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Sexual violence and Pro-Government Militias

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Abstract

Sexual Violence and By Margaret Adelia Avera

This research studies wartime rape perpetrated by pro-government militias, using the principal-agent theory to attempt to explain variation in the level of sexual violence. Principal-agent theory provides a model for understanding how restraints function to regulate a pro-government militias use of sexual violence. Principle-agent theory is applied to cross-national data on pro-government militia sexual violence and armed group characteristics. This research builds upon previous work, which found that measures of state strength were correlated with prevalence of sexual violence. Literature from studies on resources and political violence is used to illustrate how material support serves as an accountability mechanism. This research shows that material support is a condition of the principal-agent relationship that is an important control the principal actor has over the capabilities of the agent. It is argued that sexual violence occurs as a crime of opportunity that is committed by agents with fewer constraining mechanisms. This article finds evidence that the source of material support is a factor that could effect the likelihood that a pro-government militia engages in sexual violence. The relationship between funding and sexual violence is taken as evidence that conditions under which sexual violence perpetrated by pro-government militias are those where the group is able operate with greater independence from state control.

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Margaret Avera

Sexual Violence and Pro-Government Militias

Introduction

Rape is an extremely oppressive form of intimate violence. The term sexual violence is used to capture a wide array of violations¹ including; rape, sexual torture, sexual exploitation, and any form of non-consensual acts related to sexual organs such as forced pregnancy or sterilization. Conflicts involving sexual violence, like the one in Bosnia-Herzegovina, brought international attention to mass rape during war. The war crimes trials following this conflict set legal precedent determining that sexual violence is a human rights violation (Stiglmayer 1994). In the decades following, new research has emerged studying the occurrences of sexual violence in conflict.

International law codifies sexual violence as a violation of human rights. Scholarly analysis on the subject deems that international norms widely condemn the practice of sexual violence. Since participation in sexual violence breaks norms, scholars have begun to question why some groups commit a form of violence that is so negatively perceived and involves high costs for both the perpetrator and the victim. Scholars have found that sexual violence is not a universal feature of wartime violence (Wood 2009, Cohen 2016, Cohen and Nordas 2015). The question then is, why do some groups perpetrate a type of violence that is so costly?

This is important research because it intends to understand why some groups commit sexual violence. Understanding sexual violence is vital because it is a behavior that is considered damaging for all actors involved. Victims often suffer serious

¹ See Appendix 3 for coding on sexual violence.

² See Appendix 1 for list of actor types and coding information.

³ See Appendix 3

⁴ See Appendix 1 for coding of actor types

consequences like sexually transmitted illnesses, physiological trauma, or even unwanted pregnancies. Perpetrators can also suffer similar physical consequences and post-traumatic stress disorders. Social stigma surrounds sexual violence and can lead to alienation for victims and perpetrators alike (Stiglmayer 1994, Baaz and Stern 2013). These reasons show why it is so important to understand the factors related to this extremely harmful form of violence. Since sexual violence is an action that has negative consequences for all parties, what can explain why it still occurs?

The current project contributes to the field by expanding on the work of previous scholars (Cohen and Nordas 2015, Butler et al. 2007, Mitchell et al. 2014). Like Butler (2007) and Mitchell (2014) the principal-agent framework is employed to understand the mechanisms of constraint and oversight that domestic governments acting as principals use to regulate the sexual violence perpetrated by pro-government militias acting as agents. This framework is appropriated to focus specifically on the actions of individual pro-government militia groups, which previous studies do not do.

Similar to Cohen and Nordas (2015) this research focuses on the organizational characteristics of a pro-government militia, but varies from their work because the principal-agent theory is employed to help explain why changes in organizational characteristics lead to variation in sexual violence. What Cohen and Nordas define as organizational characteristics, are defined here as principal control mechanisms. They study the recruiting process and training that a pro-government militia receives finding a relationship between those measures and variation in sexual violence. This work builds on those findings by testing another principal control, the source of material support. Material support has been linked to violence against civilians (Weinstein 2007,

Humphreys 2005) but not studied for its relation to frequency of sexual violence committed by group level actors.

Therefore this work is important for understanding variation in sexual violence by increasing the precision of testing through focusing on the pro-government militia as a unit of analysis in large-N quantitative designs. The effect of a PGMs material support on sexual violence patterns has not been studied. This study is conducted to assess the possible relationship between the two to see if it explains some of the variation in the prevalence of sexual violence a pro-government militia is associated with. The principal-agent argument is used because previous literature has found support for the hypothesis, but not tested it at the agent actor level.

Principal-agent theory deems that pro-government militias are more likely to commit violence that breaks international laws and norms. The informal status of this actor type causes agency problems that exacerbate opportunistic tendencies (Mitchell et al. 2014, Ferme and Hoffman 2004). Sexual violence represents a type of violence that would be associated with the kinds of norm-breaking behavior that pro-government militias are expected to engage in (Cohen and Nordas 2015). Interestingly this is not always the case; some groups do commit sexual violence but the majority of pro-government militias are never reported to engage in wartime rape. Within this actor type that is expected to be associated with human rights violations, why do the majority of groups refrain? For the pro-government militias that do engage in sexual violence, what explains this variation? The research question fueling this study is as follows; *what explains pro-government militia's variation in sexual violence during conflict?*

Multiple regression is conducted to quantify and test the relationship between

contraband funding and level of sexual violence perpetrated. Regression can assess the correlation between the variables, while controlling for other factors. The goal is to isolate variation within the funding type a PGM receives, hypothesizing that it will serve as an explanation for differing levels of SV. Case studies are used to illustrate the dynamics of the relationship.

The funding model shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between a PGMs source of funding and the level of SV they are connected to. There is a positive association between the two, indicating a possible causal relationship. Contraband funding and foreign government support, holding constant other forms of funding, increases the severity of sexual violence that a PGM commits. The effect of contraband funding and foreign government support are the highest in the model, in comparison to the effect of domestic government support. Domestic government support is not statistically significant.

Literature Review

It is important to note variation in SV, especially because of the relative absence of sexual violence in some conflicts (Butler, Gluch and Mitchell 2007; Wood 2009; and Cohen 2016). If war itself caused SV, then every conflict should exhibit relatively similar levels of violence, which is disproved by findings that show that SV varies widely (Cohen 2016; Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell 2007; Leiby 2009; Wood 2009). These same studies simultaneously disprove the biological argument; that all men rape in order to serve the male sexual appetite. Thus it is not necessary to empirically disprove the sex, or biological, argument because it serves no logical theoretical purpose in actually explaining the incidence of SV.

A large volume of work on sexual violence in conflict has theorized that power and the construction of gender roles causes intimate violence. A common theory is that military socialization exacerbates violence through encouraging internalizing idealized masculinity and dominance over others (Stiglmayer 1994; Brownmiller 1975, Enloe 1990). More recent work comes from Amelia Hoover Green (2016) who measures of incidents of military service connected violence.

Hoover Green believes that militarization encourages and teaches violence, because she assumes that citizens must be socialized into violent behavior. Rather than assuming all individuals are equally willing to kill, she believes that it is important to figure out which factors increase the tendencies for violence. She includes instances of veterans' involvement in intimate partner violence as an indicator that military service increases violent tendencies (Hoover Green 2016, 622). Hoover Green finds variation in the SV committed by military personnel, which indicates that military service in itself is not a sufficient explanation for level of SV.

Combat militarization cannot explain all the variance in perpetration and severity of sexual violence committed during wartime. While there is historical precedent of mass rape by groups with extensive military training (Cohen and Nordås 2015, 894), there are also instances in which groups who perpetrate SV possess little to no traditional military training (Weinstein 2007). Therefore future research should focus on other characteristics of military actors and groups.

The relationship between actors, their environments, and sexual violence is explored through testimony collected in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Maria Baaz and Maria Stern. They interview soldiers, who are assumed or admitted to have

been involved in SV, to glean the individual perspective on rape. Baaz and Stern (2009) find that most frequently soldiers blame economic and social conditions for SV. Their research suggests that participation in sexual violence is related to self-interest of the perpetrator.

Soldiers interviewed by Baaz and Stern claim that military training affected their interactions with civilians by emphasizing dominance and aggression, traits they said were associated with ideal masculinity and power. With the added pressure of conflict, differentiation of roles based on sex became extremely important. Baaz and Stern hypothesize that the perceived failure to live up to the idealized masculinity led to rape as an expression of frustration or failure (Baaz and Stern 2009, 514). This finding shows that actors believe sexual violence involves economic and environmental conditions as well as the construction of gender norms.

Conversely, some research related to the conflict environment focuses on national conditions rather than individual experiences. Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell (2007) use a cross-national analysis to propose the principal-agent theory as a way to explain the incidence of SV in wartime. Their underlying assumption is that under a weak state, agents commit sexual violence because, they think their commander will not find out or will not care. Agents can seek external benefits, like sexual pleasure through rape, because of information asymmetry that may be exploited if an agent's goals differ from their commanders.

The test for the principal agent theory finds that the security environment created by the state is an important factor explaining cross-national variation in sexual violence. Butler et al. believe that stronger states are better able to regulate the behavior of agents

because they find that markers of state strength like high levels of democracy, low levels of corruption, and low levels of income inequality reduce SV (Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell 2007, 675-676). It should be noted that other scholars disagree with the principal-agent hypothesis (Cohen 2016, Cohen and Nordas 2015).

Studies thus far have not reached a consensus over the mechanisms of how identity or environment relate to variation in types or levels of violence. What can be confirmed is covariation but not a generalizable causal mechanism (Nordås and Rustad 2013; Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell 2007; Cohen, Green, Wood 2013, 11). Scholars can agree that sexual violence in war varies over time, across conflicts, as well as both within and across different regions (Cohen 2016; Cohen and Nordås 2014; Leiby 2009; Nordås and Rustad 2013).

Interestingly, variation within different types of armed groups, or actor types, is also noted (Cohen 2016; Leiby 2009)². In an overview of SV research, scholars conclude: “The connections between armed group institutions and patterns of violence, including sexual violence, have not yet been fully specified” (Cohen, Green, Wood 2013, 11). Some political scientists hypothesize that variation in SV could be due to differences between armed groups.

Recently scholars have begun to study the role of pro-government militias because of the characteristics, interests, and behavior of this type of actor. For instance, Cohen and Nordås (2015) find that PGM perpetrated sexual violence differs from the pattern of violence of other groups. PGMs are an important actor type because they are partially associated with the state, and are viewed as an informal agent of government

² See Appendix 1 for list of actor types and coding information.

military force (Mitchell et al. 2014, Carey et al. 2016). A PGMs relationship with the state has implications for their use of violence.

Cross-national studies done by Mitchell et al. (2014) tests whether the presence of a pro-government militia in conflict is correlated with increased violations of human rights. They do not focus on sexual violence and instead measure broader categories of violations such as torture, disappearances, and killings (for a full list of human rights violations tested see Mitchell et al. 2014, 822). The presence of informal pro-government militias in conflict, described as PGMs with less formal associations with the government, decreases respect for physical integrity rights, and freedom from torture and killings. They find that the violations are less severe when semi-official pro-government militias are present. This research builds off those findings, hypothesizing that pro-government militias likelihood to engage in sexual violence, varies based on the extent of their connection to the domestic government.

Variation that could explain differing levels of sexual violence is found among the different types of armed groups themselves. Leiby's (2009) work that finds that the type, location, and therefore intention of SV differed for each state actor. It is her contention that the violence committed was directly related to furthering the interests of the state, which is why it is important to look at the variation in actors. Literature on sexual violence in conflict indicates that a study of variation between armed groups will help identify and clarify the mechanism that leads some groups to commit SV while others do not.

Elisabeth Wood (2009) was one of the first scholars (for other examples see Hoover Green 2016; Wood 2006 and 2010) to try and explain the relative absence of SV

among some armed groups. Her study was vital to the field because it falsified the previously untested dominant assumption that SV is an inevitable part of war. Given that utilization of SV is not universal, Woods' model (2009) tries to show that actor related factors could be used to explain variation in level of sexual violence.

Cohen (2016) tests the combat socialization theory, which supposes that SV combats low internal cohesion in armed groups. She believes that recruitment procedures can serve as a proxy for internal cohesion (Cohen and Nordås 2015, 882). She finds that groups who engage in extreme forms of recruitment, like abduction, are more likely to engage in SV during conflict (Cohen 2016, 85). For Cohen, low cohesion within an armed group leads to higher levels of sexual violence. This theory assumes that SV is not used as an outright strategy commanded by superiors but is instead to be understood as a form of group violence that creates bonds that overcome low cohesion caused by recruitment through abduction.

Political scientists frequently find a relationship between conflict and the presence of natural resources. Empirical evidence from Fearon and Laitin (2003) (See also Humphreys 2005; de Soysa and Neumayer 2007) show that countries dependent on oil revenue are more likely to be involved in conflict and civil war. Assuming the actors in civil wars are the state and rebels, Lujala (2009), as well as de Soysa and Neumayer (2007) find that on the country level the correlation between resource wealth and conflict is weak. On a smaller scale, Weinstein, Humphreys, and Cohen observe that an armed groups' funding source effects the probability of committing violence against civilians or extreme forms of violence like sexual assault.

Neumayer and de Soysa (2007) focus on whether resource wealth is a cause of

civil war. They believe that over-reliance on natural resources for revenue makes a state unstable and prone to conflict over securing control of that resource. They consider gemstones and drugs to be lootable resources, but not energy wealth like oil production. Revenue from energy resource extraction is correlated with the likelihood of civil war but significant only in the model using 25 battle deaths as an annual threshold for violence. They conclude that their model shows some evidence for the effect of non-lootable resources, that fossil fuel dependence harms state capacity to control violence.

Humphreys (2005) finds that oil but not diamonds increase the likelihood of violence and conflict onset. Oil revenue can increase conflict because reliance on natural resources creates civilian grievances, rent seeking behavior, and economic instability. State conflict prevention is weakened because of low bureaucratic capacity and tendency for oppression in order to procure resource rents (Humphreys 2005, 534). A review of the literature shows that it is vital to make a distinction between resources facilitating conflict and their ability to generate the onset of violence.

Gilmore et al. (2005) highlight inconsistency in the results measuring the association between resources and the risk of civil war. The relationship between natural resources and violence could be inconclusive because scholars focus on whether they cause the conflict to start, rather than their ability to fund violence. They consider easily lootable resources to be minerals, oil, drugs or secondary gemstones and claim that it is extremely important to aggregate between the types of resources (Gilmore et al. 2005, 259). On the country level there is less evidence for natural resource wealth as a cause of violence, but scholars do find that focusing on group level shows a relationship between resources and violence. While resources may not begin conflict, when used to support

conflict lootable resources can intensify violence.

Lujala (2009) studies the correlation between, natural resources as the source of rebel military funding and intensity of violence. She believes that reliance on resources as revenue for military capacity can intensify fighting because; the sources of funding are only available if battles are successful (Lujala 2009, 52). Natural resources are generally concentrated in specific areas, which make looting or territorial control necessary for these sources of funding. Lujala aggregates between different types of resources to parse out the independent effects of each. Her study makes a distinction between lootable resources and the types of resources that require a larger time investment, greater expertise, and technology for extraction.

Under this distinction, secondary gemstones and minerals, as well as drug cultivation, are considered lootable resources while hydrocarbon production is nonlootable. She finds that gemstones and hydrocarbon production within the conflict zone both double the number of combat deaths, making them strongly associated with conflict severity. Oil and gemstones are also found to prolong conflict, meanwhile, drug cultivation is associated with shorter and less severe conflicts.

Weinstein (2007) finds that groups who rely on lootable resources are more likely to attract individuals who join not because of commitment to the rebel cause but because of interest in short-term rewards for service. These group members are unlikely to have social, ethnic, or ideological ties to the civilian population and therefore are more likely to commit violence because of a lack of shared characteristics. Weinstein characterizes these groups as opportunistic armed groups, rather than activist armed groups which retain civilian support. Opportunistic groups are more likely to engage in violence

against civilians because they lack dense social ties.

Both Cohen and Weinstein show evidence that groups who rely on partnerships or other ties to local populations, are less likely to abuse civilians. The underlying assumption is that civilians will revoke their support and hold the armed group accountable for the violence they commit. Cohen (2016) finds that insurgent groups, like the diamond reliant RUF who are not reliant on civilians for their resources commit higher levels of sexual violence. If the armed group has independent sources of funding, they have less incentive to restrain indiscriminate violence against civilians. For example the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) in Sierra Leone were supported by the civilian population and committed sexual violence when they moved away from their home base (Cohen 2016, 117). This observation shows that research designs should measure the geographic location of the source of funding for both civilian financing and lootable resources.

Different types of natural resources have different effects on the risk of civil war. Theory connecting rebels and lootable natural resources, supposes that natural resources revenues allows these groups to provide member incentives and material support for waging violence (De Soyosa and Neumayer 2007, 203). Neumayer and de Soysa's study doesn't show evidence that rebels start conflict because they are motivated to loot resources in order to fund militarization. This result could explain not causation but evidence that violence is a spillover effect.

Humphreys (2005) proposes that resource reliant groups have a decreased ability to make credible commitments to cease violence. Oil dependency has a negative association with chances for negotiation, but diamonds do not. Therefore it is important

to aggregate between different types of resources. The revenue from resources is important for the logistical functionality of the actor, so they will have incentive to commit violence if it means control over resource rents.

A common argument connecting resources and militant groups is that natural resource revenues allow these groups to finance their military capabilities, and that the opportunity to do so provided during wartime (Gilmore et al. 2005, de Soyosa and Neumayer 2007). Wartime gives armed groups the ability to access resources that allow them to become financially independent. Financial independence gives incentive to protect resource rents.

The mechanism of rent seeking is similar for states reliant on natural resources, whose bureaucratic capacities are weakened because of overriding incentive to procure resource rents, “The narrower the base of social support, the stronger the incentive for economic policy to sacrifice growth in order to redistribute income to the autocrats group.” (Collier 2007, 50). Based on previous literature, the PGM behavior is expected to be similar to the rent seeking that rebels and states engage in. PGMs will act strategically to pursue self interest because they don’t have incentive to conform to the interests of other actors. PGMs that rely on lootable resources are not invested in the government cause, their independent wealth allows them to behave more violently than other PGMs.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Variation in the perpetration of sexual violence (SV) during conflict puzzles scholars. Elizabeth Wood, among others, questions why some groups frequently commit SV while other do not engage at all (Cohen and Nordås 2015; Hoover Green 2016; Wood 2009). This previous work indicates that scholars should not conceive of sexual violence as an inevitable behavior of armed groups (Baaz and Stern 2013; Cohen 2016; Wood

2009). Therefore it is important to discern the conditions that make SV more likely to be committed.

The principal-agent theory is based on how the relationships between actors can constrain political behavior. In this context, PGMs and state governments operate under a principal-agent theory of how relationships effect the ability of actors to pursue self-interest. The principal-agent theory hypothesizes that groups with fewer financial ties to domestic government actors, are more able to engage in costly behavior such as participation in SV. Pro-government militias without support from the domestic government are more likely to perpetrate sexual violence than groups who can be constrained by financial reliance on domestic government.

Multiple assumptions are at work, the first related directly to the pro-government militia actor type. Scholarly research as well as some United Nations reports (1997) denotes the use of informal military groups, like pro-government militias, as particularly harmful to civilians (Ferme and Hoffman 2004, 79). These types of armed groups are less concerned with violations of international law and are frequently associated with violence against non-combatants. Mitchell et al. (2014) explain that pro-government militias are likely to have a private interest in waging violence because they operate outside the formal state military institution. Pro-government militias are expected to engage in opportunistic violence because they are not subject to the same training, material incentives, or monitoring that the state military experiences.

Research has demonstrated that there is variation between different types of actors' severity, type, and general likelihood to perpetrate sexual violence (Cohen and Nordås 2015, Cohen 2016, Leiby 2009). It is pertinent to ask why actor type has an effect on such an extreme form of violence. Do the internal attributes of actors effect

interactions with outside actors? Is there a relationship between differentiation in armed group characteristics and their use of violence? Knowing the traits of groups that commit massive sexual violence could help prevent future atrocities.

The literature indicates that certain types of armed actors are more likely to commit human rights violations. Informal military forces have been noted as frequent perpetrators of atrocities. Informal armed groups, such as pro-government militias (PGMs), are more difficult to monitor and control than state military forces (Mitchell et al. 2014, Ferme and Hoffman 2004). Pro-government militias are not part of formal state military forces and therefore may not receive training, funding, or oversight from the state. Therefore these groups pose accountability problems for domestic governments, which is believed to result in increased incidences of human rights violations.

A frequent base assumption for studying sexual violence is that it is a costly behavior for actors to engage in. Cohen and Nordås (2015) operate on the assumption that actors avoid being associated with sexual violence because of negative costs. Actors can be held accountable for costs associated with the use of SV, such as sexually transmitted illnesses, backlash or lack of support from other actors, and external sanctions or punishments (Cohen 2013; Cohen and Nordås 2015, 893; Wood 2009). That assumption holds for this research, committing sexual violence has costs associated with it. Since there are costs, actors are expected to engage in sexual violence only if it is less costly to them. Scholars note that since sexual violence may pose costs, it is considered a crime of opportunity and will therefore occur in situations where costs are less severe (Cohen 2016, Hoover Green 2011).

Sexual violence is focused on because of the distinctly negative connotations of this type of violence mentioned previously. Scholarship on sexual violence considers

rape as more severe than other forms of violence, and is an important behavior to study because of the costs that it poses for perpetrators. The assumption is that sexual violence is an extremely costly behavior, in a way that other forms of violence are not.

This research attempts to understand the mechanisms of opportunity and control that can explain variation in sexual violence. Scholars frequently use principal-agent arguments to understand the behavior of armed group actors (Butler et al. 2007, Mitchell et al. 2014). The principal-agent theory asks what mechanisms governments can use to control the actions of armed groups when they deploy in the field. Butler et al. (2007) study indicators of state strength and links measures of principal strength to national sexual violence trends. Their unit of analysis is the state government within a given conflict. To more directly understand the effect of state control mechanisms, scholars have begun to focus on pro-government militias as a specific actor type (Cohen and Nordas 2015, Mitchell et al. 2014). The unit of analysis in this study is a particular pro-government militia in a conflict. This unit is chosen to try and isolate the effect of principal control mechanisms on actors that behave as agents for the state.

Principal agent theory establishes how the interests of actors differ, and provides a model to understand how actors mediate interest through interactions. The interactions, or relationships, between a principal and agent serve to determine the ability of the principal to manipulate the agent. The more control to principal has over the agent, the less likely the agent is to engage in behavior the principal considers costly. Principal-agent theory assumes that the agent may have private interests that differ from the principal, which is why the agent will act opportunistically when the controls of the principle are weak or otherwise absent.

Interactions and interests of actors are important for understanding political

behavior. For instance, a principal may delegate tasks to an agent, and this delegation can be beneficial for the principal. During conflict a government may wish to delegate security tasks to a PGM to ease the burden on the state military forces. Doing so creates agency problems in which the PGM is a different actor than the state and may bring with them interests that differ from state objectives. Mitchell et al. state that PGMs pose a particularly substantial agency problem (Mitchell et al. 2014), making understanding the controls over them extremely important.

An important aspect of variation that is likely to effect the behavior of an agent is their ability to deviate from the interests of the principal. Previous literature connects the capabilities of actors and their use of violence (Collier 2007, Gilmore et al. 2005, de Soyosa and Neumayer 2007). The constraints on a PGM differ from formal state military because they may not have received formal state training, government funding, and are less regulated (Mitchell et al. 2014). Therefore the relationship of great interest is the correlation between variation in the constraints placed on PGMs and the severity of SV that they commit.

Principal-agent theory is a model of actor constraints that is applicable to the PGM actor type. This theory assumes that states acting as principals want to regulate a PGMs use of violence, and that agents possess self-interest and under some conditions will act for personal reasons (Mitchell et al. 2014). Pro-government militias are problematic because of their informal status and use of violence in conflict, which questions assumptions that the state holds a monopoly on violence (Carey and Mitchell 2016). Research indicates that the controls present over agent type actors like PGMs effect their behavior (Mitchell et al. 2014, Butler et al. 2007). Understanding the

constraints a PGM operates under could illuminate the reasons behind variation in severity of SV.

The relationship between the principal and agent is one where the principal wants to control the actor. It is assumed that a principal will avoid being associated with this condemned form of violence, because of the costs associated with it. A principal does not want the agent to commit SV but under some conditions an agent will participate. The principal wants to prevent the agent from participating in opportunistic violence. For principals, the source of funding for a PGM is a factor that can be used to control the agent. One of the ways a government can prevent SV is through financial support, so variation in the source of funding for a PGM will result in variation of the highest level of SV that group commits.

Principals can use material support as a way to control the behavior and capabilities of a PGM. One of the possible associations between PGMs and the state is through financial support (Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013). Agents with fewer constraints are more likely to commit human rights abuses (Mitchell et al. 2014). Variation in the constraints placed on a PGM should result in variation in the level of SV that group commits. An explanatory factor related to the constraints placed on an actor could be the source of funding for an armed group.

Type of material support can effect the regulatory power other actors have over a PGM. Pro-government militias with independent sources of funding have fewer constraints, and the implication is that this will allow them to commit more severe violence (Weinstein 2007, Humphreys 2005, Collier 2007). If a government does not have financial ties to a PGM, they are less able to exert influence on the group. The

principal-agent hypothesis pertaining to the effect of funding, predicts that actors with independent sources of revenue are able to, and more likely to, engage in coercion, aggression, or violence.

Cohen and Weinstein study the funding effect for non-state groups, which measured insurgents and rebels. Cohen (2016) finds statistically significant evidence that groups who rely on contraband funding tend to commit higher levels of SV (Cohen 2016, 86). Additionally, Weinstein (2007) conducts qualitative research on how different types of resource support can effect the likelihood of engaging in violence against civilians.

Since the effect of material support on sexual violence has not been directly measured for PGMs, it would be logical to focus on that particular actor type. Additionally, because of their ties to the government and variation from the SV patterns of other actor types, it would be prudent to see if different types of funding have an effect on PGMs. The statistical significance of Cohen's results, and the qualitative results of Weinstein, make it prudent to conduct statistical analysis of the relationship between type of funding and the level of SV. The hypothesis predicts that PGMs who receive funding from sources outside their domestic government would be associated with more severe SV.

The funding types measured are domestic government support, foreign government support, and contraband funding. The term contraband is used to reference funding through illicit channels. This definition encompasses drug cultivation but also practices of plunder and loot. Contraband funding is considered independent from principal control, because it does not originate from a government source. Foreign government support as a principal control is expected to function differently than

domestic support because of the information symmetry problems posed. Foreign governments are unable to monitor actors as well because the PGMs would be operating outside the foreign government's country. Support from the domestic government is considered a principal control and therefore is expected to exhibit the lowest frequency of sexual violence. The strength of funding as a principal control are expected as follows, domestic government support should be the strongest control, then foreign government support, with contraband funding representing the weakest funding principal control.

Groups without principal controls engage in SV more because they have less regulating them and therefore cost of SV is lower. Lower costs means the actor will be more likely to engage in opportunistic behavior. This is the puzzle this research aims to solve; the majority of pro-government militias don't perpetrate sexual violence even though as an irregular force they are more likely to. So principal-agent arguments relating just to actor type does not explain the whole story of why some groups do engage in sexual violence. Groups that do perpetrate, do so because they differ somehow in their constraints.

Pro-government militias with less formal ties to the government are going to commit the more severe levels of sexual violence. There are multiple ways to be controlled by the government, either through financial support, military exercise cooperation, or oversight (Mitchell et al. 2014). If a PGM is not a recipient of government funding, that power the state held over the group is gone. In a principal-agent relationship the important factors are how the principal controls the behavior of the agent. This theory assumes that agents with fewer constraints on their behavior will act more for their own self-interest. Therefore pro-government militias that have fewer

constraints, like those with material support from a foreign government or contraband activities, are more likely to engage in norm-breaking opportunistic behavior.

In a principal-agent framework (Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell 2007, Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013), the government only loosely controls the PGMs, or agents, that are financially independent. The principal, in this case the state government, wants to control the behavior of a PGM. The interest of the principal is considered less, under conditions that allow the agent to pursue their own desires. Theory leads to the hypothesis that an independent source of funding allows PGMs to wage violence more freely than groups for whom the government can threaten and incentivize through financial support. Following this logic, those groups behave more violently because there is less incentive to conform to state objectives.

Humphreys (2005) and Weinstein (2007) operate on an accountability mechanism, in which social cohesion and connection with civilian populations serves as a policing mechanism that prevents behavior that would be costly to the group (Cohen 2016, 45). For Weinstein, groups backed by civilians are prevented from committing SV because of possible backlash after negative interactions with the local population. He finds that those who aren't financially reliant on civilians are more likely to participate in indiscriminate violence. Therefore, PGMs that are financially independent are more likely to engage in SV because; their finances allow them to act violently without reference to state and civilian interest. This accountability hypothesis is similar to the principal-agent theory because it assumes that norm-breaking behavior is regulated by controls over actors.

The argument utilized is based on the assumption that accountability mechanisms serve as a behavior restraint. Financial independence allows actors to behave more

violently, because independence means they have no one to be accountable to. Higher levels of violence are expected because financially independent groups aren't constrained by the support or relationship with principal actors. Financial independence provides freedom from outside control, allowing these PGMs to ignore the interests of principal actors. A mechanism of control is lost for groups who are financially independent because the principal can no longer constrain them through the threat of rescinding material support.

Therefore the argument is that PGMs with less government controls constraining them, will exhibit more indiscriminate violence and or self-serving behavior. Remember that one of the costs associated with SV is backlash through withdrawal of support. Consequently, if one of the costs associated with the behavior is removed, logically that behavior will be more likely to occur. The principal-agent theory explains the expected relationship between a state and a PGM, and how that relationship governs the behavior of each actor.

Collier (2007) argues that states reliant on resource rents are not constrained by accountability. Since they do not rely on a civilian tax, they do not feel beholden to creating positive interactions with their constituents. Collier studies autocratic resource rich societies, and finds that resource rich states have very little political accountability and lack democratic constraints like transparency, accountability, and representation, to restrain behavior (Collier 2007, 46-47). In this case, the civilians act as the principal what wishes to constrain the behavior of the agent through financial ties.

The principal-agent theory helps us understand how repression and accountability are related for a variety of different actors. In a principal-agent relationship between a pro-

government militia and a foreign government, theory suggests that these PGMs will be more likely to engage in norm-breaking behavior. A domestic government already has trouble monitoring and regulating informal actors like pro-government militias. Foreign governments will have even more difficulty since the PGM is likely operating outside the foreign governments territory. Pro-government militias pose a huge information asymmetry problem for foreign governments, who are unlikely to be able to know everything that occurs when the PGM is deployed in the field. In this situation, monitoring will be extremely costly and therefore a foreign government will be less willing to expend the resources necessary to properly monitor these groups. Principal-agent theory notes that decreased monitoring gives agents the opportunity to exploit information asymmetry. Therefore, in comparison to funding from the domestic government, material support from foreign governments is expected to be associated with higher levels of sexual violence.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between material support and level of sexual violence.

H1: Pro-government militias with material support from a foreign government will commit sexual violence at a higher level than groups supported by the domestic government.

The principal-agent hypothesis is included to explain how certain types of funding make a group more or less likely to engage in oppressive behavior. This hypothesis, along with evidence from the literature on lootable resources, would suggest that criminal financial support specifically could increase violence. Literature from lootable resources studies (Humphreys 2005, Weinstein 2007) suggests that groups reliant on this type of funding commit severe violence because other actors have less ways of holding them

accountable. These findings fit well into the principal-agent model. Groups who get support from civilians or government actors are constrained by a principal actor, while those who utilize contraband funding have no principal actor. Therefore the independent variable (IV), hypothesized to have an effect on highest level of SV is the presence of contraband funding.

Repression and accountability are linked through theory discussed by Mitchell et al. 2014. They argue that rather than not engaging in repression, actors will attempt to dissociate themselves with acts of oppression (Mitchell et al 2014, 815). The mechanism they highlight is accountability. Actors will seek to avoid being held accountable for atrocities and will act to reduce their ability to be held accountable. Contraband funding allows PGMs to avoid some of the negative costs of perpetrating SV. Rather than not engage in this type of violence, they are able to do so because they don't associate themselves with principal accountability mechanisms like reliance on government financial support.

H2: PGMs with contraband funding will commit higher levels of SV than groups who get support from domestic and foreign government sources.

Data and Methods

The unit of analysis is the actor level in which the pro-government militia group is analyzed as a particular actor in a particular conflict. The definition of sexual violence utilized mimics the description employed by the SVAC Data set³. The highest level of sexual violence committed by the armed group in the conflict is measured as the dependent variable, and the explanatory independent variables are the presence of

³ See Appendix 3

contraband and foreign government support.

Scholars have begun to distinguish between different actor types, in order to control for the effect of certain group characteristics. Focusing on a single actor type allows research designs to account for intra-actor type variation. Cohen and Nordås' previous work (2015), as well as studies by Ahmad and Avoine (2016), Leiby (2009), and Nordås and Rustad (2013) demonstrate that it is important to focus on the conflict actor. The conflict actor type is specifically narrowed to pro-government militias⁴. This is the appropriate unit of analysis because it will focus on the differences between each actor, which previous authors believe could explain variation in the level of SV each type of group commits.

Statistical tests are used to assess the relationship between the previous indicated variables. Multivariate regression is used so that it is possible to control for the effect of multiple variables. Using regression eliminated the problem of having low variance in the dependent variable (DV).

The DV is the level of sexual violence, measured at an ordinal level. The independent variable is the source of funding, measured at a dichotomous level. Data on sexual violence during war can be unreliable because of problems with the accurate reporting of cases and very prominent underreporting (Cohen 2016; Leiby 2009). The reporting issues make the data not suitable for measures more precise than ordinal level so it is proper to use a 0-3 scale⁵ to measure prevalence of sexual violence.

A continual struggle is to identify data, so secondary data comes from the compiled data sets and codebooks that Cohen and Nordås (2015) use in their study; the

⁴ See Appendix 1 for coding of actor types

⁵ See Appendix 2 for information on coding of sexual violence prevalence

Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict data set (Cohen and Nordås 2014) and the Pro-Government Militias Database (PGMD) (Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013). Using the data sets already provided will directly compare regression results to the findings of previous studies. Yearly reports from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the U.S. State Department Country reports provide yearly SV level information as well as actor related specification.

Regression is used to isolate the types of funding a PGM receives. Funding will be measured and re-coded to from the Pro-Government Militias Database *Material Support* variable (PGMD) (Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013). For all funding variables a dichotomous measure is used, aggregating between three different types of funding; domestic government support, foreign government support, and looting or drugs. Updated models will separate drug funding into a separate category.

Possible controls will be adapted from Cohen's (2016) work. Cohen controls for year, population, democracy, and duration of war (Cohen 2016, 84). Her unit of analysis is the conflict level, whereas the unit used here is a PGM in a conflict. Therefore some of her controls are not immediately suited to actor level variables. Firstly, population is deemed inappropriate for this study, additionally no substitute is included since data on the group numbers of PGMs is lacking. To control for year, the middle value of the conflict-actor years measured by Cohen is used. Duration of the conflict is calculated using the SVAC year variable. Democracy is measured using the Polity IV project Database⁶ through the polity score of the control year.

Results and Discussion

⁶ Marshall, Monty G., Ted Robert Gurr and Keith Jagers. 2015. "Polity IV: Political Structures and Regime Change, 1800-2015", Center for Systemic Peace and Societal-Systems Research Inc.

Multivariate regression is used to assess the relationship between type of funding and the level of SV perpetrated by a group. The regression model⁷ shows that there is evidence of a relationship between the two. Reliance on contraband is statistically significant in all the models assessed. The funding regression finds that financial support through illegal behavior increases the level of SV that a PGM commits, even when controlling for the effect of funding by both domestic and foreign governments. Foreign government support is also statistically significant and found to increase the prevalence of sexual violence. There is not a statistically significant relationship between domestic government support and sexual violence.

The relationship is in the direction hypothesized; there is a positive correlation between non-domestic government resources and the level of sexual violence. Large T-values and small P-values show that the results are statistically significant and therefore not happening as a result of chance. When controls are included the relationship remains statistically significant. PGMs who engage in plunder and looting commit higher levels of sexual violence. PGMs who get support from foreign governments also commit sexual violence with more frequency. The results do not allow us to reject the null hypothesis, therefore it is unclear what the effect domestic government funding has on sexual violence.

The coefficient for contraband funding in model 4 shows that when a PGM relies on contraband funding, their level of SV increases by over half a point. When the IV, plunder and loot /drugs, changes from zero to one it changes the dependent variable, or highest sexual violence value, on average by .56 units. Note that since my IV is

⁷ See Regression Summary, pg 31-32.

dichotomous, meaning values are either 0 or 1, a one-unit change indicates the presence of the quality captured by that variable. For the funding model this means that the presence of contraband funding increases the severity of SV a PGM commits.

The rate of change of the conditional average of sexual violence level with respect to presence of contraband funding is estimated to be between .60 and 1.12 at the 95% confidence level. Statistical analysis shows that there is a 99.9% probability that the population average is between 1.18 and 1.70, which allows us to infer that contraband funding could probably increase the highest level of SV committed by a PGM by a whole severity level. For foreign government support, the effect is different. At the 95% confidence level, the rate of change of the conditional average is estimated between .43 and .57. These results indicate that rate of change of the conditional average is higher for contraband funding than it is for foreign government support.

The DV relies on a 3-point scale for SV, for which even a .64 increase could be extremely significant. The ordinal nature of this variable prevents inferring quantitative results such as the number of incidences of SV this would translate to. We can conclude though, that PGMs who use contraband funding are likely to commit higher levels of SV.

Model 4 and 5 differentiate themselves by making a drug funding a distinct category from plunder and looting. Some literature found that drugs had a negative effect on conflict severity (Lujala 2009), so it seemed possible that making a distinction between looting and drugs could strengthen the explanatory power of the model. Model 5 shows the results in which drugs are a distinct type of funding. Material support from illicit substances is statistically significant and has a larger coefficient than support from plunder and loot. In the regression plunder and loot remains the most statistically

significant of all the variables measured.

The coefficient for foreign government funding is the largest in the model. Controlling for the effect of all other variables, when a pro-government militia relies on foreign government support, the sexual violence prevalence that group is associated with increases by just over three-fourths of a point. The presence of foreign government support increases the amount of incidents or victims a PGM is associated with. When foreign government support changes from zero to one is correlates with a .76 average change in prevalence of sexual violence.

In addition, the variable foreign government support is statistically significant in all the models it is included in⁸. When the controls are added, the coefficient for foreign government increases. The foreign government support coefficient in models 4 and 5 is comparatively larger than the coefficient for contraband funding. The coefficient for contraband funding meanwhile decreases when controls are added. With controls, foreign government support is the variable that could be having the most effect on highest level of sexual violence. Though it should be noted that plunder and loot / drug funding still retained the highest statistical significance level.

Evaluating substantive significance can show how meaningful the results are for their ability to change the dependent variable. Dependent variable standard deviations that are close to the coefficient values indicate a meaningful relationship. The standard deviation of the highest level of sexual violence is large but is quite close to the coefficient values of both foreign government support and contraband funding. If the coefficient could increase the dependent variable by an entire standard deviation, this

⁸ See Regression Summary, Model 3-5, pg 31-32.

would be a meaningful effect. Focusing on foreign government support, if the value moves from zero to one and the coefficient is .76, then this seems meaningful for the standard deviation value .75 of the prevalence of sexual violence. The presence of foreign government support, as indicated from a change from 0 to 1, will move the dependent variable a whole standard deviation.

Model 4 has the strongest correlation between the IV and DV⁹. The multiple R-squared value indicates that approximately 22% of the variation in level of SV committed can be explained by model 4. When the controls are included in models 4 and 5, the multiple r-squared value increases from the 0.16 value that model 3 generates. Since the multiple r-squared value increased from model 3 to model 4 this indicates that the explanatory power of the model is greater when the control variables are included. When adding controls increases the amount of variation in the DV that is explained by variation in the IV, it indicates that there is a relationship between the two variables.

The regression shows that support sources independent of the domestic government explain some of the variance in sexual violence prevalence associated with pro-government militias. Small R-squared values means that reliance on contraband or foreign government explains only a plurality of the variance in SV. Funding outside of domestic government sources does not explain majority of variation found in the level of sexual violence a PGM commits.

Support for H1 and H2 is found but the model results do not allow full rejection of the null hypothesis. The confidence interval for domestic government support indicates that the variation in level of SV could still be explained by factors other than

⁹ See Regression Summary, Model 4 column, pg 31-32.

non-domestic funding.

Currently, funding source does not explain the majority of variance in SV. The low R-squared value indicates that over 70% of the variance in the highest level of SV is not explained by funding. This shows that the model for predicting level of SV could be improved. Factors not included in the current funding model explain the majority of the variance in the highest level of SV.

The positive effects for non-domestic government funding indicate that material support is one of the controls a principal can use. This is evidence that when a principal has tighter controls on an agent, it commits less sexual violence. The statistical significance of contraband funding fits predictions based on a principal-agent framework. Contraband funded groups are completely independent from state control so their increased levels of sexual violence align with H2. Foreign government support being significant is not unexpected either and supports H1. Foreign governments pose information asymmetry problems that would make their control over a PGM weaker, so the relationship is as predicted. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected, so the null hypothesis is neither proved nor disproved.

Regression Summary

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Plunder and Loot / Drugs	0.61 (5.20)***	0.61 (5.18)***	0.64 (5.44)***	0.56 (4.66)***	0.54 (4.24)***
Domestic Government Support		0.03 (0.27)	0.04 (0.37)	-0.04 (-0.37)	-0.04 (-0.35)
Foreign Government Support			0.54 (2.70)**	0.77 (3.21)**	0.76 (3.17)**
Drugs					0.61 (2.08)*
Controls					

Year				0.03 (2.42)*	0.03 (2.43)*
Duration				0.01 (0.94)	0.01 (0.96)
Polity Score				-0.02 (-1.90)	-0.02 (-1.95)
Sample Size	186	186	186	181	181
F-statistic	27.02	13.48	11.71	8.16	6.95
Multiple R-Squared	0.13	0.13	0.16	0.22	0.22

Included are regression coefficients, t-value in parentheses

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Note that in model 5 the variable plunder and loot / drugs differentiates between simply plunder and loot, and includes drugs as a separate variable.

Descriptive Statistics for Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Minimum Value / Maximum Value
Plunder and loot / drugs	.2581	0	0.4387507	0.0321707	0 / 1
Domestic government support	.6613	1	0.4745484	0.0347955	0 / 1
Foreign government support	.06989	0	0.2556539	0.0187454	0 / 1
Highest SV value	.2933	0	0.7485528	0.0548865	0 / 3
Avg SV prevalence	.02688	0	0.1926429	0.0141252	0 / 2

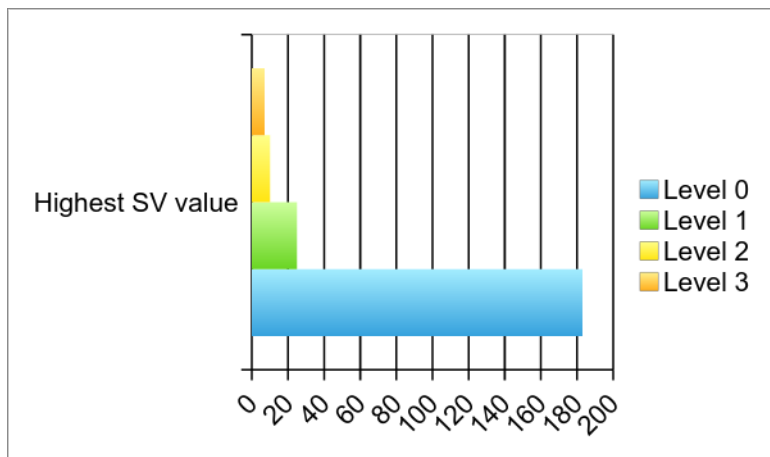
Frequency Table 1

Variable	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Highest SV value	183	25	10	7

Frequency Table 2

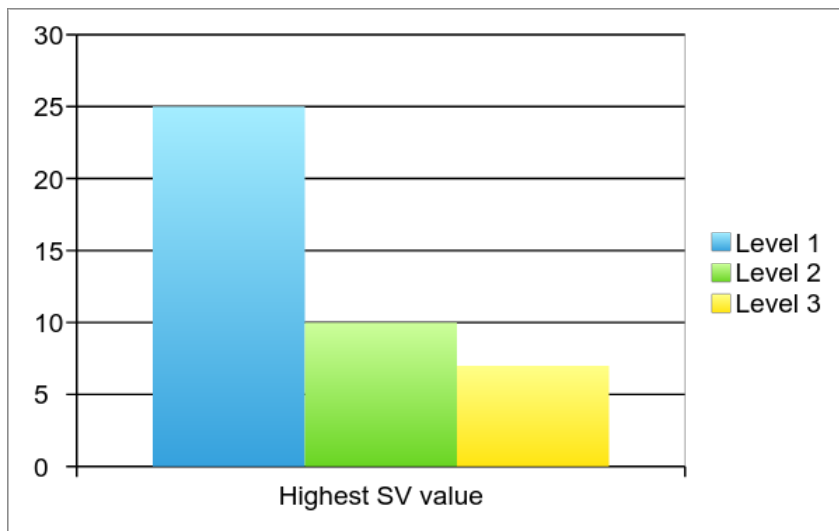
Variable	0 – Not Present	1 - Present
Plunder and loot / drugs	138	48
Domestic government support	63	123
Foreign government support	173	13

Graph 1 –Highest SV value



Y-axis is DV, X-axis is frequency

Graph 2 – Highest SV value - zoom



Y-axis is DV, X-axis is frequency

Level 0 not included

Illustrative Case Studies

The reported actions of pro-government militias in the Sierra Leone civil war displays evidence that principal-agent theory can explain variation in wartime sexual violence. Principal-agent theory provides a model for how to examine variation in norm-breaking behavior by pro-government militias. The principal actor, or domestic government, will seek to prevent the agent

from breaking norms. A case study has been conducted to show how material support from the domestic government serves as a mechanism of regulation the principal may use.

The state tries to prevent pro-government militias from committing sexual violence by regulating them through material support. Therefore this theory assumes that the way that a given PGM interacts with non-combatants will be affected by the type of relationship that armed group has with the domestic government. Pro-government militias who are supported by the domestic government are constrained from perpetrating sexual violence, and will exhibit evidence of this relationship in their patterns of sexual violence.

The pro-government militias in Sierra Leone's conflict show that variation in sexual violence is correlated to variation in measures of state strength. The pattern of sexual violence exemplified by groups that are funded through domestic government support shows temporal and spatial evidence of principal-agent theory. There is an observable relationship between the control a domestic government has over the material support of a PGM and the reported association that group has with incidences of sexual violence. The sexual violence repertoire of pro-government militias in Sierra Leone's civil war seem to vary based on the principal controls assumed to prevent agents from committing norm-breaking behavior, like rape during wartime. Groups with principal controls like domestic government support are less frequently associated with sexual violence. While groups that do not operate under principal controls exhibit high levels of rape.

Widespread sexual violence occurred in the Sierra Leone civil war. This conflict is noted for extremely frequent rape, in which there was massive prevalence of sexual violence for multiple years¹⁰. The ABA/Benetech Sierra Leone War Crimes Documentation survey estimates

¹⁰ Cohen, K. Dara, Ragnhild Nordås. 2014. "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC Data Set, 1989-2009." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(3): 418-28., (See also State Department/HRW/AI

that there were 31,759 incidences of rape. Peaks in the prevalence of sexual violence are reported for the beginning and end of the conflict as well as an increase in 1995¹¹. Qualitative analysis investigating the Sierra Leone civil war can help illustrate the dynamic between sexual violence and the funding of pro-government militias.

The civil war in Sierra Leone lasted over ten years and has become a focal point for studies on natural resources and conflict. Sierra Leone has diamond deposits, which were used by pro-government militias to fund conflict during the civil war. While a lucrative source of income, not all pro-government militias relied on contraband to fund their military operations¹². The government of Sierra Leone and civilian groups supported many of the armed groups active during the conflict.

Sierra Leone differs from global trends (Cohen 2016, Cohen and Nordås 2015) in which the most frequent perpetrator of wartime rape is formal state military actors. Pro-government militias committed the majority of sexual violence in Sierra Leone, and therefore it seems pertinent to study cases within this conflict. The civil war in Sierra Leone is frequently noted for armed group perpetrated atrocities directed at the local population (Cohen 2016 98-103). Why does a conflict with reported massive violence against civilians differ from cross-national patterns of wartime rape?

Sexual violence was perpetrated by only some of the pro-government militia groups; the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Civil Defense Forces (CDF). The Executive Outcomes were never reported to be associated with sexual violence. Within the Sierra Leone civil war the

reports)

¹¹ ABA/Benetech Sierra Leone War Crimes Documentation survey, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2004. "Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Volume 2, chapter 2, Findings." The Truth and Reconciliation Act 2000. Sierra Leone., Cohen, K. Dara, Ragnhild Nordås. 2014. "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC data set, 1989-2009." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(3): 418-28.

¹² Carey, Sabine C., Neil J. Mitchell and Will Lowe. 2013. 'States, the Security Sector, and the Monopoly of Violence: A New Database on Pro-Government Militias. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2), 249-258

CDF and RUF are PGM group actors this study takes particular note of, because of detailed data that has been gathered to create a combatant profile (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004). The CDF and RUF were both active for the majority of the war and are likely the most well known pro-government militias. There is less available data on Executive Outcomes, and this group was active for only a few years of the conflict.

Participation in sexual violence was not a constant feature among all armed actors in Sierra Leone. The civil war is an example of variation in violence against civilians between armed groups. Some pro-government militias like Executive Outcomes did not engage in wartime rape, whereas the RUF regularly committed sexual violence. The Civil Defense Forces was reported to have perpetrated extremely infrequent rape that was concentrated in a specific time period. What explains the variation of wartime rape between these different pro-government militias?

Background of the War

At the time that the civil war began, Sierra Leone was a one-party state under the leadership of President Momoh. In spring of 1991, Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor began a military takeover of the country (Cohen 2016, 99). Sankoh had previously served as a corporal in the Sierra Leone Army. Sankoh was the leader of the RUF and Charles Taylor was a Liberian rebel leader who later became the President of Liberia.

The RUF took over militarily conquered areas and fought their way northeast towards the capital, Freetown. Diamond deposits are concentrated in the east and southeast regions of the country, on the side of the country that borders Liberia¹³. Throughout the early 1990's the RUF gained territory including diamond fields as the regions under their control expanded.

¹³ United States Central Intelligence Agency. 1969. "Sierra Leone: Economic Activity." Austin, Texas. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

The attacks started in towns along the eastern border with Liberia, which began the coup against the ruling party¹⁴, the All People's Congress. The RUF cited grievances over one-party elections and corruption within the All People's Party who had provided lackluster support of the Sierra Leone Army's counter-insurgency efforts (Cohen 2016, 99). Dissatisfaction with the government of Sierra Leone was felt by many different groups, which eventually led to turmoil and instability.

Unrest within the national Army over poor pay and mistreatment led to a coup against President Momoh in 1992. The coup, led by army Captain Strasser instituted a military government called the National Provisional Ruling Council. Capt. Strasser promised multiparty elections and a stop to rebel violence (Cohen 2016, 99). The Strasser military government hired private security firm Executive Outcomes to combat the RUF and train other armed groups. The National Provisional Ruling Council was ultimately overthrown in another military coup in January of 1996.

In February elections took place selecting Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as President¹⁵. He also codified the status of the Civil Defense Force (CDF), which had been a grassroots armed group. President Kabbah appointed Chief Sam Hinga Norman, the leader of the CDF, the Deputy Minister of Defense (Ferme and Hoffman 2004, 76). The President gave them funding to protect local areas (Cohen 2016, 100) and used the Executive Outcomes PGM to train and deploy alongside CDF units (Ferme and Hoffman 2004, 76). President Kabbah systematically utilized the pro-government militias Executive Outcomes and the CDF to prevent the RUF from reaching Freetown.

The training, dividends, and opportunities given to pro-government militias angered the

¹⁴ The BBC. January 4, 2017. "Sierra Leone Profile - Timeline"

¹⁵ The BBC. January 4, 2017. "Sierra Leone Profile - Timeline"

state military forces (Ferme and Hoffman 2004, 76). Formal military members felt that cuts to the Sierra Leone state military forces budget, while pro-government militias received benefits, was evidence of the All People's Congress' corruption. Though the new President Kabbah signed peace deals with the RUF in November, they were spoiled in 1997 by another military coup. The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council led this coup consisting of alienated military sectors.

The new ruler Major Koroma invited the RUF to join his military junta and rule in the capital with him. The government of Major Koroma was soon ousted from the capital in early 1998, by Nigerian led troops known as the ECOMOG. The RUF retreated to their diamond rich territory, which allowed them to fund continuing military operations (Cohen 2016, Smillie et al. 2000). Refueled, the RUF began what is known as the January 6th invasion in 1999 to capture Freetown. Though this invasion failed it consisted of intense fighting and severe levels of sexual violence (Cohen 2016, 100).

Another peace agreement was signed in 1999, which gave government positions to some rebels¹⁶. A full pardon was given to members of the state military and a number of pro-government militias. The peace deal Article IX gave immunity to ex-combatants and exiles as of March 1999. In return, the PGMs had to disarm and allow peace-keeping forces to assist in disarmament¹⁷. Armed groups were to demobilize and the Sierra Leone Armed Forces were to be trained, with the goal of creating national armed forces. The article went on to require mercenaries to withdraw from Sierra Leone.

The RUF pushed to gain representation within the Sierra Leone government. They

¹⁶ The BBC. January 4, 2017. "Sierra Leone Profile - Timeline"

¹⁷ Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front. 1999. *Peace Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (Lome Peace Agreement)*. Lome, Togo. Government Press.

demanded political and religious rights, which were granted by the 1999 Peace Accord. An election commission was to be established to guarantee “a level playing field” in elections and competition between political parties¹⁸. Representation required that Sierra Leone cease being a one-party state. The RUF was to receive cabinet positions and legal status as a political party.

As UN peacekeepers arrived, ECOMOG troops outside Freetown were attacked in a resurgence of violence. The BBC reported that when the RUF abducted hundreds of UN troops in 2000, involvement from the British Government exacerbated violence when they intervened to evacuate British citizens and free the hostages. During this struggle, the leader of the RUF was captured. By 2001 UN peacekeeping forces were able to operate in rebel-held areas without an eruption of violence, in 2002 Kabbah won the presidential election and declared the war over (Cohen 2016, 100). War crimes trials begin in 2004 and UN peacekeepers did not leave until almost a year and a half later.

As reintegration programs began and PGMs disarmed, it became clear that the social acceptance of soldiers returning home would vary based on the PGM they served in (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 40). Members of the RUF reported having problems returning home more so than CDF members. Many RUF members said they were blamed for atrocities upon returning home, even if they had been abducted into service, “People cast all sorts of blame on me for being an ex-RUF. They say we destroyed lives and property. They provoke me. I am not happy about my life. People talk about me.” (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 40). Humphreys and Weinstein note that frequently abductees were forced to commit violence against their own communities.

¹⁸ Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front. 1999. *Peace Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (Lome Peace Agreement)*. Lome, Togo. Government Press.

Conflict Diamonds

The economic opportunities provided by disintegration of state control allowed high levels of violence. The RUF used diamond trade not to achieve goals related to political, religious, or ethnic ties, but as fuel for brutality and violence against civilians. The RUF's political claims are unconvincing given the frequent and severe attacks targeted at the civilian population (Smillie et al. 2000, 10). War provides economic opportunities to actors not usually included in normal market transactions¹⁹, who are then able to use those resources to wage violence. War is fueled by investment that is collected by those who participate in violence, especially when armed groups seek financial support outside of domestic government sources.

A report issued by Smillie, Gberie, and Hazelton (2000) reveals that the RUF was trading in contraband goods with Liberia. Diamonds were exchanged for weapons on the extensive Liberian black market, providing a channel for gemstone smuggling and a steady supply for military goods (Smillie et al. 2000, 6). Data indicated that the diamonds for weapons exchange fueled the civil war by guaranteeing the RUF retained the capacity to commit violence. Additional news reports stated that RUF territory on the border with Liberia was being used not only for mining, but was also being utilized for the cultivation of poppies and coca plants.

Scholarship around contraband trade in wartime suggests that lootable resources produce violence. Summarizing their report, Smillie et al. claim that the diamond riches of Sierra Leone created mercenary groups like the RUF. Human rights are not a concern for these actors, which instead are sustaining their ability to commit atrocities through diamond money (Smillie et al. 2000, 74). These organizational institutions were centered on exploitive behavior that incentivized violence and looting.

Smillie et al. (2000) characterize the violence perpetrated by the RUF as 'terror

¹⁹ Smillie et al. 2000, Gilmore et al. 2005, de Soyosa and Neumayer 2007.

techniques'. The violence and illicit trade by RUF was not simply a product of lack of economic opportunity. The PGM began as disaffected individuals²⁰ who took advantage of state breakdown to pursue economic benefits that prolonged violence (Smillie et al. 2000, 10). For the RUF, alienation and criminal activity were explicitly fostered to increase the group's ability to engage in lethal violence²¹. The cause of RUF violence is not grievance with government, but was rather conditioned through abduction, drug use, and training that emphasized lone wolf tactics rooted in emotional disturbance and idolizing brutality.

Reports issued by the London *Times* and the UN²² in 1999 hypothesized that violence and atrocities on the part of the RUF were part of a continued campaign to destabilize security and political institutions. The goal for destabilization was continued access to diamond resources, indicating that that goal of RUF forces was not prevention of widespread violence. The qualitative data surrounding the behavior of the RUF was that violence acted as a benefit for the group. Their association with contraband trade networks made participation in violence and oppression possible. A UN Security Council report²³ indicate that operating outside of government control allowed the RUF to pursue self-interest, who are then able to loot diamonds and perpetrate violence against civilians without possibility of repercussions. Since the RUF did not rely on civilians or government relationships for support, their use of violence was not circumscribed by normal mechanisms of accountability.

Newspaper accounts report that the intense violence during the January 6th invasion was fueled in part by weapons that were acquired through trade paid in diamond resources. They

²⁰ Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 19.

²¹ UN Security Council. 2001. "Security Council take up report on diamonds, arms in Sierra Leone; expert panel says council sanctions broken 'with impunity' ." Press release.

²² Smillie et al. 2000, 48. UN Security Council. 2001. "Security Council take up report on diamonds, arms in Sierra Leone; expert panel says council sanctions broken 'with impunity' ." Press release.

²³ UN Security Council. 2001. "Security Council take up report on diamonds, arms in Sierra Leone; expert panel says council sanctions broken 'with impunity' ." Press release.

state that the main base of the RUF was the Kailahun District where weapons were transported to RUF held territory (Smillie et al. 2000, 48). The Liberian President Taylor supported the RUF by providing an outlet for contraband, selling arms and military weapons, as well as military training based in Liberia²⁴. The RUF therefore answered not to local authorities but to the dictator of a notoriously corrupt foreign government.

The connection between the RUF and diamonds goes beyond territorial control. Many RUF commanders were previously involved with illegal diamond mining²⁵. Recruitment for the group was reportedly initiated in the slums of Freetown where many *san san* boys (illicit miners) resided (Smillie et al. 2000, Humphreys and Weinstein 2004). The RUF even sought to retain control over diamond sources post-conflict. Informants from Monrovia and other reports insinuate that President Taylor encouraged the RUF to sign the Lome Peace Agreement of 1999, because it ensured their continued control over the Diamond regions of Kono district and Tongo Field²⁶.

An entire section in the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord spoke in explicit language about how gemstone resources would be regulated by the Government²⁷. The Sierra Leone Government would have regulatory control over diamonds and gold and contract could only be approved through state channels. As part of the Lomé peace agreement, the leader of the RUF Corporal Sankoh was named Chairman²⁸ of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development Act, 1999. Article VII stated that gemstones and

²⁴ Smillie et al. 2000, 49, and UN Security Council. 2001. "Security Council take up report on diamonds, arms in Sierra Leone; expert panel says council sanctions broken 'with impunity'." Press release.

²⁵ Smillie et al. (2000).

²⁶ Smillie et al. 2000, 49. See also *Africa Confidential*, August 1999.

²⁷ Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front. 1999. *Peace Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (Lome Peace Agreement)*. Lome, Togo. Government Press.

²⁸ Government of Sierra Leone. 1999. *Commission for the management of strategic resources, national reconstruction and development act, 1999*. Freetown, Sierra Leone. Government Press.

precious metals would only be extracted through the legal exploitation of the Government. A Commission would be established to make decisions about the natural resources of Sierra Leone.

Another way diamonds fueled the civil war, was competition over the gemstone rich areas²⁹. The firm Branch Energy established a relationship between the armed group Executive Outcomes and the domestic government. Branch Energy claimed no relation to the PGM Executive Outcomes³⁰, and denied any connection between military advances that freed Kono diamond areas and the contracts for diamond concessions that were given by the Sierra Leone government. They released statements saying that Executive Outcomes had no interest in diamond concessions and that mining concessions of the Branch Energy group in Sierra Leone were not obtained by the PGM. Contrary to their claims, multiple sources find that Branch Energy landed a 25 year deal with the government of Sierra Leone for orchestrating the use of Executive Outcomes³¹. Reports show that Executive Outcomes was a security firm that was hired to oust the RUF and regain control over mining territory³². Executive Outcomes operated directly under government control as a PGM to ensure state security³³ and protection of territory like the capital and gemstone mines. At its base, the diamond mines of Sierra Leone were an epicenter of violence.

The CDF also used military force to establish control over diamond mining areas. CDF control over mines technically went against government permits and licenses, even though the group was associated with and frequently supported by domestic government sources (Smillie et al. 2000, 65). The group framed control over diamonds as a national security issue, which was

²⁹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004, 107.

³⁰ Cited in Smillie et al. (2000) who say examples are taken from, 'Statement & Media Advisory', DiamondWorks, June 10, 1999.

³¹ Feb. 2, 1997 *The New York Times*.

³² The BBC. January 4, 2017. "Sierra Leone Profile - Timeline", Cohen 2016, Smillie et al. 2000, Ferme and Hoffman 2004.

³³ Carey, Sabine C., Neil J. Mitchell and Will Lowe. 2013. 'States, the Security Sector, and the Monopoly of Violence: A New Database on Pro-Government Militias. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2), 249-258.

logical given its relationship to the national government and supposed commitment to serving as a democratic state military (Ferme and Hoffman, 83). The CDF sought to wrestle control of mines from the RUF, and are reported to have established ‘regulation’ of mines within their territory. Interviews revealed that miners in Bo joined the CDF because of their association with both the government and mining projects in the region.

The Civil Defense Forces

The CDF is an interesting case because they rely on both looting and the domestic government. The other PGMs who rely solely on domestic government support are not reported to have any participation in sexual violence related to the war, but the CDF was reported to have committed sexual violence at a level 1 prevalence. The CDF was associated with the domestic government, looting, and sexual violence which indicates they could be a meaningful example of how financial support through looting increases wartime rape. Furthermore, like discussed earlier, it is difficult to say how substantial the effect of looting can be, given the precision of the variables used in the previous quantitative analysis. Reports that the CDF engaged in sexual violence, while other groups who were supported only by the government did not, illustrate that the presence of plunder and loot behavior could increase the incidences or victims of sexual violence by an entire prevalence level.

CDF members reported that they were forbidden from participating in looting. When goods were acquired they were divided equally among the members or secretly kept by the individual. For CDF members, material benefits were not considered rewards for service. Non-reliance on material incentives by the CDF was likely because of the political support and membership of the group. The majority of RUF members were abducted (Cohen 2016, Smillie et al. 2000) while the majority of CDF members claimed to join because they agreed with the

PGMs political goals. More than 80% of RUF members' surveys stated that a stranger recruited them and that they did not have a personal connection to anyone in their unit. Conversely, among the CDF, "77% of respondents reported being recruited by a friend, relative, or community leader... Moreover, new members of the CDF typically joined units in which they had family members, friends, or members of their communities." (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 24). The CDF were volunteer units comprised of kin or community members while the RUF were generally strangers forcibly abducted into service.

Evidence also shows that the CDF began to engage in sexual violence as they moved away from their local civilian support network (Cohen 2016, 117). Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports also state that the CDF committed violence in resource rich areas against civilian residents³⁴. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission named the RUF and CDF as groups that systematically targeted diamond resource areas, saying that the targeting of these areas resulted in violence against civilians and displacement of the local population.

The Revolutionary United Front

Cohen includes the RUF as rebel actors in her own analysis, but their association with government makes it more appropriate to code this group as a pro-government militia. The PGMD does not require that a pro-government militia have legal or official status, and makes a distinction between informal PGMs and semi-formal PGMs³⁵. The RUF were allied with Major Johnny Koroma who utilized state military to overthrow the sitting President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah³⁶. Major Koroma and the RUF served as military rulers of the government once the

³⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004, 107.

³⁵ Carey, Sabine C., Neil J. Mitchell and Will Lowe. 2013. 'States, the Security Sector, and the Monopoly of Violence: A New Database on Pro-Government Militias. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(2), 249-258.

³⁶ June 10, 1997 The Guardian (London)

elected President had been removed. Additionally, the 1999 a peace deal³⁷ brokered between the RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone agreed to allow the RUF to become a political party. Based on their definition of PGMs, the RUF is an informal pro-government militia because it possesses ties to the government but was not legally recognized as a government military force.

Firstly, differences in the perpetration of violence and rape cannot be attributed to group size. Figures reported in the PGMD and by Cohen (2016) suggest that the CDF was the largest pro-government militia force, in terms of membership size. If reports of SV were simply associated with troop levels then the CDF would be the group committing the most wartime rape (Cohen 2016, 109). Data shows that the RUF committed not only a disproportionate amount of SV, but the most rape overall.

Survey data shows that looting was a prominent feature of the RUF, but was not used as a membership incentive. Goods collected by the RUF were sent out of the unit or kept by the commander (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 28). While the RUF had a large valuable goods contingent, this benefit was likely not given to recruits or group members. Data instead indicates that lucrative resources were controlled and exported by high-ranking commanders, not service persons. This is evidence that the RUF engaged in looting not as a membership incentive but rather for export.

Participation in the RUF promised a variety of benefits including women, illicit substances, and occasional looted commodities. This is different from a recruitment incentive, and instead these goods more likely represent benefits for membership retention. A quarter to a third of members of the RUF surveyed reported that they received drugs and access to marriage

³⁷ Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front. 1999. *Peace Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (Lome Peace Agreement)*. Lome, Togo. Government Press. (See also Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2004. "Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Volume 2, chapter 2, Findings." The Truth and Reconciliation Act 2000. Sierra Leone.)

or sexual partners (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 27).

Executive Outcomes were not involved in looting or contraband trade. Reports instead show that they served as a private military force to establish control over illicit mining areas for the domestic government. Their direct association with the state, being contracted through the Sierra Leone Government, seems to explain the high degree of discipline exhibited by this group. There is no evidence of opportunism³⁸ on the part of Executive Outcomes who are never reported to have engaged in rape or looting.

The principal agent hypothesis suggests that an agent will act against the principals' interest when the principal is weak or otherwise unable to regulate the actions of the agent (Cohen 2016, Butler et al. 2007). This theory implies that more 'opportunity' for the agent occurs when the state is weak. Cohen says that looting and rape are considered opportunistic behavior (see also Hoover Green 2011), actions that are more likely to be perpetrated when the actor can participate with impunity. Additionally, she states that rape and looting should be correlated, since both are considered 'crimes of opportunity'.

In Sierra Leone there is evidence of this hypothesis, after a rapid succession of coups in the early 1990's and particularly in 1996 and 1997, we see a peak of both looting and rape in 1998 and 1999, which begins in 1996 when the government would be weaker³⁹. Looting and rape are highly correlated suggesting that armed groups were able to take advantage of the opportunity presented by government breakdown (Cohen 2016, 114). Polity data scores the time period from 1997-2000 as a period of anarchy for Sierra Leone. Rape peaked during the anarchic period of government, which indicates that a principal-agent relationship could be

³⁸ Cohen (2016) and Hoover Green (2011) state that looting and rape are considered crimes of opportunity.

³⁹ Cohen 2016 data and trends from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2004. "Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Volume 2, chapter 2, Findings." The Truth and Reconciliation Act 2000. Sierra Leone.

present.

The RUF takes a disproportionate advantage of the opportunity to commit crimes, which could be evidence of a principal-agent relationship. The patterns of wartime violence give evidence for the principal-agent theory. In the period of 1998-1999 the RUF and Major Koroma's government had been driven from the capital and were in hiding. News reports indicate that the RUF used this time to trade diamonds for weapons to increase their military capabilities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports that, "The RUF was mining diamonds and using them for the procurement of supplies, arms and ammunition throughout the war, but mainly between 1998 and 2001..."⁴⁰ Rape peaked during this time, while the RUF had the least frequent association with government actors and more interaction with contraband networks. Temporal data and qualitative reports show that there is a relationship between the contraband trade of the RUF and their perpetration of sexual violence.

Executive Outcomes

The PGM Executive Outcomes had even more direct association with the government than the CDF, who had been grassroots created armed civilian groups who were eventually supported by the government. Executive Outcomes were hired directly by the government of Sierra Leone⁴¹ to combat the RUF. This PGM was never reported to have engaged in sexual violence. Additionally, when operating in diamond rich regions, the Executive Outcomes did not engage in financing or trade of any sort, instead they served as a private police force for mineral rich regions (Smillie et al. 2000, 56). The behavior of Executive Outcomes exemplifies how monetary support from the domestic government prevents violence against civilians. This PGM operated from 1995-1997 when polity data suggests the state had a high measure of autocratic

⁴⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004, 107.

⁴¹ Smillie et al. 2000, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004, 55.

control, therefore sexual violence during this time would not fit the pattern of principal-agent perpetrators. Executive Outcomes source of support was solely the domestic government, which made them less likely to perpetrate sexual violence than groups with independent sources of income. Additionally, they operated during a time of relative state strength making them particularly unlikely to engage in opportunistic behavior.

Discussion

The mechanism of principal control measured by this study is the source of funding a pro-government militia receives. Agents financially reliant on the principal are expected to engage in sexual violence less frequently from other groups. If they do participate, it will be in situations where the government capacity to regulate is weakened, for instance in situations where there is less government presence. Sexual violence will be perpetrated opportunistically, in times when government control is decreased. Agents without material support from the principal lack state oversight and are therefore expected to behave differently. The principal does not have the same degree of control over the actor that is financially independent. Based on the principal-agent theory, pro-government militias who cannot be held accountable through financial ties are more likely to commit sexual violence. The principal control mechanism of military funding is removed for these groups, and therefore they commit violence more frequently.

Principal-agent theory assumes that sexual violence is a product of variation in regulation, and therefore would be pursued as an opportunistic external benefit rather than formalized military strategy. Overall the wartime SV in Sierra Leone can be characterized as not being strategically motivated, or part of military strategy (Cohen 2016). The sexual violence in this conflict does not display ethnic, religious, or political cleavages. If victims are targeted

systematically based on demographic characteristics, scholarship deems that the use of SV was purposeful and a weapon wielded by armed groups (Leiby 2009, Cohen 2016, Stiglmayer 1994). Interviews conducted by Cohen 2016 show that armed groups did not seek specific victims as targets, which would be associated with strategic use of sexual violence.

Physical and intimate violence both took place at deplorable levels in this conflict, but data show that the two are not correlated. It is important to note for this conflict but also as a general trend that violence and sexual violence do not occur simultaneously (Cohen 2016, Hoover Green 2011). The explanation for lethal violence and reasoning for intimate crimes such as rape must therefore be different.

Data compiled from the SVAC and the PGMD show that the material support used by a pro-government militia could be connected to how frequently that group participates in sexual violence. The PGMs that rely on the domestic government for support, commit the lowest levels of sexual violence or none at all. Groups that were financed through plunder and looting committed the severest levels of violence. In Sierra Leone, both of the pro-government militias supported by looting were reported to have committed massive amounts of sexual violence⁴². Based on the coding scale used⁴³, this means that the Plunder and Loot PGMs were reported to have committed approximately 1,000 or more occurrences of sexual violence, while groups financially supported by the domestic government were associated with less than 25 incidents or victims. The pro-government militias supported by the domestic government who engage in sexual violence, do so in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of the principal-agent theory.

⁴² Cohen, K. Dara, Ragnhild Nordås. 2014. "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC data set, 1989-2009." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(3): 418-28., (See also State Department/HRW/AI reports)

⁴³ See Appendix 2 for coding information

The overall highest numbers of reported rapes occurred towards the end of the conflict in 1998 and 1999. Cohen summarizes that wartime rape in Sierra Leone, “was high at the start of the war, and then gradually decreased in frequency through 1993, which had the lowest number of reported rapes. Reports then increased again, with two peaks: one in 1995 and the second in 1998/1999” (Cohen 2016, 105). The reports of perpetration by the RUF roughly follow this overall pattern. Data from multiple sources⁴⁴ names the RUF as the most frequent perpetrator of wartime rape in Sierra Leone. Reports also suggest that the CDF did not start to participate in rape until 1998, which was nearer to the end of the conflict.

Both pro-government militias had a similar ethnic composition, which roughly reflected Sierra Leone’s national demographics (Cohen 2016, Humphreys and Weinstein 2004).

Therefore we can control for the effect of ethnic cleavages between the CDF and RUF.

Humphreys and Weinstein conclude that the members of both the CDF and RUF were poor, uneducated, and largely uninvolved in politics. Therefore scholars state that, “ This socioeconomic profile undoubtedly shaped what the combatants demanded from their factions...”(Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 21). It appears that the level of education and economic status of group members are similar for both groups. Both groups survey responses show that material wealth was not a chief concern for members, who wished instead for subsistence goods and personal safety.

Data from Carey and Mitchell’s PGMD find that the RUF and CDF differ in the material support they receive, the purpose of the armed group, and the targets of violence. The funding sources of the CDF and RUF differ, and consequently the groups vary the level of sexual violence they commit. Additionally, survey data finds that the CDF and RUF differ in

⁴⁴ ABA/Benetech Sierra Leone War Crimes Documentation survey, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2004. “Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Volume 2, chapter 2, Findings.” The Truth and Reconciliation Act 2000. Sierra Leone., (see also Cohen and Nordås 2014, Cohen 2016)

recruitment methods, membership incentives, and what networks existed within the group (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004, 22). Differences between the groups therefore seem to be the driving factors behind how differently the pro-government militias engaged with the local population.

The pattern of sexual violence and domestic government capacity in Sierra Leone is evidence of the principal-agent theory. Triangulated data finds that, “rape was high at the start of the war, and then gradually decreased in frequency through 1993, which had the lowest number of reported rapes. Reports then increased again, with two peaks: one in 1995 and the second in 1998/1999” (Cohen 2016, 105). The sexual violence committed by the RUF peaks basically match this overall pattern, while the CDF doesn't perpetrate until the 1998/1999 period.

Principal-agent theory suggests that state actors will have the most opportunity to commit violence when the state is weak. Since data shows that the period of 1997-2000 was a period of very low state strength⁴⁵, it makes sense that the peak of sexual violence occurred during this time. For the CDF this is extremely telling because of their close association with the government. There seems to be a causal process at work, in which the CDF does not commit sexual violence until the point at which the domestic government is weakest.

An additional implication of the principal-agent theory relates to the access to opportunism. The mechanism goes beyond the regulatory control of the principal and also pertains to the access that the agent may possess to pursue opportunistic behavior. For sexual violence this would mean access to civilians. Sudden spikes in access to civilians should be related to physical movements into areas of greater population density. The assault on Freetown at the end of the war is an example of one such environment. Both the CDF and RUF committed

⁴⁵ Marshall, Monty G., Ted Robert Gurr and Keith Jagers. 2015. "Polity IV: Political Structures and Regime Change, 1800-2015", Center for Systemic Peace and Societal-Systems Research Inc.

higher levels of violence during this time where they were both in the capital with access to lots of civilians, in comparison to previous periods where both groups operated in areas with less concentration of civilians.

Conclusion

Qualitative studies show that state strength is an important factor for the magnitude of wartime rape. Sexual violence by the CDF did not occur until the years where the Sierra Leone government was in interregnum and therefore would have been less powerful. Generally, the regression results show that it is important to differentiate between the types of funding that a PGM receives. Each type of funding has a different effect on the highest level of sexual violence a pro-government militia commits. Overall, there is a statistically significant relationship between the severity of SV a PGM commits and funding that comes from drugs, plunder and loot, and foreign governments. The most statistically significant relationship is the correlation between SV level and the plunder and loot variable.

The results of this study seem to fit into the narrative of wartime rape that Cohen (2016) finds. Her regression analysis finds state failure statistically significant but also finds evidence that the organizational characteristics of an armed group are correlated to the magnitude of sexual violence they commit (Cohen 2016, 87). Taken together, her results and the findings of this paper indicate that multiple facets of control over combatants are correlated with the incidence of sexual violence. We both find that state strength matters, but what is interesting is the effect of other regulatory mechanisms.

This research finds evidence for principal-agent theory through material support as a measure of state control. The funding of a pro-government militia is correlated to the severity of sexual violence they are associated with. Funding serves as an indicator of control the principal

holds, the domestic government had less jurisdiction over pro-government militias funded by contraband, and consequently these groups committed the most prevalent sexual violence.

Humphreys (2005) cites the RUF in Sierra Leone that rely on lootable resources and claims weren't really committed to fighting for the rebel cause (Humphreys 2005, 535). Natural resource funded groups have commitment problems because of opportunistic tendencies and incentive to protect resources. These types of groups are more opportunistic because they operate outside the jurisdiction of domestic government material support controls.

In the case of Timor-Leste, Cohen finds that the East Timorese PGM members were mainly criminals seeking personal gain through the looting opportunities provided by cooperation with Indonesian forces (Cohen 2016, 128). The lack of evidence suggesting SV was explicitly ordered provides support for sexual violence as a spillover effect from other factors relating to group characteristics. Additionally for the Timor-Leste conflict, it is important to note that the majority of the PGM violence occurred in areas with little rebel presence. She finds reports that SV was committed not against specific targets and instead was perpetrated by frenzied drug using PGMs (Cohen 2016, 160). Cohen believes this suggests that the violence was not related to combatting rebel threat and instead involved the motivation of militia members.

Cohen argues that principal-agent theory is too simplistic to explain variation in wartime rape because it doesn't explain correlation between recruitment procedures and increased tendency to commit sexual violence. I disagree with this analysis and instead think the correlation is evidence that a principal-agent relationship is at work. Mitchell et al. (2014) stated that principals will attempt to mediate agency problems through stringent recruitment processes and formal training. This therefore indicates that the recruitment process is a strategy used to try

and ensure that combatants aren't likely to engage in opportunistic behavior. Recruits are vetted to prevent opportunistic fighters from joining whose interests may not align with the principal actors. So logically, under a principal-agent framework, there will be a correlation between groups that have weaker formal recruiting processes and increased sexual violence.

The relationship between contraband funding and sexual violence can serve as an indicator of which PGMs are most likely to commit SV. Actors seeking to diminish severe SV should target groups that are not reliant on the domestic government for material support. Additionally, if a PGM begins to use contraband funding it can be expected that their level of SV will increase. Domestic governments should seek to prevent PGMs from looting and drug cultivation, cutting off access to these sources of funding could increase sexual or intimate security during conflict. Since the variable foreign government funding is also statistically significant, security agreements should be wary of international support for pro-government militias. These groups are likely to commit high levels of sexual violence.

Given these results, future studies should strive to increase the precision of the funding variables. For instance, previous work indicates that oil can increase violence while gemstones will not (Humphreys 2005). So it would be pertinent to run further tests that measure the effect of different lootable resources individually. The PGMD does not specify the type of resource that is looted and therefore looting is measured dichotomously. Additionally, a direct test of the effect of funding from civilian support could increase the robustness of the funding model since civilian support was not included in the coding of the PGMD. Civilian support could be another way to measure principal control, hypothesizing that civilians will act as a principal actor attempting to curb indiscriminate violence through monetary ties.

For establishing causality and increasing robustness, case studies would be useful to

measure chronology and geographic location of variables as well as detailed data. The PGMD does not contain information on when pro-government militias gained access to different types of resources. To assess the causal relationship between funding, there has to be an observable order in which a pro-government militia receives a type of funding with less principal controls and then is shown to commit a higher magnitude of sexual violence. One of the main limitations for studying armed groups is the availability of detailed data. Therefore collection efforts for armed group characteristics would also be exceedingly useful.

It is unclear whether support from domestic government decreases levels of SV. Since the funding model results did not allow full rejection of the null hypothesis, it is possible that relationship with domestic government could still have an effect on a PGMs highest level of SV. An important policy research project could be to assess the direction of the relationship between domestic government support and a PGMs level of SV, if there is one. Specifically, the relationship between domestic government and a PGM has been thought to be theoretically important (Mitchell et al. 2014, Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013), especially under a principal-agent framework.

Future work should strive to explore other ways to assess the relationship between governments and PGMs. Carey et al. (2013) note that pro-government militias often participate in joint operations with state troops. It is possible that higher association between PGM and domestic government troops will decrease incidences of sexual violence. The principal-agent framework provides multiple avenues for understanding the relationship between principal-agent actors. For PGMs the relationship, outside of monetary ties, could consist of military cooperation including training with state military. Most frequently, scholars cite regulatory power as one of the most important constraints on an agents behavior. Because a principal is not

always present in the field, their oversight power is diminished which allows agents to operate with greater freedom. Possible ways to measure monitoring over a group would likely have to come from qualitative data indicating the presence of domestic government actors or other watchdog actor types. Future studies could assess the correlation between presence of domestic government officials and magnitude of sexual violence.

Using the principal-agent framework to continue to assess the relationship between PGMs and SV would be useful. The results of this funding model indicate that the principal-agent framework is the appropriate way to analyze variance in SV. Though since the explanatory power of this model is fairly weak, future studies should attempt to analyze different connections between governments and PGMs. As mentioned previously, security agreements between principals and agents could vary and result in differing levels of sexual violence. For instance, variation in whether or not a PGM received government training should cause variation in the highest level of SV.

Additionally, the ability of the principal to have direct regulatory power over the agent could also have an effect. The principal-agent framework suggests that PGMs that operate in government-controlled areas would commit less prevalent sexual violence than those PGMs that are not under direct government oversight. The importance of oversight could explain the relationship this funding model observed for the effect of foreign government support. The statistical significance of both foreign support and contraband funding could suggest that the amount of oversight a PGM is subject to could effect their likelihood to engage in SV. It is possible that the freedom from accountability granted by contraband funding, can also be achieved by ties to foreign governments who are unlikely to have the local manpower and resources required to physically oversee the PGM they support.

The results indicate that geographic location of funding, or relationship to funding source is important. Local government support isn't statistically significant, while foreign government support is, which seems to show that interactions with civilians are mediated by ties to local actors. These findings are consistent with previous work; Cohen (2016) as well as Lujala (2009) who both show that physical location of resources effects severity of violence. The initial funding model shows that inclusion of geographic indicators could be useful for increasing the explanatory power of the model.

A trend in sexual violence in wartime that could be troubling for the principal agent hypothesis could be the fact that formal state militaries are the most frequent perpetrator of sexual violence, and are found to perpetrate rape before pro-government militias do. This result brings questions about the assumption that states do not wish to be associated with sexual violence. It is possible that principal actors are not as concerned with preventing sexual violence as we believe they would be. Though Cohen notes, that under principal-agent theory it is formal state troops that would have the most significant opportunity to engage in sexual assault when the state is weak (Cohen 2016, 113). Qualitative data will be required to assess this troubling finding. If state troops commit sexual violence when the state is weak, this is evidence of a principal-agent argument. But if troops commit violence even during times of stability for the state then some assumptions about state interest are called into question.

Additionally, perhaps it is assumptions about informal military groups that need to be altered. Mitchell et al. (2014) (see also Ferme and Hoffman 2004) stated that in comparison to official state militaries, pro-government militias posed a particularly substantial threat to human rights. The results of this regression do not allow us to assess the relationship between domestic government support and PGM sexual violence rates. Therefore it is possible that the explanatory

mechanisms for pro-government militias differ from those that are applicable to state militaries. The funding regression model indicates that PGMs with less principal controls are more likely to commit sexual violence, which is evidence of a principal-agent relationship. But the assumption the PGMs are particularly dangerous could be incorrect. A more likely theory is that state actors, regardless of their official status, will perpetrate sexual violence when principal controls are weakened and opportunity is present.

There is a positive moderate relationship for foreign government funding as well as plunder and loot or drugs. Therefore the regression models gives evidence for the principal-agent hypothesis, which stated that financial independence from principal actors would increase tendencies for violence. The model shows that PGMs who don't rely on domestic government support for military financing are associated with higher levels of sexual violence. Qualitative data from the Sierra Leone civil war also provides evidence supporting the principal-agent theory.

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Appendix 1

Coding for Actor type

1: State (in UCDP dyadic, this actor type is called 'Side A')

2: State A2 (in UCDP dyadic, this actor type is called 'Side A2nd').

These are states supporting the state (1) involved with conflict on its territory.

3: Rebel (in UCDP dyadic, the actor type is called 'Side B')

4: State supporting rebels in other country (in UCDP dyadic, this actor type is called 'SideB2nd').

6: Pro-government militias (PGMs)

“define a pro-government militia as a group that:

- is identified by media sources as pro-government or sponsored by the government (national or sub-national),
- is identified as not part of the regular security forces,
- is armed and
- has some level of organisation.

...use local, regional and international media sources via Nexis to identify PGMs, primarily relying on English language news sources from around the world from LexisNexis. The sources from Nexis include a wide range of sources including transcripts from local radio stations, national newspapers, BBC World Summaries of local news, and all major international newspapers. “ (Carey, Mitchell, Lowe 2013)

Appendix 2

Prevalence ⁴⁶

The prevalence measure gives an estimate of the relative magnitude of reported sexual violence perpetrated by an actor in a particular year. This is coded according to an ordinal scale, adapted from Cohen (2010; 2013):

- **Prevalence = 3 (Massive)** Sexual violence is likely related to the conflict, and:
 - Sexual violence was described as “massive,” “innumerable,” or “systematic”
 - Actor used sexual violence as a “means of intimidation,” “instrument of control and punishment,” “weapon,” “tactic to terrorize the population,” “terror tactic,” “tool of war,” on a “massive scale” *Note:* Reports of 1,000 or more incidents or victims of sexual violence is coded as 3.
- **Prevalence = 2 (Several/ Many)** Sexual violence is likely related to the conflict, but did not meet the requirements for a 3 coding, and:
 - Sexual violence was described as “widespread,” “common,” “commonplace,” “extensive,” “frequent,” “often,” “persistent,” “recurring,” a “pattern,” a “common pattern,” or a “spree”
 - Sexual violence occurred “commonly,” “frequently,” “in large numbers,” “periodically,” “regularly,” “routinely,” “widely,” or on a “number of occasions;” there were “many” or “numerous instances” *Note:* Reports of 25-999 incidents or victims of sexual violence is coded as 2.
- **Prevalence = 1 (Some)** Sexual violence is likely related to the conflict, but did not meet the requirements for a 2 or 3 coding, and: There were “reports,” “isolated reports,” or “there continued to be reports” of occurrences of sexual violence *Note:* Reports of less than 25 incidents or victims of sexual violence is coded as 1.
- **Prevalence = 0 (No reported sexual violence)** A report was issued for a country in a given year, but there was no mention of sexual violence related to the conflict.

Prevalence = -99 (Missing; BOTH no report AND no information) No report was issued for a country-year and no data about this conflict-actor-year was available from subsequent years. Prevalence scores are coded separately from each of the three different sources used.

⁴⁶ Source: Cohen, K. Dara, Ragnhild Nordås. 2014. “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC data set, 1989-2009.” *Journal of Peace Research* 51(3): 418-28. Accessible through Online Codebook.

Appendix 3 – Definition of Sexual Violence

Rape is defined as the case where the perpetrator invaded the body of a person by conduct resulting in penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body. The invasion was committed by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or the invasion was committed against a person incapable of giving genuine consent.

Sexual slavery is defined as the case where the perpetrator exercised any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over one or more persons, such as by purchasing, selling, lending or bartering such a person or persons, or by imposing on them a similar deprivation of liberty in order to cause such person or persons to engage in one or more acts of a sexual nature.

Forced prostitution is defined as the case where the perpetrator or another person obtained or expected to obtain pecuniary or other advantage in exchange for or in connection with the acts of a sexual nature.

Forced pregnancy is defined as the case where the perpetrator confined one or more women forcibly made pregnant, with the intent of affecting the ethnic composition of any population or carrying out other grave violations of international law.

Forced sterilization/abortion is defined as the case where the perpetrator deprived one or more persons of biological reproductive capacity.

Sexual mutilation is defined as the case where permanent disfiguration, including but not limited to cutting/severing of breasts or genitals, has occurred and that this conduct has caused death or has seriously endangered the physical or mental health of such person or persons.

Sexual torture in general, “torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.” (UN Convention against torture: <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html>). “

<p>Source: Cohen, K. Dara, Ragnhild Nordås. 2014. “Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Introducing the SVAC data set, 1989-2009.” <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 51(3): 418-28. Accessible through Online Appendix.</p>
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