

# BOOK REVIEW

**Philipp Schultz. *Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence: Perspectives from Northern Uganda*.** Oakland: University of California Press, 2021. xi + 195 pp. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$34.50. Paper. ISBN: 9780520303744.

*Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence: Perspectives from Northern Uganda* is a thoughtful exploration of the important and horrible history of the systemic sexual violence carried out by Ugandan male soldiers against men during the military campaigns waged by the Ugandan state against the Lord's Resistance Army in the Acholi region of Northern Uganda in the late 1980s and 1990s. Philipp Schultz presents oral and documentary evidence which confirms that rape of men—locally known as “Tek-gungu” (bending over forcefully)—was a widespread tactic practiced by members of the Ugandan National Resistance Army (24).

Each of the six chapters of this book blends careful considerations of theoretical issues regarding sexual violence with evidence illuminating the specific situation of Northern Uganda during these years. Chapters One and Two supply critical framing for our understanding of sexual violence in conflict zones alongside the particularities of sexual violence as a tactic when wielded against men. Chapters Three and Four zoom in on the situation in Northern Uganda and focus on the experience of male victims of sexual violence there. The last three chapters provide analysis of victim support groups and explore questions raised by efforts to obtain transitional justice. Throughout the work, the author's strong advocacy for survivor-centric approaches to victim support, redress, and rights informs his analysis. Sensitive locating the issue of male rape of men within conflict zones at the intersection of critical theoretical issues involving sexuality, gender, violence, and victimization allows Schultz to explain how sexual violence against men can or should be discussed differently (as well as similarly) to male sexual violence against women. Both involve individual, family, and community stigma and shame, as well as emotional and physical harm. Power relations within patriarchy and cultures of masculinity reveal differences between these histories.

There are interesting nuggets of evidence woven throughout the text. Since colonial cultures produced Acholi men as defined by their relationship

to martial institutions, and Acholi male culture self-represented as martial, male rape of Acholi men by non-Acholi Ugandan soldiers reflected a revenge against and humiliation of the Acholi, targeting this discourse of Acholi hyper-masculinity (52). As another example, Schultz reports that one Acholi male rape victim told his story to the international and Ugandan national English language press but hoped that no one in his home area would or could ever read it (146). Schultz deploys his evidence to support his sound and important theoretical conclusions. He emphasizes fluidity and context in masculinities, experiences and consequences of violence, responses to violence, and transitional justice. He rightly prefers the phrase “displacement of gendered personhood” when analyzing sexual violence against men to the problematic use of the term feminization or emasculation or the absurd term homosexualization.

The author’s theoretical conclusions are often that there are no straightforward conclusions. Schultz is very thoughtful and clear, and I applaud him for this. The text works in many ways as an introduction to masculinity studies, conflict studies, survivor/victim studies, and the study of sexual violence for non-specialists with Northern Uganda as its case study. There are few surprises. The author emphasizes the importance of context, the gendered after-effects of sexual violence, a more subtle understanding of how sex is linked to power and power linked to sex, and how masculinities and gendered and sexual harm are layered, complex, and fluid. These are all important and powerful ideas. But even in an introduction to these fields, there is no need to argue for the value of victim support groups (118), or that there is no universal concept of justice (133), or that victims have agency. Since the discipline of masculinity studies is an outgrowth of and as such has always been a part of feminist studies, I would argue there is no need to bridge these two fields, as the author advocates (28). I wish the text had taken these positions as givens, and moved to more nuanced analysis.

The author emphasizes, for good reason, the need to bring to light histories of conflict zone sexual violence against men—not because such acts are uncommon, but because they often result in different configurations of shames and stigmas emerging from patriarchal ideologies of masculinity. *Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence* contributes to a growing body of literature on male-directed sexual violence globally. Schultz lists other studies of male-directed sexual violence within the context of at least twelve recent global conflicts (37). More histories like Schultz’ are warranted, particularly of male-directed sexual violence in colonial settings, from the World Wars to the Cold War, as well as in independence-era conflicts.

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doi:10.1017/asr.2022.7

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