

## **WOMEN, CONFLICT AND DARFUR – A CASE STUDY CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

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Conventional and traditional conflict makes contemporary scholars of security reminiscent of a simpler time, where battlefields, soldiers, and strategies were clearly defined, and to a certain extent isolated, from the civilian population. As seen with the end of the Cold War, where civilians have been the primary targets of conflict, women become the primary victims, constituting the bulk of *civilian* deaths and displaced refugees. Yet, the same shift in “security” has created avenues for never-seen-before agency by women, playing increasingly visible roles in policy-making, international civil society and militaries. However, stuck partially in the traditional scope of security, policy-making and academia have treated the field as a gender-neutral social science. With this exclusion, variation in the identification of threats, security policy or even mainstream academic analysis has recognized the salience of gender in addressing contemporary threats to security. Using a quote from Simone de Beauvoir, this paper identifies a problem in security studies, where “representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.”<sup>1</sup> Despite empirical evidence of an increasingly visible role for women in the mainstream, feminist approaches to security have remained operationally, politically and academically marginalized.

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<sup>1</sup> Simone de Beauvoir in J. Ann Ticker, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). 1.

This paper is an investigation of the central questions of the post-Cold War era through a feminist lens – how do we understand threats to security when addressing gender as a central variable? How do women address these threats to security? What are the mechanisms available to address these threats? Of course, these answers conclude in response to the central question, why is gender not considered a salient variable in security studies and how does the inclusion of this variable change our understanding of contemporary international conflicts?

Using the case study of ethnic conflict in Darfur, I proceed in three sections; first, I present what traditional approaches to the conflict have identified as salient security variables in Darfur. Second, the discussion shows how the case study identifies three categories of female agency in security studies. Finally, the paper will conclude by discussing the larger themes learned over the course of the investigation of women in security studies.

### ***Are there Women in Darfur? Traditional Approaches to the Civil Conflict***

Traditional security, as the “study of the threat, use and control of military force,” focus on the conflicts in West and South Sudan in simple ‘ethnic’ terms, where two groups with historical grievances manifest their conflict in violent means.<sup>2</sup> Yet the history of the region explains its complexity, as there are a multiplicity of regional, natural resource, religious, economic and ethnic cleavages exacerbated by governmental negligence and exploitation, and also, due to the added role of multiple non-state armed group factions. While the twenty-plus year conflict in the South has

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies” *International Studies Quarterly* 35 (1991), 212.

ended in a fragile ceasefire between the government and rebel groups, Sudan has found itself in the midst of a related conflict in the Darfur region.<sup>3</sup>

Most simply, the traditional understanding of the Darfur conflict is a culmination of tensions among nomadic Arab groups and black farmers over economics, oil revenue and farm land. Existing tensions brought about by successive drought, changes to farming boundaries and the government's unwillingness to provide famine support during draughts since the 1980s were finally exacerbated by the government's favor towards Arab groups with its distribution oil export profits. The response within the non-Arab population, which includes the Fur, Zaghawa and several other tribes, gave rise to two military movements; the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Eventually, their discontent manifested in an uprising against government military targets in February 2003, killing 700 government soldiers.<sup>4</sup>

Unprepared for an attack, the government was further disadvantaged due to the concentration of black soldiers from the affected regions in Darfur. Therefore, the government was forced to quash the rebellion by supporting the Arab-based Janjaweed militia. In the following months, the government used an air strike policy, destroying major infrastructure within villages, followed by ground attacks by the Janjaweed militia systematically targeting SLA, JEM and non-Arab civilians.<sup>5</sup> These attacks have included the use of rape, murder and 'scorched earth' policies to inherently create a humanitarian and regional security crisis. It is estimated that since the conflict in Darfur

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<sup>3</sup> For sources on the conflict in Darfur, please see the following sources: African Union, 2006., Agbalawa, 2004., Amnesty International, 2006., Darfur Consortium, 2006., European Union, 2006., Global Security.Org, 2006., Harvard School of Public Health, 2004., Human Rights Watch, 2006., International Crisis Group, 2006., Mahmoud, 2004., Mohammed, 2003., Norway, 2005., Slim, 2004., Straus, 2005., UN, 2006., US, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Erasmus, "Sudan orders air strikes on Darfur before arrival of UN peacekeepers" August 1, 2007. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/01/07/wsudan07.xml>>

began in 2003, 400,000 people have died as a direct result of the conflict, of which 300,000 have died due to malnutrition, disease and famine.<sup>6</sup> Even more disturbing however, are the potential mortality rates within the refugee population, 1.3 million internally-displaced Sudan and 200,000 refugees who have crossed the border into Chad.<sup>7</sup> In addition, due to increased attacks on NGOs and AU peacekeepers, the UN Secretary-General has estimated that by the end of 2006, 195,000 people are completely inaccessible to humanitarian groups.<sup>8</sup>

Several institutional attempts to stop the violence in Darfur have failed undermining future attempts for negotiation. A case-in-point is the April 2004 N'Djamena ceasefire, meant to allow humanitarian and military observer groups into the country to address the devastating refugee situation.<sup>9</sup> Yet, N'Djamena was undermined from the point of signing, as rival groups did not stop their violent clashes even within negotiations of the ceasefire. One of the more notable breaches of the ceasefire was an attack in Nyala which killed forty-five civilians and ended any chance of a prolonged ceasefire, rushing the parties back into conflict.<sup>10</sup> As a response, the African Union sent a peacekeeping mission of over 7000 soldiers to observe breaches of the ceasefire.<sup>11</sup> The presence of African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) did lead to an initial slowing of raids in January 2005. Yet, as rebel groups have recognized the lack of training,

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<sup>6</sup> Richard S. Williamson, *Darfur: Genocide in Slow Motion*. New York: UNA-USA Occasional Paper, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Secretary General. "Report to the Security Council," September 11, 2006. Found at: <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep06.htm>

<sup>9</sup> These numbers are also disputed, some argue that the numbers are as high as two million displaced persons, some argue that there are under one million. Please see: CIA World Factbook. "Sudan" (2004) < <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/su.html> >. (March 18, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> BBC News, "Dozens Killed in Sudan Attack," Monday, May 24, 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3741875.stm> (March 31, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

supplies and equipment in the AMIS forces, violence has not relented against the civilian population.

Unfortunately, 2006 witnessed the most aggravated violence since the beginning of the genocide. In May, the Government of Sudan and one faction of the SLA (SLA-Minawi) signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). Sponsored by the African Union and US Deputy Secretary of State, the agreement was to disarm and disband the Janjaweed militia, and absorb the members of SLA-Minawi into the Sudanese Armed forces, police force and other security organizations.<sup>12</sup> Of course, observers in Darfur actually saw an increase of violence after the DPA was signed. As noted by the Small Arms Survey, the failure of this agreement was rooted in many problems. First, the negotiations were undermined by distrust and suspicion of the process. As noted with the immediate breaches of the N'Djamena ceasefire, the groups involved are unwilling to believe that others will adhere to this process. Second, other SLA-factions, specifically the SLA/A which represents the Fur majority population, and the JEM have rejected the DPA.<sup>13</sup> In response, government forces began attacks on non-signatories of the Agreement, resulting in the renewed violence in June and July 2006. In fact, the violence was so severe that the humanitarian aid community in Darfur threatened a full-withdrawal from the region, as ambushes, banditry, and kidnappings of personnel inhibited the ability of these groups to deliver aid. By August 2006, the unending violence prompted the call for a 17,000 member United Nations peacekeeping force in support of the AU mission mandated until the end of September 2006. Support for the

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<sup>12</sup> US Secretary of State, Office of the Spokesperson. "Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA): Factsheet" May 8, 2006. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/65972.htm>> (March 31, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> The Small Arms Survey, "No dialogue, no commitment," October 2006. [http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/sudan/Sudan\\_pdf/SIB%204%20Darfur.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/sudan/Sudan_pdf/SIB%204%20Darfur.pdf). (March 31, 2007).

UN comes from several actors in the region, the Government of Chad, the NGO community, and the leader of the now-defunct SLA-Minawi. Yet, this support has not lessened the violence, rather tensions have been furthered to, as the Government of Sudan has called the UN mission an “act of colonialism” and has clearly stated it would treat the force as a “foreign invasion”.<sup>14</sup> Of course, due to foreign hesitancy to engage in full-scale combat, this has halted progress on the deployment of the UN force. Since then, in January 2007, the Sudanese government has agreed to a 60-day ceasefire to allow for humanitarian workers to access vulnerable members of the population.

### **Criticisms of the Traditional Explanations of Security in Darfur**

Limited in its understanding of the security concerns in Darfur, the traditional security approach emphasizes the conflict between groups, including the state. This perspective assumes that the cessation of violence is the endpoint of security for Darfur, and that the state will inherently ensure the protection of the people within its boundaries.<sup>15</sup> Second, the groups identified as actors in the conflict are those that have access to economic and military capabilities. As shown later in the paper, this is a strictly top-down understanding of security, whereas bottom-up approaches recognize that vulnerability for civilians does not end with the cessation of violence.<sup>16</sup>

This being said, the tools and means to ending the conflict have been defined by traditional concepts of security, where even the mechanisms for “peace” have been

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Core writers in traditional security include: Baldwin, 1997., Betts, 1997., Blainey, 1988., Bull, 1968., Buzan, 1991., Carr, 1939., Grieco, 1988, 1997., Haftendorn, 1991., Huntington, 1996., Krasner, 1999., Mearsheimer, 1995, 2001., Morgenthau, 1967, 1985., Walt, 1991., Waltz, 1979.

<sup>16</sup> Marysia Zalewski, “Feminism and/in International Relations: An Exhausted Conversation? Or Feminists Doing International Relations: The Cut(ting) Edge of Contemporary Critical Theory and Practice?” In Harvey, Frank and Brecher, Michael eds. Critical Perspectives in International Studies. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). 206.

inherently coercive in nature. For example, the resumption of violence in 2006 was backlash, read: military coercion, against groups that refused to sign the DPA. The DPA was proposed by the AU, UN and US, and it was expected that the document was to be accepted as an 'all-or-nothing' agreement, compete with strictly defined deadlines and little time to negotiate its terms.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, suspicious and negotiation-weary groups were given few options but to defer the agreement, again resulting in renewed violence. This paper does not deny that institutional, ceasefire and governmental approaches to solving threats to security are not useful, rather it suggests that there be a reprioritization of threats in the region, which may result in the *reprioritization of the means* with which insecurity is addressed.

### **Feminist Approaches Answer the Question: Who's Security?**

Traditional security approaches the field from a top-down perspective, emphasizing structural matters such as sovereignty, economics and militaries. As we have seen, traditional analysis of Darfur focuses on security of the region as dependent on the conflict between the government, the Janjaweed militia and the SLA factions. In contrast, feminist security studies argue that contemporary intrastate conflict are better understood from the bottom-up, where the effects of conflict are more focused on micro-level analysis.<sup>18</sup> In other words, while traditional referent objects are referenced by their relative power vis-à-vis other states, a feminist approach challenges the state-centric and recognizes that power is a) not only material in nature b) gender is one lens with which to identify the socially constructed roots of power c) power is structural, defined

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<sup>17</sup> The Small Arms Survey, "No Dialogue, no Commitment."

<sup>18</sup> Gillian Youngs, "Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms? Or: why women and gender are essential to understanding the world 'we' live in" *International Affairs*. 80:1. (January 2004). 83.

by the consistent lines of relationship between oppressor and the oppressed.<sup>19</sup> When using these contributions of the feminist approach, there are three central examples of how this perspective shift changes the definition of threats to security. Darfur provides a crucial case study of how gender changes the 'important' variables and referent object within ethnic conflict.

As mentioned in the case study, there have been an estimated 200,000 refugees that have left Darfur for neighbouring Chad. In addition, the numbers of internally displaced people have been estimated as high as two million.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the major cause of death in the region is not attributed to militia violence, but due to the lack of food and water for refugees.

Yet, when applying a gendered analysis to these statistics, an important distinction becomes apparent, as it has been estimated that women and children constitute over 80 per cent of the world's refugees.<sup>21</sup> In Darfur, the statistics are even more significant – the United Nations Darfur Task Force has noted that over 90 per cent of people forced to leave villages in Darfur have been women and children.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, while women have not been the primary targets of traditional violence in the Darfur conflict, women have been the targets of a deeper, structural violence that is a central element of feminist IR theory. As Tickner notes, gendered IR theory also moves to include all forms of violence, including physical, structural and ecological.<sup>23</sup> It is the

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<sup>19</sup> This position is reminiscent of the literature on human security. Key research in the area includes: Acharya, 2001., Alagappa, 1998., Alkire, 2002., Bajpai, 2000., Lodgaard, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "SUDAN." March 10, 2004. Found at: <[www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)> (March 10, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> J. Ann Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand: troubled engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists." *International Studies Quarterly*. 41:4 (December 1997) 625.

<sup>22</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "SUDAN: Militias ravage Darfur in gangs of hundreds." March 10, 2004. Found at: <[www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)> (March 10, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand," 625.



inclusion of these threats where traditional approaches to security “fail to take account of the specific ways in which women and children are affected by war, military occupation, militarization, (forced) migration, human trafficking, sexual and other forms of slavery and (forced) prostitution”<sup>24</sup> Noting that women make up the significant proportion of refugees, it highlights the importance of identifying the effects of refugee security when shifting the referent object to women. Therefore, by shifting the focus to the individual or community - instead of the state - the theory must look at structural violence as central to security within the region.

The second example shows, when including gender as a variable for analysis and focusing on women as the referent object within security analysis, re-identifies how the field defines ‘power’ and ‘violence’ in conflicts. A central point of contention within feminist IR theory argues that insecurity still favors a male-centred conception of the threats to security. More specifically, the gendered perspective recognizes that the concepts of sovereignty, economics and military are conceived within male-centric frames of reference in several ways. First, traditional concepts of power identify power as based in the state or institutional agents versus individuals. Second, this perspective only focuses on the coercive manifestation of material power instead of the social implications of *use of power*. Finally, it sees power as ability of “A to get B to do something it would not normally do (contrary to its interests),” examine *bilateral exercise of power* between actors, ignoring its structural, collective or institutional forms.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, it is important to recognize one of the gendered realities of the war in Darfur is the use of rape as a tool for subjugation of the black population. From the

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<sup>24</sup> Youngs, “Feminist International Relations,” 83.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Dahl’s definition of power is the traditional definition of power as understood in mainstream international relations. Tickner, “Gender in International Relations,” 4.

traditional perspective, rape is seen as a side-effect to the main occurrence of war; a sideshow for the main stage production of the larger conflict. In these cases, age is not a factor and rape victims include children and women as old as 70 years. Figures for the number of rapes range in accounts from 16 to 25 per cent of the female population.<sup>26</sup> Due to social stigma, death and displacement, it is widely understood that these estimations are arbitrarily low.<sup>27</sup> Estimates in other African conflicts such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have suggested that for every rape reported there are thirty that have gone unreported. This figure also does not include the number of perpetrators at any given time, but rather the number of incidents of rape.<sup>28</sup> However, within the feminist perspective, the use of rape as a tool of war has major implications on the war itself. At the most basic level, the Janjaweed militia has used rape as a tool against the black population to subjugate their victims through humiliation, revenge or as a spoil of war.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, looking at the three ways that feminist perspectives reconceptualise power and violence, we see that power is manifested not at the state or institutional level, rather it is violence manifested at the individual level. Sexual violence, in traditional security, has not been examined in its aggregate similar to conflict deaths. This is mostly because this sexual violence is *invisible*, and despite its pervasiveness it is seen as a “private” manifestation of violence. Second, this type of power is not

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<sup>26</sup> There are a number of sources that have done work with rape victims, however, there is a large variation in the estimates women raped in the Darfur conflict. Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Centre for Health and Human Rights, Program on Humanitarian Crises and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health. “The use of Rape as a Weapon of War in the Conflict in Darfur, Sudan.” (Boston: Harvard University) October 2004. p 16., Lene Hansen, “Gender, Nation, Rape: Bosnia and the Construction of Security” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 3:1 April 2001, 68. Medecins Sans Frontieres. “The Crushing Burden of Rape: Sexual Violence in Darfur.” Briefing Paper prepared by Medecins Sans Frontieres. Amsterdam, 8 March 2005 and Adan Azain Mohammed, “Sudan: Women and Conflict in Darfur.” *Review of African Political Economy*. (2003) 97, 479-510.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Harvard School of Public Health. “The use of Rape as a Weapon of War” 16.

<sup>29</sup> Lene Hansen, “Gender, Nation, Rape: Bosnia and the Construction of Security” 68.

material, military or economic, rather it is based on a socially constructed hierarchy between genders; between an oppressor and an oppressed. It is also based on the social relationships between the religious and ethnic groups within Darfur, namely the Arab and Black populations. Finally, sexual violence can not be measured in Dahl's terms, based on "outcomes." Rather sexual violence is a *means* to the objective of ethnic cleansing, humiliation or village-clearing, hence its inclusion in the larger field of security is crucial.

At the aggregate level, rape is used as a tool for larger-level gains by creating fear within an entire population. In traditional security studies, the threat of the use of force is used as a deterrent, creating fear within a population to succumb to a state's interest. Here, the use of deterrence has its roots in sexual violence and the use of sexual subjugation. For example, in Darfur, rape was initially used to instill fear in the female population within villages. The Janjaweed used this technique to cause flight from villages and camps allowing easy land-capture within Darfur.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, rape has a direct link to the objectives and roots of the violence in Darfur, where the Janjaweed specifically attempts to rape high numbers of women to cause cultural and familial destruction. In cultural relations between black and Arab populations, rape is culturally understood as 'polluting' traditional family blood lines with *foreign* seed. This challenges both the honour of the family and interrupts the entire family blood line.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the implications of the use of rape at the aggregate level directly affect the conduct of war and the composition of the actors engaged in combat.

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<sup>30</sup> Medecins Sans Frontieres. "The Crushing Burden of Rape" March 2005 and Mohammed, "Sudan: Women and Conflict in Darfur." 479-510.

<sup>31</sup> Harvard School of Public Health. "The use of Rape as a Weapon of War," and Sakiko Fukuda-Parr. "Gender, Globalization and New Threats to Human Security" Peace Review 16:1, March 2004, 41.

The third central example within this paper examines the structural violence, in the Galtung definition of the term, as a manifestation of power in Darfur. As mentioned, threats in gendered approaches to security examine the field from a bottom-up approach to social relations between the powerful and disempowered. In Darfur, power between genders is also defined by the ability to allow or inhibit access to essential goods and services. Therefore, one of the largest threats for women in Darfur is the lack of security from disease, malnutrition, and water- and fuel-shortages within protected refugee camps. Because the insecurity surrounding these necessities, women are forced to leave the camps, but once outside they are abducted, gang raped and/or violently mutilated before being released.<sup>32</sup> Of course, the lack of life-sustaining goods is the direct result of several elements such as violence occurring within the villages razed and pillaged by the Janjaweed and the lack of access in and out of the refugee areas. This includes access for humanitarian groups as the government of Sudan has used its sovereign power to disallow humanitarian groups to access populations at need.<sup>33</sup> In addition, one of the more startling developments within Darfur is the ambushing and looting of humanitarian agencies by rebel groups. In addition, food scarcities exist as women make up a large part of agricultural sector within Darfur. These include both large-scale and individual farms within the village used for sustenance agriculture. Statistics have shown that only 57 per cent of family farms across Sudan have cultivated land in 2006.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Amnesty International. "Sudan." 2006. <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/sudan/index.do>> (March 15, 2005). And Human Rights Watch. "Crisis in Darfur." 2006. <<http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=darfur/>>. (March 15, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

It is seen that at the individual level women redefine threats to security because they are more susceptible to sexual violence within conflict situations. At the societal-level, the disruption of women's lifestyles and the increasing scarcity of food, water, fuel and health supplies is also a threat that has not been addressed in traditional security approaches. Finally, at the state-level, because of the inability of the government to create security for its citizens, refugee movements have provided insecurity for women in Darfur. Another finding of this section shows that these threats to security, while defined here as distinct concepts, are actually mutually reinforcing.

Finally, this section has shown that the shift of referent object to the individual is an important perspective for women because it identifies that security is not a blanket conception for all people. Instead, it makes the argument that women have specific security concerns based on identity and physical being. Woman as referent object is only one area where feminist research is important. Many feminist scholars fear that emphasis on these issues revert women to the "man-as-protector/woman-as-victim"<sup>35</sup> understanding of security. Rather, this section is meant to highlight that the security concerns a different than those addressed by traditional security paradigms. The next section will discuss the role of women as actors within international relations and also, how the perspective redefines the adequate tools to providing security in light of these threats.

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<sup>35</sup> V. Spike Peterson, "On the Cut(ting) Edge." In Harvey, Frank and Brecher, Michael eds. Critical Perspectives in International Studies. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). 149.

### **Gendered Security Actors and “Tools” for Security**

With a recognition that the threats to and referent object of security need to be re-conceptualized to include gender, how does the field then conceptualize its response in resolving these insecurities? Do contemporary approaches provide solutions to gendered insecurity? Because traditional threats to security are identified by “male-centric” terms of reference, it also means that resolving gendered insecurities have either never been addressed, or addressed using traditional mechanisms – which often does not address these central issues.

As discussed in the previous section, traditional security research is spent in an attempt to find solutions to end conflicts through institutional, diplomatic and negotiated-means. Yet issues such as structural, sexual and individual threats to security, as defined by gendered analysis, do not end with a ceasefire. Instead, insecurity continues to exist after the ceasefire, as limitations in the access of food, water and shelter target the displaced population. Second, culture stigmas lengthen the duration of insecurity where women that have been victimized by sexual violence are often ostracized from their former communities. Third, because there is no identifiable enemy (or a multiplicity of perpetrators), gendered crimes are rarely prosecuted. Rather, they are seen as *epiphenomenal* to the “larger” violent conflict, then the solutions are also dealt with in a “epiphenomenal” way.

The Darfur case is rife with examples of failures to protect women from gender-based insecurity. At the beginning of March 2007, the ICC released its warrant for the arrest of several top members of the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed militia. In its list of more than 50 charges, only four were for sexual violence. Yet, as the

pervasiveness of rape is blatantly evident, where an estimated 30-50 per cent of women have been victimized, these charges are a glaring omission of the gendered threats to security.<sup>36</sup> The ICC has not been the only court guilty of being unable to address women's issues. Earlier in the year, when a Sudanese court set hearing dates for several perpetrators of crimes against humanity, the trials became indefinitely postponed as the defendants did not show up at the trial.<sup>37</sup>

This leads to the question, what do feminist approaches advocate that should be done to address gendered insecurity? Of course, the process begins with a recognition that issues of structural, sexual and individual insecurity against women are part and process of the objectives of the conflict, as these issues have not even been recognized as the problem related to conflict. While this is *not* out of the conceptual reach of traditional, male-centric groups, the role of female agency in security is one means to measure "the scope" of gendered perspectives in the field. Therefore, this section will examine the contemporary roles of women in the field. Inherently, this section also prescriptive in nature, advocating a more comprehensive agency for women in the field. This section follows Cynthia Enloe's research question, "where are the women?"<sup>38</sup> This section will discuss a few roles for women in security-studies; the military, civil society and policy-making, using Darfur to highlight these assertions.

Enloe argues that because IR has defined 'important' roles as those dominated by males, the field is predetermined not to 'find women' in active, security-promoting roles, which is reflective of the internal feminist dichotomy of the essentialist versus

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<sup>36</sup> International Criminal Court. "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations." Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1564 of September 18, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> International Criminal Court, "Situation in Darfur, The Sudan" Prosecutor's Application Under Article 58(7).

<sup>38</sup> Craig N. Murphy, "Seeing Women, recognizing gender, recasting international relations." *International Organization*. 50:3. (Summer 1996). 518.

constructivist debate.<sup>39</sup> Essentialism further stereotypes women to keep them from contributing in the 'real world' of security studies, by stereotyping women into *peace studies*, making women 'useless' in matters of war-making and hard security.<sup>40</sup> Tickner argues that essentialist feminism is paradoxically regressive, as it takes traditional domestic, family-building roles for women and attempts to apply them, unconvincingly to the international scene.<sup>41</sup> Alternately, the feminist constructivist approach looks to deconstruct the socially constructed gender-roles and argues that the roles for women are increasingly multidimensional. Drawing from this assertion, the constructivist school claims that male-dominance in the field is also a product of socialization in international relations. Therefore, barriers to female participation in security studies must be deconstructed to allow for women to contribute from their experience and perspective.

Of course, this debate is exemplified in the female agency in Darfur, where women are most consistently involved in the NGOs and civil society in Sudan, yet women have not been involved in the militaristic elements of women and their involvement in the region. Instead, as women working in a male-dominated field, the impact of gender can not be measured as women continue to work within limits set by a male-defined sector. McGlen and Sarkee's work examines how systemic exclusion keeps women from the field. Tickner quotes security scholars that argue because women have not been on the front lines of war, they "tend to exhibit what [is] call[ed] "a civilian mind," a certain ostrich-like obliviousness when it comes to matters of national

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 517-8. Peterson, "On the Cut(ting) Edge." 154. and Tickner, "Gender in International Relations." 6.

<sup>40</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Feminist Inquiry and International Relations." In Michael Doyle and G. John Ikenberry eds. New Thinking in International Relations Theory. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997). 79.

<sup>41</sup> Tickner, "You just don't understand." 615.



security and war.”<sup>42</sup> Because of this structural exclusion, this section is forced to employ a prescriptive approach to women in military and policy-making roles.

The reality faced by women within policy-making also is most astute within the armed forces, as their relationship is based on an inherently negative relationship between women and militaries. Civilian populations, composed of a large proportion of women, consist of 90 per cent of mortalities within modern conflict, compared to the numbers of women in militaries worldwide as a mere 2 per cent of military service people.<sup>43</sup> This highlights the empirical barrier to feminist studies of conflict where women are predetermined in the role of victim, instead of self-protecting actors. Particularly in Darfur, because the military is one of the roots of insecurity, female agency within the military institution is out of the question.

Yet, the female engagement in the military has a place in interventionist forces. More specifically, women play an instrumental role in cultural sensitivity and rapport-building within interventionist forces.<sup>44</sup> In many societies, including conservative communities in Darfur, women have been culturally segregated from non-family males, as they are brought up within societies that do not advocate for closeness between women and men. As seen in Darfur, the intervening African Union peacekeeping mission does not have a large female military presence. This keeps local women from engaging within discussions about development and problems that they face within refugee camps. Even more troubling is the number of rape perpetrators that are not

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<sup>42</sup> J. Ann Tickner. “Feminist Responses to International Security Studies” *Peace Review* 16:1, March 2004, 43–48

<sup>43</sup> Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand.” 625. This is with the addition of the militaries of Western countries such as Canada, which estimates that women make up 10 per cent of the regular forces and 18 per cent of the reserves. Please see: [http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/whm/factsheet\\_e.html](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/whm/factsheet_e.html)

<sup>44</sup> Darfur is an example of this as both the Arab and black populations are predominantly Muslim. This assertion is central to the Canadian experience in Afghanistan, where respect for cultural relationships can help build rapports between Afghani people and Canadian soldiers.

brought to justice for their sexual crimes because women are unwilling to come forward and speak with male members of intervening militaries and NGOs. Forwarding a female presence in the military allows for the outward portrayal of respect for local traditions and cultures, and allows for a trust relationship to be built between intervening militaries and local populations.

Also, this paper advocates that female participation has obvious benefits within militaries and policy-making positions in ethnic conflicts such as Darfur. In the post-Cold War era, the central task for militaries has not been engagement in full-scale conflict; rather they have been involved in peacekeeping, peacemaking, development, institution-building and nation-building roles.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it is important to recognize that while women traditionally have not engaged in *combat* due to stereotyped gender-roles, women have a newly identified part within the multi-dimensional responsibilities for militaries. For example, women are critical in militaries with Provincial Reconstruction teams as they can liaison with local women to redevelop the country's institutions and economy.<sup>46</sup>

An example of the slow movement towards the integration of women in the military and security forces is exemplified by the intervention of an all-women intervention force in Liberia, deployed at the end of January this year. The battalion is part of a specialized Formed Police Unit, "which in the past has been used as a rapid reaction force, to control riots and crowds and also to train local police forces."<sup>47</sup> In a sign of the future of UN peacekeeping, the organization has described India's

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<sup>45</sup> An example of this is Canada's role in Afghanistan: Canada. Department of National Defence. "Three Block War," 2005. <[http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/lff/English/5\\_4\\_1\\_1.asp?FlashEnabled=1&](http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/lff/English/5_4_1_1.asp?FlashEnabled=1&)> (January 15, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/5323140.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5323140.stm)

deployment of women peacekeepers as "unprecedented."<sup>48</sup> As advocated by this paper, it is argued that, "female peacekeepers are seen as bringing a different style to international policing by appearing less threatening and more approachable for women and children."<sup>49</sup> Yet, this does not deny that female actors are less capable at the "traditional" aspects of security, rather even the director of the program recognizes that, "our women going there will send two messages -- first, that women in India are on par with men, and inspire women... wherever they go."<sup>50</sup>

While gendered threats to security are defined from a bottom-up approach, the role of women as securitizing actors can also be investigated from the bottom-up instead of top-down.<sup>51</sup> As stated by Youngs, the importance of the grassroots in security studies addresses the tendency to "ignore women's realities and their active contributions to political and economic life."<sup>52</sup> However, this situation also places feminist contributions to security studies in a difficult position. When examining women in the traditional fields of security studies, the gendered differences that women bring to the field are marginalized, because they are working within a male-dominated field. When examining the role of women within the activist and peace-studies field, it brings another level of marginalization where female attributes are not considered "hard" security studies, but rather as an aside to the mainstream decision-making process.<sup>53</sup>

When examining the 'women as actors' role that has been played in the conflict it is essential to refer to the work that has been work done at the grassroots level by

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1053109>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Youngs, "Feminist International Relations," 83.

<sup>52</sup> Youngs, "Feminist International Relations," 83-86.

<sup>53</sup> Ticker, "You just don't understand" 620-3.

NGOs. At the start of the conflict in the Sudan, the government severely restricted outsider groups to enter Sudanese borders. Therefore, many of the civil society groups that intervened at the early stages of the conflict were those that were already in Sudan, such as the International Red Cross and *Medicines Sans Frontieres*.<sup>54</sup> However, one of the core movements that have developed in the country since the outbreak of the conflict in the South has been the involvement of women's NGOs providing crucial security support for displaced women in the country.

One example of these organizations includes the African Women's Development and Communications Network (known as FEMNET).<sup>55</sup> FEMNET is an organization started in 1988 to find ways to end systemic oppression of women in African states – their mandate includes an overall mandate to deal with women's issues such as “mobilizing resources for African women's development, equality and other women's human rights by local, regional and international sources; and enabling collective action by African women's movements in order to tackle regional gender issues”<sup>56</sup> Included in their mandate is a movement to work alongside other IGOs, NGOs, the African Union and the United Nations Organizations to forward women's issues. This becomes especially crucial with the Darfur case study because FEMNET provides a support system for women that have been ignored within the larger context of the conflict between the SLM/A and the Janjaweed. One of their most recent campaigns is the push to send the perpetrators of sexual violence to the International Criminal Court.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> For example: Medecins Sans Frontieres. “The Crushing Burden of Rape: Sexual Violence in Darfur.” Briefing Paper prepared by Medecins Sans Frontieres. Amsterdam, 8 March 2005

<sup>55</sup> FEMNET. “African Women's Development and Communication Network” 2006. < <http://www.femnet.or.ke/subsection.asp?ID=1>> (March 15, 2006).

<sup>56</sup> FEMNET. “African Women's Development and Communication Network” 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Institute for War and Peace Reporting – London. “Sudan [analysis]: Women in Darfur Look to ICC” February 26, 2006. < <http://allafrica.com/stories/200603010150.html>> (March 14, 2006).

This campaign followed the Justice Antonio Cassese's report to the UN Secretary-General about the widespread and unprosecuted rape that has occurred in the country. Within Sudanese law, a woman needs to have four male witnesses to corroborate the charge of rape, therefore within the circumstance of conflict this evidence is virtually impossible to follow through. Therefore, the push by FEMNET is a crucial campaign to ensure the security of women in Darfur in the future.

Another example of the grassroots role of women exists within an organization called the Darfur Consortium.<sup>58</sup> The Consortium is a group of 30 NGOs that have formed a large coalition over the issues occurring in Sudan. Of these NGOs, many come from women's groups to form core membership of the Consortium. This is important for several reasons as these women's groups have a large and sympathetic forum with which to bring forward women's security issues to the main table within the African NGO community. In addition, these groups can draw connections between the human rights abuses targeting women and the larger frame of violence – highlighting the links between grassroots security and larger institutionalized conflict.

While FEMNET and the Darfur Consortium are two examples of NGOs that have been active in restoring security to the Darfur region, they are just a small representation of the women that participate in grassroots and non-governmental movements within conflict zones. Incidentally, while these two examples reflect internal organizations working in Darfur, it should be noted that a significant number of international NGOs working in Darfur are comprised of women. This includes women

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<sup>58</sup> Darfur Consortium. "An African and International Civil Society Action for Darfur" 2006. <<http://www.darfurconsortium.org/>> (March 15, 2006).

within organizations such as the International Red Cross, *Medcines Sans Frontieres*, and the numerous UN agencies providing humanitarian support within Darfur.

### **Conclusions**

In this paper, I have shown how a re-conceptualisation of security, taking into account gender as a defining variable, is vastly underrepresented in security studies. Therefore, a key conclusion of this approach is its redefinition of women as a referent object and the changing threats to their security. The use of sexual violence is one means of asserting power as a threat to the security of individuals. Yet, the integration of women within mainstream security studies also shows why the field also needs consideration for the inclusion of structural threats to security. Structural threats are those that are indirect and systemic in nature, including health, poverty and environmental phenomenon that directly affect the quality of the human condition.<sup>59</sup> It is important to distinguish that these threats are not manifested in violence, but as shown by the Darfur case study, are those that challenge the physical survivability of women in the region.

Within conflict situations, women are increasingly susceptible to structural threats to security, such as food, water, environmental threats. However, it is these structural threats that make women more vulnerable to physical threats to security, including rape, mutilation and death. This is not just a phenomenon exclusive to Darfur, rather these structural insecurities threaten the physical well-being of women even in domestic and familial settings.

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<sup>59</sup> Sabina Alkire, "A Conceptual Framework For Human Security" Commission on Human Security. Working Paper #2. (February 2002). p. 26-27.

Second, this paper has implications for how power is expressed in IR, as it questions the root of traditional approaches to what constitutes power. Instead, it argues that the defining of power should be broadened to include non-material definitions of the term. One of example of redefining power would be the idea of sexuality as a form of power, as the Janjaweed militia has used rape as an assertion of power over the black population in Sudan. In these cases, power is not wielded through material strength, but rather using rape becomes an expression of power between ethnicities.

In conclusion, the field of security studies needs to broaden its base, to include new variables, approaches and perspectives on the field. This will allow for both its survivability in the ever-changing field of international relations, but also fundamentally improve its ability to understand what 'security' actually means.

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