

**COMMODYING VIOLENCE:  
AN ANALYSIS OF WARTIME RAPE AND PRIVATE  
MILITARY CORPORATIONS IN IRAQ**

**by**  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis theorizes the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism and the gendered trajectories of biopolitics that have occurred alongside the reconfiguration of the state, post-September 11, 2001. To understand these processes, I examine the relationship between wartime rape and the privatization of security in Iraq during the aftermath of the 2003 American-led invasion, through a textual analysis of material and discursive relations of power.

My analysis has shown that the proliferation of private military corporations alters the landscape of warfare and wartime rape in Iraq. As an aspect of the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism, the privatization of violence, which emerged alongside the Revolution in Military Affairs and New Wars, compromises the reporting and discursive representations of wartime rape. As a form of biopolitical intervention, wartime rape serves to render life politically unqualified. The data indicates that, rather than enhance security, the PMC in Iraq has contributed to a militarized culture which promotes rape.

**Keywords:** State; neoliberalism; wartime rape; private military corporation

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*I wholeheartedly dedicate this thesis to my parents and grandparents—  
all of whom are unknowing revolutionaries in their own right.*

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## Glossary

HRW	Human Rights Watch
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PMC	Private Military Corporation
PMF	Private Military Firm
PSC	Private Security Company
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
TNC	Transnational Corporations
WB	World Bank



## Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis is about how to theorize the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism and the shifting gendered trajectories of biopolitics that have occurred alongside the reconfiguration of the state in the post-September 11, 2001 world. To better understand these processes, I examine the relationship between wartime rape and the privatization of security in Iraq during the aftermath of the 2003 American-led invasion, through a textual analysis of material and discursive relations of power. While acknowledging the under-theorized, gendered effects of such privatizations, the central research question is: in what ways are the privatization of security and the subsequent explosion of private military personnel, underpinned by the neoliberal restructuring of the state, influencing both quantitative and qualitative representations of wartime rape in Iraq? Quantitative refers to the number(s) of women who have been raped, whereas qualitative refers to the characteristics pertaining to the way wartime rape in this context is theorized and represented. Following this, how can wartime rape be theorized as a biopolitical issue?

Part of the inspiration for this thesis occurred when I came across one rare story of wartime rape in Iraq. I was reading *City of Widows: An Iraqi Women's Account of War and Resistance* by Hafia Zangana, an Iraqi born and London-based poet and artist. Zangana claims that for many Iraqis, the 2003 invasion was analogous to the 1917 British occupation of Iraq. She writes that the U.S.-U.K. catastrophic adventure has been shrouded by the old colonial phrase "liberators not conquerors," and by the new imperial lie of "establishing democracy." Both require the rewriting of Iraqi modern history

(Zangana, 2007). Similarly, Nadjé Al-Ali and Nicole Pratt argue that currently, “Iraqi women are exposed to discriminatory practices and policies as well as to violence from a range of sources—political parties, militarized groups, and the occupation forces. These sources of abuse and violence are often interlinked” (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009, p. 3). This claim subverts much of the political rhetoric which justified the invasion of Iraq in the first place. Women, both at home and abroad were hailed to support the invasion of Iraq, under the banner of “liberating” Iraqi women.

It has been widely argued that the Bush administration, which had never publically articulated itself as feminist in orientation prior to 9/11, co-opted wholesome sounding liberal feminist rhetoric to justify its imperialist agenda; what Krista Hunt (2006) has termed “embedded feminism.” Hunt defines embedded feminism as “the incorporation of feminist discourse and feminist activists into political projects that claim to serve the interests of women but ultimately subordinate and/or subvert that goal” (Hunt, 2006, p. 53). Feminists are interested in why, in the particular historical juncture of the post-9/11 period, women’s rights discourses were popularized by a neoconservative administration that had otherwise sought to aggressively dismantle the gains that feminists have made in the past 30 years.

Nevertheless, in October 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush launched his so-called War on Terror in reaction to the attacks on the Pentagon in Washington DC and the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, with the use of embedded feminism. Subsequently, this effort to combat an unknowable non-state enemy with no fixed national or territorial allegiance led to the swift, essentially unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2003. The war was justified vis-a-vis the claim that Iraq was harbouring weapons of mass destruction, among other claims which falsely linked Iraq

with 9/11. Unburdened by any information about Iraq's history or the constituents of the country, the invasion was supported by a small coalition of the willing which included Britain. Simultaneously, the American government quietly outsourced many of their operations to private military corporations (PMCs) or private military firms (PMFs) making this war effort the most reliant on private military firms in the history of warfare (Singer, 2004). Although there is a long documented history of the link between war and rape committed by state-soldiers (Cooke & Woollacott, 1993; Elshtain, 1987; Enloe 1993; Stiglmayer, 1994), the relationship between PMCs and wartime rape has been under-theorized.

The raping of women during war is as old as war itself (Elshtain, 1987; Goldstein, 2001) and rapes of women in Iraq have been extensively documented (Human Rights Watch, 2003). For example, Zangana dedicated her book to the memory of Abeer Qasim Hamzza al-Janabi, a 14-year-old girl from the small town of Mahmudiyah, 20 miles south of Baghdad, who on March 12, 2006, was gang-raped and set on fire by U.S. soldiers. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that the soldiers belonged to the 101st Airborne Division, and were stationed at a military checkpoint less than 1,000 feet from Abeer's home. The soldiers, who had a documented history of talking about raping Abeer, were said to have often watched Abeer from afar while she tended to the family's garden; their ceaseless and unwarranted gazes causing discomfort for Abeer and her family. They would remark rather ambiguously to Abeer's mother, while pointing directly at Abeer, "Very good, very good."

The soldiers also murdered Abeer's parents and younger sister. Mohammed, the only surviving member of the family and Abeer's brother, was at school during the attack. In an interview with *TIME Magazine*, he recalls how he once watched his sister,

paralyzed with fear, as a U.S. soldier, now identified as Steven Green, a former army private first class, ran his index finger down her cheek, in a way that clearly signalled fear within both Abeer and her family, as Abeer's parents at the time were making arrangements for their family to stay with another family member due to the unwarranted attention from these soldiers (*TIME*, 2006). Tragically, such incidents served to foreshadow Abeer's untimely death at the hands of American liberators. Of considerable importance is the fact that the offender in this instance is part of the U.S. military, thus his future necessarily entails that he will be exposed to the military rule of law in some way or another. In fact, two of the soldiers involved were sentenced to life imprisonment in February 2007 after admitting taking part in the gang rape (Zangana, 2007).

Of critical importance is the fact that private security and military personnel working within PMCs are not subject to the same structures and legal constraints as members of the American military (Sheehy, Maogoto, & Newell, 2009), and as of July 2007, there were more employees of private firms and their subcontractors on the ground in Iraq than there were U.S. soldiers (Hartung, 2008). Thus, U.S.-paid private contractors serving in Iraq outnumber U.S. troops (Wedel, 2008) which dramatically alters the landscape of contemporary warfare; namely it serves to trouble common assumptions about what actors precisely are waging war and wielding violence in Iraq. For example, in the first Gulf War, only 9,200 contractors supported 540,000 military personnel. In the current war "over sixty firms employ more than 20,000 private personnel carrying out military functions (as opposed to the thousands of additional civilian contractors providing reconstruction or oil services)" (Singer, 2004, p.4).

Indeed, some estimates suggest that there are closer to 50,000 armed security personnel on the ground in Iraq (Sheehy et al., 2009) and there is evidence of these

actors wielding violence indiscriminately (Chatterjee, 2004; Uessler, 2006/2008). These trends towards the outsourcing of war in the areas of information technology, the security of important people and property, interrogation, combat service, military training and strategic advice, logistics and technical support (Alexandra et al., 2008) reflect the shifting modus operandi of the contemporary war machine.

As such, warfare is increasingly conducted by PMCs, and these trends are most evident in Iraq (Wedel, 2008). Yet private military personnel operate within a legal gray-zone where the exact contractual details of their deployment are unknown or concealed altogether, resulting in “legal chaos” (Uessler, 2006/2008, p. 161). Moreover the actions of PMC personnel are not scrutinized in the same legal light as state-soldiers who ultimately answer to “military justice, the Secretary of Defence and the President” (Runzo, 2008, p. 64). Operating under a widespread decentralization of authority and overall lack of accountability and transparency, PMC personnel do not fall under the rules of the Geneva Convention, and in 2004 the Iraqi provisional government made PMC employees exempt from local Iraqi law (Uessler, 2006/2008, p. 169).

The existence of PMC personnel in urban combat zones ultimately blurs the lines between soldier and civilian. Akin to other transnational or multinational corporations, PMCs are often unburdened by the rule of law and democratic controls (Sheehy et al., 2009) and are more concerned with profit-generation rather than facilitating long term peace initiatives; they serve to both produce and offer up solutions to global security threats. This is significant because, if feminists were worried in the past about how to bring state-soldier-rapists to justice (Morris, 1995; Salzman, 1998), the expansive incorporation of PMCs serves to trouble feminist inquiry into sexual violence against women in wartime even more so.

Abeer was found in a corner of the family home, her skull smashed in, and the skirt of her dress flipped up over her head, covering her face, yet revealing her charred legs and torso. Although the details are gruesome, they are all too common in wartime. The point is not to exploit this case in a sensationalist manner, but to highlight the daily reality for Iraqi girls and women who are under American and non-American, government and non-governmental occupation. Thus, Abeer's story is, at one and the same time, both ordinary and extraordinary. Although Abeer's story showcases that wartime rape is occurring in Iraq, this individual account alone does not point to any evidence that wartime rape is an explicit strategy in Iraq, or that it is occurring on a mass-scale as was the case in other conflicts.

The data I analyzed suggests that wartime rape is indeed occurring in Iraq, although exact figures remain unspecified. Notably, other conflicts where wartime rape was significantly documented include: the rape and murder of Chinese women during the Japanese occupation of Nanking, the rape of Vietnamese women by U.S. troops during the Vietnam War, the mass rape and sexual enslavement of Bosnian-Muslim women in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the rape of Eritrean women by Ethiopian soldiers, and rape occurring as state-sponsored violence in during inter-state conflicts in Rwanda, Guatemala and Burma (Farwell, 2004). Although women were raped by private forces in Bosnia and Rwanda, the case of Iraq reveals the presence of a "shadow state" (Reno, 1998) where state officials gain power, not through the establishment of bureaucracy, but through their more or less concealed alliances with informal political networks, local power brokers, warlords, arms traders and multinational firms (Reno, 1998).

In this vein, the increasing trend toward the privatization of security in Iraq is highly complex. The privatization of security and the maintenance of a shadow state

reflect neoliberal ideals because it treats security like a commodity which operates within the confines of business ethics; something to be packaged and sold in the marketplace and consumed as a service in order to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and satisfy the diverse needs of clients. The privatization of security is merely one aspect of state privatization in general (Singer, 2004), which draws on larger trends towards the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism and social relations. This thesis specifically examines the relationship between the privatization of the state and its security apparatuses, and the gendered trajectories and manifestations of the privatized form of state power. I use the term biopower to refer to state power concerning state intervention in the administration of human life.

I argue that wartime rape is an act of bio-politics *and* anatomo-politics (Foucault, 1977), since wartime rape serves to simultaneously discipline and regulate both individual bodies and collectives. Bio-politics refers to a political concern with populations, whereas anatomo-politics targets the individual body. Given that women's claims to citizenship are often legitimized vis-a-vis their bodies (Giles & Hyndman, 2004), their social roles as mothers and wives, as selfless subjects subordinate to the "nation" (Yuval-Davis, 2008) in other words, their ascription to a historically and culturally appropriate gendered code of ethics, it follows that wartime rape, whilst disciplining an individual body, in effect shapes and transforms that body's ties to family, citizenship, and wider political networks. However, this political practice of wartime rape is complicated when theorized alongside the restructuring of neoliberal capitalism.

In this vein, this thesis questions what the future holds for biopolitical endeavours when this reconfigured state itself is not national, but rather, a curious composition of government and private forces, as well as political, ethnic and social factions which are

continuously being reconfigured while the notion sovereignty, as both a concept and a practice, remains in constant flux. For example, what is happening inside Iraq's borders today are attempts at state and nation-building by various actors, yet the borders do not demarcate a national space, rather, they signal what Saskia Sassen (2006) has called *denationalized* space where traditional understandings of sovereignty are troubled; global and local/national political and economic processes merge in accordance with a neoliberal ethos, yet are resisted in various ways.

As such, this thesis hypothesizes that the neoliberal restructuring of the state can help to explain some aforementioned quantitative and qualitative puzzles surrounding wartime rape in Iraq. I argue that the nature of the war in Iraq may also play a role in why wartime rape has not been utilized as an *explicit*, widespread technology of war, as it has been in past wars, most notably in Bosnia. It is the aim of this thesis to effectively demonstrate that wartime rape in Iraq, although sharing some elements of wartime rape in Bosnia, reveals markedly different tactics and rationales on the part of the armed and militarized groups: wartime rape, in other words, may or may not be deemed an effective weapon of war in the context of Iraq, yet I argue it serves as part of the privatized forms of power involved in both a state-building *and* biopolitical intervention.

Following this initial introductory chapter is a chapter devoted to outlining the main theoretical framework employed within the research. Within this theoretical framework section, or Chapter 2, I review the relevant literature that pertains to the neoliberal restructuring of the state. Here I outline my perspective on the state and its role in biopolitical processes. Secondly, I address the historical and current role of PMCs in warfare operations alongside the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Finally, I review the literature which pertains to wartime rape. Following this, a brief statement of my



theoretical considerations is explicated in order to summarize the key concepts utilized throughout the thesis on the relationship between the privatization of state power and wartime rape. In Chapter 3, I discuss my methods and methodological approach. In Chapter 4, I provide an analytical discussion to support the main arguments in light of my data, my theoretical framework and my methodology; In Chapter 5, I offer concluding remarks.

## Chapter 2.

### Neoliberal Governmentality in the Post-Cold War Era

The end of the Cold War in 1989-1991 signifies for many social theorists the symbolic ushering in of a new kind of economic reality. This reality is marked by a heightened sense of uncertainty and economic insecurity (Atasoy, 2009). This insecurity, which can be attributed in part to economic liberalization policies, is reflected by a rapidly growing “planet of slums” (Davis, 2006) exemplified an overwhelming “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2003). According to McMichael (2009), “while states relinquish legibility, paradoxically they continue to anchor juridical and sometimes jurisdictional relations” (McMichael, 2009, p. 23). This contradiction is reflected in what McMichael deems is a threefold crisis: in the state-system itself, the neoliberal project as a whole, and indeed, a fundamentally epistemic one (McMichael, 2009, p. 24).

The neoliberal restructuring of capitalism has a relatively short yet aggressive history. Championed by neoconservative icons such as Reagan and Thatcher, the “Washington Consensus” period, which began in the 1980s, saw the ascendance (and subsequent resistance) of neoliberal ethics on a world stage where the commodification and privatization of public services, in addition to the abolition of capital controls, represent the foundation of what Colin Leys has termed “total capitalism” (Leys, 2008). In other words, total capitalism refers to the universal privileging of the standpoint of free-flowing transnational capital in the form of currencies, or human labour—never

fixed, often feminized, always flexible—and the unquestionable belief in the superiority of the universally applicable and uninhibited market; often unburdened by contradictions in history, gender relations or the complexity and diversity of culture: here, what constitutes as “the social” is ultimately subordinated to finance capital. Moreover, the rise of transnational corporations (TNCs) represents a massive shift in power away from democratically elected governments into profit-driven, mobile regimes aimed at managing the world as a globally integrated economic unit (Clarke, 1996).

But the state in this Washington Consensus period simultaneously operated in ways newly forming European states of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century did: as a machine guided by varying combinations of capitalist and coercive logics of power; adhering to the notion of war making and state making as mutually dependent and reinforcing processes, akin to what Tilly has famously called organized crime (Tilly, 1985). Thus, under this neoliberal paradigm, social relations have been shaped according to historical and economic trajectories bent toward tireless warfare and endless preparation for war. Tilly claims that war facilitates the making of states and that “banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry, policing and war making all belong on the same continuum” (p. 170). Moreover, the state offers up double-edged protection in the form of racketeering, or someone who produces both the danger and, at a price, the shield against it (p. 171).

The central point is this: neoliberal rationality is a function of the relationship between state making and war making as organized crime; additionally, it posits that whatever can be privatized, should be. Goods and services are best if purchased in the free market by consumer-citizens. In general, neoliberalism favours the “freeing of the market,” “market efficiency,” hyper-individualistic competitiveness and “freedom of choice” (Dean, 1999). Neoliberalism represents a style of thought and economic practice

which moves away from the post-World War II state-interventionist approach of Keynesianism. Neoliberalism represents an ideological shift away from Keynesianism with respect to role of the state in determining what issues are to be deemed “public” and “private.”

Neoliberalism falsely imagines the market to be disembedded from society. But, as Polanyi argues, the market has never been, and can never be fully disembedded from social relations. The neoliberal ideal of a fully autonomous, self-regulating market is merely a product of political imagination; a utopian project based on the idea of fictitious commodities (land, labour and money) which is ultimately unsustainable (Polanyi, 1944). This is especially true given the state’s direct and penetrating role in the management of fictitious commodities (Block, 2001). Yet this irony comes as no surprise given that the state can be understood, not as an opaque block, but as a fluid state system:

a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centered in government and more or less extensive, unified and dominant in any given society. There is too, a state-idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in different societies at different times. (Abrams, 1988, p. 58)

In this respect, Foucault is helpful when theorizing the modus operandi of the state.

According to Pringle and Watson:

Foucault shifts the emphasis away from the intentionality of the state to pose questions about its *techniques and apparatuses of regulation*...He aims to show how these mechanisms and technologies get annexed and appropriated to more global forms of domination. But these interconnections are not to be read off from a general theory; in each case they have to be established through analysis. (Pringle & Watson, quoted in Smart, 1995, p. 7, italics added)

Therefore, state reorganization toward neoliberalism inevitably entails a “state-idea” which runs parallel with the (re)construction of individual and collective identity and citizenship. The neoliberal restructuring of capitalism is often achieved ideologically and materially vis-a-vis fictitious commodities and imagined communities (Anderson, 1991) in addition to other techniques and apparatuses of regulation. According to Polanyi, for example, land, rather than being a real commodity is merely subdivided nature, so states play a critical role in constructing land as a real commodity in order to suggest that it is something that had been originally produced to be sold in the marketplace as private property. The neoliberal restructuring of capitalism is achieved in part through territorializing strategies and techniques of remaking state space.

Remaking state space requires that spatial order be generated through a variety of techniques. The spatial order is considered national and thus engages social relations within the boundaries of the state. One way this is accomplished is through *vertical encompassment*: here, states represent themselves as reified entities with certain spatial properties. As a result, states help to “secure their legitimacy, to naturalize their authority, and to represent themselves as superior to, and encompassing of, other institutions and centers of power” (Ferguson & Gupta, 2005, p. 105). The reified state ascends as embodying unquestionable or “naturalized” power through these techniques of neoliberal spatialization. The cultivation of “geographic techniques used by the state is not only to establish territorial sovereignty vis-a-vis other states, but also to construct internal integration among the populations inside its borders” (Radcliffe, 2001, p. 127). The reified state becomes a “national” state through various territorializing and spatialization strategies.

If this point is taken in the context of the Washington Consensus era, the demarcation between and within populations, reinforced by the deeply entrenched yet artificially constructed dichotomy of “us versus them,” ultimately entails processes of economic *othering* between supporters of free-market, neoliberal style capitalism and those deemed less “progressive” or “rational”, often underpinned by gendered and racialized processes of othering. The national era has produced a relationship between the state and citizens within national boundaries, whereas the neoliberal era has witnessed a significant challenge to the notion of the state as a seemingly fixed container. Under the ethos of privatization, neoliberal spatiality necessitates the re-drawing of what constitutes the public and private (Hibou, 2004). As such, privatization(s):

find approval in the prevailing neoliberal discourse, they all make increasing use of private means of governing, they all alter not only the forms of economic regulation but also the forms of political regulation and the forms of sovereignty. In other words, they all displace and redraw the borders between ‘public’ and ‘private’. (Hibou, 2004, p. viii)

Although privatization schemes are not universal in implementation, privatization as a widespread phenomenon is anchored in neoliberalism.

A critical gaze should be launched against the supposed naturalness of nation-states and various neoliberal spatialization techniques utilized in reshaping political spaces as sites of new representations.

[I]nstead of seeing the centrality of particular values, traditions, or practices to any particular culture as given, we need to trace the historical and political processes by which these values, traditions, or practices have come to be deemed central constitutive components of a particular culture. (Narayan, 1998, p. 93)

The tracing of these historical and political processes facilitates a critical analysis of power relations in the neoliberal era. Implicit within this critical gaze is an attempt to “de-naturalize these concepts and ask what is a nation and how is it made, but also, what is a people and how is it made?” (Negri & Hardt, 2000, p. 102). Indeed, “the modern conception of the people is in fact a product of the nation-state, and survives only within its specific ideological context” (p. 102). Accordingly, nation-states developed with an interest precisely in securing territory, acquiring resources to secure war-making technologies, regulating populations and categorizing individuals on the basis of ethnic markers and “nationhood.”

According to Ulrich Beck “the national state is a territorial state: that is, its power is grounded upon attachment to a particular place upon control over membership, current legislation, border defence, and so on” (Beck, 2000, p. 4). State policies like citizenship and border security not only secure the nation state from outside interference, but they also solidify an ideological allegiance or loyalty to the state as seen in supposedly patriotic acts such as dying or killing for one’s hinterland. In other words, “sovereignty” entails the territorialisation of representational and discursive strategies and power struggles. Yet the ascendance of the neoliberal state has witnessed trends toward *denationalization*. In this respect, the “national” is intimately bound up in the “local” and the “global” (Sassen, 2006). These processes are also gendered. Women are often constructed as being the symbolic, cultural and biological reproducers of the nation occupying the home front, while men occupy privileged positions as “citizen-warriors” who supposedly protect women (Yuval-Davis, 1997) through a logic of masculinist protection which suggests that effective masculinities ought to protect submissive, defenceless feminized bodies (Young, 2003).

When states negotiate their relations with mechanisms of capital accumulation, access to war-making technologies, border enforcement and immigration policies, gendered effects are produced. These gendered power relations become embedded in how citizens theorize and construct their political ideas about citizenship in light of their relationship to the market, their imagined affiliation with a nation-state or state making practices, and their status in civil society. Indeed, states respond to the reorganization of political identity from the bottom-up as well. As Antonio Gramsci (1950/1971) argues, the state has a profound role in the regulation of society, the production of culture and ideas, and the construction of citizenship. For example, Gramsci's concept of the ethical state reflects how the state "educates" the consent on behalf of the masses through coercive and disciplinary forces in addition to hegemonic processes. Gramsci states:

every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces of development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. (Gramsci, 1950/1971, p. 258)

Hence the construction of citizenship is very much tied to the capitalist mode of production whereby the creation of loyal subjects is the ultimate goal. In light of the assessment of state making and war making as organized crime, the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism has facilitated the creation of loyal subjects through territorialisation and spatialization strategies bent towards reifying the naturalness of nation-state, reorienting citizenship away from collective ideals through sweeping privatization schemes, and projecting the falsehood that the market is disembedded from society (Polanyi, 1944).



As such, American military dominance in the post-Cold War era was established through subtly coercive and explicitly violent means, such as acquiring the technologies to engage wars in Iraq, and setting up the ideological parameters in order to convince American electorate of the necessity of tirelessly preparing for war. Arrighi (2007) argues that American rule is increasingly akin to sheer “dominance without hegemony” (p. 176), as its credibility has been in steady decline since the 1960s. The decline of American hegemony can be explained, in part, by its increasing dependency on foreign capital to fund its war making capacity, and its role as a global racketeer (Arrighi, 2007).

Economic liberalization policies thus became hegemonic in the Washington Consensus period by re-orienting citizenship away from collective or “public” ideals, towards “private” consumer-based, individualistic notions of being. Yet America’s position in global affairs reflects mere military dominance rather than hegemonic power, and even this military dominance is questionable in light of the widespread outsourcing of military tasks. Neoliberalism presents many contradictions outlined above, and as such, the project itself is in crisis (Atasoy, 2009; McMichael, 2009).

## **Disciplining Citizenship: Bio-political Power**

States often employ biopolitical measures to support the maintenance of hegemonic structures and ideologies. Biopolitical power is vested in the administration and fostering of life; its terrain is intimately biological. Foucault’s (1978) theory of biopolitics was the first to systematically assess the transition from the sovereign rationality of rule to a rationality of rule based on biopower, and has subsequently influenced other contemporary theorists (Agamben, 1998; Dean, 1999). According to Foucault:

the sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as 'the power of life and death' was in reality the right to *take* life or *let* live. Its symbol, after all, was the sword. (Foucault, 1978, p. 136)

Hence sovereign power is invested in the spectacle of death; wars are waged on behalf of the sovereign, in the name of the sovereign. However, biopolitics represents a transformation in state mechanisms of power, away from the spectacle that is the articulation of warfare under sovereign power, toward the notion of war as a vehicle to express collective interests in the realm of the production, regulation and maintenance of life.

Biopolitics works to "incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136). The former right of the individual sovereign has been replaced by the right of the social body to maximize its health. Wars are not fought anymore in defence of the sovereign, but rather they are waged on the behalf and existence of everyone: "entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital" (p. 137). This becomes apparent in the current War on Terror and its affiliated invasion of Iraq, which has been packaged as an ideological war; one against ideas, against an ostensibly homogenous, identifiable group of people who wage war on American ideals.

According to Foucault, since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century power has been situated and exercised at the level of life—the life of the social body. This power over life is expressed in Foucault's axis posits two poles on a spectrum which were linked together by a variety

of relations: “one pole of biopower focuses on an anatomo-politics of the human body, seeking to maximize its forces and integrate it into efficient systems” (p. 139). Moreover, “the second pole is one of regulatory controls, a biopolitics of the population, focusing on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanisms of life: birth, morbidity, morality, longevity” (p. 139). Foucault argues that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the two poles were conjoined within a series of “great technologies of power,” such as sexuality. I attempt to showcase how wartime rape casts feminized bodies across both poles. Individualized acts of rape, in officially designated camps, street-corners, private homes or elsewhere, surely serve to control and generate certain effects in individual women, yet simultaneously, entire populations are regulated; gender relations, sexuality and nationhood are also re-mapped accordingly.

Many theorists have capitalized on Foucault’s initial work. According to Giorgio Agamben (1998), biopolitics has become intensified today. Biopolitics entails the classification of morally and politically qualified life (*bios*), and bare life (*zoe*), taken from Aristotelian classifications which delineated the public sphere as political, and the private sphere as biological. Qualified life can be understood as the end product of the state, *a la* Gramsci (1950/1971), as “raising the masses” to a particular moral and cultural ethos in line with the desires of the dominant productive forces; all life has the potential of being rendered bare life, or the non-citizen subject of politics.

While Agamben’s analysis of bare and unqualified life is appreciated, according to William Connolly (2004), Agamben’s initial premises mistakenly reflect “a classical liberal and Arendtian assumption that there was a time when politics was restricted to public life and biocultural life was kept in the private realm. What a joke” (Connolly, 2004, p. 29). Indeed, the arbitrary separation of the public and private spheres, as if one

sphere is politically qualified or politically oriented and the other apolitical, has been a central theoretical error in the canon of liberal political thought.

Connolly (2004) asserts that Agamben tends to “describe the state as the nation-state” (p. 30) as if the category of the nation state is unproblematic, always-already sovereign, or somehow fixed in time/space dimensions. For Connolly, “once you acknowledge that an ethos is internal as well as external to sovereignty you appreciate that territorial sovereignty has always operated within a global as well as an internal context” (p. 34). Connolly is more sympathetic to Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s concept of *Empire*.

Empire is a worldwide assemblage, an assemblage in which some states have much more priority than others, but one marked above all by the *migration of sovereignty* toward global structures that exceed the power and control of one single state. (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 36, italics added)

Indeed this aforementioned reliance on an *a-priori* nation-state proves troubling for some key elements of biopolitical theories, especially in light of trends towards *denationalization* (Sassen, 2006).

Yet for Agamben, it is the camp, be it a war, refugee, or any other state sanctioned space for processing bodies which represents the space where politics becomes biopolitics and bare life, not the citizen, becomes the subject of politics. As illustrated by Isin and Rygiel (2007), representing the *nomos* of the modern, the camp is a zone of indistinction where juridico-political logic is suspended and replaced by an alternative logic, or what Agamben deems the state of exception. Within the camp it is impossible to distinguish between fact and the rule of law and this is reflected in the camp’s property of immanence whereby the camp as a state of exception becomes the

rule but, as exception, remains nonetheless outside the normal order (Isin & Rygiel, 2007, p. 183). Isin and Rygiel have built upon Agamben's analysis of the camp as a demarcated space invoking unique juridical procedures and deployments of power over bare, politically incapable or unqualified life. Arguing that Agamben's conception of the camp is paramount in theorizing the relations between qualified and unqualified life, they claim that it is both essentialist and ahistorical. They suggest that "frontiers" and "zones" function as spaces where subjects are "processed" as inexistent beings—non-citizens in waiting:

If the camp was a *space of abjection* where people were reduced to bare life, the zones, frontiers, and camps of our times are *abject spaces*, spaces in which the intention is to treat people neither as subjects (of discipline) or objects (of elimination) but as those without presence, without existence, as inexistent beings, not because they don't exist, but because their existence is rendered invisible and inaudible through abject spaces. (Isin & Rygiel, 2007, p. 184)

But what can be said about the biopolitical landscape found within rape camps?

Explicitly demarcated rape camps were a feature of the Bosnian war (Salzman, 1998; Stiglmayer, 1994). Within these camps or other *spaces of abjection*, how is bare life imagined, produced, and processed through rape?

I speculate that while raped women who are left to live are technically living—they have a pulse of course—their existence is absolutely troubled: having been rendered bare life, within political-juridical space such as rape camps or elsewhere, they are in fact neither really alive nor dead; they straddle two modes of life, and thus exist in a kind of purgatory. Here I equate this purgatory with what Žižek (2004) has deemed a "zone of indistinction" whereby their status as a human being, and therefore citizen, is questionable at best. For many women it is considered better to be dead than to be

stuck in such a purgatory. Indeed, this is why “honour killings” take place—to reinstate the honour within a family that has been taken through the act of rape. Women who survive rape are thus killed to purify their family lineage and protect their honour. Here, rape exemplifies biopolitical power as it simultaneously disciplines both individuals and collectives, producing certain gendered effects which ultimately reshape gender relations more broadly.

Biopolitical endeavours are indeed carried out within camps and other sites where bodies are processed and disciplined. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (2006) claim that we can use the term biopolitics to “embrace all the specific strategies and contestations over problematizations of collective human vitality, morbidity and mortality; over the forms of knowledge, regimes of authority and practices of intervention that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious” (Rabinow & Rose, 2006, p. 197). Moreover, Foucault’s general theory of power, as outlined by Jenny Edkins and Veronique Pin-Fat (2004), serves to aid in the theorization of contemporary biopolitics. Power is productive, not repressive.

Power is not to be seen as something that [necessarily] ‘subdues or crushes individuals.’ On the contrary, it is one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. (Pin-Fat, 2004, p. 5)

Finally, where there is power, there is resistance. So, Foucault’s theories allow for both positive and negative connotations and interpretations of power, resistance, and struggle. Positive forms of power means that biopolitics is often expressed in terms of bettering human lives. However, the same argument used to ensuring the well-being of society can also be used to justify mass killings in the name of protecting society (Hunt &

Rygiel, 2006). Foucault's concepts of bio and anatomo politics aid in fleshing out wartime rape as a mechanism of regulating women and as a result, gender relations, through the simultaneous disciplining of both an individual body (anatomo-politics) and an entire population or species body (bio-politics).

Furthermore, the history of liberalism, as an art of government, "shows how a range of illiberal techniques can be applied to those individuals who are deemed capable of improvement and of attaining self-government (Dean, 1999, p. 51)." *Illiberal* techniques of rule are exposed and realized when liberalism is analyzed in relation to both biopolitics and sovereignty. Indeed, according to Julian Reid (2006), in this current War on Terror climate and the subsequent invasion of Iraq, "liberal societies find themselves entering a new stage of development requiring their permanent mobilization against an enemy said to move in unforeseeable ways, which strikes at unforeseeable times, festering in the hidden recesses of their own defence infrastructures" (Reid, 2006, p. 3). According to Agamben, this preoccupation with security as the central task of the state and its source of legitimacy runs the risk of turning itself terroristic (cited in Masters, 2005).

However, this new enemy that security-obsessed strategies seek to combat is not represented by one sect, linked necessarily to one fixed, contained nation-state. Neoliberal ethics and American racketeering under the banner of war making and state making as organized crime (Tilly, 1985), have thus produced a self-fulfilling prophecy. The argument is for the mobilization against an unknowable enemy, yet since neoliberalism also requires the downsizing of governmental functions, privatization arguably exists to "fill the gap." Thus, private military and security companies emerged in order to provide solutions to regimes caught up in the various contradictions and

struggles inherent within the neoliberal project, ultimately aiding in the re-spatialization and re-territorialisation of the state.

## **Privatization and the Revolution in Military Affairs**

This War on Terror climate reflects Dean's (1999) assessment of the history of liberalism, namely that as an art of government, a range of illiberal techniques have been applied to various populations in the name of liberalism. Thus neoliberalism is described by Stephen Gill (2005), with reference to K. Galbraith, as the "perfect crime," "since in these official discourses there appear to be neither perpetrators nor any direct victims" (Gill, 2005, p. 25). There are no perpetrators because no one institution, including the state, can be held accountable due to ceaseless privatization. There are no direct victims because liberalism entails that citizen-consumer-individuals are *responsible* for their own fate. Additionally, according to Varda Burstyn (2005), the resurrection of Big Brother, a la *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, has relocated to the U.S. in the aftermath of 9/11 and has manifested quite explicitly in undemocratic ways.

As such, "the Patriot Act and the Department of Homeland Security have created a vast range of laws and actions that increasingly subvert the democracy that the Bush administration pretends to defend" (Burstyn, 2005, p. 6). For example, the CEO COM LINK hotline set up between capitalist elites and Homeland Security allows for the possibility, if not the likelihood that "in an emergency it would be the White House and the unelected CEOs of the top corporations that would make all the key policy decisions, displacing and usurping the houses of Congress, state governors, and other governmental structures" (Burstyn, 2005, p. 8). This is justified because more than 85% of American infrastructure is privatized, hence eroding any state-centred accountability.



Moreover, the military-industrial complex that accompanies this ever increasing trend to privatization and intensification of biopolitics, is an example of what Burstyn terms “double-think ideas,” namely slogans such as “war is peace.” They are slogans and ideas which are completely paradoxical and yet are used to justify global, imperialist projects. Here, as Foucault claims, “massacres become vital” (Foucault, 1978, p. 137). This entails a ruthless deployment of biopolitics, often witnessed in camps and other abject spaces. Hence the recent invasion of Iraq entails a civilizing component to the mission; namely, it was professed by the architects of the invasion that Iraq will be “liberated” and thus, granted the gift of liberal democracy. However, the Bush Administration sought to export something (democracy) that did not exist inside its own state lines (Gill, 2005).

For example, inside the U.S., the de facto criminalization of dissent, hence the direct and undisguised erosion of democracy, has been enormously ramped up (Gill, 2005) redefining the meaning and legitimacy of state-centred violence, as well as the reconstitution of citizenship rights, such as the right to peaceful protest. As Gill argues, U.S. supremacy is “intended to connote a form of rule based on economic coercion and the use—potential or actual—of organized violence as a means of intimidating and fragmenting opposition” (p. 23). Violence is increasingly becoming privatized, as seen in the case of Iraq where warfare is conducted on behalf of corporate elites and private security firms, rather than elected, accountable politicians and state-soldiers. However, U.S. strategy mainly involves the “globalization of Anglo-American constitutional principles and neoliberal mechanisms of accumulation and economic discipline” (Gill, 2005, p. 24), in addition to their claim to the power to “decree national and international rules, laws, and norms, whilst reserving ‘exceptional powers’ for themselves” (p. 24).

The assumption, as Gill states, is that the U.S., from both moral and economic standpoints, has the right to act as a Global State.

This Global State mentality is manifested in Gill's (2005) notion of "full spectrum dominance," which is the surveillance and dominance of land, air, sea and space, and serves as the counterpart to the Bush Administration's concept of the new wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Full spectrum dominance entails the militarization of space, information warfare and control over communication nodes and networks. U.S. imperialism is expressed by the expanding empire of military bases, uniformed military personnel and informants that have been dispersed globally with the aim of policing world order in favour of American economic and cultural interests. Put briefly, this dominance entails "all elements of national power: economic, diplomatic, financial, law enforcement, intelligence, and both overt and covert military operations" (Gill, 2005, p. 35).

This totalizing perspective includes the need for not only sovereign power to override the existing rules of war, e.g. pre-emptive strikes against actual or potential enemies but also policing what the Bush II Administration came to call "the arc of instability". (p. 35)

The surveillance and dominance over this arc of instability requires the increasing militarization of biopolitics (Rygiel, 2006). Following Cynthia Enloe's (2000) idea of how militarization creeps into ordinary daily routines, Rygiel asserts that "biopolitics become militarized, then, when the politics of ensuring the life and health of society occur by targeting enemies and relying on technologies of surveillance and control and practices of detention and arrests" (Rygiel, 2006, p. 163). This idea similarly reflects Sassen's (1999) analysis of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century preoccupations with populations, their mobility, ethno-markers and rooting sovereignty within well defined territories. Through an analysis of biometric technology that has emerged in the post-9/11 era,

Rygiel claims that “disguising itself as bureaucratic and technocratic, biometric technology camouflages a militarized form of biopolitics of regulating populations through risk profiling and *exercising control over the body*” (p. 163, italics added). Wartime rape is of course, one of many mechanisms of exercising control over the body. Rygiel urges that feminists must aim to deconstruct central war stories that have infiltrated collective consciousness, and have served to naturalize the militarization of biopolitical processes.

From a critical perspective, this is precisely what the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) otherwise known among defence intellectuals as “the transformation” (Parenti, 2007) is all about; the naturalization and silencing of certain gendered, militarized biopolitical processes that occur alongside the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism in the aftermath of post-Cold War geopolitical transformations, and more recently exemplified by the first and second Gulf Wars. Not surprisingly, the RMA borrows ideological language by making constant reference to “trade liberalization” “economic reform” and “free markets”—classic hallmark euphemisms of neoliberal-style capitalist accumulation, ultimately resulting in or having been influenced by sweeping privatization.

Championed by many of the architects of the war in Iraq, especially Donald Rumsfeld, the RMA seeks to replace military labour—that is, soldiers, and of course the now politically problematic American casualties—with technology, capital, or “dead labour” (Parenti, 2007, p. 88). This trend towards the use of dead labour or supposed “body-less” warfare allows for the fulfillment of the aforementioned self-fulfilling prophecy whereby neoliberal political elites simultaneously create and solve global problems vis-a-vis military operations. Herein lies the perfect segue for PMCs as an unstoppable force into the war theatre.

## **The Emergence of PMCs and 'New Wars'**

The end of the Cold War represents the moment when the supposed naturalness of neoliberal ethics was being questioned and American military power was beginning to reflect “dominance without hegemony” (Arrighi, 2007); yet Keynesianism and welfare-state policies represented a distant political memory. Exemplified by the ideological foundation of the Washington Consensus, the private military industry has emerged in the past 20 years as a systematic response to the transformations in the nature of warfare. This has been described above as the RMA and an American “Global State” (Gill, 2005) mentality, exemplified by the Bush administration’s desire for full-spectrum dominance over the arc of instability. For example, instead of boots on the ground, military operations are now conducted by technicians who sit in air-conditioned tents and are operated by a group of cumbersome high-tech army of soft American kids (Parenti, 2007). Governed by two key phrases, “information warfare” and “command and control warfare,” contemporary killing is intimately reliant upon a base of technologically savvy, highly educated and trained personnel, invoking a kind of elite transnational business masculinity (Connell, 2001) that is lacking in state militaries and is thus available for hire via private firms.

Notably, these business elites are not necessarily trained to execute physical force: “neoliberalism in the metropole does not indulge in the warrior cults, the enthusiasm for ‘blood and iron,’ that earlier masculinities did” (Connell, 2001, p. 221). Connell argues that neoliberal leadership values a mediated, technological violence as a means towards its ends. High-tech weapons systems are operated and maintained by private employees since training public soldiers is too time-consuming and costly in an era where solutions to complex problems are required instantly and yet are always

changing. “The result is a steep rise in the number of private sector employees- technicians, programmers, systems analysts, and simulation specialists- on the virtual ‘battlefield’” (Uessler, 2006/2008, p. 123). Thus:

the thousands of ‘civilians’ workings at operation headquarters to make “digitalized warfare” a reality are de facto soldiers. International law may still consider them non-combatants and civilians. But the enemy sees them for what they are—parts of the war machine. (Uessler, 2006/2008, p. 23)

These changes in warfare and the transition from what has been termed military masculinity (Morris, 1995) to a now transnational-business masculinity (Connell, 2000) have emerged alongside the normative rise of privatization which provided the logic, legitimacy and models for the entrance of the markets into formerly state domains. Many of these first targets of privatization in the 1990s were defence manufacturing industries (Singer, 2004, 2005). Notably, privatized violence has existed for centuries: “our general assumption of warfare is that it is engaged by public militaries, fighting for the common cause. This is an idealization. Throughout history the participants in war were often for-profit private entities loyal to no one government” (Singer, 2005, p. 19).

Indeed, the historical ebb and flow of the commercialization and bureaucratisation of violence can be traced back to the emergence of the European state: having once been a significant tool of monarchs attempting to seize and secure private property or territory, the use of privateers diminished after the French Revolution when “wars became wars between nations, fought by citizens of those nations, as opposed to between monarchs with private armies” (Kinsey, 2006, p. 43). Suddenly, the story of the state placed the populace at its centre; “the people” were now ideologically

suited and prepared to initiate and administer warfare themselves, on behalf of one another and against threatening outsiders.

What is of significant importance, therefore, is not the a priori presence of private forces, but the ideological underpinnings and qualitative, gendered effects of such privatizations in their contemporary form. Notably, is that it has been the Iraq War that has witnessed the most explosive intervention of PMCs and the general outsourcing of warfare *ever* (Alexandra et al., 2008; Sheehy et al., 2009; Singer, 2004). This is because, following the Cold War and the end of apartheid in South Africa, a geopolitical vacuum replaced the militaristic bipolar international scene, creating an atmosphere for many militaries in the West to downsize their large standing armies, prompted by the neoliberal economic rationale that privatization would enhance efficiency and reduce costs (Sheehy et al., 2009). The supposed peace dividend that was thought to result never truly manifested; rather, arms expenditures continued to increase during this time as did the proliferation of “new wars.”

Nevertheless, while armies in North America and Europe were being downsized and stretched thin, massive amounts of unregulated weapons left over from the Cold War days flooded into black markets and other illegal domains and shadow markets and into the hands of private, non-state actors. Meanwhile, military spending continued to increase and the gap between the global rich and poor continued to widen, providing an economic impetus for some to wage war at the local level, in some cases against the imperialist economic programs of the global financial regulatory regimes such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) (Sheehy et al., 2009). In the 1990s, 10 million soldiers worldwide were discharged from national armies, and these former soldiers were left dislocated and jobless. Since their only marketable skills

pertained to military operations, many capitalized on opportunities provided by the booming private military company industry and the resurgence of insecure times, characterized by tensions throughout parts of Africa, state collapse as seen in the breakup of the Soviet bloc, and the subsequent re-emergence of long-suppressed ethnic and regional anxieties. These so-called new wars, often involving non-state actors, and often merging and conflating the discourses of development and security, require flexible and rapid responses which traditional armies find difficult, if not entirely impossible to provide (Alexandra et al., 2008).

While the impetus behind new wars can be underpinned by economic motivations or identity politics, what they have in common is that they tend to blur the distinctions between civilian and combatant and war and peace, in addition to their reliance on the global economy for finance (Kinsey, 2006, p. 119). Of critical importance is that new wars are not fought on battlefields between opposing armies wearing uniforms. Instead, the battlefield is everywhere: cities, towns, and countryside (p. 52). Nevertheless, the post-Cold War geopolitical scene entailed key elements to conjure up the perfect storm for the ensuing rise of the PMC as a mediator in new wars: a wave of jobless “experts” able to offer services that complimented the growing insecurity brought on by the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism and the resulting global instability and insecurity. In this post-Cold War neoliberal context, PMCs represent the corporate evolution of the age-old practice of mercenaries (Singer, 2004) and as such, they promote the neoliberal mentality at its finest and in its most fundamental form.

But what to label these corporations and how to categorize them legally represents a slippery and controversial debate in the literature. The term “mercenary” conjures up morally pejorative feelings and images of loose cannons with guns looting,

pillaging and plundering in war zones for economic incentive only, having been described as the “whores of war” (Baker, 2008; Steinhoff, 2008). Although legal definitions of mercenaries exist, it is often quoted in the literature that if one is convicted of being a mercenary, the person in question should fire their lawyer immediately. This is because the international legal definition is incredibly vague. Conversely, the terms PMC and Private Military Firm (PMF) often connote a more ethical, perhaps more respectable, professional and modern ethos; a corporate service specializing in everything and anything from combat service, military training and strategic advice; logistics and technical support (Alexandra, 2008, p. 91). As David Isenberg succinctly states, “in Iraq, PMCs can be divided into two types: those with guns and those without” (Isenberg, 2006, p. 155). PMC spokespeople are also quick to claim that their employees are something different than mercenaries, perhaps respectable and legitimate.

Depending on how sympathetic a commentator is to the use of PMCs will often determine whether or not they prefer the term mercenary over something else. The use of the term Private Security Company (PSC) is also used to deflect attention away from images of combat or killing and to conjure up the idea that these companies simply “protect nouns”, that is, persons, places and things. Some scholars suggest that the employment of PMCs can be beneficial in that they simply provide services that state militaries, coalition forces and U.N. forces simply cannot efficiently and cost-effectively provide, such as humanitarian intervention, although this could equally be related to a general lack of political will. The critical point is the shift in ideology: first, PMCs are now a permanent fixture in the global security industry, having to fill the gap that new wars create. Secondly, services which were once thought of as within the inherent realm of governmental duties have now been re-conceptualized and subsequently outsourced



and treated as commodities to be bought and sold in the market place, equating to what Freeman & Minow (2009) term “government by contract” reflected by a deeply entrenched outsourcing regime.

The implications are serious for both theory and practice. Kinsey suggests that if these corporations adhere to the logic of free-market capitalism and to that of corporate social responsibility (CSR), “enlightened customers” will be more likely to engage with socially responsible companies since their profits will increase (Kinsey, 2008) even though buying into this neoliberal citizen-as-consumer ethos fails to account for the fact that companies that do not like certain “socially responsible” legislation can simply relocate to another state if they feel burdened by such pressures (Isenberg, 2006). Regardless, PMCs often operate in failed states or conflict zones where the law enforcement, legal and judicial systems of the host state is essentially non-functioning (Caparini, 2008) thus lending to the conclusion that the use of PMCs does not necessarily equate to better protection. “Indeed, the need for such protection can become self-fulfilling mainly because of the blurring of military and civilian boundaries, which, from a local community’s viewpoint, makes the military effort and reconstruction/aid activities difficult to differentiate” (Bjork & Jones, 2005, p. 791).

The privatization of security from above as exemplified by the outsourcing of military operations are reflected by a broader, ideological push towards privatization, with many of the state’s former institutions such as schools, prisons and policing, being turned over to the marketplace (Singer, 2004).

Initially, these ideas were associated with the powerful Conservative coalitions in the United States and Britain in the 1980’s, but the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the ensuing privatization of state-owned industries across Europe, and the endorsements of these principles by institutions

like the IMF and WB rendered the endorsement of privatization on a wider scale. (Avant, 2007, p. 183)

Thus, in line with the neoliberal rationale which privileges the unfettered standpoint of the market and compulsory association to it, security, rather than being a state's sovereign responsibility as it arguably once was, has now in some countries been transformed into a commodity and packaged as a private service, delivered by private enterprises, to be consumed by private individuals, state and non-state actors (Atasoy 2009; Clapham 1996; Ferguson & Gupta 2002; Hibou, 2004). Therefore violence has now been re-articulated as a private commodity rather than a public good (Avant, 2005). But the age-old prevailing assumption is that it is the state that holds the legitimate monopoly on violence.

Classical Weberian definitions of the state reflect this point: "a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory" (Weber, 1958, p. 78). Therefore, a Weberian understanding of the state reflects an inadequate conception of how violence is articulated, manifested and represented in contemporary warfare. More importantly, this perspective fails to capture the diversity of public and private actors, citizens and non-citizens, who engage in decentred state violence for a variety of political and socioeconomic gains.

In this vein, the current massive deployment of PMCs serves to confuse who can legitimately inflict violence, thus de-centring state power. Top-down privatization, or the outsourcing of military tasks to private firms, in addition to the bottom-up activities of armed non-state actors such as rebel opposition and paramilitary groups, guerrilla fighters, insurgents, mafia-style roaming street gangs, warlord factions and individual criminals, all serve to trouble not only the theorization and implementation of

international law, security and governance, but the theoretical underpinnings of sovereignty, especially when sovereignty is defined by the state's ability to inflict and monopolize the legitimate use of violence over a predetermined territory.

This challenge is reflected in what Rosenberg has deemed the paradox of sovereignty: it is at one and the same time both the fundamental conceptual building block of international relations theory, yet rife with ambiguity and contradiction in both its theoretical properties and practical manifestations. Hence, "a first step might be to cease thinking about sovereignty as a self-evident starting point—which is what we do if we accept its own legal or political self-definition" (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 127). Rosenberg argues that sovereignty should be thought of as a form of political rule historically specific to the distinctive configuration of social relations which define capitalism as a kind of society (p. 127).

As the traditional story of the state claims, states and sovereignty territorialize political identity through various national and spatial techniques. The state's authoritative presence, marked in part by its monopoly over the legitimate means of violence, is taken for granted and universalized. While territorializing political identity, the state also manages to manufacture consent for organized violence in the form of military intervention through what Tilly (1985) has deemed "organized crime." Wartime rape although not an inherent or symmetrical feature of war, occurs within this paradigm, yet the explosion of PMCs on the "battlefield" serves to confuse traditional understandings of "the military" and thus disrupts the way wartime rape is theorized alongside the RMA and new wars.

## Wartime Rape through the Case of Bosnia

There has been extensive scholarship devoted to rape in general (Brownmiller, 1993; Griffin, 1979; MacKinnon, 1994; Warshaw, 1988), in addition to the ways men and women experience war and gendered wartime dichotomies more specifically (Cooke & Woollacott, 1993; Elshtain, 1987; Enloe, 1993). Moreover, the function of strategically implemented rape during war, for a variety of purposes including cultural genocide through enforced pregnancy, has been documented most notably since the Bosnian War (Salzman, 1998; Seifert, 1994; Stiglmeier, 1994; Zalewski, 1995). Related to this literature is a diversity of feminist critiques launched against international relations theories—particularly classical and contemporary realist and liberal theories which view gender issues as intensely subsidiary and synonymous with women. These critiques focus on the nature of state relations as articulated by men and challenged by women (Tickner, 1992), gendered roles in peacetime/wartime (Elshtain, 1995) and the relationship between gender and nationhood (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

With respect to wartime rape, some scholars have sought to understand the individual, gendered motivations behind rape. Lisa Price (2001) attempts to understand the “soldier-rapist” or the perpetrators of rape by classifying them not as madmen or devils, but as ordinary men acting out of comprehensible motives. As violence serves fundamentally to differentiate between an active masculinity and submissive femininity, the rapist invokes this tendency by turning his victim “into a whore” in order to separate himself from her and confirm ideas about her that he already believes. Rape techniques and rape narratives are laden with misogynistic elements of shame, hatred and disgust for the woman, as well as the eroticization of weaponry, dominance and subordination. Price’s discussion of gang rape as being a vehicle for male bonding aids in

understanding the ritualistic, performative nature of wartime rape. In this way, rape is a structured, organized and symbolic fraternity against and differentiated from anything female, including homosexual or effeminate men. National identity, patriotic sentiment and ethnic superiority are not innate; rather they are achieved through collective consciousness raising or through collective action as demonstrated by gang rape.

Rape is not about sex, but rather power and territorial conquest. Women's bodies are viewed as fertile soil, perhaps no different from farm fields. There are perceived conceptual similarities between conquering women's bodies and conquering land. Price also argues that militarized situations not only allow men to rape but in fact compel them to. This is exemplified by their fierce loyalty to heterosexual norms, whereby men who refuse to rape are labelled, ostracized and rejected by their comrades. Some men have resisted, however, and perhaps they hold the key to informing how hegemonic masculinity operates structurally. Price's concern with the perpetrator, as opposed to the victim, changes the direction of the conversation in that men and militarized masculinity become the focus rather than victimized women. Yet there has not been a systematic attempt to uncover the way masculinity, militarized or otherwise, manifests within PMCs.

When identifying particular causes of rape within this militaristic culture, ideas about masculinity and femininity, sexual and sex-role stereotypes appear to encourage or promote the naturalness of rape (Morris, 1995). Moreover, rape myths, general hostility toward women, and masculine norms further support the naturalness of rape. Morris notes that there is anecdotal evidence of failure to enforce military rape laws. This is a crucial point which should be further elaborated on, although Morris admits that there is limited available data on this issue, given that "the majority of staff level advisors interviewed perceive that most female victims would not report a rape" (Morris, 1995, p.

171). If military legal systems do not enforce anti-rape laws then attitudinal changes are ineffective. Morris effectively highlights contributing factors within military cultures that promote sexual violence against women. The functioning of widespread wartime rape, however, varies according to context, and the presence of private military and security personnel within combat zones further complicates the function of rape.

While exploring the practicality of rape, many authors attempt to assess the varying theories that postulate why men rape. Most feminists agree that rape is absolutely not about sex, as rape victims themselves experience the act not primarily as a sexual one, but as an extreme and humiliating form of violence. Often, the aim of wartime rape is to destroy the opponent's culture (Seifert, 1994). Similar to Lisa Price's (2001) and Yuval-Davis' (1997) understanding, women are of special importance because of how the female body functions as a symbolic representation of the body politic, and ultimately the rape of women implies the rape of a nation and vice-versa. Speaking of the logic of silence, Seifert states that history itself is silent on the issue, primarily because it is men doing both the raping and the writing of history. Consequently mass rape is often erased from cultural memory. Although many authors theorize the rationale(s) of wartime rape, it has been widely argued that the primary goal of wartime rape is to inflict genocide through ethnic cleansing.

For example, Silva Meznaric (1994) explains how the emphasis on gender differences became a tool to sharpen the differences between competing ethnic groups in Kosovo. Fear tactics, media propaganda campaigns and other socializing institutions were plagued with racist and sexist undertones that served to heighten military and political conflicts, while legitimating violence in an effort to create a Greater Serbia. Meznaric notes that the differences that are usually encapsulated by traditional ethno-

markers such as language, dress, lifestyle and housing were becoming increasingly blurred by modernization, and thus, it became harder to differentiate between rival ethnic groups. Hence, rape and other forms of sexual abuse were initiated in order to cultivate new, more obviously identifiable differences amongst people which may have not been conceived of prior. Therefore according to Meznaric, rape, or at least the legitimate fear of rape, provides the landscape for men to communicate with one another, to battle with one another, and for military goals to be realized. Gender as an ethno-marker is used to exacerbate difference. She quotes one feminist who states, "in Serbia, rape acquired race, nationality and history" (quoted in Meznaric, 1994, p. 87). Therefore, rape does not exist in a social vacuum.

Similarly, Todd Salzman (1998) constructs a thorough investigation into the theoretical explanations and ideological justifications for rape camps. He argues that the rapes in Bosnia brought genocide to an unprecedented level because of its gendered bias, and the systematic and politically conscious implementation of rape camps, forced pregnancy, and the denial of abortion rights. As the Serbian government became concerned with declining birth rates amongst the Serbian population, especially in light of increasing birth rates amongst Muslims and Albanians, Serbian women were targeted as objects of moral and political reform. In 1994 the Serbian Orthodox Church claimed that women who chose not to give birth were engaging in threefold sin: against themselves, the survival of the Serbian nation, and god; thus forcing women into confined, reproductive roles (Salzman, 1998).

Despite media images which showcased what appeared to be Muslim men raping Serbian women, in reality the perpetrators were primarily Serbian and the victims, Muslim women. Patterns of sexual violence indicate the various ways that women

become vulnerable to sexual assault during war: essentially all women were kept in a constant state of panic over their security and their bodies. Drawing on Beverly Allen (1996), Salzman questions the irony of forced impregnation as a genocidal tool. He asks, "Is not the propagation of the species the antithesis of genocide?" (p. 361). Indeed, One would typically think that since both mother and father contribute equally to the genetic makeup of the child, and that the child would not automatically take on one culture over another.

But Salzman notes that this logic simply did not prevail in the context of cultural genocide through rape in Bosnia. Rather, certain patriarchal ideological myths about masculinity and femininity, which are sustained by both men and women, justify the belief that enforced pregnancy is a culturally genocidal tool, since it is believed that the man's genetic influence is more culturally significant than the woman's. Through enforced pregnancy the woman's cultural lineage is eliminated and the child takes on the culture of the father. In fact, this example is not ironic because of the very fact that it is legitimated, naturalized and ingrained in patriarchal, collective consciousness, to the degree that the alternative (maternal kinship) seems unfathomable. Accordingly, the cultural heritage of the rapist is reproduced, while the victim's is erased altogether in the act of enforced pregnancy.

One reason why rape is so "effective" as a military strategy is because of how symbolically and literally powerful the act of rape is—and how damaging it is to women's relationships with their husbands, families, churches, identities, homelands and of course, sexualities. Furthermore, Salzman claims that humanitarian law is ill-equipped to prosecute offenders. He pushes this idea further by suggesting that incidents of rape are simply not taken seriously by the international community. This echoes Zalewski's



(1998) point about how atrocities committed against women often go unnoticed or under-examined by dominant social and political elites. Certainly current literature on international and humanitarian law is also ill-equipped to respond to the increasing role of PMCs in war zones, and the criminal activity to which they may be a part of.

Similarly, Diken and Laustsen (2005) argue that wartime rape encompasses a complex range of topics usually ignored in the literature on warfare: the body, gender, religion and the psyche. The authors investigate how gender differences and religious commitments can be used in wartime rape as an instrument of traumatizing not just the women in question but also their families and, ultimately, the community in which they live. The authors assert that rape cannot be understood as just a deplorable side-effect of war provoked by soldiers' sexual frustration. Rape is a weapon of war. They assert that most studies of wartime rape focus either on the woman as victim or on the soldier as aggressor. Indeed, the role of PMCs, the RMA and new wars serve to complicate this dichotomy. The case of Bosnia presents a significantly more complex picture where rape is used as a mechanism to do more than just traumatize the woman, but to insult the community, the male members of that community, and ultimately the "nation." Ethnic cleansing was a central goal in the Bosnian case as outlined by both Meznaric and Salzman.

Diken and Laustsen make use of the literature on abjection to investigate the trauma of rape. They argue that the rape victim often perceives herself as an abject, as a "dirty," morally inferior person. The penetration inflicts on her body and herself a mark, a stigma, which cannot be effaced. But abjection has a communal aspect as well: the victim is excluded by neighbours and by family members. Hence the rape victim suffers twice: first by the physical violation itself, and second by the condemnation of a

patriarchal community. Strategic rape attacks not only the victim but also aims to dissolve the social structure of the attacked group. Rape destroys communities by transforming women into objects, or an object which provokes disgust.

Although wartime rape is indeed traumatic for women, and indeed the aforementioned arguments are often warranted, Diken and Laustsen provide a sweeping generalization about how women experience rape that is in fact more harmful than anything else. The authors offer up a constraining idea of womanhood—namely that raped women always-already enter into a permanent state of victimhood. There is a danger in promoting victimization as the end-all-be-all experience of rape survivors. Not all experiences of rape can and should be categorized like this, and an identity that is exclusively anchored in the concept of *the victim* may in fact breed a sense of powerlessness. This idea of inherent powerlessness in the aftermath of rape is also articulated by Brownmiller (1993) when she states of rape survivors “they are the victims of rape in war...the women are left with shame” (p. 45). Such an essentialist, homogenizing tactic is detrimental to all people who have been subjected to rape.

In light of this, the problem with conventional North American and European interpretations of rape put forth by authors such as Brownmiller (1993) becomes apparent: it is their universal assertion that rape victims are always-already passive, objectified and exploited females and their rapists are dangerous, inherently hypersexualized males, when in fact everyone, regardless of sex, has the potential to be raped, and thus humiliated, and thus “feminized” in the process. According to Euan Hague, these conventional feminist approaches are outdated. He cites Hall (1983) who specifically targets Brownmiller, challenging the “ahistory of her model—her view of rape as a timeless paradigm, unmodified by social circumstances, of male violence against

women” (Hall, quoted in Hague, 1997, p. 55). A similar critique of Brownmiller comes from Bonnycastle (2000) who claims that her account is “functional and, implicitly or explicitly biologically determined. “When men discovered they could rape,” Brownmiller (1975) writes, “they proceeded to do it” (p. 14). Bonnycastle (2000) concludes, “sexual violence resecurates male dominance and female subordination” (p. 67).

Moreover, while radical and liberal feminists tend to utilize outdated theories of gender, namely those that imply that masculinity and femininity are somehow inherent, mutually exclusive categories that are directly and permanently anchored in their rightly corresponding biological bodies, they also ignore the possibility for alternative accounts of rape such as ones that trouble or unsettle their generic Rape Story. This generic Rape Story tells of a “humiliating degrading, depersonalizing and terrifying ordeal” (Smart, 1995, p. 84) “which eclipses all others in feminist discourse. Woman becomes the eternal victim because of her sex which is, in turn, a natural and self-evident attribute” (pp. 86). This Rape Story is paramount in radical interpretations of rape (Brownmiller, 1993) and is reproduced through discursive gendering practices, such as law (Lacombe, 2000). This dominant Rape Story in effect seriously compromises the chance that a woman may be able to live a shame-free life in the aftermath of rape.

For example, Azra Zalihic-Kaurin (1994) in her piece entitled *The Muslim Woman* writes of a romanticized time prior to World War II when everything was just as it should have been in Muslim societies. Women and men had well-defined sex-roles. However, according to Zalihic-Kaurin (1994), “1945 marks a radical turning point in the history of Bosnian Muslim women” (p. 171). This is because of the introduction of communism, which reshaped the Muslim Woman, forcing her to abandon her traditional values and ways of life. Young Muslims were caught in between two compelling influential forces:

modernization and traditionalism. Yet over the years, travel, city life, education and communist ideology allowed for the weakening of traditional Muslim practices. The author asserts that “the Bosnian Muslims, however, never forgot their traditions...as they may wear miniskirts and have boyfriends, may study and work, but they still respect the commandment of virginity” (Zalhic-Kaurin, 1994, p. 172).

The author homogenizes Muslim women’s identity. Zalhic-Kaurin (1994) claims that “there is still the custom that after the wedding night a mother-in-law hangs out the sheet on which a young couple has slept so that everyone can see that the bride was a virgin” (p. 173). Her final statement speaks about a model Muslim woman named Emina from the World War II-period, whose “honor and dignity were worth more to her than her life. She forgives the Chetniks for her murder so that she will not be raped, humiliated and defiled” (p. 173). This quite clearly suggests that for some Muslim women it is better to die than to be raped and left living, having been rendered bare life, stuck in purgatory. This notion is supported by religion and culture, and thus reified by citizens. It has been well documented that in the Bosnian case, Muslim women were primary targets for rape by Serbian men, although this was not always the case. There are other accounts of wartime rape that provide moments of resistance, opportunity and strength that do not equate Muslim women’s honour solely with her sexuality. Yet, implicit within the Rape Story is a double standard of sexuality which equates women’s honour with her virginity and sexual passivity (El Saadawi, 1980).

Indeed, there is an emerging body of work on wartime rape which offers up alternative accounts to the Rape Story. For example, Azra Hromadzic (2007) argues with a Foucauldian framework that there is a need to “challenge, individualize and heterogenize the category *powerless raped Bosnian women*, which are casually

employed in the existing discourses and analyses of the Bosnian rapes” (p. 169, italics added). Her critique of Western liberal feminists is that, under the banner of “universal womanhood” they saw the rapes of Bosnian women through their own agendas. Hence social complexities, subjective sufferings, and individual resistance of women victims all blended into one story of suffering. “In other words, the object *powerless raped Bosnian women* were discursively formed as an already constituted and bounded a priori category” (Hromadzic, 2007, p. 175). In this instance, North American and European interest in the Bosnian rapes, according to the author, is indicative of earlier colonial patterns whereby North American and Western elites were deemed the true arbiters of knowledge, and this knowledge was then exported and coercively applied, without reference to history or culture.

The second discourse Hromadzic encountered was one of medicalization: “Many Western and local doctors and social workers, even with honest intentions to help the victims of rape, reduced the experience of war and rape to post-traumatic stress disorder” (Hromadzic, 2007, p. 175). According to the author, rape is merely one traumatic experience that women endure during wartime amidst a plethora of other sufferings. The simple reduction of post-traumatic stress disorder to being caused by rape omits the possibility that other sufferings endured during wartime may in fact be more traumatic than rape. In order to challenge these top-down discourses, the author includes excerpts from interviews she conducted with Bosnian rape survivors which undermine the generic Rape Story and the passive raped woman. The passages illustrate that women are creative and strong when they are resisting rape.

A woman named Enisa claims, “I decided to start singing and by singing to try to convince other women in the camp of my madness...I sang until the soldiers decided to

take me out of the camp and dump me near the road that led to Croatia” (Hromadzic, 2007, p. 178). Some women used their physical strength to resist the rapes and to try and save other women too. Others befriended individual rapists, inviting them to sleep in their beds with them at night, and through these developing friendships avoided the further trauma of being gang raped. Hromadzic is essentially arguing for a social constructionist approach to conceptualizing the relationship between sexual violence and war, similar to one put forth by Inger Skjelsbaek (2001) who argues against essentialist and structuralist approaches because they inevitably seek to simplify an inherently complex issue, and thus reduce sexual violence to a problem about hyper-sexual and violent masculinity, and passive, victimized femininity.

While radical and liberal feminist interpretations<sup>1</sup> of wartime rape perpetuate essentialist, ahistorical accounts of gender, womanhood and victimization (Brownmiller, 1993; MacKinnon, 1994; Zalihic-Kaurin, 1994), post-structuralist feminism broadens the interpretive landscape by facilitating the possibility of alternative rape stories and more dynamic interpretations of gender (Bonnycastle, 2000; Hall cited in Hague 1997; Hromadzic, 2007; Smart, 1997). However, many of the feminist accounts of wartime rape mentioned hitherto fail to acknowledge significant developments in the neoliberal restructuring, re-spatialisation and re-territorialisation of capitalism. As a result, their applicability to understanding the dynamic forces which underpin wartime rape in Iraq is, at the very least, limited.

<sup>1</sup> There is a plethora of literature that may be categorized as radical and liberal feminism, and I use the terms with great hesitation and consideration for this diversity. For the purpose of this thesis, radical feminism refers to the position of authors, such as Brownmiller (1993) and Mackinnon (1994). These positions tend to perpetuate essentialist accounts of gender and provide a rather narrow framework for theorizing rape. Liberal feminism is an individualistic and universalistic approach that asserts the equality of men and women through legal reform, invoking an emphasis on individual choice and democratic freedom. For the purposes of this thesis see, for example, the Feminist Majority Foundation: <http://feminist.org>.

Furthermore, the bulk of the literature is unable to address the historical lineages that contribute to the privatization of the state, the creation of, and the future trajectories of the PMC; their focus has been primarily on state-soldiers, rather than the dynamic, highly complex constellation of actors who rape women in new wars. In light of this, these theories reify the naturalness of the “state-soldier,” in addition to the Weberian nation-state. Subsequently, they inadvertently fail to account for “shadow states” (Reno, 1998) and processes of war making and state making as akin to organized crime (Tilly, 1985). Minor criticism aside, the literature has provided a solid foundation to depart from and advance sociologically grounded, feminist responses to wartime rape in light of the neoliberal re-spatialization of the state.

## **The Neoliberal Restructuring of Capitalism and Wartime Rape**

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between the neoliberal restructuring of the state and the shifting, gendered trajectories of bio-politics. In order to unpack these material and discursive relations of power, the main object under study is wartime rape in Iraq, post-2003. A sub-research question asks how wartime rape can be theorized as a biopolitical issue in light of the re-spatialization of the state. Underpinned by neoliberalism and exemplified by the privatization of security and the RMA, the war in Iraq has witnessed the sweeping, unprecedented corporatization of military and security operations which has produced a plethora of additional actors in Iraq aside from state-soldiers. With this in mind, I question how the ascendance of privatized violence in the form of PMCs has influenced the quantitative and qualitative representations of wartime rape. I speculate that these trends towards the privatization of violence have produced harmful, gendered effects.

Furthermore, I question how neoliberal militarization and spatialization techniques have facilitated the creation of several detention centres across Iraq. Here, I offer an argument which suggests that illiberal biopolitical strategies such as rape are utilized to process bodies, resulting in the demarcation between bare and qualified life. Although the literature pertaining to wartime rape reveals that the functionality of wartime rapes varies across time and space, embodying historical, cultural and political particularities, I argue that in the case of Iraq, wartime rape serves as both a state-building practice *and* a manifestation of bio-political intervention, whereby a variety of actors utilize rape as a mechanism to articulate a complex power struggle over the future trajectories of the Iraqi state.



## Chapter 3.

### Methodological Approach and Methods

I have attempted to treat this chapter as an opportunity to think about methodology as if it were a journey where traces of me as a researcher are interwoven within the fabric of the thesis itself. In essence, the guiding question in this chapter is, “How do I tell this story?” It begins with a philosophical approach, which ultimately bleeds into my theoretical orientation(s). My methodological approach, epistemological and ontological assumptions combine certain elements and concepts from feminist geopolitics, political economy and critical theory; thus my perspective is inherently interdisciplinary. My approach is inspired, in part, by Philip McMichael’s (1990) use of incorporated comparison, in addition to C. W. Mills’s (1959) notion of “sociological imagination,” in which Mills claims “neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both” (p. 3).

Mills showcases how particular stories and larger processes intersect, and are therefore shaped by one another. As such, my position as a researcher intersects with the way I proceed with the (re) telling of rape during the aftermath of the invasion. This is inspired by Jennifer Hyndman’s (2008) concept of feminist geopolitics, which seeks to recast war away from the disembodied space of neo-realist geopolitics towards the notion of war as about live human subjects:

it's about putting together the quiet, even silenced, narratives of violence and loss that do the work of taking apart dominant geopolitical scripts of 'us' versus 'them'. While the deconstruction of such binary scripts is vital, feminist geopolitics aims to recover stories and voices. (p. 197)

Meanwhile, the goal of incorporated comparison is *not* to develop invariant hypotheses via comparison of more or less uniform cases, but to give substance to a historical process, a whole, through comparison of its parts. Whether considering nation-states or a singular world system, neither whole nor parts are permanent categories or units of analysis. Hence McMichael (1990) argues that comparison becomes the substance of the inquiry rather than the framework. The whole that McMichael speaks of emerges via comparative analysis of parts as moments in a self-forming whole. Incorporated comparison allows for the idea that totality is a conceptual procedure, rather than an empirical or conceptual premise.

Accordingly, the whole is discovered through an analysis of the mutually conditioning parts. This is beneficial to my research because it allows for an analysis of both the material and discursive power dynamics in a way that reveals how the state-system is a fluid product of historical processes which are intimately tied to, and shaped by, social relations. In this respect, McMichael's (1990) and Mill's (1959) contributions complement one another by allowing for a methodological approach which values the interplay between top-down and bottom-up processes; specifically, how they shape each other and are re-cast in light of the historical interplay between the global/local dynamic in light of the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism. Taken together, Mill's analysis is based on locating the individual within a national context, whereas McMichael's approach allows for the theorization of biopolitical interventions which are beyond the scope of the national.

Given the timeliness of my research, it is simply the case that *official* knowledge of wartime rape in Iraq has not been systematically documented, thus limiting the kind(s) of data that I have access to, in addition to the quantity of official textual data. Coupled with how current this research is, is the fact that sexuality is a taboo issue. Since many discussions or investigations into sex, gender relations and violence are sensitive topics, especially in war zones (Giles & Hyndman, 2004) thus the practicalities of conducting this research are often quite disheartening. Women, especially in rural and under-educated areas, face increased threats when they speak up about being raped. Therefore, locating relevant data that is specific enough for this project has been a challenging process since official statistics simply do not exist yet.

Indeed, it is evident that more time is needed to see how much damage will be done in Iraq in terms of sexual violence. Thus full-fledged comparisons and concrete conclusions at this point in the research process may prove too hasty or ambitious. Instead I acknowledge that there are many attempts at truth-construction in Iraq, but these truths are located and produced amidst silence, shadows, secrecy and vast corruption within governmental bodies. Therefore, the knowledge claims made in this research are, to a certain degree, speculative, and are meant to serve as a departure point for future research.

Hence the goal of the research, which was conducted through an extensive internet search and analysis of secondary academic literature, official and non-official documents, newspaper articles, individual testimonies, stories, and Non-Governmental Organization reports, is to uncover some of the ways in which wartime rape operates specifically in Iraq. Through examining particular expressions of wartime rape, I hope to make broader connections to state-building practices and the ways in which the

privatization of security interacts with the creation and maintenance of gender relations. Certainly this research may benefit from interviews or observations, however material and physical constraints have prevented me thus far from including these kinds of data. Perhaps if my research was primarily concerned with “experiences of wartime rape in Iraq” the inclusion of other methods would be more pertinent.

However, this is not the case. As such, the decision to analyze secondary academic literature, ‘text and talk’ within media stories and testimonials, and Non-governmental Organization (NGO) reports within the given research design is, I believe, justified. This research design facilitates the emergence of some speculative questions about the quantitative aspects of wartime rape in Iraq, namely the number(s) of women who have reported their rapes, in addition to painting a picture about the various ways in which wartime rape is being represented through talk and text. It allows for broader connections to be made with other historical accounts of wartime rape while showcasing how wartime rape has been rearticulated alongside technologies of neoliberal spatiality, (gendered) privatization schemes and biopolitical interventions.

This aforementioned discussion about my methodological approach is reflected in my ontological position. Here I refute ahistorical accounts of social life, such as those which homogenize populations of men and women, those which are Eurocentric in orientation, and those which are gender-blind or take gender as natural or pre-ordained. I assert that all knowledge-claims are partial, historically, socially and politically contingent artefacts of an elusive truth which is contested and unfixed. Social reality is fleeting, and is best understood in light of sociopolitical and historical nuances.

In terms of epistemology, what can be known and thus, what cannot be known is indeed a product of history, socio-political conditions and other cultural influences, and this is a central premise of my methodology or Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis. I prefer the term “Foucauldian-inspired”, because many discourse analysts find their inspiration, methodological and epistemological base in Foucault’s work, even though Foucault himself may not be entirely categorized as a “discourse analyzer” in a straightforward way. Nevertheless, discourse analysis, as both a methodological approach and a method (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) is the crux of this research. Discourse analysis is the most suitable method for analyzing the data because of how flexible it is as both a methodological approach and method, and because of how it allows me to explore theoretically dense research questions from a variety of angles without feeling constrained to a particular format or preconceived framework.

Since I am interested in a conducting a critical re-examination of the meaning of wartime rape in light of the relationship between privatized warfare and biopolitics, discourse analysis allows me the opportunity to raise a variety of questions which facilitate the generation of broader theoretical links amongst and between cases beyond Iraq. The epistemological premise of discourse analysis asserts that understanding how discourse or “talk and text” is dialectically constructed, maintained and perpetuated is essential for understanding power/knowledge dynamics across local nodes and global spaces. While analyzing particular expressions of wartime rape, I find historical patterns and points of contradiction and convergence that are worth further elaboration.

Accordingly, I argue that discourses must be contextualized yet inevitably theorized in relationship to discourses past and present: “discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking context into

consideration...discourses are always connected to other discourses which are produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently” (Fairclough & Wodak, quoted in Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 4). Therefore, discourses ultimately reflect a historical and relational element that permits the ascendance of some ideas and social structures over others according to various networks of knowledge/power. Yet social structures not only determine discourse, they are also a product of discourse (Fairclough, 1989).

Therefore, while my gaze is primarily aimed at wartime rape in Iraq, it is nonetheless influenced and perhaps mediated by the events of the 1990s, namely, wartime rape in Bosnia and elsewhere, their affiliated discourses, and the subsequent feminist-inspired legal advancements that have been made in reaction to these events. Having researched wartime rape in Bosnia at the undergraduate level quite extensively prior to undertaking this project, I instinctively ask comparative questions with respect to the case I am interested in, Iraq. However, following McMichael's approach, while I use Bosnia as a departure point to ask questions about Iraq, my goal is not to develop a systematic comparison of the two cases in a seemingly straightforward way, rather it is to highlight points of convergence and divergence in terms of ways in which wartime rape operated (and operates) in two very different war zones, where the strategies, purposes and trajectories of warfare express points of worthwhile inquiry. This is critical because, social phenomena do not occur in a vacuum; as such, comparative historically-situated research techniques help foster an understanding of complex, dynamic forces.

Quite simply, I take what I have learned from Bosnia and ask these questions. What is going on in Iraq? Why the silence? Where is the feminist, sociological response to the privatization of security and the effects this has on women's security in Iraq? It is

precisely the silence that provoked my curiosity in the decision to choose Iraq as the case for this study. Yet this very silence lends itself to a rather small pool of data due to the aforementioned reasons why women do not report crimes of a sexual nature. With respect to sampling, since I am not analyzing a neat sample, but rather everything that I encounter through what I have termed a *literature snowball technique*, it is not necessary to weed out the *good* data from the *bad* data. A literature snowball technique refers to a process similar to the snowballing technique researcher's use while interviewing human subjects. Akin to what an investigative journalist would do, I gather data through web searches via snowballing within textual sources, following leads I come across in the literature, checking bibliographies, and the like.

Notably, few English-language sources detail the horrors of the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. Since I can only interpret data written for English-speaking audiences, the parameters of the available data to me are once again limited. I searched both academic and non-academic sources; mainstream news sources, such as the *Globe and Mail*, the *L.A. Times* and *N.Y. Times*, *Jane's Defence Weekly*, and less mainstream news sources such as [www.antiwar.com](http://www.antiwar.com). Often my searches on rape in Iraq came up empty, yet searches for articles on sexual abuse inside prisons, specifically the now infamous Abu Ghraib, are quite easy to come by. It appears that, since the now famous photographs were released depicting torture *against Iraqi men*, Abu Ghraib has provoked much commentary from journalists and academics alike.

Yet less scandalous stories of wartime rape, for example what I term *ordinary rape*, rape that occurs in less sensationalist circumstances such as in bedrooms or fields or alleyways are harder to come by. Of course this has to do with the sensationalism and spectacle associated with the photographic documentation that exposed the torture

inside Abu Ghraib prison to the world. My interest, however, is concerned with what is not discussed in the mainstream media—that which is concealed and that which lacks a systematic gender analysis. Notably, the U.S. Congress has been made aware of similar stories of rape and torture against women detainees in Abu Ghraib, yet curiously Congress has refused to release these images of Iraqi women to the public (Suskind, 2007c, p. 20). This reveals a concerted effort on behalf of the government to conceal any evidence of sexual abuse against women inside U.S. detention centres.



## Chapter 4.

### Data and Analysis

In light of the aforementioned discussion, the pool of data which constitutes the foundation of the analytical dimension of this thesis will serve to highlight the (concealed) stories of wartime rape which emerge out of Iraq. The pool of data is relatively small, especially in light of the allegation that, rather than help facilitate the collection of data, U.S. authorities have repeatedly ordered the Iraqi Health Ministry to stop publishing statistics about whom or how many Iraqi's have been killed through sexual violence and other means (Susskind, 2007c, p. 12). Additionally, U.S. military police have failed to follow up with some sexual violence complaints (Bjorken, Bencomo, & Horowitz, 2003). Moreover, women's organizations caution that the actual number of women who are harassed, assaulted, abducted, raped and killed is much higher than statistics show, since most crimes are not reported due to stigma, fear of retaliation or lack of confidence in the police (Susskind, 2007c). Yet all estimations conclusively indicate that American and other occupying forces are a significant part of the problem.

The newspaper articles I analyzed, a total of six, were retrieved from [www.antiwar.com](http://www.antiwar.com), and were published from 2004-2007. Anti-war.com is a news source devoted to critiquing American foreign policy. Founded by libertarian thinkers, this online magazine attracts columnists who write from anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist perspectives. Additionally, I analyzed four NGO reports produced by: Women for

Women International (WFWI; 2008), MADRE (Susskind, 2007c), Code Pink (Lasky, Benjamin, & Buffa, 2006) and Human Rights Watch (Bjorken et al., 2003), respectively, and two cluster surveys in *The Lancet*, based out of John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (Burnham, Lafta, Doocy, & Roberts, 2006; Roberts, Lafta, Garfield, Khadhairi, & Burnham, 2004).

All of these organizations share an expressed commitment to working directly with women in conflict zones, to bettering women's lives in the aftermath of conflict, gender equality, women's rights and peace. MADRE (2009) is a human rights organization that documents and condemns abuses and creates partnerships with women who have survived such violations. Similarly, WFWI (2009) is committed to addressing the unique needs of women in post-conflict zones, while Code Pink is an American based, grassroots peace and social justice organization which is specifically concerned with ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Finally, I analyzed one documentary entitled *Shadow Company* (Bicanic & Bourque, 2006), which details the explosion of PMCs in Iraq through small case studies, interviews with contract workers and scholarly experts, and historical data pertaining to the emergence of the PMC as a permanent fixture of warfare. The film is directed by Nick Bicanic and Jason Bourque; Bicanic has a Vancouver, B.C.-based film production company, Purpose Films. Notably, the film features in-depth interview clips from aforementioned political scientist, Peter Singer.

This chapter will begin with a brief historical introduction into the dynamic forces at play in Iraq, and how they have been shaped by colonialist imperatives which serve to influence the seemingly perpetual (re)making of Iraq which disrupt notions of sovereignty. I have argued above that warfare is being reconceptualised in light of

neoliberal state restructuring, privatization, and the RMA. In light of this, I then showcase how the explosion of PMCs in Iraq has contributed to the security vacuum where women's security is jeopardized. In this respect, I analyze wartime rape in the context of prisons and detention centres and suggest that these spaces are used to process bodies and demarcate between bare and qualified life. These centres also reflect manifestations of neoliberal spatialization techniques, since they in effect militarize space. Finally, throughout I will showcase how wartime rape is still very much connected to ideas about gender relations, honour, nationhood and ethnicity. Within this context, I demonstrate that wartime rape serves as a communicative mechanism within and amongst competing groups of men. Moreover, wartime rape can be conceptualized as a manifestation of both anatomo and bio-politics. I also refer to links between Iraq and the Bosnian case, while being careful not to oversimplify the specificities of each individual case.

### **Social Forces in Iraq: British Mandate to Independence**

The social, cultural, religious, political, and economic diversity in Iraq is enormous. Many of these complexities are significant yet are beyond the scope of this thesis, but have been investigated elsewhere (Abdullah, 2003; Al-Jawaheri, 2008; Cleveland, 2004; Simon & Tejjirian, 2004; Tripp, 2000). Many scholars argue that the diverse ethnic and religious groups in Iraq, which are cast mostly along place of residence; urban-rural, religious affiliation; Sunni-Shi'i-Christian, ethnicity; Kurd-Arab-Turkmen, in addition to regional and tribal lines (Abdullah, 2003) have endured decades of intense political struggles for territory, tribal and property rights, religious and political freedoms alongside an ebb and flow of British influence. The years of the British

mandate (1920) to Iraq's formal independence (1932) reflect the earliest attempts at centralized state-building and as such, "the creation of Iraq" (Simon & Tejirian, 2004).

All of these aforementioned points of social, cultural, religious, political and economic tension have been influenced and mediated by the persistent class wars marked by the socio-political dominance of the British-supported Sunni political and military elites, and Iraq's gradual incorporation into the expanding European economy since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. After World War I, the population of 3 million was "roughly 50 percent Shi'i Arab, 20 percent Sunni Arab, 20 percent Kurd (mostly Sunni, some Shi'i, a few Jewish), and 10 percent 'other' (including Jews, Christian Catholics, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Turkomans)" (Yaphe, 2004, p. 19).

British occupation in Iraq officially began in 1914, but Britain had already established a physical and ideological presence in Iraq during the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt much earlier in 1869. This facilitated the creation of fixed maritime trade routes between Basra and Europe (Abdullah, 2003). At this point Iraq was regarded as three fragmented- ethnically and religiously- Ottoman provinces: Baghdad, Mosul and Basra (Tripp, 2000). The decentralized Ottoman system that was present in the lands of Iraq during this period had been confined to the major cities and large areas of the countryside were dominated by tribal confederations accustomed to freedom from government intervention (Cleveland, 2004, p. 205). The desire to secure British interests in the region, as exemplified by the mandate of 1920, has been described as "nothing but a cover for colonialism" (Abdullah, 2003, p. 127). British interests included the security of imperial communications with India and the protection of the Iraqi and Iranian oil fields. As a result, the British attempted to amalgamate the diverse and often autonomous people of Iraq into a single, centralized state (Cleveland, 2004).

This attempt at state-building did not go unchallenged. The Kurds, making up 20% of the total population and having their own distinct language and culture, originally hoped that British intervention would pave the way for greater Kurdish autonomy or even independence (Abdullah, 2003, p. 124). Ultimately they became resistant to the centralizing efforts. In 1921 British officials helped to put King Amir Faysal into power, being careful not to compromise his leadership by making him appear as a mere apparatus of British control (Cleveland, 2004). The Iraqi army, which was to be “both a national symbol and an essential element of state authority” (Cleveland, 2004, p. 207) was also established at this time, as was a public school system and curriculum which promoted the development of patriotism and national culture.

Iraq’s eventual status as a formally independent state in 1932, and thus its incorporation into the League of Nations, followed a series of treaties which said that Iraq was to gain full independence under the condition that British military and security privileges be upheld. For example, one treaty allowed Britain to control the development of the Iraqi armed forces and to maintain two air bases in the country (Cleveland, 2004). As such, its independence is in itself contradictory, since it occurred only symbolically whilst Iraq still existed under heavy ties and formal obligations to the British mandate of 1920, exemplified by the collaboration of foreign policy initiatives in favour of British interests in the region. Iraq’s strategic location secured Britain’s commercial interests and provided easy access to India, its former colonial conquest. The discovery of oil in 1927 also served to heighten Britain’s strategic interest in Iraq, since the acquisition of essential resources, albeit through coercive means, is a way in which the state gains legitimacy from its populace.

Although Britain's influence has been weaker at some points in history than others, resistance has been uneven; there were different reactions among the cities upon the initial invasion: Basra, which had a long history of interaction with Britain and benefited from the presence of the army, generally cooperated with the expedition (Abdullah, 2004). Najaf and Karbala, predominantly Shi'i centres, were the only cities to resist Britain's presence from the beginning (Abdullah, 2004). Nevertheless, Britain's presence has manifested in an unshakable ebb and flow of military bases, economic treaties and in the general treatment of Iraq as falling under the category of what Christine Delphy (2003) has termed the imperialist "White Man's Burden": a missionary's ethos which was later picked up by American political elites in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, specifically expressed within the discourses deployed prior to the most recent invasion of Iraq.

For example, the Bush administration famously claimed that American troops would be greeted as liberators upon their arrival in Iraq. Furthermore Bush, through his neo-imperial framework and his use of embedded feminism, essentially re-invoked past colonial constructs that have traditionally classified non-Western cultures as backward, as lacking agency, and in need of Western intervention. As Delphy (2003) argues:

the words have changed, but it is not difficult to recognize behind this new phrase, 'the right to intervene', the same old white man's burden, still as lethal, for it incorporates the missionary's paradox: 'We will save their souls (their freedom) even if we have to kill them to do it'. (p. 344)

The aforementioned missionary's paradox still functions in American foreign policy, under the guise of protection myths, anti-terrorism discourses and neoliberal economics.

Not surprisingly, a trip down memory lane has it that during the Skyes-Picot Agreement of 1916, which divided Arab territories amongst the British and the French, General Maude, upon his entry into Baghdad, had unequivocally declared that the British had arrived as liberators, not conquerors (Abdullah, 2003). During the same period, Arnold Wilson, the country's Civil Commissioner, sought to "extend the British policies of India to Iraq...this meant the establishment of direct colonial rule" (Abdullah, 2003, p. 125). Similarly, the same rhetoric was employed during the first Gulf War, which was officially aimed at expelling Iraqi military forces from Kuwait, yet simultaneously U.S. interests served to enhance its military presence in the Gulf region in order to open up Middle Eastern markets to U.S. capital (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009, p. 5). Indeed, this thesis argues in part that Iraq has never been truly sovereign, if there ever was such a thing as a truly sovereign state outside of mere political imagination. Analyzing the current war in Iraq requires a historically situated methodological approach; one which prioritizes the complexities inherent in theorizing the social forces at play in contemporary Iraq.

## **How War and PMCs in Iraq Make Women Less Safe**

The making and re-making of Iraq over the course of the last century has not only resulted in insecurity and gendered violence, but its re-making has been influenced by a coercive, imperial framework, reflecting Tilly's (1985) assessment of war-making and state-making as organized crime. Households and individuals are currently becoming militarized, as families arm themselves as a result of the climate of fear, which simply contributes to the spread of violence and feelings of insecurity. With the addition of sweeping privatization of public resources (Klein, 2005) and the introduction of the private security industry as a seemingly permanent fixture in the Iraqi landscape, the

complex network of social forces is undoubtedly being reshaped. Indeed, the makeup of Iraqi society is also being reconfigured accordingly. In light of this climate of fear and militarized ethos, violent crime rates overall have been on the rise since the Gulf War in 1991. According to Nadjie Al-Ali:

Many women reported that before the imposition of sanctions they used to keep all their doors open and felt totally secure. During the sanction regime there were numerous accounts of burglaries—often violent ones. And, in the current situation of occupation, looting, burglaries, killings and rape are widespread. With mafia-like gangs roaming the streets at night, most Iraqis do not want to hand in the weapons they have because they feel they have to protect themselves and their families. (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 748)

Feminist scholars are actively working to combat notions of gender that are ahistorical or essentialist, and this is strongly reflected in the post-structuralist literature on wartime rape. How to theorize the impetus behind wartime rape, emerging masculinity complexes that underpin the theorization of rape, and the legal/humanitarian responses to rape remain sites of real and ongoing struggle for feminists. As a gendered effect of bio-political intervention, wartime rape undoubtedly serves to reconfigure and discipline sexuality and gender relations. The precise functionality of rape, however, is contingent on localized and contextual particularities. Undoubtedly, certain age-old images of wartime rape that remain fixed in collective imaginaries are becoming more problematic with the explosion of PMCs, and thus require a new kind of feminist-political inquiry.

Namely, the case of Iraq demonstrates how these age-old images of clearly demarcated boundaries between identifiable and, therefore, knowable state-military/soldier-rapists and victims are becoming blurred and tweaked according to the dictates of neoliberal state-building and the affiliated new wars: here, the key players on



the battlefield are less obvious; private and public actors are more difficult to distinguish. Part of the maintenance of American empire and full-spectrum dominance (Gill, 2005) requires the massive yet secretive deployment of neoliberal spatialization techniques. This means that “over half a million U.S. troops, spies, contractors, dependents and others are now stationed on some 737 military bases located in more than 130 countries, according to official Pentagon inventories” (Johnson, 2008, p. 21).

These contractors operating within PMCs come from all over the world to participate in some of the most lucrative work available in their profession. They reflect various socioeconomic backgrounds, personal and professional histories, roles and intentions. As warfare changes alongside the uneven ascendance of neoliberalism, so too do the mechanisms, strategies, operations and locations of military battles. Thus, wartime rape, as a *useful* military strategy also becomes reconfigured accordingly. New wars of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which occurred alongside massive privatization schemes and the explosion of private military personnel, showcase how the modern war machine has been reconfigured to adapt to a constellation of competing public and private actors, all of whom cling to diverse and competing gendered/ethnic ideologies, histories, cultures and political, socio-economic imperatives.

These wars also illustrate that wartime rape can be high in some instances, and relatively low in others. As Elisabeth Jean Wood claims, the repertoire of violence invoked by various armed groups reveals variations in the use of sexual violence, yet the apparent absence might reflect our ignorance of its actual occurrence rather than a true absence (Wood, 2009, p. 133). Notably, Wood argues that if the elite [operating in Iraq] judge sexual violence to be counterproductive to their interests and the hierarchy is sufficiently strong, little sexual violence will be observed. Given the relative silence over

wartime rape in Iraq, could this suggest that political elites in Iraq find it to be a counterproductive strategy to rape women? She goes on to state that:

an armed group that *aspires to govern civilians* is less likely to tolerate mass rape of its future constituency. (This may explain why mass rape occurs in some (but not all) secessionist conflicts: the armed group carries out mass rape against civilians it plans not to govern)" (p. 141, italics added)

Whether or not foreign political elites plan to govern the civilian population long term is beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet women are being raped in Iraq and many public officials are reluctant to speak about it. When they do, they face serious consequences. A former deputy human rights minister claims:

of course rape is going on. We blame the militias. But when we talk about the militias, many are members of the police. This is the worst time ever in Iraqi women's lives. In the name of religion and sectarian conflict they are being kidnapped and killed and raped. And no one is mentioning it. (Ussayran, quoted in Zangana, 2007, p. 117)

It comes as no surprise that members of the Iraqi police have been accused of raping women when it is DynCorp, a PMC now famously associated with sex crimes in Bosnia, who trained them (Chatterjee, 2004). Moreover, "police make \$120 a month while soldiers make almost half that, far less than what they could earn were they to work for private security companies or even as day labourers" (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 125). It appears there is little incentive for police to risk their own personal and financial security to protect women's rights. "The Iraqi police are following the example of those who trained them,' Ahmed Mukhtar, a school headmaster in the northern Iraq city of Mosul told IPS. 'American soldiers did it more than a thousand times and got away with it" (quoted in Jamail, 2007, ¶16).

Indeed, since many women feel unsafe leaving their homes because of the lack of security apparatuses, it has been suggested that the invasion has witnessed an entire generation of women remaining prisoners in their own homes for fear of what kind of torture and insecurity the streets may offer up (Shallal, 2008). “Baghdad is like a ghost city, most of its 6.5 million inhabitants are imprisoned in their homes, it’s simply too dangerous to venture out.” Yet house raids and random arrests are features of the new Iraq (Zangana, 2007, p. 121). Both public and private spaces are dangerous for women. As summarized in a February 2004 report by the International Committee of the Red Cross, arresting authorities entered houses after dark, breaking down doors, pushing people around and arresting family members, including the elderly, handicapped or sick, without due cause or providing any information about who they were or where their base was located (p. 121).

Moreover, the occupation has resulted in increased Islamisation<sup>2</sup> and conservatism on the part of locals. For example, honour killings are a manifestation of this conservatism. Although honour killings are mainly restricted to rural areas and uneducated populations, knowledge of its existence works as a deterrent for many women, thus many stay at home for fear of creating gossip about them and being harassed on the streets by Islamists who demand that *all* women wear a headscarf or *abbayah* (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 752). Notably, crimes against women and honour killings have always existed in Iraqi society, but, According to Al-Jawaheri (2008), much of the focus post-invasion has emphasized the “culturally-specific consequences of the fact that sexual dishonour of a woman is often punishable by death” (Al-Jawaheri, 2008, p. 142).

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Islamist' in this thesis is borrowed from the MADRE report (Susskind, 2007c, p. 3). It refers to those who pursue a reactionary social and political vision in the name of Islam, as distinct from 'Islamic' relating to the religion of Islam.

“Addressing the surge in violence against women in Iraq in this manner is disingenuous. Rather, it is war, mass displacement of the population, and political hostility that increases women’s vulnerability to aggression” (p. 142). As such, an analysis of crimes against women, including honour killings, must take into account the conditions, in this case war, that makes women more vulnerable.

PMC personnel have no genuine intention of combating the variety of gendered violence that has manifested in Iraq. Rather, these actors, some of whom are armed, contribute to the model of neoliberal governmentality in Iraq which has acquired influence in Iraq since the invasion. According to the data I analyzed, these entities have also contributed to general feelings of anxiety, fear, and anger (Chatterjee, 2004; Susskind, 2007c), in addition to increased Islamisation, sectarian violence, conservatism and resurgence of patriarchal gender ideals (Al- Ali, 2005).

This is particularly important in a context where women’s rights and equality are perceived to be part of Western agendas to impose an alien culture and morals. Many Iraqis, who under different circumstances might have been sympathetic to or even supportive of women’s rights, view women’s roles and laws revolving around women and gender relations as symbolic of their attempt to gain independence and autonomy from the occupying forces. (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 753)

The question of whether American elites plan to govern Iraq and its resources, and therefore its citizens on a long-term basis is an important one when analyzing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of wartime rape in Iraq. The swift emergence of PMCs into Iraq begs the question of whether these “guns for hire” are more likely to use (sexual) violence indiscriminately since their motivations are primarily economic and have no real required allegiance or loyalty to militaries, the general public and indeed state-building processes, in Iraqi or otherwise.

The war in Bosnia witnessed this trend of PMCs engaging in sexual violence. For example, Dyncorp employees, who made up the core of the police force, were reported to have paid for prostitutes and participated in sex-trafficking schemes including buying and selling women for their own personal enjoyment, in addition to purchasing illegal weapons, forged passports and committing other immoral acts (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 111). Dyncorp is a company never far from controversy and has plenty of experience in the “rent-a-cop” field (p. 111). Founded in 1946 by a small group of World War II pilots seeking to utilize their military contacts to make a living in the air cargo business, Dyncorp’s employees have a history of “behaving like cowboys” (Janice Schakowsky, quoted in Chatterjee, 2004, p. 111). One Dyncorp site supervisor in the Balkans even videotaped himself raping two women (Susskind, 2007b).

How the presence of private contractors has fuelled resistance from locals in addition to misogyny towards women, while permitting the resurgence of patriarchal values, is also of critical importance: women’s rights are being subverted and compromised in reaction to war and foreign occupation. The resurgence of patriarchal values is a reflection of this profound emasculation and indeed, a crisis with respect to how masculinities are being reconceptualised, internalized and asserted. What is being (re)asserted in this context is the logic of masculinist protection (Young, 2003). In this respect, “good” men (attempt to) protect their women from “bad” men liable to attack. In this logic, virtuous masculinity is constructed in relation to the presumption of evil, threatening outsiders (Young), including, but not limited to, foreign PMC personnel. One woman reported that her rapists asked her, “Why are you wearing trousers, the American soldiers are looking at you” (Bjorken et al., 2003, p. 7). This sentiment reflects a desire to “protect” Iraqi women from the gaze of foreign occupiers, thus reshaping

gender relations in line with the resurgence of patriarchal values. According to Singer, more than 20,000 military contractors are present in Iraq and yet not one has been prosecuted or punished for a single crime, sexual or otherwise.

Thus, we can only conclude that with PMFs in Iraq we have somehow stumbled upon the perfect village, in the midst of a war zone, where human nature has somehow been overcome, unlike in the most bucolic villages. Or, we have a clear combination of an absence of law and political will. (Singer, 2004, p. 13)

In the Dyncorp example, no one was prosecuted; employees enjoyed immunity and are back on federal payroll (Susskind, 2007b). If Singer's point is accepted, private military personnel are absolutely engaging in criminal activity, beyond merely gazing at women, and/or fuelling lawlessness in Iraq to some unknowable degree. There is little to no legal recourse for victims of sexual violence, stemming from cultural imperatives and the legal vacuum that exists in Iraq today. Indeed, the neoliberal dream of full-spectrum dominance generally requires that corporate, transnational-business elites be excluded from the reach of the law.

## **PMCs and the Reconfiguration of Gender Relations**

The involvement of PMCs in Iraq remains a steadfast approach in response to the unpredictability of the situation on the ground. The purposes of PMCs in Iraq fall into three branches: non-lethal peacekeeping operations, military consultant firms and combat services; of course underpinned by claims to enhance efficiency and reduce overall costs. Most activities involve protecting important people such as terrified businessmen and the former leader of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), Paul Bremer; protecting important sites such as oil pipelines, regional authority headquarters

and even the Green Zone in downtown Baghdad, in addition to supplying convoys through hostile territories (Chatterjee, 2004). Yet PMC personnel blur the lines between soldier and civilian and in fact appear to take on the characteristics of a paramilitary force.

Upon seizure of Iraq in April 2004, occupation authorities fired all 400,000 soldiers in Saddam Hussein's army with the hopes of training 40,000 new soldiers across 27 battalions (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 125). This goal was missed by a large margin, yet this is where American-based corporations profit regardless of whether intended targets are met or not. For example, the Iraqi army was trained by U.S.-based Company Vinnell who was awarded \$48 million for the job, while they paid soldiers a mere \$70 per month. One major source of tension was the:

forced integration of ethnic Arabs and Kurds, traditional enemies...American planners thought they could create a model for the country's diversity...from the first day this was a nonstarter, because military training had to be translated from English to Arabic and then to Kurdish. (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 126)

Within the first few weeks, 100 Kurds quit—they also complained that their weapons were malfunctioned. The U.S. military eventually fired Vinnell for contributing to ethnic tensions among soldiers (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 126). Despite Vinnell's failed contract, the Virginia-based company has a long history of providing services to the American military, from Guam in the 1950s to the Korean War (p. 126).

Privatization has occurred in other areas besides those concerned with policing or combat. For example, Halliburton managed to secure \$3.9 billion in contracts related to transportation and the maintenance of equipment from the military in 2003, although it is estimated that contracts for Halliburton will ultimately be worth as much as \$13 billion.

Halliburton has been repeatedly accused of significant overbilling, attempts to beat the competitive bidding clause, and deliberate, widespread inefficiency (Chatterjee, 2004). Moreover, Bechtel, one of the world's largest engineering-construction firms, was awarded a \$2.8 billion contract to refurbish Iraq's sewage, water and school systems. However, the company has a long history of botched reconstruction jobs and creating economic hardships on local people once they vacate the county in question. According to one source, "Bechtel and privatization go hand in hand. When Bechtel comes to your town, you can expect costs to soar and accountability and local control to evaporate" (Beck, quoted in Chatterjee, 2004, p. 65). Bechtel recently brought a \$25 million lawsuit against Bolivia for cancelling a contract to manage the Cochabamba water system. Under Bechtel, the water rates for locals skyrocketed (p. 65).

Within days of the fall of Baghdad, thousands of local and expatriate contractors, working for multinational corporations, were hired to reconstruct the country and install democracy at a profit that most assumed would be paid for from Iraq's vast oil wealth. (p. 13)

These trends reflect elements of what Leys (2008) termed total capitalism: the universal privileging of the standpoint of free-flowing transnational capital in the form of currencies, or human labour—never fixed, often feminized, always flexible—and the unquestionable belief in the superiority of the universally applicable and uninhibited market; often unburdened by contradictions in history, gender relations or the complexity and diversity of culture: here, what constitutes as "the social" is ultimately subordinated to finance capital. Both Halliburton and Bechtel aptly express the contradictions in claims about the supposed benefits of neoliberal economics, and claims about the benefits of privatization—images of efficiency, inherently "free-markets" and genuine competition—prove to be mere rhetorical devices, rather than claims based in evidence.



What has resulted from this neoliberal ethos is the continued widening of the gap between the rich and the poor in Iraq: the privatization of reconstruction has been lucrative for both elite Iraqis and foreign companies. Not surprisingly, ordinary Iraqis view the invasion of expatriates and multinational corporations with great suspicion, especially in consideration of the fact that some of the most controversial episodes of the war have involved private military personnel. These include allegations of war profiteering, the brutal killing of Blackwater employees at Fallujah,<sup>3</sup> and the torture that took place at the now infamous Abu Ghraib prison, involving private contractors from Titan Corporation for intelligence and interrogation services (Singer, 2004). More generally, and lesser known, are examples of contractors being just plain obnoxious; macho, swaggering types who walk around Iraq wearing Oakley sunglasses, Kevlar helmets and flak jackets acting as if they own the place (Chatterjee, 2004). Journalist Tucker Carlson describes a disturbing incident he witnessed while traveling with a Dyncorp contingent as they stopped for gas:

Thanks to sabotaged oil pipelines and a huge glut of new vehicles (more than 300,000 since the war); every station had a gas line. Some are more than a mile long. People can wait for days, camped out in their cars, for a full tank. We had no intention of doing that. Waiting in line, stationary and exposed, was simply too dangerous. Instead, we commandeered the gas station. All four vehicles roared at high speed. Two went directly to the pumps. Two formed mobile roadblocks near the entrance...there was a large and growing crowd around us. It looked hostile. *And no wonder. We'd swooped in and stolen their places in line, reminding them, as if they needed it, of the oldest rule there is: armed people get to do exactly what they want; everyone else has to shut up and take it.* (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 113, italics added)

Certainly this kind of arrogant machismo does nothing to contribute to fostering respectful relationships between men, but most likely fuels the flames of resentment and

<sup>3</sup> "At the end of March, 2004 the company Blackwater made headlines when four of their men were killed in an ambush as they were driving through the town of Fallujah. Blackwater claims the convoy was providing security for Compass ESS, which has a contract to provide food services to the U.S. military, although no food trucks were described as ever being close to the scene of the attack." (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 129)

anger already present due to the war and most likely compromises relations with military units. Notably, military officials have commented on how private military personnel serve to confuse authority structures rigorously implemented and present within military organization (Wong, 2003). In essence, the legal and moral responsibility for contractors on the part of military officials is unknown. Additionally, there is no formal arrangement for intelligence-sharing; this exacerbates danger and contributes to preventable accidents such as “friendly fire” where people on the same “team” end up killing each other by mistake, due to lack of communication. Contractors serve to challenge unit cohesion as well. Whereas military soldiers report that they fight primarily for each other, under the flag of their country, and ideological interests such as spreading freedom, liberty and democracy in Iraq (Wong, 2003), private contractors are not motivated by the same ideals, and lack the immediate social justification.

Indeed, private security companies and their employees in Iraq have little to do with civilian security and more so to do with professional and economic gain. The approach provides armed protection to individuals and places, rather than a civilian constabulary where respect for law and public safety is the primary aim (Duffield, 2001). Therefore, their interests, roles, reputations and actions in Iraq may not only compromise those of the military, but at a basic level their presence serves to confuse the overall landscape of warfare in Iraq in terms of questions pertaining to authority, accountability, transparency and, perhaps most importantly, the perceptions of Iraqis. Of course, women’s physical integrity suffers accordingly as a result of the conflicting ideological standpoints and contradictions between private and public security providers where ultimately, both “good” and “bad” macho men of various ethnic, religious and national backgrounds, perform their masculinity vis-a-vis a logic of masculinist protection (Young,

2003). Moreover, women's organizations report that militias are "taking revenge on each other by raping women" and targeting Christian women with rape and assassination as part of a broader attack on that community (Susskind, 2007c, 1).

For example, the documentary *Shadow Company* (Bicanic & Bourque, 2006) highlights the ways in which masculinity and ethnicity shape one another and are expressed in relationship to femininity. The film describes a situation in Iraq where there are no rules. The narrator is quoted as saying "everybody is shooting at everybody and a whole bunch of pissed off Iraqi's are taking shots at Americans because they can. This is especially pertinent in light of the fact that most insurgents believe that contractors—men with guns who do not wear military uniforms—work for the CIA and are therefore legitimate targets; hence the blurring of these groups in the public eye (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 132). Women fear being caught in the crossfire thus many have confined themselves to their homes indefinitely (WFWI, 2008; Bjorken et al., 2003).

Not only do Iraqis believe that their country is being sold off to private companies, but:

resentment among the local population towards the coalition and foreigners is increasing, to the extent that all foreign armed parties may be viewed with animosity when lethal force is used frequently in the majority of cities and towns in Iraq by foreign personnel. (Bjork & Jones, 2005, p. 787)

hence fanning the flames of the need for security, thereby justifying their employment, and thus supporting the notion that "security" is indeed a self-fulfilling prophecy: neoliberal architects conveniently serve to both create and solve security problems. The presence of the vast army of private security has led to greater distrust and anger. The occupation is caught in a dilemma: either withdraw the private security people and risk

being killed—or beef them up to take the place of soldiers and inflame the anger of the local population (Chatterjee, 2004).

The presence of foreign occupiers and the increase in violence against women has led to a kind of crisis in masculinity, since it is becoming more difficult for men to provide economic resources, protect themselves and their female family members. One example of how this crisis in masculinity has expressed itself is within systems of training, pay and job security.

Above Iraqis on the pay scale are ex-soldiers from Nepal, India, and Fiji. Next on the pay scale are Chilean, South African, and ex-Soviet bloc personnel. Finally there are the highly trained ex-Special Forces people from Britain and the United States who are paid much, much more—in some cases over \$1,000 per day. These men guard high profile targets and train American and Iraqi military police in defensive and offensive tactics. While most of these men try to stay out of combat, they have been known to engage in military action. (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 106)

This passage illustrates how un-equal pay based on ethnicity and nationality is used to define, demarcate and differentiate between competing groups of men; some of whom are then awarded economically based on hierarchies of race. Moreover, it has been suggested that women suicide bombers are motivated by this kind of desperation surrounding gender and the protection of honour; in some cases these women have been raped and see no other alternative: the women *themselves* must avenge their attacker since moving forward with their lives is daunting if not entirely impossible (Bloom, 2005). Conventionally, where it has been the role of men to protect women's honour, the case of female suicide bombers speaks to this crisis in masculinity, where men's roles as economic providers and protectors are being displaced and reconfigured in light of foreign occupation.

Moreover, critical perspectives claim that part of the reason PMCs are so prominent in Iraq has to do with the U.S. administration's inability to foresee the enormity of the challenge(s) in the aftermath of the invasion. Contractors were ushered in swiftly, and security clearances, if conducted at all, were postponed. Unburdened by any concrete knowledge about Iraq, the architects of the invasion did not anticipate inheriting a country of crumbling state institutions, essentially on the verge of collapse due to 20 years or so of almost incessant war. Their motivating principles were based on regime change.

The collapse of the Iraqi state dramatically changed the nature of the U.S.A.'s role in Iraq. Regime change had been perceived by the neoconservatives promoting it in strictly liberal 'Washington consensus' terms. The creation of the state, not its reform, was philosophically at odds with the forward-leaning, anti-state rhetoric of the neoconservatives. It has also been far more costly and has required greater expertise and resources than the Pentagon had anticipated or indeed could supply. (Dodge, 2005, p. 710)

Thus, this passage articulates the harmful effects that such a misguided approach produced. The swift and widespread inclusion of PMCs is directly related to the unpopularity of the war amongst the American electorate: images of dead Americans poked at collective memories of dead soldiers from past unpopular wars, namely Vietnam. The argument for the inclusion of PMCs in modern warfare claims that, not only are private contractors *not* entitled to government services post-mission such as medical and disability benefits, but non-sensationalist news and images of their deaths or injuries are not covered by the mainstream media. So, their presence overall helps to keep negative headlines about dead or wounded American soldiers to a minimum. Hence, less American dead equals less political wrangling on the part of the architects of the war. Most obviously, however, contractors are utilized because the military is already

struggling to recruit people and now spends considerably more money (in the form of signing bonuses and incentives) to attract and retain soldiers (Stiglitz & Bilmes, 2008, p. 55) thus contributing to a kind of “brain drain” within militaries.

But the question of counting the dead and/or injured with respect to their relationship to the state, in and of itself projects a disturbing hierarchy of “who counts.” Quite simply, Iraqi deaths do not count from the perspective of American political elites. From January, 2002, until the invasion in 2003, virtually all deaths in Iraq were from non-violent causes (Burnham et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2004). Yet U.S. General Tommy Franks is widely quoted as saying “we don’t do body counts” (Franks, quoted in Roberts et al., 2004, p. 1863). Hence:

geopolitically, the question of who is counted is related to the question of ‘who counts?’ and ‘who cares?’ The ‘fatality metrics’ of body counts is clearly lopsided in the context of Iraq: victimhood is commodified and patriotism publicized for soldiers making the ultimate ‘sacrifice’, while Iraqi deaths are framed as ‘the price that must be paid’ for introducing ‘freedom and justice’. (Hyndman, 2008, p. 199)

These current trends reflect a sharp ideological contrast between the willingness of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Frenchmen and contemporary American kids to go to battle. The pseudo-military and/or paramilitary services offered by PMCs are therefore necessary when enough ordinary civilians refuse to join the fight and when their presence is required for political reasons.

Certainly the political ambiguity of such a unilateral invasion is enough to fuel a climate of anxiety within and amongst ordinary Iraqis. Added to these basic tensions associated with the current war, not to mention 25 years of recent war, is an overall inability to determine who is who and what is what on the ground. Such a constellation of

heterogeneous social forces muddies all genuine attempts to discern the intentions, roles and credibility of foreign invaders, therefore profoundly complicating civil-military relations and as such, security, specifically women's security, fades away into the background and becomes less of a legitimate political goal and more of a political risk. Questions of whose bodies "count" in the business of tabulating the dead, fails to acknowledge the plight of raped women, often seen in American detention centres. In some respects, they are neither dead nor alive, but exist in a kind of purgatory or zone of indistinction (Žižek, 2004).

## **U.S Detention Centres as Sites of Gendered Violence**

Numerous witnesses and victims have testified and investigators have confirmed that coalition forces and U.S. contractors have committed horrific crimes of sexual abuse, torture, and physical assault. There is copious reportage of rapes, including gang rapes, and routine sexual humiliations as well as accounts of women falling prey to honour killings after leaving U.S. detention centres. Amal Kadhim Swadi, an Iraqi lawyer who represented women detainees at Abu Ghraib, claimed that sexual violence by U.S. forces was "happening all across Iraq" and was not confined to a few isolated cases. (Lasky et al., 2006, p. 7)

There is broad consensus in the data I have analyzed that the war in Iraq has not, like the architects promised to the American electorate and indeed the world, enhanced women's rights whatsoever. Of course, many feminist eyebrows were raised when these initial claims were packaged and fed to the North American public, illustrating curiously well-timed manifestations of embedded feminism. Most feminists, perhaps with the exception of some American liberal feminists, accept that war does not improve women's conditions. On the contrary, the invasion has left a once functional, although heavily centralized and brutal government in ruins, with little to no governing ability or operational legal frameworks to acknowledge or protect women's rights to their

physical integrity. According to one report, when women were asked what they thought were the biggest problems facing Iraq as a whole, their responses were: high/rising prices, housing availability/prices, lack of security and the American occupation/presence (WFWI, 2008). However, responses differed dramatically by region. As such, it is critical to recognize the dynamic forces and experiences at play in different regions, cities and rural areas of Iraq (p. 16). As one Iraqi blogger claimed, “it’s like Baghdad is no longer a city, it’s a dozen different smaller cities each infected with its own form of violence” (Riverbend, quoted in Rosen & Engelhardt, 2006, ¶4).

By nearly every account, women report that security remains poor throughout most of Iraq (WFWI, 2008; Bjorken et al., 2003; Susskind, 2007c; Lasky et al., 2006). One middle-aged woman reported that the Americans “gave us something but they took from us another thing. They gave us freedom and they took from us security...but if I have to choose one of them, I will choose safety and security” (WFWI, 2008, p. 17). Many Iraqi women have a long history of political and public participation, having engaged in society at levels relatively on par with men for decades. Accordingly, where women’s rights were once championed as the most advanced in the region, the destruction of infrastructure, the sweeping and instantaneous privatization of once state-owned companies, and the lack of basic resources such as food, water, electricity, oil, gas and access to basic let alone advanced health care and educative services have provoked a constellation of threats to women’s physical and economic security amidst a dangerous security vacuum. As one woman claimed in the Human Rights Watch report, “we want security...you can’t walk the streets alone. We need security, then freedom...you will make us say we prefer Saddam Hussein’s rule, because then it was safe, even though everyone hated him” (Bjorken et al., p. 7).



Since the overthrow of Iraq's authoritarian and centralized government, and the simultaneous and subsequent processes of "De-Bathification" which has been designed to essentially purge the public sector of workers, including police, from the former regime, the country has been overrun by networks of criminal gangs, militias and paramilitary units, including the complex of shadowy groups that constitute the anti-U.S. insurgency (Susskind, 2007a). Certainly the effects of this security nightmare were the unintended consequences of a botched and poorly executed war plan: "the Americans had not anticipated the need to establish and maintain security across Iraq" (WFWI, 2008, p. 11). As a result, it is estimated that between 50,000 and 1.3 million Iraqis have died from strife since the occupation began, including terrorist attacks, sectarian killings and from criminal activity and more than 400 Iraqi women were abducted and raped within the *first four months* of the occupation (WFWI, p. 17). Given that there has been almost seven years of war in Iraq, and that official statistics often reflect lower estimates, one can imagine what the current figures are.

Notably, half of these women who reported their rapes were then murdered by their families in so-called "honour killings" (WFWI, 2008, p. 15) suggesting that, not only are women's honour tied so intimately to their sexuality, but that place of purgatory or zone of indistinction that a woman may suffer in after being raped calls for her impending death. Generally, these numbers are most likely higher, due to the politics of reporting and collecting information about rape. Although most of the assaults and abductions that took place against women in the immediate aftermath of the invasion occurred in public settings, violence against Iraqi women continues to be perceived as a private family matter, somehow outside the realm of "politics" (WFWI, 2008, p. 15) where legal

recourse is often deemed unnecessary as families tend to “resolve” such cases between themselves (Bjorken et al., 2003, p. 11).

Therefore, women’s issues are still considered to be non-political, especially sexual violence. This is reflected in the HRW report where it investigated cases where:

police were reluctant to investigate cases of sexual assault and abduction and other cases where the police have blamed the victim, doubted her credibility, showed indifference, or conducted inadequate investigations. For these reasons, many women are reluctant to file a complaint. (Bjorken et al., 2003, p. 1)

Indifference towards sexual assault also exists on the part of American soldiers and contractors as well. It could be argued that these two groups work together to assure their illegal practices remain effectively hidden from public scrutiny. “In fact, despite a recent military report recommending criminal charges be filed against at least two Titan employees contracted as translators at Abu Ghraib prison, the U.S. Army has awarded [another] contract to the security firm” (Croke, 2004, ¶21).

Indeed, threats of violence are in fact *produced* by the coalition forces themselves—comprising of American, British, and Iraqi police, soldiers and contractors, in addition to local thugs, roaming mafia-style street gangs, and radical religious groups, many of whom are backed by the U.S.: “women have been systematically attacked by theocratic militias on both sides of the sectarian divide, but the most widespread violence has been committed by the Shiite militias affiliated with the U.S.-backed government—the Badr Brigade and Mahdi Army” (Susskind, 2007c, p. 3). Here, the Pentagon relies on and financially supports militias or “death squads” that commit gross human rights violations (Susskind, p. 12) including the widespread use of rape, torture and abduction and/or trafficking of women, to guarantee its own dominance in an era

where explicit challenges to American military dominance are being made both in and outside Iraq's borders.

The 'misery gangs' of these Shi'ite militias now patrol the streets of Iraq's major cities, attacking women who don't dress or behave to their liking...as the occupying power, the U.S. was obligated by the Hague and Geneva Conventions to provide security to Iraqi civilians, including protection from violence against women. In fact, the U.S. enabled these attacks: in 2005, the Pentagon began providing the Shi'ite Badr Brigade and Mahdi Army with weapons, money and military training in the hopes that these groups would help combat the Sunni-based insurgency. (Suskind, 2007a, ¶3)

Termed the Salvador Option,<sup>4</sup> this is merely one mechanism of many utilized by American elites to maintain its full-spectrum dominance in Iraq, and therefore by extension, the Gulf region. Women's needs come last while the U.S. supports whoever at the time they determine to be of strategic interest, irrespective of their record of committing brutal crimes against women. Here, embedded feminism (Hunt, 2006) is radically, absolutely dis-embedded. Indeed, what happens in Iraq will set the tone for U.S. relations in the greater Middle East. According to one compelling interpretation,

Since the end of World War II, U.S. policy in the Middle East has been guided by an effort to control the region's energy sources. This economic interest has trumped ideological concerns about 'freedom' and 'democracy' (though U.S. actions are always presented in these lofty terms at home). On the ground, the U.S. cultivated Islamists as an alternative to the rule of socialists or Arab nationalists (like Saddam Hussein), who were less amenable to U.S. control over their countries' reserves of oil and natural gas. Despite the myth of a 'clash of civilizations' between Islam and 'the West,' the U.S. has been very comfortable with reactionary, theocratic leaders in the Middle East...these men have made great business partners. (Suskind, 2007c, p. 10)

<sup>4</sup> Iraq is not the first war in which the Pentagon has relied on militias that commit gross human rights violations against civilians. The plan to support what are now known as Iraqi death squads is called the Salvador Option, named after the policy used in Central America in the 1980s where thousands of suspected "leftists" were killed in Honduras. In Iraq, the U.S. is supporting and training Islamist militias that used gender-based violence to impose theocracy.

In an effort to combat Arab nationalism, the U.S has aligned itself with groups who are not necessarily interested in preserving women's security. These aforementioned documented crimes against women have taken place in some of the over 450 U.S. detention centres across Iraq, where women are often utilized as "bargaining chips" in order to avenge other men: in this instance, the female family members of suspected terrorists are threatened with rape in order to garner a confession from the detained individual. Notably, "under Saddam there were thirteen prisons. Now there are 36 run by the government and 200 run by the militias. All these have the approval of the American government" (Susskind, 2007c, p. 20). This re-territorialisation of space in line with neoliberal spatialization techniques comes as no surprise given the characteristics of new wars, when intelligence gathering and highly specialized techniques of data collection, interrogation and weapons systems analysis are part of the very foundation of how modern wars are fought. The explosion of detention centres reflects neoliberal spatialization strategies aimed at regulating, disciplining and processing bodies. This is evident in the case of residents of Tikrit and its neighbouring villages, who were simply imprisoned in the weeks leading up to Hussein's capture. Residents say they woke up one morning to find that the U.S. military had enveloped their villages in barbed wire and set up checkpoints during the night (Croke, 2004).

The explosion of detention centres represents a greater trend of the militarization of space on the part of the U.S. The re-territorialisation of space alongside affiliated discourses of the War on Terror is often accomplished in the name of security or as part of America's anti-terrorism agenda. Women as young as 12 and as old as 60 have been held without charges being laid or any semblance of due process, but essentially as hostages with the hopes of eliciting confessions from their male relatives (Susskind,

2007c), reflecting truly *illiberal* strategies inside a war where core, archetypal liberal values were invoked to justify it in the first place (Dean, 1999; Reid, 2006). Since the modern war machine requires highly specialized men operating under a new transnational-business masculinity ethos to interact with and execute rapidly changing technologies, private security contractors and personnel represent, for some, just a part of the evolutionary requirement of war, for others, a necessary evil.

Private security contractors have been implicated in cases involving the sexual torture of women. “The majority of detention centers where former inmates allege American soldiers and contractors committed acts of abuse were found in and around Baghdad; most of them buildings that had been converted into prisons” (Croke, 2004, ¶16). Moreover rape is committed habitually by all the main armed groups, including those linked to the government. Twenty year-old Sunni Sabrine al-Janabi was gang-raped by three policemen on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at a police station where she was accused of assisting resistance fighters by cooking food for them. In a videotaped statement, Janabi claimed, “I told them, ‘I did not know that an Iraqi could do this to another Iraqi...I begged them not to rape me *and I swore to them that I was a good woman and I am like a sister to them*, but they did it, one after the other” (quoted, in Jamail, 2007, ¶4-5).

Notably, Janabi’s shock over Iraqi’s harming other Iraqi’s is warranted considering that:

U.S. policy forced Iraqis to compete for scarce resources on the basis of sectarian identity and *reoriented Iraqi citizenship on the basis of religion instead of nationality*. At the same time, the U.S. armed and deployed openly sectarian Shiite and Kurdish militias to fight Sunnis and police Sunni neighbourhoods. The U.S. state department has acknowledged that this policy has ‘greatly exacerbated tensions along purely ethnic lines.’ After igniting the civil war, U.S. policies have continued to fuel the violence by giving one side—the Sunni-based insurgency—its raison

d'être, while giving the other side—the Shi'ite-controlled Iraqi security forces—money, weapons, and training. (Susskind, 2007c, p. 16, italics added)

Indeed, women are being murdered throughout Iraq in unprecedented numbers (WFWI, 2008, p. 20) based on information which (falsely) links women with *other* men. Indeed, one report claimed that 63.9% of respondents stated that violence against women in general is on the rise. In central Iraq and Baghdad, the number jumps to 91.8% and 72.0%, respectively (WFWI). Some women are threatened with rape inside prisons where both public and private officials work. Others are indeed raped, often in front of their wanted male relatives, seemingly as a powerful way to communicate the male relative's inability to protect his female family member's physical integrity and honour. Other women have been photographed, videotaped and harassed while naked, and tortured in a variety of other ways, in order to coerce intelligence from men and ultimately force them into confessing (WFWI, p. 20). Some of these visual images have flooded into pornographic internet sites allowing for the perpetual shaming of the victim(s) (Susskind, 2007c, p. 22). While the media has honed in on sexual torture in detention centres against men, little to no gender analysis has been applied to this phenomenon, as such the gender war is overshadowed. Of considerable importance, yet underreported, is the fact that the first pieces of evidence of torture at Abu Ghraib came from a *woman* detainee.

A letter, signed only with the first name Noor, was smuggled out 5 months prior to the now infamous scandal broke out claiming that women were being systematically raped by U.S. soldiers and that some detainees were pregnant as a result of these rapes. According to Haifa Zangana, "the first question asked of female detainees in Iraq is, 'are you Sunni or Shia?' The second is, 'are you a virgin?'" (Zangana, quoted in

Susskind, 2007c, p. 20)? Here, sexuality and religious affiliation merge and effectively “flag” or encode cultural descriptors on bodies. Notably, it has been suspected by multiple local sources that Noor, in addition to at least three other young women who returned to Baghdad pregnant after being released from prison, were killed by their families in what is thought to be honour killings (Susskind, 2007c, p. 21).

The War on Terror has thus facilitated and legitimized the ebb and flow of various strategies of sexual torture against Iraqi civilians on the part of the Coalition and other actors even though torture is officially prohibited by the Geneva Conventions and other international laws. Detention centres are now peppered throughout Iraq for the expressed purposes of interrogating and intelligence gathering. Some are clearly demarcated as official, legitimate spaces of interrogation, and others are set up in abandoned buildings; their legitimacy is therefore questionable. Check-points are also sites of sexual violence, routine humiliation and harassment and as a result many women have said they avoid these areas altogether. Yet torture in the form of rape or threat of rape against women detainees remains silenced and overlooked by the media and political elites.

These sites of violence may indeed represent microcosms of rape camps so ferociously documented in the Bosnian War, where widespread rape served as an explicit military strategy to facilitate ethnic cleansing. Notably, “the state of Iraq now resembles Bosnia at the height of the fighting in the 1990’s when each community fled to places [camps] where its members were a majority and were able to defend themselves” (Cockburn, quoted in Susskind, 2007c, p. 16). Wartime rape in Iraq, although not serving as an expressed purpose to ethnically cleanse the region as was the case in Bosnia, is similarly occurring as a mechanism of communication between competing groups of

men: in the context of Iraq, wartime rape has been committed by a variety of American backed public and private, foreign and local actors competing for legitimacy and struggling over a variety of socio-political, religious, ethnic and economic goals, amidst a backdrop of seemingly endless occupation.

Recall Isin and Rygiel's (2007) conception of the camp as a demarcated space invoking unique juridical procedures and deployments of power over bare, politically incapable or unqualified life. They suggest that frontiers and zones function as spaces where subjects are processed as inexistent beings—non-citizens in waiting. If this is the case, rape as a concept must be expanded to include other forms of physical and sexual torture to really encompass the reality of the continuum of violations that occur in these ill/legitimate spaces, reflecting a kind of hyper-militarized American ill/liberal manoeuvring, under the banner of security. Here, beings are processed through disciplinary strategies of control and regulation in order to demarcate people(s) along racial and ethnic lines. However, bodies are also being processed along sexual lines, and rape is merely one tactic among many where this is accomplished.

This productive, bio-political power is expressed by the fact that women have been utilized as bargaining chips between groups of men in order to gain intelligence, (re)assert protection myths and perform masculinity. The rape of women serves as a communicative strategy between men, signalling which men are able to protect the honour of their women, and those who fail to adequately perform their masculine duty. While (unofficial) torture is justified and indeed supported by some of neoconservative stripes in order to obtain intelligence, it is evident that American intelligence gatherers engage in sexual torture, as exemplified by the U.S. Military Commissions Act (2006)



which served to expunge rape from the definition of torture. Supported by President Bush, the law requires specific proof of intent to commit torture.

But motive is very hard to prove in cases of sexual assault because a defendant can always claim that his motivation was sexual gratification rather than torture. The law limits the definition of rape to sexual penetration (most U.S. states and international law use a broader definition)...under the law, only forcible or coerced penetration is considered rape. Thus...photographs of U.S. military policeman 'having sex' with an Iraqi woman would not be evidence of rape, since they do not necessarily document coercion. Yet, U.S. federal and international law recognizes that rape occurs whenever the victim does not give free and voluntary consent. In a sexual relationship characterized by an extreme disparity of power (such as that between a prison guard and an inmate) consent becomes a hollow concept. The MCA thereby sanctions violence against women by U.S. forces. (Susskind, 2007c, p. 21)

Coupled with the fact that, according to the above passage, sexual violence against women is endorsed by new military laws, there is an obvious overall lack of authority, transparency and hierarchy specifically within detention centres—the result of competing masculinities, ethnicities and religious identities amidst a backdrop of decentralized powers, sweeping privatizations and overall state restructuring. When asked about how such abuse could take place inside these prisons, Col. Dave Quantock responded, “I don’t know. It’s all about leadership. Apparently it wasn’t there” (Rosen & Engelhardt, 2006, ¶25).

Indeed, the functioning of PMCs, especially in relationship to their state-military counterparts, reveals a clear lack of overall authority, accountability and commitment to creating, maintaining and perpetuating civilian, gendered security efforts. Yet neoliberal governmentality claims to project democratic ideals. In a response to the report of the rape of Abeer Qasim Hamzza al-Janabi, the 14-year-old girl who was gang-raped and set on fire by U.S. soldiers, as described at the beginning of this thesis, President Bush

remarked, "Our military is fabulous...we will deal with this in a way that is going to be transparent, above-board and open" (*USA Today*, 2006, ¶6-7). This statement fails to account for the fact that President Bush supported the implementation of a law which both promotes and facilitates the raping of Iraqi women, in addition to the fact that "the military" can no longer be constructed as an impenetrable, homogenized unit; the military reflects merely one aspect or key player of the modern war machine which absolutely, fundamentally *subverts* neoliberal claims to transparent, above-board and open policies.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the age-old idea of the state-soldier, as part of a state-centred-mission, acting on behalf of a state-military is withering away, decaying and eroding whilst the proliferation of PMCs slowly chip away at fixed, collective imaginaries about the state, sovereignty and warfare. The ideological underpinnings of the seemingly permanent PMC promote, and are sustained by, neoliberal re-territorialisation and spatialization techniques, bent towards the ceaseless militarization of space, as exemplified by the textual analysis of material and discursive relations of power that this thesis invokes methodologically.

A significant portion of the data examined the case of U.S. backed detention centres. Here, the feminized rape victim exists in a purgatory or zone of indistinction where she has been rendered bare and unqualified life, at which point she may or may not be killed in order to avenge her attackers and reclaim honour. Yet the rape of women in Iraq has occurred in a variety of sites, by a variety of public and private, foreign and local actors, including those dozens of militias backed by the U.S. government, against women who are equally as diverse in terms of their socio-political, religious and ethnic affiliations and goals. Thus wartime rape in any context cannot be reduced to a simple, ahistorical phenomenon; indeed, wartime rape does not exist in a social vacuum; it has a

history and has produced a constellation of complexities, (silenced) stories, and points worthy of inquiry.

When President Bush announced his war against terror and subsequently invaded Iraq vis-a-vis false claims that linked Iraq to 9/11, feminist eyebrows were raised at the administration's curiously well-timed incorporation of embedded feminism and its sudden interest in "liberating" Iraqi women. Women were hailed both "at home" and "abroad" to support the invasion. However, instead of working towards improving the conditions of women in the aftermath of the unilateral invasion, the Bush administration actively sought, vis-a-vis the Salvador Option, to dismantle any attempts at genuinely feminist security policies. Rather, it subverted women's security by facilitating the raping of women in U.S. backed detention centres, jails and check-points, in addition to other less sensationalist sites. The war has produced sectarian violence, resentment and competition amongst ethnic and religious factions, and a crisis in gender relations.

Yet while articulating the Washington Consensus-style, neoliberal desire for war in Iraq as part of a commitment to an imagined democratic agenda, the Bush administration quietly outsourced many of their security and military operations to U.S.-based PMCs and PMFs with long histories of human rights violations and overall shadiness, making this war effort both the most reliant on private military firms in the history of warfare, and indeed one of the most controversial. These outsourcing activities are underpinned generally by the global restructuring of capitalism bent, in part, towards the privatization of everything and anything that can be commodified, packaged and sold in the marketplace, and specifically by a relationship between war-making and state-making that reflects organized crime (Tilly, 1985). The central claim here is that states actively pursue measures to acquire capital, secure commodified resources and access

to war-making technologies, through coercive means, supported by hegemonic state apparatuses which “educate the masses” according to the dictates of capitalism.

Indeed, this era is characterized by the ascendance of total capitalism (Leys, 2008), or the universal privileging of the standpoint of transnational capital, irrespective of historical, cultural or gender particularities. In this era, privatization(s) entails the re-making of what constitutes the public and private, and thus social relations are re-mapped in accordance with a citizen-as-consumer archetype and the idea that the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence is entirely disrupted. This presents a complex paradox of sovereignty (Rosenberg, 1994) since traditionally sovereign states are defined as such in relation to their access to an unabashed monopoly on violence. When the monopoly on violence is challenged, so too is the major theoretical building block of social theory: sovereignty.

The incorporation of PMCs as an increasingly permanent fixture of modern warfare serves to radically alter the landscape of contemporary killing and wartime rape; this begs the question of which entities and actors are capable of wielding legitimate violence. Surely, these trends towards the outsourcing of war in the areas of information technology, the security of important people and property, interrogation, combat service, military training and strategic advice, logistics and technical support (Alexandra, 2008) reflect the shifting modus operandi of the war machine at the most fundamental level. Theorizing the implications of these transformations entails a re-imagining or re-articulation of what contemporary killing, or the RMA looks like: who the key players are and what their roles, interests, and motivations are.

Once control, planning and oversight are essentially relinquished on behalf of the state military, a heavily corporatized, unaccountable and easily mobile regime manoeuvres amidst the intra-national terrain of warfare avoiding many legal constraints. These corporations are not concerned about the eradication of gendered violence or respectfully participating in repairing anything—a war-torn country or relations between its constituents and occupying forces—but rather guided by an overwhelming interest in the bottom line: satisfying the needs of clients, familiarizing personnel with up and coming weapons systems and technological innovations, undermining the competition, upholding a commitment to a masculine-transnational-business ethic, and the like. Individual contractors reflect a variety of national, personal and professional backgrounds, thus further research, perhaps ethnographic in method, is required to determine their own interpretations of war and their roles. But their impetus is undoubtedly economic; that of the state-soldier—primarily ideological (Wong, 2006). Regardless, the war in Iraq has witnessed the rapid blurring and bleeding of categories of being—soldier, mercenary, civilian, contractor, insurgent, and rapist. The implications of this blurring of categories reflect problems of perception, legitimacy, authority, and the legal status of the diverse network of individuals involved in war making.

As such, wartime rape requires re-theorization that criticizes the generic Rape Story which posits outdated, constraining ideas about gender: namely that masculinity and femininity are somehow inherent, mutually exclusive categories that are directly and permanently anchored in their rightly corresponding biological bodies. The Rape Story supports the notion that raped women always-already enter into a permanent state of victimhood. Criticism of this generic account of rape is best articulated by post-structuralist feminist scholarship on wartime rape, which emerged in relationship to the

Bosnian War, because it unsettles ahistorical, imperialist and essentialist accounts of gender relations. Yet the gendered effects of the privatization of violence have been under-theorized, and thus represent space for new feminist responses across a variety of disciplines. As part of this urgency to provide some academic analysis of the subject of study in question, I have argued that wartime rape is an act of biopower; it serves as both a state-building practice *and* a manifestation of biopolitical governmentality, casting feminized bodies across both anatomo- and bio-political terrains.

Wartime rape is a bio-political process that has been carried in what I have argued is akin to rape camps documented in the Bosnian war. The data pertaining to this phenomenon has revealed sheer complexity of actors involved in the raping of women. Although PMCs represent one force which has proliferated in Iraq both quantitatively and qualitatively, they are but one force amongst several that commits sexual violence against women. What is significant is not the a priori presence of these corporate bodies, but rather the gendered effects of these biopolitical trajectories implicit in the inner-workings of privatized violence. These effects relate to the individual and collective disciplining of women and gender relations. Also, they produce conditions which are hostile to the future of democracy with respect to the transparency and accountability of all those who claim to “liberate” the country of Iraq. Raped Iraqi women and girls like Abeer showcase a rather different story regarding what “liberation” has entailed for them.

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