



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Bc. Linda Jelínková

Title: International Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Comparing Rwanda and Former Yugoslavia

Programme/year: Master in International Security Studies / 2

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Mgr. Et Mgr. Karolina Svobodova

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	36
<i>Total</i>		80	73
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	92



Evaluation

Major criteria:

At first, the research question and the research objectives incl. the hypothesis are clearly stated and explained on the background of the relevant literature and context description. The author present one main research question (*How did the international response to conflict-related sexual violence differ in the cases of civil war in former Yugoslavia and genocide in Rwanda?*) and three sub-questions which she later analyzes and answers in her thesis.

At second, as regards the theoretical / conceptual framework, the author applies two main ones - the general (IR) constructivism and the feminist constructivist theory to the social reality of international response to the sexual violence in the two examined armed conflicts and related ethnic cleansing (genocide in case of Rwanda). Constructivism is compared with essentialism and structuralism. The influence of these three scientific approaches is also appropriately analysed as relates to the international response. Nevertheless, the term "Feminist Security Studies" is quite unclear and not further explained and it is not a term regularly used in academic resources. While it is absolutely all right to postulate a new approach by the author, it should be explained as such. The same applies to the (currently non-existent) theories on international response to the conflict related sexual violence in cases of former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It should be stated that the author is producing the new theory here in a historical and contemporary perspective in constructivist framework.

While the thesis presents an excellent constructivist elaboration of norms as created and applied by the international community in the response to sexual violence, the advantages of the (feminist) constructivism could have been elaborated more extensively, not only in terms of perceived victims of sexual violence but in the whole construction of the social reality which ultimately bears sexual violence. However, the operation with "innocent and vulnerable victims" relating to women (and children) is again very valuable from the theoretical and analytical perspective. The author depicts the difference between the social reality as perceived in a general context and perceived by the victims (who are men in many cases). Boys are rather omitted, although they, according to recent findings, become very often victims of the conflict related sexual violence (e.g. currently, in Syrian refugee camps); in fact, much more than men.



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Further, the author also mentions a range of conflict related sexual violence theories and she uses a proper definition based on reliable and regularly used source (the UN). She again applies the feminist perspective here when neatly describing the concepts of “sex” and “gender”. Still, it could be added to the presentation of Woods’s conclusions that she also stipulates the sexual drive is not the motive for conflict related sexual violence – the same as the author later refers to Cynthia Enloe regarding the same example (“comfort” women and military brothel as a tool to prevent rape of civilians). These facilities proved that sexual desire is not the case since the soldiers still committed sexual violence on civilians intensively.

At third, the methodology is based on a qualitative comparative research, particularly on the MSDO (Most Similar, Different Outcomes) method which is explained and applied appropriately. The cases of former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are comparable with a distinction of the local context (different culture) which the author rather omits (see below). Still, the methodology is correct and scientifically elaborated.

However, the definitions of sexual violence and other concepts as gender should have been rather presented in the chapters on Theoretical / conceptual framework, while the chapter 4.1. (*Methodology*) should only involve their operationalization (which it does). Regarding the international response operationalization, also governmental actors could have been used. For example, the approach of the French government to the conflict related sexual violence in Rwanda (and to the genocide in general) could have been examined, as the French support to the Hutu (Habyarimana’s) government in the civil war is provable. Also the role of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals could have been elaborated more in detail.

The analysis contributes well to the scientific research and it is very logically constructed based on arguments. The author first describes the two cases one by one, and then she compares them in the final analysis.

With regard to the analysis of the case of former Yugoslavia, the war in today’s BiH could have been also reminded (related to the number of the conflict related sexual violence victims there). Further, the analysis of MacKinnon’s conclusions on the impact of pornography on the conflict related sexual violence could have taken into account the whole social reality as constructed in the patriarchal system. (As the current pornography, mostly exploiting women as sexual objects and objects of male aggression, only reflects the patriarchy. It is the patriarchy leading to sexual violence, rather



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than the pornography itself).¹ This QCA offers comparison with Rwanda where the sexual violence was more extensive without pornography being largely disseminated as in former Yugoslavia.

Then, the case of Rwanda, the biggest deficiency is the number of sexual violence victims in case of Rwanda. The author claims 500, 000 victims without a reference at the p. 40. and again at the p. 48 with the reference to Morris. However, other sources (as the UN) state different numbers – 250, 000 victims of sexual violence in Rwanda. Hence, better cross-check analysis and fact-checking should have been considered here, or better referencing regarding the facts (important as this). On the other hand, it must be admitted, the facts regarding armed conflicts and violence in Africa are often dubious also in reliable sources (as UN, governmental, and academic sources) which quite largely differ on census data, for instance, or on the overall number of genocide victims in Rwanda (see Reyntjens – around 1, 000, 000 victims). The result is also a doubtful number of the Tutsi victims of the conflict related sexual violence. (Provided there was around 900, 000 baTutsi in Rwanda before the genocide with 200, 000 survivors, there must have been also a significant number of the (moderate) Hutu victims attacked by baHutu and by the RPF.)

The role of national courts could have been also examined next to the ICTR and Gacaca. (The national courts prosecuted the sexual violence accordingly, after the ICTR decision on the sexual violence as an evidence of genocide. It would be useful to know their results as well.)

In contrast, the constructivist notion of masculinisation of baHutu and feminization of baTutsi referring to Gallimore, and also references to female perpetrator of the conflict related sexual violence are very much applicable and interesting. Also, the argument of the approach of the ICTY as constructivist and the approach of the ICTR as essentialist is novel and a deeper analysis would be again interesting.

Finally, the analytical interpretation of the comparison of the two cases is very original and contribute well to the current state of art.² The author actually presents a new theory of the international response to the conflict

¹ There is a wide critique of MacKinnon in this and other point of view regarding pornography as a prerequisite of sexual violence.

² It could be only stipulated the chapter should be rather named *Analysis* then Discussion related to the content.



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related sexual violence in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda based on the answers to the research questions and their justification. Her conclusion is the difference between the international response in the two cases is based on the cultural “superiority” of the case of former Yugoslavia. This theory is well documented by the presented facts and the chain of arguments. However, it could be suggested the word “superiority” (indicating the qualitatively higher culture of Europe), postulated by Lears in 1985, to be replaced by “dominance” (rather referring to a power relation than to a “real” state). Also, the terms as “eurocentrism” or “westernism” could have been used.³ Without regard to naming, this concluding interpretation is very appropriate and valuable. The author, for instance, refers to the concentration camps discourse created by the activists and applied to the sexual violence reality during the civil war in former Yugoslavia.

Still, there is hypothetically a range of other possible interpretations as the geography (Yugoslavia being part of Europe in contrast to far Rwanda) which is also a part of eurocentrist discourse or the different local context (in Rwanda, the sexual violence and sex being highly tabooed). The world-powers interest also come to mind (the interests of France and other countries) although they are not relevant for the response, in comparison with the two elements mentioned previously.

To sum up on the methodology and analysis, they have been very well developed and grounded in facts, literature, and arguments. The remarks above deal with the very details while the main body of argument is novel, thoroughly elaborated, and seriously justified.

Minor criteria:

The sources used in the thesis are wide and diverse, corresponding with the required level at Master degree. The author analyzed a range of primary and secondary sources as UN and NGO’s reports, media coverage, an academic materials.

Also, the style is very well developed relating to Master degree level. A little deficiency shows the quite unclear presentation of the overall numbers of the victims in general summaries – for both countries together (from the writing

³ While the Western level of development is indeed superior, the Western culture is rather dominant than superior to African.



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point of view). In addition, more linking words could have been used. Eventually, the author should have been a more careful when presenting important terms and definitions as there are a few typing mistakes (e.g. p. 43 “Interhamwe” and the quotation of Seifert in the Introduction omitting a negative).

Finally, as regards the formal requirements, the text fulfils appropriately the criteria of Master thesis but there is a mistake in the list of references where the primary and secondary sources are assigned incorrectly as a result of a typo since the author describes the sources correctly in the text. This evaluation does not include a software check on text authenticity as it is presumably in the competence of the University offices.

Overall evaluation:

The Master thesis of Linda Jelinkova *International Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Comparing Rwanda and Former Yugoslavia* is an example of an excellent research work with relevant resources implicating a precious analytical interpretation of the answer(s) to the research question(s) based on the QCA method, applying historical and contemporary perspective in the (feminist) constructivist framework.

Suggested grade: A

Signature: