Gender-based violence in societies under pressure

An analysis of how external conditions and internal relations are connected

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate possible reasons for increased levels of gender-based violence *within* societies put under pressure. I will carry out this aim through using three theoretical dimensions related to structural violence, feminist critique of traditional perceptions of security and theories concerning gender and nationalism. The primary case is women's situation in Palestine after the start of the second intifada and the secondary case is the 2004 tsunami. I argue that reasons for violence in times of societal pressure are found in inequality during times of normality and that the existing hierarchies can be expected to be part of a society's handling of crisis.

Findings of the study suggest that, among other things, generalizations regarding reasons and mechanisms resulting in increased violence are possible and the comparison of the two cases show many similarities despite vastly different contexts. Furthermore the paper argues that a change in external conditions directly affects the internal relations of a society.

Key words: gender, structural violence, intimate-partner violence, Palestine, tsunami

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1   Introduction

In the last decade feminist academics have analyzed the different ways in which conflict affect men and women. The basic idea is that as all other fields of human activity war and conflict lead to different roles and consequences for men and women. A logic starting point was to investigate what women do in times of conflict and how they were affected by an ongoing conflict. In this strand of research a number of aspects have been found and analysed, for example the use of rape as a weapon and method for ethnic cleansing and the different images of nation that men and women come to be reduced to in times of conflict. The terms war and peace have strong gendered implications. As the methods and ways to wage wars have changed the targets of the militaries have also changed. The vast majority of victims now consist of civilians, a group that tends to include a majority of women. Women are also mainly absent from peacemaking processes although they often are affected more than men by armed conflicts as a result of the increased targeting of civilians.[1]

Not seldom the struggle for national liberation means less security and more intimate-partner violence[2] for women. It is also women who are affected first when there is no more money. When women try to change their situation they are told that the national struggle must be prioritized over the struggle for equality and women's rights. As the struggle for liberation or security is the most important women's situation will continue to be low on the list.

At the same time conflicts or other changes in society can provide women with the space and opportunity to advance their positions. Research however points in the direction that advances made under times of crisis usually is rolled back after the end of crisis and a return to everyday life. However, research on this point is ambiguous and would be an interesting subject for further studies.

This essay is inspired and influenced by research made by previous feminist thinkers interested in gender, conflict and international relations. But this paper differs from "the usual study object" in attempting to analyze and discuss how societal pressure (whether due to armed conflict, famine, environmental disasters, poverty etc.) affects gender relations *within* the affected society, i.e. at the domestic level. Focus will thus not be what happens on the battlefield or how the combatants treat each other, but rather how changes in outer circumstances also change the dynamic within a society. The ambition of the paper is to continue and

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[1] Tickner, Ann J. 1992. *Gender in International Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press. Preface.
[2] Intimate-partner violence is a term used for all kinds of physical and psychological violence that adults or adolescents use against their partners

broaden the discussion about the gendered effects of societies under pressure by also including the hitherto widely neglected course of events on the "home front".

In doing this the paper attempts to fill a gap in the research produced so far by placing intimate-partner violence *within* a societal context and therefore being directly influenced by militarization, material conditions and other general phenomena connected to societal pressure.[3]

Starting point for the paper was a newspaper-article stating that there had been a 150 percent increase in intimate-partner violence since the second Palestinian intifada (uprising) started in the year 2000. Seemingly Palestinian men's frustration and anger over a difficult situation lead to an increase in intimate-partner violence, and Palestine was therefore chosen as one of the cases to be studied closer for the purpose of this paper. The ambition is to have a broad approach that includes various kinds of situations that puts pressure on a society besides armed conflict. Examples of this could be environmental disasters, famine, poverty and economic recession. It has become clear as the work has progressed, however, that most of the material and previous research deal with armed conflict situations.[4]

The choice of Palestine as case study thus means that armed conflict is the focus of the analysis. However, a working thesis for the paper is that despite differences and added complexity in the case of armed conflict, it results in a situation where the society is put under pressure and that therefore parallels to societies put under other kinds of pressure will be possible.

The paper employs structuralist oriented theories to discuss the different ways the home-front and the front are connected. In this the paper connects to a long established theoretical feminist critique of the constructed divide between public and private, war and peace and men and women.

The paper mainly deals with a theoretical discussion about the possible factors that can help explain the processes behind the increase in intimate-partner violence. To support the discussion a case-study is chosen as a way to back the theoretical discussion with empirical data. The chosen case is the situation for Palestinian women since the outbreak of the second al-Aqsa Intifada in the year 2000. A number of studies point in the direction that intimate-partner violence have drastically increased after the year 2000. As a secondary case the gendered impacts of the 2004 tsunami is chosen in order to facilitate a comparing discussion.

Given the highly emotional aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a critical attitude has to be adapted in relation to the empirical material. As this paper does not directly deal with the animosity between Israel and Palestine or other aspects of the conflict, but focuses on the internal dynamic of the Palestinian society some of the highly subjective material can be avoided.

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[3] Adelman, Madelaine, "The Military, militarism and the militarization of domestic violence". *Violence Against Women*, 2003;9;1118. P. 119-1120.
[4] Ahlsén, Pernilla. "Sverige sviker kvinnorna i Israel och Palestina". *Flamman* 7/2-2008.

However, there is reason to assume that material and views about injustices inside the Palestinian society are concealed since the conflict is still ongoing. The position and abilities for the women's rights and feminist organisations to criticise events can further be expected to be restricted, something that is underlined by Simona Sharoni in her book *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*.

Another reason for choosing women's situation in Palestine is that there are studies and data that go more than 30 years back in time. This does not exist for many of the other potential countries which for various reasons are subjected to pressure. The paper does not engage in the discussion about conflict in general or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, but stresses the increase in internal violence directed primarily at Palestinian women.

If structural violence is a part of everyday life it is also likely to be part of a societies' response to disasters or armed conflicts. It is therefore vital to address this level of analysis and point to the connections between peacetime inequalities and events that seem extraordinary because they occur in times of disaster or armed conflict, but in fact are based on the "normal" relations between individuals and groups of individuals. If we are to react and try to mitigate terrible situations this understanding is crucial.[5]

1.1   Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate and discuss the different ways gender relations are affected in a society under pressure, and more specifically how the subsequent increase in violence against women can be understood and explained.

In order to do this, I concentrate both on earlier research and theoretical discussions on the subject, and on two different case studies, namely the deteriorating situations for women during the second Palestinian intifada and after the 2004 tsunami.

1.2   Understanding violence and gender: A qualitative, constructivist approach

A qualitative method - instrumental case study - as defined by Robert Stake have been chosen for this paper. The reason for this is that the analysis will be strengthened by connecting it to empirical data. My aim is to connect this specific case to the theories to see if there are phenomena possible to generalise.

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[5] Scheper-Hughes, N, Bourgois, P. 2004. *Violence in War and Peace*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. P. 20.

The instrumental case study is defined by its secondary interest in the actual case and mainly plays the role of illustrating another, more abstract phenomenon. It is not the particular case that is the chief interest but the chain of events that might lead to a specific situation. The choice of the case is made in order to facilitate the understanding of another interest.[6]

The case helps to extract some of the particularities of Palestinian women's situation, but the aim of the paper is primarily to investigate whether there also are phenomena possible to generalise. For this reason a parallel to the tsunami disaster in 2004 will be drawn.

The paper is written within a social constructionist theoretical framework which in short is based on a criticism of the positivist claim that objective knowledge is possible and that the researcher through analysis can find what "really happened". According to a social constructionist position reality isn't absolute or objective, and the researcher will therefore always affect the result of the analysis with his/her own opinions.[7]

The researcher's role in doing research can in this context be problematic. With the understanding of the "value-laden nature of inquiry"[8] the researcher has to make many choices under the production of a paper. To begin with, the choice of subject already reflects the researcher's field of interest. In short: the researchers own opinion obviously has part in the finished product. It is important however that this also applies to positivist research despite the claim for objectivity and neutrality. I argue that a transparent research with careful references is by far more honest than the positivist claim to be completely neutral in relation to one's own research.

Methodologically I have mainly tried to handle the researcher's role by being careful with references. In order to make the paper transparent as many references as possible have been included to make it possible for the reader to reconstruct the chain of thoughts and the conclusions. By doing so it will be possible to decide whether reasonable conclusions from the existing material have been made.

My hope is that the references make the text transparent and thereby open for other researcher's assessments of the results.

In problematizing and illustrating women's situation in a society in crisis the paper is influenced by the feminist strand of research, which among many other things "centers and makes problematic women's diverse situations as well as the institutions that frame those situations."[9] A vital part of this is also to question "taken-for-granted" ideas about what women do in a specific context that tends to

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[6] Stake, Robert: "Qualitative Case Studies" in Denzin, N. Lincoln, Y. 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Third Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. P. 445.
[7] Schwandt, Thomas A: "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism" in Denzin, Norman K., Lincoln, Yvonna S. (ed.) (2003): *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications Thousand Oaks, p. 305-306.
[8] Denzin and Lincoln: "Introduction" in The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. P. 10.
[9] Olesen, Virginia L: "Feminisms and Qualitative Research at and Into the Millenium" in *The Landcape of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. P. 333.

be based on gendered stereotypes or prejudice.[10] Implicitly this also means discussing and problematizing men's positions.

1.2.1 Sources and material

To be able to answer my questions I use theoretical literature and studies related to my field of interest and empirical material for the case studies. I have focused on analysing and discussing the mechanisms behind various chains of events and therefore concentrated on the theoretical discussion. To support the analysis a case study is used to provide empirical information about the situation for women in Palestine since the start of the second intifada as well as the gendered impacts of the 2004 tsunami.

The empirical material for the case consists of a number of reports dealing with the situation in Palestine. Some of them focus directly on women's situation after the start of the second intifada in 2000, while other focus on Palestine in general. Besides the reports a few academic articles as well as a number of newspaper articles have been used. The information about the tsunami is mainly from an Oxfam International report and an article in the academic journal *International Social Work*. Certain weaknesses of the empirical material regarding number of sources as well as different kinds of sources are outweighed by the fact that the theoretical and more abstract discussion is central to the paper.

The theoretical literature consists of the three strands of thought that are focused in the analysis. These theories are further explained in each section below but can be put under three somewhat different categories: The first is theories discussing structural violence. I have mainly supported this section with articles from the anthology *Violence in War and Peace* edited by the anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois. The second theoretical category is based on the feminist critique of the traditional ways of defining security as well as a broader critique of International Relations in general. Here I have mainly used Ann J. Tickner, who has written on these subjects for more than 20 years. One of the standard works in this category – Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* – have also been consulted.

In the last category, discussing women and nationalism, the main source is Nira Yuval-Davis and her book *Gender and Nationalism*.

For specific information about women in Palestine Simona Sharoni's book *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* has been used.

1.2.2 The scope of the study

There are many ways to theorize about the possible reasons for an increase in intimate-partner violence in societies under pressure. The limitations of this paper

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[10] Olesen, p. 333.

have forced me to focus on but a few factors. However, I argue that the chosen ones are relevant and coherent, and that the paper thus makes an interesting, although not full perspective on the gendered effects of societal crisis.

To choose Palestine as a case study obviously also means choosing a situation with an endless number of complex relations. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is by now 60 years old and has probably shaped the inhabitants more than any other individual factor over the last century.

The primary case study in this paper is Palestine after the start of the second intifada. As the research has progressed the need for an additional case to compare some of the phenomena from Palestine have become increasingly clear. In order to facilitate this I have chosen the 2004 tsunami as a relevant and interesting case to compare the findings of the primary case. To discuss the tsunami also means that some attention can be given to contexts that are not involved in armed conflict and therefore put under pressure by other reasons.

Another kind of limitation is the fact that women are not a homogenous group. In writing a paper about "women's conditions" a big risk of obscuring existing differences within the group of women occur. For instance the demands for security posed by women living in the West are different than the ones posed by women living in the developing world. For this reason one cannot assume that there exists a natural "sistership" between women living in different parts of the world.[11]

These differences are structured through various dimensions of power and discrimination that, for instance, can include class, ethnicity, sexuality and religion. The effects of societal pressure on women *in general* therefore carry an implicit contradiction. Women with adequate funds can obviously always escape the worst effects of a particular situation. In the case of Palestine this can, for instance, mean relieving the pressure on the family by affording to buy food despite of drastic increases in food prices or the ability to remain employed. With this said, there is at the same time a need to generalise, as certain gendered effects of the occupation affect women (and men) generally. An example of this can, for instance, take the shape of giving birth while waiting for permission to cross one of the border controls.

To speak about women without speaking about men can be compared to clapping hands with one hand only.[12] It can be argued that speaking about women always includes also speaking, though indirectly, about men. To speak about men *directly* contains, however, many advantages, one being to simply emphasize men as a gender. For the purposes of this paper a discussion about masculinity and the contradictions and problems masculinity faces in stressful times would be relevant is only dealt with indirectly, but would be an interesting and necessary topic for further studies.

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[11] Hudson, Heidi. "'Doing' security as though humans matter: A feminist perspective on gender and the politics of human security". *Security Dialogue* 2005; 36; 155. P. 157.
[12] Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. *Gender & Nation*. London: Sage Publications. P. 1.

2 Theoretical perspectives: The need for a new standpoint

This heading presents the theoretical perspectives that are used to answer the statement of purpose. Thus focus is on using theory illustrating gendered dimensions of the ways societies react in times of crisis or pressure. Central are questions regarding in which ways violence and oppression in peacetime relate to violence and oppression in societies under pressure. Of specific interest is the social construction of certain definitions and understandings of masculinity, femininity, sexuality and gender relations.

Three theoretical dimensions are chosen which in short can be described as structural theories on violence, feminist theories challenging traditional ways of defining security and theories concerning women and nationalism.

The theories are based on social constructionism, which in short means that we don't find empirical knowledge in our studies but rather that we construct or make it. The results of the specific study will always depend on the researcher's own opinions and bias.[13] Derived from this is that it therefore isn't possible to describe a chain of events objectively or "as it really happened". The researcher's role is according to this view not to find the truth but rather to interpret a phenomenon and give his/hers interpretation.

Gender is a fundamental part of the way we structure reality and also opens doors to analysing unequal power relationships based on other factors. Gender is commonly understood as a synonym for women but actually refers to the system (or structure) of human relations within which perceived biological differences when it comes to reproduction are made significant in the social arena. In other words, how a society relates and defines the human body and which consequences this definition gets for individual's personal life. [14]

Another key to the theoretical discussion is to analyse the various ways in which sexuality and the physical bodies become inscribed with a range of (gendered) political meanings especially in times of conflict. In peacetime the body can symbolise the core of everyday oppression and domination. In times when a society is under pressure the way bodies and sexuality are viewed change and become infused by a number of other meanings. The hierarchies gain importance and female and male bodies are filled with latent meanings of nation, peace, war etc. Basically individual bodies are in this way made social bodies.

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[13] Schwandt, Thomas A: "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism" in Denzin, Norman K., Lincoln, Yvonna S. (ed.) (2003): *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications Thousand Oaks. P. 305-306.
[14] Connell, R.W. 2002. *Om genus*. Göteborg: Daidalos. P. 20-22.

Here Nira Yuval-Davis theories about gender and nationalism provide a useful tool to analyse the mechanisms at work in this process and how acts considered individual or personal in times of peace becomes acts directed against a whole group of people in times of war. Another source is Robert Connell who talks about the human body as a canvas that can be inscribed with different meanings and significance according to context. With this approach focus is shifted from the body itself as important to instead analyse the social arena in which different attributes are inscribed on the body.[15]

To speak about violence requires a definition of what violence really is. Usually the term violence is associated with physical violence inflicted by one person on another. But obviously we can also include acts such as verbal abuse and the threat of violence. What different individuals perceive to be violence also differs in relation to that person's background or the specific context in which some of the definitions are set. The different discourses and struggles concerning how to define violence points with this understanding to its social and political nature. To be able to clearly define what violence means has clear and direct implications for policy and moral. If violence in the private sphere is placed on the same level as street violence or violence between states it puts an immediate pressure on states to act. The *construction* of what violence "really is" therefore mirrors interests and power positions. This parallels the discussion about security and whom gets to define a secure life.[16]

The examples of theories accounted for above are all interesting and relevant aspects that can be applied to different problems. One shortage in most of them is, however, that they lack a holistic view of human relations. They focus on one area of human relations leaving the rest to other theories to investigate. The discussion on structural violence will however show the many connections between various areas of human activity, how war and peace are related, how militarised masculinity is connected to intimate-partner violence and how gender is a fundamental way we structure reality, but also that gender isn't always the most important factor in determining the reasons for oppression. Intersectional theory is an attempt to bridge these gaps in the individual theories and can with this analysis be a way to combine different sets of power, domination and oppression in order to understand how and why complex mechanisms act and interact.

2.1   A structural approach to violence

A structural approach to violence mainly focuses on the macro level. In this view violence can be traced to uneven economic distribution, attitudes, institutions etc. which together create and maintain hierarchies in a society. These

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[15] Connell, p. 54-55.
[16] Stanko, Elisabeth A. "Introduction" in Stanko, Elisabeth A. (ed.) 2003. *The Meanings of Violence*. London: Routledge. P. 73.

structured inequalities further work to facilitate and legitimise violence as a reasonable and acceptable way of solving problems with groups of people categorised in an unfavourable way. Values that places priority with a specific characteristic or trait over other characteristics and traits in the same way work to prolong the differences between the categories. An illustration of this is how (constructed) institutions such as heterosexuality is made normal and how all other sexualities therefore are viewed as abnormal or exceptions. This creates an environment within which it is easy to oppress or insult people with other sexual identities than heterosexuality.

In this paper the structural approach to violence is used to discuss links between private and public, between peace and war, normal situations and when societies are put under pressure. One assumption is that violence in times of conflict or societal pressure is rooted in everyday life. In the words of Maria Olujic, who writes about the extensive gender-based violence during the conflict in former Yugoslavia: "[t]o understand the public violence in former Yugoslavia requires insight not only of wartime 'culture of violence', but also of the 'culture of peacetime'. The two are inextricably linked."[17]

Based on this understanding a discussion on *how* these link and affect each other can be made without giving in to notions that structure controls individuals' every move. Vital is, however, not to view violence as individual, for instance based on biology, but as something that is related to, and based in, society.

To theorize around these issues, with how Palestinian women are affected by violence in the family as an example, we need to have both an understanding of the particular local context, including its history and culture, but also look at how this is shaped by contemporary politics and local culture. In the Palestinian case this can, for instance, mean an understanding of how Palestinian women are affected by violence in the family *connected* to the pressures of the intifada and occupation.[18] "

I join Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois in their definition of structural violence as:

"the violence of poverty, hunger, social exclusion and humiliation – inevitably translates into intimate and domestic violence [...] The social and cultural dimensions of violence are what gives violence its power and meaning. Focusing exclusively on the physical aspects of torture/terror/violence misses the point and transforms the project into a clinical, literary, or artistic exercise".[19]

So for the purposes of this paper it is crucial to understand the connections and relations between the ways in which a society acts under times of pressure and the

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[17] Olujic, Marija. "Embodiment of terror: gendered violence in peacetime and wartime in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina". *Medical Anthropology Quarterly, New Series*, Vol. 12, No. 1, The embodiment of violence, (Mar., 1998). P. 32.
[18] Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes as cited in Farmer, Paul, 2004. "An Anthropology of Structural Violence" in *Current Anthropology*, Volume 45, Number 3, June 2004. P. 20.
[19] Scheper-Hughes, Bourgois, p. 1.

"normal" situation. This points to an understanding of how structured inequality in the shape of gender relations shape that same society under "normal" conditions and how inequalities are exacerbated under times of crisis.[20]

Although many times not premeditated or even conscious, one effect of this structured inequality can, be very violent on an individual level. To identify these outbursts as part of a broader structure can be difficult, as structural violence usually is invisible being a part of everyday life and therefore nothing special. The focus on abnormal violence (war crimes, crimes against humanity etc.) in times of armed conflict is with this perspective understandable but results in ideas that place that violence in a different – pathological or extraordinary – category and detaches it from the everyday violence, such as the battering of women.[21]

Other effects of the structured inequality are material which, for instance, leads to certain groups not being given the same possibilities to attend school, higher education as well as different access to tools that can be used to advance one's position. This obviously also work to prolong the division and discrimination of specific groups in a society.

Class also plays a crucial role in relation to material effects of inequality. Even though physical violence occurs in families of all socioeconomic groups, women living in poverty are disproportionately affected. Protracted unemployment also tends to have devastating effects in patriarchal societies and previous research shows how the stress on the household unemployment means can translate into violence.[22]

Essentially, what a structural approach to violence does is to blur the borders between different types of violence and to illuminate the continuum of violence that reaches all the way from everyday intimate-partner violence to genocide. "There is no primary impulse out of which mass violence and genocide are born, it is ingrained in the common sense of everyday social life."[23]

With the perspective of a continuum of violence that exceeds the constructed divide between normality and abnormality, peace and war, everyday and special days, it becomes clear that the traditional definition of peace isn't separated from but rather intimately connected to war and crisis. That everyday violence, like rape and racist assault, is considered peace in relation to the battlefield, illustrates the view that violence in the public arena is deemed more dangerous and important than violence in the private sphere.[24]

With the problems of defining what violence "really is", discussed in the beginning of this section above, also follows that the meaning of a specific act of violence is defined after the actual act have been carried out. The meaning of the act becomes established after the fact as individuals or groups of individuals

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[20] Sharoni, Simona 1995. *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. New York: Syracuse University Press. P. 6.
[21] Sheper-Hughes, Bourgois, p. 4-5.
[22] World Bank, March 5, 2003. *Two years of Intifada, Closure and Palestinian Economic Crisis. An Assessment*.
[23] Scheper-Hughes, Bourgois, p. 20-21.
[24] Scheper-Hughes, Bourgois, p. 20-21.

interpret the situation within a social, economic and political context. Who defines, and how this happens, is thus focused as an arena in which meaning is produced.[25] A direct consequence of this is to examine differences in access to power and who are in a position to define as opposed to being defined. In other words, to begin putting violence in a societal context, in which existing hierarchies and basis for discrimination is seen as contributing factors to the outbursts of violence. With this view violence against women is a social problem and not an individual one. As proposed by Elisabeth A. Stanko, and mentioned above, violence is closely related to discrimination and (often unequal) social relations.[26]

The produced meaning and definitions also balance on the line between legitimate and illegitimate, permissible and impermissible violence. In the context of the Israel-Palestinian conflict this is clearly illustrated by the celebration or condemnation of some acts as justified or as terrorism.[27]

In continuation of this it is possible to say that many acts of violence aren't abnormal at all, but rather in line with the dominant perceptions of where the border between justified and illegal violence is drawn. A consequence of this argument is that violence in some contexts not only is permissible but even actively supported.

The sharp distinction between war and peace can also be used to hide criminal acts occurring in peacetime. In her article "Who Will Declare War on Terrorism against Women?" Catharine MacKinnon asks herself why September 11th led to swift acts when the constant and universal oppression of women is considered everyday life and not as a war on women. MacKinnon argues that the ongoing war on terrorism defies traditional rules regulating international law, since non-state agents were on both sides of the planecrashes. Since al-Qaeda isn't a state, a new legal practice rapidly developed in order to frame the attacks as the starting point of a war. MacKinnon's point is that what is considered peacetime isn't peace at all – if you are a woman. Her question, formulated in relation to 9/11, is "when will opposition to terrorism include the daily terrorism against women as women that goes on day after day; world- wide?"[28]

2.2 Feminist critique of traditional conceptions of security

25 Burman, M. Brown, J. Batchelor, S. "'Taking it to heart': girls and the meanings of violence" in Stanko, Elisabeth A. (ed.) 2003. *The Meanings of Violence*. London: Routledge. P. 77.
26 Stanko, p. 4.
27 Scheper-Hughes, Bourgois, p. 2.
28 MacKinnon, Catherine. "Who Will Declare War on Terrorism against Women?" in *The Women's Review of Books*, Vol. 19, No. 6, (Mar., 2002).

Theories about international relations have historically been a field dominated by men. Traditional areas of interest have, with few exceptions, excluded women's experiences, and women have seldom been portrayed as actors in international politics. Instead men's experiences, hopes and fears have conventionally been the point of interest and have thus privileged men's knowledge and experience.[29] Somehow international politics has been perceived as isolated from other areas of politics. The doctrines of security, war and peace is a world inhabited by soldiers, diplomats and international civil servants taking key policy-decisions, which men for some reason have special qualities to handle.

Basic for this strand of feminist thought is that different individuals will define a secure environment differently according to their special context. Here a divide between men and women as well as between women living in the west and women living in developing parts of the word can be observed.

International Relation (IR) studies have been influenced by the general gender inequality, but have at the same time produced and reproduced gendered images connected to International Politics. The classical aspects of masculinity are in this way closely linked to courage, strength, violence and the use of force. In this discourse these characteristics are connected to honourable deeds like defending one's country.[30]

One aim of feminist IR scholars is to criticise this silence in traditional IR discourse on (state) security concerning the neglect of women's prevailing insecurity and further to connect women's insecurity to unequal power-relations. Another aim is to question (false) dichotomies, which according to feminist theory are ways to create hierarchies closely related to gender. In IR-theory this model can be detected in the sharp distinction between an anarchic outside/public sphere and the harmonic inside/private sphere. Closely related to this is the image of the man-soldier-subject and the woman-caregiver-object. Few stories exist about women as warriors, and women are generally seen as victims and seldom as agents.[31]

The dominant realist school of IR theory is, in accordance to this, mainly interested in preventing war and the rise and fall of states. It is inspired by Hobbes and others' understanding of everlasting "anarchical" animosity between states trying to defend their own interest on the international arena. One way to solve this dilemma is to prepare for war.[32] In essence the realist assumptions about the world can be summarized in this quote:

> The most dangerous threat to both a man and a state is to be like a woman because women are weak, fearful, indecisive, and dependent – stereotypes that […] still surface when assessing women's suitability for the military and the conduct of foreign policy today.[33]

[29] Tickner, preface.
[30] Tickner, p. 6.
[31] Tickner, p. 48.
[32] Tickner, p. 9-11.
[33] Tickner, p. 39.

To speak about security while excluding large parts of the population seems, with this understanding, as very misguided. An aim of this paper is to show how and why the levels of violence and domination increase in times of societal crisis.

Essentially this means bridging the gap between private and public spheres and showing how they are interrelated rather than independent. Similarly feminist thinkers, like Cynthia Enloe and Cynthia Cockburn, have analysed how a militarization of societies affects masculinity and femininity as well as changes gender relations in peacetime. With this they also bridge the gap between the public and the private and between peace and war.

One example of how gender isn't deemed relevant when it comes to "high politics" is that gender issues were not a part of the US-sponsored peace negotiations following the first Palestinian intifada in 1991. This was at that time something that passed uncommented and unnoticed.[34]

On a similar note, HRW concludes that many of the Palestinian Authority officials seem to view security only in terms of the occupation. A consequence of this is that the PA neglect to act against the increasing levels of violence in the family.[35]

In the discussion about security a key feminist argument is that national security isn't isolated from security within the state. Based on the above discussion on structural violence, it seems clear that the way states act internally has a direct effect on how they act internationally, and that militarism, sexism and racism are interconnected. As shown in this paper the levels of violence in families increase drastically as a consequence of wars or other sources of societal pressure. Other studies have shown that women are particularly vulnerable to rape in militarised societies.[36]

With the above discussion on structural violence in mind, it seems clear that violence against women and other oppressed groups only can be understood if the private sphere is taken into consideration and emphasised, and if the strict dichotomies influencing much of IR-theory are blurred.

Security should instead be defined along the lines of elimination of violence, regardless if it is military, economic or sexual.[37] Another way of doing this could be to introduce the term "human security", built on the feminist analysis in which state security isn't enough. – Individuals and groups of individuals need not only protection from other states but also protection from their own state and from other individuals.

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[34] Sharoni, p. 15.
[35] Human Rights Watch. November 2006. "A question of Security. Violence against Palestinian women and girls". Volume 18, No. 7(E). P. 6.
[36] Tickner, p. 56.
[37] Tickner, p. 66.

2.3   Women and nationalism in societies in crisis

With a basic definition nationalism can be said to have its roots in 18th century Europe and assume a complete correspondence between national boundaries and the boundaries of the state.[38] Being a highly researched field a number of theorists have investigated different dimensions of nationalist development. There are of course a number of differences between different kinds of nationalisms as well as between nationalism in different contexts. For example it can be noted that nationalism based on the myth of a common history and shared blood/genes tend to be the most exclusionist version. There are clear links here to racism and the idea of a homogenous collectivity making "deviants" unwanted or disturbing.

For the reasons of this paper a basic perception of nationalism as a number of doctrines or political movements that strives to unify a population with a common history and a common goal is sufficient.

In relation to the discussion above on the feminist critique of International Relations theory, this tradition's view on states as a singular identity points to that IR-theory supports the suppression of internal heterogeneity. It also supports the division between public and private spheres.

In relation both to Israel and Palestine Simona Sharoni writes that national security and national liberation discourses are similar in the way they both see the unity of the nation as superior to any splintering demand that might come from individual citizens within the nation. One result of this view on national security and national liberation respectively is that social and economic problems within both the Israeli- and the Palestinian societies are not deemed important until the conflict is over.[39]

Women's role as "mothers of the nation" can be illustrated by the struggle over reproductive rights. For many feminists reproductive rights, for instance to be able to decide when to have children, are for a basis for emancipation. According to Yuval-Davis the pressure on women to have or not to have children is usually not related to women as individuals but rather to women as part of a bigger national project. This is clearly noticeable in Israel where women are urged to give birth to as many children as possible in order to check Palestinian's large population increase.

One aspect of this is that the male and female characteristics become increasingly polarized at times when societies are put under pressure. At times of crisis there are unique possibilities for gendered stereotypes to permeate the whole society in a fundamental way that isn't in the same way possible during more normal periods, and in part explains the retreat to gendered roles connected to the reproduction of the nation.[40] Symbolically and discursively this can mean being pictured as mothers of the nation or other ways of connecting femininity with

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[38] Yuval-Davis, p. 11.
[39] Sharoni, p. 36.
[40] Tickner, p. 47.

nationalism. Stereotypes such as women being responsible for the household seem to gain importance for a number of reasons and women are on a practical and material level increasingly forced (back) into the private sphere.

A central finding of early feminist analysis was the division of society into a public- and a private sphere and how these separated areas of human life are rigidly connected to ideas about men and women. The tendency to view society in terms of dichotomies is an old (and mainly western) phenomenon and ultimately falls back on the difference between nature and culture. Women, being "naturally connected" to childrearing and household duties, are identified with nature and accordingly placed in the private sphere. Men are conceived as opposite of this and placed in the public sphere burdened by the demand for creative and productive activity. Related to the discussion on gender and nationalism is the construction of women as mothers of the nation implicating women's role as bearer's of the collective and reproducers of the nation.[41]

An example of this is according to Simona Sharoni how Palestinian women during the first three years of the first intifada increasingly were depicted as "mothers of the nation" and were increasingly seen as combining the continuity of the Palestinian resistance with the special warmth and care of womanhood.[42]

A key here is that the meanings ascribed to men's, but especially women's, bodies change in relation to context. In peacetime, women's bodies tend to be given individual meanings. This rapidly changes in times of conflict when women's bodies are ascribed with meanings related to nation and community – in other words social meanings.[43] An illustration of this is the different significance rape is given depending on context. In peacetime the vast prevalence of rape is usually considered as an individual crime depending on factors such as the woman's sexual habits, the psychological state of the perpetrator etc. In times of war rape is commonly used a weapon and is in that context given a meaning suggesting that it's not the actual woman who is central but rather the insult against the men of her nation. An intimate play with gender relations rape as a weapon is mainly considered as an insult to the men on the opposite side who fails to protect their women and children.

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[41] Yuval-Davis, p. 37.
[42] Sharoni, p. 35.
[43] Olujic, p. 45.

3 Case studies

To investigate the validity of the paper's thesis two cases have been chosen. The primary case is the situation for women in Palestine after the start of the second intifada and the secondary case is the gendered effects of the 2004 tsunami. They comprise of two totally different situations set in very different settings. The only common denominator is that the societies are, for different reasons, put under tremendous pressure. A comparison of these cases will serve to investigate the particularities of each society, as well as point to similar processes and tendencies, that despite the different contexts appear.

The situation for Palestinian women in the occupied territories have been described and written about by many writers over the years. Focus for studies have among others been the development of the Palestinian women's movement, the women's movement's role in the struggle for independence, the difference in women's and other group's participation in the first and second intifada and how Palestinian and Israeli men and women have been affected by the militarization of their respective society. This paper is mainly interested in how the gender relations in the Palestinian society has changed since the start of the second intifada in 2000, but to make the events after 2000 comprehensible some (very brief) background concerning the background of the Intifada will be provided as well. Although the paper doesn't delve into the particularities of the Israel-Palestine conflict, some information to contextualise the case is necessary in order to be able to understand the very special dynamics that occur during the second intifada.

To further illustrate and investigate the general nature of the Palestinian case the gendered effects of the 2004 tsunami will be investigated as well. Above all this will facilitate a comparison between the two cases and thus make it easier to discern the particularities of each case, as well as common processes. The information is mostly based on an Oxfam International report titled *How Women were affected by the Tsunami: a perspective from Oxfam* published in 2005. Additional information comes from an article published in *International Social Work in* 2007.

3.1 The Palestinian Case

3.1.1 Background and contextualisation

The Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) includes Gaza and the West Bank which were created after the Arab-Israeli war in 1949. The result of the conflict was a division of the former Mandate Palestine into three zones – Gaza, West Bank and Israel. After another war in 1967 Israel occupied Gaza and the West Bank and later annexed East Jerusalem in 1980. Over the next 26 years Israel ruled the occupied territories through a military administration that controlled large parts of the civilian Palestinian's lives, including restrictions on mobility, freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

In 1987 the first intifada (rebellion) started in the OPT channelling the Palestinian population's resentment to the occupation. The intifada ended in 1993 with what came to be known as the Oslo accords which included a mutual recognition of Israel and PLO, and a withdrawal of Israeli troops from some parts of the West Bank and Gaza. Furthermore a Palestinian authority with limited power was to be set up. The Accords was supposed to end with final talks in 1999 but were never concluded.[44]

The Oslo accords led to the creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA) by the PLO. This authority had a president, a cabinet of ministers and a Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The elections to the PLC in 1996 were boycotted by most parties as a protest against the Oslo accords and won by Yasser Arafat's PLO coalition.

After negotiations failed, the second intifada was initiated in 2000 and is still ongoing. Israel has since 2000 embarked on a number of unilateral actions including the construction of a wall mainly in the West Bank and the recurring closure of checkpoints and borders. The second intifada had disastrous results on the PA's economy. A 2003 report from the World Bank states that "[u]sing a poverty line of US$2 per day, the World Bank estimated that 21 percent of the Palestinian population were poor on the eve of the intifada, a number that increased to about 60 percent by December 2002. Accounting for population growth, the numbers of the poor have tripled, from 637,000 to just under 2 million."[45]

In 2006 Hamas, created in Gaza in 1987 as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, won the parliamentary elections for the PLC. This ignited a storm of criticism across the world, both EU and USA defines Hamas as a terrorist organisation, and many countries cut diplomatic relations with the PA. Besides this EU and Japan cut all development aid to Palestine. Israel stopped transferring tax revenues amounting to 50-60 million US dollars per month. All of this led to a big crisis for the PA which as of September 2006 stopped being able to pay the salaries of its 165.000 civil servants on time. "Many employees have stopped showing up for work, some can no longer afford the transportation costs of commuting […] and UN agencies and other international sources are reporting

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[44] HRW, p. 10-11.
[45] World Bank.

that the OPT appeared on the verge of economic collapse and humanitarian crisis."[46]

The OPT is not a sovereign state and the Palestinian Authority is not a sovereign government although they have retained some governmental functions, including a criminal justice system. Because of a complicated partition of the occupied territories the PA only has jurisdiction in certain areas that commonly are cut off from each other by large areas without jurisdiction. In the West Bank Israel controls 60 percent of the total area.[47] These aggravating circumstances have made effective administration of the OPT difficult and put the PA's authority in question.

3.1.2 Gender and the second intifada

The Human Rights Watch report *A question of Security - Violence against Palestinian women and girls* was published in 2006 and evaluates the prevalence of gender-based violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The report states that "it is already well established that violence against women and girls inside the family is a serious problem in the OPT"[48] and tries to investigate why this situation is prolonged. The method of the report is mainly interviews and HRW has met with a wide variety of interviewees that include women victims of violence, police- and prison officials, social workers, NGOs and legislators. The report thus gives a rather updated and broad image of the levels and seriousness of violence in the family. In relation to the purpose of statement of this paper the report states:

> "Various studies and statistics gathered by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and Palestinian women's groups record high levels of violence perpetrated by family members and intimate partners, aggravated during times of political violence."[49]

Obviously all Palestinians suffer from the difficulties they face living in an occupied territory. However, it is plausible that women suffer particularly by the inefficient criminal system and the lawlessness on the streets. During the collection of data HRW for instance visited a court in which a rape case that had been postponed for five years was due to be settled.[50] As shown in their report HRW also concludes that although the impact of the conflict with Israel and the adherent occupation is enormous there is also much to be criticised about how the PA handle women's situation. In their view a working legal system isn't the only factor that controls and restrains gender-based violence and that the Palestinian

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[46] HRW, p. 14.
[47] HRW, p. 12.
[48] HRW, p. 4.
[49] HRW, p. 3.
[50] HRW, p. 20.

Authorities lack of action against violence in the family to a large extent falls back on an unwillingness to act.

Although ambiguous most sources seem to mean that there has been an increase in intimate-partner violence within the Palestinian society since the start of the second intifada. Another example of this is an article in the Middle East Times from 2002 which cites a recent study in which 86 percent of the respondents thought that violence against women had increased since the beginning of the second intifada.[51]

The Jerusalem Center for Women, a Palestinian NGO located in east Jerusalem, writes the following in a 2008 report:

> Furthermore, domestic violence has increased in tandem with the oppressive policies of the Israeli government, so that many women live under a double threat of violence. Domestic violence is, of course, a societal ill that has always existed in Palestine, as in every society. However, it is widely considered that the feelings of ineptitude and frustration felt by Palestinian men due to the occupation have led to a sharp increase in domestic violence in recent years.[52]

In a 2003 report, the World Bank writes that the economic chock after 2000 mainly has been absorbed by the domestic private sector and that more than 50 percent of the pre-intifada private workforce had been laid off.[53] They further conclude that the disastrous effects the economic freefall have on the society in general, and how protracted unemployment can have devastating effects in patriarchal societies. They also note an increase of violence against women as the crisis continues.[54]

A direct effect of the occupation and the economic collapse is that many of the PA's institutions have stopped functioning. An illustration of the consequences of this for women can be found in Israel's biggest newspaper Haaretz which states that matters concerning women increasingly are being determined by tribal leaders or PA-appointed governors instead of overloaded courts. Haaretz notes that these systems tend to be arbitrary and biased against the victims leaving women with small chances of getting a fair judgment of their cause.[55]

Related to this is the fact that the breakdown of official institutions such as the police have led to an increase in street violence but also that the public confidence in the PA has dramatically decreased.[56] One aspect of this is that even if the PA wants to act against the increasing levels of violence in the family they lack the tools to make a substantial change.

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[51] AFP/Middle East Times, http://www.dailyalert.org/archive/2002-09/2002-09-26.html.
[52] Jerusalem Center for Women. "Discriminatory policies against Palestinians in East J'lem. 10/1-2008.
[53] World Bank.
[54] World Bank.
[55] Haaretz, 7/11-2006. "Report: 23 percent of Palestinian women endure domestic violence". .
[56] HRW, p. 16.

An analysis of violence in the family must in this context also take into consideration how the conflict affects everyday life. Although the increased levels of gender based violence is common after disasters and conflicts the extreme situation in the OPT obviously also have many particularities. In the case of Palestine the curfews and other restrictions on mobility seems to be one factor that impair women's situation in the home. Connections should also be made to the broader context of violence being inflicted on Palestinians by the Israeli army and the militarisation of society in general. An Amnesty International report from 2004 relates to this when it writes that an increase of violence in the family is common also during other conflicts. Factors Amnesty emphasizes are the trauma experienced by conflict survivors, the frustrations that are connected to high unemployment and a lack of basic services as well as the tensions that are created when gender positions are re-negotiated. Amnesty too, note that violence in the family has increased since the outbreak of the second intifada and also states:

> "Palestinian women have reported that some men who had been detained by Israeli forces were inflicting ill-treatment on their wives, mirroring the interrogation methods which they had suffered themselves in prison."[57]

3.2 The 2004 Tsunami

The literature on the gendered effects of the 2004 tsunami is mainly focused on the immediate effects of the tsunami under the label "crisis management". As many of the societies that were hit by the tsunami were completely demolished many people ended up fleeing to large refugee camps scattered all over Asia. The special gendered dynamics in camps are not central for the purposes of this paper but can still be used as an example of how a society handles crisis. As the tsunami occurred in 2004 research on the long-term effects remain to be produced.

All in all more than 220.000 people died or disappeared when the tsunami hit eight countries in Asia and five in Africa in December of 2004. More than 1.6 million people became homeless in one of the world's biggest natural disasters. Women and children were over-represented among the many deaths.[58]

Reasons for the over-representation varied, but among the factors were that women were waiting by the sea for fishermen to come back from their fishing expeditions, but also that large pieces of clothing both hindered women from running from the waves but also dragged them down as they got wet. Women were also found intertwined with elder people and children suggesting that they

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[57] Amnesty International Publications. 2004. "Lives blown apart. Crimes against women in times of conflict".
[58] Oxfam. June 2005. "How women were affected by the tsunami: a perspective from Oxfam". *PLoS Medicine*, Volume 2, Issue 6, e178.

died while trying to rescue them. In addition to this many women in the affected areas cannot swim.[59]

Besides the horrendous destruction of whole cities and villages, women have been affected by a change in the internal dynamics of the societies as well. As a consequence of the pressure by the near-total destruction of many cities and villages gender-based violence have increased in tandem with the efforts to rebuild what was destroyed. Abuse in temporary shelters and refugee camps have been reported, and testimonies of higher levels of rape and violence in the family have been submitted from all affected countries.[60]

The overcrowded camps have led to a number of gender-specific problems, one spurning from the uneven death rates which have resulted in more men than women in the camps. Women in the camps are often abused both sexually and verbally. In some areas only men are viewed as a legitimate head of a household, leading to a prohibition of women to collect relief cash and goods.[61]

Long-term effects of the tsunami are still to be investigated, and issues here for example include what the disproportionate number of women who died in the tsunami will mean for gender relations. If the increasing levels of violence in the family will decrease when the people can move back to their homes is another. In the meantime women continue to fight to have their voices heard in the reconstruction phase but have so far had little access to the arenas where the decisions are taken.[62]

One important aspect of women's special vulnerability to disasters, is according to Oxfam, that all disasters discriminate against vulnerable groups. Poor living conditions is one factor that usually lead to certain people being hit more severely than others. With this in mind it's obvious that women, who make out 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty, are hit harder than men by disasters.[63]

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[59] Pittaway, E. Bartolomei, L. Rees, S. 2007. "Gendered dimensions of the 2004 tsunami and a potential social work response in post-disaster situations" in *International Social Work*. 2007; 50; 307. P. 309.
[60] Social Work, p. 309.
[61] Oxfam: *How women were affected by the tsunami: a perspective from Oxfam*.
[62] Social Work, p. 307.
[63] Oxfam: *How women were affected by the tsunami: a perspective from Oxfam*.

4 Discussion and comparative analysis

Many aspects can be drawn from the levels of analysis in this paper, focused on structural violence, traditional ways of defining security and nationalism and gender a finding is that these different dimensions *together* create a gendered environment of oppression and violence. The paper thus shows that when outer factors change the inner dynamic of a society changes as well. If looked at from another perspective it can be expected that the ways masculinity and femininity is constructed in the Palestinian context also has repercussions on how the conflict with Israel is fought.

Violence cannot, with this understanding, be understood as an isolated phenomenon, but something that is placed within a society and builds on the existing relations within that society. In other words violence against women is a *social* problem and not an individual problem. The object of analysis shifts as a result of this to social relations and aspects of distribution of power and money.

Although set in a vastly different context it is relevant to draw a parallel to Philippe Bourgois' article about Puerto Rican crack dealers in urban USA. Bourgois, among other things, describes some of the interviewees experience with racism in the workplace and how this, for some, led to it being unbearable having an ordinary job. Bourgois suggests that a gendered result of this process is that as decently paid factory jobs increasingly are disappearing from USA and the new jobs mainly are in the service sector, a kind of crisis in masculinity among these men is developing. These economic factors make it harder and harder for Puerto Rican men to fulfil old-fashioned patriarchal dreams of being the family provider. Instead the women gets the new jobs and "in the worst-case scenario, as males became impotent in the service economy, they lashed out against the women and children they could no longer support economically or control ideologically."[64]

Bourgois' study leads to another interesting dimension of this process relating to how societal pressure affects masculinity. The question here is not so much *if* times of crisis affect masculinity but rather in what ways. In observing the impacts on women, we implicitly also observe impacts on men's lives. Times of crisis generally make it harder for men to live up to the image of soul breadwinner. Men seem to react to this by trying to preserve other aspects of what they perceive are important traits of their masculinity. One of these traits is probably the fact of being, consciously or unconsciously, superior to other groups in society. Of these groups women might be the most important. In this way societal crisis might lead to a "crisis in masculinity" which in turn results in violence.

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[64] Bourgois, Philippe. "US inner-city apartheid" in Scheper-Hughes, Bourgois (ed.). 2004. *Violence in War and Peace*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. P. 306.

The two cases point in the direction of it being possible to generalise a number of aspects of gender-based violence in societies put under pressure. The reaction to external pressure is of course different depending on the specific context. However, general patterns such as increased levels of violence directed at women and other vulnerable groups seem like something that transcends different geographical, cultural and economical contexts. The cases show, for instance, many similarities in the retreat to more traditional gender roles and a generally worse situation especially for women. This can be traced to the fact that women bear the double burden of both increased inner oppression but as everyone else suffer from outer repression.

Important findings here points to the necessity of connecting different levels of the analysis as well as questioning the rigid construction of different spheres, the difference between violence in peace and violence in war and how women (and men) become bearers of national symbols in times of crisis.

In relation to traditional ways of defining security the realist IR tradition is shown to be blind to differences and different needs within the own population, and can thus not take into account the feminist critique which remind IR-scholars that real security must include changing all relations of domination in all parts of society.[65] It is with this perspective hypocritical to speak about safe societies only as the absence of war which in effect excludes the everyday violence suffered by women and other groups.

Relevant feminist questions posed in this context is posed by Simona Sharoni who asks who "we" are that are meant to be secure as a consequence of a specific policy? For whom is a specific goal the first priority? These questions can also be connected to the discussion on gender and nationalism as the term "we", when used about national collectives, always bear strong gendered implications which usually include the idea of the soldier-man and the woman who stays at home taking care of children.[66]

The tendency in IR theory to silence internal heterogeneity also hides the constant struggle over meaning and that there is a perpetual competition between definitions of who and what constitutes the imagined community. The degree of success in this struggle reflects differences in social location, experience, and power.[67] This tendency is also exacerbated in times of nationalistic surges illustrating the connections between the different dimensions of the analysis.

For women in Palestine the struggle for independence generally has had the effect of reinforcing their role and connects them even stronger to the reproduction of the community. This tendency of giving women's demands a lower priority during times of societal pressure is maintained by HRW who states that Palestinian women and girls, as a result of failed state institutions,

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[65] Hudson, p. 162.
[66] Sharoni, p. 24.
[67] Sharoni, p. 33.

increasingly are confronting a patriarchal justice system that puts higher priority on the reputation of their family instead of worrying about their well-being.[68]

The importance of working societal institutions is thus highlighted as something very important for the struggle for women's rights. As the Intifada and the resulting chaos in the Palestinian society the institutions that could potentially help victims of violence in the family are devastated and stop functioning. Normally this means a retreat to traditional ways of making justice, ways that tend to be patriarchal and mainly focus on safeguarding the rights of people currently in power.

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[68] HRW, p. 5-6.

5   Conclusion: Towards a broader definition of inside and outside security

5.1   Differences, similarities and possible generalisations

The aim of this study was to investigate is to investigate how the increase in violence against women in pressured societies can be understood and explained. One central finding of the study is that societies in crisis tend to emphasize traditional perceptions about gender. Women suffer differently than men in times of crisis, and are as all inhabitants affected by the source of pressure, natural disaster, war, poverty etc. But as this paper has shown they also suffer from increasing levels of violence in the family, gender-based violence in wars as well as being made symbols for the nation's reproduction.

The paper suggests that this gender-based violence must be seen in relation to wider power relations and be related to the clearly gendered societies in which male power is the norm at all levels.[69] The two cases further show a number of common reactions to the different contexts in which the societies are put under pressure and some generalization therefore seems reasonable. One result is that societal pressure exacerbates existing inequalities and enforces oppression against vulnerable groups. A consequence of this finding is that these processes can be expected to occur in all societies, but obviously to different degrees depending on the context.

A key element of feminist theory is to stress that more factors must be added to the analysis. This doesn't mean that gender always is the most important or decisive factor, and in that way feminist thinking also leads to questioning of other relations of inequality and discrimination. Central is to question false dichotomies such as the one between public and private and how it reinforces existing differences in access to power and influence.

The Palestinian example with it's seemingly never-ending conflict shows that groups of people that under certain conditions use their energy on kicking upwards trying to make a change, under other – more hopeless situations – instead starts kicking downwards. When that occurs vulnerable groups lead the

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[69] Tickner, p. 58.

risk of becoming targets of the frustration and anger actually generated by other sources. A parallel here is to the political situation in many western European countries where racism is growing within the working class. Previously this group tended to fight upwards at the same time being united down- and sidewards.

Above all the paper suggests the need for connecting various levels of analysis to each other and show how they are all are related and interact in creating the societal context within which violence is played out. This way of approaching the purpose of this paper essentially means connecting violence occurring in times of war, times of peace, times of "normality" and times of societal pressure to each other and points to how these are ruled by the same gendered logic. In doing this the paper emphasizes the need for an extended definition of security as a concept that must include oppression against vulnerable groups everywhere, all the time.

5.2 Further research and possible solutions on the practical levels

As emphasized above, the paper suggest attacking the problem of violence against women not as isolated events but try to understand the ways this violence is connected to the ways we structure society in general. To do this we have to address the whole problem instead of analysing each phenomenon separate giving the impression that they somehow are isolated. To do this inter-disciplinary studies seems necessary and intersectional theory could, for instance, be a useful tool since it attempts to include several dimensions of power and discrimination and show how these are interlinked. In this way we can perhaps, avoid getting stuck in reductionist theories making the mistake of treating processes as either culturally specific or as isolated from other social, political and economical events. Important is also to continue the theoretical discussion with support from empirical studies trying the theories against different situations.

Suggestions for continued research is, for example, to examine how masculinity is affected by the same external changes that in this study has been shown to result in increasing levels of violence against women. Another would be to support the assumptions of this paper regarding generalisations and test if also economically wealthy societies, such as Sweden, share the gendered characteristics of the two cases. Finally the impact of failing public institutions, police, legal system etc. on women's rights struggle would be an interesting topic to further analyze. How should these formal institutions be focused in reconstruction?

There are of course also encouraging signs in this field besides some of the negative trends. One is the gender sensitivity in relief- and reconstruction work that is shown in the reports published by Oxfam International in their work after the 2004 tsunami.

The ratification of the UN resolution 1325 in the year 2000 also have the potential of furthering the importance of adding more levels to the analysis and

relief work carried out after natural disasters and conflicts. 1325 is the first formal document of the UN Security Council to expressly consider the importance of having women participants at all levels of decision making makes women central in the reconstruction processes and thus transcends the tendency to treat women solely as victims of war and conflict to include them as political agents.

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