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# Mechanisms underpinning programs to reduce risk and incidence of sexual violence in armed conflict: Realist analysis of systematic review findings

# Scope and key narrative findings

- Scope: Evidence for reduced risk and incidence of SV in conflict, post-conflict and disaster
- Search terms: “sexual violence” AND “conflict” and synonyms
- 20 studies reported outcomes
- Limited implementation and evaluation methods
- Some evidence of reductions associated with firewood / fuel alternatives and zero tolerance
- Multiple component interventions -some

| | INTERVENTION STRATEGIES |
|---|---|
| IN DIV IDU AL | Survivor responses<br>Livelihood strategies |
| CO MM UNI TY | Community mobilization<br>Multiple<br>component<br>interventions |
| SO CIE TAL | Personnel<br>Systems and security<br>Legal action |

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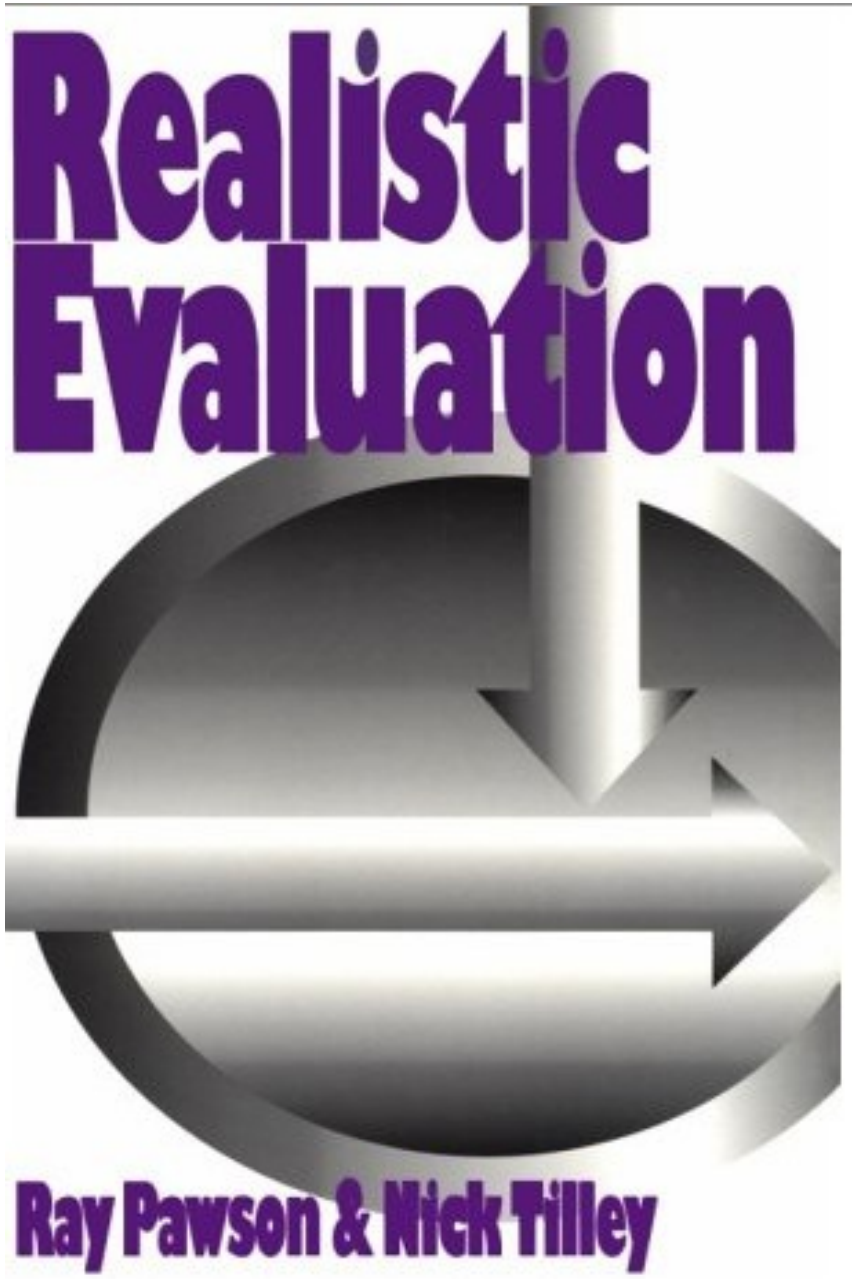
# Approach




- Realism – social science – between constructivist and empiricist
- Not “what works?” but “what works for who in what circumstances?”
- Recognition of complexity and impact of context
- Context – Mechanism – Outcome
- Mechanisms = operation of choices by key actors

# Proposed mechanisms

OVERALL

- "Rape is risky" – perceived likelihood detection

SURVIVOR CARE/ LIVELIHOOD

- "There is help for this problem"– awareness of responses
- "It's safe to tell" – survivors feel safe to come forward

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

- "We have rights" – communities empowered
- "We can work together to solve this problem" – communities empowered

PERSONNEL/ INFRASTRUCTURE

- "We take this seriously" – authorities are responsive

LEGAL

# Mechanisms in multiple component interventions

- Most common components – survivor care community mobilization, systems and security
- Most common indicator of reduced risk = strong uptake of services by survivors
- Mechanism – “There is help for this problem”
- Also requires “It’s safe to tell”
- Action by services for confidentiality / anonymity

# Community mobilization in multiple component interventions

Little data reported on mechanism

"We can work together to address this problem"

BUT 4/5 Multiple component interventions included community mobilization and these all showed some evidence of reduced risk

3/5 also included systems and security interventions – predominantly fuel initiatives

# Mechanisms in personnel interventions

2 studies -programs for zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peace keepers

Sites - Haiti &Liberia, Kenya, Namibia & Thailand

Reduced risk and incidence ONLY in Liberia

No evidence “We take this seriously”

Lack of community awareness AND confidentiality

Require “It’s safe to tell” and “There is help for this problem” ?

# Mechanisms in systems and security interventions

- Some evidence of "Rape is risky" ie reduced opportunity through patrols/ fuel.
- But risk of displacement.
- Apparently most effective with simultaneous operation of "Safe to tell" and "We can work together"

# Mechanisms for legal interventions

"Rape is risky" – prosecution deters offenders – promotes reporting through evidence of action

In fact – low rates of prosecution and convictions in 5/6 studies on legal interventions

Also stigma & retaliation towards victims in Gacaca courts and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda suggests lack of "It's safe to tell"

# “We already have ways to address this problem”

- Women’s groups use of traditional ideas of resilience to make meaning
- Healing/ cleansing for LRA
- Traditional route to address GBV
  –> family -> elders -> agencies as last resort

# Mechanism enablers

- Use of multiple strategies, community engagement and attention to the range of risks.

- Anonymity of access.

- Significant cultural and economic obstacles prevent women from reporting or seeking help following experiences of sexual violence.