

Introduction

The Importance of Women Wartime Rapists

Very few women are wartime rapists. Very few women issue commands to commit sexual violence. Very few women play a role in making war plans that feature intentional sexual violation of other women. Very few women sexually violate other women as they supervise prisons, staff refugee camps, participate in military conflicts, serve on military police forces, or participate in insurgent violence. Very few women advocate strategies of forced impregnation as a method of ethnic cleansing. Very few women force other women to have abortions or miscarriages as they torture them. Very few women skin other women alive and use their tattoos to decorate furniture. Very few women sell women prisoners of war into sexual slavery. Very few women are genocidal rapists. This book is about those very few women—their crimes, their meanings, and the political and legal ramifications of their actions.

It is difficult to write a book about those very few women, though, given that they are frequently invisible, or, when visible, are often sensationalized. Take, for example, the Wikipedia entry on “war rape.”¹ All eight uses of the word “female” are characterizations of rape *victims*, even though one describes female combatants as victims. One hundred twenty-nine of the 130 uses of the word “women” in the text refer to them as the victims of wartime and genocidal rape. While this entry recognizes that war rape sometimes has male victims, the primary role of men in the Wikipedia article is as perpetrators. Phrases that describe war rape as “the spiritual bonding of men at arms” and suggest that “men who rape are ordinary Joes,” and define the act as “committed by men against women” are repeated throughout the article, and suggest that war rape is an act where men are the perpetrators, whoever the victims are. The Wikipedia article on genocidal rape replicates these assumptions.²

I do not mean to hold Wikipedia up as an example of the most in-depth knowledge on the subject of who wartime and genocidal rapists are, or what wartime or genocidal rape is. Instead, I mean to point out that a general description often used for popular consumption *editable by literally everyone* which has many of the key details of the definition of, occurrence of, and history of wartime rape makes no mention of the existence or possibility of female perpetrators. This omission occurs in the great majority of newspaper articles, websites, human rights reports, policy briefs, and scholarly articles that address sexual violence in war and genocide.

Discussions of wartime sexual violence that do mention women perpetrators are few and far between, and many of them sensationalize those women. For example, Ilse Koch was married to Nazi commandant Karl Koch, who headed Buchenwald concentration camp during World War II. Ilse became a guard at Buchenwald. The available evidence suggests that Koch participated in acts of torture and terror in her time at Buchenwald. Compared to other women alleged to have committed wartime sexual violence, Ilse Koch's actions are mentioned in a relatively high number of histories and analyses. Tales of her most well-known transgressions recount her collecting the tattooed skin of women prisoners as home decorations, crafting lampshades and other household goods from the skin of Buchenwald's victims.³ Even without that accusation (which has been contested), Koch was known around Buchenwald as cruel and sadistic in her behavior towards prisoners. She is alleged to have been both physically and sexually abusive towards them.⁴ Her involvement in the torture of female prisoners was part of the reason that she was sentenced to life imprisonment at the end of the war.

Often characterized as a “nymphomaniac,” Ilse Koch has been held responsible for the deaths of more than forty prisoners based on her collection of tattooed human skin.⁵ Her story was widely reported because “it symbolized the fundamental humiliation of the individual in the concentration camps—particularly when the instigator was a woman.”⁶ Accounts of Koch call her “the bitch of Buchenwald” and contend that she “sexually tortured” inmates in the concentration camp to keep her husband in “sexual dependence.”⁷ There were rumors both that she had sexual affairs with officers and that she sexually abused prisoners.. Though early accounts focused on her collection of human skin, later

stories paid more attention to her sexuality and to her participation in abuse. Her trial “cited an image of women or female perpetrators that placed the commandant’s wife outside human society,” as an “animal” or “dehumanized creature”—a “diabolical female” with “unbridled sexuality.”⁸ As historian Alexandra Przyrembel explains:

From the case of Ilse Koch there emerged an image of a female National Socialist perpetrator who was criminal, acted out of her own (also sexual) motives, and—unlike the majority of National Socialist perpetrators—could not claim that she had only been acting under superior orders. . . . Perhaps the power of the “image of Ilse Koch” is responsible for the tendency . . . to view female perpetrators in the concentration camps as at most a “remarkably brutal and power obsessed” minority among women.⁹

While this book is about women like Ilse Koch, it looks to avoid what Przyrembel calls the “image of Ilse Koch”—the differentiation and sensationalization of (sexually) violent women into stereotypes of the dangers of femininity gone awry.¹⁰ These two moves, I argue, police gender lines and sustain societal structures of gender inequality.

Coverage like “the image of Ilse Koch” and discussions that omit the possibility and existence of women perpetrators of sexual violence in war and conflict share a number of misconceptions about the nature of women, of gender, and the nature of sexual violence. This introduction discusses those common misconceptions, and how together they render women perpetrators either invisible or sensationalized.

Common Misconceptions about (the Study of) Sexually Violent Women in Global Politics

Misconception #1: The Category of “Woman” Is Easily Discernible, and It Is Possible to Definitively Tell Who Is in That Category and Who Is Outside of It

One element that descriptions of wartime rape that see only men as the perpetrators and descriptions that sensationalize women perpetrators share is the idea that there are people who are men and people who are women, and all people fit into those categories neatly. This

is one of the oldest dichotomies in human history. Though obvious exceptions exist, from Dionysus in Greek mythology¹¹ to India's *hijras*,¹² binary gender categories have been remarkably consistent across time, place, and culture in human social and political relations. The idea that people are either male or female can be found in almost every legal structure in present-day global politics: one must check a "gender" box on immigration forms passing through airports most places in the world; court records identify victims, perpetrators, and witnesses by their "biological sex" and date of birth; combatants are classified as either male or female by militaries, paramilitaries, and terrorist organizations alike.¹³ All of these uses of "biological sex" categories assume that all people fall into one of those two categories. In fact, until very recently, doctors who delivered babies who did not fit neatly into one of the two categories often told parents that their babies had "cosmetic" defects in their genital areas that were "corrected" in post-delivery cleanup, rather than identifying those babies as the genetically accurate "intersex."¹⁴ There are a number of different combinations of "sex" chromosomes that produce people of a number of different "biological sexes"—not two, but many.¹⁵ In fact, about one in a thousand people is some form of "intersex" in terms of chromosomal configuration and the physical manifestations of that chromosomal configuration.¹⁶

So, in common language, what does that mean? It means that the categories of "women" and "men" cannot be understood as mapped onto the (assumed) two common sex chromosomal configurations without regard to the variations that do not match those two dominant categories. At the very least, "biological sex" is a spectrum rather than a dichotomy.¹⁷ More likely, the dichotomized notion of "biological sex" with "male" at one extreme and "female" at another extreme is incoherent—rippled by not only intersex people, but by trans* or genderqueer people, who identify as either/or and/or neither/nor.¹⁸ Therefore, the line between people who are women and people who are men is not as clear as inherited accounts make it seem, and the idea that perpetrators are "men" and victims are "women" is oversimplified by definition. This oversimplification would endure even were it clear that people have essential characteristics in common based on their membership in sex categories. That assumption, though, referred to in the feminist literature

as “gender essentialism,” is the second misconception necessary to the contemporary invisibility, or sensationalism, of women who commit sex-based crimes in war and conflict.¹⁹

Misconception #2: Assuming It Is Possible to Parse the Category of “Woman,” the People in It Necessarily Have More in Common than Simple Membership in the Category

If many accounts of sexual violence in war and conflict rely on the stability of the categories of “male” and “female,” that reliance is based on the assumption that those distinctions are meaningful not only in a biological sense but in a social one. A significant amount of scholarship on sex and gender (generally and in the study of global politics) calls that understanding into question, however.²⁰ It suggests that “sex” and “gender” refer to different things that are often lumped into one. The simplest form of the sex/gender distinctions refer to “sex” as the biological and/or chromosomal characteristics that people have which give them the sex organs and chemical compositions to be understood as biologically male, female, either/or, or neither/nor.²¹ In this understanding, gender is related, but distinguishable. “Gender” is the set of social expectations associated with the perceived biological sex of a person—where people understood to be “men” are expected to display traits associated with masculinity, and people understood to be “women” are expected to display traits associated with femininity. In other words, gender is the imputation of essential characteristics to people because they are (perceived to be) of a particular biological sex.²²

Gendered expectations of people who are understood to be male include toughness, autonomy, aggression, rationality, confidence, and (hetero)sexuality.²³ These traits are understood by many if not most people to be a part of “masculinity.”²⁴ Gender expectations of people understood to be women include sensitivity, (inter)dependence, passivity, emotionality, quietness, innocence, grace, caring, and purity.²⁵ These traits are often understood as part of “femininity.” Because men are expected to be masculine and women are expected to be feminine, some stereotypical assumptions are frequently made about people on the basis of their biological sex. Some of these expectations are present in everyday social and political discourses. For example, in contemporary

Western culture, men are often expected to like sports, where women are expected to be interested in and well suited for care labor, including but not limited to motherhood. In the same circles, aggressive and/or dominant men are often understood to be fulfilling expectations about who they are and who they ought to be, while aggressive and/or dominant women are understood to be falling outside of normal behavior for women.²⁶ Women are often seen as in need of protection or even special treatment (e.g., the common suggestion that it is problematic for men and boys to “hit a girl”), where men are seen as responsible for providing that protection.²⁷

These day-to-day stereotypes of what “men” and “women” are capable of and/or expected to do sometimes translate into a less public but still well-understood conventional wisdom about men’s and women’s places in interstate relations and global politics.²⁸ For example, soldiering is traditionally understood to be men’s labor, and the security arena understood to be the purview of men and masculinity.²⁹ Even militaries that come to include women often do so expecting them both to maintain their femininity and to meet or exceed the standards of masculinity that are set for men in militaries.³⁰ Men are expected to be responsible for heavy labor in job markets (like construction) and women are expected to do care (like housekeeping) or home-based (like sewing) labor.³¹ These expectations come to divide where men are expected to be in global politics, and where women are expected to be. Cynthia Enloe suggests, adding on to the traditional feminist criticism that finds it problematic that women are expected to be in the private sphere and men are expected to be in the public sphere, that this public/private dichotomy also manifests in global politics.³² She provides evidence that, in global politics, men are expected to be in the international sphere (as soldiers, politicians, diplomats, and businessmen) and women are expected to remain in the private sphere (as care workers, wives, mothers, and house workers).³³

These assumptions, however, do not bear themselves out in the practice of everyday social and political life, much less in the global sphere. People understood to be women often have characteristics associated with masculinity, and people understood to be men often have characteristics associated with femininity.³⁴ Many people combine traits associated with masculinity and femininity, and many versions and degrees

of masculinities and femininities exist in the world. This hybridity is not the result of some merging or combination of manhood and womanhood, but rather a signifier of the false nature of the dichotomy from the start. Rather than maleness and femaleness translating into masculinity and femininity “naturally” or as a result of biology, gender can be understood as a social construction.³⁵ By that, I mean that men/masculinity and women/femininity are related by discourse, social expectation, social constraint, and social power rather than by something fundamental and essential that they have in common. This means that the association of men and women with essential traits related to those categories is fundamentally problematic.

This association can be seen as gendering—associating sex and gender. Though there is not one universal “gendering,” genderings—sets “of discourses which can set, change, enforce, and represent meaning”³⁶—can be found in almost every part of global politics. These socially constituted differences are intersubjective, and constantly evolve with intentional manipulation, changing social norms, and cultural context. In this way, gender relations are not power relations that just happen between men and women (or even between men and men or women and women). They are, instead, a complicated matrix of power relations, often (falsely) reduced to expectations about what men do and what women do.

This book argues that the suggestion that men are the (only) perpetrators of sexual violence in war and conflict and that women are (exclusively) the victims of such violence is yet another essentialist dividing line—where there is something that men have in common as a class (that they do not share with women) that makes them capable of the perpetration of such violence, and there is something that women have in common as a class (that they do not share with men) that makes them both incapable of the perpetration of such violence and likely to be its victims. When women are recognized as having perpetrated such violence, both those women and their violence, like that of Ilse Koch discussed above, are often framed as outside of the normal purview of femininity—there is something *wrong* not only with those women but with their femininity.³⁷ I argue that this is related to the third common misconception necessary to construct current media, scholarly, and legal frames about sexual violence in war and conflict—that women are more peaceful than men.

Misconception #3: Women Are More Peaceful than Men, and Do Not Commit (Political and Sexual) Violence

The assumption that women are more peaceful than men is almost as old as, and almost as prevalent as, the assumption that the categories of “man” and “woman” are both valid and socially meaningful. For example, the words “woman,” “women,” or “female” can be found in Thucydides’s *A History of the Peloponnesian War* in fifteen different places.³⁸ In those appearances, the most common role for women is, with children, being taken captive by the victor when they are seen as belonging to the vanquished. Other roles that women play are supportive: they provide men with the supplies to fight, encourage them to be brave, and take care of them when they are injured. Women’s care labor earns them men’s protection, and it is clearly not acceptable for men to attack women and children.³⁹

The story in *A History of the Peloponnesian War* is unique, but the role that women play in it is far from unique. In accounts of war from Thucydides to Grotius, and from Sun Tzu to George W. Bush, women are wars’ innocent, peaceful constitutive others—men fight wars to protect women, who are innocent of the cause and the fighting of the wars. Nearly thirty years ago, Jean Elshtain chronicled the ways that both women and men are often pigeonholed by gender ideal-typical expectations about the ways that people of their sex behave in war and conflict.⁴⁰ She saw that the stereotype of “just warriors” is often applied to men, under which they are expected on the basis of their manliness to fulfill a duty to protect women and defend righteous causes. Women, on the other hand, are often expected to behave as “beautiful souls,” in need of protection and justifying the defense of the state or nation. Still, even women who fulfill expectations of being gender-stereotyped “beautiful souls” to some degree or another often do not receive the promised protection or safety from war—instead, they are often endangered by it. For this reason, feminist scholars have talked about gender-stereotyped roles in war and conflict as a part of a “protection racket”⁴¹ where the chivalric pretension to protection of women underpins war-justifying logic but is not actualized in war fighting.

It is not only a long history of war narratives that suggest women are more peaceful than men, but sometimes women (and even feminists)

themselves. In fact, in International Relations (IR) scholarship, a significant amount of the first generation of work on gender and global politics emphasized women's place as outside of war and conflict, peaceful themselves and in opposition to men's wars.⁴² This scholarship reflected a number of women's peace movements in the global political arena, including but not limited to the Greenham Women's Common, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Women in Black.⁴³

People who see women as more peaceful than men suggest different reasons why, but all of their reasons are based on the idea that women have something essential in common. Some accounts trace women's peacefulness to women's physical weakness—because women are smaller and daintier than men, they are less able to protect themselves.⁴⁴ Women's inability to protect themselves made them conflict averse by default, which evolved into a personal and political commitment to peace.⁴⁵ Other accounts relate women's peacefulness to their innocence—women are perceived as more pure than men, without the need to get their proverbial hands dirty in the business of politics and war.⁴⁶ In these stories, women have the privileged position of not having to deal with war, and can therefore preserve their purity while men fight for, and over, them and their protection.⁴⁷ Still other accounts relate women's peacefulness to motherhood, suggesting that the natural bond between women and their children makes women more nurturing, which leads them to be more peaceful.⁴⁸ In this view, women see how fragile and vulnerable children are, and come to love and care for their children.⁴⁹ They then see other people (whether friend or enemy) as someone else's children, and have a sense of compassion that only motherhood can bring.⁵⁰

All of these stories, however flattering to women, share the preceding misconception: that there is something essential about women *as women* that they have in common. The women whose stories line the pages of this book, though, are a stunning counterexample to the particular gender essentialism that women are more peaceful than men. Women who perpetrate, participate in, command, and support sexual violence in war and conflict are anything but the passive, innocent stereotype of a woman that the descriptions of women as more peaceful than men support. It is possible to suggest (as many

do) that the few women who commit sex crimes during war and conflict are anomalies—nonfeminine women, abused women, or examples of femininity gone wrong, while most “real” or “regular” women fit (more or less) into the traditional notion of femininity.⁵¹ Recent work, however, suggests that this account is trying to put the square peg of “women” into the round hole of “femininity,” where they do not actually fit.⁵² This work suggests that women are *as capable as men*, not only in areas where positive personal, educational, or career opportunity are involved, but also in the areas of negative, violent, and/or criminal behavior. Those “women” (like “men”) live in a gendered world, with gendered expectations, gendered opportunity structures, and gendered power—so they (like “men”) find themselves constrained by gender in their choices and opportunities.⁵³ These constraints, though, are social, rather than natural, biological, or fundamental.

To say that gendered expectations are social constructions and social constraints is *not to say* that they are easy to change, to get around, or to destroy. Gendered expectations, especially gendered expectations about men’s violence and women’s non-violence, are long-standing and sticky. Social constructions are no less a part of everyday life because they are socially constructed. At the same time, exceptions to and transgressions against the gendered social expectation that women are peaceful demonstrate both that women are not more peaceful than men, and that the social norm that says they are is a problematic oversimplification. It is an oversimplification, however, that is necessary to the illusion that women cannot, and do not, commit sex-based war crimes, and that the women who do are anomalous. As Lori Girshick explains, referring to the LGBTQ community in the United States, “woman-to-woman sexual violence is an invisible form of sexual violation because of our denial that women are sexual perpetrators.”⁵⁴ In this context, while some “take comfort in statistics showing how rare woman-on-woman assault is,”⁵⁵ others see it as important to understand, even though it is rare. However, attempts to understand women’s sexual violence in war and conflict often make the same essentialist mistakes of accounts of wartime sexual violence that ignore women perpetrators—understanding women’s behavior as somehow fundamentally different than men’s.

Misconception #4: When Women Commit (Political and Sexual) Violence, They Do So for Different Reasons than Men Do, and Those Differences Are Theoretically and Empirically Interesting to Study

Even when news sources, blogs, scholarly articles, and policy analyses do acknowledge that women commit sexual violence in war and conflict, they often start with the assumption that women who commit violence are motivated by different forces than men, and that their violence is somehow quantitatively and qualitatively different from similar acts of violence committed by male counterparts. In *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*,⁵⁶ Caron Gentry and I argued that that women's violence in global politics is often dealt with in the media in ways that are sex-specific to women perpetrators. We called these the mother, monster, and whore narratives.⁵⁷ The mother narratives characterize women being mothers as fundamental to how they come to participate in violence, either as violent mothers who nurture violent men or as they seek revenge for the loss of their families and maternal identities. The second set of narratives we identified are the monster narratives. These stories of women's motivations for engaging in violence frame female perpetrators as psychologically disturbed persons, harder to control and more monstrous than men who might commit similar acts or be involved in similar organizations. In these accounts, the monstrosity of politically violent women is unique because its source is the sort of irrational anger that only women are seen to be capable of, or the insanity that failing at other aspects of femininity can inspire. The third set of narratives are the whore narratives. In the whore narratives, women's violence is either caused by erotomania/sexual obsession or erotic dysfunction/the inability to satisfy men. Other work has followed up on, complicated, and critiqued this typology, but recognized the existence of each of the narratives.⁵⁸

These three narratives tell different stories but share several things. First, they separate the question of why women commit political violence from the question of why men do so (or even why people generally do so). Second, they distinguish "broken" women who might commit political violence from a stereotypical real or normal woman, who continues to be, as women have always been assumed to be, more peaceful and less physically and emotionally capable of violence than her male

counterparts. Third, despite the strong association between normal women and peacefulness, these stories associate violent women's violence with excess, fracture, or frustration specific to femininities.

This is all the more true in the cases of violence among women in this book. If women's perpetration of political violence generally is framed as unnatural, then women's perpetration of sexual violence, especially against other women, seems basically impossible to imagine. It is assumed that, however little all women share, they do (or at least ought) share an understanding of how sexual violence is a key to gender subordination, and therefore resist perpetrating it. If war rape is "an assault against the female gender, violating her body and its reproductive capabilities as a 'weapon of war,'"⁵⁹ then it must be men who are violating "the female gender" as a whole.⁶⁰ This is compounded by women's presumed interest in women's emancipation. In other words, if rape is gender subordination, female rapists are people who are *both* negatively impacted by gender subordination *and* perpetuating it. This is not unprecedented—for example, some Jews were complicit in the Holocaust, and some Tutsis killed in the Rwandan genocide.⁶¹ Still, for some reason, many people are more unsettled when the oppression in which the oppressed are complicit is sexual violence. Many assume that women *would not* and *cannot* rape, much less commit those crimes in war and/or genocide.

It may be for these reasons that the conventional wisdom fails to group women perpetrators of sexual violence with their male counterparts. With Wight and Myers, I see that a violent woman's gender is "the primary explanation or mitigating factor offered up in any attempt to understand her crime."⁶² People with a political interest in maintaining and reifying (part or all of) traditional gender roles tend to exhibit a blindness to women's sexual violence in war and conflict. As a result, stories of women's wartime sexual violence are either silenced, or produced and reproduced in ways that deny women's agency in violence, and characterize women who do commit violence as singular or aberrant.⁶³ Accounts of women's violence "become systems of signification which are productive (or reproductive) of their subject women" specifically and women more generally.⁶⁴ If violent women are differentiated from an ideal understanding of what is expected of *women as women*, then no further accounting for their violence is necessary, and the (false) conception that women are or could be *fundamentally* peaceful or nonviolent does not require interrogation.

I argue that an interest in maintaining that ideal notion of womanhood is a key reason that women's motivations for committing political violence are often analyzed differently than men's motivations. In addition to distinctions between women's commission of war crimes and men's similar behaviors, politically violent women are themselves characterized as distinct from normal or real women. "Real" or "normal" women are seen as incapable of committing violence generally and the sexual violation of women specifically. "Real" women are peaceful, conservative, virtuous, and restrained—feminine; violent women ignore those boundaries of womanhood."⁶⁵ Because the stories of sexually violent women conflict with the ideal-typical notion of peaceful femininity, violent women fit uneasily (if at all) in political discourse. Their decisions to engage in political violence are rarely framed as voluntarily taken, and, when they are, they, by definition, need different explanatory theories than men's violence, which is more normalized.

Sexually violent women, though, are "women" as much as any other "women" are women—and defining femininity as nonviolent does not make it that way. They commit sexual violence in war and conflict, as much as anyone does—and defining sexual violence in war and conflict as something women do not do does not change that. In this book, I argue that sexually violent women, like sexually violent men, cannot be accounted for by or disaggregated by the "biological sex" of the body of the perpetrator. While deconstructing these categories will be a majority of the work of this book, it is important to recognize (and critique) some of the costs associated with deconstructing traditional notions of the sex of perpetrators of sexual war crimes.

Misconception #5: If Women Are the Perpetrators of (Political and Sexual) Violence in War and Conflict, It Is No Longer Important to Look at Women as Victims, or at the Gendered Impacts of War and Conflict

One common result of recognizing that women commit any sort of proscribed or illegal violence in global politics is the erasure of the gendered nature of victimization in conflict. A significant portion of the few stories that *are* told of women's conflict sexual violence characterize it as *reverse* gender subordination—where women are by definition no longer the

victims when they become perpetrators.⁶⁶ Barbara Ehrenreich's discussion of the prison abuse at Abu Ghraib is an example of such a discourse—she argues that women committing sexual violence demonstrates the ultimate success of (and current unnecessary of) the feminist movement, since women who can abuse women are now by definition equal to men and therefore not in need of whatever the feminist movement had to offer.⁶⁷ In other words, some argue female war criminals show that women's unequal and sex-specific victimization in war is over—that women cannot both be victims of conflict violence (as a class) and perpetrators (as individuals or as a group)—it has to be one or the other.⁶⁸

This might be because recognizing women perpetrators distorts frames that characterize sexual violence in war and conflict as a crime that men commit against women. But women *have* participated in, encouraged, and led such violence. This often seems paradoxical to observers looking to make sense of gender subordination, both generally and in war and conflict. If wartime rape is an ultimate site of women's marginalization, why do women subordinate women?

The answers to these questions, I argue, are both uncomfortable and straightforward. While gendered orders in the world often position women differently than men, we often mistake that difference in positioning for a difference in nature. While similarly positioned people often feel empathy or solidarity with those who suffer the same plight, we often mistake that as a natural solidarity or community among women. As a result, we expect women who have experienced gender subordination to be less likely to enact gender subordination. There are a number of flaws with this logic, though. The first, discussed above, is that the assumption that women have something in common because they are women is problematic on a variety of levels. The second is that it assumes that men's likelihood to subordinate women on the basis of gender comes from a place where those men are not subordinated on the basis of gender. But, as a significant amount of feminist scholarship has noted, men are often subordinated on the basis of gender, and/or subject to expectations of gendered power structures that are at odds with their personal sense of desire and/or identity.⁶⁹

Instead, I suggest that “men,” “women,” and people who fall into either/or or neither/nor category *all* live in a world of gendered structures and gendered expectations that shape what opportunities they

have, what they are expected to do, and how their choices are reacted to in the public sphere. People are not obligated to and do not always act within the expectations of those gendered structures. Gender subordination is not something that *men* exclusively do to *women*, but rather something any people can do to any people on the basis of gender-based expectations. Who is doing the perpetrating, then, does not change the nature of an act of gender subordination—either for the perpetrator or (most importantly) for the victim. I contend that women’s (individual or group) participation as perpetrators of sexual violence does not necessarily mean that women (individually or as a class) are not victimized disproportionately in war and genocide or by that sexual violence. Instead, many of the women in this book are sexually victimizing and subordinating other women on the basis of gender, while they themselves live in and experience a highly gender-hierarchical world.

It is, then, worth engaging thinking about what it means to characterize women as victimized on the basis of gender in war and conflict. This book builds on the argument that the *practices* and *impacts* of genocide, war, and conflict are gendered along many axes.⁷⁰ War and conflict often affect people positioned as women differently than they affect people positioned as men in a number of ways.⁷¹ Work, and income, are often distributed along what scholars of gender have identified as “gendered divisions of labor,” which are often exacerbated during war and conflict, leaving “women” operating with more responsibilities and less resources.⁷² People often understood as women are assumed to be protected from wars (given their status as by-definition civilians), regardless of whether or not protection is provided. This discursive double bind means that, in practice, women are often the majority of wars’ civilian victims, and experience war with sexualized divisions of labor.⁷³ For people positioned as women, war and conflict often end decades after the shooting stops—where the lasting effects of infrastructural damage, food and health-care deprivation, social structure breakdown, and governance destruction and reconstruction often influence their lives in a continuing way, particularly at home where the influence is the least visible.⁷⁴ Often, women’s experiences of sexual violence in war and conflict also continue long after the shooting stops—in the form of social stigma, rejection by family, long-term internal injuries, and children born as a product of wartime rape.⁷⁵

Women are not the only ones who experience genocide, war, and conflict as gendered. Often, people understood to be men are expected to fight in wars regardless of their personal preferences.⁷⁶ That is because idealized masculinities are often associated with soldiering, where men achieve manliness, and membership in social and political communities, through the chivalry associated with providing protection (and glory) to their nation (and their women) by making and fighting in wars. This call to service as “just warriors” or citizen-soldiers has affected many otherwise unwilling soldiers, and led to a significant amount of death and destruction in war and conflict.⁷⁷

Feminist scholars have argued that these gendered roles in war and conflict, and their resultant gendered impacts, are not incidental or coincidental, but a necessary element of the ways that wars and conflicts are framed, justified, and performed.⁷⁸ This argument suggests that the “visible” gendered violence of war and conflict (for example, sexual violence committed against women by men) is a symptom of an even larger problem of the gendered nature of war and conflict.⁷⁹ This orientation is crucial to understanding why characterizations of sexual violence in war and conflict as incidental or coincidental are not only inaccurate but problematic, theoretically and practically.

Misconception #6: Sexual Violence in War and Conflict Is Incidental or Coincidental, Not a Common, Deliberate, and Strategic Weapon of War

Discussion of sexual violence in war and conflict that either assumes away women perpetrators or sensationalizes them often, though not always, shares the assumption that sexual violence is an incidental or coincidental part of war. Much of the policy and jurisprudential activism around sexual violence in war and conflict suggests that war and the rape that happens during it are separable—that it is possible to fight wars and conflicts paying attention to *jus in bello* rules, including, but often not limited to, restraint from sexual violence.⁸⁰ This assumption has led many to study the variation in sexual violence in war and conflict, looking for commonalities among conflicts where sexual violence is higher or lower.⁸¹ While these researchers find a number of conflicts in which wartime sexual violence is low, neither these nor any other

identifiable researchers claim that wars *without* gendered and/or sexual violence have occurred.⁸²

Instead, sexual violence *in war* is as old as war itself. During wars, rape “becomes a metaphor for national humiliation . . . as well as a tactic of war used to symbolically prove the superiority of one’s national group.”⁸³ The use of this tactic is, according to the feminist literature, overdetermined. War *is* sexual violence, and therefore it is not surprising but expected that it includes sexual violence.⁸⁴ Soldiers who fight in wars are often motivated to fight using both gendered and sexually charged language (and related stereotypes), which suggests that the manliness of soldiers is proved by the degree to which they are able to feminize other soldiers—either directly or by taking dominion over “their” women.⁸⁵

The number of conflicts in which war rape has been prevalent, when collected, is stunning. Feminist political theorist Robin May Schott finds references in ancient texts from Homer’s *Iliad* to the Christian Bible, and recounts particularly brutal instances of war rape in World War II, the former Yugoslavia, the Rwandan genocide, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁸⁶ Before these extreme examples were recognized, sexual violence in war and conflict had “been characterized by physical invisibility—in the double sense that civilian casualties are often invisible in official casualty statistics and in the sense that rape does not always leave visible signs on the bodies of victims.”⁸⁷ Yet “organized rape has been an integral aspect of war for a long time.”⁸⁸

Although sexual violence has been a weapon of war throughout history, only recently has it been explicitly recognized as such. In Schott’s words, “with this physical invisibility has gone political invisibility.”⁸⁹ Since the early 1990s, there has been an upswing in the recognition of rape and other gender-based violence as war crimes and/or crimes against humanity in the institutions and conversations of international law.⁹⁰ While the punishment of wartime rape had previously been very inconsistent, the 1990s saw it broadly classified as a war crime in international jurisprudence.

Saying that sexual violence is a “weapon of genocide” and a “weapon of war” does not equate or even compare the experiences of individual or collective rape and individual or collective death. If genocide is an explicit attempt to exterminate a group of people (be it on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or some other axis),

then rape is used as a weapon of genocide when rapes are committed intentionally and systematically to further the cause of that extermination. The purposes that rape as a weapon of genocide can serve include destroying collective consciousness, forced impregnation (and therefore racial or ethnic impurity), destruction of household (economic and social) units, and national/ethnic humiliation. If war is an attempt to conquer, humiliate, destroy, or remove the enemy, sexual violence in war and conflict can be (and is) used as an instrument of those ends in similar ways.

Seeing sexual violence as a weapon of war, though, is only part of the picture. Many who recognize rape as a weapon of war fail to understand it as gendered. That fallacy is addressed next.

Misconception #7: Sexual Violence in War and Conflict Is Not Gendered

K. R. Carter defines war rape as “a crime—and, in the context of my argument, also a weapon—that can be sex/gender neutral.”⁹¹ Carter characterizes it as “sex/gender neutral” because it is a weapon that can be used against both women and men, and because “men are . . . victims of rape as a weapon of war.”⁹² In this understanding, it is not the sex or gender of the body/ies committing sexual violence, or the sex or gender of the body/ies victimized by that violence. Instead, what makes sexual violence worth considering as a weapon of war is the pure volume of the destruction that rape causes—to men, to women, to children, and to societies as a whole.⁹³ Many who either ignore or sensationalize women’s perpetration of war rape do so sharing, explicitly or implicitly, Carter’s assumption that the commission of rape *on* multiply sexed bodies constitutes it as both sex- and gender-neutral.

This book argues that sexual violence in war and conflict is neither sex- nor gender-neutral. It is not sex-neutral because those committing the sexual violence are attentive to the sex of the bodies they are victimizing, both for their own sake and for the signification of the violation as an act of sexualized power.⁹⁴ Wartime rapists communicate emasculation to “enemy” men and express their own masculinity on male and female bodies differently.⁹⁵ Even if war rape were sex-neutral, however, its sex neutrality would not lead to gender neutrality.

Instead, being victimized in sexual violence in war and conflict is an experience shared by those understood as biologically female and those feminized in political and social relations. A number of feminist scholars argue that the prevalence and even possibility of war rape is a key threat both to women's security and to the possibility of achieving gender equality.⁹⁶ Judith Gardam sees wartime rape as a cornerstone of gender subordination, arguing that "nowhere is women's marginalization more evident than in the attitude of the law of armed conflict to rape, an experience limited to women."⁹⁷ Gardam argues that "rape is . . . an integral part of the system ensuring the maintenance of the subordination of women."⁹⁸

Sexual violence in war and conflict can be seen as an attack on the "enemy" state or nation in two different ways. First, "it is a symbolic attack on men's virility and their ability to protect their women."⁹⁹ As Jan Jindy Pettman explains, "rape functions as a strategy to deliver a blow against a collective enemy by striking at a group of high symbolic value."¹⁰⁰ Second, conflict sexual violence directly and materially threatens a state or nation's ability to sustain itself through cultural and biological reproduction. Characterized as "occupation of the womb,"¹⁰¹ forced impregnation is "committed systematically" and "generates mass terror, panic, and destruction"¹⁰² through the physical but also symbolic consequences of these acts.¹⁰³ In other words, forced impregnation causes both a fearful emotional reaction and a physically destructive impact. Even though many of these observations about the gendered nature of different forms of sexual violence in war and conflict are accurate, many of them are still framed in ways heavily reliant on understanding men as the perpetrators of the violence, and women as its victims, an assumption discussed in more detail below.

Misconception #8: For Sexual Violence in War and Conflict to Be Gendered, Men Have to Be the Ones Committing It

A widely held but rarely discussed viewpoint in a number of the policy and jurisprudence communities that deal with sexual violence in war and conflict frames it as a gendered phenomenon, as seen in recent jurisprudence of sexual violence in war and conflict. The term "genocidal rape" is a relatively new term, used to specify a particular subset

of sexual violence in war and conflict wherein rape is used as a tool of genocide—of extermination of a national, religious, or ethnic group. This new term signifies changes in thinking about the moral status of sexual violence in conflict. While sexual violence *in war* is as old as war itself, the ethical and legal status of that violence has changed significantly over time, place, culture, and conflict. Some (especially ancient) war stories account for women's sexual enslavement as one of the victors' spoils at the end of the conflict.¹⁰⁴ Others characterize sexual violence in war and conflict as a violation of the property rights of a man to whom the raped woman is understood as belonging.¹⁰⁵ Recently, in international law, sexual violence in war and conflict has been characterized as a violation of women's human rights, a reification of gender inequality, a war crime, and sometimes an act of genocide.¹⁰⁶

With a similar outlook, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) decided that occurrences of rape can “constitute genocide in the same way as any other so long as they were committed with the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a particular group, targeted as such.”¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, the court decided that “the rape of Tutsi women was systematic and was perpetrated against all Tutsi women and solely against them.”¹⁰⁸ In fact, the ICTR and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) have been the leading courts in identifying and prosecuting the crime of genocidal rape, though those identifications and prosecutions have resulted in fewer convictions than some advocates for women's rights and women's security argue are appropriate. The ICTR provides arguably the first jurisprudential definition of rape in international law, explaining that “while rape has been defined in certain national jurisdictions as non-consensual intercourse, variations on the act of rape may include acts which involve the insertion of objects and/or the use of bodily orifices not considered to be intrinsically sexual.”¹⁰⁹ It followed that characterization with the explanation that rape is a type and magnitude of force, rather than the mechanizations of particular actions, “used for such purposes as intimidation, degradation, humiliation, discrimination, punishment, control or destruction of a person.”¹¹⁰ In ICTR jurisprudence, one can be guilty of genocidal rape either by having committed the rape oneself or by commanding, aiding and abetting, or inciting it.¹¹¹ To find a defendant guilty of genocidal rape, two elements are necessary: an act listed as an act

of genocide must have been committed, and it must have been specifically targeted towards a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group with the special intent necessary for genocide—destruction of the group.¹¹² Citing the European Court for Human Rights, the ICTR discussed the physical and psychological scarring that results from genocidal rape as evidence that it constitutes a crime against humanity.¹¹³

Still, most discussions of genocidal rape (and wartime sexual violence more generally) assume that if women are (largely, individually and collectively) its victims, men are exclusively the perpetrators. Many court cases either implicitly or explicitly define the victims of genocidal rape as female and the perpetrators as men who violate them. Many arguments for conviction of genocidal rapists, and indeed the convictions themselves, specify women as the population of the victims and one or many men who did the victimizing. They assume, implicitly or explicitly, that the male sex of the perpetrator is a constitutive feature of the gendering of the violence.

Women's commission of wartime sexual violence is often invisible in these narratives, then, by definition. Some feminist scholars see it as important not to lose the long-overdue recognition of women as victims of sexual violence in war and conflict because of the very few women who perpetrate the crime. In conflict sexual violence jurisprudence, this is upheld by a number of different characterizations of the sex/gender of victims/perpetrators. Combing through cases of war rape jurisprudence suggests additional ways the sex of the perpetrator of war rape is assumed to be male. First, many cases employ a characterization of war rape as primarily a crime of the commission of a sex act, and as therefore primarily a sexual crime. This understanding of the sexualized content of the crime (as opposed to seeing the crime as a combination of sex and power, or as a crime of power) seems implicitly to limit its perpetrators to men (who are assumed to be sexual) and its victims to women (who are assumed not to desire base sexuality). Second, heavy reliance on the concept of gender justice¹¹⁴ as a justification for the prosecution of sexual violence in war and conflict seems to help to conflate gender justice (which should be about masculinities and femininities, masculinization and feminization, as well as women and men) and sex justice (a sense that men are the “bad guys” who oppress women, and that sex discrimination is both dichotomous and one-directional). Third, the particular

reliance on the idea that what makes sexual violence in war and conflict so terrible is women's innocence¹¹⁵ defines not only women victims as incapable of violence, but also women perpetrators. These elements are visible in the discussions below of specific cases of women's sexual violence against other women during conflict.

This book suggests that it is important to disaggregate, but continue to understand, both sex justice and gender justice. A woman (or a man) being raped *by a woman* makes her (or him) *no less raped* for the sex of the perpetrator. An act of rape being committed *by a woman* makes it no less gender subordinating for the victim, male or female. The gendered nature of sexual violence in war and conflict is not limited to, or mapped on to, the sex of the perpetrator.

This argument, however, does not mean to suggest that recognizing women as perpetrators of sexual violence in war and conflict does not change that violence should be conceptualized. Such an assumption can lead to the silencing of stories of female perpetrators, male victims, and male and female victims of female perpetrators. Instead, I mean to suggest that seeing female perpetrators (and sexual violence in war and conflict as an act of feminization rather than an instantiation of masculinity) changes the way that sexual violence in war and conflict is conceptualized. The changes this re-visioning inspires are complicated and require retheorizing not only sexual violence in war, but both gender and war.

Misconception #9: Including Women Perpetrators in the Analysis of Sexual Violence in War and Conflict Does Not Necessarily Change How Wartime Sexual Violence Is Defined, Understood, and Theorized

Approaches to the perpetration of sexual violence in war and conflict that ignore women perpetrators often continue to assume that the perpetrators are exclusively male. While accounts that sensationalize women's violence change the face of the perpetrators, they also treat women perpetrators differently than male perpetrators. In that context, accounts of sexual violence in war and conflict and accounts of that violence perpetrated by women are substantively different. I argue that this approach is fundamentally flawed.

A surface exploration might suggest that “adding” women perpetrators *should not* change theories of sexual violence in war and conflict. After all, I have been making the argument that wartime sexual violence is not *something different* because women do it. Indeed, I reiterate, conflict sexual violence *is not* something different because women do it. That said, theories of sexual violence in war and conflict were often constructed *assuming men are the perpetrators* and *assuming an essential masculinity to the male perpetrators*. The combination of those assumptions are problematic, because they not only leave out women perpetrators, but any characteristics associated with femininity (e.g., emotion, impulse, relationality) which might go into motivating the commission of sexual violence in war and conflict, and any characteristics associated with masculinity that might be present in its performances, its victims, and/or its significations. Theories constructed *by men, about men, assuming masculinity* are partial not only because they leave out women *as people* but also substantive considerations related to femininity.¹¹⁶

I argue that gender analysis is crucial to understanding the occurrence of, meanings of, and representations of (women’s) sexual violence, against each other and more generally. To this end, the book rethinks not only women’s sexual violence but men’s as well. It suggests that such rethinking is a necessary part of theorizing sexual violence in war and conflict (and the accompanying gender subordination) as something *people* do, rather than as something *men* do. Including previously obscured gender inequalities in accounting for people’s sexual violence in war and conflict “allows us to see how many of the insecurities affecting us all, women and men alike, are gendered in their historical origins, their conventional definitions, and their contemporary manifestations.”¹¹⁷ Recognizing that women sometimes commit sexual violence in war and conflict, this perspective argues, is insufficient. Instead, that recognition should be accompanied by rethinking the phenomena of sexual violence in war and conflict to account for not only the women but the gendered complexities that were previously absent from narrow and sex-biased accounts.

Misconception #10: Post-Conflict Justice for Sexual Violence Necessarily Relies on Being Able to Disaggregate the Sex of Perpetrators and the Sex of Victims

As discussed above, jurisprudence and even scholarly analysis about sexual violence in war and conflict seems to rely fairly firmly on the idea that men are its perpetrators. This book argues that the assumption that all perpetrators of sexual violence are men actually hinders post-conflict justice in a number of ways. It creates spaces of invisibility around women perpetrators, around women victims of women perpetrators, and around male victims generally. These spaces of invisibility, I argue, are not necessary to post-conflict justice, even if those who promote them might see them as an essential shortcut. Instead, they are conceptually problematic (since women can and do play roles in perpetration) as well as practically problematic (since they make it more difficult to identify and punish women perpetrators and to provide justice to their victims).

Instead, the theoretical reformulations inspired by seeing both women and femininity in the perpetration of sexual violence in war and conflict can be translated into suggestions for dealing with rape among women more effectively in prosecutions, and therefore more accurately accounting for occurrences and gender dynamics of sexual violence in war and conflict. These hopes rest in a few foundational principles on which the law of wartime rape should be conceptualized. First, it is crucial to understand that gender subordination is not about *being* male or female in some absolute sense, but instead about perceived membership or even association in/with those groups. Second, those perceived associations have only *subordinating* impacts because gender categorization and association is at its foundation a power relationship, where association with masculinities augments power and association with femininities disempowers.

As I mentioned above, then, it is best not to see gender subordination as something men *do to* women or women *do to* women, but to understand it instead as a discursive constellation of gender-based power relationships (and related expectations) based on the perception of maleness and femaleness, masculinity and femininity. Such an interpretation resolves the apparent paradox of female perpetrators of conflict

sexual violence victimizing individual women in acts that also subjugate women as a social category.

The key to rewriting conflict sexual violence jurisprudence successfully, in my view, will be to preserve the “gender justice” paradigm in which war rape is politically and jurisprudentially condemned, while breaking down the sex and gender essentialism that maps that “gender justice” paradigm into understanding women as necessarily the innocent victims and men as necessarily the violent perpetrators. An alternative conceptualization might begin with seeing war rape as an act of *feminization* of the victim and the victim’s group, regardless of the biological sex of the perpetrator or the victim. Such an approach would prove more descriptive of *what happens* in war rape and (therefore) more useful in jurisprudential situations of prosecuting rapists and policy situations of protecting victims. This sort of thinking can serve as the foundation for a gender-conscious practice of post-conflict justice around sexual violence.

Seeing Rape among Women: An Outline

This book, then, looks to pair critical feminist theorizing and the analysis of women’s sexual violence in war and conflict. By “critical feminist theorizing,” I mean analysis that seeks to identify and discover the implications of genderings in global politics. It is “neither just about women, nor about the addition of women to male-stream constructions, it is about transforming ways of being and knowing.”¹¹⁸ Looking through “gender lenses” is a way to filter knowledge, such that

[t]o look at the world through gender lenses is to focus on gender as a particular kind of power relation, or to trace out the ways in which gender is central to understanding international processes. Gender lenses also focus on the everyday experiences of women *as women* and highlight the consequences of their own unequal social position.¹¹⁹

The stories about women who commit wartime sex crimes in this book are about women, but they are also (and more) about gender. Particularly, scholars studying gender and global politics have emphasized that gendered power relations are not inherent to relations

between people understood to be women and people understood to be men (or even between men and men or women and women).¹²⁰ Instead, in the case of the subject matter of this volume, gender relations happen among parties in war and conflict, among war crimes perpetrators, and between perpetrators and their victims. Many of these gendered relationships, including many of those in the pages of this book, are ones in which “institutional hierarchies are *naturalized* by feminization and thus are effectively depoliticized,” where “feminization as devalorization” intersects race/ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, and other cleavages in global politics.¹²¹ Since “gender is relational,” “*privileging who and what is masculinized is inextricable from devaluing who and what is feminized*”—one requires the other.¹²² Therefore, instead of looking at women wartime rapists as if “women” were either a natural category or one separate from men or masculinity, the chapters in this book study those women as gendered actors, navigating gendered relationships, and living in a gendered world.

Chapter 1, “Conditions That Drove Them to the Brink of Death: Gender, War, Genocide, and Sexual Violence,” starts this process by discussing the relationship between gender, war, and genocide. It introduces the concept of gender in more depth, detailing the complicated relationships between sex, gender, and gendered expectations and receptions of human behavior. It then applies this analysis to war and conflict, suggesting that the conceptual structure, causes, performance, and results of war and conflict are profoundly laced by gendered expectations, gendered competition, and gendered inequities. Suggesting that there are gendered dimensions both to war generally and to ethnic conflict specifically, the chapter makes the argument that gender analysis is necessary to understanding the dynamics of gender, war, and conflict. It then expands on the argument in this introduction that sexual violence in war and conflict is gendered and endemic to war and conflict. It argues that understanding sexual violence in war and conflict as gendered adds explanatory power to understandings of war and to understandings of gender.

Chapter 2, “Man-to-Man Communication: The Impossible Existence of Rape among Women,” suggests that the analysis in Chapter 1 is a significant part of a discursive structure that makes the recognition of women wartime rapists almost impossible and even-handed treatment

of the ones who are recognized unlikely. It argues that the current media, scholarly, and jurisprudential treatments of wartime rape are structured around narratives that require women victims and male perpetrators. It examines the assumptions about *what men are*, *what women are*, and *what men and women signify in war and conflict* that are necessary to require male perpetrators of female victims in war rape narratives. The chapter argues in turn that each of these assumptions are problematic. It contends that the discursive impossibility of women wartime rapists is not only troublesome for the analysis of sexual violence in war and conflict, but is also a linchpin of current (gender-unjust) justifications for and motivations for the perpetration of conflict, war, and genocide.

The discursive impossibility of women perpetrators of sexual violence in war and conflict in chapter 2 is coupled with the stories of those very women in chapter 3, “The Unforgettable Wound: Seeing Rape among Women in Conflict.” This chapter explores rape among women in conflicts across the world—Darfur, Armenia, Germany, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These cases were selected to show a variety of conflicts in which women engaged in a variety of types of sexual violence. This chapter suggests that the women rapists in these conflicts are not more inclined to sensitivity, reservation, or non-violence than men are. It notes, however, that these women are also not seen as the same as men, even when their behaviors are similar and the perpetrators claim similar motivations. Instead, these women are often held up as examples of the problems with, and therefore the need to control, femininity. In each of these stories, there is a “double move of sensationalizing *that women rape women* and distancing women rapists both from agency in their own actions and from normal femininity.”¹²³ It compares their discursive impossibility to the information that we have about these women, their lives, their crimes, and their motivations.

Chapter 4, “There’s No Evidence Women Are Any Worse at Rape than Men Are: Understanding Women, War, and Rape,” constructs a theory of sexual violence in war and conflict aware of women perpetrators and the role of not only masculinities but also femininities in the creation and perpetration of wartime sexual violence. It begins by suggesting, in general terms, that the underlying problem of the devaluation and devalorization of femininity needs to be addressed to address these

manifestations of that problem. That problem can only be addressed in a world where values associated with femininity are “more universally valued in public life” and “women’s agency in their decisions is as recognized as men’s agency in theirs.”¹²⁴ I suggest that a path towards those goals starts with recognizing the contingent and contextual nature of *all* interaction and *all* decision-making, not only women’s. Taking this as a starting point, Chapter 4 critically engages existing theoretical approaches to sexual violence in war and conflict. It suggests reformulations of those theoretical approaches that help to understand sexual violence in war and conflict, even as it is among women. In so doing, it uses feminist theorizing to construct an argument that the characterization of sexual violence in war and conflict as gender subordination is not inaccurate—instead, inherited notions of what that gender subordination is are oversimple. Revisiting the discussion of sex and gender in chapter 1, this chapter makes the argument that seeing gender subordination more complexly can strengthen theories of wartime sexual violence, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator. The chapter concludes by suggesting a way forward to theorizing gender subordination (in war and outside of it) that accounts for the dynamics of masculinization, feminization, and gender subordination, acknowledging that women can be the perpetrators of those acts in addition to being (and sometimes while being) their victims.

Chapter 5, “The Wrong of Rape: How Women Rapists Change Criminal Jurisprudence,” turns from theorizing to practice. It suggests that accounting for rape among women in post-conflict justice is complicated, given that it complicates (and sometimes contravenes) some of the political forces that have drawn important attention to the commission of the war crime of rape. Expanding on the discussion of the possible directions for war rape jurisprudence above, it suggests complications for the current “gender justice” paradigm of post-conflict justice for sexual violence. It suggests that a new paradigm for evaluating war rape should rely on an understanding that gender subordination is both structurally systematic and substantively fluid. Gender subordination relies on both the delineation of gendered categories based on perceived associations with sex, and on the inscription of power on those gendered categories. This creates a situation of both incomplete independence and unequal power. This chapter uses that understanding of gender subordination

to explain that women, both as individuals and as a group, can be seen as victims of women's acts of sexual violence *without* that victimhood denying women's capacity to exercise political and/or violent agency. It introduces the idea of gender/violence as a war crime to explore the enforceability of this more complex notion of gender subordination.

In conclusion, chapter 6, "One of the Most Abiding Myths of Our Time: Re-visioning Women, War, and Rape," suggests that this reconstruction of conflict sexual violence jurisprudence could be carried over into policy and advocacy work on war rape specifically and on gender subordination in war and conflict generally. It puts forward a frame for reconceptualizing the relationships between gender, war, and sexual violence in the policy world with an aim towards decreasing both wartime sexual violence specifically and gender subordination generally *without* essentializing, sensationalizing, or ignoring violent women. It does so by reframing two recent conflict sexual violence cases in the terms of the lessons learned about impossibility, visibility, and gender subordination in this book. In so doing, it suggests that rape among women is not something sensational, unmanageable, or strange for scholars, media, or courts—at least, it does not have to be.