



Guilty by Association: The Issue of Gender Violence and the Targeted Killing of Men of Fighting Age in Times of Conflict

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INTRODUCTION

People's intolerance for the suffering of women and children in war is greater today than it has ever been. The threat facing male civilians, however, remains a low-visibility issue in the minds of the global public, academia, and the humanitarian community. Men, particularly the young and healthy, have traditionally constituted the warrior class in society, the group from which almost all combatants are drawn. Consequently, a common mental shorthand exists, in which women and children are civilians and men are combatants (Grossman 2014). As a result, attention is focused on the threats facing women and children to the exclusion of the dangers faced by men. This chapter states the obvious but often forgotten fact that, while all combatants are men, not all men are combatants. Male civilians are as much victims of war as any other innocent people (Gorris 2015; Solangon and Patel 2012; Lewis 2014). If we are to consider and prevent

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the suffering of all victims of war, then we must be conscious of the plight of all civilians and their different threats and needs, men included.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first, I define how I am using the concept of gender violence, as comprising acts inflicted on a victim as a result of the perceived norms, and roles associated with that victim's gender. I also justify its use here by describing the association between male gender and the role of the warrior.

In the second part, I aim to build on the sparse literature around male-gender violence by identifying two distinct ways in which the male = warrior association leads to violence. These are what I term 'strategic' and 'impulsive' acts of violence. Strategic violence, which is planned systematic and top-down, is the most commonly discussed due to its 'spectacle' and association with genocide (Honig and Both 1996; Jones 2008; Kévorkian 2011). Impulsive violence which is emotional, sporadic, and self-directed is less visible but may be more endemic and may therefore, represent a greater threat to the life and dignity of civilians.

Being less visible this chapter focuses in more detail on impulsive violence. Forming part of the background noise of war, I seek a means to draw it out by proposing three preconditions that may predict where it is widespread and where special attention should be directed to understand it and help protect those affected by it. These preconditions are:

1. That the role of the warrior is perceived as an exclusively male one.
2. Insurgent tactics are used and combatants are hiding amongst the civilian population.
3. That opposing forces lack the capacity and/or will to restrain themselves.

In the third part, I try and assess this relationship and provide some insight into how much of a threat impulsive violence may present; an analysis of the violence that occurred during the Bougainville conflict was conducted. Taking place in Papua New Guinea (PNG) between 1989 and 1997, data on 158 incidents involving 256 victims drawn from reports on the war were analysed using both a content and demographic analysis.

The results indicate that 54.9% of victims were males between the ages of 15 and 49 despite constituting only 25.2% of the population. Of these, 34% were identified as victims of impulsive violence, targeted by combatants who perceived them as enemies. This means that an estimated 1 in 5 men on Bougainville between the ages 15 and 49 were victims of impulsive

violence. Even with the large margins of error inherent in any analysis of wartime violence, this type of violence was a significant threat to the dignity and lives of civilians during that war.

The preconditions outlined help to guide future research. This is not only of value to help understand how prevalent acts of impulsive violence are but how to control it, prevent it when it is occurring, and identify the needs of victims affected by it. This is especially pressing given the prevalence of insurgency-type conflicts today where all three preconditions are present. Most important however is drawing attention to the plight of a category of civilians ignored by humanitarian agencies and the international community.

GENDER VIOLENCE AND THE GENDERED ROLE OF THE ‘WARRIOR’

Defining Gender Violence

The term ‘gender violence’ (or ‘gender-based violence’) is rarely used in connection with violence against men. When the term is used it is most commonly associated, and even used interchangeably, with violence committed by men against women (Merry 2011). This is evident in the ways gender violence is often defined by scholars, international agencies, and humanitarian organizations. (Mathur 2004; Rose 2016; UNFPA 2017). Their understanding is exemplified by the following extract from *Researching Gender Violence*, by Skinner et al. (2013): ‘There has also been a broadening of perspectives in research over time from using “violence against women” as the inclusive term to using the term “gender violence”. Gender violence includes all types of violence against women in the UN definition but is not confined to violence against women; thus recognizing violence against children, young people or lesbian and gay people’. The previous passage, in a book about gender and violence, includes many identities but with one notable exception, the category which represents half the population, men. While this exclusion is dominant, it is not universal. Some academics and organizations do utilize definitions that include men (e.g. IDS 2017; IFRC 2015; Merry 2011; O’Toole et al. 2007). However, they are in the minority. This general lack of recognition of men as victims of gender violence has also been identified in various articles, such as ‘Invisible Victims? Where are male victims of conflict-related sexual violence in international law and policy?’ (Gorris 2015); ‘Systematic Silencing:

addressing sexual violence against men and boys in armed conflict and its aftermath' (Lewis 2014); and 'Sexual Violence Against Men in Countries Affected by Armed Conflict' (Solangon and Patel 2012). These authors all show that little attention has been paid to the way males can be victimized in times of war and the part gender can play in that.

In this chapter, I take gender violence to mean acts of physical violence motivated by the perceptions of norms and roles held by the assailant. Despite this chapter's focus on how wartime violence affects men, this definition is intended to be inclusive of all genders. It is also intentionally restrictive in its understanding of violence as direct physical assault. While the definition of violence can be broader (e.g. O'Toole et al. 2007; Skinner et al. 2013), I am addressing extreme wartime violence such as murder, torture, and rape.

The Gendered Nature of the Warrior Class

Many forms of gender violence can be attributed to the relationship between the victim's gender and the assailant's perception of the victim as weaker, lesser, or submissive. This relationship often drives spousal violence against women (O'Toole et al. 2007; Yllo and Torres 2016) or prison rape against 'effeminate' men (Merry 2011; Reid and Walker 2005). However, perceptions of strength, superiority, and dominance can also incite violence if the victim is seen as a threat.

Throughout history, combatants have been almost exclusively male. Biologically young males are the physically strongest demographic in any human population. This strength has been a consistent advantage in combat and, consequently, war has been an activity that has traditionally selected for males (Goldstein 2003). There have been exceptions. However, as Goldstein (2003, 10) states in *War and Gender*, fighting is one of the most stable gender roles across all cultures and times and the exceptions would be 'far fewer than 1 percent of all warriors in history'. Even in modern liberal western cultures, female combatants remain rare.

In contrast to many other forms of gender violence, it is the perception of male dominance, physical superiority, and perceived propensity for violence that can endanger men in wartime. When there is a contest of political power through force of arms, it is adult males from whom all combatants are drawn. The ability of a group to attack or resist an opponent often rests on their ability to mobilize their manpower (through force if necessary). For this reason, men can also be perceived as 'the group posing the greatest danger to the conquering force' (Jones 2010). This association can often mean that the line between the combatant and the non-combatant

is much finer for this demographic than for any other, with the result that civilian men can face extreme danger to their dignity and well-being merely because of their gender.

STRATEGIC AND IMPULSIVE VIOLENCE

This section puts forward a means to categorize and understand two ways the male = warrior association can result in attacks, that of strategic and impulsive violence. While these stem from the same perceptions of same gender norms, the motivation, means, and ends are different.

The Strategic Use of Violence

The concept of the strategic use of violence identifies gender violence that is coldly calculated, systematic, and often directed ‘from the top down’. It includes attacks and killings that leaders direct to achieve a strategic goal, as when a conscious decision is made to destroy an opponent’s ability to fight by neutralizing a vital war resource—the young male population. In such a frame of mind, men of fighting age represent the manpower reserves of the opposition, a resource akin to oil or industry and one that can decide a war. To remove a military threat, a group may decide to eliminate the opposition’s ability to fight back by eliminating its manpower. In such a case, the combatant/non-combatant distinction does not matter. A male civilian is just a warrior who has not yet taken up arms, and a threat to be eradicated.

Most cases of male-gender violence that are described in the literature fall into this category because strategic violence is often associated with genocide and large-scale killing. In the former case, the aim may be to target males of fighting age early and quickly, with the goal of destroying a population’s ability to defend itself before it fully realises what is happening. In other instances, the killing may be focused on pacifying rather than eliminating a population. These types of behaviors are described in the literature concerning Bangladesh, Armenia, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

In *Death by Government*, Rummel describes the mass killing of young males during the Bangladesh liberation war: ‘...the Pakistan army [sought] out those especially likely to join the resistance—young boys. Sweeps were conducted of young men who were never seen again. Bodies of youths would be found in fields, floating down rivers, or near army camps’ (Rummel 2011, 329).

Similarly Kevorkian describes how, early in the Armenian genocide, elements of the Ottoman military and administration moved quickly to eliminate the male population. For example, in the city of Bitlis all males over the age of 10 were ‘liquidated’ in just two weeks during 1915. The objective was ‘eliminating all possibility of resistance from the onset’ (Kevorkian 2011, 341). By the time the Armenians were sent into exile, the population consisted of women and children, since no men were left alive. One of the most famous instances of strategic violence was the 1995 Srebrenica massacre during the Bosnian civil war; the Serbs acted similarly:

Muslim men posed a pointed threat to the Serbs who were educated in the traditions of people’s war...[this] demands that potential resistance now, and in the future, be minimised. As many men as possible had to be killed (Honig and Both 1996, 177).

The Serbs isolated approximately 8000 men from the rest of the population and massacred them.

Jones (2008) has identified the rapid targeting and elimination of males in Rwanda. He argues that killing the Tutsi men was not only due to the gendered nature of ethnic identity in Rwanda, but also a deliberate means of eliminating future resistance stemming from the conflict with Tutsi rebels. He describes how ‘the opening blast of the genocide was accompanied by an injunction not to repeat the “mistake” of the 1959 revolution when male children had been spared only to return as guerrilla fighters’ (Jones 2008, 205). The result was instances of babies’ diapers being removed to determine their gender and then the male babies were killed.

In each account each group intended to neutralize its opponents for differing periods of time. While the Pakistanis aimed to crush an immediate insurgency in Bangladesh, the Hutus in Rwanda aimed to remove an inter-generational threat. However, for each, scholars describe acts of calculated and systematic violence. With the exception of Jones, the scholars’ primary focus is on acts of genocide rather than on gender. However, the writers demonstrate how men were targeted for death due to their perceived threat to those carrying out the genocide. These cases demonstrate how ‘the extermination of males... serves as a kind of vanguard of the genocide as a whole, an initial barrier to be surmounted and “threat” to be removed, before the remainder of the community is consigned to a violent death’ (Jones 2008, 202).

Impulsive Acts of Violence

The second form of violence stemming from the male = warrior association is what I term impulsive violence. While strategic violence is calculated, systematic, and directed from the top down, impulsive violence is emotional, sporadic, and self-directed. It includes the assault, torture, and killing of males of fighting age that results from the emotional reactions of individual soldiers to their inability to identify, locate, and defeat elusive opponents.

In his discussion of male-gender violence, Carpenter (2006) states that this type of behaviour is ‘particularly associated with low-intensity conflicts and counter-insurgency operations’. While insurgencies have occurred in many periods, they are very common in today’s security environment. Insurgent forces use asymmetric tactics, ambushes, surprise attacks, snipers, and raids to wear down the resolve of a superior force (Angstrom and Widen 2014). Key to their methods is their ability to hide and move without being detected, using the terrain or civilians as cover. As Mao Zedong wrote: ‘The guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea’ (Mao 2000).

Hiding amongst civilians is an effective tactic in asymmetric conflicts; however, it puts the civilian population at increased risk. The strategy relies on hiding behind the impunity of non-combatants. In effect, it acts to ‘operationalise the moral dispositions of the enemy by using the reluctance of the enemy to target civilians’ (Sorabji and Rodin 2006, 158). This makes it difficult for the enemy not only to fight effectively but also to respect civilian impunity. Fighting guerrilla opponents can have a significant negative impact on soldiers’ attitudes and psychological states. Being constantly exposed to the threat of ambush by hostiles who melt away, or villagers who, in the night, attack as part of a faceless, ill-defined entity creates extreme physiological pressure on soldiers. It can make the distinction between the combatant and the non-combatant seem less important, putting strain on even the most well-trained forces. As one US Army veteran recalled, ‘The constant threat of violence in Iraq, as in Vietnam, led to the potential for soldiers to become “dangerously violent” ’ (Rieckhoff 2006, 159). The frustration of dealing with a threat that, in most conflicts, can be identified only by its gender can reduce all men of fighting age to being seen as potential hostiles.

The dangerous, impulsive violence of individual soldiers is well described by Carpenter (2006) in relation to sex-selective massacres. He

discusses the way the term ‘civilian’ is understood and how often sex and age are used as mental shortcuts to distinguish non-combatants. This is also shown by the work of military psychologist David Grossman, who states that, ‘If a soldier kills a child, a woman, or anyone that does not represent a potential threat, then he has entered the realm of murder and the rationalization process becomes quite difficult’ (Grossman 2014, 89). Killing fighting-aged males is much easier to rationalize if fighters are indistinguishable from civilians, especially when elements within that group have been attacking and killing a persons comrades. Cultural. Cultural and organizational values can help restrain soldiers. However, all armed forces are institutionalised to engage with the enemy and commit acts of violence. Even in highly trained, liberal armies such as those of the United States or the United Kingdom, the pressures of fighting against insurgents means soldiers cannot always be restrained.

Examples of impulsive gender violence are not easily identifiable. Their sporadic and self-directed nature makes them hard to detect. The ‘blind spot’ around male victims of war makes their identification even harder. In most accounts of wartime atrocities, they may make up the ‘general background noise’ of violence. However, it is this very fact that makes understanding it of particular value. Two events that can serve as examples of impulsive violence are those at Kalvryta, Greece, in 1942 (Mojzes 2011) and Batang Kali, Malaysia, in 1948 (Engelhart 2012; Newsinger 2015). In each village, German and British forces, respectively, executed every man. Both are events in which soldiers faced with the psychological pressure of fighting insurgents responded by killing all men without distinction. These two events are more easily identified because they were mass executions of the entire adult male population. However, the personal nature of impulsive violence means it can usually be expected to manifest in smaller attacks conducted by individuals or small units of soldiers against a single or small group of victims. This is demonstrated by the account of a British journalist, Harry Miller, operating during the Malay Emergency, who wrote: ‘To many [British colonial police] of these sergeants every Chinese was a bandit or a potential bandit, and there was only one treatment for them, they were to be “bashed around”’ (Newsinger 2015). Newsinger then describes how the attacks went far beyond beatings. First he recorded how, on 20 July 1948 a man was shot ‘trying to escape’. Two more were killed ‘trying to escape’ the next day and in November that year no fewer than 20 men were also killed ‘trying to escape’.

More recently, in Hamdania, Iraq, in 2006, American Marines moved to ‘arrest’ a man they suspected of planting IEDs. They had decided in

advance that if they could not find him, they would ‘get someone else’ (another male) (Englade 2015). An innocent civilian male, identified as Awad, was murdered in cold blood as a result.

In each case, the soldiers were faced with an opponent who was not clearly distinguishable from the civilian males. While the perception of threat was driven by the same male = warrior shorthand as in those who carried out strategic killings these soldiers were not driven to violence by orders from on high, carrying, planned attacks. The killings were emotional responses to a challenging environment. In each case the victims were murdered. However, while murder is the most notable end result of impulsive violence, it is not the only result. Singling out fighting-age males from the population for beatings such as in Malaysia, or humiliating, torturing, or raping them can also take place. Whether this is done to dissuade, for revenge, for information, or to neutralize the threat is not the defining feature of impulsive violence. What matters is that they are using the male = warrior shorthand to justify their emotional impulse for violence against what they see as a ‘legitimate’ target of war.

Predicting Impulsive Violence

Acts of strategic violence may be horrific, with their scale and systematic nature making them historically important. In contrast, the sporadic nature of acts of impulsive violence, with the victimization of one or two men at a time, can be just forgotten background noise. This makes detecting impulsive violence more difficult, so bringing attention to it is of particular value. Additionally, acts of strategic violence are rare today while insurgencies and asymmetric conflicts are relatively common. Therefore, acts of impulsive violence may be a far endemic and represent a more pressing threat to civilian well-being.

To try to advance our understanding of its prevalence, I propose a set of three preconditions, which, I suggest, can predict situations in which widespread acts of impulsive violence are likely to occur or have occurred. These are:

1. The role of the warrior in the conflict is perceived as being exclusively gendered one.
2. Insurgent tactics are used and combatants are hiding amongst the civilian population.
3. That opposing forces lack the capacity and/or will to restrain themselves.

The first precondition concerns those whom society views as possible combatants. While young men have usually been perceived as the warrior class, this might not always be the case. In future conflicts, men and women of fighting age could be viewed by society and by hostile forces as the warrior class and both genders could become targets of impulsive violence. (In that case, the violence would not be a gender issue but should nevertheless remain of concern.)

The second precondition is important because it is the inability to clearly identify the enemy that blurs the combatant/non-combatant distinction. If the enemy is clearly identified and combatants are still attacking male civilians, then this will be a case of strategic violence or be motivated by another factor, such as elitocide.

The final precondition is to exclude conflicts where highly disciplined and/or those with strong humanitarian values are the occupying force. While some acts of impulsive violence will occur, such as those committed by US forces in Iraq, they would not be expected to be widespread. The concept of values is included in this precondition because, despite their discipline, ideologically motivated forces such as those in WW2 Germany, Japan, or those in colonial wars may have had little interest in restraint.

If these three preconditions are met, I predict impulsive acts of violence to be endemic. If valid, this gives a means of identifying past and future conflicts for further research. It also helps identify in which conflicts particular attention to the humanitarian plight of male civilians and appropriate humanitarian support may be needed.

The Case of the Bougainville Civil War

In this section, I attempt to ascertain the scale of impulsive violence in one conflict that meets all three preconditions that predict its widespread occurrence, The Bougainville Civil War. This conflict that took place in Papua New Guinea (PNG) from 1989 to 1997 was the bloodiest in the Pacific since World War II and was one where men fought as irregulars who often lacked uniforms and who operated out of their local villages against enemies who were poorly trained or disciplined (Adams 2001; Aspinall et al. 2013; Braithwaite 2010; Howley 2002).¹

¹ This conflict also has the advantages of being of low intensity, and in a low population area where there was a low media footprint, all of which made it easier to catalogue the violence that occurred there.

To understand how widespread acts of impulsive violence were in Bougainville, a mixed methods approach using descriptive analysis paired with a demographic analysis of reported wartime atrocities was undertaken. Data collected from government documents, the reports of humanitarian agencies, and local accounts were used to build the most comprehensive dataset possible within the limitations of type of research (e.g. from Amnesty International, US State Department, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the compilations of human-rights reports by Marilyn Havini). As with any study of wartime violence, the inherent problems and gaps in the data are extremely limiting. However, in trying to understand forms of violence that are rarely acknowledged or discussed a beginning needs to be made somewhere.

From the available information, 704 distinct incidents and more than 1000 victims of reported atrocities were identified. From this number, 251 individuals involved in 158 different incidents had sufficient identifying data on both their age and sex. Given the ad hoc nature of the reporting and the identification of victims by age and sex, this is taken to be a relatively representative sample of the victim population of the Bougainville conflict, for whom the atrocities ranged from assaults to torture and killing.

This set of victims was further divided into six demographic bands by age and sex: male or female children, adults, and elderly. The division served two purposes. This allowed for the demographic distribution of the victim population to be compared to that of a model of the actual population of Bougainville (UNDP 2017).² This allowed for the detection of any dis-representation.

Isolating fighting-aged males also identified which accounts within the data would be used in the descriptive analysis. This allowed for the identification of the reasons why the fighting-aged males victims were attacked and which proportion of these were motivated by impulsive violence.

While the dark figure of unreported crime limits the strength of the findings, this analysis allowed for an idea of the following to be discerned:

- the proportion of fighting-age men who were victims of impulsive violence,

² Note that the UN data is for PNG as a whole. However, comparisons of PNG's demographic composition with that of Bougainville reveal only marginal variation. Additionally, the level and type of violence was not sufficient to skew the demographics (as in the USSR in World War II). Additionally, nothing indicates that the refugee population was sufficiently gendered to skew the demographics.

- the proportion of victims who were fighting-age men and, therefore,
- how widespread might have been acts of impulsive violence during the Bougainville conflict.

By assigning each relevant demographic band an age of demarcation the ‘fighting age’ of the warriors in Bougainville had to be identified. As in many conflicts in which there are irregular forces, finding the age of combatants was not as simple as doing so for militaries with formal organizational structures. While the forces of modern nation-states usually define fighting age as, being between 18 and 35, irregulars can include both the very young and the very old (Ozerdem and Podder 2011).

During the Bougainville conflict, many youths served in the irregular forces on both sides. For this analysis, ‘adults’ are divided from ‘children’ at age 15. While some children did take part, they did so in very low numbers. 15 was also a demarcation used by the UN in their population model and therefore allowed a comparison between the victim and actual populations. For a similar reason, the upper age demarcating ‘adult’ from ‘elderly’ was selected as 49. This meant the population sample could be divided into six demographic bands:

- Male, Elderly: 49+
- Female, Elderly: 49+
- Male, Adult: 15–49
- Female, Adult: 15–49
- Male, Child: 0–15
- Female, Child: 0–15

The demarcation of age allowed for the demographic component of the analysis to be undertaken. However, undertaking the descriptive component required categorical distinctions to be drawn in order to analyse the reports of violence involving male adults between 15 and 49. Five categories were developed to identify the reason why these men were attacked. These were:

- *Impulsive violence*: Those who were targeted as suspected combatants or were mistreated in ways consistent with the belief that they were combatants despite lacking the clear identification required by the rules of war.

- *Combatant*: Those who were identified as combatants because they surrendered, were captured during a combat, stated they were a combatant, or were bearing arms. (This category does not include legitimate combat deaths.)
- *Random*: Those who were victims of indiscriminate attacks such as artillery fire, fire from air support, sporadic gunfire, and so on.
- *Other*: Those who were assaulted for other reasons such as the fact they were government workers, journalists, and those who were known to be civilians but were killed in revenge.
- *Unclear*: Those where the motivation for the attack could not be determined.

FINDINGS

Figure 18.1 depicts the results of the descriptive analysis for the adult males.

The results indicate that acts of impulsive violence accounted for the largest proportion of attacks in which a motive could be identified (51%) and accounted for 34% of incidents overall. Of these victims, 23 were murdered, mostly at gunpoint, while the rest were beaten to death. Ten men were not killed but were beaten, sometimes while in detention (all were released without charge). One exception was Mr. Korelava, who died later from complications related to the amputation of his leg. Another 12 victims were tortured, often to death. The torture was often acts aimed at

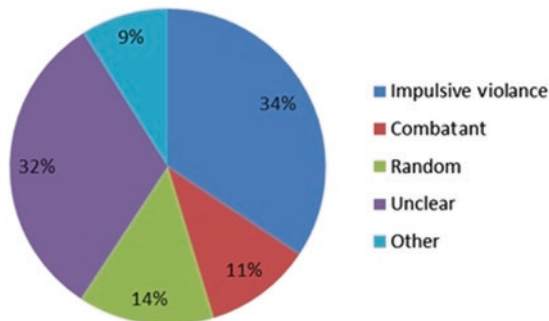


Fig. 18.1 Content analysis of the victimization of men aged between 15 and 49

humiliation or domination such as those who were forced to eat sand or feces, to sodomize one another, or who were forced to dig their own graves, and suffer through mock executions.

Of the 11% of victims (16) who were identified as combatants, 9 were executed after surrendering, 1 was tortured to death during his interrogation (before being cut to pieces), few details were recorded for another six beyond their status as combatants.

Of the 18 victims of random attacks, 11 were killed by ranged weapons, primarily mortars. Five were killed when their vehicles were fired upon, while another four died when a mortar round hit a church congregation in Buin township. Six other men were killed during village raids, and another was killed when his group was ambushed while looking for food.

The 12 victims in the 'Other' category were attacked for various reasons and included the assassination of Theodore Miriung, the head of the local pro-government administration in Bougainville; a man known as Jack, who had a history of mental illness and was shot for stealing a boat; and three youths who were forced to run for their lives for 20 kilometres when the army caught them drinking during Easter. Three instances also involved the murder of civilians in retaliation for rebel attacks or their families' involvement in the rebellion.

The final category comprised those cases where the intent behind the violence was unclear, primarily due to a lack of detail in the accounts. Of these 16 instances involved attacks where males aged between 15 and 49 were the only victims. Furthermore, they appear to be singled out with only two of these involving more than one victim (two and three victims, respectively). Whether these were attacks against combatants, acts of impulsive violence, or these men were attacked for other reasons is unclear. Of the five remaining cases, three followed the pattern of random strikes and involved six male (15–49) victims who were attacked along with women and children. Nothing can be inferred about the attacks on the remaining 19 male victims because the reports were too general such as lists of victims without descriptions of their fate.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 18.2 shows the results of the demographic analysis, comparing the distribution of the victim population to that of the population model of Bougainville as a whole. It also incorporates the results depicted in Fig. 18.1 for the 25–49 male population.

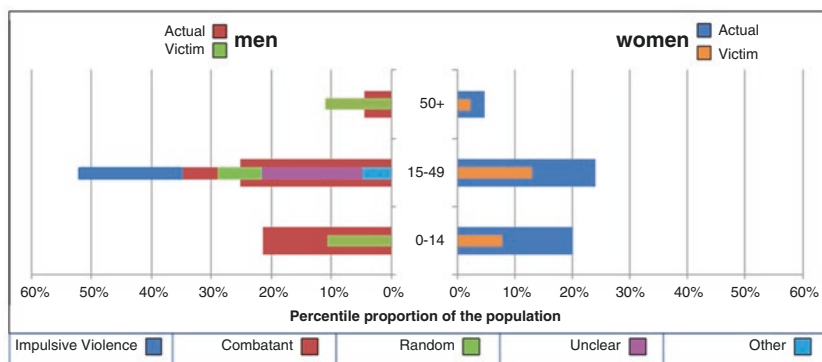


Fig. 18.2 Combined results of the demographic and content analyses

Figure 18.2 shows that men aged between 15 and 49 were significantly overrepresented as a proportion of the documented victims. They make up 55% of victims yet only 25% of the actual population. Men older than 50 were also overrepresented. They constituted 11% of the total victims but only 4.5% of the actual population. All other demographics were underrepresented, some by as much as 50%.

The overrepresentation of fighting-age males in the victim population and the high proportion that were victims of impulsive violence indicates that impulsive violence was a significant threat to civilian well-being during the Bougainville conflict. This data indicates that males between 15–49 who were victims of impulsive gender violence represents 25% of all recorded victims.

To account for the overrepresentation of elderly males, a further content analysis was carried out on the accounts of violence against this demographic. This indicated that only 16% of them were victims of impulsive violence despite the fact that there is no account of combatants over the age of 50. The results might reflect assailants' inability to discern the victims' age. Many of these men were also victimised for other reasons, predominantly due to their role as chiefs or elders, which suggests the presence of eliticide during the conflict.

The reason for the underrepresentation of women of all ages and male children is unclear. This could be due to the overrepresentation of adult males or it could be due to under reporting. Rape and sexual assault is a

crime often targeted at women between the ages of 15 and 49 and is commonly underreported due to factors such as social norms or feelings of shame (Weiss 2010). While a possibility, this would not explain the consistency of underrepresentation with children or women over 50. It is also likely that sexual assault against males is also underreported for the same reasons as for women. While the relative rate of unreported sexual assault between the genders is unclear, rates of attacks against males would increase dramatically along with rates of impulsive violence as combatants seek to dominate, humiliate, and emasculate their enemy.

As with other research into criminal activity, there are significant problems in determining the difference between what is occurring and what is reported (Ellis et al. 2010). The chaos of war and the agendas of political actors make this issue even more problematic in times of conflict. However, as Strouse and Claude (1976) note: 'To forswear the use of available, although imperfect, data does not advance scholarship'. It would be inappropriate to try and interpret the balance of suffering between different demographic groups, nor is that the intention of the work here. The aim was to assess if acts of impulsive violence against fighting-age males were a significant threat to the well-being of civilians as would be predicted by the characteristics of the conflict. Despite the large margins of error in analysing this kind of data, the results do indicate this is the case.

The inability or unwillingness of the combatants on Bougainville to clearly distinguish themselves from the civilian population undoubtedly resulted in violence during the war. The accounts of many of the attacks demonstrate the type of mental shortcuts discussed by Carpenter (2006) and Grossman (2014) where a man's age and sex place him under suspicion and make him vulnerable. The reports of attacks against these men were added to accounts of more general attacks on villages and the killing of civilians in retaliation. Taken together, they clearly show a climate in which combatants became instilled with the same 'dangerous violence' as the US forces in Vietnam or Iraq (Rieckhoff 2006, 159). Poor discipline and an inability to come to terms with the enemy contributed to widespread abuse and killing. As may be occurring in many other counter-insurgency or guerrilla campaigns, the threat in these cases is not strategy or the high command but the poor discipline, training, and a lack of adherence to international norms of those on the ground.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this chapter was to contribute to the literature on understanding how gender violence impacts males in times of conflict. More specifically, on the threat that the male = warrior association can create and how it can lead to widespread acts of assault, torture, and killing against a group rarely considered as vulnerable civilians. This is reflected in the scarcity of research and records on the subject. This makes it both a challenge to research yet essential to do so.

To try and help identify conflicts in which male civilians are most vulnerable and the reasons for that, two expressions of violence driven by the male = warrior association were identified. The first is strategic violence, the systematic killing of fighting-aged males directed by leaders to fulfil military and political objectives. This is discussed in the literature in instances of genocide or the mass killing of thousands of men to pacify opponents. The second expression of this form of gender violence is impulsive violence. This is the victimization of fighting-aged males driven by the individual combatants themselves.

Of these two forms of violence, this chapter focused more on impulsive acts of violence. This is less discussed in the male gender violence literature and draws less attention in the historical record than strategic mass killings like that at Srebrenica or in the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. As it is conducted by combatants on their own initiative, often against one or two men at a time, it often goes undetected, unreported, and ignored, partly forming the background violence of a conflict.

In order to identify conflicts in which acts of impulsive violence may be particularly endemic three factors that may predict its occurrence has been put forward. These are:

1. The role of the warrior in the conflict is perceived as being exclusively gendered one.
2. Insurgent tactics are used and combatants are hiding amongst the civilian population.
3. That opposing forces lack the capacity and/or will to restrain themselves.

An analysis of the scale of impulsive violence during the Bougainville conflict, one which met all three criteria, was undertaken. Despite the

limitations in trying to assess the scale of wartime violence, the data did indicate that a significant proportion of fighting-aged men were assaulted, raped, tortured, and killed during the conflict due to their gender and their assumed status as a combatant. If this finding is consistent with other conflicts, then these three criteria can act as a tool to help focus further research into this type of violence and may help predict and prevent its future occurrence. This is all the more pressing as the type of insurgent conflicts and civil wars that meet these criteria are frequent in the world today. This makes the threat of impulsive violence even more significant as is the danger of continuing to ignore it.

Even beyond the violence borne out of the male = warrior association, there is an imperative to do more to create space for the male victims of war and develop a more inclusive concept of victimhood. The lack of awareness by, or even disinterest from humanitarian organizations, media outlets, and humanitarian agencies about the plight of adult males is concerning. The following account of an attack on a Congolese village in 2007 typifies this systematic blindness: 'The FDLR combatants massacred at least 96 civilians, including 25 children, 23 women, and seven elderly men' (Randall 2015). This report identifies victims from all major demographics except one, fighting-age men. What makes this all the more startling is that 41 of the 96 murdered civilians, the majority, were fighting-aged males.

When Carpenter (2006) interviewed human rights advocates about the gendered nature of their efforts, they reported that the media, the parties to conflicts, partnering agencies, and governments simply did not care when they tried to raise the issue of protecting males. What was more, the advocates acknowledged that they knew ignoring the plight of male undermined the civilian's safety. They also noted that failing to acknowledge the vulnerability of male civilians helped reinforce the harmful stereotypes of men as nothing but perpetrators. Despite this, they stated that this was not outweighed by the pragmatic need to get their humanitarian messages out.

The practice of active silencing is also discussed by Apperley (2015) who argues that the political discourse of aid denies any assistance to men and that the elite actors who fund most humanitarian agencies 'rely on masculine stereotypes to uphold and advance thier agendas'. He also notes that 'organisations seem reticent to raise awareness of male victims of violence, perhaps out of fear of compromising the existing systems in place to

help women' through a reduction in funding or because of a continued belief in the idea that men are not civilians. The case of the Dutch 'Refugee Law Project' reflects this at its worst. They attempted to raise the issue of men as victims within their organization and create a more inclusive operation. Dutch Oxfam threatened to cut the project's funding unless women continued to represent 70% of their clients (Apperley 2015).

It is not only within the aid community where there is blindness. Carpenter (2006) describes how, in the time leading up to the fall of Srebrenica the intention of the Serbs to target the Bosnian males was predicted as the most serious threat to civilians beside the care of those already sick and wounded. Despite this prediction, only women and children were taken to safety while men were forcibly prevented from being evacuated. As a result, over 8000 men were murdered after they were overrun by the Serbian forces. Both Jones (2008) and Carpenter identify the male = warrior association as a critical component of this massacre. They assign the prohibition on evacuating men as being influenced by the prejudices of not only the humanitarian workers and forces conducting the evacuation but the Bosnian leaders themselves. Carpenter even argues that this bias against male civilians affected the plans of the hostile Serbian commanders who calculated that 'the West would be more concerned over women and children than over men' (Carpenter 2016). This instance shows the bias against the plight of civilian males even in the face of impending strategic violence and mass murder, let alone their victimization resulting from acts of impulsive violence.

The lack of awareness or even resistance to acknowledging male victims of war is extremely harmful to civilians' dignity and lives. Therefore, understanding and incorporating these people into our conception of victimhood is essential. Some scholars, such as Jones and Carpenter, have sought to highlight the threat of strategic violence. However, the type of violence I describe as acts of impulsive violence may be far more widespread and, therefore, a far greater threat. If we value all innocent lives and seek to protect all civilians, then that commits us to moving away from our traditional concept of the male as only the warrior. We must acknowledge the plight of adult males in order to move towards a more nuanced understanding of the unique threats faced by all civilians in times of war, and the different response this requires of us to prevent.

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