

Straight as a Rule

Heteronormativity, Gendercide, and the Noncombatant Male

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This article is an extension of the author's research into the vulnerability of noncombatant "battle-age" males in situations of war and genocide. It explores the role of heteronormativity—defined as culturally hegemonic heterosexuality—in shaping the victimization experiences of male noncombatants. An introductory section addresses definitional issues and frames the discussion in terms of the study of gendercide, or gender-selective mass killing. The link among noncombatant status, imputed violations of heteronormativity, and gendercide is then explored. A separate section considers the phenomenon of sexual violence against males in wartime and asks whether feminist theories of "genocidal rape" can usefully be deployed to assist understanding of this little-studied phenomenon. The conclusion cites some remaining conceptual and conventional obstacles to research on male noncombatants, and suggests avenues for further investigation.

Key words: war; men; gendercide; noncombatant; sexual violence; heterosexual; homosexual

This article represents a contribution to the literature on the vulnerability of noncombatant men (and adolescent males) in situations of military conflict, ethnic strife, and genocide. In particular, it explores the role of heteronormativity—which I define as culturally hegemonic heterosexuality—in shaping the victimization experiences of male noncombatants. *Noncombatant* encompasses all those who do not bear arms in a given conflict or at a given stage of a conflict. This includes both civilians, that is, those that have played no part in fighting or whose martial moment lies far in the past; and also, and crucially, includes prisoners-of-war as well as former fighters who have been demobilized or who have deserted. These latter may not be "civilians," strictly speaking, but if they fall into the hands of an enemy, they are fully entitled to the protections afforded by the Geneva Conventions and other relevant human-rights instruments.

The analysis that follows is cast within the framework of the study of *gendercide*, a term pioneered by the American scholar Mary Anne Warren to refer to "the deliberate extermination of persons of a particular sex (or gender)" (1985, 22). Warren's focus throughout her 1985 work *Gendercide* was

the experiences of women and girls as well as the targeting for infanticide of female fetuses (hence the subtitle of her work, *The Implications of Sex Selection*). Nonetheless, she rejected the use of terms such as *gynocide*, crafted by Mary Daly, as not sufficiently inclusive, “since sexually discriminatory killing is just as wrong when the victims happen to be male” (Warren 1985, 22).

My own research into gendercide has sought to explore all sides of gender-selective extermination strategies and the related patterns of gendered abuse and atrocity that tend to accompany them. In particular, I have argued that

the most vulnerable and consistently targeted population group [in situations of war and genocide], through time and around the world today, is non-combatant men of “battle age,” roughly 15 to 55 years old. They are nearly universally perceived as the group posing the greatest danger to the conquering force, and are the group most likely to have the repressive apparatus of the state directed against them. The “non-combatant” distinction is also vital. Unlike their armed brethren, these men have no means of defending themselves, and can be detained and exterminated by the thousands or millions. The gender of mass killing, moreover, likely extends beyond the age range specified. Elderly males are probably more prone than elderly women to be caught up in the “malestrom” of war; and modern warfare, with its relentless press-ganging and criminality, extends ever further down the age ladder in the hunt for child soldiers and street thugs—overwhelmingly boys. (Jones 2000, 192)

The attempt has been not only to conceptualize these issues for academic purposes but also to establish noncombatant men, and males of “battle age,” as legitimate subjects for concern and intervention by human-rights organizations, national governments, and international governmental organizations like the United Nations. Gratifyingly, since my article “Gendercide and Genocide” appeared in 2000, a number of other scholars from diverse disciplines have responded to the invitation to investigate these matters and have greatly extended the reach and depth of the analysis.¹ This article reflects their contributions alongside several years of my own research and activism.²

Until Terrell Carver’s recently published contribution, however, little attention has been paid to the question of heteronormativity and its role in gendercide.³ This article, limited and in some ways speculative as it must be, seeks to chart some of the relevant analytical terrain.

MILITARISM, GENDERCIDE, AND HETERONORMATIVITY

Mary Anne Warren coined the term *gendercide* to highlight “the fact that gender roles have often had lethal consequences, and that these are in important respects analogous to the lethal consequences of racial, religious, and class prejudice” (1985, 22). One of the most lethal gender roles in modern times is that of the “feminized” male—by which I mean the male who has

adopted or had imposed on him a cultural identification with traditionally feminine roles and behavior. The feminized male “Other” is essential to the construction of modern masculinities, especially hegemonic masculinity, as Charlotte Hooper wrote in the following:

Feminization as masculinist strategy operates not only to circumscribe and downgrade female activities, but is also a powerful tool in the construction and maintenance of hierarchies of masculinities. It has been used not only to police the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity and ensure a large measure of conformity, but also to differentiate between and create hierarchies of subordinate masculinities. . . . Strategies of feminization used to downgrade groups of men may be more contradictory and precarious than strategies that straightforwardly masculinize men and feminize women, but their relative success . . . indicates that masculinism can privilege elite males at the expense of feminized Others, regardless of sex or gender. (2001, 71)

Crucial here is the component of heteronormativity, which feminized males are held to violate. The supposed failure to live up to standards of heterosexual masculinity is integral to intramale differentiation and hierarchy—as Hooper pointed out in the passage just quoted, and as Michael Kimmel has also stressed with his assertion that “all masculinities are not created equal”:

One definition of manhood continues to remain the standard against which other forms of manhood are measured and evaluated. Within the dominant culture, the masculinity that defines white, middle-class, early middle-aged, heterosexual men is the masculinity that sets the standards for other men, against which other men are measured and, more often than not, found wanting. . . . This is the definition that we will call “hegemonic” masculinity, the image of masculinity of those men who hold power, which has become the standard. (2001, 271-72)⁴

It follows that those males adopting subordinate masculinities or having such masculinities thrust on them by the bearers of hegemonic masculinity are likely to be disciplined and punished for their failure to fulfil hegemonic demands and expectations. The strategies used in this pursuit tend to begin very early in life and are familiar to most of us from everyday observation. The relentless hounding of perceived “geeks,” “faggots,” “pansies,” “wimps,” and the like in schoolyards worldwide may, in adolescence and adulthood, lead to vicious assaults and even killings of those who do not “measure up”; openly homosexual men and male adolescents, or those alleged to be homosexual, are at special and often mortal risk. As Hooper aptly commented, “Heterosexual hegemonic masculinity depends for its existence on the presence of a stigmatized subordinate homosexual masculinity. Otherwise it would cease to be clearly heterosexual” (2001, 55).

How are these patterns manifested under the conditions of militarism that pervade nearly all societies and the warfare and genocidal outbreaks that

have consumed many of them? We must first note, with a crashing lack of originality, that militarism in recent historical times has been essential to the construction of hegemonic masculinities.⁵ R. W. Connell, citing the research of Frank Barrett, noted “an oppressive but efficient regime [of militarism]—emphasizing competition, physical hardness, conformity, and a sense of elite membership—designed to produce a narrowly defined hegemonic masculinity, and therefore creating serious problems for women trainees” (2002, 141)—and, one might add, for men who fail to measure up to the competitive, “hard,” conformist norm. Hegemonic masculinity defines itself vis-à-vis the noncombatant: as Lisa Price has written, “I AM only to the extent that you are not—male because you are female, Serb because you are Muslim, soldier because you are civilian. Your absence marks, verifies my presence and your pain becomes my power” (2001, 212; emphasis in original).

Second, the militaristic component of hegemonic masculinity is designed to prepare males (and increasing numbers of females) for action in extremis. There is perhaps no human experience more terrifying than armed combat, and so militarized masculinity is *inherently extremist*, with a momentum that rapidly pushes it beyond the bounds of what would be considered “acceptable” behavior in societies technically at peace.⁶ We can thus expect that perceived “gender traitors”—such as the male noncombatant—will, in a context of war and genocide, be exposed to the most severe sanctions, of a kind and on a scale beyond the peacetime norm.

Third, it can be emphasized that hegemonic masculinity is not just competitive masculinity, not just warrior masculinity, but also *victorious* masculinity. Defeat in war is seen as inherently feminizing—which is why defeated enemies in antiquity, and in some cases to the present, have often been castrated as a prelude to being killed (and their severed genitals sometimes paraded as totems of victory; see further discussion below). This also helps to explain why, among vanquished military forces, an even more volatile hyper-masculinity⁷ may arise as a kind of existential backlash against defeat. The cases of the German Freikorps after World War I and the “Rambo” masculinity that arose in the United States after defeat in Vietnam are only two of the best-studied examples.⁸

Fourth, and finally, hegemonic masculinity is *militarily active and identified* masculinity. This is important to stress, because many warrior cultures accord a profoundly masculinized respect to enemies, including defeated enemies. The enemy may be seen as a man like oneself and, in defeat, to be partaking of a bitter pill that all military formations must swallow on occasion. The enemy *may* be feminized during actual combat (as guerrilla forces who refuse to “fight like men,” i.e., in open battle, are often feminized). He *may* be humiliated, castrated, and anathematized. But when considerations of masculine “honor” prevail, he may also be praised and even lionized both in combat and in defeat; and, as a fellow man engaged in the most masculine

of pursuits, he may even be deemed worthy of nurture and protection, which carries frankly feminine and frequently homoerotic overtones.

An anecdote from the battlefields of Gallipoli in Turkey, which I visited in the prelude to writing this article, conveys the point well. A Turkish statue on the battlefields commemorates a famous and apparently factual event on the first day of fighting, April 25, 1915 (see Figure 1). In the testimony of Australian First Lieutenant Casey:

At Chunuk Bair [the furthest point of penetration in the Allied invasion] . . . there was heavy trench fighting between the Turks and the Allies. The distance between the trenches was eight and ten meters. Ceasefire was called after a bayonet attack and the soldiers returned to their trenches. There were heavy casualties on both sides and each collected their dead and wounded. From between the two trench lines came a cry for help from an English captain who was very badly wounded in the leg. Unfortunately, no one could leave their trenches to help, because the slightest movement resulted in the firing of hundreds of bullets. At that moment an incredible event occurred. A piece of white underwear was raised from one of the Turkish trenches [NB: This is itself interesting in the context of militarized masculinity] and a well built unarmed soldier appeared. Everyone was stunned and we stared in amazement. The Turk walked slowly towards the wounded British soldier, gently lifted him, took him in his arms and started to walk towards our trenches. He placed him down gently on the ground near us and then straight away returned to his trench. We couldn't even thank him. This courageous and beautiful act of the Turkish soldier has been spoken about many times on battlefields. Our love and deepest respect to this brave and heroic soldier. (Cited in Aşkin 2002, 29)

Note the use of traditionally feminine words like *beautiful* and *love* alongside traditionally masculine ones like *courageous* and *heroic*. Hegemonic masculinity provides the mechanism to reconcile these disparate usages.

As a subset of the above, consider the symbolic significance of *noncombatant male* status as I have defined it here—that is, the status of a male who *does not* bear arms, who *chooses not to*, or who has been *disarmed*. It is by now banal to point out the close association between masculinity and military weaponry, and the phallic significance that is explicitly⁹ or implicitly assigned to nearly every class of weapon from the lowly bullet and rifle through to the jet airplane and aircraft carrier. Under conditions of hegemonic masculinity, the absence of arms represents a profound failure and/or rejection of masculinity. For men and adolescent boys, it constitutes a symbolic (and—horrors!—often voluntary) castration. This is somewhat less significant for those outside what might be termed the *virility range*—that is, for very young boys and old men, who are viewed respectively as pre- and postsexual, and thus not as bound by the tenets of heteronormativity. But it tends strongly to shape the perception and depiction of the noncombatant battle-age male. *Battle age*, after all, is effectively a synonym for *reproductive age* and constitutes for men the period of expected heterosexual activity and identification.



Figure 1: A Turkish soldier bears a wounded Allied soldier back to his lines, April 1915. Statue on the Gallipoli battlefields, Dardanelles, Turkey. Photo by Adam Jones, June 2003.

Combining the above frameworks enables us to arrive at a better understanding of the victimization of noncombatant men and adolescent boys in war and genocide. (1) Militarized expressions of violence act to buttress hegemonic masculinity. (2) This violence is likely to take the most extreme forms, reflecting the violence in extremis that is genocide and war. (3) Hegemonic masculinity is competitive and seeks to emerge victorious; it is *always* buttressed in its hegemony by victory, and the vanquished male foe is frequently feminized by virtue of his defeat. This may lead to atrocities ranging from castration to genocidal mass murder of captured prisoners of war. (4) When hegemonic conceptions of honor and respect for the enemy prevail, leading to a respectful or even nurturing attitude toward one's opponent, this is granted only to the extent that the opponent has respected the *active agency* of hegemonic masculinity. To bend the old hominem, "Better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all." As noted, the inability, neglect, or refusal to bear arms symbolically castrates the noncombatant but battle-age male, opening him to the abiding, even hysterical contempt of bearers of hegemonic masculinity.

This final point assumes greater significance when we consider the specific avenues by which the noncombatant male is likely to gain noncombatant status. He may, as mentioned, have been captured and held prisoner, in which case he may be accorded respect and protection, on one hand, or exposed to the severest atrocity, on the other.¹⁰ He may be wounded, disabled, or handicapped—in which case he may be left alone or exposed to murderous contempt.¹¹ He may be too old or too young to meet the requirements of battle age; in this case, he is seen as not truly masculine by virtue of a presumed heterosexual virility that is either nascent (in the case of young boys) or expired (in the case of elderly men).¹² If, however, he falls within the fateful 15-55 age group and has not been captured and forcibly disarmed, then the route to noncombatant status is a varied one. He may be a pacifist or *refusenik*—a role that hegemonic masculinity has traditionally viewed with opprobrium and that immediately cancels his claim to hegemonic masculinity and heterosexual validity.¹³ He may be a deserter—a role to which even greater gendered hostility attaches. He may be in hiding—and no "real man" could tolerate such a skulking, cowardly, isolated existence. He may also have been deemed not physically acceptable for service. In this case, unless he bears some glaringly obvious debility, a masculinized stain of suspicion (and a resulting vulnerability to abuse or atrocity) is likely to be attached even among his own people, let alone among enemy combatants.

An important additional element should be reckoned with. If heteronormative masculinity in conflict situations is intimately bound up with bearing arms, then masculinity that is absent or lost through noncombatant status *can be regained through the simple expedient of taking up arms*. However feminized and thus anathematized the noncombatant male may be, he always possesses a latent ability to transform his status and present the threat to an

enemy that is posed by a hegemonic-masculine equal. This is vital to fleshing out the portrait of gender hatred that inspires the male *génocidaire*: the enemy who is today passive, feminized, prone to abuse may tomorrow be the active, masculine abuser of oneself and (another significant feature) “one’s” womenfolk.¹⁴ One might not even have to wait for the morrow: perhaps the apparent noncombatant is simply concealing his combatant status, ready to attack as soon as one’s back is turned. In brief, we cannot understand why so many millions of noncombatant males have been slaughtered and exposed to all manner of other atrocity during the past century alone without acknowledging the sense in which they pose a *potential* threat to what their tormentors have designated as worth protecting. It is this combination of hegemonic-masculine contempt, patriarchal proprietariness, and *gendered fear* that may have animated the Russian soldier in Chechnya who told a visiting journalist:

I killed a lot. I wouldn’t touch women or children, as long as they didn’t fire at me. But I would kill all the men I met during mopping-up operations. I didn’t feel sorry for them one bit. They deserved it. I wouldn’t even listen to the pleas or see the tears of their women when they asked me to spare their men. I simply took them aside and killed them. (Quoted in Reynolds 2000.)

My broader argument is that each of these contexts and identities is deeply gendered, and that the vulnerability of the noncombatant male standardly reflects the categorization procedures and existential requisites of hegemonic masculinity. Accordingly, to understand the targeting of noncombatant men and adolescent boys, we must attend to the ways in which hegemonic versions of masculinity (especially their militarist component) have been built and reinforced. This is by no means a cut-and-dried matter. As we have seen, hegemonic masculinity often finds a place for conceptions of honor and “respect for the enemy” that can operate to protect noncombatant men under certain restricted conditions. But it is impossible to understand the factors that place noncombatant males at special risk of abuse and atrocity without recognizing the complex cultural formations that designate them as “acceptable” targets for such victimization.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE NONCOMBATANT MALE

The issue of male-on-male sexual violence in wartime has barely begun to receive sustained attention, whether from scholars or international governmental and nongovernmental organizations.¹⁵ This is despite the fact that, in Augusta Del Zotto’s words,

This practice, along with confiscation of the enemy's feminine "spoils of war," is as old as history itself. Ancient Persian murals show triumphant warriors marching along bearing plates piled high with their enemy's penises. For centuries, men and boys who were captured in, or as a result of, combat became the "body servants" (sex slaves) of western warriors, or the "brides" of warriors in Mesoamerica. Most cultures appear to support the claim that an important aspect of conquest involves turning male enemies into feminized subjects. (Del Zotto and Jones 2002)

Accounts from modern wars, especially those in the Balkans and Caucasus, suggest that the pattern remains intact and may even be staging a resurgence. Together with Del Zotto, I have examined this issue in detail elsewhere (Del Zotto and Jones 2002), but some aspects of the phenomenon are worth noting in the present context.

One of the most intriguing elements of male-on-male rape and sexual violence is the gendered positioning of rapist and victim: the way in which victims are feminized while *rapists are confirmed in their heterosexual, hegemonic masculinity*. This reflects more broadly on patterns of intermale sexual relations. It is a well-established fact, for example, that in highly patriarchal societies such as those in Latin America and the Balkans, as well as in the hypermasculine environment of men's prisons worldwide, feminine status is assigned to the "passive" (receptive) partner in anal intercourse but not to the "active" (penetrating) one.¹⁶ Indeed, the latter finds his masculinity *and his heterosexual identity* actually reinforced: in Lynne Segal's pungent phrasing, "A male who fucks another male is a double male" (quoted in Hooper 2001, 78).

How is this framing transferred to a specifically military context? We might note, first, that the traditionally all-male environment of militaries has long accepted, and even (in Greco-Roman and some African constructions) celebrated, intermale sexual pairings. This may partially account for the "acceptability" of certain forms of sexual torture, such as forcing male prisoners publicly to sexually assault each other, which might under other circumstances be viewed as unacceptably homoerotic.

Second, if my earlier argument is correct, a male who is exposed to rape and sexual violence in wartime *has already been feminized by virtue of having assumed noncombatant status or having been forced into it through disarming and detention/incarceration*. If, to repeat Segal's insight, the man who fucks another man is doubly a man, then a noncombatant male who is forcibly fucked is doubly feminized. So, too, is the ethnic group to which the sexually assaulted male belongs. Dubravka Zarkov (2001) is very powerful on this point, although her analysis focuses on specific cases in the Balkans in which the form of sexual violence chosen was castration. "In a phallogocentric culture, cutting off a man's penis symbolically emasculates every man" belonging to the targeted group, according to Zarkov:

Because the phallic power of the penis defines the virility of the nation, there can be no just retribution for its loss. So, when the male body is ethnic and male at the same time, the castration of a single man of the ethnically defined enemy is symbolic appropriation of the masculinity of the whole group. Sexual humiliation of a man from another ethnicity is, thus, a proof not only that he is a lesser man, but also that his ethnicity is a lesser ethnicity. Emasculation annihilates the power of the ethnic Other by annihilating the power of its men's masculinity. (2001, 78)

Very little is lost if we substitute the broader term *sexual violence* for the narrower *castration* in this passage. The additional element of sexual mutilation, however, represents an even more extreme demasculinizing/feminizing of the victim and a more profound valorizing of the heterosexual virility of the assailant and, by implication, his ethnic group.

Attention can usefully be paid here to recent debates over the "genocidal rape" of women, most notoriously (during the last century) in Nanjing, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Rwanda.¹⁷ The term *genocidal rape* was coined by Beverly Allen in her 1996 book, *Rape Warfare*. Focusing on the 1990s cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, Allen defined genocidal rape as "a military policy of rape for the purpose of genocide" and isolated three "main forms": (1) in which women are raped by paramilitary forces, followed up by regular forces who "offer the now-terrified residents safe passage away . . . on the condition that they never return"; (2) rape in conditions of detention and incarceration, "often as part of torture preceding death"; and (3) the long-term incarceration of women for rape *and impregnation*, with the women being held until they give birth to a child that is assumed, in highly patriarchal cultures, to bear the ethnicity of the rapist, in which case the cohesion of the victim's ethnic group is eroded by the perceived introduction of an infant of an "alien" ethnicity (Allen 1996, frontispiece). A final element, not explicitly mentioned in the scheme but noted by many other commentators, is the humiliation imposed on the female victim and her anathematizing by members of her own community—she is seen as "dirty," "unworthy," or somehow complicit in her own violation and may be abandoned or shamed into exile by community members.

Allen's formulation has sparked considerable controversy, with Rhonda Copelon, for one, contending that

the elision of genocide and rape in the focus on "genocidal rape" . . . [is] dangerous. Rape and genocide are separate atrocities. Genocide—the effort to destroy a people—[sic] based on its identity as a people evokes the deepest horror and warrants the severest condemnation. Rape is sexualized violence that seeks to humiliate, terrorize, and destroy a woman based on her identity as a woman. (1998, 64)¹⁸

In my view, however, criticism of Allen's formulation overlooks the extremely broad legal definition of *genocide*,¹⁹ which does not require physical

extermination but emphasizes destruction of group cohesion and identity by, among other things, “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”.²⁰ There is nothing, of course, that prevents a woman from adhering to multiple identities, and in the case of rape as a strategy of genocide or ethnic cleansing, her simultaneous gender and ethnic identifications are central.

Accordingly, Allen’s concept and definition appear to me sound.²¹ The question is, Can sexual violence against noncombatant men also serve a genocidal purpose? I think it can. First, it must be noted that the rape of males in the context of war and genocide far less frequently involves actual intercourse between assailant and assailed. More common is one of two patterns: (1) forced rape of one “subordinate” male (especially an imprisoned one) by another; or (2) severe sexual torture, up to and including castration (sometimes also committed by one subordinate male against another on the command of a prison guard; reports of both variants surfaced in the Bosnian war-crimes trials).²² Referring back to Allen’s formula, we can see that her second specified form of genocidal rape, rape in conditions of detention and incarceration, is pivotal to sexual attacks on noncombatant males.²³ Indeed, her first and third forms, emphasizing “demonstration rapes” designed to force a population to flee and rapes aimed at impregnating the victim, are mostly or entirely irrelevant in the case of sexual violence against men.²⁴ Furthermore, the actual penetration of male rape victims probably occurs in only a minority of cases, and when it does occur it is probably as likely to be inflicted by a fellow detainee as by a captor. Severe sexual torture, focusing on damage to the genitals, appears to predominate; it is often followed by murder.

What we *can* see at work here is a variant of sexual violence that is especially focused on undermining or obliterating the masculinity of the victim and that can, I think, be considered “genocidal” in certain contexts. First, the coercion of one’s fellows to inflict the violence is a special feature of sexual violence against males and can be predicted to erode group cohesion in something of the same way that rapes and impregnations of subordinate-group women are expected to do. The “feminization” of male victims certainly threatens the masculine group cohesion that is essential for military action. And, finally, the element of sexual torture and genital damage that figures so strongly in accounts of male rape and sexual violence in conflict situations can be seen as a counterpart to the forced impregnation and cultural humiliation of female victims. Men who are physically damaged may be incapable of playing a role in group reproduction; more significantly, I suspect, men who have been “feminized” through rape and sexual violence may encounter profound psychological difficulty in subsequently expressing their masculine sexuality. There is little doubt that such damage constitutes the kind of “serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group” specified by the Genocide Convention as contributing to the destruction of group cohesion and identity.

Let me make a final, and closely related, point. Some feminist work on rape of women has contended that, far from being a simple reflection of gender inequality, rapes in fact may increase when women's status is increasing. Rape thus constitutes a form of

male backlash caused by women's growing desire to be more independent of men. . . . More threatened male egos may mean more rape. In the short run, the more women who break out of the traditional female role and assert themselves in new ways, the more threatened male egos there are. (Russell 1975, 14)²⁵

One might speculate that sexual violence against men in war and genocide, with the extreme masculine humiliation that it entails, reflects something of the same dynamic. A military encounter with an enemy, for reasons that need no reiteration, poses a threat to the male ego. This may be greatly intensified if the military encounter arises from *within* the body politic—for example, an uprising by a subordinate ethnic group. This has something of the same connotations of intimate, intrafamilial revolt that women's striving for independence and equality has in male-dominant societies. The attempted suppression of such insurgencies by hegemonic ethnicities may parallel (and be bound up with) hegemonic masculinity's attempts to suppress challenges to the ego and social status of hegemonic males. A "backlash" dimension, in short, may pervade both phenomena, although this must remain speculation and requires much more sustained investigation.

CONCLUSION: PATHS FORWARD

The above analysis, fragmentary and often speculative as it is, suggests possible avenues for future exploration. Despite powerful work done in the past on the militarism/masculinity nexus, we still lack a nuanced theoretical picture of the diversity of noncombatant statuses and the way these intersect with variables of gender, age, ethnicity,²⁶ and social class. We need to understand better the fluid, shifting, and contingent character of hegemonic masculinity through history, although much useful work on this theme has been done by R. W. Connell, Michael Kimmel, Lynne Segal, Terrell Carver, and Charlotte Hooper, to name only a few. (I readily acknowledge that the image of hegemonic masculinity that I have presented in this article, for purposes of parsimony, is an overly schematic and "fixed" one.)²⁷ The subject of the deployment of gendered language and propaganda before and during outbreaks of war and genocide deserves close attention for what it might teach us about how the masculine identities of perpetrators are shored up and how the Other is feminized as a prelude to victimization or extermination.²⁸ Finally, the component of sexual violence against men is also undertheorized, although it is beginning to receive long-overdue attention in the human rights literature.²⁹

A significant difficulty is that we still lack a clear empirical picture of the character and scale of victimization inflicted on “outgroup” males, including bearers of subordinate masculinities, throughout history and around the contemporary world. My own work on gendercide has only recently engaged seriously with gender theory, for the simple reason that I have viewed the empirical dimension as primary: it is harder to theorize without even the vaguest factual outlines of the problem. Much of the first-wave feminist literature similarly sought to delineate the empirical dimension of subsequent “women’s issues” such as domestic and sexual violence, economic disadvantage, and so on. Exploration of the issue of noncombatant males in war and genocide has not been addressed until very recent times;³⁰ in empirical terms, I believe we are roughly where the feminist literature stood in the early 1960s. Despite the tentative efforts of myself and others, a vast analytical terrain remains to be charted. The entire issue of male victimization remains one of the more powerful taboos in the social-scientific literature, not least as a result of the derision heaped on investigators by feminists and hegemonic masculinists alike.³¹

The problem is compounded when we recognize that the hegemonic masculinity to which men are commanded to aspire emphasizes stoicism and silence in the face of suffering, particularly suffering that is held to feminize the victim. This is again very far from an original point, but it further occludes understanding of the scale and nature of male victimization, including that of noncombatant men in war and genocide. To cite just one example, the question of male sexual victimization up to and including genocidal sexual violence remains an almost total void. We have only the most fragmentary evidence from antiquity and modern testimony of the scale and nature of the problem; quite clearly, male victims must pass through something of the same process, and receive something of the social support, that female victims of rape and sexual assault had to traverse in decades past. In doing so, they will also have to surmount the obstacles posed by hegemonic masculinity, which brings extraordinarily powerful mechanisms of shaming and silencing to bear on those who dare to speak up.

One question that preoccupies me is the extent to which male victimization, including the abuse and atrocity meted out to noncombatant males, merits analysis within a “human-rights” framework. We have grown accustomed to the (once-radical) statement that “women’s rights are human rights”: that is, gender-specific rights issues are an integral part of broader human-rights framings. Do “men’s rights” deserve similar consideration? Unfortunately, the very phrase immediately conjures images of hegemonic, socially conservative males beating their breasts as they desperately erect bulwarks against women’s liberation. As a committed feminist from adolescence on, I too have had to overcome a reluctance to address issues of men and masculinities in these terms.³² But just as first- and second-generation feminists were stigmatized as bra-burners and lesbians for speaking out, I think it is vital that we

confront and surmount the obstacles that hegemonic gender identities place in our path.³³ This might allow us to explore in a clear-sighted way the relevance of a rights discourse for men—including those noncombatant males who must confront the shattering phenomena of war and genocide.³⁴

NOTES

1. A range of contributions from sociology, political science/international relations, psychology, and queer studies were published as a special issue of *Journal of Genocide Research* (Jones, ed, 2002c). These, together with additional essays (including Carver's), are published in book form as Jones (2004b).

2. For the activist/educational component, see the Gendercide Watch Web site at <http://www.gendercide.org>. This includes a wide range of historical and contemporary case studies of political-military and institutional gendercides. See also Jones (2002a).

3. The theme is, however, implicit and occasionally explicit in the contributions by Øystein Gullvåg Holter and Evelin Linder (Holter 2004; Lindner 2004).

4. Thanks to Terrell Carver for bringing this quote to my attention.

5. Notably, Øystein Gullvåg Holter contended that this was not always the case:

In traditional society, manliness often meant the ability to avoid war, through cleverness, strength or prowess, and fighting if need be. The man should prove his courage—but wars were primarily fought between lords and their trained followers, not between men as such. . . . One should not exaggerate the “limited” character of pre-modern war (for example, the Middle Ages rules that war was not allowed on church days, outside designated areas, and so on), for in some contexts most of the population did participate in the warfare. Yet the modern “everyman” definition of the soldier did not dominate; nor did a “masculinity” as the common discipline of all men. (2004, 68)

6. “Technically” because, as the literature on human security and the feminist literature on women in society remind us, many apparently “peaceful” societies are in fact riven by conflict and violence, all of it gendered to the core.

7. As stated by Hooper:

The term *hypermasculine* is used in the contemporary literature to mean exaggerated displays of physical toughness (which . . . would belong to the warrior and honor traditions of hegemonic masculinity) and has close connections with the concept of machismo. It is possible to imagine hypermasculinity being applied to extreme examples of other forms of hegemonic masculinity—for example, an extremely cold, ruthless and calculating rationality. Therefore, like masculinity itself, the term has no ultimately stable meaning. (2001, 241, n. 44)

8. On the Freikorps, see Theweleit (1987); on the post-Vietnam era in the United States, focusing on the heartland paramilitary movements that arose in the wake of defeat in Southeast Asia, see Gibson (1994).

9. This is well encapsulated by the basic-training chant, “This is my rifle, this is my gun/This is for fighting, this is for fun”—pointing in turn to the male soldier's weapon and his crotch. There is no better artistic depiction of the brutal interplay between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities in the military context than the first half of Stanley Kubrick's 1987 film *Full Metal Jacket*, which features this chant. (The film's title, which refers to a type of bullet, can be read as a metaphor of the hardness and imperviousness sought by adherents of hegemonic masculinity.) See also Carol Cohn's classic article, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals” (1987).

10. Take the case of Soviet prisoners of war captured by invading German forces in the summer and autumn of 1941. A total of *3.3 million* prisoners died in German hands during the war, a full 2.8 million of them in just eight months of 1941-1942 (a rate far exceeding the extermination of Jews in the Holocaust, and matched in modern times only by the Rwanda genocide of 1994). Perhaps half a million—mostly Jews and commissars—were executed outright, whereas the remainder were killed off by starvation and disease. See the Gendercide Watch (2001) case study of this little-known genocide at http://www.gendercide.org/case_soviet.html. In the case of Allied (British, French, and U.S.) prisoners, however, the Germans were far more solicitous, in general extending them the protection they were entitled to under international humanitarian law. The difference appears to lie in a militarized masculinity that recognized one category of prisoner as “honorable” in defeat while designating the other as a kind of masculinized subhuman. As one German Wehrmacht officer wrote of the “threat” posed to the homeland by his Soviet opponent: “What would have happened to cultural Europe, had these sons of the steppe, poisoned and drunk with a destructive poison, these incited subhumans, invaded our beautiful Germany?” (quoted in Bartov 1994, 18). As Holter wrote (2004, 90),

The Nazi killing of male Soviet POWs should not be interpreted only as a political move, but also a gender statement showing the superiority of the Aryan “superman” (although in the most cowardly way possible). From this vantage point, genocides are the outcome of a twisted, “racialized,” regressive politics. The stronger the gender component, the greater the chance of gendercide or the use of gender terror as part of genocide. (Emphasis added.)

11. One would like to think that in most cases, the wounded, disabled, and handicapped would be exempted from the requirements of hegemonic masculinity. This does not, however, reckon with the depths of human sadism toward the helpless. It also overlooks the regular atrocities meted out to those hors de combat, a relatively recent and renowned example being the slaughter by Serbian paramilitaries of more than 200 wounded Croatian soldiers in their hospital beds at Vukovar in 1991. It should be noted that “irregular” paramilitary formations are standardly less bound by dictates of military and masculine honor, which may serve to protect certain categories of noncombatants, notably prisoners of war and the wounded.

12. “Virility,” of course, can be translated as “battle-ready,” and thus conceptions of hegemonic masculinity operate on both sides of a conflict to designate who is a legitimate target among noncombatants.

13. Women frequently mobilize themselves or are conscripted to discipline such aberrant masculinity, as with the young women who strolled around British cities in World War I handing out white feathers (symbols of cowardice) to battle-age men out of uniform. The validation of antiwar masculinity by U.S. women during the Vietnam conflict—exemplified in the slogan “Women say yes to men who say no”—was a truly revolutionary repudiation of this female role in buttressing hegemonic masculinity.

14. This article does not delve into the question of the patriarchal custodianship of women that often animates the slaughter of combatant and noncombatant males who are deemed a threat to the purity and integrity of (feminized) home and hearth.

15. An important, although partial, exception is Zarkov (2001). Zarkov’s work can be seen as a “partial” exposure of the issue in the sense that, as its title suggests, it concentrates on representations of the phenomenon of male-on-male rape in Croatian media rather than constitutes an empirical analysis of male-on-male sexual violence per se. It is, however, highly significant to the present discussion, because it suggests how strategies of hegemonic masculinity may be adopted even by those sympathetic to the plight of sexually assaulted men. In the media coverage that Zarkov analyzed,

the same criteria of dominant masculinity were used . . . to set the dividing line between different ethnicities. . . . [B]oth the masculinity and the heterosexuality of the [raped] Muslim men [described in the media] were systematically questioned. . . . Through the

acts of sexual violence quoted in their paper, and the words describing them, the violated bodies of the Muslim men were systematically denied the attributes of the dominant masculinity. (2001, 77-78)

16. See, for example, Lancaster (1992) and Gutmann (1996).

17. Case studies of all these campaigns of mass rape, which in the Nanjing and Rwandan cases was frequently followed by murder of the female victims, can be found on the Gendercide Watch Web site (<http://www.gendercide.org>).

18. Stuart Stein advanced a similar argument in his essay "Geno and Other Cides: A Cautionary Note on Knowledge Accumulation" (2004).

19. As codified in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (1948).

20. I do not integrate this point with the study of gendercide because by my definition gendercide is *gender-selective mass killing*. This represents my concern that the UN Convention's definition of genocide is too broad, although many other scholars believe that the emphasis on nonlethal as well as lethal actions is a valid and useful one.

21. There is the further element of death through infection by AIDS in cases of rape, a matter of extraordinary concern in the case of the mass rapes in Rwanda in 1994. See Jones (2004a), especially Section 6, "Genocidal Rape." This would also be relevant in the case of male rape victims, as AIDS statistics from U.S. prisons attest.

22. See Jones (1994, especially n. 12). According to Dubravka Zarkov (2001, 72), this article "was the first to assert that the war in former Yugoslavia produced gender-specific violence against men, including sexual violence."

23. According to Zarkov (2001, 71), sexual assaults against males in the Balkans wars "were committed mainly in detention, and by all warring sides."

24. Community males are, however, clearly a target of the rape of "their" womenfolk, which is often carried out before their eyes; feminist scholars of the subject have stressed this point. Such rapes of women might also be considered a form of sexual violence against men.

25. The passage is cited in Whaley (2001), which systematically tests the "backlash" hypothesis and finds it generally sound.

26. I refer here to the regular pattern of feminizing males from out-group ethnicities. To develop an insight advanced by Cynthia Enloe, the construction of other ethnicities as effeminate both derives from and depends on their exclusion from military conscription. The symbolically castrated nonbearer of arms must not be permitted to gain or regain his virility through military enterprise. Other subordinate ethnicities, however, particularly those with long warrior traditions, may be allowed or encouraged to bear arms and concomitantly granted the status of true men; Punjabi Sikhs and Nepalese Gurkhas are two examples from the history of the British empire. See Enloe (1980).

27. For instance, it is important to understand how two devastating world wars in the twentieth century marked "the beginning of a twentieth-century crisis in masculinity and a terminal blow to martial masculinities" (Hooper 2001, 66)—although this analysis seems valid only for Western European countries. Military defeats for the United States in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan may have played a similarly central role in undermining "martial masculinities," although this requires that the hypermasculine backlash evident in both countries after these wars be a temporary phase rather than an enduring reconsolidation of martial masculinism.

28. I have touched on the theme of gendered propaganda against out-group males in my article "Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention" (Jones 2002a).

29. Particularly in a prison context, where most of it occurs. See the groundbreaking Human Rights Watch report, *No Escape* (Human Rights Watch 2001).

30. Note that, as far as I am aware, the research into gender-selective targeting of battle-age males is the first time that this issue has ever been addressed in a systematic, comparative, and global-historical fashion in any language. This is despite the fact that the gender-selective extermination of this target group is cited in literatures extending as far back as Homer, the Old Testament, and Thucydides.

31. It gives me no pleasure to criticize feminists for this failing or to lump them together with hegemonic masculinists, whose aberrations they have done so much to describe and denounce. But I think such feminist opposition, regrettably, is an obstacle that must be overcome if we are to arrive at a balanced and inclusive framing of gender and gendered suffering in the world. As I have written in a recently published article, feminist strategies frequently use

a methodology that barely deserves the name: 1) isolate a social phenomenon; 2) assume prima facie that it is the expression of "androcentrism" and therefore discriminates against women; and 3) present what female specific data are available to buttress the assumption of discrimination. . . . Precisely the same assumptions and methodology are evident in the plethora of "gender" initiatives by national governments, international organizations (notably the United Nations and World Bank), and nongovernmental organizations. (Jones 2002b: 398-99)

On a brighter note, I perceive substantial advances to have been made in recent years both in the feminist framing of "gender" issues and in the willingness of scholarship to engage with these issues. See, in particular, recent works in the Zed Books series on gender and conflict, notably Jacobs et al. (2000) and Moser and Clark (2001).

32. Evelin Lindner captured my dilemma quite well, and with empathetic humor, in her article "Gendercide and Humiliation in Honor and Human-Rights Societies" (2004).

33. By which I mean the prevailing/hegemonic models of masculinity and femininity alike. There is a sense in which one cannot speak of "hegemonic femininity" in the same way as "hegemonic masculinity," given the political, social, and economic predominance of the latter. But as feminists have long recognized, certain models of both femininity and masculinity have long been privileged and used to subordinate and marginalize those of both sexes who do not "measure up."

34. See Jones (2002b) and Buchanan (2004). I also find a great deal that is useful and progressive in Warren Farrell's much-maligned work, *The Myth of Male Power* (1993).

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