or feminine identities, is produced differently across space. To impose a single understanding of gender relations in all humanitarian emergencies is to foreground gender, perhaps at the expense of ethnic or some other identity, as a principal organizing category across conflict zones. On the ground, gender is always an important consideration, but it is not necessarily the principal organizing category of camp life. To assume that it should be risks effacing the impact of class, caste, and cultural location on social relations that may discriminate against certain groups of refugees or displaced persons.

By tracing some of the contradictions and assumptions of selected UNHCR gender policy, I have argued that POP, despite its good intentions, creates a grid of intelligibility that reveals certain aspects of refugee life but conceals others. The integration and mainstreaming of gender as a part of the humanitarian mandate are laudable. Specifying how gender and culture should be incorporated into refugee planning from an ahistorical and aspatial perspective is, however, less viable.

The WVV project is a contradiction in UNHCR policy, generating a tension of its own. Although UNHCR integrationist gender policy contradicts the manner in which the project was conceived and delivered, the international discourse of human rights politicized the well-funded project to address violence against refugee women in northeastern Kenya, and the project went ahead. The WVV project is not the only UNHCR initiative that aims to identify vulnerable segments of the refugee population. It is standard practice in all areas of UNHCR competency to identify such groups and ensure adequate provision and protection (UNHCR 1996). The inclusion of vulnerable groups as part of the humanitarian agenda is important, but recognizing the competing conceptualizations of refugee women is critical.

What might replace this additive model of integration, in which gender difference and cultural diversity represent deviance from invisible but culturally dominant practices? Within UNHCR, practical changes are necessary in terms of both emphasis and approach. In situations of humanitarian response, logistics, health, and social services all depend upon political work—namely negotiation, translation, and interpretation. To some extent this work is already being done, primarily by NGOs, and should be expanded by drawing on the geographically diverse and culturally attuned experience of NGO staff. At UNHCR, practices might include ongoing discussions with refugees—women in particular—and not simply management of them, in an effort to bridge some of the social, cultural, and political differences and discursive distance that is reproduced by humanitarian organ-

izations. This may seem too simple, and some agency staff would argue this is already being done.

UNHCR witnessed extraordinary growth in its resources in the early to mid-1990s. Despite decreased funding since then, it can still afford to do the job well, especially where it can draw upon the expertise of NGOs well-placed and experienced to assist. But are there staff positions whose primary function is to do the political and cultural work of communication, translation, and interpretation across all aspects of humanitarian assistance? Administration, protection, social services, and field staff are all assumed to be gender sensitive and culturally competent in the areas for which they are responsible, but there is not yet sufficient political prerogative or resource allocation to work through the gender and cultural implications of programming on a situation-by-situation basis. This should be made a priority. Effective assistance requires as much engagement with the cultural politics, geopolitics, and history of the place where people are disaffected as with the political and logistical challenges of finding and providing relief.

As de Alwis (Chapter 10 of this volume) and Preston and Wong (Chapter 7 of this volume) argue, space constitutes social relations just as social relations impute meaning and make space into place. No single model of "doing" social relations can be applied unproblematically across space, in this case across conflict zones and humanitarian locations, without a mutually constitutive set of social relations being produced through space. That is to say, a model applied to a specific humanitarian crisis will be changed and (re)made by the relations of place and people in situ. Neither gender nor politics is constant across conflict zones. As Elizabeth Grosz (1994) notes, "A model is a heuristic device which facilitates a certain understanding, highlighting certain features while diminishing the significance of others; it is a selective rewriting of a situation whose complexity entails the possibility of other, alternative models, models which highlight different features, presenting different emphases" (209). Models are always partial in both senses of the word: they are selective, and they embody particular domains of knowledge and power. As such, they are better as heuristic devices than as the practical bases for policy or programming.

While the mainstreaming and integration philosophy of UNHCR's gender policies is laudable, its assumptions about the seemingly aspatial categories of gender, culture, and geopolitics remain unexamined. The WVV project, in contrast, highlights the dangers of subscribing to or unintentionally reproducing categories of difference without attending to their practical implications. Despite these shortcomings, action must be taken to prevent further violence against women refugees. Sexual violence, linked to the instability of Kenya's Northeast Province now and historically, continues to be a threat to women and girls living in the Dadaab camps (Crisp 1999).

Collecting wood with which to cook is dangerous work, and these women live in a conflict zone of their own.

## NOTES

I would like to thank Wenona Giles, Geraldine Pratt, and Nadine Schuurman for their suggestions on this chapter. Any errors or oversights, of course, remain my own.

1. There is a highly uneven geography of humanitarian assistance. Why did the United Nations intervene so avidly in Bosnia but not in Rwanda? How did Kosova/o attract so much attention and Sierra Leone so little in 1999? The visibility and representation of human displacement to the public in the global North and its proximity to "home" are important variables in determining political will and whether international bodies should step in to intervene (Hyndman 2000).

2. UNHCR's (n.d.) recent emergency handbook mentions gender in passing (e.g., "What is the gender ratio of the population?" [46]), but such questions get at descriptive data and do not analyze the relational nature of gender relations in camps. While it is disappointing to note that *gender* does not appear in the index, *women* does. However, the majority of entries deal with pregnant women and lactating mothers. Most relevant to this analysis is that the book embodies the contradiction between women as vulnerable and women as equal partners in decision making (via their integration). Such contradictions also exist in the field, but most of the references to "women" in the handbook represent women as part of vulnerable groups (which they often are), thus digressing from UNHCR's POP gender policy of "mainstreaming."

3. For the purposes of this discussion, the *Horn of Africa* refers to Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. Kenya is not always included in such a definition, but because it has hosted so many refugees from each of these countries, it is a de facto part of the region.

4. Somalia won independence in 1960 when British Somaliland and Italian Somalia were joined. Kenya's independence came in 1963, after a tumultuous history of colonial rule (see Hyndman 1997).

5. Conflict in Sudan has been ongoing since independence. Civil war has been waged by the Government of Sudan and its armed forces against the people of South Sudan since 1983 (see Macklin, Chapter 4 of this volume). It should also be noted that Eritrea, a country added to Ethiopia by UN decree in 1960, declared its independence from Ethiopia in 1992.

6. For a more sustained discussion of "bandits" in northeast Kenya, see Hyndman (1997) and Crisp (1999).

7. For a comprehensive review of UNHCR policy, Executive Committee conclusions, and legal protocols regarding women, see "Special Issue on Refugee Women" (1995).

8. In any society where half the population is adults and half children, women (25 percent) and children would be expected to make up 75 percent of the population. In cases where people have fled war, it may be that gender ratios are skewed in either

direction, with a preponderance of women in camps while men fight or, as in the case of Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, where there is a preponderance of men and boys.

9. I would like to thank Virginia Thomas for sharing her insights and experience as a consultant evaluating the Dadaab Firewood Project. The views represented here are her own.

# The "Purity" of Displacement and the Reterritorialization of Longing

## Muslim IDPs in Northwestern Sri Lanka

*Malathi de Alwis*

### POSITIONING

As Chan Kwok Bun (1991) has noted, the refugee camp is "a unique socio-political artefact of this century" (284). While several contemporary ethnographies have focused on such camps as technologies of power and sites of transnational displacement (Hitchcox 1990; Malkki 1995a), much less attention has been paid to the phenomenon of displacement and the role of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in such contexts.[1] In Sri Lanka, for instance, our understanding of the physical topography of the country—a product of colonial knowledge making[2]—must also now be folded into a topography of violence that has produced "front lines," "no-man's-lands," "border zones,"[3] and "refugee camps" that constantly expand and contract in correspondence to the shifting battle lines between the Sri Lankan state and the Tamil militants (see Map 10.1).[4]

These new, constantly fluctuating configurations of space are exemplified by the margin-a-lizing work done by the very terms used to describe them. Lines, zones, and borders mark the tenuous and temporary presence (or even the nonpresence, i.e., "no-man's-land") of its inhabitants. The problematization of such spaces in conjunction with those of its inhabitants/producers is central to Henri Lefebvre's (1991) injunction that when we evoke "space" we must "immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so" (12). Lefebvre's unmooring of "space" from its previous, mathematical/Euclidean formulation as an "empty area" and his articulation of it in terms of quotidian "social space" point us to, among other things, the co-constitutive nature of people, commodities, and spaces and the central role that is played by spatial *practices,* along with spatial representations, in the production of space.

Map 10.1. Sri Lanka. Adapted from K. Demusz, *Listening to the Displaced* (London: Oxfam, 2000).

I use *place* in this chapter as a locative marking of social space and thus envision a dialectical relationship between these two categories.[5] Doreen Massey's (1994a) work has been especially useful in shattering the binary of space and place that poses one as a site of interaction and the other as enclosure. However, while she rightly notes that there are no pure or essential places, she perceives places and spaces only as products of human interaction and thus misses Lefebvre's insight regarding the co-constitutive nature of spaces and people. I find such problematizations of space and place especially useful when reading the accounts of the displaced who narrate "place" as the site of security, stability, and authenticity[6] in the face of their seeming *temporary* relocation in undifferentiated and unfamiliar "space." The unfamiliar spaces of refugee camps and/or the region of relocation simultaneously imply the in-placeness of those who are already resident in that space. However, the displaced themselves, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, have been able to transform such abstract, and thus threatening, spaces into familiar places or territories[7] through material and representational practices that endow them with value and belonging (cf. Tuan 1977: 6), thus themselves demonstrating the fluidity and dynamism of "place."

My chapter is also centrally concerned with another spatial (which is also to suggest ideological)[8] category, "home," which in many ways encompasses, as well as is encompassed by, the formulations of space and place I have discussed above. Geographers have described "home" as the "exemplar of place" (Rose 1993: 53) and the "territorial core" (Porteous 1976). The attributes of "home," exemplified in Porteous's (1976) assertion that it provides the "essential territorial satisfactions" of nurture—"identity, security and stimulation" (383)—and Tuan's (1977) descriptions of it as a place of intimacy and well-being (147) were further feminized through the work of Jungians such as Gaston Bachelard (1969) and Clare Cooper (1974), who equated the self with the home and thus gave it a specific personality.[9] This universalization and idealization of the gendered "home," notes Gillian Rose (1993), also produced a "feminization of place" (56); the construction of "home" as a woman's place resulted in both "place" in general and "home" in particular being produced as sites of nurture, stability, reliability, and authenticity (Rose 1993: 56; Massey 1994b: 179).

What I am especially interested in here is how such formulations of "home" have been naturalized; it has become a space that has already been marked out (in both symbolic and material terms) for a specific kind of occupant (George 1996: 21). More troubling, however, are the sweeping assumptions made about "home" that leave no room for ambivalence or the problematization of this category. There is no accounting here for the conceptualization of "home" as a place of oppression or subversion, where incest and domestic violence take place alongside nurture and intimacy (George 1996).[10] This naturalization and idealization as well as feminization

(or often maternalization)[11] of "home" is frequently articulated through nostalgia, a form of melancholia caused by prolonged absence from one's home or country.[12]

I will return to these problematizations of "space" and "place" in general, and "home" in particular, throughout this chapter, while exploring how the very out-of-placeness of Muslim refugees in Sri Lanka has produced particular gendered readings of their identity and in analyzing how the displaced themselves reiterate as well as counter these readings through an articulation with two different hegemonic formations, one local and the other global. I am interested here in engaging with Liisa Malkki's (1995a) discussion of how Hutu refugees from Burundi (now domiciled in Tanzania) retain the "purity" of displacement through a nostalgic reiteration of "mythico-history" that reaffirms their ties to a particular "home." I want to call into question her reading of these narratives as subversive in light of my discussion of the idealization of "home" above. I will also argue that this process of "purification" itself is a very gendered project and that it is essential that we interrogate how and upon whose bodies it gets worked out.[13] I find Malkki's (1995a) call to problematize the "sedentarist bias in dominant modes of imagining homes and homelands" (16) a provocative one, but I wish to caution against her valorization of mythico-history in the production of cultural identity (within the spaces of displacement) to the detriment of ignoring the material bases of such imaginings.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I locate the displaced both nationally and locally by briefly discussing their positioning within the Sri Lankan nation-state and that of the Tamil Homeland (yet to be created), as well as within the refugee camps and new regions of relocation. In the second section, I discuss how the refugees' out-of-placeness is reproduced and gendered through the moralizing discourses of the residents of that region. In the third section, I analyze how particular narratives and practices of the refugees reiterate the "purity" of their displacement through nostalgic reaffirmations of "placeness" and "home." I highlight here how such reaffirmations are primarily premised on the policing of women's bodies and spatial(ized) practices. In the final section, I interrogate a particular practice of refugee women that, in their own way, reiterates a longing for "home" that is both similar to and different from that articulated by their male kin.

## PLACING THE DISPLACED

### *Negotiating Identities*

The Muslims[14] (Moors), who are the second largest minority, have, until recently, been largely ignored in the dominant construction of the "ethnic

problem" in Sri Lanka, which has been constituted as a conflict between the majority community, the Sinhalese, and the largest minority, the Tamils. In response to such a marginalization and in the context of Sinhala nationalism and the hegemony of a Sinhala state, the Muslim elite (who were middle-class and upper-class men from the southern regions) in modern Sri Lanka sought to represent the entire Muslim social formation in their own image "as a peaceful trading community of Arab, as opposed to Tamil, origin, whose presence in Sri Lanka dates back to medieval times, and which traditionally enjoyed good relations with the Sinhalese" (Ismail 1994: 57). Such a representation completely repressed the identity not only of Muslim women (who were not traders) but also of other classes of Muslims, particularly those domiciled in the Eastern Province, who were predominantly farmers, had "strong infusions of Indian Muslim blood into their community," and followed a kinship system that was similar to that of the Mukkuvars of South India (Yalman 1967: 283; Ismail 1994).[15]

The distinctive nature and significant numbers of the eastern Tamils have enabled Qadri Ismail, who has produced the most rigorous and sustained critique of Muslim identity formation to date, to differentiate them from the southern Muslims, who make up two-thirds of the Muslim population and live in Sinhala-dominated provinces. However, the same cannot be said for his treatment of the Muslims of northern Sri Lanka, who have pretty much dropped out of his cognizance. The Muslims in the northern provinces, who make up a much smaller percentage of the Muslim population in Sri Lanka, lived in Tamil-dominated areas until October 1990, when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who had been fighting for a separate Tamil state since 1982, suddenly denounced the Muslims living among them as traitors and demanded that they leave Tamil soil immediately.[16] Some Muslims were given forty-eight hours to leave, while others were only allowed two hours before the LTTE began to loot their property. The LTTE limited the money and valuables many families could take with them, announcing that "everything you earned in *Eelam* [Tamil homeland] must remain in *Eelam*" (Robinson 1991: 25). Over sixty thousand Muslims were transformed into homeless, poverty-stricken refugees within a matter of hours. Many fled to Colombo, though the majority converged in the Puttalam district, in which fellow Muslims already predominated.

The identity of the northern Muslims has had to go through several gyrations over the past decades, due to the extremely marginalized circumstances of their lives. Living under the jurisdiction of a Sinhala state in a region dominated by Tamils, their allegiance has constantly shifted between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. However, many Muslims began to identify more and more with the aspirations of the Tamil militancy movement that dominated the 1980s (when there were multiple militant groups, unlike now), and many youth joined militant groups as well.[17] The sudden decision

of the LTTE in October 1990 thus came as a rude shock to many Muslims, who had until then supported the cause of the Tamils. Such an alliance of sentiment and placeness continues to be affirmed, albeit in more muted fashion, post 1990, in the Muslim refugees' narrations of the circumstances that led to their displacement and in their insistence on differentiating the LTTE cadres from the northern provinces from those from the eastern provinces.

To briefly summarize the dominant refugee narrative: the LTTE in the east brutally massacred 120 Muslim boys and men while they were praying in a mosque in Kattankudy (in the eastern province) in August 1990. The Muslims in the east were so incensed that Muslim Home Guards (a volunteer, rather haphazardly trained civilian force) joined forces with the Sri Lankan army to prevent further atrocities from being perpetrated on their community. The LTTE in the east, however, became outraged at this move and complained to their counterparts in the north that the Muslims were harassing Tamil civilians in the east. The LTTE political bureau decided to exile all Muslims from *Eelam* (i.e., whatever land that was under LTTE control at that time). The LTTE in the east sent special battalions to oversee the eviction of Muslims because they felt that their northern counterparts might let some of their friends stay on.[18]

While spatial limitations inhibit me from producing an extended analysis of such narratives of displacement here, I would like to draw attention once again to the myriad ways in which Muslims in general and the northern Muslims in particular have had to negotiate their identities in the face of varied and changing hegemonic formations. As Ismail (1994) succinctly notes, "Identity is about hegemony—not 'community' " (58). Since their relocation, post 1990, in the northwestern region of Sri Lanka, Muslims have had to contend with an old (but differently experienced) hegemonic formation. This includes the Sri Lankan state as well as new formations such as that of the resident Muslim population in their region of relocation and humanitarian aid organizations, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

## *Negotiating Spaces*

Loose sandy wastes of scrubland, salt marshes, and wind-shorn mangrove trees interspersed with coconut plantations lie wilting under the scorching sun as one drives along the rutted macadam road that trails the length of the Kalpitiya Peninsula in the Puttalam district, 150 kilometers north of the capital city of Colombo. This arid soil and searing landscape is now home to over sixty thousand Muslim refugees dispersed across the district in over sixty camps.[19] The refugees' presence in the Puttalam peninsula has produced new mappings of the landscape. Their clusters of *cadjan* (woven coconut

palm) shelters are situated within camp perimeters that bear clipped, alphabetized identifications linked to the village that surrounds them as well as to other camps in the village. Each camp is mapped in turn by the benevolent practices of various governmental and nongovernmental, foreign, and local humanitarian aid organizations that work among the refugees, giving each camp a unique identity and a specific relationship with particular aid agencies. For example, Camp A in Village N bears the stamp of the Rural Development Fund, the International Islamic Regional Organization, and the Jamaat-i-Islami, who have built their wells and toilets and a clinic, while Camp D in Village N bears the mark of Oxfam and Redd Barna, who have built their toilets and a Montessori school.

Unfortunately, the foreign and local humanitarian aid organizations' particularized relationships with specific groups of refugees have not engendered a more nuanced notion of "refugeeness." As Liisa Malkki (1995a) has pointed out, many such organizations perceive refugees as "a problem"; they are constituted as an anomaly that requires "specialized correctives and therapeutic interventions" (8). The emplacement of the refugee camp as a "standardized, generalizable technology of power . . . in the management of mass displacement" has its antecedents in post–World War II Europe (Malkki 1995b: 498). While the camps in Puttalam differ considerably from the post–World War II camps or even the Hutu camp described by Malkki—the chief difference being that they are administrated by the refugees (all males) themselves—they nevertheless continue to be sites of hegemony as well as subversion. I will revisit this issue in the final section of my chapter.

Malkki (1995a) has discussed in depth the status of "refugee," which "ordinarily acts to make people interstitial or liminal—and hence polluting" (230–31).[20] While her work has primarily focused on how the "betwixt and between" positioning of refugees can be perceived as a threat to the categorical order of nation-states, I find that such positionings can also be perceived as disrupting categorical orders *within* nation-states and ethnic groups. Take for example, the perceptions of the residents of Village N, who are Muslims. They comprise about 250 families, as opposed to the refugees in the four camps within the jurisdiction of their village, who comprise about 700 families. Despite their commonalities of ethnicity and religion, the residents have constructed the refugees as "other." The refugees are perceived as enjoying the benefits of two worlds while also posing a threat in terms of their numerical strength.

Constant tension and suspicion have begun to take their toll on the residents, who welcomed the refugees with great enthusiasm when they first arrived in 1990—donating land, building materials, food, and other goods; sharing their toilets, wells, and grinding stones; and helping to build the *cadjan* shelters. What they originally perceived to be acts of benevolence that would earn them merit in the eyes of Allah have now resulted in what they

view as a lifestyle of servitude and deprivation. The residents' decline in prosperity is directly correlated with the practices of the refugees: they catch fewer fish because the refugees are overfishing, they can't sell their onions and chilis because the refugees are glutting the market, their shops have gone bankrupt because the refugees have opened competing shops, and so on. While many of these complaints are mainly premised on a contestation of "place," they are never articulated as such. Rather, they are subtly legitimized by arguments that present the refugees as a people who have lost their moral bearings. Such a discourse, as I will argue in the next section, continues to be based on an assumption that the loss of bodily connection to "place" produces a loss of moral bearing (cf. Malkki 1992: 32).[21]

## DISPLACING PURITY

The residents' predominant portrayal of the refugee men is epitomized by their "corrupting" practices of watching blue movies, getting into fights, and drinking. The threat posed by these refugee men, however, is presented as the need to safeguard the resident women, who can "no longer walk outside [the household compound] after dark."[22] The situation was exacerbated when it was discovered that a male refugee schoolteacher was having a love affair with a female resident school teacher. The female teacher's parents insisted that the couple get married, but the male refugee refused, and the female teacher was bundled off to her relatives in another part of the country.

The residents also point to a similar trajectory of corruption among the refugee children, whom they accuse of teaching "bad language and bad habits" to their children. In addition, the residents note that the refugee children are dirty and unhealthy and infect the resident children with various diseases. This "deplorable" behavior is read as a direct index of the refugees' parenting practices, especially those of the women, who do not adequately supervise and care for their children. This critique, predominantly made by resident women, is also tied to a deeper conflict that stems from the fact that many refugee women have taken jobs away from the poorer resident men by working in the onion and chili fields for a lower wage.[23] In addition, resident women perceive refugee women as threats to the harmony of their households, on the premise that many refugee women have become the mistresses of the wealthy landlords for whom they labor. This assumption however, seems to be based on one incident that occurred in an adjoining village, where a wealthy landlord evicted his wife and family and set up his refugee mistress in their residence. The obvious inequality of power in such supposed liaisons is vehemently denied by the resident women, who make the counterassertion that it is the refugee women who are loose and who entice

the landlords. As one resident woman scoffed, "These women go out for wage work, they do not live under the authority of their husbands, it is they who support their men. . . . That is why we have so much trouble with the refugees."

This construction of the "looseness" of refugee women can be read in two ways. First, it seems to be premised on an argument that the loss of economic control means a loss of authority and masculinity, which concomitantly means an inability to control the sexuality of one's womenfolk. Second, there is a suggestion that because women go out to work, they can no longer be chaperoned or watched by their husbands or male kin and are thus liable to temptation. Both suggestions, however, are premised on the patriarchal notion that women are inherently loose and that if they are not watched carefully or disciplined constantly they will revert to their "natural" state of being.[24] Both suggestions also display an awareness of the circumstantial nature of this shift in hierarchy (i.e., it is due to displacement), which shares similarities with the less frequently used and more sympathetic arguments that these women are "loose" because "they have nothing to lose" or that "they have become deranged due to what they have suffered."

The out-of-placeness of the refugee women has been coded here as "looseness," while a similar trajectory of displacement among the male refugees is read through the terms of unruliness and emasculation. Interestingly, while the feminization of the refugee men is openly suggested— that is, they cannot control their wives or themselves, they get drunk, fight, and are overly sexual—there is no suggestion that a parallel process has taken place among the women—that is, that they have become masculinized because they are now the wage earners. Instead, the women's identity continues to be read primarily through the terms of sexuality. But it is a sexuality that, like their male counterparts', is out of control and thus quintessentially feminine as well as dangerous.

If the discourses of the residents could be said to produce the refugee as a site of impurity and categorical disorder, then the discourses and practices of the refugees can be read as countering and "purifying" such a formulation. In the following section, I look at a formulation of this refugee discourse that addresses two hegemonic formations within which they are articulated—the universe of the residents and that of the humanitarian aid agencies.

## THE PURITY OF DISPLACEMENT

Unlike the refugees who live in camps in the border zones, where they continue to be harassed by the militants as well as state troops, the refugees in Puttalam have led relatively stable lives. When I was conducting my research

in 1993, almost three years into their exile, their lives seemed to have picked up familiar routines, marriages had taken place, babies had been born and festivals celebrated. Yet the refugees also continued to be gripped by great uncertainty and despair. A day did not go by without their wondering when they could return "home" while simultaneously recalling a romanticized past of plenty and "placeness."[25] This "unfaltering belief in the temporariness of exile" in collocation with a "resistance to putting down roots," notes Malkki (1995a), is central to the affirmation of a collective identity that is "based on the past and on the lost homeland" (228, 230). Being a refugee, she points out, not only signals a tie with the homeland and the possibility of eventual return but enables the displaced to retain a separateness and an "antagonistic equality" between themselves and the original inhabitants of a place. Such a formulation disputes the common categorization of refugees as boundary crossers and thus polluters and helps to reframe displacement as a "state of purity" (230–31). In other words, by continuing to stress the "out-of-placeness" of their lives as well as themselves, the refugees attempt to preserve the purity of their refugeeness. I will discuss below a particular construction of Muslim identity that not only retains the "purity" of displacement but attempts to assert both a separateness and a certain equality between the refugees and the residents. Such a constitution, I suggest, is centrally facilitated by the refugee woman, who is produced as a cipher for all that was (temporarily) lost as well as what must be preserved for the future; the purity of displacement has been imbricated in her moral purity.

As I pointed out above, the refugees' constant reiterations of exile are also linked to a valorization of "home." For example, comparisons are often made between the present landscape they inhabit and the one they left. While one is arid and stark and so blisteringly hot that the refugees cannot work in the fields past noon, the other was moist and fertile and forested. These identifications with "placeness" are further sharpened by the refugees' ongoing identification with the village from which they came. For example, not only are many of the refugees in Camp D from the same area, but their camp committee comprises the members of their administrative council "back home." While the humanitarian aid organizations seem to be unaware of such subtle continuities and have bureaucratized the refugees according to a prior rationality (e.g., alphabetization), the residents are aware of the differences and, like the refugees, call each camp by the name of the region it represents back home. These particular configurations of bodies that invoke the "homeland" thus produce yet another kind of mapping upon the land of exile.

While the refugees strive to mark their separateness from the residents, they simultaneously wish to assert their equality in terms of class and status. Such equations are predominantly articulated, once again, through narratives of "placeness"—at a more individualized level—framed by their present

circumstances. For example, a refugee man's complaints about his rickety *cadjan* shelter or the miserly nature of a resident would be juxtaposed against his recollections of his own wealth and status, his two-storied, cemented, and tiled house that had to be abandoned, or the fact that his wife and daughters never went out to work. Those who had much of their wealth tied up in immovable property feel the despair of displacement the most keenly, for they have been reduced to paupers overnight. As one man noted wryly, "The only thing that belongs to me now is my wife."

Such shifts in property ownership and the inversion of patterns of income generation within the refugee camps, where many women go out to work while their husbands stay home, have made women's positioning within pre-existing patriarchal power structures a fraught one. Not only has the incidence of domestic violence increased within the camps, but women's mobility has been drastically curtailed. Their every movement is now open to scrutiny and questioning under the guise that it is they who have to uphold the honor and cultural traditions of their family and community. As one young woman complained, "My husband insists on following me even when I go to the toilet."[26] Thus what had become naturalized rituals of quotidian life within the home are now fraught with danger and uncertainty and subject to new forms of surveillance.[27] While such a policing of women's bodies is framed by a discourse of security and safety, it also provides an opportunity for their male kin to reassert their authority and masculinity within an unfamiliar space.

This patriarchal restraint of women via kin relationships is also folded into a broader matrix of containment via the all-male Mosque Committees as well as revivalist Islamic groups such as the Jamaat-i-Islaami and Thabliq Jamaat. The Mosque Committees, peopled by the more wealthy and powerful segments of the displaced populations, play a central role in the arbitration of family disputes and the upholding of religious norms and standards. The religious groups, on the other hand, exert a more subtle influence via their women's "wings" (auxiliaries), which run special Quaranic classes for the refugee women and try to teach them "the true Islamic way of life" (Zackariya and Ismail n.d.: 23). The embracing of this new way of life—of moral purity and modest deportment—is most clearly articulated through the increased adoption of the *hijab* or veil. Such reiterations of familiar patriarchal practices and new religious injunctions, I suggest, also reinscribe the space of displacement as "pure" and thus enable the reclamation of at least certain aspects of a lost "placeness" and "home" within the space of displacement.

Indeed, the different figurations of "home" within the space of displacement merit closer scrutiny if we are to better understand a particular material practice of the refugee women that I will discuss in the next section. If prior to displacement, the "home" could extend outward into the "world" as long as its contours retained the inscription of patriarchal (in the familial

sense) authority (cf. Chatterjee 1989), now, post displacement, the material core of the "home" itself becomes fractured. Toilets, wells, and grinding stones that had previously been the central components of a middle-class home are now dispersed across the camps and in the homes of the residents; the participation in the practices of domestication and civility now requires a continuous traversal of the "world."

### RETERRITORIALIZING LONGING

How do women respond to these escalating tensions of displacement? Many of them not only display classic symptoms of trauma[28] but also inhabit the margins of camp and village life; they do not participate in the administration of the camp or the mosques (they are not even allowed to enter the latter), and they travel outside the camp very infrequently (except for employment). As a result, they also barely register in the discourses of the aid agencies, who consistently lump them together with the children. As Malkki (1995a) has perceptively pointed out, the persistence of aid organizations across the globe to photographically document women with children perhaps stems from a notion that "women and children embody a special kind of powerlessness" (10). However, while it might be strategically useful to highlight the universal humanism encapsulated in the nurturant madonna and child (especially when attempting to procure public donations), it is another matter to reduce woman to child: that is, to infantilize her. This was a frequent practice among aid workers in the Puttalam region, who often spoke paternalistically about the refugee women's ignorance and "backwardness," their docility and helplessness, and their "annoying habit of constantly asking for things."

I would like to consider more carefully the negotiations of identity and "placeness" that frame the refugee women's interactions with the aid organizations that work among them. Why do these women consistently play into a universalized image of the victimized refugee woman? This is despite the fact that they are often the family breadwinners and take great pleasure in subverting many of the policies and projects instigated by various agencies because they perceive them to be ridiculous or unfair. For example, the sanitation policies adopted by aid organizations working in the camps are a great source of contention, especially among the refugee women—although most aid workers do not realize this and, if they find out about it, casually dismiss it as a sign of ignorance and incivility.

In brief, it is a cardinal rule among relief agencies that potable water sources must be safeguarded from groundwater contamination. As a result, the toilets are usually built at one end of the camp and the wells and taps at the other. Such a plan of construction, however, is met with unanimous dis-

approval by the refugee women for several reasons. At a general level, it is a constant reminder of the fractured nature of their homes that is particularized with the provision of specific reasons that illuminate the congealed value of a basic amenity that we so often take for granted in middle-class homes (Rybczynski 1986). The women point to the inconvenience of having to traverse the entire length of the camp each time they need to use the toilet—this scurrying back and forth between well and toilet being especially trying in "emergency" situations. Such travel, considered to be particularly hazardous at night, requires them to awaken a male family member to accompany them. However, many women noted that what was most degrading was the very public nature of their ablutionary practices. As one woman commented, to the embarrassed merriment of her female companions, "Now every time we go to the other side of the camp with a jug of water in our hands, everyone in the camp knows what we are going to do!" However, instead of confronting the aid agencies with their grievances, the women have devised their own solution. They use the scrubland near the wells and leave all that "backing and forthing to younger women who like to display themselves."[29]

It is interesting that the majority of the women's concerns regarding the displacement of what were previously central components of private residences were articulated through several feminized categories associated with "home" and "placeness" that I discussed above: moral purity, privacy, and dignity. However, while a globally accepted discourse of sanitation may have led to the further disruption of these refugee women's familiar conceptions of "home" (i.e., the separation of wells and toilets), I suggest that they also actively participated in practices that sought to refigure certain aspects of "home," as best as they could. It was the exigencies of such a desire (among many others) that required them to maintain and exploit the humanistic and universalized image of the refugee woman as helpless and needy.

A common practice among the refugee women in the various camps in Village N is to badger all representatives of aid organizations that visit their camps to donate kitchen utensils, which range from pots, pans, and pails to grinding stones and mortars. Most aid workers (though there have been some exceptions) ignore such requests on the premise that their priority is to provide the refugees with essential goods and services such as medicines, sanitation, potable water, housing materials, and food. However, the resort to such artificial divisions between essential and luxury commodities and services, in a situation of such scarcity, is not useful here, as what we could even define as luxuries is a moot point in such a context. Rather, I find Arjun Appadurai's (1986) suggestion that we should think of luxury goods as "*incarnated signs* whose principal use is *rhetorical* and *social*" (38, italics in original) useful here because it enables us to move beyond a merely functionalist conception of domesticity, which posits that such goods are essential

domestic utensils for women who perceive their primary role to be domestic providers and nurturers. While such an argument is perfectly tenable, I suggest that the refugee women's requests can be read in more complex ways that enable a fleshing out both of the "hypermateriality"[30] of these commodities and of certain sentiments that extend beyond the commodity.

Most refugee women identified their kitchen utensils as the items they missed the most in their present environment—their narratives of displacement invariably involved their complaint that they had been unable to bring their kitchen utensils because they were too bulky and cumbersome.[31] The women attributed the loss of these utensils as contributing to the more prolonged drudgery of their workload in the camps. They also pensively described particular utensils left behind or broken en route that had been part of their dowries. These items, which they had carefully used over the years, were for them, material symbols of a marriage that had endured. Such utensils, exchanged at marriage, are thus produced as important markers— along with the scale and quality of dwellings (see above)—of the wealth and status of the refugees (McGilvray 1989: 213).

Finally, I want to revisit the multiply layered constructions of "home" that I have been setting out in this chapter to point out yet another figuration of it that has been introduced into my discussion. The domestic utensils under discussion here invoke a particular space within the "home"—the kitchen— which thus gets produced, in this context, as the ultimate core of the "home." In the relatively public space of the refugee camp, the kitchen (and sleeping quarters) become the only spaces that the refugee woman can claim to control and within which she can retain some privacy. The hypermateriality of these commodities in a situation of hyperscarcity, as it were, can thus be read as reflective of the women's desire not only to recreate a semblance of a familiar domestic world that has been disrupted and to reiterate an understanding of "home" that has been dis-placed—across regions and even across the refugee camp—but to assert the identity tied to that space (the home) and place (the homeland). In this sense then, kitchen utensils become repositories of "congealed longing," to use Judith Williamson's (1986) reformulation of Marx's articulation of commodities as sites of "congealed labor"; they are the "final form of an active wish" (12).[32] These women's requests from aid agencies, then, are not only their way of asserting the "purity" of displacement but an attempt to reterritorialize their longing and identity in the space of displacement.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has raised several questions about how we can conceptualize the construction of identity and space/place in the context of internal dis-

placement. By focusing on the rhetoric and practices of residents, aid workers, and refugees, I have tried to illuminate how representations of territory and identity are produced within structures of power, how they are gendered, classed, and also universalized while they are simultaneously reiterated and contested. Such a trajectory of analysis has been especially enabled through the theorization of "purity" and "home," loss and longing.

As I have argued in this chapter, the process of "purification" in the context of displacement is particularly gendered. The refugee woman is produced as a cipher for all that has been (temporarily) lost as well as what must be preserved for the future; her community's purity of displacement is imbricated in her moral purity. The mobilization of "loss" within such a context thus also becomes vital. In his impassioned call for a recognition of the crucial distinction between loss (which produces historical trauma) and absence (which produces structural trauma), Dominick LaCapra (1999) notes that "the historical past is the scene of losses that may be narrated as well as of specific possibilities that may conceivably be reactivated, reconfigured, and transformed in the present or future" (699–700). It is such narrations and possibilities that I have sought to articulate here while also marking those practices that seek to reconfigure and transform the present as well as the future of lived reality within the context of displacement.[33]

Such lived reality, both in the present and as future projections, I also argued, is framed by various articulations of "home"—as lost possibilities and nostalgic memories, lack of security, absent belongings, mourned relationships, and quotidian traumas. Thus the fracturing of the material core of the "home" through the disparate dispersal of toilets, wells, and grinding stones across the refugee camp, I noted, produced a concomitant longing for other material markers of that very in-placeness. Through this reiteration of placeness (i.e., "home"), which is frequently maternalized, naturalized, and reified, was also reaffirmed a certain sense of "purity" and moral reordering.

Such a reading of narratives and practices seeks to both problematize and understand the complicated gendered and classed articulation of "purity" and "loss" post displacement. In fact, LaCapra's (1999) notion of "empathic unsettlement" might best capture my analytical trajectory here to avoid "facile uplift, harmonization, or closure" (723). As Gupta and Ferguson (1992) have rightly pointed out, "the idea that space is made meaningful" is a familiar one to anthropologists; the more urgent task is to "politicize this uncontestable observation" (11). Hopefully, this chapter is a step in that direction.

## NOTES

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1. I use the terms *refugee* and *refugee camp* as these are the terms used by the displaced themselves, as well as by most local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as opposed to the more "accurate" term *internally displaced person* (*IDP*) used by UN organizations and international NGOs operating in Sri Lanka. The English term *refugee* is what is most frequently used by displaced and nondisplaced persons in Sri Lanka, though the Sinhala term *anata* and the Tamil term *ahadi* are in usage too. The latter two terms also contain the connotations of destitution and orphaning (cf. de Zoysa 1999: 5).

2. For an excellent analysis of a particular epistemological field within which such knowledge making took place in colonial Ceylon, see Jeganathan (1994).

3. The artifactual nature of the "border" is well articulated in Rajasingham (1995), while Samuel (1995) exemplifies the use of this category in human rights discourses.

4. A civil war has been raging in Sri Lanka for the past twenty years. Tamil and Sinhala nationalist movements have contributed to the struggles, but conflict between the security forces of the Sri Lankan government and the separatist movement of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has proven the greatest threat to the civilian population of Sri Lanka, particularly in the northern and eastern regions of the country. Members of all three major ethnic groups in the country—Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim—have been and continue to be displaced as a result of this war, though the majority of the displaced in Sri Lanka are Tamil. Ongoing displacement has become a fact of life for many households in the northern and eastern provinces, and the death toll from this war now exceeds sixty thousand. For insightful analyses of nationalist sentiments and ideologies that are at stake in this war, see, e.g., Abeysekera and Gunasinghe (1987), Committee for Rational Development (1984), Jeganathan and Ismail (1995), and Spencer (1990).

5. My shift between "space" and "place" also enables an engagement with humanist and feminist geographers who mobilize "place" rather than "space" as their central conceptual category. As feminist geographer Gillian Rose (1993) points out, humanist geographers associated "place" with "ordinary people" and thus perceived it as an embodiment of human interpretation and significance, in opposition to "space," which was understood through the language and methodology of scientific rationality (see above) (41, 43).

6. Such a valorization of "placeness" is exemplified in Yi-Fu Tuan's (1974) treatise on "topophilia"—a word he coined to describe the attachment people have to places (cf. Massey 1994b: 167).

7. I use *territory* here to denote a specific sense of familiarity that is associated with the cognizance of, and belonging within, boundaries (cf. Kaplan 1987).

8. The chapter headings of Rybczynski (1986) provides an excellent map of the material concretization of this "idea" of "home."

9. This further enabled the supposition that a home projected the personality of its central core, the "woman of the house" or the mother, and could be used as a

metaphor for her body (George 1996: 23). This equation of home with self also led to a division in geographical discourses between "home" and "nonhome" that corresponded to the binary of "self" and the "other," thus leading to the "exclusion of women (among others) from the geographical" (Rose 1993: 62; cf. George 1996: 21–22). The historical trajectory of equating the woman with the home has also been extensively studied, documented, and analyzed in other fields, particularly history and literature; see, for a brief sampling, Armstrong (1987), Bloch (1978), Davidoff and Hall (1987), George (1996), Hansen (1992), Jolly and Macintyre (1989), Ryan (1975), and Wilson (1991). For a discussion of this gendered formulation within the context of South Asia, see Chatterjee (1989), de Alwis (1994), and Sen (1993).

10. In fairness to Porteous (1976), he does consider (for a minute) that the "home base" may not be all "home sweet home": "Like an attentive mother with her child, the home may smother an individual who is unable to leave it for considerable periods" (387). Ironically, this analogy not only maternalizes the home (see note 11) but also produces the mother as the perpetrator of violence.

11. Massey (1994b) talks about how working-class boys perceive "home" as where Mum is; it is she who is the stable and symbolic center, the anchor for others (180). See also note 9.

12. This new "disease" was first identified in 1770, among Captain Cook's sailors (*Oxford English Dictionary,* vol. 6, 1933: 535). See also Robertson (1988) for an extensive and rigorous discussion of the culture and politics of nostalgia in Japan, where the term *furusato,* glossed as "home" or "native place," is motivated by "a nostalgia for nostalgia, a state of being provoked by a dissatisfaction with the present on the grounds of a remembered, or imagined, past plenitude" (494–95).

13. Malkki (1995a) notes that she was unable to speak to the Hutu women in any sustained fashion during her research (50–51). Unfortunately, she makes no effort to provide a gendered reading of the male narratives she documents either.

14. The collapsing of what is usually recognized as a religious identity into that of an ethnic identity in Sri Lanka is something that has frequently perplexed outsiders. This very move, however, succinctly captures the constructed nature of identities that are too frequently naturalized (this goes for Sinhala and Tamil identities as well) as primordial givens. For an insightful analysis of the changes in the categorization of Muslim identity in Sri Lanka, see Ismail (1994).

15. The matrilineal kinship structures of the eastern Muslims, not surprisingly, have attracted the attention of several anthropologists, unlike the kinship structures of the Muslims of the southern and northern regions. See, e.g., Yalman (1967, esp. chap. 13) and McGilvray (1974, 1989).

16. For useful discussions of the rise of the LTTE and their location within a broader canvas of Tamil nationalist movements and militant organizations, see Guneratne (1995), Hoole et al. (1990), and Swamy (1994).

17. Muslim families often gave shelter to LTTE cadres during the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) occupation of the northern peninsula from October 1987 to March 1990. When the IPKF would conduct house-to-house searches, "a woman would come out with a sari draped over her head and smile demurely, they would see she was a Muslim and go away, thinking that Tigers couldn't be hiding in a Muslim house" (Hensman 1993: 55).

18. See Robinson (1991) for a similar reportage framed within a discourse of human rights. Several of the narratives he cites share similarities with as well as differences from the narrative I have set out above. He also notes that several refugees berated the Sri Lankan state along with the LTTE (25, 28). The Muslims' narratives reported in Hensman (1993: 55–56) emphasize that such an ethnic cleansing took place against the wishes of their Tamil neighbors, with whom they had lived in close friendship. Some of these neighbors also believed that it was only the presence of Muslims in the north that was acting as some kind of a restraint on the armed forces.

19. The time period I am referring to is 1993, when much of my field research was conducted. The situation of the refugees has drastically changed since then. The majority of the refugees have been relocated in new settlements in the same district, and the conditions in the few remaining camps have been vastly improved, though many of the problems I discuss here, such as tensions within and across communities, scarcity of resources, unemployment, the policing of women, and domestic violence, persist. For more recent studies on the situation in this region, see de Zoysa (1999), Jayasinghe (1995), Wijeyatilake (1994–95), and Zackariya and Ismail (n.d.).

20. See also Malkki (1992) and Arendt (1973). For a discussion of the invisibility of liminality and the polluting nature of transitional beings, see Turner (1967). For a discussion of the danger of pollution, see Douglas (1966).

21. I wish to mark my usage of the term *loss* here as opposed to *absence,* pace LaCapra (1999), who makes an important distinction between the two by linking losses with historical traumas and absences with structural traumas (699).

22. At one point a nightly curfew that went into effect at 8:00 p.m. was imposed as a precautionary measure.

23. Most resident men avoided sharing their opinion of refugee women, with the exception of some who noted that these women had stolen their jobs and a few landlords who stressed that the women were very hardworking.

24. A few middle-class resident women managed to distance themselves from this formulation by asserting that "looseness" was a characteristic of lower-class women.

25. There are some refugees, of course, who have managed to purchase houses, have married people from the Puttalam region, or have secured good jobs and who now assert that they would never go back to their former homes, but they are in the minority.

26. The women are similarly chaperoned when they walk around the village environs to pick salad greens or collect firewood.

27. The majority of these women were subject to certain forms of *purdah* in that many of them were forbidden to work outside the home. However, "home" here was a fluid category that was nevertheless always bounded by some patriarchal authority and surveillance. Thus many women acknowledged that though they were in *purdah,* they used to work in their husband's fields or those of male kin. Some of the poorer women also noted that they would work as wage laborers in fields owned by nonkin as long as their husbands could work either beside them or within hearing distance.

28. I use this term rather reluctantly, being aware of its rather loose and indiscriminate usage in recent times. For useful problematizations of this term, see Farrell (1998) and Young (1995).

29. Ironically, this censure of visibility and the assumption of the pleasure it

engenders draw upon hegemonic patriarchal notions that also fuel the criticisms that are hurled at the refugee women as a collectivity by the residents. I thank Cara Ann Mould for raising this question with me.

30. I am grateful to Ritty Lukose for suggesting this term to me.

31. See Jeganathan (1998) for an evocative description and analysis of the commodity form in the moment prior to the inhabitants' final flight from their homes during an ethnic riot.

32. I find that Susan Stewart's (1993) extremely nuanced and complicated discussion of the multiple meanings of longing does not, however, capture the kind of longing and nostalgia that I have tried to set out here.

33. It would also be very interesting to consider how mourning and melancholia are mapped onto loss in such a context (see LaCapra 1999: 713–16). Spatial limitations, however, foreclose such an extension of the argument in this chapter.

# Escaping Conflict

## *Afghan Women in Transit*

*Asha Hans*

Nowhere else has a war on women been illustrated so starkly as in Afghanistan. Flagrant abuses of Afghan women's most basic human rights in the sectors of education, health, and civil and political participation have been widely documented (U.S. Department of State 1999; Amnesty International 1999a, 1995). The Taliban have been the most recent perpetrators of these injustices, but violence against both men and women in Afghanistan has been ongoing for over two decades. The constant condition of war during the last twenty years has adversely affected Afghan women's lives, forcing millions to leave their homes and seek refuge in countries across the globe. Approximately 9,580 Afghans have entered India to await asylum in third countries (UNHCR 1998: 62). This chapter traces the experiences of these women, many of whom wait silently in transit (see Map 11.1).

The research presented here investigates the trials and displacement of Afghan women who have found refuge in New Delhi. I am interested in understanding the relationship of these women to the nation even as they find themselves outside the territorial boundaries of their country. In this chapter I probe specific notions of nation, whether imagined or concrete, as political, social, and geographic boundaries of a country. In exploring these borders, what does a country, in this case Afghanistan, mean to displaced women?

When initially interviewing Afghan women in New Delhi,[1] I found that their stories were passed down by word of mouth and that listening to their experiences was crucial to understanding a more embodied version of politics in Afghanistan. Some of the most insightful narratives came from the older women, with whom interaction was easier, as storytelling was a larger part of their lives. They had so much to tell and so few people who wanted to listen to them. The accounts of raging mobs, check posts, corrupt border

Map 11.1.  Afghanistan. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

guards, sexual abuse, dead and mutilated bodies, lost or beheaded children, and unhygienic and insecure camps were told and retold during the interviewing. There was also anger and silence. It is important that we understand the silences of these women as well as their narratives. Urvashi Butalia (1998) writes about the general silence that shrouds the experiences of the Partition of India and more specifically the silence shrouding women's experiences in such conflict situations. Cynthia Enloe (1995: 14) has also argued that men use nationalism to silence women. In the process of building the nation, women's sexuality is exploited in ways that shame and often silence them (see Mojab, Chapter 5 of this volume, and Blacklock and Crosby, Chapter 3 of this volume). If women are silent, how do we understand their location and role within the nation? Likewise, how do notions of belonging to the nation and political mobilizations to protect the nation shape women's experiences of displacement from the nation as state?

The nation, in contemporary social theory, inhabits a space that is simultaneously abstract (imagined, mental) and concrete (physical, geographical) (Deshpande 2000: 169). These contrary aspects of the nation space can be linked because of their common existence in (and only in) the social realm. It is through the linkage between these abstract and concrete spaces and their realization through active social practices and pro-

cesses that the nation space takes shape and the problematic is defined (Deshpande 2000).

In the first section, I discuss iterations of Afghan history and the placing of women within these historical moments. In the second section, I examine the place of women's bodies in economies of violence and their dislocation. Next, I discuss the space of the nation in these women's lives as they shrug off old identities in search of the new. Finally, I outline the limitations of nationalism in dislocated places as defined by women.

## A GENDERED HISTORY OF CONFLICT

One of the earliest attempts at emancipation and social reform for women in the twentieth century took place in Afghanistan. Afghan leaders located women's emancipation as central to its nationalist ideology of modernization. In 1883, Amir Abd al- Rahman Khan (1880–1901), a ruler of Afghanistan, allowed widow remarriage and made the registration of marriages compulsory (Kakar 1979: 168). His son, Amir Habibullah (1901–19), introduced the concept of women as contributing members of society and not simply as mothers. However, the emancipation process was not linear, and at the same time as progressive change was introduced, Habibullah proclaimed that men were entitled to full control of their women, as the honor of the people of Afghanistan prevailed in the honor of their women (Kakar 1979: 173).

In the 1920s the next attempt to modernize Afghan society was initiated by King Amanullah (1919–29). New laws included the abolition of the veil (*chadari*) and *purdah* (seclusion). Women could go out in public unveiled, form associations, and attend schools and work. These were the new undertakings of modernization and were legally established in the 1923–24 state code *Nizamnamah-ye arusi, nikah wa khatnasuri*. This year also marked the beginning of a conflict over gender norms. Islamic codes of appropriate behaviors for both men and women conflicted with more "modern" and Western norms of women's conduct. Women's lives up to this time had been influenced by Islamic law, and Sharia law in particular. Accordingly, women had inferior status to men in terms of marriage, inheritance, and the law. Legally, a woman had half the rights of a man. For example, women needed two witnesses while men needed only one in a court of law. Within such frames of reference, people use the word *woman* (meaning "coward") to insult opponents (Kakar 1979: 171). Women were the bearers of the family honor, and a man's reputation was measured through the behavior of the females in his household. The state-building processes proposed by Amanullah included women's emancipation as central to his conception of a modern Afghanistan. He aimed to transform gender relations significantly. Amanullah's reforms

were resisted by a rural Islamic opposition, and he was forced to flee when his plea to the British for assistance was turned down (Dupree 1973: 453). This was not the only time that international strategic policies would have a devastating effect on women's lives in Afghanistan. The Cold War would profoundly complicate their situation, as I shall discuss later in the chapter.

Consequent to Amanullah's removal under the regime of Nader Shah (1929–33), schools for girls were closed, and veiling and segregation of women was reintroduced. Zahir Shah (1933–73), who succeeded as the next ruler, did not effect any significant change. It was under the leadership of Daud (1953–63) that crucial changes relating to gender relations were again introduced. Women were encouraged to remove the veil, and despite protests by the conservative forces, Kabul University was opened to women. Liberal economic policies and an influx of consumer goods from the West supplemented increasing Soviet influence. This time, the mullahs (Islamic religious leaders) joined the tribal chiefs and other conservatives to challenge these changes. They failed initially, as Daud used armed forces to quell the rebellion, but eventually they succeeded. Despite the fall of Daud, during the reign of Zahir Shah the intellectual and middle class continued to support liberal policies (Centlivres-Demont 1994: 340). The constitution gave women equal sociopolitical and legal rights, and consequently in 1964, the first woman, Kubru Nurzai, entered the National Assembly and was appointed the minister of public health. Women started to occupy new public spaces in the 1970s in the top levels of the government, the judiciary, and education. Despite these changes, the role of women as reproducers of the nation in their homes and households was never questioned (Centlivres-Demont, 1994: 343). The dichotomy in women's lives continued.

In 1978, after the Saur Revolution, another round of social reforms for women was introduced. The communist Afghan regime introduced laws to raise the minimum age at marriage for girls to sixteen years, put limits on the traditional "bride-price" system, and allegedly forced women to take part in literacy programs. The communist regime's modernization reforms to improve the status of women were once again unacceptable to segments of the predominantly Muslim population (Wulf 1994: 45). The regime's determination to forcibly apply the reforms contributed to the birth of the Afghan resistance movement. It was not only culture that was at stake; the reforms had a deep economic element For example, the limitation imposed on bride-price affected not only the social basis of society but also rural economies and women's own social security. Women symbolized both the honor of the family and of the nation and therefore found themselves placed at the center of a conflict between Western concepts of modernization and Islamic codes of culture.

The Soviet invasion in 1979 opened up new spaces and roles for women, while also exacerbating suffering and insecurity in an already unstable situ-

ation. The communist regimes continued their reforms, which provided the Mujahideen grounds for organizing a coercive opposition. Many Afghan men saw themselves as *mujahid* and took on *jihad* as a major life objective.[2] In this war against the Soviets, many women supported the Mujahideen and became willing partners in the insurgency. The emergence of women in this public space has been interpreted as women "being symbols of legitimisation for political groups led by men" (Rubin 1997: 291). This is not altogether correct, as at times their role turned combative. In 1980–81, for instance, schoolgirls and teachers led some of the most militant demonstrations in Kabul (Rubin 1997: 291). Nahida, who led the revolt, came to be the new heroine of Afghanistan. Stories of women suicide bombers welcoming troops abound in Afghanistan, as do the killings of women in Kandahar by their men to protect their honor.

Tajwar Kakar was a well-known woman associated with organizing war. She set up a school for training boys in armed warfare in Kunduz. In Herat and Kandahar, she established strong women's resistance organizations that investigated enemy collaborations, pursued those suspected, and set up operational groups that abducted and executed Russians (Mayotte 1992: 165–72). Tajwar was a member of a small group of women who directly participated in the covert war against the Soviets. Though women's roles in the freedom struggle were generally subordinate to those of men and the space allocated to women was still marginal, women were seen as important by the Mujahideen, and women's assistance was tolerated if not actively sought.[3] The Soviet invasion created a complete breakdown of the existing political and civil society. Sites of power emerged in rural Afghanistan that would eventually impose a new social order on the country's urban centers. Different groups competed for leadership of the jihad. Cold War–induced conflict and state-controlled violence intensified the flow of refugees to Pakistan and Iran. A poorly and weakly governed country could not withstand the flood of modern weaponry indiscriminately lavished on all groups by the superpowers during the Cold War (Rubin 1996: 3, 14). Washington alone supplied an estimated $10 billion in arms and aid to the "freedom fighters" (Ahmad 2001). During the Soviet occupation, the United States gave these weapons to the Mujahideen resistance/freedom fighters, which included, at the time, Osama Bin Laden. Ironically, the Taliban, with roots in the camps for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, was also nurtured in exile by the United States. Militarization thus intensified conflict and militant conservatism among members of both groups, and this, in turn, affected women's lives (Goodwin 1994: 83). Women continued to be at the receiving end of a nation in conflict. Gang rapes, abductions, and other crimes against women became common during the Mujahideen takeover.

The conflict entered yet another phase with the entrance of the Taliban onto the Afghanistan political scene in 1994–95. Their takeover of the capi-

tal, Kabul, in 1996 signaled their control of the balance of power within the country. Women's emancipation and rights were lost with the emergent militant leadership of the Taliban. Highly restrictive notions of what constituted appropriate femininity in an Islamic state became a critical issue. On September 28, 1996, Radio Kabul (Radio Shariʿah) announced that "as per an order issued by the Amir al-muʾminin (the commander of the faithful), Mulla Muhammad Umar, women are not allowed to venture outside of their homes." The Taliban emerged as a powerful force in the mid-1990s and came to occupy 90 percent of Afghanistan (Shirzai 2000). In this part of Afghanistan their decrees held firm, and especially those norms regarding women became a matter of concern worldwide. The Taliban's "Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" squad was intensely harsh against women.

The full restrictions imposed by the Taliban against the women of Afghanistan cannot be fully catalogued here. I have tried to gather information from the refugees in India, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), and other nongovernmental organization (NGO) sources working in the country. Punishment included a beating, imprisonment, or public stoning to death. Women had to shroud every inch of their body with the *chadari* (or *burqa,* as it is known in India and Pakistan).[4] Schools were closed for females above the age of eight, and health facilities were out of bounds for most women, as unescorted women were not allowed into hospitals. Since female doctors were forbidden to work and male doctors either were prohibited from providing treatment to women or had to do so without touching them, few women were able to access health facilities. Work outside the home was not allowed. To venture outside, a woman needed a male relative as an escort. It was her duty to see that no music was played in her house and that children behaved themselves—for example, by not dancing or flying kites (U.S. Department of State 1999; Amnesty International 1999a, 1995; RAWA 2001). The closure of land mine awareness classes for women had implications for their own and their children's physical security. Closure of schools, especially boys' schools where women were no longer allowed to teach, meant that larger numbers of boys on the streets were at risk of mine injuries (Rubin 1997: 295). The banning of women from *hamam*s (public hot baths) had implications for the health of both women and children, who used to accompany their mothers (Rubin 1997: 295).

This turmoil, combined with that of the past twenty years, has forced Afghans to leave their homes. The reasons for people leaving Afghanistan are mixed. In the narratives of the Afghan women I interviewed, it was quite obvious that violence against women intensified at every phase of the conflict. The women who left during the governance of Najibullah left generally because of threats to their husbands. There is no doubt that there was an increased threat of sexual assault during the reign of the Mujahideen. The

takeover of Afghan territory by the Taliban not only generated an increased physical and sexual threat but also was a threat to women's very existence. Women's behavior and honor became central to the Taliban's self-created image as protector of the nation.

The Taliban's policy of protecting women was rationalized by the ongoing political conflict in Afghanistan. Afghans have long been at the center of international conspiracies and have had to maintain their nationhood despite incursions from the outside. In maintaining the Afghan nation-state, strategies of modernization and traditionalism have constituted a site of conflict where women became the symbols of the construction of the nation and its boundaries. In this case, women's bodies became central to the conservative policies of the Taliban. Here, politics in the name of tradition constituted resistance to the modernization process, which was seen as flowing from the West. This site of conflict, as Chatterjee (1993) argues, is located within the cultural domain of the family and marked by a space dominated by women. Women's bodies belong not to themselves but to the nation and are sites of its inscription. He notes that in the case of Indian nationalism, the women's question was removed to the inner domain, far from the arena of political contestation with the colonial state (117). Women were located in the spiritual realm of the home, considered as superior to the material realm constructed by colonial interests (120). This process of containing women within narrow boundaries was part of nationalistic Indian politics and reflects its similar use by the Taliban, who regard women's bodies as tradition markers of the boundaries of the state.

### BODIES AS BOUNDARIES OF THE STATE

Women who have fled Afghanistan do not talk easily. For many, to speak about the escape to exile opens wounds and to recount the sexual reasons for leaving is shameful. Women find it difficult to discuss sexuality openly, particularly in refugee situations where men always remain present. Thus my discussions with the women were marked by apprehension, reserve, control, reticence, and above all a silence. Women left Afghanistan due to the various forms of violence they feared or experienced; sometimes this was a gendered violence, sometimes not. The loss of limbs due to land mines affected the entire population, regardless of their gender. Afghanistan is one of the most mine-infested countries in the world (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] 1996: 1), and land mine explosions do not discriminate. Men who are directly involved in military maneuvers, however, do face more dangers from mines than women and children.

Gendered forms of physical violence exist in all conflicts. In Afghanistan, it is women's sexuality that has been targeted. For example, a kidnapping or

elopement could result in the woman being half-buried and shot by her father or male relative, while a woman showing her hand outside her *burqa* may have had it cut off. Some families left Afghanistan because their daughters were growing into beautiful young women, who might be punished through no fault of their own. Women's youth was, and will remain, a cause for sexual attacks in Afghanistan. Under each of the Afghan regimes described in this chapter, women have left due to sexual attacks. Whether under communist or Islamic regimes, rape has been consistently found to accompany conflict in Afghanistan. Ethnic chauvinism and minority status in Afghanistan are related to an increase in the incidence of rape. Among those persecuted under the Taliban regime were many Hindu women raped by local commanders, Taliban youth, and border guards. Hindu and Sikh refugee women were quick to point out that rape of their community women by Taliban armed youth was supported by local commanders. Thus the Afghan state, which supposedly protects the populace, has been a significant agency in perpetuating this violence and thus also providing a method of forcing the ethnic group to leave. Those who leave are called *kafirs* ("nonbelievers," though the term is sometimes also used to mean "slave").

A Sikh woman lamented that Jalalabad, where she was born and had grown up, was not the same. It had been emptied of its ethnic Hindu and Sikh population. Her family had been forced to leave, as her husband had been threatened that his beard would be cut. As a Sikh, he was compelled by his religion to wear a turban and grow his beard. He left Afghanistan rather than violate the principles of his religion. While Hindu men were asked to identify themselves by stitching a yellow cloth onto their clothing, Hindu women were forced to wear a yellow *burqa* or face physical punishment. A Muslim refugee woman told me that Kandahar was perhaps the only male city in the world. No woman was allowed outside on the streets. "Why did these things happen?" I asked her. "Why such attacks against them because of their gender and ethnicity?" She replied that women were regarded as sexually insatiable and succumbing easily to temptations of the flesh. They were believed to take men down with them into a perpetual hell. Another woman who had been attacked outside a mosque said that it had become a common occurrence to violate women's bodies, as the teachings in the mosque emphasized the danger that women's sexuality poses to men. Shalinsky (1993) has written that women are considered inferior because *nafs* (desire) dominates more than *aql* (reason) in women's lives. If the former is not controlled, it will result in *fitna* (chaos) (662). *Fitna,* according to the refugees, is related to male honor in a cultural context where consequently the veil assumes a crucial importance in the protection of women from the gaze of the outsider. Safia,[5] a young refugee woman who had been sitting quietly at one of our meetings, asked: "Is protecting honour only a male right? The breasts of women were cut if they opposed the Taliban." Baljit added:

> My colorful dresses became the reason for the shadow of death that hung over me. Did I look sexy in those dresses? I do not remember now. I was never beautiful, in fact in Afghanistan I was one of the "dark" ones. The color of my skin inherited from my ancestors was not pristine white like that of my Pashtun friends. Unlike my friend Shaheen, I had no boy even glance at me. Why then all of a sudden had I become a threat to the Afghan men? How could I, a married woman, steer them from the path of virtue? Why was my chastity attacked when men could not control their sexual urges?

Safia continued: "Talibans have their own rules and regulations, but these are not suitable for the contemporary people of Afghanistan. They have traveled back in time and want us all to do the same, but then I could never walk backwards, so I left."

Under each Afghan regime, refugee women have faced a distinctive threat that has forced them to leave the country. Interethnic and inter-religious feuds account for most departures. Women at the receiving end of the Mujahideen and Taliban edicts have fled because the conservative religious policies have threatened their very being as women. The women I interviewed showed an especially deep fear of the Taliban. Shaheen spoke softly, the apprehension reflected in her eyes: "Even a pregnant mother is not allowed to deliver at the hospital. Women are not allowed in public without a male guardian. The Mujahideen were animals, but the Taliban are the devil. These people call themselves Muslim, but they are not Muslims." Fetching water, for instance is a woman's job, so this gendered work produces gendered crimes. Latifa, who went to fetch water as the pipeline was cut, was surrounded by five Taliban youth with guns. She was taken to a shelled building and raped. She laments: "How could I not go out—we have to drink water, don't we?"

There can be no response to such questions; we sit quietly, unable to reply. Another woman who had been abducted and raped, not by the Taliban but by men of the Hizb-I-Islami (a party led by Gulbadan Hikmatyar with the backing of Pakistan), felt that she had no option but to join the increasing number of prostitutes. She said that the prostitutes were in great demand by the Taliban. The commanders usually abducted women. Some of them even have ten wives, although Islam allows only four. They had enough food, so it was no trouble for them to maintain such large households or harems. The men who were now middle-aged picked up very young and nubile girls. The soldiers, on the other hand, were not rich and therefore picked them up as prostitutes. A middle-aged refugee woman from Kabul said, "Prostitution is no longer paying, so I left." Even the economy of sex work has its limitations.

Among the members of this group of refugee women are widows who were targeted by the state and its armed forces in Afghanistan. As RAWA (2001) reports, about 15,400 widows in Afghanistan are below the age of

forty; they are the sole breadwinners of their families and are currently being supported by the Red Cross and CARE. This figure does not include the sub-provinces surrounding Kabul. With that inclusion, the number of Kabul widows exceeds 50,000. The closing of bread shops and subsequent lack of access to basic food brought these women on the streets with no options but to beg. Lack of access to food constitutes a distinct dimension of violence against women's bodies, and this is obvious when data on the situation in Afghanistan are contrasted with those from some of the poorest countries in the world (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2000: 189, 240, 268). The women interviewed did not speak on this issue, just as they will not speak of their bodies and sexuality. Honor is a gendered concept with many expressions that has compelled many women to live in vacuums and not talk about their lives, their loss, their pain, and especially hunger. I noticed that one woman, Noor, a widow, related only happy memories. She edited her words, and perhaps her mind, of anything ugly or unpleasant. One day I sat with her in silence, not talking. It was then that she began to relate what she called her past and her fate. Noor, like many widows, had to leave Afghanistan because of hunger, which exists but is not spoken about. She spoke hesitantly:

> When my husband was alive, we had a stationery shop and a car. We lived in Gazni district, but as the children grew up, to meet their needs of a good education, we came to Kabul. When the Taliban came, we had to take our daughter out of school; then my son's school closed, as women had been barred from teaching in the school. It was getting more difficult by the day to meet our needs. Food was going beyond our purchasing capacity. We decided we would go back to Gazni—maybe the situation was better there. That same night my husband did not come back home. After a month's search, my brother, whom I relied upon after my husband's disappearance, was found dead on the street. I had no work, no one to support me, and we went hungry for days. I also realized that through my queries I was exposing myself to the Taliban's anger. Everyone was afraid to help me. I realized I had outlived my need in my own country, nor could it fulfill mine. I could no longer see the desperate hunger in the eyes of my children. My own people had become my enemies. Why, I never understood. It was as if I no longer belonged. Finally, where even the war and the rockets could not force me out of my country, my hunger compelled me to leave.

Jahan Ara, another widow, added:

> Our families used to protect us. We were not open to sexual attack, and though the system of marrying our dead husbands' brothers existed, we had physical security. We were looked after and never went hungry. But with the Taliban, the situation has changed. The community can no longer support us against the wishes of the state. The young are dying or are in the armed forces. Who

will marry us? There is so much poverty, so our only option is to become pros-
titutes or to beg.

Physical attacks on women's bodies, denial of basic food, and fear for one's
life have forced women, especially the unprotected, to leave Afghanistan for
India. But exile is difficult too, and it becomes even more difficult as family
members are scattered across the globe.

### DISLOCATED AND IN SEARCH OF NEW IDENTITIES

Women's dislocation from their homes is linked with sociopolitical evolution
and change. This process of transformation is never smooth, and in the case
of Afghanistan, it has been both protracted and contradictory within a con-
text of long-term conflict. The refugees themselves see this dislocation end-
ing in a temporary though extended void:[6] a void, the women felt, with bro-
ken linkages with the past and none established for the future. What shapes
the lives of those who are in suspended animation in an alien country? What
does it mean to be enveloped in the time warp of which they speak? My task
was to see how Afghan refugee women negotiated with these conditions of
extreme dislocation in their lives and to trace the linkages to the nation and
nationalism that exist in exile. Dislocated and scattered in these spaces, how
do these women combat their shock and adjustment in their new surround-
ings? Does the space of the nation stretch across borders, or is dislocation
complete and final with no backward linkages to the nation?

These Afghan refugee women are dislocated not only from a territorial
space called the state but also from their society and families. They had been
part of traditional extended families, but through my conversations with
them in New Delhi I found that traditional structures no longer existed in
refuge. Many women now belonged to nuclear families or were single and
living alone. Husbands, children, and extended families were scattered in
the United States, Canada, or Austria. Some were lucky to be in constant
touch with these members, and some received financial support from them.
There were also stories of refugee women leaving behind husbands, sons,
and daughters. In my experience, there was rarely an Afghan refugee family
with all of its core members living together in Delhi.

The absence of loved ones leaves deep scars, which seldom heal properly.
The trauma of this dislocation in women's lives has created deep psycholog-
ical and stress disorders (Desai 1997: 26–28). Many women realize that con-
trolling the process of the disintegration of the family and home in exile is
beyond their capability. They understand and experience the impact of
un/underemployment on their men. An Afghan man without work finds
himself helpless, and this powerlessness can itself generate domestic vio-
lence, relating to the frustration of a loss of masculine roles. One refugee

woman I spoke to asked: "Why does he not rebel against his situation, why does he not break these barriers? I fear coming home, to see him unshaved, drunk, ready to beat me. This is not the same man who worshipped the ground I walked on. I miss the Sunday dinners with friends, the weddings and the festivals. He was always happy then and we made a beautiful couple."

This is but one dilemma with which women had to cope. Many women complained of their husband's involvement with other women; desertions were common. Husbands abandoned not only their wives but also their children and their communities. Women had to cope with situations where loss of self-esteem was imposed by their own families and communities: "My children look down upon me. I am so different from their friend's mothers. They question my difference; my different speech, my dress, my walking. They cannot understand why I cry for small things, every small incident is a crisis, a trauma. Why cannot their father forget a country called Afghanistan and help the family make its way to Canada? How did Iqbal and his parents find asylum while we did not?"

I also learned from the women that dislocation in the refugee context can be understood only within a multidimensional analytical framework that is above and beyond trauma. The women themselves visualized their problems and their encounters in a broader context than the state, the community, and the extended family. They explained that in Afghanistan, as in many other cultures worldwide, families still form the basis of society, and traditional roles in these societies are gendered: men sustain the financial and moral requirements, and women fulfill all other familial needs. This positioning changes in refugee locations, as extended families no longer exist. For women in these dislocated spaces, the need for extended families is important but not as significant as often visualized by society at large. While they longed for an Afghan family presence, they did not necessarily pine for the trappings of an extended family or community that might provide support but could also suppress their needs and desires. What affected them most was the instability of their existence. Shakila, a widow whom I met and interviewed in New Delhi, had been confined in Afghanistan for six months before coming to India, as she had no male escort to accompany her outside. This code of conduct laid down by the Taliban compelled her to flee her home. On arrival in India she could not fully utilize her new-found freedom, as she was not equipped to work in an open marketplace. Thus, while she missed her extended family who were still in Afghanistan, she also realized that the limited assistance they had been able to give her had been her reason for leaving Afghanistan in the first place. As there was no help forthcoming from anyone else, she had to find ways to meet these challenges alone.

Afghan men and women have multilayered identities defined by not only their gender, race, or ethnicity but also by their class and professions. The

women's transformation to new transient locational identities is also dependent on a recognition and acceptance by the international community that they are bona fide refugees. Women who have challenged and moved beyond the boundaries of their previous identities are often women who have been rejected by their own people, have set up new "temporary" homes, and now imbibe a new political consciousness of their rights. They have acquired skills and used them to meet the needs of their families. The younger women whom I met were usually well dressed, wore makeup, and resembled the young, hip Indian crowd around them. They loved music of any kind, especially Hindi film music. For these young women in exile, much of Afghan culture had been left behind and many of the new local customs had been adopted. Values changed as women moved without veils and walked with men. Theirs was a world where cable television rubbed out the edges of one's "nationness," fusing remnants of a global culture beyond the history of conflict. Women, in these dislocated spaces, searched and found new identities more easily, even when their families and communities in exile were not supportive. Men, in contrast, continued to find identity in national spaces even after crossing borders to leave their country.

## CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

The spaces of nation and state can also be the sites and causes of their trauma. One of the first women I interviewed in New Delhi talked about the borders she had crossed to reach India:

> Crossing a border was a trauma for me, I will always remember it. It was something in my heart, something I felt. If you ask me, "Where did Afghanistan end and Pakistan begin, where did Pakistan end and India begin?" who knows and who cares? Did we draw these lines? These are all power plays meant for people who are rulers; for me when I looked out of the airplane I did not see any line. I only saw my past fading and a fear of my future overtaking me. It was a line not on a map, it was drawn on my heart.

Many women understood the nation as related to the conflict in Afghanistan. Their understanding was that clan rivalry had been not only fundamental but also a critical barrier to Afghanistan's unity. They agreed that the differences between groups are drawn from shifting cultural constructions. But in spite of these differences, they felt a shared understanding of their cultural histories. Shakila stated that her love of the country would always exist, as would her memory of the beauty, the climate, and the smell of the mountain air: "I remain an Afghan till I die." The music, the dances, the mosques, and the bazaars were all intertwined in her remembering of Afghanistan:

Can anything change that? Can I be an Indian just because I have been here for ten years? Yes I do love Hindi films and songs, but these are different. They do not have anything to do with my land or culture. The beauty of Afghanistan has captured people's imagination and they want to capture her. It is like a woman—everyone wants her for her beauty. How can I forget it? I bought a stone broken from the very famous Laizabar Hill [in Afghanistan] from another Afghan refugee in India, at a cost of Rs. 5000 (more than US$100), which is more than a month's income.

The women I interviewed related nationalism and "nationness" to lost homes and homelessness. There was hurt and nostalgia in their rememberings: "Nationalism has no meaning any longer, as going back to Afghanistan is to go back to hell." When asked her opinion about nationalism, instead of answering my question, a young woman posed her own question: "Where is Afghanistan?" She replied herself: "In Afghanistan people are hanged for no fault. There are no rules of humanity. Only the name Afghanistan remains, it is no longer what it was. If the old does not remain, then where does the question of nationalism arise?"

Women see themselves as the objects and survivors of a nationalism that protects the honor of the state through their bodies. Women made the following comments: "God has made me so beautiful that he forgot to give me good fortune." "My nation thought my body belonged to it." "We women have become properties of the state. We are objects to be used and then discarded." "A woman's body becomes the site of conflict, whereby she is forced to leave her country."

The deployment of women's purity for the preservation of cultural identity is not new (see de Alwis, Chapter 10 of this volume). Nor is it a unique idea that women's entry into public spaces poses a threat to national honor. During conflict these notions often become the "norm." What is new is that the *jihad* is not against the normal enemy who has occupied territory in the sense that the Soviets have done. The *jihad,* as depicted in the human rights report by the United Nation's Special Rapporteur, is now primarily against the self (one's own people) and, secondarily, the international community's attack against Islam (UN Commission on Human Rights 1999: 9). It is a power game between groups within the country, fighting to gain ascendancy. Women are the medium for uniting the community and gaining power for the *mujahid.* The Taliban perpetuates its power and stops international attempts to criticize its actions by using the protection of women as a cause for *jihad.*

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced the discontinuous locations of Afghan women in relation to the nation and the continuities that exist in exile. Their undertakings have been lived mostly in silence. They have not thought of themselves as heroic or remarkable. Afghan women's roles in conflict, as we have seen through their own perceptions, have ranged from subdued to invisible. While some, like Tajwar Kakar, joined the *jihad* and have been recognized for their commitment to the nationalist cause, the multitude of Afghan women who have protested and have suffered through the years of conflict remain shrouded in silence. While these women may not have organized and resisted actively, they have sacrificed their homes and families, and they have frequently contested the attempts of the regimes to suppress their rights. While many women supported Afghanistan against external occupation, they did not find themselves among the counted leaders of the nation. Instead, the same Mujahideen leadership that acknowledged women's role in combat became responsible for creating policies of gender apartheid. Women did not find an emancipated space for themselves in the newly gained independence from external occupation. Denied their autonomy under the Taliban, they continued to sustain violence at the hands of the state and their communities.

The gendered history of Afghanistan during years of conflict raises questions concerning the relationship between women and the state, processes of social inclusion, and nationalist cultures. Afghan women's need for self-definition and autonomy is for the most part, ignored or utilized for political ends. At the same time, cultural practices have mutated and changed across space in exile. Women move without the veil, talk to men, and resume work outside the home. Despite ongoing dislocation, exile has, for many women, opened up a space to assert new identities and to diffuse old notions of nation.

## POSTSCRIPT

September 11, 2001, changed the world in many ways. In October 2001, United States took military action to oust the Taliban in Afghanistan. There was elation that the women of Afghanistan would at last be delivered from their containment at home and the grip of conflict. The international community announced huge, new aid packages and a vision for reconstruction in Afghanistan. Women's rights would be acknowledged and women would walk the streets without fear. Dr. Sima Samar was initially appointed vice premier of the new government in Afghanistan, ostensibly a "victory" for women. Before long, however, she was fired from the cabinet and has since taken a much less significant post. The stage was set for Afghans to return home, with the promise of freedom and democracy to come. It has become

clear, however, that the situation in Afghanistan has barely changed. A subsequent war in Iraq diverted the world's attention, while the violation of rights and loss of livelihoods of Afghan women continue.

After the war, in 2002, I spoke to Afghan women and the UNHCR representatives in Delhi. I asked the women if they wanted to go back to their homeland. Their early enthusiasm had already been replaced by fear. Women were afraid that UNHCR and India would force them to go back while the security situation remained unclear. There was news filtering back of refugee returns and their problems, of continuing violence against women in many parts of the country. There was much talk of aid but virtually nothing reaching the people. Refugees returned not to their homes but to camps for internally displaced persons.

Despite a new national government, precariously filled with former warlords from all sides of the conflict, violence against women in many parts of Afghanistan continues. Afghan women in Delhi remain in limbo, unable either to return home or to find asylum in other countries. Since 1997, no Afghan man or woman has left India (UNHCR, 2001: 98). With "democracy" reinstalled in Afghanistan since 2002, no country will give these refugees asylum. The doors to a settled future are closed; the only exception to this adversity is that they are allowed to remain where they are on humanitarian grounds.

## NOTES

1. Between 1997 and 2001 I interviewed fifty Afghan refugee women in New Delhi. Of this group, fifteen had left Afghanistan prior to the arrival of the Taliban (five during the regime of Najibullah and another ten when the Mujahideen took power). The majority (thirty-five women) fled to India during the Taliban takeover. As the women are not in camps and were difficult to contact, no attempt was made to make a selection based on ethnic representation. Afghanistan, however, is a multiethnic country and this multiethnicity is reflected in the Afghan refugees in New Delhi. The dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan is the Pashtun, who are further divided into the Ghilzai and the Durrani. Other ethnic groups are the Baluchi: groups from Central Asia, including the Tazhiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Sikhs. About 99 percent of Afghans are Muslims, of which 88 percent are Sunnis of the Hanafi School of jurisprudence.

2. A *mujahid* is one who leads the faithful in a holy war or participates in a holy war. *Jihad* comes from the Arabic word *jhd*, "to strive," and is the only type of war permitted in Islam. It signifies the struggle to rid the territory of the infidel and is a war to protect Islamic identity.

3. It was not the first time women had participated in *jihad*. The role of Malalai, who had fought against the British in the battle of Maiwand (1880), is part of Afghan women's history. Afghan women's actions during wars against outsiders have been

accepted and acclaimed. Those women who stood up against the Soviets were made into heroines for refusing to accept communist dress codes and ideas and instead exemplifying Afghan values, Islamic virtue, and the upholding of family honor (Omidian 1994: 161).

4. I have used the word burqa as the Afghan refugee women use this term instead of chadri, which is more common in Afghanistan. It is a full-length garment covering a woman from head to toe with just a small mesh slit around the eyes. No part of a woman's anatomy must be seen, not even a toe or a finger. There is some confusion regarding its entry into Afghanistan: some writers regard its origins in Byzantine and Zoroastrian cultures (Dupree 1973: 531); others see its origin in India. It takes various manifestations depending on the ethnic group, age, class, and so on of the women: e.g., Muslims wear white *burqas,* Hindus wear yellow *burqas,* and many poor women who need freedom of movement to work do not wear it at all.

5. The names used in the chapter are pseudonyms.

6. Egon Kunz (1973) writes of the temporariness of displacement and describes it as "midway to nowhere" and the "spiritual, spatial, temporal, and emotional equidistance no man's land" (133).

# War, Flight, and Exile

## *Gendered Violence among Refugee Women from Post-Yugoslav States*

*Maja Korac*

This chapter analyzes changes in the gender roles and responsibilities of refugee women in the post-Yugoslav states that have been caused by their forced displacement. It begins by addressing the "logic" of the exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism in the region and the social and political implications of women's forced migration. In documenting the experiences of women whom I interviewed as they became refugees, the chapter examines changes in their roles and social relations caused by the gendered violence of war, flight, and exile. The women are of different ethnic backgrounds and have varied experiences of becoming refugees. Nevertheless, the interviews reveal that these women have much in common. The hardships of their survival in exile and the development of successful coping strategies through which they confront their victimization are both the potential spaces for the creation of new narratives of belonging and multiple identities (see Map 12.1).

## EXCLUSIONARY POLITICS OF ETHNIC NATIONALISM

The most significant principle driving change in post-Yugoslav states has been nation-state building embedded in ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism is centrally related to processes of *exclusion,* which are a main characteristic of ethnic-national projects in the region. Ethnic nationalism, as Nodia (1996) points out, "aims for a nation-state but conceives of its goal in terms of ethnic purity" (106). Such a state serves the interests of the dominant ethnic nation and tries to exclude minorities politically and, in extreme cases, physically, through forced expulsion, so-called "ethnic-cleansing," and genocide.

Map 12.1. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and surrounding countries.
Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

Even those who doubted in 1991, at the beginning of the war in Croatia, that "ethnic cleansing" was premeditated now perceive that this was the main goal of the conflict. The war transformed Croatia, for example, into one of the most "ethnically pure" post-Yugoslav states. The heaviest fighting took place in areas with the most mixed populations in Bosnia-Hercegovina and Croatia. Ethnic cleansing in areas unaffected by the war followed territorial cleansing of ethnic minorities in the war zones.

The exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism also breeds intolerance of certain groups within ethnic-national collectives, such as individuals who are in or from ethnically mixed marriages or those who refuse to express their identity in terms of a single ethnic nation. Therefore, the exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism cuts across seemingly unambiguous ethnic-

national lines and also victimizes some people from the majority ethnic nationalities, those who are marked as "different." The politics and practice of exclusion, embedded within projects of ethnic nationalism in the region of what was formerly Yugoslavia, mean that the identities of all those who cannot or do not want to state their "appropriate" ethnic-national background and/or "loyalty" to the nation-state are denied and effaced.

Woodward (1995) notes that "[i]n ethnonational terms, Yugoslavia was a land of minorities. No group had more than a regional majority, and most communities were ethnically mixed. . . . Large parts of the country—including cities and most towns—were ethnically mixed" (32). This particular context of an ethnically mixed population, as well as a considerable number of people who identified as Yugoslavs, was the rationale for deploying a politics of exclusion.[1] Such a politics was critical for the success of the political elite in its claim for power over "ethnically pure" territories.

Multiethnic communities were sites not just of peaceful multiethnic coexistence but of genuine cohesion. Ethnically mixed marriages were one of the significant demographic and cultural characteristics of Yugoslav society (see Morokvasic-Müller, Chapter 6 of this volume). Although ethnically mixed marriages were more typically found in urban settings, in the areas with the most ethnically mixed population, they were also common in rural settings. Ethnically mixed marriages were an expression of good multiethnic relationships in the region. At the time of the 1981 census, the number of people in ethnically mixed marriages and from ethnically mixed backgrounds was greater than the numbers of Albanians, Montenegrians, Macedonians, Muslims, and Slovenes. Approximately two million people out of the population of twenty-two million were either parents or children of ethnically mixed marriages (Petrović 1985). This group was outnumbered only by Croats and Serbs (Petrović 1985). Therefore, to realize their projects for "ethnically pure" states, the political elites had to deploy a politics of biological and cultural "cleansing," which was a precursor to war. History and language were to be purged of any notion of peaceful coexistence.

Commenting on the results of the first multiparty elections in Yugoslavia in 1990, Woodward (1995) argues that the voters did not make a clear choice for nationalists and independence. They did push the nationalist momentum further, however, not because of the voting results, but because of the use politicians made of them (118). Processes of ethnic-national purification were essential for politicians who had been seeking more political power over their territories. Nationalistic oligarchies also actively worked to spread hatred and fear of an "other," creating a base for an ethnic-national identity that would be suitable for their nationalistic projects.

This is not to imply that the society of prewar Yugoslavia was without internal national tensions and competing interests. However, the state socialist solution to these ever-present national politics was, as Milić (1993) explains,

"to give political legitimacy to the national interest through a federal state with territorial autonomies, while trying on the social level to reduce, and overcome this legitimate national interest by shaping society along the lines of egalitarianism and the ideology of a 'workers' ' society" (110). The political solution to the national enigma in Yugoslavia was to grant near-statehood to the republics as well as multiple rights of national self-determination to individuals. This meant that Yugoslav society was successfully held together, not by political dictatorship or repression of national sentiments, but by a complex system of rights and overlapping sovereignties.[2] Therefore, the primary social divisions and inequalities were not, as Woodward (1995) argues, "defined by ethnicity but by job status and growing unemployment" (44).

It can be argued that the revival of ethnic nationalism in the region was in essence a "state nationalism" rather than "nationalism from below" (Milić 1993). A crucial element in this "state nationalism" is a politics of ethnic-national identity that demands purification and ethnic-national "sameness," and thus a politics of exclusion based on a hatred and fear of an "other," represented by an ultimately different ethnic nation. As a result of such a politics in post-Yugoslav states, four and a half to five million people in the region were uprooted by August 1995.[3] The data include refugees, internally displaced persons, and approximately seven hundred thousand people who left the country after the beginning of the wars, seeking political asylum in European countries.[4] When we note that the total population before the war was twenty-two million, these figures mean that every fourth or fifth citizen in what was once Yugoslavia has been forced to flee his or her home.[5]

The massive population displacement of predominantly women has operated as a crucial symbolic and material element in reconstructing boundaries between ethnic-national collectives. In the context of violent conflict over ethnically homogeneous territories and states, uprooted women have become symbolic and strategic sites of nationalism and the quest for the destruction of a multiethnic-national society. The centrality of women in this process is intrinsically related to their roles as biological reproducers and as cultural cultivators of the boundaries of ethnic-national collectives and their ideologies (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989).

I have argued elsewhere (Korac 1999) that the creation of divisions among refugee women along ethnic-national lines and within a single ethnic nationality is central for the establishment of the exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism and its projects. Uprooted women, once exiled in one of the post-Yugoslav states, continue to be marked by their ethnic nationality in a crucial way. On the one hand, the place of exile carries characteristics of a war zone, particularly for women of minority ethnic nationalities. These women confront a constant fear for their lives and the safety of their children, although they are no longer in an official war zone. On the other hand, women who share ethnic nationality with the majority of the population in

the host country are also confronted with various restrictions on their rights. The limitations of women's rights serve the state's interest in controlling women in order to "protect" the "endangered" ethnic nation. In justifying such control, the nation-state creates and imposes a notion of women as "traitors" to their ethnic nation. This idea easily translates into public stigmatization of women who cross demarcated lines between ethnic-national collectives. They become "traitors" by marrying interethnically and/or by having children in mixed marriages, as well as by refusing to identify themselves solely according to their "blood ties."

Because the exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism insists on these divisions among refugee women, all other socially and economically constructed differences—as well as similarities among them—remain hidden. In the following pages I analyze the radical changes of the roles of refugee women as mothers, caregivers, providers for their families, and wives that result from the war, flight, and exile. Following an explanation of research methods, I analyze how these changes transcend ethnic-national boundaries and become the common, underlying characteristic of their individual struggle for survival in exile.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Throughout the chapter I refer to ten refugee women living in exile in Serbia, FR Yugoslavia. The collection of data was conducted during my fieldwork in 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997.[6] Most of the interviewees were living in Belgrade at the time, while three were accommodated in one of the "collective centers" set up for refugees in towns or villages close to Belgrade. I also refer to three women refugees who were in exile in Zagreb, Croatia, and Ljubljana, Slovenia, and who were interviewed by others.[7]

The refugee women I interviewed were identified through a snowball sampling technique, initially facilitated by my contacts with women's groups in Belgrade. The refugee experience can make displaced people suspicious of institutions, governments, and individuals representing these bodies, including researchers such as myself (Moussa 1993: 36). Therefore, I first got in touch with some of the women by attending the women's groups' weekly meetings or by accompanying women's group activists during their visits to refugee centers in and around Belgrade. Three of the women whom I interviewed were contacted through my friends and relatives.

In my initial contacts, I talked about my research but also about myself. Until the fall of 1992, I had lived in the region. I spoke the same language as my interviewees and knew well the places these women were forced to leave. This was invaluable in establishing trust.[8] Moreover, although my experience of "voluntary" exile was fundamentally different from their experiences of

forcible displacement, we nevertheless shared feelings of pain because we had lost *home*. All these circumstances helped me to be accepted as a researcher, and at the same time as a kind of "insider." Although I may have been perceived as "one of them," I was also someone who was free to leave and continue a "normal" life, and this placed me in a more powerful position (see Blacklock and Crosby, Chapter 3 of this volume).

I was conscious of this imbalance of power between the women I interviewed and myself. While I was open about my research and myself, during initial contacts I did not disclose my antinationalist politics or express antigovernment attitudes. Rather, I expressed the compassion and pain I felt regarding the tragedy of all peoples adversely affected by the war in the region.

The women were living in an extremely authoritarian social and political environment that did not allow for open expression of political views that were different from those promoted by the regime. Moreover, since the survival of these women depended on the provisions given by the host government, their personal contact with someone who was openly against that government could have threatened their status and existence. The position of women of minority ethnic nationalities was even more sensitive in this regard. They struggled for survival in a hostile social and political environment that promoted hatred toward non-Serbian ethnic nations. The women had reason to fear that their personal contacts with those who were against the regime would be perceived as an open political statement that could worsen their already unfavorable position. I also did not want to jeopardize my access to refugee women who were nationalists, who might decide not to participate in the research if they knew that my political views were very different from their own.

The differences between the interviewees and myself were aggravated in cases in which our socioeconomic background and education were radically different. To confront and reduce any problems of understanding, I often repeated to the women, in my own words, what they had told me during the interviews, to ensure that they agreed with my interpretation. In this way, I tried to overcome barriers resulting from a "lack of shared cultural norms for telling a story, making a point, [and] giving an explanation" (Kohler Riessman 1987: 173).

This approach was critical for interviewing women with whom I did not share an ethnic-national background. My own location and experience regarding the problems of ethnic nationality in a conflict involving ethnic nationalism were radically different from the experiences of the women respondents. I found, however, that commonalities in educational background and upbringing helped to bridge the ethnic-national differences and contributed to the development of mutual understanding during the interview process.

The decision to include the experiences of refugee women interviewed by others was based on my highly restricted access to refugee women in other post-Yugoslav states. Although I was a graduate student at a Canadian university at the time of the research, my place of birth, ethnic-national background, and citizenship were obstacles to conducting research outside Serbia. Therefore, interviews with refugee women who were in exile in Zagreb, Croatia, and Ljubljana, Slovenia, represent an attempt to broaden the picture of the situation of refugee women in other post-Yugoslav states.

Embedded in the different economic, social, and political situations in these societies were significant differences between the situation of rural and urban women in Serbia and the situation of those located in Serbia and in other post-Yugoslav states. Any generalization of the situation of women in or across post-Yugoslav state[s] is bound to be problematic. Nonetheless, there are similarities that stem from a long, shared past by the citizens of these new states, as well as from the recent process of transition from state socialism to ethnic nationalism in the region. For this reason, I include the stories of women located in other post-Yugoslav states. These accounts enable me to trace general trends and identify the ways in which the local populations have reacted to refugees. They provide an avenue to explore how women have dealt with the hardships of their lives in exile, including the separation from their homes and loved ones.

### BECOMING A REFUGEE: COUNTERNARRATIVES OF BELONGING AND THE RISE OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

*Refugee* means a person lost in space and time. That is the shortest definition. When I came to Zagreb [Croatia] as a refugee, a woman of forty-nine at that time [the spring of 1992], a well-established professional, I was a director of a firm, my educational background is law. At the time when I came here as a refugee I was nobody. I was nothing. I was a person without a name, actually on the contrary, I was a person with the name [Bosnian Muslim] to hide, not to be pronounced.[9] I would not wish that kind of feeling on anybody. That is so sad and miserable, you simply don't have anything to look forward to. You don't know where to turn, from whom to get food, from whom to get shelter. I had quite a few friends in Zagreb, whom I met through work, so they were there to help me in the beginning. Yet they were ready to help for a couple of days, five days at the most. However, my stay was endless. We couldn't foresee when the war would be over, and moreover whether there is a hope it'll be ever over. . . . I didn't cry then, I cry now. Somehow I was strong then, I was aware that crying is not a way out, that it would make my situation even worse.

These words, from Biba, a Bosnian Muslim woman in exile in Zagreb, Croatia, express a feeling common to most of the women I interviewed.[10] Their experiences of becoming refugees stripped them of their individual identity

and annulled all attributes of their lives before the war and exile. The words of Branka, a Croatian Serb woman with a middle management position before the conflict, revealed the same feeling of loss regarding her identity: "I'm a refugee. I no longer feel I am anyone or anything. Now, actually, I am no one and nothing." This theme of the loss of individual identity is a feeling shared by the interviewees regardless of their age, socioeconomic background, or ethnic nationality.

McSpadden and Moussa (1993) point out how the legal construct of refugee has "social implications indicating a historical reality outside of one's normal identity . . . [that does] not represent the unique qualities of an individual, but reflects the circumstances which impinge upon the person and cause flight from the homeland" (209). In this sense, the women interviewed share the problem of reconstructing their identity and life with other refugee women throughout the world (Afkhami 1994; Buijs 1993; Moussa 1993).

The feeling of being deprived of one's identity and of becoming a non-entity is compounded by a feeling of humiliation over having to rely on humanitarian aid. Branka explained how humiliated she felt when she had to obtain clothing at the Serbian Red Cross Office in Belgrade:

> [I]t simply humiliates you [the procedure of getting aid]. I came [to Belgrade] only in summer clothes. When I went to the Red Cross to get something, because I was forced to [by the change of seasons], I went six times [and came away with nothing five times], that is an awful feeling. You go there [to the Red Cross], everyone's grabbing there, wrestling over those clothes. It's awful, and now you go there, and you know you have to take something, and you can't. I was going towards the clothing, knowing I had to take something warm for my child. I had no money to buy anything, there was no one to give me any. They were fighting over them. I had no intention of entering, fighting, scrambling for a sweater or something else with another woman. It humiliated me so much, until I did it the sixth time, *then* I had to.

Almost all the refugee women I interviewed fled to Serbia (FR Yugoslavia) at the beginning of the wars in Croatia and/or Bosnia-Hercegovina, fearing an escalation of the conflicts. However, almost all of them had believed that they were leaving, not permanently, but for "three-four weeks" or "a couple of months" at most. Tanja, from Bosnia-Hercegovina and of mixed ethnic nationality, describes the problem of accepting the reality of the war and her new life circumstances:

> I arrived and only then realized that I had become a refugee. I had always cried for the refugees in Croatia, be they Croats or Serbs. . . . I found that horrible, I would always cry. Then I came here and for days I couldn't accept it. I didn't register. I kept on calling my husband and asking if I could come back. He said,

just a bit more, until, one day he took his parents, drove them to Raska [a town in Serbia], and stayed with us [in the collective center in Belgrade] because he couldn't stand it any longer [in the war zone].

Among those interviewed, only Tamara, a Bosnian Muslim woman, had a systematic approach to her new status as a refugee. After two years of living in war-ravaged Sarajevo, during which she had her third child, Tamara developed an organized plan for getting to Serbia and then applying for resettlement in a third country. A policy of family reunification would then enable her husband to get permission to leave Sarajevo and rejoin her and their children. For Tamara, being a refugee was finite and she would be able to reconstruct her life. Tamara said:

> I, personally, am not hurt by it [by becoming a refugee] because I know that after I have left my home, if I leave for Canada, when I regulate my status, start working, I won't feel like a second-rate citizen. I'm aware that I am now a zero-rate citizen, that I'm starting from scratch. I consciously embarked upon that road and I don't give a hoot because someone here considers I shouldn't be here. I'm not here because I wanted to come and live here or threaten anyone, I am simply here because I have to be here until I obtain some of those documents so that I can go abroad.

Tamara's experiences in the war, as well as her socioeconomic and marital status, enabled her to make decisions and plans long before she was able to leave her home. As a mother of three small children, a highly educated professional who was married interethnically, Tamara was eligible for resettlement in a third country. This set of circumstances, however, is not common in the patterns of flight among refugees in the region.

For women who became refugees in one of the post-Yugoslav states, the places to which they were displaced are familiar because they once belonged to a common "homeland." This characteristic distinguishes their situation from most other forced migrations. Those who were fortunate enough to escape immediate life-threatening dangers found themselves in exile, yet in places where their friends, colleagues, lovers, or relatives might have lived. Although these women knew the local language and customs, they became "foreigners in a country which until recently was their homeland" (Nikolić-Ristanović et al. 1995: 13). This situation contributes one more layer to the politics of identity.

Refugees are grounded in the identities they held before flight, as McSpadden and Moussa (1996: 218–19) point out. At the same time, they must forge new identities that will enable them to belong to the host society: learn the language, further their education, undertake additional training to get employment, and so on. Yet for refugees who are in exile in one of the

post-Yugoslav states, the host country is usually not a foreign, unfamiliar place. Thus their adaptation, integration, and creation of a new identity requires an entirely different set of attributes than if they were adapting to a new culture and country. In the conflict involving ethnic nationalism and the politics of exclusion, the most important element for the adaptation of these women to the host society is their ethnic nationality, an ascribed attribute that is entirely beyond their individual influence and control. Even the refugee women who are of the same ethnic nationality as the majority of the population in the host country confront specific problems in recreating their individual identities. Goca, a Bosnian Serb woman, describes the way she has been regrouped as the consequence of her flight:

> When I'm with my three sisters-in-law, who are also refugees with their families, I feel like a person. . . . But with all other people who haven't lived to lose their house, their friends, I can't feel comfortable because they don't understand us. They only say, "Be happy you're still alive." That sentence is the most important, I don't deny that, but it has become so heavy and sad. Because you have to eat, to sleep, to wear something when you're alive, you have *to think.*

Slavka, a Bosnian Serb refugee woman, expressed similar feelings about the attitude that "being alive" is the most important feature of refugees' well-being. Slavka said:

> In those first moments [at the beginning of her exile] I was just glad to be alive and have something to eat. I thought I was happy. As time passed, I realized that it wasn't what I had expected. I hadn't expected much, I didn't ask for much. I just wished to organize my life somehow. I wanted to work and be of use to myself and society. To forget, so that things would be easier. The persons who were chosen to help, the directors [of the collective centers], they don't have time to talk to us, visit the center, be with us. They have other work, things I probably don't know about. They say: "Keep quiet, you have food. Are you hungry?" No, we're not. "Well, then what do you want?" But I didn't think that my life should boil down to lunch and supper.

In this region, the stereotyping and consequent stigmatization of refugees are common, underlying characteristics of their lives. Refugees are perceived as a homogeneous group of people whose rights are "protected" and yet restricted in the country of asylum. As a consequence, they are seldom treated as individuals with individual life histories, problems, and feelings. Goca's story reveals the problems she has encountered with regard to this stereotype:

> No one asks us [her and her husband while in exile in Belgrade] what we feel, what we think. . . . Here in Belgrade, the very fact that you're from Gorazde [a small town in central Bosnia-Hercegovina] shows that you're a refugee. I have

already told you that my husband and I were well off because we were hard-working, we liked to dress well, to eat well, to have a good boat, to have a good car, to treat our friends to dinner. After we arrived in Belgrade, we continued our life not by spending because you Belgraders can't do that either, but we continued eating normally, acting normally, dressing and living normally. And we were even reproached by our relatives, they're mostly intellectuals, they said, "You're refugees now, maybe you shouldn't dress like that, others might criticize you." . . . We refugees practically mustn't eat, dress, talk, wear makeup, have friends. We who have fled should be at a lower level, and the one who tells me that, she/he doesn't know how you lived. At the word *refugee,* people put us down [into a low socioeconomic category].

Even when these women have been fortunate to come across people who treat them in a friendly way, as persons who have individual histories, needs, and interests, they often confront feelings of guilt. It is a sense of guilt for being "alive" while their loved ones, husbands, relatives, and friends in the war zones are in life-threatening situations. "Survival guilt" (Eastmond 1993) is a common feeling among refugees and represents "the psychological result of leaving others behind while they themselves were escaping" (39). Nermina, a Bosnian Muslim woman, describes her guilt:

This friend of mine, Ivana, she came to visit us [at the refugee center for women and children with special needs]. She brought some shampoo for all the women. She talked to me longest. She's also a professor of literature, she came on her own initiative [to visit the center]. . . . I told her how much I had liked to go to the theater and that my husband and I had started leaving the children alone at home before the war broke out and we went to opening nights in Sarajevo. . . . And then, one evening she called me, and asked if I was free, because she wanted to take me out to the theater. At first I was delighted and said that I wanted to go. But then I started getting ready, and the situation in Sarajevo at that time was terrible, they didn't have any water, electricity, food; and I was getting ready, and I started to cry. I couldn't go. I thought it would be a betrayal of my family over there, having a good time, going to the theater while they were sitting in the dark. I called her and said I couldn't go. Ivana understood.

The stereotyping and stigmatization of refugees are even stronger in the context of flight within the post-Yugoslav states. The duration of the conflict and the economic hardship resulting from it, as well as the economic sanctions imposed on Serbia, FR Yugoslavia, have contributed to the perception of the refugees, regardless of their ethnic nationality, as being a heavy imposition on the host government.[11] This has made it even harder for refugee women to adapt to their new life situations. Slavka, a Bosnian Serb, describes her feelings about the stigmatization of refugees in Serbia, disclosing a counternarrative of belonging: "Well, it hurts when they [people in Serbia] say: 'Why have you come here? These refugees, they steal, lie, smuggle. Belgrade

was a different city before the refugees came.' . . . So I live here, if this can be called a life. They don't understand me, I don't understand them. There are frequent squabbles, and I think that I prefer to talk to refugees of any nationality, that we understand each other better."

The lives of these women exiles in the post-Yugoslav states are narratives of belonging and identity that are often constructed in contrast to the exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism and the goals of the state officials and bureaucrats. My research reveals that experience in exile leads to an increase in political consciousness on the part of refugee women, who feel they have become pawns in the hands of the host governments. This excerpt from an interview with Branka, a Croatian Serb woman, reveals this pattern: "We're [women refugees] only being manipulated. . . . No one protects you in any way, no one gives you security. Not to help you, but to frustrate you. They keep on showing mothers with children on TV, babies, saying aid is needed, but they [the state officials] are actually only using you for their own purposes." Tanja, a Bosnian woman of ethnically mixed background, described one of the ways in which refugee women and their children have been manipulated by the state-controlled media:

> When *Politika*'s [Belgrade daily and a TV station, viewed as the government mouthpiece] journalists come, everything is rigged. They come when the director [of the collective center] tells them to, they go to the nicest rooms, and when they film us, then they film the nicest room and my children are not filmed in the poverty in which they live. Then there were cases when children were given toys [just for the purpose of filming], to show how they were having a wonderful time.

The manipulation and misinterpretation of the needs of those in exile are common characteristics of the refugee situation in many counties. Harrell-Bond (1986) points to problems of power related to host governments that speak for refugees and their rights rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. This pattern, experienced by refugees around the world, has been aggravated in the context of the post-Yugoslav states, where developed democratic political procedures were lacking even before the recent conflict. The situation regarding the rights of refugee women is problematic because most of them are not socially accustomed to participating in the public political realm. Consequently, most of them lack the skills to articulate their demands in terms of their individual, social, and political rights. The major features of their identity, as women, remain their roles as mothers, wives, caregivers, and providers for their families. In the following sections I discuss these aspects of their identity in the context of their lives changed by war and flight.

## REFUGEE WOMEN AS MOTHERS AND CAREGIVERS

My interview data on the experiences of refugee women in Serbia, as well as secondary sources,[12] clearly indicate that they constantly fear for their lives and futures, as well as for the lives of their children and other family members. They try to negotiate between their responsibility as mothers to provide a secure future for their children and the new circumstances of their lives over which they have lost control.

Seka is a Bosnian Serb who was a working-class woman before the breakup of Yugoslavia. She divorced her husband long before the war. Seka has three daughters who were ten, eight, and five years of age at the time of the interview. She also had a son who was killed in the war. Seka confessed that it was hard for her to carry on as the one solely responsible for her children's future:

> It's extremely difficult. I look at my daughters, they're young, and I'm helpless. I've never felt like I feel here [in exile], I feel incompetent, I fear for them, what they'll do, where they'll go. I don't know how long I can endure this. My health is damaged, I have developed diabetes, there is no financial help, I can't give my children anything, just what they can get in the collective center. I wonder where I'd make my nest, how I'd earn something. I don't see a future in front of me. Sometimes I live like a robot, overwhelmed by all this. Will it stop? Everything depends on me. Will there be peace, will it be possible to move freely [in the region of post-Yugoslav states]. I don't see a bright future for my children.

Nermina, a professional Bosnian Muslim woman, explains her feeling of pain at having sole responsibility for her children and not being able to secure for them the kind of life she herself had as a child: "From this perspective I don't think that I'll be able to give my children even half of what I had, because I really had a nice life. . . . And now all they have here is me giving them love." These words indicate the pain of witnessing one's children suffer in exile, deprived of the love and care of their fathers, relatives, and friends. It is, however, even harder for mothers separated from their children.

Refugee women separated from their children because of their flight experience psychological stress and emotional suffering that can be devastating. Many of these women commit their lives to getting their children out of the war zones. Ivana is a refugee woman from Bosnia-Hercegovina of ethnically mixed background, with a Serbian mother and a Croatian father. She is married to a Serb born in Serbia and has three children. Ivana lived with her family in a small town in eastern Bosnia-Hercegovina. She happened to be in Belgrade, where she had come to obtain her husband's citizenship papers, when suddenly, because of the conflict, it became impossible for her

to get home. At the time her husband was a volunteer in a Serbian paramilitary force. Ivana describes her fear and anguish for her children and family:

> My sister was already here in Zrenjanin [a town in northern Serbia], and there was no chance of my getting back there [to Bosnia-Hercegovina]. . . . In the meantime, the children and my parents were in my flat [in a town controlled by the government of Bosnia- Hercegovina]. . . . And then, you know, when the sirens wail, they all go down into the cellar. I talked to them practically every day. My mother was worried about my sister and me, and I was concerned about them. . . . Then the telephone lines were interrupted and since then I haven't spoken with my children. . . . I don't know how they are making out. . . . There's no market. The shops are closed. You're lucky if you find someone selling something in the street. . . . I sent three packages, they didn't get anything. You can't send money, nothing. And you feel bad when you sit down to eat and you know that they don't have anything.

Ivana, however, did not give up trying to get her children out of the war zone, at times risking her own life. On April 2, 1994, she went to Doboj, a Serbian-held town in eastern Bosnia-Hercegovina, when she heard that her children were on the list for an exchange:

> I went there, and stayed forty days, they were supposed to be exchanged every day, and they'd [authorities of Bosnia-Hercegovina and the Republic Srpska] put it off, and so on. I was in Doboj. You know what it's like, they're [the army of Bosnia-Hercegovina] shelling it from two sides. So that you don't have one day of peace. A shell fell 30 meters away from me, killing four children, four were wounded. . . . And you don't have time to run. It's just luck. You pray to God that it doesn't hit you. . . . I find it incomprehensible that I'm in a situation where I can't help my child. I can't help the three of them. How can I help them? In what way? I went to UNPROFOR [UN Protection Forces] to fix it up so that my kids could get out. It didn't work. And that International Red Cross. They said: There is a Red Cross branch in Tuzla [a town in northeastern Bosnia-Hercegovina]. Only children up to fifteen and a mother or father over sixty can get out through the Red Cross. That means if they let them, my mother and father and the child could get out. But what about my other two children and brother. . . . How are my parents supposed to leave a son and my two children and get out with just the little one?

Ivana's deep concern for the well-being of her children is mixed with her feelings of loss of precious elements of her maternal role, watching and helping her children become adults. She says: "The small one writes in a letter: 'Dear aunt (to my sister) I'm so small and tiny, miserable. If you were to see me, you wouldn't recognize me, but I'm 100 times smarter than I was.' Because the children have grown up, the children have matured in the war. Because of the war, they've matured in a year. And I haven't seen the children for two and a half years."

Refugee women whose children remained in the war zones controlled by an "enemy" ethnic nation often fear that their sons will be drafted into the "enemy's" army and end up fighting against their own ethnic nation. These women experience intense anxiety resulting from strong social pressure to be a "loyal woman," and a "Mother of the Nation" whose sons have to fight for the "National Cause." They attempt to negotiate between their role as mothers of their children/sons and their role as "Mothers of the Nation." This negotiation becomes particularly difficult in a situation where a woman's "loyalty" to the ethnic-nation can be considered "problematic" if her sons are fighting in the "enemy's" army. Ivana's experience illustrates this problem:

> My only wish is that my children come here, and be with me, that they're here, and that's all I want. . . . I am very much afraid that they [the government of Bosnia-Hercegovina] might call up my child. They [people, friends in Belgrade] ask me: What will you do if your child is mobilized and sent to the front there? What would I do? Kill myself? He knows in his soul *who he is,* and he knows that he must go, if he doesn't they'll shoot him, he must. . . . Because it's a dirty war. If the wars were clean, then things wouldn't have come to this. That's the worst thing. War was never good and never will be.

Ivana tried to overcome the dilemma between her motherhood and "loyalty" to the Serbian nation, as it has been constructed by nationalists, by defining war as *dirty,* especially the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina. She explained how she would have felt if her sons, the oldest in particular, could get out of the war zone and join the "proper" army, that is the Army of FR Yugoslavia:

> I wouldn't let them go now. He [the oldest son] is ready for the army, but I would like him to continue school. Because, if I could just bring the children back and get them to serve in the *regular* army, here in Serbia. I say God forbid, but if it is fated and war breaks out in Serbia, then he'll *have* to go. What can I do? I wouldn't like my child to go, no mother wants her child to go, a mother would prefer to go instead of her child.

This excerpt documents how Ivana was trapped by the unequal and gendered construction of women's citizenship, as discussed by Yuval-Davis (1994), and the different ways in which women and men are supposed to act out their citizenship obligations and patriotism. For Ivana, being a mother of sons who can be drafted into the army and ultimately killed is reluctantly accepted as the "destiny" of her gender.

The negotiation between women's role as mothers, their love and care for their sons, and their socially constructed role as "Mothers of the Nation" was a recurring theme in the interviews. There were differences, however, in the ways in which the women confronted the dilemma. The data suggest that women of higher socioeconomic status and of ethnically mixed background

commonly have a better chance of choosing between their love for their children and their patriotism. Maria, a Bosnian middle-class woman whose mother is Serb and father Croat, fled with her family to Ljubljana, Slovenia. She comments: "There is no war, no victory, which is worth the sacrifice of children" (McNeill and Coulson 1994: 17). Women of higher socioeconomic status who are in mixed marriages, and therefore have the opportunity to resettle in a third country, were also more likely to overcome the socially constructed pressure of being a "Mother of the Nation." Tamara, a Bosnian Muslim professional woman, married to a Bosnian Serb, explained her decision:

> I think it is wise [to resettle in a third country] because of the children. Particularly since I have small kids, sons, there's no end to the war. In ten, fifteen years, time flies, these children will be in a situation to be military conscripts. I don't want them to carry a gun when everyone else is learning foreign languages, computers, riding motorbikes, and for some ideas, particularly national, I find that totally unimportant. Not a sufficiently important thing in life for which my child should sacrifice his own.

Regardless of their socioeconomic differences, none of the refugee women interviewed embraced the role of mother as "martyr and heroine" who sacrifices the life of her son(s) to the nation. Some of the women expressed a clear antiwar position. Seka, the Bosnian Serb woman whose son was killed in the war, said:

> I think it's important for women to get involved in antiwar groups and politics and try to stop these people who are willing to make such a thing [war]. To stop them victimizing our children. . . . I can't say 100 percent, but 99 percent are men [involved in war]. I think no woman, perhaps one out of hundred, would want to conquer countries, property and territories, and to let her child die for it. I don't know why, but I feel that way. Perhaps because I'm a mother. Do men, fathers, feel that powerful, strong, and thus think that they'd do something better, more, with their warrior ideas?

Seka, however, was aware of the role of women in the production of "warriors" and war. She recognized women's hesitation or powerlessness to break their socially constructed role as central agents in the process of the socialization of children: "It's terrible what is happening to us [women]. But women make their own mistakes. When we give birth to a male child, we make him a hero; when we give a birth to a female child, we are usually disappointed. Our families are seldom eager to have female children. When a son is born we boost him."

Some of the women articulated the difference between women's and men's attitudes toward war in essentialist terms. This was the case of Tanja, a middle-class Bosnian woman of mixed ethnic nationality and a mother of

two children. Tanja said: "The men played the greatest part in this war, that's *normal*. They took up weapons immediately, women would've done that differently. I think this would've never happened if women were in charge."

The views of the women were not always clearly articulated as antiwar. However, they all emphasized their role as mothers and their feelings of love and care for their children as the critical factors in their negative attitudes toward war. This recurring theme in the interviews *partially* supports Ruddick's (1989) analysis of women's experiences of mothering and her notion of a maternal politics of peace. I concur with feminist critiques that there is *no necessary relation* between women's role as mothers and pacifism (Carter 1996; Pettman 1996; Scheper-Hughes 1996; Cockburn, Chapter 2 of this volume). My interview data, however, indicate that the socially constructed role of these women as mothers—that is, as the main emotional providers and caregivers—shapes their attitudes toward war.

Freire (1995) points out that in patriarchal societies the role of women as mothers is socially constructed as the core of their identity and that it consequently affects women's coping mechanisms in situations of crisis (20–25). I argue elsewhere (Korac 1998b) that because these women have lived in the context of a patriarchal culture of post-Yugoslav states, their role as mothers has been constructed in that way. However, this contributes to the development of strategies that enable them to resolve conflict situations in nonaggressive ways. The socially constructed nonviolent attributes of their role as mothers give them the *potential* for transforming violent conflicts into negotiations and/or nonviolent practices.

The fulfillment of such potential depends to a great extent on the particular social, economic, and political context in which these women realize their mothering role. Moreover, the utilization of nonviolent attributes by mothers and nonmothers in the politics of peace versus war depends on the historically and geographically contingent positions of women in post-Yugoslav states. Only the efforts of women to gain social space for the articulation of their autonomous political voices can provide a catalyst for transforming violent conflicts into negotiations so that nonviolent politics can be actualized.[13]

## REFUGEE WOMEN AS SOLE PROVIDERS FOR THEIR FAMILIES

A great majority of the interviewed women confront radical life transformations by becoming the sole providers and protectors of their families and households (see also Hans, Chapter 11 of this volume). Their spouses, fathers, and brothers have been absorbed into wars and mobilized in armies, exiled, or killed. All but two of the married women I interviewed were separated

from their husbands because the men had to remain in the war zones, were fighting, or had been killed. This separation is a source of anxiety for women who fear for their spouses and families. However, the separation from their husbands is also a source of tension in communication between spouses. Refugee women have often found it difficult to share the hardships of exile with their husbands who remained in the war zones. Interviews with refugee women from Bosnia-Hercegovina who were in exile in Ljubljana, Slovenia, disclosed this kind of problem: "My husband can't even include a sympathetic word or two about what I'm going through, it's as though he thinks my life here is one long picnic" (McNeill and Coulson 1994: 19).

Even when women do not encounter serious discord in communication with their spouses as the result of separation, tensions regarding the sharing of problems remain. Women who did not work outside their households before their flight at times experience mixed feelings toward their husbands who stayed in war zones. Milica, whose husband remained in a sector of Sarajevo controlled by the government of Bosnia-Hercegovina, said:

> Well, he probably couldn't [leave Sarajevo]. If he could have, he certainly would have. There must have been a thousand and one reasons to leave and just as many to stay. Because, after all, he'd be leaving his parents alone and they are old, his father was very sick, he was three months in the hospital . . . and then he died. His mother is alone, and old, and there's nobody to look after her, and she's probably ill, absent-minded. What can I say.

Milica went on and confessed why and when she is angry with her husband:

> When I find things very difficult and don't know what to do with myself or the children [I get angry]. I had never looked after myself. I was never in a situation where I had to earn my keep, to live alone. I don't say that I wouldn't have managed, if I had found myself in such a situation. . . . When I got married, all in the family were working, they had their earnings, so that I never had any financial problems. One comes into a situation when even though you have some money, you don't know what to do with it, how to make the best of it, or even multiply it. When it comes to money, I don't know anything, really.

Regardless of feelings of incompetence, Milica did manage to find work, earn money, and improve the living conditions for herself and her two daughters. "I found some kind of a job [shop helper and occasionally a courier for a small business]. The salary is very low and I work without papers [illegally], but the money comes in handy, apart from what I get here [accommodation and food in the "collective center"]. I don't lack food at least. I won't mention clothes because that's not important." Milica says that she found the job "by accident." However, she relates that she was able to clearly set out the boundaries of her commitment to the job: "I walked past a shop window and saw an ad, and I went a couple of times, and the man

hired me. I told the man that I'd do some work because I really needed it and said I'd work a week or two and we'd see, without a commitment, he could tell me when I was through, and I'd tell him when I didn't wish to work any more." Milica's articulation of her needs and feelings about the job to her employer reveals the development of human agency and a successful strategy of survival.

A study of women's and men's experiences in exile (Freire 1995: 20) indicates that refugee women, in general, tend to respond better than their male compatriots to the crises inherent in the process, developing better coping mechanisms and adjustment strategies. Marija, a refugee woman from Bosnia-Hercegovina, talked about this gender difference from her own experience in exile in Ljubljana, Slovenia:

> I've discovered so much about myself during this past eighteen months. Most significantly, I have realized that I am a strong woman. When I look at other refugees I see many strong women coping in similar situations. My experience here indicates that it's more likely to be the men who break down, seemingly unable to find sufficient flexibility or resources within themselves to make the necessary adjustments between life as it was and how it is now. (McNeill and Coulson 1994: 20)

Freire (1995) argues that women do better than men when it comes to coping with crises in exile because women in many societies have been socialized to confine themselves to the microsystems of the family and households (20). She points out that even highly educated women in most societies continue to be subordinated by men within both the "public" (workplace and politics) and "private" (family and household) realms. Thus work outside the homes only "adds an additional, secondary role to their core identity as mothers and wives" (21). This is particularly true of societies based on more patriarchal cultural and gender relations, such as the Latin American societies studied by Freire and the post-Yugoslav states under scrutiny here. In these societies, women are accustomed to having fewer opportunities than men, to assuming that they must be able to cope with whatever situation arises, to drawing something positive out of the most taxing experiences, and to being thankful for whatever assistance, if any, they receive from others (21).

In this sense, women's experiences of the life and hardships of exile have some elements of continuity with their lives in peace. Providing care and love for their families remains women's main concern in exile, as well as the main source of their strength in developing successful survival strategies.

Problems with communication and the maintenance of close relationships with husbands can lead to women's awareness that their marriages may be threatened. Branka, a Croatian Serb woman, discusses this problem. At the time of her flight in May 1991, her husband was working in a part of Croatia unaffected by war. When the war in Croatia spread, he managed to flee

Croatia and reach the Netherlands, where he was living illegally at the time of the interview. Branka conveyed the uncertainty of her future with her husband: "Whether or not we'll see each other again, years are passing by for all of us." Branka's struggle for survival also made her aware of her personal strength: "I'm here [in Belgrade], I have some friends, relatives, although they're no great help. It turned out, during all of this, that I am actually alone. And I had been afraid to go elsewhere [abroad] so as not to be alone, but in essence I am alone here, too."

Although the problems that refugee women confront as a result of exile and separation from their spouses cause pain and confusion regarding their present and future life and plans, these women often develop an awareness that they can cope alone. This awareness gives them a sense of autonomy and agency.

## LOSING LOVED ONES

The lives of refugee women whose husbands or other close family members have been killed are even more difficult and demanding. One third of those interviewed have lost one or two close family members, either brothers, sons, husbands, or nephews. Some of them can hardly find the energy to struggle for everyday survival after their loved ones have been killed. As Arcel's (1995) study points out, "The death of a spouse, or the loss of parents for young children and adolescents, is the biggest crisis for most people, creating unparalleled stress" (25).

Anka, a Bosnian Serb refugee woman born in Serbia, had lived in Sarajevo since her early childhood. She was married to a Bosnian Croat and had two sons. Anka fled with her younger son first to Kikinda, a small town in northern Serbia where she had been born, and later to Belgrade, where she was given accommodation in a "collective center." Her husband and her older son remained in a sector of Sarajevo controlled by the government of Bosnia-Hercegovina. She described her own and her younger son's first year in exile, before both her older son and husband were killed:

> I had some of my own money. We were well off [while living in Sarajevo]. I decided to find a house [in Kikinda] and that's how it was. Sometimes I'd pay, sometimes work in exchange for living there. And so I survived that year, sitting beside the radio, TV. You know, you leave your child, your husband behind. I'd hear the journalist speaking even when I turned off the radio. . . . My son [younger] started school. That is the village in which I was born. There are a lot of my old teachers there. And he finished sixth grade there, they [teachers] were very nice to him. He had some problems [with children], he had a fight about nationality. They called him "Ustasha."[14]

Then Anka found herself in a situation where she could hardly survive:

> My husband was killed in front of our building in Dobrinja 2 [Sarajevo suburb]. . . . He managed to survive the first year of the war. He was killed on February 7, 1993, and my son was killed on February 17—that is, only seven days after my husband's funeral. My son was sent somewhere on the front, to fight against the Serbs, he was killed there. . . . Everything has fallen through. . . . I can't go on anymore, I don't have the strength. Another three years and I'll be fifty. I can't, I'd only like to get this child somewhere, if someone'd like to adopt him, but someone nice, to take him, so that he's happy. But I don't live any more.

Anka's is one of many responses to the tragic loss of close family members. Among the refugee women I interviewed, the most common focus was on their personal obligation toward their children. However, drastic changes of life as a result of war and exile are particularly difficult for middle-aged and older women, as Anka's case reveals.

## WIVES OF THE WARRIORS

Refugee women whose husbands have joined the army or paramilitary forces confront yet another set of problems while in exile. They must negotiate between their love, care, and fear for their spouses and the terrifying fact of their loneliness and their economically and socially insecure lives in exile. Some must also cope with the reality of life with men who have become psychologically destroyed after experiences at the front.

This negotiation often involves the development of a political consciousness on the part of the women, as Ivana's experience shows. Ivana is a refugee woman of mixed ethnic nationality from Bosnia-Hercegovina. As mentioned earlier, she had lived with her husband and family in a small town in eastern Bosnia-Hercegovina. Her husband, a Serb, born in Serbia, joined the paramilitary forces, and Ivana described her reaction: "You know, I was fed up, up to here, with his Serbian cause. Because as soon as the war started, he just kept saying: 'We Serbs.' It starts getting on one's nerves. Because you're not used to someone being singled out. Be a man, no matter who you are and what you are."

Yet the rise of a political consciousness seldom becomes a solution to women's problems in dealing with the individual and broader political consequences of their nationalistic husbands. Most of the women interviewed, as noted earlier, were socialized to confine themselves to the microsystems of their families and households and thus lacked an awareness of themselves as "political" individuals. This situation was compounded with the politics of ethnic nationalism and the social and political pressures to restrict their social space, as well as the expression of their autonomy as political agents. All these circumstances limit women's individual choices and their room for

action. Ivana continued her story about the struggle with her husband, who decided to join the Serbian paramilitary forces:

> I quarreled with him. I told him that if he died I wouldn't know where his bones were. [I said,] "Don't go." But he said that he must go, that his comrades were in danger. He was obsessed by the war because those who have been to the front can't stand silence anymore. He left. . . . When he returned . . . he was practically unrecognizable. But all that aside, he'd flipped psychologically. . . . Now he is not going to the front. He's a 60 percent invalid, but he works for the army, God knows. To tell you the truth, I'm not interested anymore. I've had enough of the army and everything. Up to here.

Women do not always accept their socially prescribed roles as caregivers. They are not always willing to pick up the pieces when "the boys come home" after the war and "to do so with gratitude for those who fought and took life on behalf of their women and their nation" (Peterson and Runyan 1993: 82).

Ivana's story indicates, however, that men are also victims. They are also affected by various forms of violence, from killing, torture, and body mutilation to psychological pressures resulting from experiences at the front. Nonetheless, there is a difference between women's and men's experience of violence in a situation of ethnic-national upheaval and social turmoil. Ivana articulated this problem of difference in the following way:

> You know what, there is a difference. In war, a man leaves. I mean he knows he's going, but he doesn't know if he'll return. None of the fighters do. After three years, it's all the same to him if he's killed, if he's wounded. He'd prefer to get killed than live without a leg and an arm. . . . But a woman, a mother, for example, she worries for her husband and children; she doesn't have to do any particular work, she doesn't even have to be politically committed, but she has a hard time. She's torn apart by everything.

The difference in women's and men's experiences of violence in war is based on the fact that the process of militarization of an ethnic-national collective and war represents a struggle for power in which women and men participate differently. Their different locations within this struggle are related to their structurally different access to power in society and consequently to the means of war.

## CONCLUSION

This journey through women's experiences of war, flight, and exile documents drastic changes in their roles as mothers, wives, and caregivers. The discussion reveals that radical changes in gender roles and responsibilities, in conjunction with a constant fear for family members who remain in war zones, contribute to women's difficulties in developing appropriate and suc-

cessful survival strategies. The centrality of their socially constructed roles as the primary caregivers and emotional providers for their families becomes the main source of their strength in confronting the crisis of their lives in exile. These roles, however, represent a continuation and reinforcement of the hardships of women's subordinated status in peacetime.

Although the ethnic divisions among refugee women, imposed by the politics of ethnic nationalism, tend to overshadow all other differences as well as the similarities among these women, the analysis reveals that the radical changes in their roles transcend ethnic-national divisions. These changes, resulting from war and gendered violence, are shared, underlying characteristics of women's individual struggles in exile. This is not to imply the "universality" of these categories or practices related to the particular roles of women; rather, it is to argue that women are similarly positioned in terms of their roles, despite differences in history and location. Women's roles in the family and the practices tied to them are experiences they can share. In this sense, their experiences as mothers, wives, and caregivers provide a common denominator for creating identifications among women across ethnic-national lines. Such fluid identifications can, in turn, challenge the essentialized idea of nation.

## NOTES

This chapter is based on my Ph.D. dissertation, entitled "The Power of Gender in the Transition from State Socialism to Ethnic Nationalism, Militarization, and War: The Case of Post-Yugoslav States," defended September 1998 at York University, Canada.

1. For the information on statistical data about numbers of Yugoslavs, see Petrović (1987: 30).

2. For a detailed discussion of the constitutional system of rights in Yugoslavia, see Woodward (1995: 29–46).

3. The data come from an unnamed UNHCR report and refer to the latest instances of "ethnic cleansing" in Srebrenica and Zepa (Bosnia-Hercegovina) and in the region of Krajina (Croatia). Cited in *Nasa Borba,* August 10, 1995, 5.

4. It is important to note that the distinction between refugees and internally displaced persons is critical for the situation and well-being of those who are forcefully displaced in these wars. Refugees are persons who cross internationally recognized borders (e.g., persons from Bosnia-Hercegovina who fled to Croatia, FR Yugoslavia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia, or any other country of the world). As such they are protected by the international convention on refugees. Internally displaced persons are those who flee their homes but are still within the borders of their country of origin (e.g., persons who fled their place of residence in Bosnia-Hercegovina but have remained on its territory). The UNHCR's mandate does not officially extend its protection to internally displaced people.

5. The data presented aim to emphasize the overall consequence of the exclusionary politics of ethnic nationalism in post-Yugoslav states in order to stress its

importance for the realization of ethnically pure nation-states in the region. However, this does not mean that I do not acknowledge important differences in the extent to which some ethnic nations, Bosnian Muslim in particular, have been victimized by this politics. Moreover, the emphasis on a more general pattern embedded in ethnic nationalism in the region does not imply a lack of awareness of unequal relations of power among ethnic-national collectives in the recent wars and thus their differentiated responsibility for the crimes and atrocities committed during the recent conflict.

6. The first two field visits were financially supported by the Gender Unit, Centre for Refugee Studies, York University. My visit to Serbia, FR Yugoslavia, in 1997 was financially assisted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Without this financial support, for which I am most grateful, this research would not have been possible.

7. The interviews with refugee women in Ljubljana, Slovenia, were collected by Pearlie McNeill and Meg Coulson (1994). The interview with Biba, a Bosnian Muslim woman in exile in Zagreb, Croatia, was carried out by Brenda Longfellow for a film, *A Balkan Journey: Fragments from the Other Side of War,* directed by Brenda Longfellow, and produced by Gerda Film Productions, Canada, in 1996. This documentary was filmed in Belgrade, Serbia, FR Yugoslavia, and Zagreb, Croatia, in April and May 1995. I transcribed and translated the interviews with women portrayed in this documentary. The quotes I use in the chapter, however, were not included in the final version of the film. Permission to use the interview from the documentary is gratefully acknowledged. All the names from my own interview data in this chapter are pseudonyms

8. I am Serbian, born and brought up in Belgrade, and at the time of the research I had not yet become a Canadian citizen.

9. Refugees of "inappropriate" ethnic nationality have often had to protect themselves from the stigmatization and the potential hostile attitudes of the local population in the host country. This was the case with Biba, who fled to Croatia in 1992, at the beginning of hostilities between Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims.

10. The interview was given for the film *A Balkan Journey.*

11. Drakulić (1994: 32–33) talks about her own experience with the stigmatization of refugees in Slovenia as the result of the economic crisis.

12. The secondary interview data were collected in the refugee camps in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in the summer of 1993 by Coulson and McNeill. These interviews in their entirety are published in *Women's Voices: Refugee Lives* (McNeill and Coulson 1994).

13. For a discussion of women's organizing in post-Yugoslav states, see Korac (1998a).

14. Ustashas were the Croatian equivalent of the German SS troops during the Nazi-fascist regime of the Independent State of Croatia (1941–45).

# The Gendered Impact
# of Multilateralism in the
# Post-Yugoslav States

## *Intervention, Reconstruction,*
## *and Globalization*

*Edith Klein*

Near the end of 1999, an extraordinary event took place: in New York, ten foreign ministers sat down, had dinner together, and discussed affairs of state. Such a meeting of foreign ministers would not have been so remarkable except that all the foreign ministers were women, and the matter of moment was the widespread phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children. That evening's meeting resulted in a letter, signed by all the ministers, calling on the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to put the issue on the agenda of the General Assembly (Crossette 1999). This laudable effort will in all likelihood prove to be the first step on the long and arduous road the issue will eventually take through the United Nations and its implementing agencies. That first step would probably never have been taken had the ministers not all been women.

Multilateral actions of this type send powerful and unequivocal messages. One cannot help wondering what was going through the minds of Madeleine Albright's female colleagues six months earlier when she pulled the plug on diplomatic negotiations and provided American support to allied North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military forces for an aggressive bombing campaign against the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this chapter I examine the gender relations of the NATO campaign and highlight two main observations: First, as a multilateral action, the decision to bomb Yugoslavia was undertaken in the highly gendered environment of international diplomacy and as such raises questions about the nature of decision making in that environment. What role does gender play in such decisions? To what degree are multilateral actions of this type, in this era, governed by globalization imperatives and hence by the gendered impact of globalization? Second, the NATO bombing campaign was an intervention that was bound to have gendered consequences. In the dis-

placement of large numbers of people, the destruction of property and infrastructure, and the process of rebuilding, reconstruction, and postconflict constitution making, the impact has been experienced differentially not only among different nationalities but also between women and men.

A cycle of nationalist violence has characterized conflict in the former Yugoslavia and its successor states during the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. This has coincided with, first, the dramatic resurgence of multilateral alliances as a major player in handling internal conflict. Second, international civil society has emerged as a counterbalancing force struggling against the dehumanizing impact of multilateralism. The third important factor in this cycle has been the economic, social, and political impact made by the legions of international humanitarian aid organizations and workers whose task it has been to put the pieces back together. Such significant international presence (in the form of ideas, people, and capital) in interethnic disputes brings with it baggage that is bound to raise issues of gender equality at many different stages and levels of the conflict. One of the important consequences of this form of multilateralism is the relinquishing of large areas of control to supranational organizations that are not directly mandated by the individuals whose lives they may be controlling. This is a feature that it shares in common with globalization. As a concept, globalization has a great many definitions, but for the present purpose I am using it in the sense of a tendency (both deliberate and inadvertent) toward reorganization of the relationships between the private and public sectors with the goal of fostering the free and unencumbered flow of capital and culture. I use the term also with reference to the consequences of such flow. Elsewhere globalization has been defined in a more minimalist way (e.g., as "the extension of boundaries of social transactions beyond state borders" [Zurn and Lange 1999: 3]). The gendered consequences of the phenomenon are apparent if we consider the implications of Breton's (2001) assertion that "globalization changes the distribution of political power in society in favour of corporate capital against the institutions that have responsibility for the general welfare of the citizenry."

Peoples of the Balkans have the relative misfortune of being located at a geopolitical crossroads of significant strategic value. As a result, control over the region (and its inhabitants) has often been sought after by empires and superpowers eager to secure trade routes or military superiority. Not surprisingly, multilateral action in the Balkan theater is not new, nor is its impact on women. This impact has until now, however, been largely ignored. Many complex variables—globalization, the redefinition of political space, nationalist and regionalist agendas, armed intervention in civil disputes, development of core humanitarian values, and highly focused efforts at conflict resolution, among others—are playing a much more prominent role than in earlier periods of conflict. Moreover, the tasks of reconciliation

and reconstruction are more multifaceted and now command enormous human and material resources.

These newer and more complex variables raise urgent questions about the ways in which they have changed the international political environment from the perspective of gender. The coming decades are sure to witness continued struggles over national identity and sovereignty, governance over global flows of capital, cultural homogenization, and human rights. The gendered nature of these struggles, and the role played by women in them, are likely to shape the democratic content and nature of our future political structure and process. Below, I examine the interrelationships of this complex set of factors and specifically the way in which they are gendered. In doing so I propose a matrix that may be a useful heuristic device for understanding these interrelationships, and perhaps helpful in conceptualizing the gender dimension of other crisis situations resulting from political violence.

## THE LOGIC OF MULTILATERAL ACTION:
## THE NATO INTERVENTION AND ITS CONTEXT

On March 27, 1999, the forces of NATO began a series of bombardments of strategic sites in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, marking the launch of an escalating military action with the manifest intention of bringing a halt to interethnic conflict in Kosova/o. This military action came after the apparent collapse of negotiations in Rambouillet, France, where Yugoslav and Kosova/o–Albanian representatives had been meeting with European and American mediators to come to an agreement on new constitutional arrangements for the ethnically contested territory. The intervention came after several months of what has become known as "coercive diplomacy," a technique (especially effective when the parties have unequal power) that used demands, counterdemands, threats, and ultimatums. The militarized component of the intervention lasted eleven weeks. NATO pilots flew more than fourteen thousand strike missions (Roberts 1999). While casualty numbers are still being debated, it is certain that hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless, thrown out of work, or otherwise adversely affected by this action (see Map 13.1).

Like other multilateral actions of recent memory, the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia—although lacking UN Security Council approval—constituted essentially a militarized component of diplomacy. This tool was to be based on the tactical approach of an antiseptic rapid strike; it was to consist of planned escalation, in the expectation that increased intensity would elicit the hoped-for response in the way of concessions from the Belgrade regime. Destruction was targeted against militarily important sites, with the stated intention—and the virtual promise—of avoiding high levels of civil-
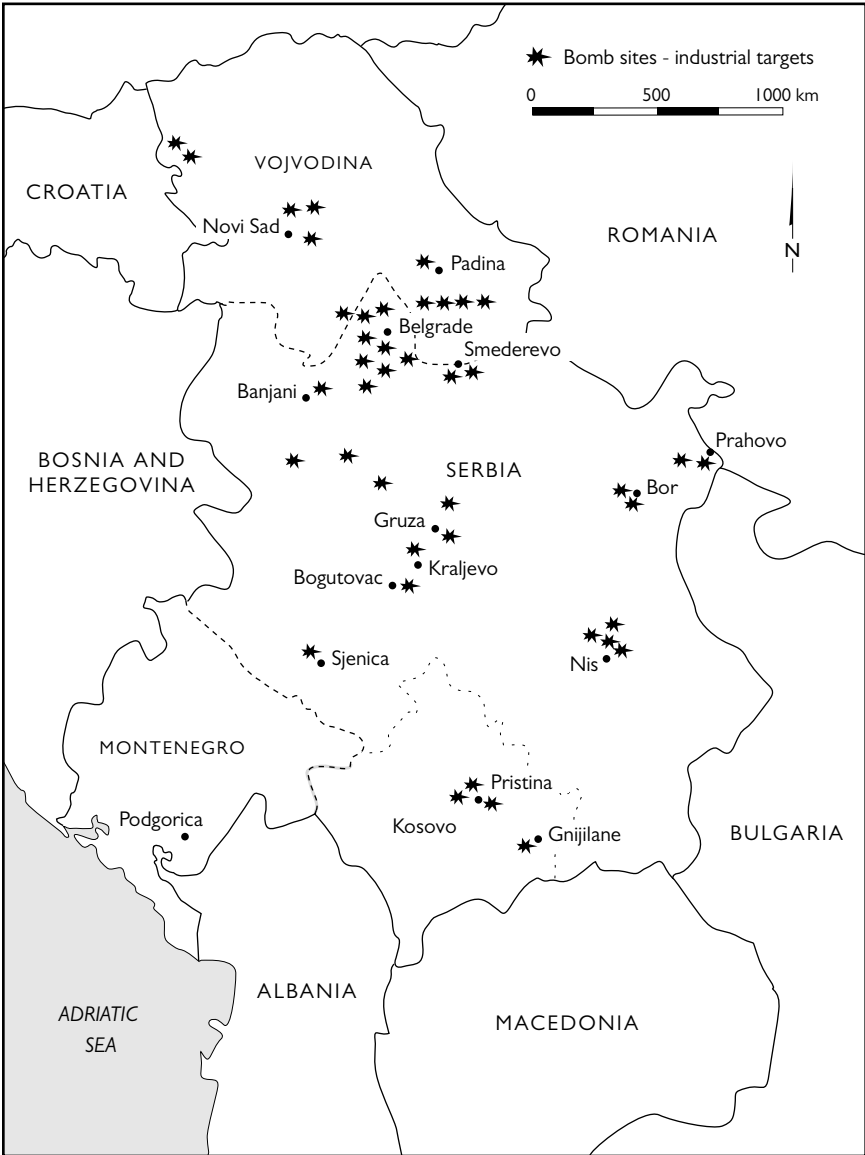
Map 13.1. NATO bomb sites in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, March to June 1999. Adapted from Phillippe Rekacewicz, "NATO bombing targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, March–June 1999" (http://mondediplo.com/maps/ frybombingsmdv49) and Nadine Schuurman cartography.

ian casualties and damage.[1] But there could be no doubt in the minds of military planners and diplomats alike—judging from the record of previous actions such as that in Kuwait—that there would surely be at least some degree of "collateral" damage, that civilians would be affected either as casualties or as refugees, and that, as in the preceding years of armed conflict in the region of former Yugoslavia, the distinction between combatants and civilians would become blurred in the process.

At the time of the intervention, the prevailing international mood was one of despair and frustration inflamed by moral rhetoric. After nearly ten years of interethnic civil conflict in many parts of the world, the European and American powers had struggled to articulate a policy of "humanitarian"-inspired intervention in sovereign states. The catastrophic experiences of humanitarian and peacekeeping forces in places such as Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia-Herzegovina had put the international community on alert and in one case at least (Bosnia-Herzegovina) had drawn fleeting attention to the victimization of women. By the time the threat of "ethnic cleansing" in Kosova/o was becoming tangible, a policy governing humanitarian intervention had still not been clearly articulated. Only somewhat contradictory positions could be inferred from American and European statements.[2]

A state or states may enter a conflict for patently strategic reasons, though they may claim moral reasons for doing so (e.g., asserting an intent to protect human rights or state sovereignty rather than oil deposits). Observers have often cited results of historically based empirical research indicating that "most [interventions] have occurred in situations where the humanitarian motive is at least balanced, if not outweighed, by a desire to . . . reinforce sociopolitical and economic instruments of the status quo" (Franck and Rodley 1973, quoted in Wheeler and Morris 1996: 138). There have been too few cases of multilateral interventions to make sound empirical judgments about the motivations behind them; but there appears to be support for the view that humanitarian interventions often serve the intervenors' interests and only inadvertently may save the lives of the groups they are intended to protect. What is still unclear is how and why choices to intervene are made.

Multilateral interventions have been governed in the past by traditional great-power interests, to which ethnic concerns have been added only recently.[3] Traditionally, gender concerns have played no part in decisions to initiate interventions, although the recent case of Bosnia at least raised awareness of the impact that interethnic conflict could have on women. Yet there have always been gendered consequences of multilateral interventions, consequences that arise not only from the impact of the intervention itself but from the broader political values (outside the humanitarian context) motivating the intervention. These consequences have simply been unremarked upon until now, except by feminist international relations

scholars. But ignoring the consequences of such actions for women, and failing to include women as equal partners in the postconstitutional order, foreshortens the perspective intervenors must have to meet the twin objectives of calming or resolving violent conflict and creating a postconflict environment conducive to long-term and sustainable peace. For it is arguably the women in a community at war who maintain the social and economic fabric of everyday life and who will play important roles in the postconflict, peacebuilding, and reconciliation stages of the dispute. In fact, it is often women's work that makes possible the transition from conflict to peace—to the extent that a democratic order is based upon equal participation of men and women. As research on the effect of militarized conflict on women has made abundantly clear, it is women who carry the larger share of the burden during conflict and, I would argue, in postconflict reconstruction (see Sørenson 1998 for a much fuller elaboration of this argument). The increased threat of militarized multilateral actions and the tendency to resort to them when diplomatic efforts at conflict resolution fail make it all the more urgent to explore the gendered meanings of these events and more specifically their gendered impact on the shape of the political environment in the postconflict period. In a very practical sense, for the purpose of regenerating societies destroyed by war and of establishing a new democratic culture and order, women must be well positioned to do the rebuilding work in their communities.

Following upon decades of Cold War inaction, NATO's decision to attack the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia carried with it some ideological assumptions, even if they had not been made explicit. While at base the NATO campaign was intended to get Yugoslav authorities back to the bargaining table, the overarching vision included at some level a view of the constitutional or social order that was to follow the successful conclusion of negotiations, an order that would supposedly contribute to stability and democratization. As a product of a gendered international political and military environment, such visions are likely to have limitations of culture and gender. For example, NATO has no apparent commitment to gender equality. In fact, neither NATO nor any other ad hoc military alliances are aware of gender as an issue, for otherwise they might have considered an intervention to stop "gender cleansing" (e.g., Afghanistan). NATO and international governmental organizations do seem to have evinced greater moral clarity on issues of ethnic conflict, but only some of the time and only in some areas of the world. Self-conscious of its own position in the postcommunist, post–Cold War new world order, NATO functions as a classical military organization in terms of decision making and self-justification, responding to geopolitical imperatives, but assumes the role of interpreter of international law, a function that rightfully belongs to other bodies such as the United Nations, the international courts, and international tribunals (Dick 1999).[4]

Little more than a year after the conclusion of NATO's action against Yugoslavia, a clear consensus had already formed around the assessment that the intervention was unnecessary, poorly executed, and extremely inaccurate, causing greater-than-expected civilian and environmental "collateral" damage.[5] Few would dispute the observation that "the disturbing lesson of the air campaign may be that its most effective aspect involved hurting Serbia proper (including its population and government) rather than directly attacking Serb forces in Kosovo and protecting the Kosovars" (Roberts 1999: 117–18). J. R. Bullington (1999a) concluded, even more pessimistically, that NATO intervention in Kosova/o "turned a humanitarian crisis into a humanitarian catastrophe." The military campaign had spawned a huge propaganda effort that reflected a most cynical attitude toward democratic values and principles. It sparked a massive rebuilding and reconstruction effort involving hundreds of organizations and millions of dollars. And above all, it did not resolve Kosova/o's sovereignty question.

## THE GENDERED CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE

At least two factors are important in considering the gendered impact of NATO's action in the Balkans: first, the effects of the local atmosphere of ethnic conflict and political violence on women as political subjects, and second, the gendered nature of international/multilateral participation in conflict and the political institutions (national and supranational) that support it.

Looking briefly at the first factor, we should note that the impact of war and political violence on women has been widely studied, and both scholarly and activist discussions of the subject have contributed much to our understanding of the issues in civil conflicts as well as multilateral actions. This growing body of literature deals with the impact of war generally, and interethnic conflict specifically, on women, addressing such major questions as identity, victimization, resistance, self-organization, family structure, family violence, and changing roles (Lentin 1997; Sørensen 1998). These issues have been studied in the context of the Persian Gulf War (Mojab 1997), the conflict in Northern Ireland (Cockburn 1998), apartheid in South Africa (Maitse 2000), and many other cases. Feminist scholars have underscored the contradictory nature of the effects of war on women: in the way that the state at war, in mobilizing its citizens (men in active participation in the militarized war effort, women in the active and passive support of nationalist or bellicose agendas), can reinforce traditional patriarchal structures and attitudes but also provide opportunities for women to challenge the status quo.[6]

When NATO forces carried out air strikes against Serbia and Kosova/o in March of 1999, women of the region, of all nationalities, already had long acquaintance with political violence and the consequences of such violence.

Kosova/o Albanian women had survived for a number of years the brutal effects of Serbian nationalism and nationalist violence, experienced through loss of family members, loss of political rights, violation of human rights, sexual violence, and poverty. In Serbia and Montenegro, women experienced a version of this brutality through disintegration of nuclear families, loss of male family members to military service, loss of extended family members in other theaters of war, loss of political and economic security, impoverishment, and despair. Regardless of nationality, women of the region became "the most numerous passive victims of the war" (Davidović 1994: 202).

And these effects were only the most recent ones. A gender perspective on "Yugoslav"[7] society shows that there was already a solid foundation upon which to add these elements. They constituted additional layers upon a firmly entrenched gendered division of work. Part of the foundation was made of up vestigial attitudes arising from kinship and gender roles in traditional peasant society (St. Erlich 1966); part of it came from highly masculinized/militarized attitudes shaped by historical circumstances (Salecl 1994); part came from Tito-era creations of the "socialist woman," which resulted in overburdened women carrying obligations of breadwinner, housekeeper, and mother in an environment that was inhospitable to gender equality (including, above all, workplace discrimination and political underrepresentation) (Ramet 1999). But a good part of the foundation was laid down with the revival in the region of ethnic nationalism, which, as Maja Korać (1996) put it, was "profoundly gendered" (239). With the escalation of war, particularly in Bosnia, women in Yugoslavia found new sets of problems to deal with: rapid impoverishment, unemployment, the closing of factories (especially those with a predominantly female labor force), and the shutting down of infrastructure and basic services (Milić 1995; Reeves 1995).[8] Within the constricted social space of what was Yugoslavia and what were to become its successor states, women's bodies and identities were put to the service of the nationalist project. The stress and trauma that resulted from the ensuing decade of nationalist reorientation were to exact a severe toll on the physical and mental health and well-being of women all across the region.[9]

Turning to the second problem—the gendered nature of the international political environment—we can look to the ample evidence for the social construction of gender within that environment and its consequent marginalizing of women from positions of decision making.[10] The merits of including women in positions of decision making are one thing; neutralizing the gendered nature of diplomacy, defense, and security is quite another. Both of these components have been widely explored by a number of scholars from the perspective of women's potentially benign influence, or at the very least women's better representation of women's interests (Tickner 1992; Beckman and D'Amico 1994; Whitworth 1994; Murphy 1996; Meyer

and Prugl 1999).[11] Recent research on women representatives in national governments all over the world yields the conclusion that while women representatives are still vastly outnumbered by their male counterparts (by a ratio of approximately ten to one at ministerial levels), governments that do include significant numbers of women at this level are more likely to enact more so-called women-friendly policies, such as better labor protection and more generous maternity leave provisions (Reynolds 1999). There are too few cases at the level of international politics to draw firm conclusions, but U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's two vastly contrasting diplomatic initiatives (the NATO bombing and the antitrafficking initiative) are prominent examples of the fact that, in the highly gendered arena of international politics, women ministers do not necessarily enact or support enlightened, feminist policies.

While great progress has been made in placing women's rights on the UN agenda (new standard-setting instruments, special conferences on the subject, etc.),[12] the weight of these issues at the international level is not yet tipping the scale, nor has the participation of women in positions of leadership reached "critical mass."[13] As one observer (Douglas 1999) with long years of service in the international arena put it, "Where are women leaders, and why have women (other than the ever-present female interpreter) disappeared by the time news crews tape representatives of countries and organizations smiling across the conference table?" Women's participation in international political leadership must be understood as being connected to the role of women in civil society: the latter does not substitute for the former. While the role women play, particularly in communities at war, in organizing civil society can prove to be the catalyst for social transformation, it should not be assumed, as it often is, that "although women do not hold power directly, they exert their influence indirectly and this, in some way, compensates for their absence from governmental positions" (United Nations Office at Vienna 1992: xiv–xv).

## FACTORING IN TRANSITION, NATIONALISM, AND SOVEREIGNTY

Ethnonationalist conflict and the struggle for sovereignty are often, though not always, linked, but the coincidence of the two phenomena has been a hallmark of political change at the end of the twentieth century. Both intersect with gender, and in the case of eastern Europe the effects of this intersection have been amplified by the concurrent collapse of communist regimes and the transition to a different social, economic, and political order.

The gendered quality of interethnic conflict based on nationalist aspira-

tions has been amply documented in many contexts. In all the Yugoslav successor states, to varying degrees and for varying lengths of time, the pervasive subjugation of women to a patriarchal order was revitalized by hypernationalistic mobilization coupled with the postcommunist transition. Ethnocratic regimes exploited a window of opportunity to introduce aggressively pronatalist and antifeminist policies, sometimes in partnership with civil society organizations, such as the Church. The quality of cultural and personal life was fundamentally transformed by the reanimation of a traditional hypermasculine discourse that essentially disenfranchised women in public life and constricted their democratic space (Papić 1999; Kesić 1999). The remarkable growth in antiregime activity among women during this period—for example, the creation of Women in Black in Belgrade and women's leadership in the establishment and sustenance of indigenous peace movements in Croatia—testifies to women's unwillingness to forfeit what political power and space they did possess or to buy into a nationalistic and gendered vision of a future putative sovereign state. (This extraordinary effort by antinationalist, antiwar activist women to shore up and sustain civil society during the Milošević era has gone largely unnoticed outside feminist scholarship. In an otherwise excellent analysis of Serbian society under Milošević's campaign to destroy "alternatives," Gordy [1999], for example, does not mention gender or women in such roles at all, except with reference to the Women's Movement for the Preservation of Yugoslavia, a regime-sponsored organization that was trotted out on appropriate occasions to demonstrate support for the Milošević regime.)

In both of the recent cases of intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova/o, intervening forces confronted interethnic conflict erupting hard on the heels of the collapse of the state and the emergence of weak parastates single-mindedly devoted to the project of sovereignty, amid a transition process from one type of political system into another, and in conditions of severe economic deterioration. The use of militarized humanitarian force to bring about more stable conditions and ultimately to allow for a peaceful settlement was well intentioned. It aimed to prevent or slow the pace of interethnic killing and the forced expulsion of people from their homes and to accelerate the stabilization of the political process. But the expectation that the United Nations or NATO forces could compel support for an unspecified, yet-to-be determined constitutional order was unreasonable. NATO forces (and the diplomatic authorities ordering their mobilization) did not consider the problem of sovereignty as the foremost issue, any more than they did the problem of gender equality. Their aim, at least on the manifest level, was to protect the rights of the abused ("we are determined to continue until we have achieved our objectives: to halt the violence and to stop further humanitarian catastrophe" [NATO 1999]). Yet the inevitable logic

of events meant that sooner or later issues of state architecture and civil-social organization would have to be addressed. In the territories of the former Yugoslavia the central problems underlying violent assault against the excluded "other" ethnic group are territory and the pursuit of sovereignty; a militarized, multilateral intervention in a sovereignty dispute does little, however, to further their resolution.

The pursuit of sovereignty in the postmodern era may in any case, for better or worse, be a frustratingly elusive political goal. There is considerable debate over the impact of globalization on the traditional functions of the sovereign nation-state.[14] And while that impact is still understudied, it does appear probable that the functions that do remain may be only symbolic ones, and the price to be paid for them very high indeed.[15] And although it is unlikely that the aspirations of minorities—or indeed of any human community—will be satisfied with anything less than full sovereignty, at the same time the processes of globalization threaten ultimately to make the sovereign nation-state a relic. As economic resources become increasingly concentrated within the international corporate sector, local control over a wide range of decisions is ceded to unelected supranational bodies, and homogenization of culture, interests, and values is the cost of doing business at the global level. The community may continue to exist, but its functions become less and less relevant as more and more ideas, processes, and things are removed from the immediate embrace of democratically organized local decision making.[16]

The Clinton Doctrine, as the policy of global watchdogging came to be known, is a post–Cold War example of globalized discourse: the doctrine claims for the United States "the right to intervene militarily in humanitarian situations worldwide without regard to national sovereignty or United Nations authorization" (Bullington 1999b). Problems of gender equality, economic and human rights, and cultural self-preservation do not appear on the global radar screen. Rather, the questions of importance have to do with problems of "the free market": How, in the global view, can economic interests and the unfettered flow of capital be enhanced?[17]

The debut of the Clinton Doctrine through the NATO campaign sounded an alarm: "It doesn't get much press in the United States, but everywhere else there is speculation over how far the Americans might extend the principles of Kosovo, intervening inside other nations' borders to enforce 'international values' of humanitarian treatment or human rights" (Sanger 1999: 1). Though U.S. imperialism made an easy target, there may have been similar misgivings about UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's statement of the problem: "There is emerging international law that countries cannot hide behind sovereignty and abuse people without expecting the rest of the world not to do something about it" (quoted in Živković 1999).

### GLOBALIZATION, INTERVENTION, AND GENDER

The forms that globalization forces have taken in the late twentieth century have had the contradictory consequences of inhibiting regionalist/nationalist movements in some places while prompting their emergence in others (Zurn and Lange 1999). Globalization can also provide a window of opportunity for manipulative nationalist movements to mobilize against the loss of national culture, national identity, and national sovereignty. The emotional stakes in such issues are very high, making it possible to convince people to fight over things like national borders and national identity. Whether globalization prevails or national movements prevail, women stand to lose a good deal on either count.

Shortly before the outbreak of war in former Yugoslavia, a huge international invasion had already taken place in the tiny village of Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina). When visions of the Virgin Mary began to appear to several local youngsters, the spot became an enormous draw for pilgrims from all over the world, and the formerly secluded and rather isolated town was flooded with religious tourists. Women were stuck with the tasks of renting rooms, preparing meals, and performing the usual chores of hospitality to accommodate the enormous influx of visitors. This odd form of globalization had an immediate and palpable impact on the village women: they began to suffer from illnesses, especially headaches, and unexplained episodes of "madness." An astute observer made note of this epidemic and (although he did not use the term *globalization*) linked it specifically to this pressure generated by processes of globalized culture and the onerous burden it placed on the shoulders of women in the village (Bax 1992, 1995).[18] Of course, globalization did not drive the pilgrims to Medjugorje, but their arrival in some sense simulated the global environment. The commercialized culture of miracles became a common language for the pilgrims and the villagers, but it was a language the villagers had not chosen voluntarily. This burden was imposed upon them from the outside by a much larger and more powerful group (Western tourists with hard currency) and by processes beyond their control; it was accepted because in the circumstances their economic choices were so limited. The women of the village had no say in the acceptance or rejection of these responsibilities.

The pressures of the global economy, which are linked to the absolute requirement of political stability and labor peace, are often a significant part of the larger latent motivation behind militarized multilateral actions. Once the conditions have been established to ensure the freer flow of capital in the region and the integration of the regional economy into the global one, the local economy and the state that manages it must adapt to the new conditions. This usually means an increased role for the informal (and household) sector, which must take up the slack created by the withdrawal of the state

from its normal provision of services, and hence an increased burden for women (Peterson 1996a).[19] But if the trade-off has been symbolic sovereignty, then those who support the nationalist project may feel that the increased burden for women is an acceptable price.

## THE POSTCONFLICT ARCHITECTURE

What happens when the bombing stops and the killing ceases (if not voluntarily, then at least under the watchful—and interested—eye of outside monitors)? What shape does community life assume? What is the postconflict legacy for women of multilateral interventions? How does outside involvement in the management of a militarized conflict in the postconflict phase contribute to the social construction of gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic relations? How does the local political culture intersect with the NGO or intergovernmental organizations culture in the process of constructing these relations?

Certainly the humanitarian crisis was foremost in the rhetoric of world leaders participating in the Bosnia and Kosova/o interventions, but they were not able to give clear expression to their vision of the postconflict arrangements. Criticizing the absence of a postconflict vision was interpreted as trivializing the humanitarian crisis that the intervention was meant to avert. More than one observer has confirmed that "the initial determination to employ force in defence of humanitarian goals has not been backed up by a long-term political, economic, and social commitment to the interventionary project" (Wheeler and Morris 1996: 166) (see Hyndman, Chapter 9 of this volume). What was Bosnia or Kosova/o to look like after the end of the violence? How would human rights be protected in ethnically divided communities? How would communities become reconciled? The mechanistic approach taken toward constitutional reconstruction in the Dayton agreement governing postconflict Bosnia-Herzegovina had paid little attention to building democratic culture. There was little reason to expect better for Kosova/o, and given what one scholar describes as the tendency toward "pervasive masculinization of political structures and institutions, especially in the process of state formation" (Peterson 1997), the political reinvention of a postconflict Kosova/o was likely to obviate any role that gender might play in a democratic postconflict settlement.

The antidemocratic nature of the regimes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in pre-Dayton Bosnia-Hercegovina made it unlikely that the political reconstruction of these regions would be based on moderation, mutual tolerance, and inclusion in the political process; the gendered nature of the political process and the prevailing patriarchal political culture compounded the difficulties. The architects of the Dayton agreement were forg-

ing a new constitutional arrangement in conditions of "notorious aversion to feminism . . . and anti-state and anti-institutionalist attitudes" (Jalusić 1998: 1). The externally imposed democratization process in Bosnia-Herze-govina had been driven by "the needs of international institutional actors for new forms of cooperation and new ways of legitimating their international regulatory role" (Chandler 1999: 193). This applies to Kosova/o as well, where, despite the lessons "learned" from post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina, a management team has been parachuted in to supervise democratization. If, as some have concluded (e.g., Vučković 1999), the new states of the Balkans will not be able to undertake democratization on their own, then who should decide on the content of the democratization and the process of its implementation?

In June 1999 the Stability Pact was established by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to assist in the reconstruction of southeast European countries affected by the war in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in the Yugoslav successor states and by economic transition. Its aim was to promote regional security and prosperity by nurturing democratic principles and practices, supporting human rights, and aiding economic reconstruction (European Union et al. 1999). The Stability Pact (whose provisions apply to other countries in addition to those involved in conflict) was characterized by a "state-centric" perspective and what I would term "bureaucratic humanitarianism": that is, a tendency to channel aid through specific organizations recognized by the OSCE authorities and a tendency to rely on outside experts and consultants, and not necessarily those who were doing the most effective rebuilding and reconciliation work (e.g., women's self-help organizations). Sensing this shortcoming, civil society organizations across southeastern Europe almost immediately launched joint appeals directly to the offices of the OSCE "for greater involvement by non-state actors in the development and implementation of the Stability Pact" (OSCE 1999).

## GLOBALIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

Within a year of the conclusion of the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia, even those who supported it were already critical of the "victory." Consider, for example, the following statement from an observer who spoke from long years of experience in American foreign service: "We've won ownership of the Balkans problem, probably for a generation. We've won the right to manage relations between Albanians and Serbs, as we are already doing among Croats, Muslims, and Serbs in Bosnia. We've won a second international protectorate, Kosovo, to add to Bosnia. We've won the obligation to deal with a massive humanitarian catastrophe and to rebuild an economically devas-

tated, turbulent region. We've won the ability for those who took us into this war to feel righteous" (Bullington 1999a). These obligations carry with them an enormous financial burden. But the payoff is likely to be large in terms of garnering for the European Union and its global partners the political support and the regional stability it needs for economic prosperity (defined on its own terms).

Humanitarian motives and democratizing goals were not the primary force animating participants in reconstruction. For example, the United States, largely responsible in the first place for the bombing damage in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, lost little time in attempting to profit from, or at least exert control over, the reconstruction effort. Shortly after the launch of the Stability Pact, members of the U.S. Congress introduced a bill "requiring that US assistance funds spent on rebuilding Kosovo be used to purchase American-made goods and services" (Basic Publications 1999). In a similar vein, the effort to insert an influential American role in the reconstruction process did not go unnoticed by antiabortion groups such as Concerned Women for America, who viewed reconstruction in Kosova/o as a window of opportunity for work on changing the rights environment for women: they actively campaigned to deny reproductive rights to refugee women and to insert their organization's antiabortion campaign onto the agendas of donor authorities (Concerned Women for America 1999). And the Americans were not the only participants in the reconstruction effort who carried hidden (and not-so-hidden) agendas into the process. The irony that Western governments had "dual involvement . . . both as warring parties inside Kosovo, and as donors and implementers of the relief operation just outside its borders" (Porter 2000) might also have been noted in the reconstruction effort.

The scenario that had unfolded in Bosnia-Herzegovina stood to be repeated in Kosova/o, with predictable consequences for women:

> Where reconstruction proper is concerned, one has only to turn to the texts discussed at Rambouillet. Chapter 4a of article 1 specifies that the economy of Kosovo is to operate in accordance with market principles. Once again Dayton supplies the rule and says how it is to be applied. Supervised by a governor appointed by the International Monetary Fund who does not know the region, the Bosnian central bank has been able to play only a secondary role since it has not been allowed to create the currency needed to finance credit. The state is authorized to share in the reconstruction only if it contracts with the international financial institutions a substantial debt that will ensure their domination of Bosnia in the future. Thus Kosovo, like Bosnia, finds itself in the same situation as many a developing country. (Živković 1999)

## COERCIVE CONSTITUTIONALISM

The placement of human rights on the global agenda means that "the human rights discourse and agenda have gradually been usurped by governments and intergovernmental organizations" (Petrova 2003). Few would argue against the need for international standards of human rights or for an enforcing judicial structure such as the International Criminal Court. The protection of human rights, however, is also a matter of constitutional architecture, and intergovernmental organizations and military alliances now appear to be the arbiters of constitutional choice.

When Madeleine Albright used the phrase "indispensable nation" to describe America's role on the international stage (Sanger 1999), she put a name to the process of globalizing democratic values, American style. The Western powers' interests in postconflict Kosova/o were not only economic in nature; the Stability Pact included extending measures to support democratization in the region. The errors committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina (such as holding elections too early, creating an inadequate and counterproductive constitutional order that did not take into account local political culture, and reinforcing ethnic segregation produced by the war) had already been recognized. Even five years into the Dayton agreement, there appeared to be no further progress on creating a functional interethnic polity with all the characteristics of a sovereign state that met the needs of all its citizens. What were the prospects for a better result in Kosova/o?

In the reconstruction project, international institutions offer up a democratization agenda governed by global interests; and they do so in a highly gendered manner. It is particularly questionable why international institutions would expect that their proposals for democratization and reconstruction would be considered legitimate by anyone other than those who signed the deal—and especially by activist segments of civil society, including women. Did those proposals reflect the same values, traditions, cultural ideals, and political aspirations as the social groups whose relationships Dayton was intended to recast? Without the direct involvement of women in the creation of the postconflict political and economic order—women who are more politically active now than ever before, who have suffered through and survived protracted conflict, and who have significant experience in their own civil society structures—the legitimacy of any new democratic order is likely to be suspect and its implementation difficult. We have only to look at the reaction of women to the Stability Pact. But the hostile and suspicious reception of this Western creation could be heard in all quarters. Consider, for example, the statement by Yugoslavia's first post-Milošević president, Vojislav Koštunica (elected on October 8, 2000), a champion of the democratic project in postconflict Yugoslavia, in his remarks about the Stability Pact:

> Another demand, of course, concerns the so-called "democratization." This does not necessarily entail the creation of democratic institutions as such. No, this entails finding obedient, pliant people who will assume power, people whose equivalents in Bosnia and the Republic of Srpska are known as the "pro-Dayton" forces. Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially the Bosnian-Serb Republic (Republika Srpska), provides the prime example of the relativization of "democracy" and all democratic institutions. Whether it is elections, the media, or the functioning of elected bodies, the will of the people in the Bosnian Serb Republic is irrelevant. What matters is the will of the authorities in Washington. (Koštunica 2000)

There has been surprisingly little discussion about the appropriateness of imported political models for places like Kosova/o, Yugoslavia, or Bosnia.[20] But some constitutional scholars question the idealization of the liberal democratic values—and most especially the principles of liberal individualism—that are part of political culture and political structure in the United States: "If one of the tests of constitutionalism is the extent to which it preempts, resolves and heals the scar created by conflict, then it is not so clear that the American model is the runaway preferred choice. . . . [T]he US remains a deeply divided society, whether in spite of or because of its deep commitment to a difference-blind conception of justice and constitutionalism" (Vipond 1999: 179). Others conclude more directly that "democratisation [on whatever model] is driven by external needs" (Chandler 1999: 194) and that the substance of the democratization project (e.g., constitutional design) hardly matters. With Milošević gone from the political scene, at least for the time being, it will be illuminating to see the way in which Koštunica or his successors handle the return of the constitutional question to the state's agenda. The position of Montenegro within the Yugoslav federation will have to be resolved, while the ambitions for sovereignty in Kosova/o (still considered part of Serbia but essentially a protectorate under UN administration) will have to be addressed. And given Koštunica's apparent resentment at being "taught" lessons in democracy by the authorities in Washington, it is unlikely he will use the American liberal model as a basis for discussion of the status of Kosova/o and Montenegro.

The coercive constitutionalism practiced by international bodies such as the OSCE may in fact be a contractual agreement for a protectorate, creating a state that serves no purpose except to maintain a holding pattern suited to the "protector."[21] The social and economic consequences of coercive constitutionalism and the failure to create a legitimate political order—insecurity, chronic pessimism, eroded identity, a weakened state attracting little or no talent, unwillingness to invest for the future—lead to what Theodore Lowi (1979) calls (in quite a different application of the concept) a condition of "permanent receivership." An arm's-length trustee is

appointed who has the responsibility for either unloading or protecting—depending on the status of the firm's creditors—the assets of the bankrupt firm and doing so in a measured, well-regulated, and impartial manner. Like Bosnia, Kosova/o may also be destined for a condition of permanent receivership unless not only the constitutional arrangement but the process for arriving at such an arrangement can be "owned" by citizens of the region, whose democratic aspirations will be respected. Without the equal participation of both men and women in that process, the democratic basis of such an arrangement will be at best questionable.

### THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN RECONSTRUCTION

When the Stability Pact was still at the proposal stage, there was no specific mention of the particular issues that had affected women during the period of conflict, or even of gender equality or women's rights; indeed, the language of the proposals and the discussion of them was patronizing. Consider, for example, this statement from the German government:

> *Our interests* in south-eastern Europe are *largely in line with our partners.* These lie primarily in the following areas: the *containment of violent ethnic conflict,* as a pre-requisite for *lasting stability all over Europe; the reduction of migration motivated by poverty, war, persecution and civil strife,* the concretization of *democracy as well as human and minority rights,* as the aim of a value-led foreign policy, the establishment of *market economy structures* with stable economic growth to close the prosperity gap in Europe, *economic interests* (expandable markets, investment targets), and the maintenance of cohesion and *credibility of international organizations* in which we play an active role (EU, NATO, OSCE, UN). (German Government 1999, italics in original)

Since the pact and similar agreements emerge from a gendered decision-making environment at the level of the European Union and NATO, it is not at all surprising that women would feel compelled to demand a voice: they asked for an "equal and active role for women in development and implementation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe," arguing that because women were underrepresented in decision making, certain negative results were bound to ensue, including "the loss of values, knowledge, and experience of more than half of the human potential of this region, violation of women's human rights, feminisation of poverty, growing discrimination in political, economic, social and private life, not only on the basis of ethnicity and religion, but also on the basis of gender" ("Appeal to Participants of the Stability Pact" 1999).

In the design of postconflict architecture, women can be marginalized on several fronts. First, gender-based issues may be entirely unnoticed by intervening forces or humanitarian benefactors. Such problems as family casual-

ties, job loss, illness, post-traumatic stress disorder, social stigma (as a result of rape or other events), and loss of social networks are more likely to create greater and more distressing burdens for women, and unless a postconflict reconstruction program takes these issues into account, there are certain to be long-term negative consequences.

Second, in the interests of efficiency, international donors may value humanitarian and reconstruction work performed by women and self-help groups but may not view those groups as legitimate forces of civil society, even though these are the very individuals and groups they claim to be seeking as partners. International administrators for the region have been roundly criticized for failing to establish networks with local organizations and individuals:

> During the critical post-war period, the EU [European Union] failed to see the benefits of establishing partnerships with civil society organizations throughout Serbia. . . . The Stability Pact has worked almost exclusively with governments. Through excluding most civil society organisations from Stability Pact work during its first year, the Stability Pact office has failed to take advantage of their specific areas of expertise and close links with communities and vulnerable individuals. The government-led nature of Stability Pact work has skewed economic reconstruction work towards large-scale infrastructure projects, at the expense of more immediate priorities of poverty reduction and small-scale economic initiatives to benefit the majority. (Oxfam International 2000: 3)

Locally based individuals and groups who organize humanitarian and reconstruction work are often viewed by donors as effective but not efficient. Moreover, such work—not only in the reconstruction phase but also later, as women assume the roles of service providers as the state withdraws from this realm—has a tendency to be "invisible" (see also Blacklock and Crosby, Chapter 3 of this volume)

Third, the vast bureaucracy that has blossomed in the last decade to service humanitarian operations and postconflict management counts many women among rank-and-file workers and among its professionally trained and qualified specialists but few in the decision-making ranks. A veteran of the bureaucracy noted that much of the "progress" that had been made was superficial:

> [T]he ways in which "gender policies" have been integrated increasingly leave one feeling as if such policies exist almost purely on paper. The international organizations, the research and teaching organizations, the well-meaning NGOs have put "women on the agenda"; bilateral and multilateral agencies are insisting that their staff have gender awareness training; technical assistance projects are monitored for their gender impact; there are women—even some feminists—who have achieved important positions in the hierarchy of these organizations. Nevertheless, the feeling remains that in spite of what they say,

gender policies are not making sense, nor any difference in the usual activities of these organisations. (Pearson 1997: 10–11, see also Hyndman, Chapter 9 of this volume)

### CONCLUSION: PRESERVING THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE

The final decade of the twentieth century will be remembered for two main features: the apparent epidemic of intrastate conflict and the unprecedented scope and pace of social, political, economic, and technological change (globalization and internationalization). Together, these features have left no sector of public or private life untouched.

The recent dramatic increase in militarized civil conflicts reflects several trends—often contradictory—in social and political organization: the failure of states to meet the needs of citizenry (and indeed the very threat posed by the state to its own citizens); the raw struggle for power among competing elites in newly formed states; the intolerable levels of oppression of minorities; the struggle against the unwelcome homogenization of culture in the face of globalization. The response to these militarized conflicts has increasingly taken the form of a militarized multilateral intervention, either for strategic reasons, great-power competition, the force of public opinion, or humanitarian purposes.

A multilateral action—three or more parties joining forces to achieve a common goal—is normally based on a foundation of cumulatively developed explicit and implicit consensual ideology, a development that takes place at the level of state actors and concentrated loci of economic power, and over long periods of time. But now such actions take place deeply embedded in a context of a globalizing world economy and highly militarized (unelected) international organizations and involve different and complex expectations. Militarized interventions occurring in such an environment lead to a shrinking of the democratic space and hence to social transformations that can have extremely negative consequences. Women in postconflict society thus find themselves at a difficult and potentially perilous crossroads.

A mapping of the interrelationships leading to marginalization is offered in Figure 13.1. The typology should not be viewed as a fixed map but rather as one that could be adapted to specific and varying contexts to alert the observer to critical junctures where marginalization is likely to happen.

There are several reasons why marginalized groups—and especially women—find themselves in danger of losing their democratic space during conflict and in the transition to postconflict. First, the focus of world public opinion passes through the long and distorting lens of media and the Internet. While world public opinion can exert significant moral pressure on multilateral forces to enter a conflict on behalf of one of the claimants, it cannot necessarily sustain that pressure through the postconflict period to

Weak or irrelevant nation-states parastates, ethnocracies

Strengthened national/ patriarchal values; decline of civil society

Women socially marginalized, drafted into service of nationalism

"Coercive" constitutionalism; economic restructuring

Frustrated or suppressed sovereignty

Women politically marginalized or disenfranchised

Protectorate, proxy-state, or "permanent receivership"

Strengthened role of military/police; custodial control of decision making

Feminization of poverty

Figure 13.1. Globalization, political violence, and social transformation. Source: Edith Klein.

support a democratic project, particularly if such support entails a high financial investment. Support for moral causes such as human rights issues tends to dwindle as casualties increase (Broder 1999). With time, the world public loses trust in the reliability of information, particularly about distant places and people, and thus loses interest.

Second, the international organizations and authorities who negotiate the transition out of conflict and who manage the postconflict phase of a dispute are deeply rooted in a culturally hidebound and gendered environment and discourse. Diplomatic and administrative strategies are therefore unlikely to be effective in maintaining or expanding the democratic space, much less a nongendered one, unless there is a close partnership with civil society organizations in the host country. But these partnerships are fragile by their very

nature, involving the cooperation of groups widely separated by interests and self-definition. The danger of linking civil society and democratic reconstruction has been pointed out: "[T]he mantra that civil society can be equated with democracy and non-violent solutions is open to doubt. Nor should one assume that Western concepts of autonomous civil society are meaningful in all war-torn societies" (Pugh 2000: 121).

Third, the process of "coercive constitutionalism" that characterizes many postconflict landscapes such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova/o means that multilateral organizations have the dominant voice in settlement and reconstruction. They may be insensitive, or at best indifferent, to the special circumstances of the conflict they have been called in to settle, much less to the way in which women have been affected. At best, considerations of gender issues are marginalized in the discussion of reconstruction, and women are treated by the rebuilding authorities as the "silent victims" of conflict in need of "special" services such as rape counseling, while the focus remains on "essential" matters such as rebuilding factories (see Blacklock and Crosby, Chapter 3 of this volume).[22] The integration of gender issues into the postconflict architecture does not figure prominently on the agenda.

Fourth, the postconflict transition focuses on concretely measurable, and highly symbolic, achievements of progress. Diplomatic energy and resources may be tied up in international courts, giving a greater emphasis to symbolic—and distant—progress toward reconciliation rather than mobilizing efforts to rebuild and reconcile at the community level. The success of reconstruction efforts is often measured more by international or Western standards than by local interests. For example, in commenting on the reopening of the airport in Pristina, the head of the UN Interim Administration Mission to Kosova/o (UNMIK) noted that it was "a very good sign, a symbol of the return to normality," stressing that it should contribute to Kosova/o's "greater participation in worldwide communication and the expansions of its economic possibilities" (United Nations, 1999). This, two days after a UN worker was shot dead by an assailant in the streets of Pristina allegedly for having been overhead to utter some words in Serbian.

Fifth, women are likely to be marginalized by the social transformations that take place as a result of conflict, intervention, and postconflict management. Conflict itself severely constricts the democratic space—although, as we have seen, the forces of civil society can also manage to find ways to preserve or increase that space. But intervention and postconflict management are also critical periods of social transformation: in conditions of weak state structure and postconflict crisis, there may be substantial shifts in power relationships, including gender roles. Such transformation is often animated by the very process of economic reconstruction and recovery: for example, the introduction of privatization measures that may be a condition for a donor's gift.

Sixth, postconflict management can have the effect of reinforcing inequitable gender relations whereby women increase their amount of unpaid labor (e.g., in incurring greater responsibilities for household management, having to devote greater time to "social work" in the extended family). When violent conflict is layered on top of economic transition, as was the case in the successor states of former Yugoslavia, the impact can be especially severe.

The depiction of this web of interrelationships between globalization, political violence based on ethnocultural conflict, and social transformation in Figure 1 is intended to suggest that, somewhat as in a Rubik's cube, the movement or imbalance in any one of the areas can affect one or more of the others. It is also intended to suggest that all of these factors should be kept in view simultaneously so that we do not lose sight of portentous changes that may be occurring beyond the immediate situation.[23]

Despite the large numbers of militarized intrastate conflicts in the last decade of the twentieth century, the fact remains that war is a statistically rare event. Nevertheless, as Geller and Singer (1998) have noted, we spend a great deal of time preparing for war and a great deal of time recovering from it. A significant part of the recovery is devoted to negotiating a new political order out of chaos, but this is a protracted and difficult undertaking that is not necessarily unidirectional, as the experience of democratization in eastern Europe has taught us so well. Even with the optimism the world feels with the electoral defeat of Milošević and his extradition to the Hague, the words of his successor, Koštunica, suggest that the struggle to defend the democratic space in the global context is just beginning: "Today and in the future the Serbs cannot count on any 'allies' in the old sense among the great powers. They can count, however, on covert and overt allies in the West, in Europe, and on the diffuse but ever more prevalent resistance all over the world to what has come to be known as 'benevolent global hegemony' " (Koštunica 2000).

In the decades of empirical study of militarized conflict, one of the few incontrovertible findings is that democracies do not attack other democracies (Geller and Singer 1998), which is in itself a compelling reason to promote and support democratic culture. To maintain and expand a democratic space in the gendered global environment, women and men must both participate fully and equally in creating their own political order, and multilateral interventions and managerial/constitutional projects must make this not just a first priority but a prerequisite for their own involvement. As two observers have noted, "The project of reconstituting the political must look to the behavior and attitudes of women to discover what has meaning and what works for them" (Graham and Regulska 1997: 66). If this is taken as a guiding principle, then postconflict citizens stand at least a chance of averting the possibilities of post-totalitarian fascism, which has already made its

appearance in other parts of eastern Europe in the beginning of the twenty-first century. At the very least, this means understanding citizenship as inclusive of gender, class, ethnicity, and any other form of difference.

<p style="text-align:center">NOTES</p>

1. The full chronology of the NATO operation—and it should be noted that this was the official version given out for public consumption—can be found on the official NATO Web site, which has an archive of the transcripts of daily press briefings given by the political spokesperson (James Shea) and various military spokespersons (www.nato.int/Kosova/0/all-frce.htm).

2. Garrett (1999) discusses, for example, the contrast in the language of (and political motivations behind) the Clinton administration's Presidential Decision Directive 25 issued in May 1994, which outlines the limited conditions in which the United States would commit troops to "trouble spots," and the public statements made by Clinton during his presidential campaign. He quotes a Clinton statement in April 1992 calling for a standing international army that would be poised "at the borders of countries threatened by aggression, preventing mass violence against civilian populations, providing humanitarian relief and combating terrorism" (172). See also Chomsky (1999: 1–23) for critical analysis of the American position.

3. For a full analytical and historically based discussion of motivations leading to "humanitarian" interventions, including the advocacy of ethnic concerns, see Garrett (1999).

4. This point was discussed midconflict by Dick (1999).

5. Although critics of American foreign policy opposed the intervention early on, mainstream supporters came around to see through the weakness of the operation, both indirectly (see, e.g., Anderson and Vinch 2000), and directly (see Thomas 2000). Responding to broadside attacks, NATO (2000) produced its own self-serving evaluation of Operation Allied Force.

6. The point is also made with respect to the American war against Vietnam in Buzzanco (1999).

7. I refer to Tito-era Yugoslavia in using this term here.

8. The details of these problems are discussed in Milić (1995) and Reeves (1995). For a detailed survey of ways in which women of former Yugoslavia responded to these problems, see Renne (1997), especially Part Six: "Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia: Feminism, War, and Peace," 165–237.

9. For data on declining fertility rates, and increasing numbers of low birth-weights, among other physical health indicators, see MONEE Project (1999).

10. An excellent analytical review of the literature on this subject is provided in Murphy (1996).

11. Tickner (1992: 62ff.) provides a summary of these arguments.

12. Riddell-Dixon (1999) discusses the tools and methods that have been used to integrate women's rights into the UN agenda.

13. Perlez (1999), in a profile of the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Phyllis Oak-

ley, quotes her subject as bemoaning the weakness of the diplomatic arm of the U.S. government, attributing it to the inability of the State Department to attract talent. "She described American diplomacy as 'threadbare.' " Ms. Oakley says. "The only thing we have left is the military, so we use it in Iraq and Kosovo" (quoted in Perlez 1999: 26).

14.  One analyst notes, "Adherents to the notion of the new economy sometimes suggest that its globalizing powers are so great as to hollow out the powers of the nation-state. A mass of evidence suggests that this claim is much exaggerated" (Hall 2001: 11).

15.  Electorates consider those costs seriously. Among reasons recently given for the decline of support for sovereignty in Quebec were the following: mishandling of a federal service that had been handed over to the province; unpopular proposals for restructuring local government in Montreal; and difficult public sector labor negotiations (see Fraser 1999).

16.  One critic (George 1999) noted that

[t]he Atlantic Alliance's intervention in Kosovo is a spectacular example of the erosion of state sovereignty, helped along by globalisation and the "right to interfere." This evolution is spreading to a growing number of spheres, first and foremost the economy. However, the principle of sovereignty is not breaking down with any degree of uniformity: the social and environmental spheres remain relatively unaffected, while a higher economic order is emerging only too clearly, founded on the primacy of the markets and guarded by irresponsible and complicit international organisations, led by the World Trade Organisation.

17.  This viewpoint is described by Cook (1999), who writes that "transition has done best the closer a country is to Berlin. And this, effectively, is how the West sees it. . . . The common wish in 1989 was for a new Eastern Europe that resembled the West; instead, the West has decreed a kind of stratification in which countries compete with one another for the same prize" (B2).

18.  This astonishing story is told by the cultural anthropologist who observed Medjugorje and its inhabitants over a period of several years, before and during the war. See Bax (1992, 1995).

19.  The relationship between global restructuring, the highly gendered revitalization of the private sphere, and other changes in the local economy and role of the nation-state is examined in detail by Peterson (1996a).

20.  A notable exception being Chandler (1999).

21.  Chandler (1999) suggests that in the case of Bosnia, the Dayton plan for democratization

has been central to the reshaping of international institutions in the post-Cold War period. The international consensus that developed through the Bosnian war tied European and US interests together and reshaped international co-operation under US leadership through the NATO alliance. NATO has also been the key institution for reintegrating the former Soviet bloc states into the international community. Bosnia was not just NATO's defining post-Cold War success, but also remains a central focus for cohering the alliance. It would appear that for this reason the international community has been reluctant to see the process of engagement come to an end. (193)

22.  For examples of this language, see Kumar (1997), who refers to assistance for

political rehabilitation in terms of building "institutional capacity for governance" (5), "support for elections," "human rights monitoring and promotion," and so on. Women are mentioned in a page and a half of text (23–24), "Assisting Women as War Victims."

23. See the framework offered by El-Bushra (2000: 77). It covers many of the same areas, in a linear fashion.

# Feminist Futures

*Negotiating Globalization, Security,
and Human Displacement*

# 14

# New Directions for Feminist Research and Politics

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Politics of globalization, nationalism, and geopolitics create and connect sites of violence beyond the borders of specific communities and countries. These sites are highly gendered, often racialized, and always spatialized. In the introduction to this book, we argued that identifying the gendered antecedents and consequences of conflict is crucial to understanding and preventing conflict at various sites of violence. In this concluding chapter, we return to the question of feminist politics in light of the work presented thus far. Specifically, we examine the role of global connectedness and interdependence in shaping gender politics, especially in the face of conflict and involuntary migration. Human security and gender assumptions embedded in notions of the state are scrutinized by examining the role of war crimes tribunals. Finally, we consider the potential of transversal and transnational feminist politics. As feminists, we hold that ensuring the basic protection and well-being of those who are increasingly on the front lines of conflict and violence is paramount. One can no longer simply speak only of "womenand-children" as the central gendered category of war victims (Enloe 1993), as is evidenced by the tragic events in New York and Washington and the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This book has generated feminist analyses that place the politics of gender relations, nationalism, economic liberalization, and displacement at the forefront of thinking about violence and war.

## FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBALIZATION AND THE ANTECEDENTS OF CONFLICT

Globalization is often thought of as an inexorable force of progress or doom, depending on one's ideological positioning. A closer look suggests that glob-

alization represents a more eclectic and internally incoherent set of processes and politics that integrate economic, environmental, and cultural livelihoods across the globe in spatially uneven and socially unequal ways. These changes facilitate the acceleration of transnational financial transfers; the redistribution of work to more profitable locations for corporations in manufacturing and service delivery; and the movement of labor to jobs that offer better remuneration than work available at home. As capital moves across borders, so too do economic migrants and those fleeing conflict generated by new investment or regulatory norms. Globalization is not a unitary or unified project that produces positive *or* negative outcomes but a composite of processes that generate patterns of exclusion, pockets of wealth, and sites of violence.

Contrary to deterministic accounts of technology as the root of globalization, we maintain that technology is part of the globalization puzzle but does not dictate the direction or outcomes of the economy, culture, or politics. Technology is a social process (Dicken 1998). Its various outcomes are shaped by people, governments, corporations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that represent civil society. The balance of power among these players is the central issue for feminists, particularly when the rights of global capital and states prevail over those of citizens, NGOs, and groups that may not have access to the protection, services, and other benefits of citizenship. As states pass legislation to make investment attractive to multinational corporations, these provisions cannot prevail over the laws that protect citizens of such states. The story of Talisman in Sudan provides an alarming illustration of the ways in which the interests of states and multinational energy companies prevail at the expense of marginalized South Sudanese women, men, and children. In this example, there is a lack of overlap between political constituencies. That is to say, Canadians' rights are not being violated by a Canadian company. If they had been, Talisman's actions would not have continued for as long as they did.

The illicit trade in diamonds to purchase arms and perpetuate conflict in West Africa constitutes another pressing dilemma: "Diamonds from Sierra Leone have been used to fund the transfer of weapons to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels who have committed widespread human rights abuses in Sierra Leone" (Amnesty International 2000a). And despite these documented human rights violations, three companies that trade on Canadian stock exchanges—Rex Diamond, AmCan Minerals, and DiamondWorks—are involved in the diamond trade in Sierra Leone (Smillie, Gberie, and Hazelton 2000). Fierce fighting by the RUF during the 1990s targeted civilians, leaving them with crude amputations. Fueled by diamonds, this violence has been highly gendered: "Abduction, rape and sexual slavery of girls and women have been among the most abhorrent and distressing features of the nine-year internal armed conflict in Sierra

Leone" (Amnesty International 2000b: 1). The correlation of the international trade in diamonds with gendered forms of violence against women in Sierra Leone links globalized economies of violence to women's bodies in insidious ways.

The 1995 international nongovernmental forum in Beijing and the 2000 Beijing 5+ discussions in New York clearly defined economic globalization as one of the most serious threats to women's well-being worldwide (International Non-Governmental Forum on Women. 1995; United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women 2000). If *globalization* refers to multiple and contradictory processes that facilitate increasing integration on an unprecedented scale, these threats need to be specified in terms of place, time, and the socially and spatially uneven ways in which people are affected. Deleterious effects of globalization, such as reduced access to health care, education, child care, and other state-provided benefits and services, have been experienced disproportionately by women throughout the world, from war zones to refugee camps, factories, offices, and homes.

Rife with contradictions, processes of globalization have also liberated women from economic constraints and marginalization by providing them with the means to generate solidarity across class and gender lines, thus creating formal and informal networks in the workplace, community, and family (Zaman 1999a: 159). While there is general agreement that globalization represents "a widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life" (Held et al. 1999: 2), there is tremendous debate about its conceptualization, competing dynamics, and consequences across space.

Wilkin (1999) provides an analysis of both the benefits and dangers of globalization. Using the heuristic distinction of "globalization from above" (GFA) and "globalization from below" (GFB), he describes GFA as referring to "the movement toward the imposition and acceptance of new global liberal economic norms—liberalization, privatization and deregulation" (38). The implementation of these norms can result in the kinds of disempowering consequences that are decried by feminists who oppose global restructuring and its multiple effects at local, national, and international levels. Wilkin refers to the process of GFA as isolating the public from decision-making processes and as "anti-democratic, anti-needs-satisfaction and as reinforcing unequal social power between classes" (39). GFB, on the other hand, is described as reflecting "diverse and fragmented forms of resistance and support for the process of expanding the realm of private social power at the expense of the common good and the satisfaction of needs in general" in which players from across the political spectrum participate (39).

Wilkin's conceptualization of globalization, however, is complicit with the binary thinking that our analysis aims to avoid. While his framework illustrates the variety of participants and interests in processes of globalization,

it fails to specify the range of scales at which these processes take place and the links between them. We argue against the oversimplification of local-global distinctions, terms that rely on one another for their meaning, and for greater attention to the roles of urban, regional, national, and transnational links across space. Who, for example, is left off the map of a globalized world? Huge tracts of territory, located primarily in rural parts of the industrialized world and developing regions, are excluded from the economic activity and prosperity that globalization's proponents promise (Dicken 1998). The uneven impact of economic integration across geographic regions is clear, yet the conceptualization of GFA and GFB does not account for such glaring disparities.

One central issue for feminists is the extent to which processes of globalization undermine governance structures of the nation-state, and their subsequent implications for social relations of gender, race, class, and migrant status. The nation-state provides important supports and benefits to women, appearing to be more "feminized" than the highly masculinized private corporate sector (Peterson and Runyan 1999: 104). However, calls for "sound economic management" through the privatization of public sector services have served to erode public citizenship. New definitions of citizens as "special interest groups"[1] or "consumers" have emerged. The rights of citizens and those of global capital are being constantly negotiated at a time when neoliberal rationality prevails over welfare state models of governance. Women's issues tend to be marginalized within the domestic and feminized sphere of home and family. These issues are artificially separated from more pressing "public" challenges of security and economy (Peterson and Runyan 1999: 114). This approach is evident in the Canadian government's policy toward refugees, which tends to favor men, leaving most refugee "women-andchildren" applicants to make do with development or humanitarian aid in their home countries or as refugees in neighboring countries. Refugee women, represented as "victims" or "recipients" of humanitarian aid or welfare, are part of this dynamic (see Razack 1998; Hyndman, Chapter 9 of this volume). Mobility is gendered: men are more likely to leave home; women do not or cannot (Giles 1996: 44).

### NEOLIBERALISM AND INVOLUNTARY MIGRATION

The impact of neoliberal policies in the North has shaped both involuntary migration–generated conflict and humanitarian assistance throughout the 1990s. In the post–Cold War period, marked by the disintegration of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall, there has been a notable decrease in long-term development assistance and a proportionate increase in funding

for complex humanitarian emergencies. Donor governments voluntarily fund international organizations worldwide to manage human crises in the place they arise and as they arise: "[I]nternational relief aid for regions in conflict increased fivefold during the 1990s, to a high of $5 billion a year. At the same time, long-term development aid dropped overall" (Boutwell and Klare, 2000: 51).[2] This shift from long-term to short-term funding patterns has been accompanied by a transition from bilateral aid to multilateral assistance. In short, states are exerting their influence on international affairs, particularly large-scale human displacement, by different means. Steady increases in humanitarian assistance throughout the 1990s are an expression of a more globalized world, one that is more economically integrated and politically interdependent. The focus of aid is less on social development and stronger livelihoods in individual countries than on political (and macro-economic) stability across world regions. While humanitarian funding to assist people located in conflict zones has increased, industrialized countries have fortified their frontiers (Van Kessel 2001). Increasingly, involuntary migration is being managed at a distance (Hyndman 2000). This respatialization of international assistance means that those adversely affected by war or persecution are often being assisted in or near conflict zones. The invention of the "safe haven," or "UN protected area" during the 1990s epitomizes this trend. UN assistance to the Kurds in northern Iraq in 1991 and to Bosnian Muslims in the six "safe cities" of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993 illustrates this shift in approach.

The end of the Cold War has affected the aid regime by eliminating the political rationale for assistance in the first place, but it has also coincided with neoliberal measures of fiscal austerity and reform in many donor countries. The Cold War has left few, if any, countries unaffected by its bipolar animosities. Instead, it has created economic, political, and cultural conditions for the development of its own distinctive agents of violence, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, a self-declared government that violated the most basic rights of women, minority Hindus, and others on a daily basis. The value and meaning of refugee assistance have also changed dramatically. Refugees are no longer the attractive, politically charged pawns in ideological contests between the United States and the USSR. Where asylum from countries allied with the enemy superpower was once a virtual given, it is now the exception to the rule. With the adoption of neoliberal policies in many wealthier regions, the welfare state has been pared back, and refugees are less attractive to even the most generous of resettlement countries.

Processes of globalization do not occur in a uniform way across nation-states, governments, and corporations in the world today. The international division of labor employed by multinational corporations fuels the globalization of production, resource development, and service provision. Glob-

alization challenges the ability of nation-states to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to their citizens on an everyday basis, thus creating a crisis of legitimacy within such states. Peterson (1996a) refers to this as a "balancing act" for states, which involves, not the elimination of state power, but its transformation (8, 10). One sign of this shift is the refusal or inability of a nation-state such as Canada to effectively criticize or ban the involvement of its citizens in corporate ventures in war-torn areas.

Accountability for violence associated with resource extraction or production is lacking where economic activities transcend international borders. Individual nation-states weigh the price of speaking out against atrocities, concerned that they may scare away future investment. Where corporate interests prevail over citizens' basic protection, the question of citizenship becomes central. Echoing Saskia Sassen's (1996) notion of "economic citizenship" whereby multinational corporations exert their power over governments, trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its Chapter 11 expropriation clause have enormous implications for the ways in which we define citizenship and trace its gendered, racialized, and class dimensions.[3]

The case of Sudan speaks to the role of the nation-state in profiting from and sustaining war in various regions of conflict. The governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States are complicit in the human rights violations perpetrated as political means to economic ends. A two-tiered definition of citizenship now exists in countries such as Sudan, where investor nation-states (e.g., those involved in the oil industry) have rights that supersede those of Sudanese nationals. The fate of women and men who are caught in these conflict zones, unable to rely on their own governments or foreign governments, are at the mercy of humanitarian agencies and the global media for making their plight visible. Identifying and understanding the sites at which state power is being eroded are crucial to determining whether governments are more accountable to corporate or private interests than to their own citizens (Jacobs 2000: 224). Related to these issues of power and accountability is the question of security: security for whom? "Human security" represents an innovative attempt to ensure the security of citizens rather than a strategy to fortify the stability and well-being of nation-states without concern for their nationals. The two are not mutually exclusive. In the pages that follow we examine how and whether such an ideal can work in the face of conflict and in what ways it is gendered. In the face of demands for corporate security and economic citizenship, we explore how states manage the protection and provision of basic rights and entitlements for their nationals. We illustrate the ways in which rape and violence against women in wartime has been addressed through international tribunals and the relationship of these tribunals to human security.

## HUMAN SECURITY

"Human security" is a relatively recent concept in foreign policy and multilateral affairs, and one that has been adopted by various governments as part of peace-building initiatives. It stems from the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Report,* in which a broad notion of security is advocated, encompassing economic security, food security, health, and environmental security. The concept has personal, community, and political dimensions (Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade [DFAIT] 2000). According to these definitions, human security disaggregates the broader notion of security to a finer scale at which smaller political constituencies and vulnerable groups become visible. It aims to reconstitute the territorial foundation upon which security is based and to identify for assistance those who are effaced or harmed by policies in the name of state or global security. Its attention to the security of individuals and groups in the broadest sense highlights the importance of scale to political struggle (Staeheli 1994). Yet critics have argued that it is but another thinly veiled expression of state interests. A feminist analysis of the concept is conspicuously absent.

Critics maintain that the notion of human security has been used to justify breaches of state sovereignty, especially in the context of international intervention. That is to say, the security of persons prevails over the autonomy of states to do as they please within their own borders. To the extent that such interventions truly save lives, human security is a workable concept with feminist potential. Where it provides an alibi for foreign intervention that serves to prevent migration flows, contain instability, or secure access to vital resources, it is just another version of state security and conventional geopolitics.

Is human security gender-blind? Does it address the distinct social and geographical locations that situate men and women differently at specific sites of violence? Our analysis of these questions suggests that human security is a rights-based approach to security, one that assumes that all people have basic (human) rights and should enjoy these rights regardless of who or where they are. As noted in the introduction, men and women may have the same rights in principle, but they do not bear these rights equally, nor do they have equal access to protection and citizenship. Nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, caste, and class all bear on the expression of rights and material outcomes. Human security does, however, have the potential to subvert the dominance of state security and sovereignty to some extent. Shifting from the level of the nation-state and its place within the global economy to a finer scale, human security does have the potential to offer greater accountability to individuals and/or groups that might be ignored by or at odds with

their government, assuming that parties outside the state take an interest in the plight of such citizens.

This takes us back to the Women in Conflict Zone Network, where, in 1999, its members communicated via e-mail about the violence being perpetrated by the Yugoslav state. On the one hand, NATO used "human security" as its rationale for attacking Serbian positions, ostensibly to protect ethnic Albanians in Kosova/o. On the other hand, segments of civil society inside Serbia had been protesting the nationalist discourse and resulting violence for decades, working for human security (without naming it) in a state that perpetrated insecurity and widespread violence. Human security is a contradictory concept that can be co-opted by states and multilateral organizations to serve their own security agendas. Feminists must be cautious of such manipulation, but human security also offers a potentially radical new site of accountability to more feminist security studies.

Security is as much about the safety of the body and household as it is about the security of the state or global economy. Enloe (1989, 1993, 2000) analyzes the everyday constellations of power within and beyond the U.S. military to expose the militarized notions of masculinity and the material effects these have on women. She refers not to the security of states but to the security of people, in particular the local women left behind when U.S. military bases were closed in the Philippines or when U.S. soldiers departed after their R&R in Pattaya, Thailand, following their tour of duty in the Persian Gulf. Many other women experience the violent impact of demilitarization when combat ceases and their soldier husbands' militarized masculinity is no longer required (Enloe 1993). The scale of state-centered geopolitics is exclusionary. Select relations of power are rendered visible and significant, while other events and struggles beyond the international stage are effaced. Feminist critiques of security challenge the tacit territorial assumption of state security by asking whether states actually make their populations secure (Peterson 1992).

There is a potentially conflictual relationship between human security and the struggles for control over land, access to mineral wealth, and justice despite the legacies of colonialism. Human insecurity is directly related to whether one enjoys entitlement to everyday survival needs (Thomas 1999). Many countries in the South today are caught within a web of global dependency characterized by huge debt loads. These debts are linked to structural adjustment policies and the strict austerity measures of lenders—in particular, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Structural adjustment policies and the loans to which they are attached have differential impacts on people of different socioeconomic status, thus further complicating the provision of and access to basic human security.

Examining the everyday politics of work, play, war, or displacement and the ways in which they are practiced on people's bodies provides a much

finer, more accountable scale of analysis of human security (Hyndman 2001). One way to examine access to basic human security is through the war crimes tribunals.

## SECURITY, VIOLENCE, AND THE TRIBUNALS

Initially, feminist understandings of rape conceptualized it as a form of widespread violence against women (Brownmiller 1975; Russell 1975). More attention has now been given to the social meanings of rape and sexual violence against women in wartime, along with the role of sexual violence in the construction of ethnic-national boundaries (Brownmiller 1994; Meznaric 1994; Seifert 1994). Analyses of the social and political aims of rape and sexual violence against women have explored violations against women in ethnic-national conflicts from two perspectives. First, violated women are represented as symbols of male power and conquest. Papanek (1994) describes this process as one in which women become both symbolic of political goals and subject to the objectives of political movements, nation-states, and their leaders. Second, violations against women contribute to the demasculinization of conquered men, a symbolic process whereby some men are labeled as "incompetent" (Seifert 1994). This pejorative label has served as an important mobilizing element in the further militarization of masculinity and the imposition of increasingly severe restrictions on women in the name of the safety of the nation.

   Assessment of international responses to gender-specific crimes and evaluations of the place of such crimes in relation to crimes against humanity are crucial to the debates around violence and women's rights (Copelon 1994). The establishment of the International Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 has been an important focus of feminist analysis (Drumbl 2000). At face value, one might argue that such a legal institution is at best a liberal instrument to punish crimes of unimaginable violence. But its historically and geographically circumscribed mandate and implications are more far-reaching. The tribunal can create and has created new categories of crime that are themselves gendered. In June 1996, the tribunal "issued indictments for the arrest of eight men, charged with sexual assault 'for the purposes of . . . torture and enslavement.' For the first time in history, rape was being prosecuted as a weapon of war and a 'crime against humanity' " (Kirshenbaum 1997: 64). Encoded in international law, the notion of security of person takes on a more public and legitimized meaning. Ample evidence that men used rape to terrorize, humiliate, and "contaminate" the women of opposing ethnic groups in Bosnia-Hercegovina led to these indictments. As Radhika Coomaraswamy (1999) has pointed out, "To rape women with impunity and to mark their bodies with the symbols of the other side is

to assert domination and to symbolically assault ethnic identity in its most protected space" (10). In Bosnia-Hercegovina, some men were also raped in an effort to emasculate their identities. The body as the finest scale of geopolitical space is critical to a feminist understanding of rape and human security.

The ruling that rape is a weapon of war, however, is significant for another reason. Sexual violence and rape are as old as war itself, but until now these issues have been rendered invisible or incidental because they were dismissed as private acts, the "aberrational practices of errant soldiers" (Coomaraswamy 1999: 3). The tacit theater of war was the battlefield, the public space around which the rules of war—the Geneva Conventions—had been written. But the public/private divide between the battlefield and people's bodies has dissolved. Bodies, homes, communities, and livelihoods have become the battlefields of contemporary conflict. By identifying rape as a strategic weapon of war, its violence is publicized. Appropriate measures to address such crimes are legitimized. Rape is not simply an addition to international humanitarian and human rights law; it is a new category of crime that reorganizes the scale and scope of what is acceptable. Furthermore, by codifying rape as a weapon of war, the spatial relations of sexual violence are recast: that which counts (that which is public) and that which does not (that which is considered private). Just as violent actions taken by a government within its own territory are no longer considered "domestic" acts, beyond the purview of human rights and justice, so too has sexual violence in the context of war entered the realm of public debate and jurisdiction.

In another unprecedented ruling of the tribunals, this time at the international criminal court for Rwanda, rape has been further classified as a weapon of genocide. This allows the tribunal to try perpetrators of rape during attacks against Tutsi and Hutu in 1994 as perpetrators of genocide in certain circumstances. Where rape is used as a tool of extermination, judges have ruled that rape is a tool of genocide. The tragedy of the tribunal for Rwanda is that it comes too late: it cannot halt the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people that occurred between April and July 1994. In Rwanda, too little intervention too late has been one of the most serious humanitarian mistakes of the late twentieth century.[4]

The relative merits of a place-based tribunal, as in the case of Rwanda and Yugoslavia, versus a permanent international criminal court cannot be considered here. However, two points should be made: (1) where possible, the redress of injustice should occur within the country in which atrocities took place, through structures established by indigenous governing forces, as in South Africa with the imperfect but relatively bloodless Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and (2) the nascent permanent international criminal court risks becoming an expression of UN universalism in which largely Western legal norms and precedents are imposed on all those who come

before it. Nonetheless, it does promise to make geopolitically dominant countries, like the United States, accountable for their military maneuvers.

Whereas the international tribunals for Rwanda and [the former] Yugoslavia mobilize international conventions against torture and humanitarian laws that outline the rules of war, each operates within the parameters of a temporally and geographically circumscribed set of events. The publicity of the trials and the transformation of private acts of personal terror into public acts for which accountability can be sought are at one level a major political breakthrough. Feminists have argued that perpetrators be made accountable for acts of violence that might otherwise be kept "private" and remain depoliticized. But on another level, the legitimacy of the process in the eyes of a society that has endured war crimes such as rape constitutes another basis for measuring accountability. Disclosure of rape, sexual violence, and assault is itself an intensely social, political act, and the decision to publicize such violence should always lie with the survivor of the crime. The ICTY is not perfect, but it has proven to be an important instrument in recasting the question "What constitutes war?" and in raising the question of what course of action is appropriate for the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. As Drumbl (2000) argues (in response to a commentary by Martin 1998), "[T]he increased criminalization of gendered crimes and hate crimes represents a reinforcement of the retributive criminal justice model," one that may well be counterintuitive to feminist politics (22). One must consider the context of such crimes and the goals of any response: Is the aim reconciliation among segments of a shattered society? Is it punishment, so that by prosecuting perpetrators a local sense of justice is achieved and civil society can be rebuilt? Is the aim political—that is, to bring major war criminals to "justice" for the satisfaction of certain allied governments on a more international scale?

If the tribunals are not leading to reconciliation at home among the survivors and perpetrators, then alternative modes for dealing with incidents of horrendous violation of human security should be considered. Truth and reconciliation commissions, such as that in South Africa, have demonstrated some promise in this regard (Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd 2000). They are worth exploring where perpetrators feel that "Western justice" is being meted out by courts prejudicial to their testimony. Demanding remorse from such perpetrators may remain a tall order, but trying them at home, under one's "own" people and legal system, may be more effective if making perpetrators accountable for their deeds in the eyes of co-citizens is the goal. National discourses of truth and justice will be very different from those of the international tribunals, if they are indeed viable. Clearly, the link between collective forms of human security as defined by Thomas (1999) is more easily drawn with truth and reconciliation commissions than with international war crimes tribunals. And more importantly, the international

tribunals do not and cannot deal with global injustice and the human insecurity that is wrought globally by poverty and mass inequality. National forums are needed to challenge definitions of security proposed by our respective neoliberal states that protect global corporate power to the detriment of human security. Networks and other ways of connecting civil societies to governmental politic beyond international borders are critical for ensuring the human security of people in households, neighborhoods, villages, cities, schools, hospitals, and workplaces throughout the world. We must think and act at multiple levels concurrently.

## ARTICULATING TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSVERSAL FEMINIST PRACTICES

At the outset of this volume, we sought to extend feminist understandings of conflict zones and to ground gender politics at specific sites of violence. In the following pages we would like to highlight the less visible but equally important transnational and transversal aspects of our work together. The authors in this volume espouse no single version of feminism, nor have we encouraged any such unified or unitary project. The Women in Conflict Zones Network, from its inception, included a broad range of people from distinct geographical locations, political backgrounds, and experiences. The interdisciplinary character of the Network has ensured varied understandings of feminist issues, and the Network has never sought consensus on a specific brand of feminist thinking or politics. If categories can be deployed here, solely as a heuristic device, we can say that socialist feminists sat next to antinationalist feminists employing poststructuralist perspectives, who sat next to feminists whose approaches were primarily quantitative, who sat across the table from feminist activists dealing directly with the aftermath of violence invoked by war. Yet the Network and its projects have illustrated a common commitment to combating violence against women (and men) and the conflict that perpetrates such violence (e.g., Giles et al. 2003).

In these final pages, we draw upon the insights of authors in this volume and from feminist work elsewhere. "Transnational feminist practices" challenge the organization of politics around conventional international borders and advocate a space of connection across differences (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). While sometimes criticized for a "culturalist" approach to politics, feminists who work transnationally enable transborder alliances between groups to form by challenging binary conceptions of politics as either global or local, central or peripheral. Focusing instead on the circulation of power and the processes of identity formation and subjectivity across space unmoors knowledge production from the dominant political projects in place, such as international relations theory. Such feminist work does not

limit itself to "woman" as the principal category or axis of unequal power relations. Rather, it examines the ways in which the state or other dominant institutions construct "woman" in subordinate ways. Transnational feminist approaches analyze location in ways that include both geography and positionality, recognizing the importance of differences embedded in one's identity but connecting across such differences nonetheless. The political implications of one's social or cultural identity can be significant. Such identities shape one's mobility, access to services and opportunities, and economic and physical well-being, especially in situations of conflict.

A major focus of feminist transnational research has been the articulation of gender in relation to the dominant discourses of globalization, nationalism, and the state. Nationality, gender, religion, class, caste, and cultural context situate people unevenly within a web of relationships that transcend political borders. Stasiulis (1999) elaborates on the importance of relationality, positionality, and "relational positionality" to feminist politics, referring to "the multiple relations of power that intersect in complex ways to position individuals and collectivities in shifting and often contradictory locations within geopolitical spaces, historical narratives, and movement politics" (194). Feminists do need to be concerned "with mapping the complex societal relationships which construct dominance and subjugation" (Sharp 1996: 107), as well as identifying ways to address the material effects of such dominance and subjugation. The two are inseparable.

Similarly, Brah (1996) uses the concepts of diaspora, border, and the politics of location as a "conceptual grid" for historically analyzing "trans/national movements of people, information, cultures, commodities and capital": "Diaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes . . . [and] is 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous" (181). Brah's ideas have important implications for analyses of forced migration and gendered violence in the context of war. The concept of "diaspora space" allows us to connect locations of violent conflict with people and places elsewhere, living "in peace." Likewise, gender relations are not fixed but are produced unevenly across sites of violence and relative calm. The production and trade in military weapons, as well as resistance to banning land mines and other weapons of destruction, can no longer be viewed as issues that are located elsewhere—that is, in a "war zone." Rather, "feminist work tends to represent war as a continuum of violence from the bedroom to the battlefield, traversing our bodies and our sense of self" (Cockburn 1998: 4).

In this book we have consistently linked relations of conflict to people and processes beyond political borders. By employing a transnational rather than an international approach, we aim to destabilize the centrality of the nation-

state as the principal unit of inquiry into relations of conflict and to highlight dimensions of power that traverse an array of borders, including political boundaries, cultural or national identity markers, and class fractions: "Transnational theorizing thus departs from the assumption that neither nations, nor local communities, can be seen as independent entities" (Stepputat and Nyberg Sørensen 1999: 85). A transnational feminist analysis serves to challenge the primacy of state-centric analyses, where the security of governments, their territory, and their markets generally prevails over the safety of people on a human scale. Transnational feminist analysis and practice allow for connections between subjects in unequal locations to engage one another from distinct social, political, and geographical locations. Combined with a transversal politics of coalition building, this transnational feminist approach opens up a space to examine processes of globalization and global restructuring in the same context as relations of gender and ethnic-nationalist/nationalist war and conflict.

The public/private distinctions between battlefield and home, soldier and civilian, and state security and human security have broken down. Feminist analyses of conflict elucidate the intimate connections between war, political economy, nationalism, and human displacement and their various impacts across scale. The body, household, nation, state, and economy all represent sites at which violence can be invoked against people in highly gendered ways. Analyzing these sites of violence, discerning common patterns of waging war and fueling conflict, and forging links among those who refuse to participate in the either/or projects of "us" and "them" will serve to change the ways in which power is negotiated.

## NOTES

1. The Ontario provincial government (Conservative Party) in Canada has recently defined taxpayers as a special interest group.

2. Foreign aid to developing countries rose steadily throughout the 1970s and 1980s but fell drastically in the 1990s: "From 1992 to 1998, aid originating from the DAC [Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development] donors dropped from $60.8 billion to $51.5 billion, a decline of 15.3%" (Thérien and Lloyd 2000: 26). Comparing both per capita GNP contributions and total contributions over the decade of the 1990s, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (1992, 1995, 2000) documents a steady climb in donations for humanitarian aid from countries in the North. For example, the United States contributed $1.10 per capita or $277.73 million total in 1991; $1.53 per capita or $397.74 million in 1994; and $1.63 per capita or $444.9 million in 1999. Norway, as the most generous non-G-7 country, donated $11.28 per capita or $48.51 million in 1991; $13.53 per capita or $58.2 million in 1994; and $15.62 per capita or $70.3 million in 1999.

3. Chapter 11 of NAFTA includes a controversial clause originally drafted to pro-

tect private companies from the expropriation of their business by any government in Canada, the United States, or Mexico. This section was not intended to be contentious or widely used by companies to sue governments that stipulated environmental or other standards at odd with a company's operations. Yet this is what it has become: a tool employed by corporations to demand repayment for purported economic losses, especially those related to environmental regulations.

4. The international tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda have also been harshly criticized. The two most notorious Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadzić and General Ratko Mladić, both indicted on war crime charges in the Hague, still wield power behind the scenes and have not yet been arrested by NATO peacekeepers (Whitney 1999). Nonetheless, arrests are made, cases are opened, and convictions continue.

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