

# **Ordered Rape: A Principal–Agent Analysis of Wartime Sexual Violence in the DR Congo**

**Gerald Schneider<sup>1</sup>, Lilli Banholzer<sup>2</sup>,  
and Laura Albarracin<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Policy makers and academics often contend that organizational anarchy permits soldiers to perpetrate sexual violence. A recent United Nations report supports this thesis especially with regard to the massive sexual abuse in the Congolese civil war. We challenge the anarchy argument and maintain, based on a principal–agent framework, that opportunistic military commanders can order their soldiers to rape through the use of sanctions and rewards. Our qualitative and quantitative analysis of a survey of 96 Congolese ex-soldiers shows that ordered rape is more likely in organizations where soldiers fear punishment and in which commanders distribute drugs as stimulants.

## **Keywords**

rape, sexual violence, DR Congo, principal–agent models, military hierarchy

## **Introduction**

Urging the Security Council of the United Nations to take action, Margot Wallström, UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, called the Democratic Republic of the Congo the “rape capital of the world” (“UN Official Calls,” 2010). According to UN diplomat John Holmes, wartime sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) amounts to a “culture which has grown up of impunity,

---

<sup>1</sup>University of Konstanz, Germany

<sup>2</sup>University of Mannheim, Germany

### **Corresponding Author:**

Gerald Schneider, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Konstanz, Box 86,  
Konstanz 78457, Germany.

Email: [Gerald.Schneider@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:Gerald.Schneider@uni-konstanz.de)

and a feeling you can get away with anything” (Allen, 2007). An official report concluded 3 years later: “[V]iolence in the DRC was accompanied by the systematic use of rape and sexual assault by the combatant forces” (United Nations, 2010a, para. 530). Many observers believe that wartime sexual violence is often employed as a strategic weapon. According to UN Security Council Resolution 1820, sexual violence in conflict can be “used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations” (United Nations, 2008b, para. 1). Evidence that mass rape is a key instrument of powerful armed groups to terrorize civilians has been documented for Ex-Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda, among others (Maedl, 2011).

Many analysts believe, however, that rape in wartime societies is often not ordered but rather a consequence of the anarchy that reigns in some armed groups. According to this view, the main culprits are not the military commanders but rather the individual soldiers who are enabled to commit atrocities because inhibiting control mechanisms either do not exist or are not functioning properly in the midst of conflict. Humphreys and Weinstein (2006b), for example, show for the case of Sierra Leone that chaotically organized units pose a considerable threat to the civilian population.

Based on interviews with ex-fighters in the DRC, this article examines the alternative thesis that the risk of sexual violence often stems from highly disciplined armed units in which opportunistic commanders manipulate some basic incentive scheme to unleash sexual violence to pursue their own economic or political agenda. Our theoretical argument refers to the burgeoning literature that traces the occurrence of sexual violence to the organizational structure of an armed unit and particularly to the relationship between the principal (the commander) and his subordinates (soldiers). Although most principal–agent models limit the analysis to how well the soldiers perform with regard to one single task, our theoretical argument considers the trade-off that arises in situations where the success of a military operation depends on at least two different assignments. In our perspective, commanders in a conflict like the one in the DRC need to order both systematic terror (including sexual violence) against the civilian population and “normal” soldiering activities if they want to reach the goals of their armed campaign. From an organizational perspective, war thus often resembles a situation that some economists have called “multi-task” problems (Holmstrom & Milgrom, 1991; MacDonald & Marx, 2001). The principal wants the agent in such constellations to perform both tasks, but the agent has an incentive to limit the activities to the fulfillment of a single obligation.

Comparing our principal–agent account of sexual violence with similar explanations, we propose that commanders can use the hierarchical structure of their units and basic stimuli such as drugs and food to turn their fighters into rapists and thus into actors who perform an additional task besides the soldiering activities. In other words, the use of both disincentives and incentives is instrumental for the strategic use of sexual violence. Our empirical evidence shows in support of this expanded hierarchy thesis that an ex-soldier who feared being punished by his superior is more likely to have heard the order at some point in his military career that his unit shall engage in sexual violence. Former combatants who were abducted and who accordingly did not

join the military forces on their own free will are also more likely to have witnessed such commands. The empirical evidence furthermore suggests that this form of violence was more widespread in units in which soldiers received drugs as a reward for their actions. There was, however, no link between looting activities and the order of sexual violence; this is in contrast to the findings for other strategies used to terrorize civilians. We discuss the implications of these regularities for our understanding of wartime mass rape and suggest that future works need to specify more clearly the situations under which either the anarchy or the modified hierarchy thesis advanced in this article is empirically more relevant.

## **An Alternative Principal–Agent Explanation of Sexual Violence**

### *The Incidence of Sexual Violence*

The war in the DRC that started in the wake of the genocide in neighboring Rwanda is the most violent internal conflict in recent decades. Prunier (2009) labels this slaughtering, which led to the direct and indirect death of up to 5.4 million people,<sup>1</sup> “Africa’s world war.” One of the defining features of the conflict is the massive sexual violence in which most of the conflict parties engaged. In a report submitted to the UN General Assembly, Yakin Ertürk, special rapporteur on violence against women, characterized the widespread use of sexual violence against women as a “defining feature of the Congolese conflicts” that has been particularly pervasive in the Kivu provinces<sup>2</sup> (United Nations, 2008a, para. 12). Between 2005 and 2007, the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC, since 2010 MONUSCO) reported more than 30,000 cases of sexual violence in South Kivu alone (United Nations, 2008a). Subsequent reports by the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) identified 11,012 victims of sexual violence in the Kivu region between June 2007 and June 2008, of which more than one third were children (United Nations, 2009). In the first 9 months of 2009, the United Nations Population Fund reported 7,500 cases of sexual violence against women and girls, which according to the organization doubles the figure of cases reported in the same period in 2008 (United Nations, 2010b).

Any estimate of the incidence of sexual violence in a war region like the DRC should be taken with a grain of salt. Self-reported figures are most likely much lower than the real number as shame, fear of stigmatization, and guilt may prevent victims from reporting such crimes (Green, 2004). In light of the downward bias inherent in victim interviews, it is not surprising that general surveys estimate the magnitude of sexual violence to be much larger. Peterman, Palermo, and Bredenkamp (2011) reckon, grounded on such a research design, that up to 1.8 million Congolese women have been raped in their lifetime and conclude that the prevalence of sexual violence is “several orders of magnitude higher than what has been cited in previous studies” (p. 1064).<sup>3</sup>

It is not only the depressing number of victims, be they as large as Peterman et al. (2011) report or somehow lower, but also the viciousness of many acts that has turned the conflict-ridden country into a notorious case. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator

James Holmes speaks of “a sexual violence so brutal it staggers the imagination” (United Nations, 2010c). Abductions, sexual slavery, gang rape, mutilation of genitalia, and the complete destruction of female reproductive organs are on the list of recurrent gruesome episodes (Human Rights Watch, 2002, 2005; United Nations, 2008a). In their analysis of 492 cases of sexual violence in South Kivu, Omanyondo, Berckmans, and Mulyumba (2005) find that 79% of the victims had been gang-raped and 71.1% had been tortured while being raped: “They were beaten, wounded with machetes, or they had their genitals mutilated or burnt with drops of plastic melted by a flame. Some women, after they had been raped, were killed by a shot fired into their vaginas” (p. 33). Combatants of most armies and armed groups in eastern Congo have committed sexual crimes. Perpetrators include members of the local *Mai-Mai* militias, *Le Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (CNDP), *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda/Interahamwe* militias (FDLR), as well as fighters attached to the Congolese security forces, *L’Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo* (AFDL).

The cruelty of the acts and their widespread and systematic occurrence has led the UN and several human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch to portray the use of sexual violence in the DRC as a weapon of war. When conceptualized as an instrument of strategic warfare, rape in conflict is “neither incidental nor private.” Rather, “it routinely serves a strategic function and acts as a tool for achieving military and political objectives” (Human Rights Watch, 1995, para. 2). Sexually assaulting civilians, mostly women and girls, is thereby only indirectly used to conquer territory. Rather, armed units employ it to inflict trauma on individual persons and, at the same time, to destroy social bonds and group solidarities (Diken & Laustsen, 2005).

Evidence in favor of the thesis that rape has been a central strategy of warfare in the DRC is, however, mostly anecdotal and resorts to the reports and accounts of selected victims. This information does not allow us to explore the motivations of the perpetrators and discern when and why specific armed groups are more likely to employ sexual violence as a military instrument. The few noticeable exceptions include the retrospective studies by Bartels et al. (2010) and Omanyondo et al. (2005). These authors attempt to discern the patterns of sexual violence in the Kivu regions based on detailed interviews with rape victims and the examination of medical records. Taking the sociodemographic characteristics of the victims into account, these studies observe that women of all ages, occupations, and ethnicities can become the target of wartime sexual assault. However, mainly married women (59.1%) and farmers (79%) are victimized, with the majority of attacks (61.8%) occurring in isolated places like the fields or surrounding woods where women were tending to their crops (Omanyondo et al., 2005). These analyses however, are mostly descriptive and do not attempt to explain or rationalize why certain groups systematically rely on this sort of violence, while other groups resort to other tactics of civilian victimization or do not employ such instruments in any systematic way.

Resorting to a noticeably smaller sample of 25 respondents, Maedl (2011) reconstructs the perpetrators’ violence repertoire from the perspective of their targets. This allows her to discern the degree to which the victims themselves consider the endured

cruelties to be of an organized nature. In her view, the predominance of gang rape and the combatants' use of weapons indicate that the assaults are planned and tolerated by the armed groups. Several of the interviewed victims confirmed that the groups of attackers committed the atrocities within a hierarchical structure and were in this sense able to identify a superior who gave orders. Many of the interviewed women also reported that the attackers were under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the assault. Based on these interviews, however, we are unable to judge whether the combatants received these substances from their superior to foster their aggression or whether the soldiers drugged themselves without the knowledge of their commanders. Maedl (2011) interprets her data nevertheless as "evidence that the rapes are perpetrated as a military activity and are an inherent part of the group's conduct" (p. 142). Although she analyzes the victims' perspective systematically, her study is only based on a convenience sample of women who were treated at a South Kivu medical institution specialized in the provision of postsexual violence care. As the patients treated there typically suffer from severe medical complications most often stemming from assaults by more than one offender, we cannot consider the incidence of gang rape that Maedl uncovers to be representative for the entire region or country.

Reconstructing the motivations of the combatants as well as the hierarchical structures within which they operate solely from the victims' perspective has, in our view, considerable limitations. If we want to understand sexual violence fully, we also need to study the characteristics and motives of the perpetrators. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2008, 2009) partly fill this gap by examining how the perpetrators themselves understand their violent crimes. They find that most soldiers explain the sexual crimes through concepts of hyper-masculinity and express poverty and neglect as the major driving forces behind the sexual assaults. One of the interviewees expressed,

a soldier, if he has no possibilities, no money so that he can go the normal way. . . if he has nothing in his pocket, he cannot eat or drink his coke, he has nothing to give to a woman—he will take her by force . . . Physically, men have needs. (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2009, p. 509)

This rationalization of the incidence of sexual violence fails, however, to account for the extreme brutality with which the crimes are committed. If the Congolese wartime sexual violence is driven by the need to release sexual tensions or to escape briefly from economic and social marginalization, why should the perpetrators then torture, maim, and kill their victims, and why does this form of one-sided violence vary across conflicts and armed groups?

### *Principal-Agent Explanations*

To develop our principal-agent argument of wartime rape, we resort to an increasing number of studies on how group characteristics like organizational hierarchy and command and control mechanisms influence the logic of violence in civil wars, particularly its use against civilians (Blattman & Miguel, 2010; Humphreys &

Weinstein, 2006b; Weinstein, 2007; for a review, see Schneider, Banholzer, & Haer, 2011). A related literature tries to explain the variation in the usage of sexual violence across and within conflicts through organizational frameworks (see Annan, Blattman, Mazurana, & Carlson, 2011; Butler, Gluch, & Mitchell, 2007; Cohen, 2011; Leiby, 2009; Wood, 2006, 2009). It is possible to group the arguments developed in these analyses according to whether the perpetrators or the eventual planners are the main culprits. Some contributions suggest that sexual violence is an opportunistic act perpetrated by out-of-control soldiers who exploit the chaos of war. Yet, the alternative theoretical strand contends that sexual violence can be seen as a strategic instrument that commanders employ in pursuit of a particular goal. Most of these studies stress the role of organizational hierarchy to explain why the prevalence of sexual violence varies considerably across war-torn societies. We add to this reasoning the “incentives thesis” and argue that commanders can use both disincentives *and* incentives to motivate soldiers to sexually attack predominantly women and children. Note that the “anarchy” and the “incentive” explanations of massive forms of sexual violence are not mutually exclusive. We do not argue that rape by soldiers during violent conflicts is always a consequence of orders by commanders and the incentives they use to entice the soldiers to commit the sexual violence. Our goal is rather to demonstrate through the development of a particular principal–agent argument that opportunistic military leaders who aim to use sexual violence as a strategic weapon of war employ basic inducements to motivate the sexual victimization of civilians.

The anarchy thesis perceives the combatants as the main culprits and portrays them as unruly agents who engage in this activity for a variety of motives, including sexual gratification, power, peer ingratiation, and avoidance of ridicule (Butler et al., 2007). The sexual maiming of women and children is, in this perspective, an activity that soldiers carry out without the direct or indirect consent of their superiors. This interpretation is in line with the general literature on principal–agent models. Proponents of this formal-theoretic branch within political science and economics examine how a contract between the principal and an agent needs to be designed so that the latter actor performs well with regard to a single or a number of tasks (for an introduction, see Laffont & Martimort, 2002). The literature generally expects that the risk of agent shirking grows with the uncertainty about the motives and behavior of the subordinates. The information asymmetry between the principal and his or her agent is particularly acute in combat zones, which are characterized by “conditions of anonymity and permissiveness that allow individuals to pursue their private interests without fear of detection or retribution” (Leiby, 2009, p. 448).

Butler et al. (2007) test their argument through a cross-national analysis, arguing that the “incidence of sexual violence by government forces is driven by out-of-control agents” (p. 673). The organizational slack thesis advanced by Butler et al. allows them to predict that the risk of sexual violence by state security forces decreases with the power of strong human rights monitors, with the monetary rewards commanders hand out to reduce their informational asymmetries, and with the accountability of the officials for the actions of their agents.

The expectation that the level of violence grows with the level of organizational slack also enjoys popularity in more general attempts to explain wartime atrocities directed against civilians. Humphreys and Weinstein (2006b), for instance, write in a cross-sectional analysis of civilian victimization in Sierra Leone: "Fighting units composed of individuals motivated by private goals, with high levels of ethnic diversity, and weak mechanisms to maintain internal discipline commit the highest levels of abuse" (p. 444). The model offered in support of the internal discipline thesis, however, only studies the interaction between soldiers and the civilian population and leaves the principal-agent relationship between combatants and their commanders therefore unexplored (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2006a).

Recent research by Cohen (2011) also supports this "bottom-up" account of sexual violence. In this pioneering global analysis, she argues that the recruitment mechanism predicts the usage of sexual violence. Where abduction is the principal recruitment mechanism, sexual violence is more prevalent as it promotes combatant socialization in groups that otherwise lack unity and cohesion. Rape, however, is rarely directly ordered by commanders but is rather an "activity" that combatants view as "fun" or "entertainment" (Cohen, 2011, p. 34).

Mitchell (2004) develops a more strategic explanation for the prevalence of wartime rape. He argues that "in the administration of violence [principals] may find ignorance concerning the actions of their agents convenient" and therefore, in an act of "strategic cynicism" (p. 46), refuse control. The author's interpretation of a raping spree that occurred during the massacre of Magdeburg, a gruesome episode of the Thirty Years' War, illustrates this conjecture. He suggests that Count Tilly, the commander, was indifferent toward the suffering brought over the civilian population, and therefore was directly responsible for it. Referring to this lack of intervention, Mitchell (2004) writes, ". . . while the presence of rape may result from either a principal who won't control or of a principal who can't control, the absence of rape reveals a principal in control" (p. 50). Although Mitchell addresses the opportunistic behavior of principals who will not control agents to pursue their own agenda, he does not fully consider a fourth type of principal: the one who has control and uses this capacity to directly pursue a strategy of sexual violence.

Leiby's (2009) comparative study of Guatemala and Peru conversely takes the possibility of ordered sexual violence into account. Her theoretical argument conceives of sexual violence as a higher order instrument that the commanding officers promote or at least tolerate. The goals that which they attach to this strategy are manifold: Sexual violence may simply be a means to terrorize the civilians, to repress the opposition, or a tool within an ethnic cleansing campaign. Wood (2009) similarly analyzes the restrained use of sexual violence on the part of the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka through an organizational perspective. The absence of sexual violence is, in her view, predicated by a strategic decision at the top of the rebel group. The success of this restrictive order depends not only on the leader's ability to enforce it down the chain of command, but also on whether the individual combatants endorse it. Wood finds that the ban by the LTTE leadership of the usage of sexual violence and the organization's strict internal discipline indeed best explain the

absence of sexual violence perpetrated by this group. The group promoted, during the period analyzed, a puritanical code of conduct not only among its cadre but also among the civilian population in the areas it controlled, and severely punished deviations from these rules. Wood's analysis thus suggests that organizational strategy and military hierarchy are key explanatory variables of the use of wartime sexual violence.

Although these principal-agent arguments have broken new ground in the analysis of sexual violence, the study of such acts suffers under the limited ability to bolster the claims with appropriate organizational or individual-level data and the almost exclusive focus on the anarchy thesis. Wood's (2009) analysis, for example, is restricted to the role the Tamil LTTE has played in the reduction of this sort of one-sided violence, overlooking the possible power that individual barriers, such as a cultural norm against extramarital sexual relations, might have played in this conflict. The mismatch between the level of analysis for which the authors develop their arguments and the aggregated nature of the data is even more pronounced for Butler et al. (2007). Individual motives, which are the cornerstone of their argument, are difficult to gauge from national-level aggregate data, and without a method that overcomes the ecological fallacy problem, it is impossible to empirically assess the validity of the behavioral claims derived from the theoretical model.

### *An Alternative Model*

As Mitchell (2004), Leiby (2009), and Schneider (2012) show, sexual violence can also have a strategic function, and opportunistic commanders as well as politicians might rely on it passively or actively to pursue their own agenda. This strategic alternative suggests that hierarchy rather than anarchy might be the root cause of many instances of sexual violence. We believe that the examination of wartime rape should take this alternative explanation seriously and move beyond the one-sidedness of the anarchy thesis. Our argument that commanders strategically encourage rape also works in support of the trend in international humanitarian law, which increasingly holds commanders responsible for the gruesome acts committed by their subordinates. We argue below that the risk of ordered wartime rape should be particularly high in the presence of opportunistic commanders when the military units have a functioning command-and-control system and when the perpetrators are rewarded for their gruesome acts. Military leaders, in our view, can therefore employ both disincentives in the form of punishments for disobedience against an order to rape as well as incentives to promote civilian victimization among their subordinates.

Principal-agent models in general examine how the dependent actor can be motivated through sanctions and rewards to perform a single task like soldiering or terrorizing the civilians. The situation becomes more complex if the principal wants the agent to perform two tasks. We believe that the planners of a military campaign face such a decision-making dilemma. While the fighters typically prefer to hear the order to engage in "normal" soldiering activities instead of a command to victimize civilians, the commanders in many armed conflicts need both activities—fighting and terror again civilians—to reach the goals of their campaign. Schneider (2012) argues,

based on the multitask principal–agent model of MacDonald and Marx (2001), that military commanders can induce fighters who resist one-sided violence to commit atrocities against civilians through a sophisticated compensation scheme. Sexual violence in this perspective become more likely if the leaders decrease the pay for soldiering activities and increase the rewards for both the complete success of the military campaign and side activities of the soldiers such as looting. This means that the promise of a long-term reward, such as a share of the country’s natural resource bonanza, and immediate compensation for extra activities increases the risk of sexual violence and other forms of civilian victimization.

Ordering the rape of women, children, and unarmed males during warfare is, in this perspective, one of the tasks which an “unprincipled” commander, to use Mitchell’s (2004) wording, can assign to his soldiers. As in any principal–agent relationship, the subordinate expects to be rewarded for the completion of the job and to be punished for a failure to fulfill the obligation. Ordered sexual violence should therefore become more likely in the presence of hierarchy as well as incentive schemes that compensate soldiers for contributing to these acts. Note that our model adds a principal–agent twist to a rich tradition in the feminist literature that has examined the consequences of social and family hierarchy to account for sexual violence. In her seminal book, Brownmiller (1975) conceives of rape as an instrument of domination, employed to keep women in a constant state of fear and intimidation. During war, dominant discourses of masculinity are reinforced by the very maleness of the military, the power of weaponry, the bonding of men at arms, and the logic of hierarchical commands. War, accordingly, “provides men with the perfect psychologic backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women” (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 24). Card (1996) moreover argues that cross-culturally wartime rape is an instrument for women’s domestication that communicates, produces, and maintains male dominance. War increases the vulnerability of women, making them an easy target of the message of male domination.<sup>4</sup>

We derive a double hypothesis from our own organizational argument on how military commanders employ sexual violence alongside other tactics in wartime.

**Hypothesis 1:** The risk that a military unit engages into sexual violence grows with the attractiveness of nonregular compensation and the hierarchical structure of the group.

## Research Design

We will test our hypothesis on the organizational roots of massive sexual violence based on 96 semistructured interviews with former members of seven different armed groups in the DRC. In collaboration with the nongovernmental organization (NGO) *vivo* (victim’s voice), an interdisciplinary research team from the University of Konstanz conducted these interviews in April and May of 2009<sup>5</sup> in the province of South Kivu. Our respondents were combatants who had been released from active duty or had managed to escape from their armed unit to find support at sites known as “welcome centres.” Most of the interviews took place at these institutions.<sup>6</sup>

The heads of the centers selected our interview partners upon availability. Although a complete randomization would have been preferable, we do not think that such an ideal research design was realistic at the time we conducted the interviews as new fights were erupting in North Kivu in May 2009 (BBC, 2009) and as the turnover in the centers is quite large. To minimize the bias, we clustered the results on the groups to which our respondents originally belonged. However, there are some biases that need to be factored in when analyzing the results. First of all, the site selection for our interviews influenced the composition of our sample. The largest group (66) of respondents, for example, belong to the Mai-Mai rebels because this militia was one of main groups active in the Kivu region in 2009. Twenty-two former fighters had been affiliated with the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD), 14 respondents came from *Les Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC), and further interview partners had been formerly attached to other armed units such as the AFDL (11), CNDP (9), *Les Patriotes Résistants Congolais* (PARECO; 8), and the FDLR (5). Despite the slight overrepresentation of the eastern Congolese rebel groups, our sample of interview partners reflects the multifaceted armed group landscape of the DRC in the time period under examination quite well.<sup>7</sup> However, because the number of observations for some armed groups is very small, we complement the statistical analysis with qualitative information on the main units active in the eastern DRC.

In addition to the group-membership bias, we also noted that the majority—almost 90%—of the ex-combatants in the welcome centers originated from the Kivu provinces. The other respondents came from Kinshasa or other regions in the country. Two ex-fighters indicated origination from Ruzizi, a Rwandese Province bordering the DRC. Note in this context that foreign combatants are often directly repatriated into their birth country; one example are the Rwandese fighters attached to the FDLR (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2003). Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that our sample includes predominantly local Congolese fighters.

Despite these biases, we believe that our sample also mirrors the sociodemographic background of the DRC combatant population quite accurately. We mostly talked to young men with an average age of 21 and an age range of 14-49 years and were only able to speak to 5 females who had been attached to one of the fighting groups. This age and gender distribution is not atypical for Congolese armed groups. Although women are not explicitly excluded from becoming soldiers, they seldom embark on this career path. Lacking educational and employment opportunities, it is predominantly young men who join armed groups, not only for income but also for social recognition (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). The motivations—indicated retrospectively by our respondents—to join an armed group in the first place fall into two main categories. While 36% (50) of the ex-soldiers stated that they had been abducted, 64% (89) claimed to have joined the armed group voluntarily. Of the latter, income was most often mentioned as the primary reason to become a soldier (28%), followed by political motivation (21%) and personal safety concerns (19%). Against our expectations, we did not only find combatants who had been demobilized or freed by MONUC (28) or former fighters who could only leave their unit by escaping (16). We also met 7 individuals who had left their organization without any problems and 15 who had left

one organization to fight for another one. Obviously, our sample only consists of ex-combatants who were not part of an armed group at the time the interviews took place. We are therefore unable to judge whether soldiers who continue in an armed group have had completely different experiences with regard to sexual violence, which is a limitation of our data. However, many of our interview partners had just left their armed organization a couple of days ago and an equally large number were considering rejoining an armed group. This suggests, in our view, that we can compare our interview partners to the soldiers who were active in this region during our period of investigation.

Depending on the mother tongue of the respondent, the research team conducted its interviews in French, Swahili, Mashi, Lingala, or Kinyarwanda with the assistance of translators. All interviews were held in places that were as private as possible. At the opening of every session, respondents were informed about the purpose of the interview. Every interviewer had to ensure that the respondent understood the voluntary nature of the interview, that he or she could end the conversation at any point of time, and that all information would remain strictly confidential. We encouraged the respondents to answer truthfully, explaining to them that we did not have any expectations about the outcome of the interviews and that there were no “right” answers. Furthermore, we clarified that they would not receive any kind of compensation for taking part in the survey. Interviewees, interviewers, and translators signed a consent form, stating that the respondent understood all particulars and agreed to participate in the interview. The research team conducted 10 pretests of the questionnaire to augment the quality of the survey.

We use several of the variables of the project questionnaire to test our hypotheses. The dependent variable *Rape* indicates whether or not a respondent heard at any point of time the order that the unit to which he belonged should engage in sexual violence. Combatants who responded positively to the question “Were people in your unit ordered to rape civilians?” received a value of 1, 0 otherwise. Although this variable does not directly express the real involvement of an interview partner in the victimization of the unarmed, it at least expresses that the military unit to which he or she belonged took part in acts of one-sided violence. Realizing that individuals were ashamed to admit that they had been involved in acts of sexual violence, we consciously posed the question in a less personal way. We also examine whether ex-fighters also heard similar orders (*to attack villages, to abduct people, and to kill or harm civilians*, respectively). The dummy variables that we have built also allow us to examine whether the groups which had a particularly pronounced tendency to rely on sexual violence also used other forms of one-sided violence more frequently and whether our incentive-based explanation also holds for other victimization instruments.

We acknowledge that asking specifically for what we call “ordered” rape and other commanded forms of one-sided violence renders it possible to examine only the correlates of organized forms of civilian victimization. Although our research design allows soldiers to dilute their personal responsibility for directly participating in one-sided violence or to protect fellow combatants from being identified as the main culprits in these acts, posing a direct question of whether or not a soldier had

participated in such actions would have increased the danger of nonresponse. In other words, surveys that try to estimate the incidence of the involvement of ex-combatants in gruesome or illegal activities will almost necessarily underestimate the true incidence of the examined crimes. This means for our examination that we are able to uncover some correlates of “ordered” wartime rape, but not of sexual violence in general.

We measure the hierarchical nature of a group through two dummy variables. *Abduction* attributes a value of 1 to interviewed soldiers who were abducted and thus coerced into the group; the category 0 contains those ex-combatants who joined the organization voluntarily. *Fear of punishment* is coded 1 for those respondents who did not leave the group because they feared a negative sanction and who expressed a persistent fear of the commander’s coercion, 0 otherwise. The first variable is only an indirect measure of hierarchy. We contend, however, that abduction requires an organized armed unit and that the threat of punishment is more important in preventing desertion for abducted combatants in comparison with volunteers.

The second explanatory variable tests whether the incidence of sexual violence goes hand in hand with basic economic incentives. *Drug reward* is a dummy variable; it takes the value of 1 if the respondent claimed that he had received drugs as a reward while serving in an armed group, 0 otherwise. An ex-combatant from the DRC interviewed by Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2008) reasons that “Rape is a result of that too, especially the bad rapes. It gets too much . . . Also, a lot is because of drugs” (p. 78). We also test whether sexual violence is related to the incidence of looting. There is some related evidence reported in Schneider (2012) that the risk of general one-sided violence increases with the risk of looting, and 63.6% of the rape victims interviewed by Maedl (2011) stated that some goods were stolen from them during the rapes. Looting and other illegal activities are frequently attributed to hunger. In the words of corporal A. of the Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2008) survey, “We soldiers commit rape, why do we commit rapes? Poverty/suffering. When we are not paid, or not paid at all. We are hungry” (p. 77). We measure the need for food and other resources through the dummy *Not enough food*. It attributes the value 1 to ex-soldiers who responded positively to the question of whether or not they received enough food.

## Results

### *Armed Groups and Their Violence Profile*

This section presents quantitative and qualitative evidence in favor of the multitask principal–agent framework that we have developed to link disincentives and incentives to ordered sexual violence. Table 1 demonstrates that the violence profile of the armed groups differs widely and that the order to employ sexual violence was the least frequently heard one-sided violence command. Although almost 20% of the interviewed soldiers admitted to having been exposed to such an order, around 30% said that they had heard the less specific commands to abduct civilians or to kill and harm them. The number of nonresponses to the sexual violence question was also larger

**Table 1.** Differences in Violent Behavior of Armed Groups.

Armed group	Number of interviews	Heard order to rape	Heard order to attack villages	Heard order to abduct	Heard order to kill/harm
Mai-Mai	67	7 (12%)	14 (22%)	15 (23%)	17 (26%)
RCD	22	4 (21%)	11 (58%)	11 (58%)	9 (47%)
FARDC	14	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
AFDL	11	1 (9%)	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	4 (36%)
CNDP	9	5 (62%)	3 (33%)	7 (78%)	4 (44%)
PARECO	8	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
FDLR	5	5 (100%)	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	3 (75%)
Others	2	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Total	138	23 (19%)	34 (26%)	40 (31%)	39 (30%)

Note. Missing data on some items due to nonresponse (123 responses to “heard order to rape,” 89%; 130 to “heard order to attack villages” and “heard order to abduct,” 94%, each; and 129 to “heard order to kill and harm civilians,” 94%). RCD = *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie*; FARDC = *Les Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo*; AFDL = *L’Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo*; CNDP = *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple*; PARECO = *Les Patriotes Résistants Congolais*; FDLR = *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*.

than for other related items. This supports our theoretical assumption that soldiers perceive acknowledging that their former group committed this crime as more perverted than admitting to having heard orders for other forms of civilian victimization.

Table 1 also reveals that groups that employ sexual violence are also much more likely to use other forms of one-sided violence. The incidence of one-sided violence is closely related to all other forms of one-sided violence examined here. The Gamma coefficient for the relationship between ordered sexual violence and “Heard the order to attack villages” amounts to 0.75 (asymptotic standard error [ASE] = 0.11), the corresponding coefficient with abduction amounts to 0.78 (ASE = 0.10), and with “Heard the order to kill and harm” reaches a value of 0.76 (ASE = 0.11).

Among the more frequently represented groups, the Mai-Mai were seldom ordered to employ one-sided violence. Although every fifth combatant had heard the order to attack villages or to abduct civilians, ordered sexual violence and the order to kill or harm civilians were more rare in this group. The name Mai-Mai refers to regional groups, initially formed for the purpose of defense from attacks by Rwandan militias. Even though the individual Mai-Mai groups are not necessarily in touch with each other, the rebel groups maintain strong ties with the civilian population in their home area. More than half of the Mai-Mai respondents in our sample revealed that they met recruited family members, friends, or people from their village in the militia, lending support not only to the claim that the armed units have deep roots and considerable proximity to the civilian population but also pointing toward a strong natural cohesion among its ranks. More than one third of the Mai-Mai combatants indicated that they had left and rejoined the organization several times, which suggests at first sight loose command structures and little coercion. However, the members of this group scored

relatively high on the “fear” variable, which we take as a sign of a hierarchical group structure. Even though respondents indicated that they rarely received the order to rape, there are numerous accounts by human rights organizations that show the extensive involvement of Mai-Mai militias in incidents of sexual abuse of women and children.

Breton-Le Goff (2010) and others link the sexual violence perpetrated by Mai-Mai groups to witchcraft rituals. According to this explanation, fighters belonging to these militias believe—or are made to believe—that raping virgin girls, pregnant women, or breast-feeding women will make them less vulnerable. One Mai-Mai soldier admitted in our interviews that he had sexually abused babies to increase his strength in combat. We could not verify how trustful this disturbing confession was. Note, however, that supernatural “justifications” of these acts are not restricted to Mai-Mai combatants (Clark, 2002). From this evidence, we can conclude that Mai-Mai militias do not directly use rape as a weapon of war but commit these criminal acts nevertheless as an attempt, in their view, to strengthen their fighters. This, however, seems to happen without explicit orders of the commanders. Due to the accounts of former combatants, we believe, however, that Mai-Mai commanders know about these crimes, accept them, and possibly even encourage these human rights violations.

Although the Mai-Mai are composed of local Congolese people, the RCD, originally formed as an antigovernment front supported by Rwanda and Uganda, is what Afoaku (2007, p. 118) describes as “a collection of strange bedfellows” held together by their aim to overthrow the government. Due to its diverse membership, the RCD comes with a weak “natural” internal cohesion. Almost 60% of the respondents in our sample did not know any of their fellow combatants before they had joined this group. However, as our data suggest, the RCD appears to substitute lack of cohesion with strict hierarchy. It stands out as one of the most hierarchical and coercive armed units in our sample. Only about one third (36%) of the respondents stated that they had joined the organization voluntarily, whereas the rest (64%) fell victim to abduction raids.

Using abduction as a recruitment strategy is a necessary means for the RCD to survive, as this armed group never enjoyed much popular support. The legitimacy of the RCD particularly suffered under its suspected connection to Rwanda and Uganda, and the difficulties in transmitting a political motivation that supposedly guided its actions. According to Tull (2003), “the RCD’s justification for the uprising against the dictator was lost on a population which clearly refused to see the purpose of the war” (p. 434). Among the organizations studied in this article, the RCD is the most violent militia. According to our interviews, fighters who belonged to this armed unit were consistently ordered to attack the civilian population and to engage in sexual abuse, even though their overall “share” in the cruelty repertoire attributable to this form of one-sided violence is comparatively small. Due to support from neighboring governments and the monopolistic control of natural resources, the RCD does not need to rely on looting or other “contributions” from the local population to the war effort. In fact, 85% of the RCD soldiers claimed in our survey that they had enough food—the highest share of all armed groups examined here. Because the RCD is well equipped and the accounts suggest that RCD members did not know anyone in the group prior to

joining it, we can assume that most of their members join for opportunistic reasons rather than ideological convictions. In comparison with the Mai-Mai militias, the RCD seems to explicitly apply rape as a strategic weapon of war, that is, to punish the civilian population of the enemy camp, because commanders give orders and encourage their units to commit these awful acts.

While the Mai-Mai and the RCD are paramilitary organizations, the FARDC acts on behalf of the Congolese government. Sadly, it was also known to be the most undisciplined and unstructured group operating in the DRC at the time our interviews took place. The International Crisis Group describes the Congolese army as a group with “poor training, lack of discipline and weak operational capacity” (Vircoulon, 2010). According to the former FARDC fighters represented in our study, they were never ordered to use violence against civilians. However, sexual violence committed by some units of the Congolese army is well documented; Human Rights Watch (2009), for instance, wrote in one of its yearly reports,

The government army . . . is one of the main perpetrators, contributing to the current climate of insecurity and impunity in eastern Congo. FARDC soldiers have committed gang rapes, rapes leading to injury and death, and abductions of girls and women. (p. 4)

We suspect that the divergence between our study findings examination and the evidence assembled by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other organizations is due to the difficulties in uncovering “spontaneous” mass rapes through interviews. The HRW report suggests in this vein that the FARDC rapes are not necessarily used as a strategic tool. In this regard, the FARDC appears to be a primary example in support of the anarchy thesis.

Several of our interviewees stated that they had belonged to the AFDL. Under the leadership of Laurent Kabila, the AFDL marched into Kinshasa in 1997 and overthrew the government of President Mobutu. Breton-Le Goff (2010) describes the dire civilian consequences of this leadership change:

Between 1997 and 1998, the soldiers and officers of the new regime prohibited women from wearing pants and miniskirts, raped and tortured women and girls at roadblocks, detained young women in hotels to be raped, sometimes collectively, and forced women of the ex-Mobutu militaries to undertake domestic work. (p. 15)

The viciousness had not disappeared from what was later to become the Congolese military forces, as our interviews conducted in 2009 confirm. Thirty-six percent of the AFDL respondents admitted to having heard the order to kill and harm civilians and almost one fifth of these combatants were exposed to the instruction to attack villages and to abduct people. Compared with some of the other organizations, the AFDL, though, has a relatively low record of ordered sexual violence.

The CNDP, a rebel group initially formed to protect the Tutsi population from the Hutu-militia FDLR/Interahamwe, belongs not only to the most strictly organized militias in our sample but is also the most violent group. According to our data, the CNDP ranks third on the hierarchy scale, and Stearns (2008) confirms in a comprehensive

analysis that some of its units have a clear command structure. This relatively well-organized group employs one-sided violence excessively. In our sample, more than half of the combatants had heard the order to rape. Eyewitnesses have frequently reported that the CNDP was responsible for various forms of one-sided violence, like the murdering and raping of civilians (Tish, 2011; Wakabi, 2008). In 2011, Lieutenant Colonel Kibibi Mutware, a commanding officer of the CNDP was sentenced to 20 years in prison for ordering mass rapes and crimes against humanity after 49 women testified against him (“DR Congo Colonel Kibibi Mutware,” 2011). Clearly, the violent strategy of the CNDP against the civilian population and its hierarchical structure lend support to our hypothesis.

Finally, we also interviewed some members of the armed groups PARECO and the FDLR/Interahamwe, both mainly composed of Congolese Hutus. Although respondents belonging to PARECO denied having heard the order to commit crimes against civilians, almost all of the five FDLR/Interahamwe respondents admitted to having been exposed to orders to rape, abduct people, attack villages, and kill or maim civilians.

In sum, the qualitative analysis of the individual armed groups provides only an unclear picture of the relationship between hierarchically organized militant organizations and sexual violence. For some organizations like the RCD, this relationship seems to be true; in other cases, like the Mai-Mai, the situation is less clear. To establish a more general picture, we will test the organizational thesis statistically.

### *Testing the Disincentive/Incentive Argument*

We are not interested in the magnitude of sexual violence per se in this study. The authors are aware that all of the groups under examination have victimized women and children at some point. However, we aim to contest the widespread conviction that wartime sexual violence is predominantly a product of organizational anarchy and thus the failure of military commanders to discipline their soldiers. In fact, our double argument stipulates that the presence of a functioning command-and-control system within military units as well as rewards for the gruesome acts are systematically linked to an increase in strategic sexual violence and other types of one-sided violence. Adjusting for group membership, the logit models reported in Table 2 distinguish in correspondence with our theoretical argument between a hierarchy and an incentive model.

The results established in Table 2 clearly show that both hierarchy and the basic incentives associated with soldiering in the DRC positively influence the risk that an ex-combatant has heard the order to commit sexual abuses. Soldiers who have been abducted or fear being punished after defecting from the armed unit are much more likely to have been exposed to such an order. The probability of facing such a situation amounted to 63% (95% confidence interval [CI] = [27%, 99%]) in the presence of these two conditions, and 9% (95% CI = [1%, 18%]) without them. The odds of hearing such an order were 4 times larger for both elements of organizational hierarchy than without them. The effect is much more robust for ex-combatants who have been abducted than for those few soldiers who feared being punished for disobedience. Our results thus resemble those of Cohen (2011) who finds that armed organizations recruiting new members

**Table 2.** The Influence of Personal Attributes of Former Combatants in the Democratic Republic Congo on the Involvement of Their Group in Ordered One-Sided Violence.

Model outcome	Hierarchy		Incentive		Hierarchy		Incentive		Hierarchy		Incentive	
	Sexual violence	(1.69)	Sexual violence	(2.81)	Attack villages	(1.47)	Attack villages	(0.75)	Abduct civilians	(7.02)	Kill or harm civilians	(1.59)
Abduction	3.94 <sup>***</sup>	(1.69)	5.63 <sup>***</sup>	(2.81)	5.54 <sup>***</sup>	(1.47)	2.91 <sup>***</sup>	(0.75)	13.79 <sup>***</sup>	(7.02)	4.22 <sup>***</sup>	(1.59)
Fear of punishment	4.15 <sup>*</sup>	(3.59)	1.82	(0.88)	1.82	(0.88)	2.28 <sup>***</sup>	(0.70)	5.30 <sup>***</sup>	2.83	7.31 <sup>***</sup>	(3.64)
Drug reward			0.85	(0.34)			2.28 <sup>***</sup>	(0.70)			4.13 <sup>***</sup>	2.029
Not enough food			-51.33				2.28 <sup>***</sup>	(0.70)			1.56	(0.92)
Log likelihood			-51.85		-61.70		-65.73		-54.82		-71.44	
Correctly classified	83.19%		79.82%		75.21%		74.00%		78.51%		71.54%	
n	119		114		121		121		121		123	
												122

Note. Entries are odd ratios and robust standard errors (in parentheses) adjusted for membership of interviewed ex-combatants in one of eight armed groups.  
<sup>\*</sup>p < .10. <sup>\*\*</sup>p < .05. <sup>\*\*\*</sup>p < .01.

through abduction engage in sexual violence more often than armed groups with members who have joined the unit voluntarily. Interestingly, the “risk of ordered sexual violence” also grows with the commanders’ inclination to use drugs as rewards for their underlings. The odds for this particular correlate of sexual violence are almost 6 times larger than in a situation without it. However, hungry soldiers are not very likely to be sent on a mission to rape women and children. This nonrelationship is in slight contrast to Maedl (2011) whose interviewed victims observed both the organized nature of the rapes and accompanying looting activities. The probability that a soldier had heard the order for sexual violence was 45% (95% CI = [27%, 63%]) given the presence of these two inducements and 15% (95% CI = [0%, 31%]) without them.

We can also trace the other forms of ordered one-sided violence examined in this article to the positive and negative incentives that we derived from our principal-agent explanation of civilian victimization. This is particularly the case for the abduction and the drug reward variables, which systematically increase the risk that an ex-combatant heard the order to attack villages, to abduct civilians, or to kill or harm civilians. Groups with many hungry soldiers are a danger for entire communities, as the association between “not enough food” and the risk of “attacks against villages” shows. This relationship also underlines that at least some looting stems from armed units with clear command structures and that wartime stealing cannot be solely attributed to a *soldateska*, which prefers civilian victimization over typical military activities.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Wartime rape belongs to the most gruesome aspects of political violence. According to current popular opinion, a lack of control by the military commanders frequently accounts for the usage of what is called “one-sided violence.” This article has examined according to which hierarchy is often responsible for wartime sexual violence. More precisely, we have analyzed whether the incentives and disincentives set by the commander systematically influence the risk that this form of civilian victimization happens.

The qualitative analysis of experiences of members of the individual armed groups provides a rather mixed picture. We not only find examples where anarchy seems responsible for sexual abuse (e.g., in the FARDC), but we also find evidence for our hypothesis that commanders order their subordinates to rape civilians (e.g., RCD and CNDP). In the case of the Mai-Mai, explicit orders to rape seem to be rare but sexual violence is still used (very likely with the knowledge of the commander) in the context of witchcraft rituals and with the aim of strengthening the fighting power of the units. The quantitative analysis further helped to create a more general picture. Based on a survey of ex-combatants in the DRC, our analysis has shown that the risk that a soldier heard an order to rape civilians was higher in military units when the respondent was originally abducted by the armed group, when he feared being punished, and when he received drugs at least once as a reward. Our results thus show that military commanders systematically entice soldiers with a mix of sanctions and rewards to engage in the massive sexual violence for which the war-torn DRC has gained an unmatched notoriety in recent years.

These results question the generalizability of recent studies that attribute the prevalence of sexual violence to the absence rather than the presence of clear command-and-control structures. Although organizational anarchy or the indifference of military leaders toward the undertakings of their soldiers might have caused the cruelties against females in some conflicts, the situation in the DRC looks different. Our evidence strongly suggests that sexual violence is often used as a military instrument and that an array of basic incentives and disincentives increases its risk. We could not examine acts that were not commanded and happened in a situation of organizational anarchy. However, our findings suggest that the next necessary step in the analysis of this form of civilian victimization might be the identification of the context factors in which hierarchical or anarchical wartime rape becomes more likely. We suspect that the risk of hierarchical one-sided violence grows in situations in which the contending military forces are equally powerful and in times when the outcome of conflict is not yet predictable. We would need systematic organizational-level data for a large number of conflicts to test such hypotheses. Furthermore, we believe that one requires a mixture of perpetrator and victim information to clearly disentangle the conditions under which the risk of experiencing “ordered” rather than more spontaneous wartime sexual violence becomes especially important.

We acknowledge that our data set has several limitations. First, our sample is restricted to one particular country and further studies need to explore whether the mechanisms uncovered in our study also hold true in other countries. On a positive note, however, looking at several different armed groups in one country rather than several countries also bears advantages because we can assume the conditions under which the interviews were conducted and the cultural background of the interviewees to be rather similar. Second, we only have a small number of observations for some armed groups and the answers of these combatants might not be representative of the entire group. We partially addressed this problem by posing our questions in a more general way, asking whether the order to rape was ever given to someone in the group, not only to the respondent personally. We also believe that posing this rather sensitive question in a more impersonal way also led to more honest answers.

We contend, nevertheless, that our results also have practical implications beyond the DRC. In particular, our study could add fuel to the attempts to prosecute both the perpetrators and their commanders for participation in these acts. Although the Laws of War prohibit wartime rape, one of the most difficult aspects in the legal examination of these alleged acts of one-sided violence is establishing a clear chain of command. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, for instance, acquitted a Bosnian Serb officer of responsibility for commanding rape as “there was no clear superior-subordinate relationship between the defendant and the specific inferiors at the rapes’ time and place” (Osiel, 2009, p. 35). Our results suggest that the planning of such acts does not only involve the respective orders but that the preparation includes the development of perverted incentive schemes that increase the obedience of the soldiers. Even if such preparatory acts cannot be prosecuted, it might help potential victims if it becomes harder for armed units to obtain access to drugs, to force civilians

into their service through abduction, or to threaten these soldiers for their anticipated disobedience with the perverted and often deadly orders.

### **Acknowledgments**

We thank Thomas Elbert, Roos van der Haer, Harald Hinkel, Heike Riedke, and Elisabeth Kaiser for data collection, advice, and help with logistics, as well as Anita Gohdes, Jule Krüger, Neil Mitchell, and two anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier versions.

### **Authors' Note**

A previous version of this article has been presented at the Munich meeting of the International Politics section of the German Political Science Association, October 2011.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Funding**

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (DSF 004/07) and the nongovernmental organization victim's voice (vivo) supported this research.

### **Notes**

1. Scholars such as Goldstein (2011) have refuted this estimate, which refers to initial surveys under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee and some subsequent studies.
2. Women and children are by far the most frequent victims of wartime sexual violence. In some conflicts, male rapes are nevertheless not uncommon. It is, however, hard to obtain precise estimates for this target group. Sivakumaran (2005) quotes a report by Human Rights Watch on the situation in Eastern Congo, stating that "rape is considered even more shameful for a male victim, crimes of this kind are less likely to be reported than those involving female victims" (p. 1294).
3. Without denying the severity of the problem, Goldstein (2011) questions the claim that the incidence of sexual violence in postwar Congo is much higher than in other societies.
4. Skjelsbæk (2001) argues conversely that exponents of ideas of militarized masculinity propose a theory of men as essentially sexually aggressive. Understanding masculine nature as static and unchangeable has led, in her view, to reductionist and deterministic explanations that perceive sexual violence as an unavoidable aspect of war.
5. A pretest of the survey was undertaken in early 2009 in Bukavu, Goma, and Bunyakiri, and the survey was modified accordingly.
6. BVES (*Bureau pour le Volontariat au Service de l'Enfance et de la Santé*), LAV (*Laissez l'Afrique Vivre*), and CAPA (*Centre d'Apprentissage Professionnel et Artisanal*). In these centers, returnees receive primary assistance in the form of shelter, food, and, in some cases, education or vocational training.
7. The majority of respondents (49) had been part of only one armed group, whereas 27 interviewees had been a member of two armed units. The rest had belonged to three or more armed groups.

## References

- Afoaku, O. (2007). Congo's rebels: The origin, motivations, and strategies. In J. F. Clark (Ed.), *The African stakes of the Congo War* (pp. 109-28). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Allen, Karen 2007. DR Congo's terrifying ritual of violence. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6989771.stm>
- Annan, J., Blattman, C., Mazurana, D., & Carlson, K. (2009). Civil war, reintegration, and gender in Northern Uganda. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 55(6), 877-908. Retrieved from <http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/55/6/877>
- BBC. (2009, May 13) 'Dozens killed' in DR Congo raids. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8049105.stm>
- Barker, G., & Ricardo, C. (2005). *Young men and the construction of masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, conflict, and violence* (World Bank Social Development Paper No. 26). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Bartels, S., Scott, J., Mukwege, D., Lipton, R., VanRooyen, M., & Leaning, J. (2010). Patterns of sexual violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: Reports from survivors presenting to Panzi Hospital in 2006. *Conflict and Health*, 4, 1-10.
- Blattman, C., & Miguel, E. (2010). Civil war. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48, 3-57.
- Breton-Le Goff, G. (2010). Ending sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 34, 13-40.
- Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Butler, C. K., Gluch, T., & Mitchell, N. J. (2007). Security forces and sexual violence: A cross-national analysis of a principal-agent argument. *Journal of Peace Research*, 44, 669-687.
- Card, C. (1996). Rape as a weapon of war. *Hypatia*, 11, 5-18.
- Clark, J. F. (Ed.) (2002). *The African stakes of the Congo War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cohen, D. K. (2011, March 28). *Causes of sexual violence during civil war: Cross-national evidence (1980-2009)*. Paper presented at the Minnesota International Relations Colloquium, Minnesota.
- Diken, B., & Laustsen, C. B. (2005). Becoming object: Rape as a weapon of war. *Body Society*, 11, 111-128.
- DR Congo colonel Kibibi Mutware jailed for mass rape. (2011, February 21). *BBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12523847>
- Eriksson Baaz, M., & Stern, M. (2008). Making sense of violence: Voices of soldiers in the Congo (DRC). *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46, 57-86.
- Eriksson Baaz, M., & Stern, M. (2009). Why do soldiers rape? Masculinity, violence, and sexuality in the armed forces in the Congo (DRC). *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, 495-518.
- Goldstein, J. S. (2011). *Winning the war on war: The decline of armed conflict worldwide*. New York: Dutton.
- Green, J. L. (2004). Uncovering collective rape: A comparative study of political sexual violence. *International Journal of Sociology*, 34, 97-116.
- Holmstrom, B., & Milgrom, P. (1991). Multi-task principal-agent problems: Incentive contracts, asset ownership and job design. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, 7, 24-52.
- Human Rights Watch. (1995). *The Human Rights Watch global report on women's human rights*. New York: Author.
- Human Rights Watch. (2002). *The war within the war: Sexual violence against women and girls in Eastern Congo*. New York: Author.
- Human Rights Watch. (2005). *Seeking justice: The prosecution of sexual violence in the Congo War*. New York: Author.

- Human Rights Watch. (2009). *Soldiers who rape, commanders who condone: Sexual violence and military reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. New York: Author.
- Humphreys, M., & Weinstein, J. M. (2006a). *Handling and manhandling civilians: Derivation of hypotheses* (Unpublished webappendix). New York: Columbia University.
- Humphreys, M., & Weinstein, J. M. (2006b). Handling and manhandling civilians in civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 100, 429-447.
- International Crisis Group. (2003). *Rwandan Hutu rebels in the Congo: A new approach to disarmament and reintegration* [ICG Africa Report No. 63]. Nairobi, Kenya: Author.
- Laffont, J.-J., & Martimort, D. (2002). *The theory of incentives: The principal-agent model*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Leiby, M. L. (2009). Wartime sexual violence in Guatemala and Peru. *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, 445-468.
- MacDonald, G., & Marx, L. M. (2001). Adverse specialization. *Journal of Political Economy*, 109, 864-899.
- Maedl, A. (2011). Rape as weapon of war in the Eastern DRC? The victims' perspective. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 33, 128-147.
- Mitchell, N. J. (2004). *Agents of atrocity: Leaders, followers, and the violation of human rights in civil war*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Omanyondo, M. C., Berckmans, J., & Mulyumba, B. (2005). *Women's bodies as a battleground: Sexual violence against women and girls during the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. South Kivu (1996-2003)*. London, England: International Alert.
- Osiel, M. (2009). *Making sense of mass atrocity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Peterman, A., Palermo, T., & Bredenkamp, C. (2011). Estimates and determinants of sexual violence against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101, 1060-1067.
- Prunier, G. (2009). *Africa's world war: Congo, the Rwandan genocide, and the making of a continental catastrophe*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Schneider, G. (2012). *Incentives to kill: The organizational roots of one-sided violence* (Unpublished manuscript). University of Konstanz, Konstanz, Germany.
- Schneider, G., Banholzer, L., & Haer, R. (2011). Cain's choice: Causes of one-sided violence against civilians. In T. G. Jakobsen (Ed.), *An introduction to theories behind warfare and collective violence* (pp. 57-82). New York: Nova Science.
- Sivakumaran, S. (2005). Male/male rape and the "taint" of homosexuality. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27, 1274-1306.
- Skjelsbæk, I. (2001). Sexual violence and war. *European Journal of International Relations*, 7, 211-237.
- Stearns, J. K. (2008). Laurent Nkunda and the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP). In S. Marysse, F. Reyntjens, & S. Vandeginste (Eds.), *L'Afrique des Grand Lacs* (pp. 245-267). Paris, France: L'Harmattan.
- Tish, J. (2011, July 7). *Mayi-Mayi Sheka, FDLR-FOCA, and CNDP responsible for rapes and other crimes in DRC says UN report*. AfroAmerica Network—Resources, Information, News, Views and Social Networking. Retrieved from <http://www.afroamerica.net/AfricaGL/2011/07/07/mayi-mayi-sheka-fdlr-foca-cndp-rapes-crimes-drc-un-report/>
- Tull, D. M. (2003). A reconfiguration of political order? The state of the state in North Kivu (DR Congo). *African Affairs*, 102, 429-446.
- United Nations. (2008a). *Report of the special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Ertürk: Addendum: Mission to the Democratic Republic*

- of the Congo* (A/HRC/7/6/Add.4). Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Human Rights Council. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/47d545b72.html>
- United Nations. (2008b). *Security council resolution 1820* (S/RES/1820). New York: United Nations Security Council.
- United Nations. (2009). *Combined report of seven thematic special procedures on technical assistance to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and urgent examination of the situation in the east of the country* (A/HRC/10/59). Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Human Rights Council. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/10session/A.HRC.10.59.pdf>
- United Nations. (2010a). *Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1993–2003*. Geneva, Switzerland: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- United Nations. (2010b). *Second joint report of seven United Nations experts on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (A/HRC/13/63). Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Human Rights Council. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/13session/A-HRC-13-63.pdf>
- United Nations. (2010c). *Sexual and gender-based violence in conflict: Operationalizing advocacy*. New York: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
- UN official calls DR Congo “rape capital of the world.” (2010, April 28). *BBC*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8650112.stm>
- Vircoulon, T. (2010). *After MONUC, should MONUSCO continue to support Congolese military campaigns?* International Crisis Group. Retrieved from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/central-africa/dr-congo/vircoulon-after-MONUC-should-MONUSCO-continue-to-support-congolese-military-campaigns.aspx>
- Wakabi, W. (2008). Sexual violence increasing in Democratic Republic of Congo. *Lancet*, 371, 15-16.
- Weinstein, J. M. (2007). *Inside rebellion: The politics of insurgent violence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, E. J. (2006). Variation in sexual violence during war. *Politics & Society*, 34, 307-341.
- Wood, E. J. (2009). Armed groups and sexual violence: When is wartime rape rare? *Politics & Society*, 37, 131-161.

### Author Biographies

**Gerald Schneider** is professor of international politics, president of the European Political Science Association (2013-2015), executive editor of “*European Union Politics*,” and coeditor of “*International Interactions*.” His research focuses on European Union decision making, the causes and consequences of armed violence, the international political economy of financial markets, bargaining, and conflict management.

**Lilli Banholzer** is professor of international politics pro tempore. She holds a PhD in political science from the University of Konstanz. Her main areas of research are the internal structure of armed groups, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, psychological consequences of war, and the political economy of inclusive growth.

**Laura Albarracin** is a researcher at oekom research, Munich, Germany. She has MA degrees from the University of Konstanz and Rutgers University. Her research interests include the dynamics of violence during armed conflict, natural resources and conflict, and the political economy of international oil production.