

The Effects of Female Participation in Ideological Rebel Groups on the Patterns of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

Zhuoyan Wei^{1,a,*}

¹Shanghai Starriver Bilingual School, Shanghai, China

a. weizhuoyan1106@163.com

*corresponding author

Abstract: This essay analyzes how female participation may affect the perpetration of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) by rebel groups. I look at leftist, Islamist, Christian, and Buddhist rebel groups, examining how these ideologies interact with the factor of female participation. I hypothesize that while female participation in leftist and Buddhist rebel groups may reduce CRSV, it may have relatively little impact in Islamist and Christian rebel groups. I test these theories individually through the case studies of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF). Due to the lack of data on Christian and Buddhist rebel groups, I only statistically corroborate my hypotheses on leftist and Islamist rebel groups.

Keywords: conflict-related sexual violence, female participation, rebel groups, rebel sexual violence

1. Introduction

As the international community shifts its attention to violations of humanitarian laws, more research into conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is warranted in order to effectively reduce the crime. It has become basic understanding that the patterns of CRSV vary by conflict, armed organization (either state or rebel forces), and involved entity (both perpetrators and victimhood) [1-4], and the main goal of the CRSV literature is to identify the factors that contribute to the exacerbation or reduction of the crime.

There has been much debate regarding the effect of female participation in rebel groups on CRSV [5-7]. In my research, I hope to add an important layer to this growing chorus of studies by examining the distinct interactive effects of different ideologies on women combatants in rebel organizations. That is, how does female participation influence CRSV perpetrated by rebel groups with different ideologies? First, I join the previous studies by engaging with leftist and Islamist rebel groups in answering this question. Second, I depart from the studies to add Christian and Buddhist rebel groups to my analytical angle.

In my essay, when I discuss CRSV, I refer specifically to sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups against civilians. I provide four theories: 1. Female participation in leftist rebel groups reduces rebel CRSV. 2. Female participation in Islamist rebel groups has no impact on rebel CRSV, or if ever does, increases rebel CRSV. 3. Female participation in Christianity-based rebel groups

has no impact on rebel CRSV. 4. Female participation in Buddhist groups reduces rebel CRSV. I use case studies to test these theories and further corroborate the first two with data analysis.

My research provides implications for rebel groups that wish to reduce incidents of CRSV, for it offers insights into whether female participation would serve such a purpose given the ideological environments of the groups.

2. Literature Review

In this section, I examine the existing literature on the factors of CRSV in general and the specific determinants of rebel CRSV.

From the current literature, I find three main types of CRSV. The first is the self-motivated sexual violence. This includes sexual violence perpetrated for sexual gratification. Thornhill and Palmer proposed that men have an inherent propensity for rape from the perspective of reproductive success, which falls under this category [8]. In addition, combatants sometimes perpetrate sexual violence for the purpose of taking revenge for their own community [3]. I count these as self-motivated, because they are driven by combatants' private, opportunistic motives. These personal motives also include social dynamics, by which combatants come to perpetrate sexual violence as a means of socialization to build solidarity [1]. Sexual violence, especially gang rape, may be used to promote bonding among comrade-in-arms in the same unit [3].

The second type is sexual violence as a strategy. This happens when sexual violence is used as a tool promoted by the leaders of armed groups [3]. For example, forced impregnation may be an instrument to dilute the bloodline of an ethnic community, and mass rape can be employed to demoralize the enemy [9].

The third type is sexual violence as a practice, in which it is neither ordered nor authorized but tolerated by commanders [10]. Ju attributed commander toleration to factors including the masculine atmosphere in the military, the normalization of toleration, difficulty of exerting effective control, the need for internal cohesion, and the commanders' career incentives [11].

Even though those are the three basic categories in typology, there can be ambiguous overlapping areas in reality. Most notably, it is particularly difficult to determine whether sexual violence is used as a strategy, because the internal instructions are not always revealed, which raises conceptual issues for researchers in the field. For example, Cohen, Green, and Wood note that military sexual violence is sometimes interpreted to be a strategy based on its consequences, which is an approach that cannot be widely accepted because it falls short of proving the group's intention of using sexual violence as strategy [12].

Research suggests that rebel groups are reported to carry out less sexual violence than state actors [12], so focusing on rebel CRSV may shed light on the factors that reduce CRSV.

There is extensive literature on the determinants of rebel sexual violence. Rebel groups may prohibit sexual violence due to their desire for support and their aspiration to govern the locals, especially when they are dependent on the civilians [3]. Sawyer, Bond, and Cunningham found that rebels who hold elections with civilian participation are less likely to perpetrate sexual violence [13]. Furthermore, some scholars argued that the presence of peacekeepers can decrease rebel sexual violence during conflicts [14]. Nevertheless, rebel groups might perpetrate sexual violence when they aim to obtain territorial authority by imitating state behavior [15].

The effect of female participation on sexual violence in armed groups is yet an unresolved debate. Wood hypothesized that armed groups with a high proportion of women fighters tend to refrain from sexual violence, such as in Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Peru, and Colombia [3]. This is consistent with the liberal feminist view propounded by Card, who suggested that the presence of women in the military can prevent their male counterparts from perpetrating rape to exert dominance [16]. However, Loken observed statistically that female participation has no substantial impact on

whether the armed group engages in sexual violence due to the conformity brought by the inevitable misogynistic culture in the military [5]. This is in line with the anti-militarist feminist claim that women can never be fully equal in the military and can only be tokens [17]. The example of the Western female migrants to Daesh who "openly admit and accept Daesh's rape of women and girls held as slaves" supports the anti-militarist over the liberal feminist approach, because Western women in Daesh seem to have adopted the misogynistic view prevalent in the military [18]. Both of the feminist perspectives have merits and each can be used to explain different situations. My research aims to explore the circumstances under which each perspective can be applied.

Ju statistically analyzed the female participation in state armies and rebel groups separately, finding that it exacerbates wartime rape in the former yet reduces wartime rape in the latter [7]. This is consistent with Mehrl's finding that female combatants' presence correlates negatively with wartime rape [19]. Wood and Thomas linked women participation to rebel ideology, noting that leftist rebel groups are more likely to employ female combatants than Islamic counterparts [20].

Moreover, existing literature reveals the direct connection between rebel ideology and sexual violence. Research shows that leftist rebel groups are less prone to perpetrate sexual violence than religious groups, and these tendencies are enhanced by international third parties that hold the same ideology [21]. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that while religious groups, which are conservative, seek to preserve traditional social norms including the role of women in society [20, 22], leftist rebel groups tend to subvert cultural norms and traditional gender roles [20, 23].

In order to fill the gap in the current literature, I try to explain the varying influences female participation has on rebel CRSV by examining whether rebel ideology is a determining factor of how women engage with the military environment.

3. Theory

In this article, I aim to further investigate the causes of variance in sexual violence in different rebel groups, looking at female participation together with the ideology of held by the group.

Sawari divides religious rebel groups into Islamic and non-Islamic ones and does not specifically discuss the smaller branches of Islam or other non-Islamic religions [21], which may be inadequate for a thorough examination. I am not able to discuss every ideology, yet I wish to avoid the dichotomy of religious/ideological rebel groups into Islamic versus non-Islamic [20] or leftist versus Islamist [21], which may result in overgeneralizing. Therefore, in addition to analyzing female participation in leftist and Islamist rebel groups as the baseline research, I also take a step toward examining female participation in hitherto neglected rebel groups based on Christianity and Buddhism, and how it may affect the groups' CRSV perpetration.

For female participation, I take Wood and Thomas' demand-supply approach [20] and look at why rebel groups recruit female combatants and why women want to join rebels in combat roles.

Leftist groups are often characterized by their aim to reform existing social hierarchies and their gender egalitarianism [20]. For example, Karl Marx was supportive of women's demands for equality in the workplace [24], and Mao Zedong emphasized the importance of women's liberation in the revolution of society [25]. Since these two figures may serve as sources of inspiration for leftist ideologies, leftist rebel groups may be relatively willing to recruit women combatants and even women commanders to promote their egalitarian ideals. Women who join leftist organizations are likely to identify themselves in accordance with the leftist ideologies, and some of them, though not all, tend to be liberal-minded. They may seek and receive equal treatment in leftist rebel organizations as their male counterparts do, even including opportunities to be promoted up to leadership roles. Due to organizational egalitarian principles, women in leftist rebel groups might be more likely to hold commanding positions compared to other groups.

Given that leftist rebel groups are inclined to act according to their core set of ideologies, they are unlikely to allow sexual violence to transpire. Moreover, the fear of losing support from foreign actors with similar egalitarian ideologies may dissuade the rebels from committing sexual violence [21]. For this reason, leftist rebels are unlikely to use sexual violence as a strategy. Even when they consider using it, the egalitarian-minded women in commanding positions might object to it or refuse to give the order.

Since the female combatants are generally liberal-minded, it is likely that they will reproach and interfere when their male comrades sexually abuse women for pleasure. Their intervention may be especially effective when they are in commanding positions.

Leftist rebel groups with female recruits are unlikely to use sexual violence as a practice. According to Card [16], in patriarchal societies, rape has the symbolic meaning of dominance over women and the men who claim to be the protectors of women. Sexual violence reinforces the patriarchal logic, which is presumably rejected by the leftist ideology that seek social reform. Thus, sexual violence is more likely to be seen as a wrongful act by the group, making it easier for female combatants to reject it as a practice instead of perpetrating it as a socialization process. But in leftist groups without female combatants, soldiers may still practice sexual violence due to the lack of female presence that disrupts the misogynistic atmosphere.

Hence:

Hypothesis 1: Female participation in leftist rebel groups reduces rebel CRSV.

In contrast, Islamist groups recruit women for very different reasons. Islamist groups are characterized by their adherence to traditional social hierarchies and gender norms [26]. In classical Islamist texts, women's participation in jihad is mostly limited to the support and care for male fighters [27]. Therefore, when Islamic rebel groups recruit women, they mainly intend to let them take on supporting roles. One exception would be when they employ women as suicide bombers, because women are more likely to elicit "greater public sympathy and publicity" [28] for the group.

Women who join Islamic groups are most likely to be religiously motivated, as demonstrated by the 17 western women who joined Daesh in the research done by Loken and Zelenz [18]. These women may desire to fulfil traditional support roles for men due to their religious devotions [29]. They may sometimes endorse sexual violence against women, for instance, one female migrant to Daesh posted on social media: "i must say what you may have heard about brothers taking the yazidi women as sabayyah [slaves] is in fact true wa Alhamdu lillah [and praise belongs to Allah]" [18].

Even for the few female recruits that take on violent roles in the group, the subordination of women makes it unlikely for them to ascend to commanding positions. And the female combatants are likely to accept sexual violence as a practice, even though they may not be personally involved in the perpetration.

Therefore, for Islamist rebel groups, women do little to hinder fellow combatants from perpetrating sexual violence for personal desires, as practice, or as strategy. On the contrary, female combatants' expectation and encouragement of sexual violence may in fact increase its perpetration. But due to the patriarchal structure in the Islamic society, women combatants may find it inappropriate to play dominating roles, so they may refrain from engaging in sexual violence themselves. My argument differs from that propounded by anti-militarist feminists in the sense that while they predict that the female combatants would adopt the misogynistic norms and participate in sexual violence, I highlight the possibility that they may approve of misogynistic group norms without perpetrating sexual violence personally.

Hypothesis 2: Female participation in Islamist rebel groups has no impact on rebel CRSV, or if ever does, increases rebel CRSV.

For Christian rebel groups, I expect a similar situation as Islamist rebel groups.

In Christian fundamentalism, patriarchal values are promoted first and foremost by the concept of God as a male figure [30], even though many modern-day Christians may consider God as genderless. When the ideas of God and father are linked together, victims of sexual violence committed by men may view God as the abuser [30], thus becoming passive and silent about the crimes.

Forgiveness is a virtue emphasized in Christianity. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." This essentially puts pressure on victims of sexual violence to forgive their abusers. Some members of the Christian community even propose that "following Jesus requires a willingness to relinquish bodily autonomy in serve of self-sacrificial love" [31].

Even though Christian fundamentalist communities may push for patriarchy [32], Christian rebel groups may not specifically exclude women from combatant roles when recruiting women, because unlike Islam, there is no explicit doctrine within Christianity that prohibit female participation in violent missions. However, the women recruited into these groups may constitute those who grew up in a suppressed environment where they are taught to forgive and sacrifice themselves when facing sexual violence. Therefore, it may be illogical to expect them to hinder sexual violence from happening in the group. When female Christians witness fellow male combatants perpetrating sexual violence against enemy women, they may consider the incident the opportunity for sacrifice and suffering, which are desirable in Christianity, since they are thought to be necessary for salvation [30]. But the female combatants themselves may refrain from actively encouraging or perpetrating the crime due to their passivity.

Hence,

Hypothesis 3: Female participation in Christianity-based rebel groups has no impact on rebel CRSV.

Buddhist rebel groups, on the other hand, may exhibit behaviors radically different from the Islamist and Christian groups in the aspect of sexual violence.

According to Samarakoon (2022, 9), Buddhist teachings seem to be opposed to gender bias, as illustrated in both the *Therī gāthā* and *Bhikkhunī Samyutta*: "What does womanhood matter at all [when] the mind is concentrated well, [when] knowledge flows on steadily [as] one sees correctly into Dhamma." This is consistent with the feminist trend of "deconstructing the idea that there are important differences between men and women [...], that 'men' and 'women' constitute meaningful categories at all" [17].

This Buddhist concept of gender makes it likely for Buddhist rebel groups to be more inclusive than non-Buddhist groups. They may accept women in combatant roles more openly and treat them as equals. Moreover, sexual violence depends on viewing the victims as from the "other" group as opposed to one's own, which is based on the sense of self, the Buddhist concept of *anatta*, or "no-self," highlights the idea that we have no fixed entity [33]. Thus, Buddhist combatants may not see civilians from other religious or ethnic groups as distinct from themselves, so there may be weak motivation for them to perpetrate sexual violence.

From the dissolution of "self," compassion is promoted by Buddhist teachings. As a result, when female fighters are recruited into the Buddhist group, they may actively stop their male counterparts from committing sexual violence, disrupting any misogynistic ideas and social practices in the groups, which is consistent with the logic advocated by liberal feminists. Similarly, female Buddhist combatants adhering to compassion and empathy are also likely to reject sexual violence as a strategy and avoid condoning their subordinate when they play the roles of commanders.

Hypothesis 4: Female participation in Buddhist groups reduces rebel CRSV.

4. Case Studies

In this section, I provide case studies to test my hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Female participation in leftist rebel groups reduces rebel CRSV.

One typical example of leftist rebel groups with high levels of female participation is the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), an opposition group that stood against Salvadoran government's Armed Forces.

It has been estimated that 60% of those who provided logistical support for the FMLN were female, and 30% of its combatants were female [34]. According to the interviews conducted by Kampwirth, even though women faced gender discrimination in some regions, they were respected and given leadership roles in other zones [35]. This indicates that even though the FMLN promoted a gender egalitarian ideology, this notion did not successfully permeate throughout the group.

The female recruits mostly joined the FMLN to escape from state violence in structural conflict zones [35], and the FMLN recruiters attracted female combatants by offering such protection from sexual violence [1]. If the combatants in the FMLN perpetrate sexual violence, it would undermine the organization's ideological narratives used for recruitment, and it would cause the female combatants already recruited to lose faith in the group. Therefore, the FMLN instated a rule that anyone who committed rape would face death penalty [36]. With the aid of political education, FMLN combatants were able to internalize the norm of prohibiting sexual violence and promoting respect for women [1]. Thus, the need for female participation and female participation itself help to limit the rebel sexual violence.

The data on sexual violence suggests that the prohibition of sexual violence through this mechanism was effective— "there are almost no reports, across all sources of data, of rape by the FMLN against civilians" [1].

Hypothesis 2: Female participation in Islamist rebel groups has no impact on rebel CRSV, or if ever does, increases rebel CRSV.

One of the Islamist insurgencies that receives the most international attention is the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh. Despite its patriarchal structure, it is known for attracting women who have been exposed to Western liberal ideals [37]. According to Zakaria, about ten percent of foreign recruits from Europe, North America, and Australia are women [38].

The participation of western women can be understood considering how Daesh frames itself as a place where pious Muslim women belong [39]. In its propaganda, women are used to demonstrate a commitment to appropriate family roles and piety [40]. As opposed to other competing theories, Western women join Daesh because of the discrimination they face in their home countries and the religious mandate for making hijra [18]. They achieve emancipation through hijra and do not perceive the patriarchal confinements in Daesh as restricting [41]. Thus, the women who join Daesh are supportive of the patriarchal order it promotes due to their religious devotion.

When Daesh soldiers invaded Yazidi Sinjar, they abducted Yazidi women and declared that the Yazidi women and children were distributed amongst themselves according to the Sharia [42]. In an issue of Dabiq, the author justifies sexual violence by arguing that Islam permits sex with non-Muslim slaves [43]. This demonstrates how Daesh rationalizes its perpetration of sexual violence through its religious doctrine. Since the female combatants in Daesh identify with the Islamist ideology, they are generally supportive of the perpetration. Some female recruits feel that Yazidi women deserve the mistreatment—Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah wrote "[we] have indeed raided and captured the [non-Muslim] women [...] I and those with me at home prostrated to Allah in gratitude on the day the first slave-girl entered our home" [18].

Therefore, as a result of the type of women Daesh recruits, female participation does not hinder the perpetration of sexual violence.

Hypothesis 3: Female participation in Christianity-based rebel groups has no impact on rebel CRSV.

Cases of rebel groups based on Christianity are relatively rare, but the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda is such an example. Its leader, Joseph Kony, claims to be communicating with the Holy Spirit and seeks to establish a Ugandan government that adheres to the Ten Commandments [44]. The LRA is known for its human rights violations, including the abduction of more than 30,000 children, both boys and girls, who were beaten, raped, and forced to commit violence [45].

About 30% of LRA's child soldiers are female [46], but this has little impact on the perpetration of CRSV. Women typically hold lower offices and are considered weak in the LRA. A former LRA commander explains this by referencing Joseph Kony's comment that women are naturally made weaker than men, which is consistent with the Old Testament's portrayal of women as inferior to men when it describes the creation of woman as a solution to men's loneliness [46]. Given the low status of women in the Christian environment in the LRA, they most likely have no say in the overall strategy and are unable to hinder the perpetration of CRSV, of which they themselves are also victims when they are forced to become the wives and mistresses of the senior commanders and bear their children [46].

Despite the prevalence of forced marriages, the LRA rarely engage in CRSV outside of those marriages [47]. This can be attributed to the "cultural norms that reject rape and support the importance of marriage and children" [47]. The institutionalization of forced marriage in the LRA helps its leaders to gain a high level of control over the recruits; it also pushes forward the LRA's political vision by reinforcing the "boundaries of national purity" through the regulation of sex [48]. Thus, contrary to my hypothesis, despite the subordination of women, the female participation in the LRA reduces the CRSV perpetrated outside of the forced marriages. Nevertheless, my theory is correct in predicting that women in the Christian groups would not play an active role in mitigating or exacerbating CRSV.

Hypothesis 4: Female participation in Buddhist groups reduces rebel CRSV.

Rebel groups holding Buddhist ideologies are also very rare, and only limited information can be collected about them. One possible example is the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), which demands regional autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) from the Government of Bangladesh [49]. Its leader, Joan Chakma, once led some Buddhist radicals to demolish a Christian church in Suandrapara, where there was a Buddhist majority [50]. Even though the UPDF Manifesto does not explicitly mention any commitment to religion [51], around half of the CHT population is Buddhist [52], making it likely that a significant portion of UPDF recruits may be influenced by Buddhism.

The UPDF makes an effort to attract female participation with its Parbatty Chhattagram Nari Sangha (The Chittagong Hill Tracts Women's Association) and Hill Women's Federation. And according to Braithwaite and D'Costa, women join the UPDF to seek protection from sexual violence [53]. Even though there is no specific data on the level of CRSV perpetrated by the UPDF or reports on how women interact with the men in the group, this may be similar to the situation in the FMLN — the UPDF may strategically prohibit sexual violence to make an appeal to female recruits, and the female recruits, whose ideas are shaped by the Buddhist form of gender equality, may in turn actively prevent CRSV. However, it should be noted that Buddhism may play a less important role than I expected in determining the effect of female participation, since the UPDF does not seem to be influenced by the concept of "no-self" — it identifies itself clearly and presumably sees the Parbatty Chhattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) as its enemy [52].

5. Data Analysis

In addition to the case studies, I also conducted data analysis to further validate my theories. However, due to the scant incidents and data of Christian and Buddhist rebel groups, I only examine the data of leftist and Islamist rebel groups.

Using the data on female participation in rebel groups [20], the data on rebel groups' religions and ideologies [54], and the data on CRSV from the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) dataset [55], I create the following table.

Table 1: Prevalence of female participation in leftist rebel groups.

Level of rebel CRSV	0	1	2	3	Total
0	590 73.93%	26 3.26%	82 10.28%	100 12.53%	798 100.00%
1	52 80.00%	1 1.54%	1 1.54%	11 16.92%	65 100.00%
2	33 97.06%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 2.94%	34 100.00%
3	11 100.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	11 100.00%
Total	686 75.55%	27 2.97	83 9.14%	112 12.33%	908 100.00%

For the horizontal direction, 0 means either no evidence of female participation or non-leftist group; 1 means leftist rebel groups with low levels (<5%) of female participation; 2 means leftist rebel groups with moderate levels (5%-20%) of female participation; 3 means leftist rebel groups with high levels (>20%) of female participation [20].

For the vertical direction, 0 means there is no mention of sexual violence in reports of the conflict; 1 means there are isolated cases of sexual violence that are likely related to the conflict; 2 means there are numerous cases of sexual violence likely related to the conflict; 3 means there is massive sexual violence related to the conflict [55].

The table reveals that with only one exception, leftist rebel groups with low, moderate, and high levels of female participation likely never perpetrated numerous or massive sexual violence. This is supportive of my hypothesis that the presence of female combatants in leftist rebel groups can reduce CRSV. Comparing the leftist rebel groups with high levels of female participation and leftist rebel groups with low levels of female participation, we may notice that the former is more likely to perpetrate higher levels of sexual violence, which is contrary to my theory. However, we may attribute this to the possibility that the female combatants may be more willing to report cases of CRSV, and the CRSV perpetrated by leftist groups with lower levels of female participation may be underreported.

Table 2: Prevalence of female participation in Islamist rebel groups.

Level of rebel CRSV	0	1	Total
0	732 91.73%	66 8.27%	798 100.00%
1	63 96.92%	2 3.08%	65 100.00%
2	34 100.00%	0 0.00%	34 100.00%
3	11 100.00%	0 0.00%	11 100.00%
Total	840 92.51%	68 7.49%	908 100.00%

There is only data on Islamist rebel groups with low levels of female participation, and there are only two data points of reports on CRSV. Therefore, the data is insufficient for validating or disproving my hypothesis.

The lack of reports on the CRSV perpetrated by Islamist rebel groups may be caused by the female combatants' reluctance to report these crimes, which makes sense given their generally supportive attitude toward the perpetration of CRSV.

6. Conclusion

In this essay, I examined the connection between female participation and the perpetration of CRSV in rebel groups with differing ideologies. I hypothesized that while female participation in leftist and Buddhist rebel groups may reduce CRSV, it may have relatively little impact in Islamist and Christian rebel groups.

My theory that female combatants in leftist groups can reduce CRSV is corroborated by the case study of the FMLN, which attracts gender-egalitarian-minded female recruits who help prevent the crime. The data analysis also shows how the presence of women can decrease the level of CRSV.

My theory that female combatants have little impact or exacerbate CRSV in Islamist groups is supported by the case study of ISIS but not the data. The women in ISIS do not show any opposing attitude toward CRSV, instead, they may encourage its perpetration due to their religious commitment.

For lack of adequate information, the rest of my theories are not sufficiently validated. The case study of the LRA illustrates a way in which, contrary to my prediction, forced female participation alleviates the CRSV against civilians outside of marriage. The case study of the UPDF aligns with my hypothesis, but there is not enough evidence to show how Buddhism is an important determining factor.

My research may offer some insights for rebel group leaders who wish to establish a positive image by refraining from sexual violence. For example, leftist rebel groups may be advised to recruit more female combatants for the purpose of reducing sexual violence and displaying their gender egalitarian ideology. Further research can be done to investigate the effects of female participation rebel groups with other ideologies or more specific religions, such as the Sunni and Shia groups. Future scholars can also examine how the behaviors of state forces can influence female participation in rebel groups, such as the case of the FMLN women who seek protection from sexual violence.

Reference

- [1] Cohen, Dara Kay. 2016. *Rape during Civil War*. Cornell University Press.
- [2] Cohen, Dara Kay, and Ragnhild Nordås. 2021. *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Data Project (SVAC) 3.0, 1989-2019 Codebook and Instruction Manual*.
- [3] Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2006. "Variation in sexual violence during war." *Politics & Society* 34 (3): 307-342.
- [4] Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2009. "Armed groups and sexual violence: When is wartime rape rare?" *Politics & Society* 37 (1): 131-161.
- [5] Loken, Meredith. 2017. "Rethinking Rape: The Role of Women in Wartime Violence." *Security Studies* 26 (1): 60-92.
- [6] Mehrl, Marius. 2022. "Female combatants and wartime rape: Reconsidering the role of women in armed conflict." *Armed Forces & Society* 48 (2): 464-479.
- [7] Ju, Changwook. 2023. "The Distinct Effects of Women Combatants on State- and Rebel-Perpetrated Rape."
- [8] Thornhill, Randy, and Craig T. Palmer. 2001. "A natural history of rape: Biological bases of sexual coercion." MIT press.
- [9] Sharlach, Lisa. 2000. "Rape as genocide: Bangladesh, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda." *New Political Science* 22(1): 89-102.
- [10] Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2018. "Rape as a practice of war: Toward a typology of political violence." *Politics & Society* 46 (4): 513-537.
- [11] Ju, Changwook. 2022. "Why Do Military Officers Condone Sexual Violence? A General Theory of Commander Tolerance." *International Studies Review* 24 (3): 1-31.
- [12] Cohen, Dara Kay, Amelia Hoover Green, and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2013. "Wartime sexual violence: Misconceptions, implications, and ways forward."
- [13] Sawyer, Katherine, Kanisha D. Bond, and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham. 2021. "Rebel Leader Ascension and Wartime Sexual Violence." *Journal of Politics* 83 (1): 396-400.
- [14] Kirschner, Shanna, and Adam Miller. 2019. "Does Peacekeeping Really Bring Peace? Peacekeepers and Combatant-perpetrated Sexual Violence in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63 (9): 2043-2070.
- [15] Asal, Victor, and Robert Ulrich Nagel. 2021. "Control over Bodies and Territories: Insurgent Territorial Control and Sexual Violence." *Security Studies* 30 (1): 136-158.
- [16] Card, Claudia. 1996. "Rape as a Weapon of War." *Hypatia* 11 (4): 5-18.
- [17] Duncanson, Claire, and Rachel Woodward. 2016. "Regendering the military: Theorizing women's military participation." *Security dialogue* 47 (1): 3-21.
- [18] Loken, Meredith, and Anna Zelenz. 2018. "Explaining extremism: Western women in Daesh." *European Journal of International Security* 3 (1): 45-68.
- [19] Mehrl, Marius. 2020. "Female Combatants and Wartime Rape: Reconsidering the Role of Women in Armed Conflict." *Armed Forces & Society* (2): 1-16.
- [20] Wood, Reed M., and Jakana L. Thomas. 2017. "Women on the frontline: Rebel group ideology and women's participation in violent rebellion." *Journal of Peace Research* 54 (1): 31-46.
- [21] Sarwari, Mehwish. 2021. "Impact of Rebel Group Ideology on Wartime Sexual Violence." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6 (2): 1-23.
- [22] Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change*. Cambridge University Press.
- [23] Wood, Reed M. 2019. *Female Fighters: Why Rebel Groups Recruit Women for War*. Columbia University Press.
- [24] Brown, Heather. 2014. "Marx on gender and the family: A summary." *Monthly review* 66 (2): 48-57.
- [25] Yuan, Lijun. 2005. *Reconceiving Women's Equality in China: A Critical Examination of Models of Sex Equality*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- [26] Robison, Kristopher K., Edward M. Crenshaw, and J. Craig Jenkins. 2006. "Ideologies of violence: The social origins of Islamist and leftist transnational terrorism." *Social Forces* 84 (4): 2009-2026.
- [27] Cook, David. 2005. "Women fighting in Jihad." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28(5): 375-384.
- [28] Speckhard, Anne. 2008. "The emergence of female terrorism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31(11): 995-1023.
- [29] Sjoberg, Laura, and Reed Wood. 2015. "People, not pawns: Women's participation in violent extremism across MENA." *USAID Research Brief* 1: 1-4.
- [30] Kennedy, Margaret. 2003. "Christianity and Child Sexual Abuse—Survivors informing the care of children following abuse."
- [31] Scarsella, Hilary Jerome, and Stephanie Krehbiel. 2019. "Sexual violence: Christian theological legacies and responsibilities." *Religion Compass* 13 (9).

- [32] Rose, Susan D. 1999. "Christian fundamentalism: Patriarchy, sexuality, and human rights." In *Religious fundamentalisms and the human rights of women*, pp. 9-20. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [33] Samarakoon, Charya. 2022. "Addressing the causes of conflict-related sexual violence with the buddhist doctrine of lack of a permanent self and meditation training." *Contemporary Buddhism*: 1-20.
- [34] Vázquez, Norma. 1997. "Motherhood and sexuality times of war: The case of women militants of the FMLN in El Salvador." *Reproductive Health Matters* 5 (9): 139-146.
- [35] Kampwirth, Karen. 2021. *Women and Guerrilla Movements*. Penn State University Press.
- [36] Viterna, Jocelyn. 2013. *Women in war: The micro-processes of mobilization in El Salvador*. Oxford University Press.
- [37] Chatterjee, Debangana. 2016. "Gendering ISIS and mapping the role of women." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 3 (2): 201-218.
- [38] Zakaria, Rafia. 2015. "Women and Islamic militancy." *Dissent* 62 (1): 118-125.
- [39] Pearson, Elizabeth, and Emily Winterbotham. 2017. "Women, gender and daesh radicalisation: A milieu approach." *The RUSI Journal* 162 (3): 60-72.
- [40] Loken, Meredith, and Hilary Matfess. 2022. "Women's Participation in Violent Non-State Organizations." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*.
- [41] Kneip, Katharina. 2016. "Female Jihad—Women in the ISIS." *Politikon: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science* 29: 88-106.
- [42] Cooke, Miriam. 2019. "Murad vs. ISIS: Rape as a Weapon of Genocide." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 15 (3): 261-285.
- [43] Al-Ali, Nadej. 2018. "Sexual violence in Iraq: Challenges for transnational feminist politics." *European journal of women's studies* 25 (1): 10-27.
- [44] Ehrenreich, Rosa. 1998. "The Stories We Must Tell: Ugandan Children and the Atrocities of the Lord's Resistance Army." *Africa Today* 45 (1): 79-102.
- [45] Ellison, Marc. 2015. "Magazine: The girls of the Lord's Resistance Army." *Al Jazeera*.
- [46] Nkabala, Helen Nambalirwa. 2014. "Gender perspectives in the Lord's Resistance Army in relation to the Old Testament." *Old Testament Essays* 27 (3): 930-944.
- [47] Kramer, Sophie. 2012. "Forced marriage and the absence of gang rape: Explaining sexual violence by the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda." 11-49.
- [48] Baines, Erin. 2014. "Forced Marriage as a Political Project: Sexual Rules and Relations in the Lord's Resistance Army." *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (3): 405-17.
- [49] Ali, HM Ashraf. 2012. "Place and contested identity: portraying the role of the place in shaping common sociopolitical identity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh." *COMPASS* 1 (2): 31-46.
- [50] Corraya, Sumon. 2021 "Christians flee after two attacks by Buddhist radicals against their church."
- [51] UPDF. 1998. "United Peoples Democratic Front Manifesto (Preliminary)." http://updfcht.com/?page_id=692.
- [52] Jamil, Ishtiaq, and Pranab Kumar Panday. 2008. "The elusive peace accord in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh and the plight of the indigenous people." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 46 (4): 464-489.
- [53] Braithwaite, John, and Bina D'Costa. 2018. "Macro to Micro Cascades: Bangladesh." In *Cascades of Violence: War, Crime and Peacebuilding Across South Asia*, 321-62. ANU Press.
- [54] San-Akca, Belgin. 2016. "States in Disguise: Causes of External State Support for Rebel Groups." Oxford University Press.
- [55] Cohen, Dara Kay, and Ragnhild Nordås. 2021. "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Dataset (Version 3)." *The Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict*.