Preventing Conflict Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence with Early Warning Analysis

Sara Davies, Griffith University
Jacqui True, Monash University
E: sara.davies@griffith.edu.au  T: @DaviesSaraE
E: jacqui.true@monash.edu  T: @JacquiTrue
WPSAC http://wpsac.wordpress.com/
Protection Gateway http://protectiongateway.com/
Paper outline

1. Growth of SVAC large n studies aimed at prevention and prediction (i.e. Butler et al 2007; Cohen 2013)

2. Large N studies of SVAC are instrumental not critical; problem solving not prevention

3. Part of the solution - understand and explain gender oppression and inequality (large n studies need to ‘talk’ to small n studies)
Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict & WPS

• Sexual violence in armed conflict (SVAC) significant recognition by UNSC crime that constitutes a threat to international peace and security
• Embedded with 1325 Resolution (2000) and, especially, 1820 (2008).
• Women peace and security agenda recognises gendered experience of conflict and insecurity
SVAC Large n studies – a lack of theory

- Growth in analysing SVAC as a ‘tool’ of warfare (disaggregated from other gendered phenomena)
- Growth of large-n studies of SVAC - statistical analysis of 5 or more conflicts by defn of key variables NOT in-depth case studies.
- Large n studies not informed by feminist IR interest in warfare (or warring social orders) as a reflection of gendered power relations
- Nor engaged with continuum sexual and gender-based violence in so-called ‘peacetime’ and on the homefront – these are not prevention studies
Large n studies – instrumental not critical

• Minority of these studies claim ‘large n’ objectivist knowledge
• Result is these studies reify the conditions of possibility for SVAC rather than explain them
• Problems of reductionist large-n – single data sources, poor operationalisation of factors/variables, one type of conflict, one type of SV – shining the torch where the light is on!
Large n studies – instrumental not critical

• Concern - most large-n studies are systematically biased against gender analysis & eliminate one of the most powerful forms of explanation

• Poor operationalisation of societal/structural gendered oppression & inequality e.g. fertility and education status/ratio

• Poor operationalisation & failure to gender disaggregate in other structural variables e.g. sex ratios of perpetrators, location of insurgents near camps, phases of conflict, location of civil/cross border conflict (proximity of civilian pop)
Part of the solution

• Endogeneity – variables can’t be nicely separated - they are all contain gender dimensions
• Surprisingly large disconnect between large-N studies and reference to volume of fieldwork done in small-N studies
• These large n need to ‘talk’ to small n studies
• Prevention requires understanding SV(AO) prior to onset of conflict; appreciating human rights abuses and gender inequality of women and minority groups
Thank you

E: sara.davies@griffith.edu.au  T: @DaviesSaraE
E: Jacqui.true@monash.edu     T: @JacquiTrue
WPSAC http://wpsac.wordpress.com/
Protection Gateway http://protectiongateway.com/