



Disparities and Diversification: Feminists in Europe Study War and/or Militaries

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Abstract This chapter discusses the dynamic feminist scholarship on war and militaries produced in contemporary Europe, highlighting work on militarism and militarization, military masculinities, the inclusion of women in armed organizations, military families, conflict-related sexual violence, and ‘everyday’ experiences. It sketches the national and institutional contexts where scholars are located and discusses the political economies that underpin significant disparities in geographical distribution and research focus, despite efforts to diversify scholarship and challenge dominant storylines and assumptions. In emphasizing how ideas and communities of scholars span continents, the chapter troubles the reification of ‘Europe’ as a privileged site of knowledge production.

Keywords Feminism · Militaries · War · Conflict-related sexual violence · Continuum of violence

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INTRODUCTION

The body of feminist international relations scholarship on war and militaries produced by scholars working in Europe is large, dynamic, and increasingly diverse. There is, of course, significant slippage and overlap between feminist work on militaries and on war. Given that the main business of militaries is to fight wars, much scholarship is relevant to both. Key themes—such as the understanding that militaries and war are inescapably gendered social phenomena characterized by gendered logics and gendered roles, and the idea that we cannot understand the geopolitical without focusing on and understanding the ‘everyday’ lives of ordinary people—characterize feminist work on both wars and militaries. Similarly, key policies—such as those that emerge from the UN’s Women, Peace and Security agenda (in-depth discussion of which is beyond the scope of this chapter, see Haastrup, this volume)—pop up repeatedly in the background of both sub-sets of scholarship. Despite these overlaps, this chapter is structured primarily around a discussion first of scholarship on militaries and second of scholarship on war.

The two central points I highlight in this chapter in an attempt to capture the current state of the literature, moreover, also apply to work on both wars and militaries. First, readers will notice that the scholarship cited below does not represent an even coverage in terms of the geographical location of the scholars who produce it, or the militaries/wars that are analyzed. Specifically, most scholarship is produced by academics in the UK. The Nordic countries, in particular Sweden, follow as the second most well-represented region. While this over-representation is perhaps partly attributable to how my networks have been shaped by my own location in the UK (and previous employment in Sweden), as well as my inability to read any European language other than English, it is doubtless also largely attributable to the different political economic realities across the countries of Europe. In addition, and with some exceptions, scholarship on *state* militaries tends to focus on the nation in which its author is located—there is, therefore, an significant emphasis on the British and Swedish militaries, with comparatively little literature on other European armed forces or on state armed forces outside Europe. In comparison, work on *non-state* armed groups is mostly focused on militaries in the Global South. In another, perhaps interlinked imbalance, scholarship on gender-based violence in war and militaries tends to focus on the Global

South, with a surprising lack of literature on such violence within European armed forces. I return to these disparities, and the colonial ways of thinking they (re)produce, below.

Second, and working against, to a certain extent, the uneven distribution of scholars and case studies I refer to above, recent years have seen a significant push toward the diversification of feminist scholarship on war and militaries, and increasing efforts to challenge dominant storylines and assumptions. This includes progress toward recognizing the multiplicities of the gendered experiences and identities in military and conflict spaces; an improved engagement with the multiple axes of power that cut across gender such as race, class, sexuality, and nationality; and a greater reckoning with the impact of coloniality in shaping what and how we know. While much work is still to be done, and indeed, while dominant stories are often unintentionally reproduced even in work that seeks to disrupt them (Stern and Zalewski 2009), there is nonetheless a significant body of interesting work endeavoring to complicate our existing assumptions. I sketch out some of this dynamic and diversifying literature below.

VITAL CAVEATS: ‘IR SCHOLARSHIP,’ ‘ON WAR AND MILITARIES,’ ‘WITHIN EUROPE’?

Before I move to the mapping of the literature, there are some important caveats that are worthy of a brief discussion. First, the volume and quality of research in this area mean that providing an exhaustive inventory here is impossible; instead, I seek to map broad trends that are inevitably debated by many more scholars than I can cite below. Second, while this volume seeks to map IR scholarship, defined roughly as that produced by scholars based in politics or international relations departments and/or who publish in IR journals, this draws an artificial line around debates, as relevant knowledge is built not just in IR but also across disciplines including anthropology, history, sociology, and women’s studies. Indeed, a failure to learn from other closely related disciplines has been identified as a significant weakness in IR scholarship (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2018; Parashar 2013). The boundaries between the focus of this chapter and others in this book are also to some extent fluid and leaky, in particular the chapters on Peace and Peacebuilding (Haastrup) on Critical Security Studies (Krulisova and O’Sullivan; on overlaps between studies of militaries/militarism and security, see also Åhäll 2016; Stavrianakis and Stern 2018 and the associated issue of *Security Dialogue*).

Third, and most importantly, the boundaries of ‘Europe’ are porous and politically constituted. Many of the ‘big names’ who have shaped the discipline are based elsewhere, as are multitudes of emerging and mid-career scholars doing compelling work within the same epistemic, methodological, and political frameworks discussed here. Of course, it is not the case that these scholars’ ideas are *absent* from the text that follows; in many places, their work informs that cited to the extent that it is woven into the subtext of what I discuss here. Compounding this mobility of ideas, scholars themselves are also mobile, so that the boundaries of an overview of work produced by scholars employed by institutions in European states leave space for slippage. Should older work produced by scholars who are now based in Europe but were previously located elsewhere ‘count’? What about work co-authored between those in Europe and those outside? In this chapter, I have included work that falls into these two grey areas; however, I have excluded publications by scholars who were once based in Europe but are now elsewhere. Exclusion of the work of scholars currently based outside of Europe means that I am inevitably presenting a somewhat incomplete, impoverished, and distorted picture of the debates in which Europe-based scholars themselves are engaged.

Moreover, questions should be raised about the politics of re-centering Europe as a primary site of knowledge production, in particular when much of that knowledge, especially when it comes to scholarship on war, takes place outside Europe as its empirical sites. The trope of European scholars extracting data from countries in the Global South and spinning it into authoritative ‘knowledge,’ allowing us to position ourselves as the ‘experts’ on the lives of ‘others,’ is, of course, a familiar one with a long history, intermeshed in and (re)productive of unequal global relations of power. Citation is political and it is performative: it is “a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies” (Ahmed 2013). As well as impacting upon the careers and reputations of individual scholars, citation plays a role in (re)producing disciplinary boundaries and in marking out the approaches and debates that are primary within them. Thus, including work by scholars (currently) based in Europe writing about the Global South (e.g. Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2017; Coulter 2008) but not work by scholars with (current) institutional homes outside Europe even when they write about Europe (e.g. Drummond 2018) risks reproducing ‘Europe’ as an innately better, primary site of knowledge production.

MILITARIES

This section maps key trends in feminist scholarship on militaries. I begin by sketching the emerging field of feminist Critical Military Studies (CMS), into which much of this research falls, before discussing four substantive themes that have been of particular interest to feminist scholars in Europe: militarism and militarization, military masculinities, the inclusion of women in armed organizations, and military families. Most work produced by scholars in Europe focuses on European state armed forces, in particular the UK (e.g. Basham 2013; Bulmer 2013; Cree 2000a, b; Duncanson 2013; Higate 2012a; Hyde 2016; Gray 2016a, b; Welland 2013; Woodward and Winter 2007), but also Sweden (Åse and Wendt 2017; Edwards 2012; Stern and Strand 2021; Strand and Kehl 2019), Norway (Dyvik 2016; Rones and Fasting 2017), Denmark (Åse and Wendt 2017), Portugal (Carreiras 2006), the Netherlands (*ibid.*), and Finland (Lehtonen 2015), among others. In addition, European-based scholars have also engaged with military constructions of gender in non-European locations including Thailand (Streicher 2012), Myanmar (Hedström 2020), the DRC (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009, 2012; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2017), Burundi (Friðriksdóttir 2018), Kashmir and Sri Lanka (Parashar 2014), and Peru, Columbia, and El Salvador (Dietrich Ortega 2012). While there are exceptions (Brown 2017; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2012), scholarship on the Global North is more likely to focus on state militaries, while that on the Global South focuses on non-state armed groups. This disparity is concerning because it (re)produces an unspoken assumption of a diametric difference between one kind of armed group ‘here’ (organized, modern) and another ‘there’ (unruly, not modern), thereby reinstating colonial ways of thinking (cf. Eriksson Baaz et al. 2018).

While perhaps primarily rooted in the traditions of feminist security studies, feminist scholarship on militaries draws on insights from studies of political economy (Chisholm and Eichler 2018; Chisholm and Stachowitz 2016; Hedström 2020), from postcolonial theory (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Henry 2012), and from disciplines including anthropology (Parashar 2013) and sociology (Carreiras 2006). Increasingly, many interested scholars identify their work as located within the interdisciplinary field of feminist Critical Military Studies (CMS). While studies of this kind of course have a much longer history, CMS has grown in recognition across Europe in recent years, particularly since the 2015 launch

of the journal *Critical Military Studies* and the regular inclusion, since 2013, of a CMS section at the European International Studies Association's annual Pan-European Conference on International Relations. As far as it is an identifiable body of work, CMS draws on interdisciplinary influences and methodological plurality, seeking to "approach... military power as a question, rather than taking it for granted" and thus engaging in "a sceptical curiosity about how it works" (Basham et al 2015: 1). CMS is by no means exclusively a feminist intellectual endeavor; however, feminist scholarship occupies an important position in this field.

Militarism and Militarization

'Militarism' and 'militarization' are both terms that frequently appear in feminist scholarship. In contrast to classic definitions that focus on the glorification of military violence or the build-up of weapons, feminist work tends to focus on the level of the 'mundane' and the 'everyday,' examining how the exercise of military power on the global stage is made possible through the day-to-day (gendered) organization of ordinary lives and of "common sense" (Åhäll 2016: 155). 'Militarism' is approached by some scholars as a "value system" (Kronsell and Svedberg 2012: 5)—a way of making sense of the world that normalizes the use of, or the *idea* of the use of, military power (Åhäll 2016: 160). Scholars have demonstrated how contemporary "liberal militarism" is rooted in biopolitical, racialized, and "masculinist protection" orientated logics that position military action as the "rational" course of action required to protect 'our' way of life from racialized outsiders (Basham, 2018: 34). For others, militarism is the organization of gendered social relations in a way that makes the use of military force possible. Elsewhere, for example, I explore the intimate relationships between male service personnel and their wives as a site in which militarism is embedded, because these relationships enable military institutions to access military wives' domestic and emotional labor (see below) (Gray 2016b). 'Militarization,' in contrast, is generally used to refer to complex processes through which such attitudes or social relations are spread or strengthened throughout society (Cree 2020b; Hyde 2016); "the process of preparing and engaging in the actual war-related practices" (Kronsell and Svedberg 2012: 5); or a form of governmentality "that (re)produces the power of military rationalities, discourses, knowledges, and practices" (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2017: 269).

Military Masculinities

Feminist scholarship on military masculinities questions the often-assumed naturalness of the association between militaries and masculinity. Military masculinities are approached as social constructions that play a central role in persuading men to fight (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009: 499; Ronés and Fasting 2017: 145–146); in legitimating war in the eyes of the public (Basham 2013: 140; Millar and Tidy 2017: 142–143); and in the causality of war itself (Cockburn 2010). In the dominant stories told about it in the literature, the hegemonic masculinity of the idealized combat soldier revolves around the central norms of physical prowess, courage and toughness, discipline and respect for authority, and the use of violence, as well as misogyny, hyper-heterosexuality, and homophobia (Basham 2013; Bulmer 2013; Carreiras 2006: 41–42; Higate 2003: 27–30; Woodward 2003). Scholars have argued that the formulation of military masculinity has very often entailed the denigration of characteristics deemed feminine, with women and LGBT people positioned as the construction’s necessary “referential ‘other’” (Carreiras 2006: 43–44), and homoerotic group-bonding practices reliant upon the apparent exclusion of women and gay men (Basham 2009: 423; Higate 2012a; Welland 2013).

While it is certainly possible to trace this coherent story about military masculinity in much of the feminist literature, much recent scholarship works to trouble this narrative through specific exploration of the multiplicity, fluidity, and contingency of military masculinities. Scholars have explored the multiplicity of masculinities performed or aspired to by Western military men (Chisholm and Tidy 2017; Millar and Tidy 2017: 153), as well as the irrelevance of Western-centric aggressive warrior archetypes to many contexts in the Global South (Dietrich Ortega 2012; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008; Friðriksdóttir 2018; Streicher 2012). Others have charted how military masculinities are further complicated (and racialized) when they are enmeshed with global labor supply chains in the workings of private military security companies (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016; Higate 2012a, b; Joachim and Schneiker 2012); how the particular experiences of peacekeeping might reshape military masculinities (Duncanson 2013; Holvikivi 2021); and how contemporary “soldier-scholar” masculinities might legitimate liberal internationalist warfare (Khalili 2011: 1486–1488). Scholars interested in drones debate how the increasing use of such technology in warfare is reshaping the

relationship between masculinity and violence (Clark 2018; Kunashakaran 2016; Wilcox 2017), while those interested in embodiment and emotions consider the excitement, pleasure, and enjoyment, as well as pain and suffering, that comes from enacting military identities and activities (Dyvik 2016; Welland 2018). Scholars have also explored the significant changes that have enabled LGBT people to serve openly in many European (and other) militaries. Some have noted that militaries increasingly use the idea of LGBT-inclusiveness as a way to frame themselves as relevant to contemporary society (Strand and Kehl 2019), while others demonstrate that heterosexuality continues to shape ‘public’ military life, allowing militaries to remain presumptively heteronormative spaces (Basham 2009; Bulmer 2013; Lehtonen 2015). Recent work has begun to engage more comprehensively with gender as formulated through intersections with other axes of oppression such as race and class (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016; Higate 2012b; Ware 2012); however, important silences remain here, as well as a problematic trend toward the depoliticization of ‘intersectionality’ as a concept in some CMS work (see Henry 2017).

Fighting Women

As they are interested in fighting men, feminist scholars are also interested in fighting women and have studied female fighters across Europe and beyond. While armed groups generally remain presumptively masculine, women have long been present in multiple roles and, indeed, the division between ‘combat roles’ and ‘support roles’ is in many cases highly unstable, political, and gendered (Millar and Tidy 2017). In state militaries, women have been increasingly incorporated into ‘combat roles’ (Carreiras 2006: 12–23). Women’s participation as fighters in non-state armed groups, in which they have perhaps always taken on more varied roles (Brown 2017; Coulter 2008; Marks 2017; Parashar 2014), has been different across different groups: while some position women’s active participation as a signifier of modernity and liberation, others use women as a symbol of a traditional culture that must be reclaimed, and are therefore more likely to contain women’s participation within unarmed support roles (Parashar 2014). Scholars interested in the call to increase the numbers of women involved in peacekeeping missions enshrined in the WPS agenda have noted that this goal is largely based on the assumption that the presence of women will automatically improve civil-military

relations in conflict zones and reduce sexual violence (Kirby and Shepherd 2016: 374–376), and have critiqued the ways in which the small increases that have been seen rely overwhelmingly on women from the Global South (Henry 2012).

Some feminist scholars take the view that the integration of women into militaries is a progressive move—either because it grants women greater access to full citizenship rights and broader equality (Kennedy-Pipe 2000: 36–37; Kronsell 2012), or because women’s presence might “regender” the cultures of these organizations by undermining the association of masculinity with militarism (Duncanson and Woodward 2016). In opposition to this, anti-militarist feminists argue that the violence, environmental destruction, and imperialism inherent in militaries, as well as the spectrum of gendered discrimination, exploitation, and violence perpetrated by military personnel, and indeed the inherently patriarchal nature of military organizations, mean that the inclusion of women cannot significantly change the military system (for an overview of these arguments, see Duncanson 2017). While Duncanson charts anti-militarist feminist scholarship primarily in the US, it is worth flagging the work of Cynthia Cockburn here, perhaps Europe’s most prominent anti-militarist feminist scholar. Cockburn’s powerful analysis identifies the intertwined forces of patriarchy, ethno-nationalism, and capitalism as a root causes of war—arguing specifically that “patriarchal gender relations predispose our societies to war” (Cockburn 2010: 140).

Military Families

Feminist scholars are also interested in military families, particularly military wives. Civilian women married to servicemen are often described as situated in liminal space, on the borders of the military and civilian spheres (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2017). Despite their lack of status as full members of military communities, however, a significant body of work has detailed the central importance of the unpaid reproductive labor performed by civilian women in intimate relationships with servicemen—in state militaries among both regulars (Basham and Catignani 2018, 2020; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2017; Gray 2016b; Hyde 2016) and reservists (Basham and Catignani 2020), in parasite armed groups (Hedström 2020), and in private military security companies (Chisholm and Eichler 2018). This labor is crucial to military organizations, reproducing the individual soldier in much the same

way as women's reproductive labor in capitalist systems enables men to participate in the labor market as workers, and thereby enabling armed organizations to wage war (Hedström 2020; see also Ware 2012: 207).

Military wives also carry out vital symbolic roles in domesticating and legitimating war in the minds of civilian publics. Military wives constitute the most immediate embodiment of the idea that military men protect the feminized space of the hearth and home (Basham 2013: 82–83; Gray 2016b). Representations of military wives (as well as, to a lesser extent, other family members) as vulnerable, heroic figures who sacrifice their family life in support of the nation, and deserve support from the nation in turn, render critique of military institutions in public discourse more difficult (Basham 2016: 889; Cree 2020a, b). Military wives are largely understood either as militarized subjects or as agents of militarization; others, however, have also explored how they may play a role in resisting militarism in various ways (Cree 2020b; Erikson Baaz and Verweijen 2017; Hyde 2017).

WAR

While feminist scholarship has engaged with multiple elements and enactments of war, I focus here on three areas of study that have gained particular attention in recent decades. First, I map feminist calls to study war not (only) in terms of the actions of states, but through a focus on war as experienced by 'everyday' people. Next, I offer a brief sketch of work on the gendering of contemporary counterinsurgency practices—this is of particular interest to feminist scholars as it provides a counter-point to the 'masculine' way that war has generally been understood. Finally, I discuss perhaps the most common theme appearing in feminist studies of war: sexual violence in conflict spaces.

Everyday War

Parashar calls on us to pay attention to how war is lived through the "banal moments" which make up the lives of people who "live inside wars and confront the gory images and the sight of blood and bodies on a daily basis" (Parashar, 2013: 618–619). In this research vein, feminist scholars across Europe have explored, among other things, the "social orders" that war creates (Coulter 2008: 55–56), the multiple roles that women take on in conflict and post-conflict settings (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009; Coulter 2008;

Parashar 2014), and the gendered experiences of male military personnel deployed to warzones (Dyvik 2016). Pushing back against the removal of lived, embodied lives from much mainstream scholarship on war, some scholars center bodily experience (Dyvik 2016; Wilcox 2011); others, the emotional experiences of warfare (Åhäll and Gregory 2015). The intention of scholarship focused on everyday life, on bodies, and/or on emotions is to understand how war is lived and experienced by embodied human subjects. In so doing, this scholarship does not simply flesh out accounts of what we already (think we) know about wars; rather, it centers experiences which traditional frameworks cannot explain and, thus, is deeply challenging to them (Parashar 2013). This approach does not seek to suggest that states and their actions are not important, but rather that it is impossible to understand war in its fullness without also paying attention to lived experiences and how they construct and prop up the geopolitics of war: as Basham contends, war is ‘simultaneously a geopolitical and an everyday phenomenon’; it is ‘simultaneously co-constituted by geopolitical and everyday practices’ (Basham 2013: 14, 7).

Counterinsurgency

While conventional warfare is generally portrayed as ‘masculine,’ scholars analyzing the gendering of contemporary counterinsurgency have noted both that it is widely understood as a softer, ‘feminine’ way of warring and that counterinsurgency practices, because they target the civilian population rather than enemy military personnel, are centered on a feminized target. Often, counterinsurgency practices explicitly target women, because women tend to be assumed to be non-combatants and, moreover, to be a central lynchpin of the civilian society whose ‘hearts and minds’ must be won over (Khalili 2011; see also Dyvik 2014; McBride and Wibben 2012). Counterinsurgency is analyzed as a colonial feminist project, where privileged white women of the metropole justify their increasing role in policy circles in the ‘feminist’ and ‘humanitarian’ language of ‘saving brown women,’ and where women marginalized in their home countries can, as military personnel, wield power over colonized men while still being able to take on a role as “damsel in distress” in relation to the hypermasculinity of US special forces personnel (Khalili 2011; McBride and Wibben 2012). The use of Female Engagement Teams by the US military in Afghanistan has emerged from the literature as a particularly clear example of this (Dyvik 2014; McBride and Wibben 2012).

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

Conflict-related sexual violence is a significant focus of feminist scholarship on war produced across Europe. One key theme of the debate circulates around the idea that conflict-related sexual violence functions as a ‘weapon of war.’ The weapon of war discourse is organized around four nodal points: the assumption of ‘strategicness’; the belief in a culpable perpetrator who acts with rational intent; the idea that it is possible to stop rape; and the gendered assumption that a woman’s sexual ‘purity’ somehow represents the purity of her ethnic or national collective (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 44–62). When it came to the fore in scholarship and policy in the aftermath of the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s, this narrative enabled wartime rape to be framed as *political*, rather than as an inevitability tied to men’s sexual urges and war’s cruelty. Such ideas have found traction among scholars in Europe (e.g. Seifert 1996) and continue to underpin much of the relevant policy discourse analyzed in European scholarship (Gray 2018; Kirby 2015). However, in the past decade, most scholarship emerging across Europe tends to be critical of the weapon of war discourse. This critique comes in several forms.

Some critique the weapon of war framework because it obscures the continuum of violence by producing a “hierarchy of harms” (Kirby 2015: 463) between different forms of violence. It has now been compellingly demonstrated that rapes understood to constitute a ‘weapon of war’—mostly those perpetrated by armed men against (mainly) women of ‘enemy’ collectives—are not the only form of gender-based violence in warzones and indeed are unlikely to be the most prevalent (Swaine 2015: 759–760). Scholars have therefore argued that the political focus on this one form of violence obscures the continuum that connects ‘everyday’/‘individual’ and ‘extraordinary’/‘mass’ forms of gender-based violence across war and peace, public and private, and thus makes it difficult to understand and to tackle such violence in a comprehensive way (Boesten 2014; Gray 2018; Kirby 2015; Swaine 2015). While many working in this area have drawn primarily on critical war or critical security studies perspectives in drawing the connections between sexual violence across the continuum, others have done so through a political economy approach, highlighting the material bases of sexual violence that stretch across war and peace (Kostovicova et al. 2020) (and it should be noted, of

course, that these approaches are not mutually exclusive but often inform and reinforce one another).

Another important line of critique comes from postcolonial feminist thinking. Zalewski and Runyan (2015) explore the racialization that underpins how the hypervisible “spectacle” of sexual violence in the Global South is framed for consumption by those in the North. Similarly, others have explored how ‘weapon of war’ narratives often rely upon colonial and racialized imaginations of the conflict rapes that take place in the Global South as barbaric, inexplicable, savage, and inhuman—something that could never happen ‘over here.’ This framing calls for a white savior and risks the commercialization of conflict rape in certain parts of the world, in that it skews Western donor funding toward particular forms of harm at the expense of others (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 88–106; see also Douma and Hilhorst 2012).

A third critical approach queries the “curious erasure” (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2018) of bodies and sexualities from discussions of ‘weapon of war’ rape. Recent scholarship draws on insights from feminist scholarship outside IR to complicate understandings of sex, violence, pleasure, and power (*ibid.*) and explores how sexuality appears in the stories of wartime sexual violence told by many perpetrators and victim-survivors (Boesten 2014; Dolan et al. 2020; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009, 2018). This makes room to explore how bodies themselves come to be intelligible as a deployable ‘weapons’ (Kirby 2020), how sexual violence can be caused by a breakdown in military order as much as it can result from the following of military orders (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 64–87), and how a removal of ‘the sexual’ from our understanding of conflict-related sexual violence may have the unfortunate side effect of opening up space for such violence to be framed as a legitimate tactic of warring (Gray and Stern 2019).

Finally, recent years have also seen increasing recognition of male sexual victimization in conflict settings. Generally speaking, this literature identifies the importance of patriarchal gender relations and structures in shaping how sexual violence against men is perpetrated and given meaning, further developing conceptualizations of how gender underpins sexual violence more broadly (Dolan et al. 2020; Gray et al. 2019; Touquet and Gorris 2016; Zalewski et al. 2018). This literature itself is also becoming increasingly complex and nuanced. Recent scholarship has begun to critique and complicate some widespread assumptions about male victimization in the existing literature, including heteronormative

ideas (see Schulz and Touquet 2020) and the sense that such violence necessarily results in the ‘emasculat[i]on,’ ‘feminizat[i]on,’ or ‘homosexualizat[i]on’ of its victim-survivors (Schulz 2018).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the above mapping demonstrates, there is a significant push within feminist scholarship to disrupt the dominant storylines of academic knowledge on war and militaries, both those contained within ‘malestream’ scholarship and those that animate much of the existing feminist scholarship itself. Significant silences, however, remain. Multiple potential avenues for future research could be noted; however, for me the most striking gap is the paucity of literature on gender-based violence within European militaries themselves. There are some examples—e.g. a small amount of work on domestic violence in the British military (Gray 2016a, b), and some studies on sexual abuse, harassment, and discrimination against women and LGBT personnel (Alvinus and Holmberg 2019; Bulmer 2013; Carreiras 2006: 46–54; Woodward and Winter 2007)—however, this body of work is very small and undeveloped in comparison with the significant amount of scholarship on gender-based violence in the US military, as well as that produced by European scholars on sexual violence in warzones overseas. It is unlikely that this can be explained by a lack of violence to investigate—in the British military, for example, a handful of high-profile cases as well as the significant proportion of Court Martials linked to sexual assault, rape, or child pornography (Rayment 2019) suggest an issue worthy of study. This disparity in research knowledge (re)produces colonial divides, by positioning military gender-based violence as something that primarily takes place ‘over there.’ That is, while scholars are increasingly seeking to produce knowledge on conflict-related sexual violence that pushes back against colonial narratives, when we look at the body of research as a whole, coloniality continues to underpin modes of knowledge production in multiple ways. As I note above, a similar point can be made about the focus of scholarship in the Global South on non-state armed groups and not on state militaries.

Another glaring gap in the literature relates to the relative lack of research on European state militaries other than the UK (and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Sweden). This leads to my final point—a discussion of where the literature cited in this chapter is produced and of the impact this location has on the knowledge constructed. Most feminist scholars

working on war and militarism in Europe are based in the UK (followed by Sweden and the other Nordic countries). The over-representation of UK-based scholars can be explained by factors including the large numbers of academic institutions, the availability of research funding, and a political atmosphere that is (at the current moment in time) generally permissive to feminist research.

In the UK, perhaps the highest profile institution hosting feminist scholars working on war and militaries is the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). This status was solidified with the 2015 launch of the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security and the announcement in 2019 of the large five-year Gender, Justice and Security Hub, funded by the British Government's Global Challenges Research Fund, and housed at LSE, which brings together multiple research streams and research sites into a large, multi-stranded project. At the time of writing, however, much of this work has been somewhat thrown into uncertainty due to cuts to Britain's Overseas Development Assistance commitment (Kirby 2021), and it remains to be seen whether cuts such as this will weaken the dominance of UK-based scholarship in the post-Brexit world. Outside the LSE, many British institutions seem to house one feminist academic working in this field, and I wonder if it may sometimes be felt that one such scholar is required in order to 'tick the box' for an IR department in terms of teaching needs and research profile, but that (as this presumably remains a 'fringe' focus within IR more broadly) any more might be superfluous to requirements. There is at the time of writing, however, more than one feminist scholar of war and/or militaries to be found at, among others, Cardiff University, Kings College London, the University of Manchester, Newcastle University, the University of Sheffield, SOAS, the University of Sussex, and the University of Warwick. In the Nordic countries, the School of Global Studies at the University of Gothenburg stands out as the institutional home of a large number of scholars interested in gender, war, and the military, who often collaborate together as well as publishing independently. The Swedish Defence University in Stockholm and Lund University also boast several interested scholars. In Norway, Oslo's PRIO is worthy of mention, particularly as the institutional host of the SVAC and GEO-SVAC datasets on sexual violence and armed conflict (see Bahgat et al. 2016; Cohen and Nordås 2013).

Representation across the rest of Europe is significantly more scant, with some scholars scattered across Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany,

Iceland, Portugal, and Serbia, among others, and some countries, including Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Poland, in which I am not aware of any relevant scholars (although my limitation to the English language may play a role in producing my ignorance here). The experiences of the Central European University, which previously housed feminist scholarship on war and militaries in Budapest in its Gender Studies Department before moving most of its operations to Vienna as a result of attacks by the right-wing Hungarian Government, including particular attacks against gender studies as a discipline (Redden 2018), are worthy of note as an example of how hostile political environments can stymie scholarship.

Scholars' geographical locations matter for a number of reasons to do with the politics of knowledge (some of which are discussed above), and they also matter because they can shape the types of research that is possible. While in some locations (e.g. in Hungary) it may be impossible to conduct feminist research in an academic institution at all, practical issues in other locations—such as the priorities and methodological biases of funding bodies, the relative permissiveness of risk assessment regimes, and the possibility of getting research access into military institutions—all shape *what types* of feminist research are possible. This likely plays out in different ways across Europe, but I offer a couple of examples from the UK here because, given that most scholars are located in the UK, this likely has the most significant impact on the field as a whole. The most immediate point here is that the concentration of scholars in the UK leads to an disproportionate focus in the literature on the UK military, but there are also more subtle factors at play. Many UK institutions have cautious travel risk assessment policies that somewhat simplistically (and influenced by a colonial mindset) divide the world into 'low risk' and 'high risk,' or even 'hostile' locations. Anecdotally, this may result in researchers being denied permission to carry out fieldwork in certain locations in a way that would not happen, for example, in Sweden, where universities do not seem to follow restrictive travel risk assessment regimes. Similarly, the quantity of scholarship that does exist on the British military perhaps masks the often difficult processes required to gain approval to conduct research with members of the institution itself, which particularly constrain research that is interpretive, critical, and/or feminist. The power and biases of military gatekeepers in the British context have doubtless prevented and/or reshaped feminist research that would otherwise have been conducted (Basham and Catignani 2021). It is not possible, of course, to conduct a review of literature not published and research

not carried out. However, the point I want to make here is that it is not only intellectual interest that drives how feminist scholars in Europe select the focus of their research, it is also political economic realities and the constraints of requiring various forms of institutional permission. These realities shape the body of feminist literature on war and militarism that is produced across Europe in powerful, if usually unseen, ways.

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