ENGENDERING WARTIME CONFLICT

Women and War Trauma

This report is a part of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR's) Violence in Transition Project (VTP). Past VTP research has focused on a number of faultlines for violence in the South African transition to democracy. The presence of forced migrants in South African cities has been one such source of ongoing tension and conflict. Alongside this has been the recognition that refugee groups are often extremely vulnerable and have themselves lived through extremes of violence.

The forty women who participated in the research towards the compilation of this report are refugees living in Johannesburg. They fled from the African Great Lakes Region, particularly Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The interview questions focused on women's experiences of armed conflict; their views on peace efforts; political transition in their host countries; and their experiences of accessing resources in South Africa.

In offering a gender analysis, this report looks at how war shapes gender relationships and gender-based violence in ways that are not always well recognised in the services offered to refugees or in broader asylum and peace-building processes. The experiences of the refugee women shows the need to broaden the scope of trauma interventions to provide programmes that integrate memorialisation projects, transitional justice initiatives, counselling and peace-building. In this contribution to existing debates on the design of interventions, CSVR aims to further its commitment to victim empowerment and human rights for all groups, as well as to the trauma and refugee services sector more specifically.

"When the war started it was between soldiers but then with time you see the population got involved."
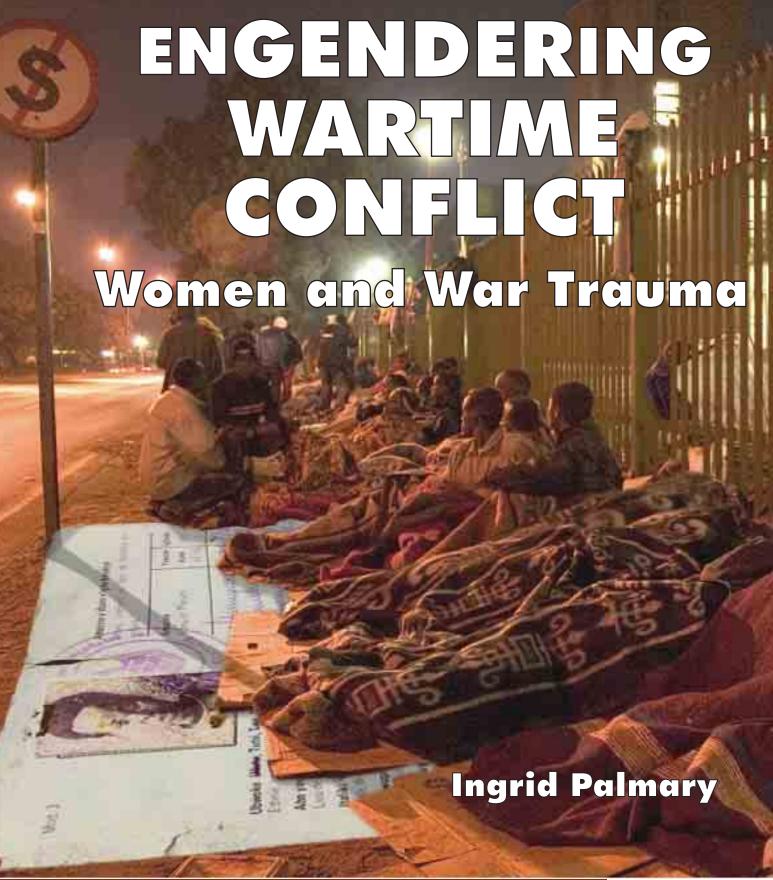
"I was raped but he was not a man who was going to be a uh [good] husband. Lucky with all those problems I didn't get AIDS."

"My mother-in-law has got a very big scar in her in her hand. What happened was, one of the Interhamwe wanted to finish me by chopping off my head. And then when he was bringing down [the machete] my mother-in-law held it and it cut her palm here. So you can imagine?"

ENGENDERING WARTIME CONFLICT / Women and War Trauma

by Ingrid Palmary

ENGENDERING WARTIME CONFLICT

Women and War Trauma

Ingrid Palmary

Violence and Transition Project

CSVR
CENTRE FOR THE
STUDY OF VIOLENCE
AND RECONCILIATION

ENGENDERING WARTIME CONFLICT

Women
and
War Trauma

Ingrid Palmary

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION

VIOLENCE AND TRANSITION SERIES

The Violence and Transition Project seeks to examine the *nature and extent of violence* during South Africa's transition from apartheid rule to democracy (Phase 1) and within the new democracy itself (Phase 2) in order to inform a violence prevention agenda. This series comprises a set of self-contained, but interrelated reports, which explore violence within key social loci and areas, including:

Phase 1 (1999-2002)

- Revenge Violence and Vigilantism;
- Foreigners (immigrants and refugees);
- Hostels and Hostel Residents;
- Ex-combatants;
- State Security Forces (police and military), and
- Taxi Violence

Phase 2 (2003-2005)

- The KwaZulu Natal Peace Process
- Gun Control in Richmond, KwaZulu Natal
- Kathorus Youth in the aftermath of the 1990s
- Community-State Conflict and Socio-Economic Struggles, and
- Trauma and Transition, with a focus on refugee women

While each report grapples with the dynamics of violence and transition in relation to its particular constituency all are underpinned by the broad objectives of the series, namely:

- ♦ To analyse the causes, extent and forms of violence in South Africa across a timeframe that starts before the political transition and moves through the period characterised by political transformation and reconciliation to the present;

- ♦ To investigate the role of perpetrators and victims of violence across this timeframe;

- ♦ To evaluate reconciliation, peacebuilding and transitional justice initiatives and institutions, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established to ameliorate future violence in South Africa;

- ♦ To develop a theory for understanding violence in countries moving from authoritarian to democratic rule, i.e. "countries in transition", and

- ♦ To contribute to local and international debates about conflict, peacebuilding and democratisation.

Through the research, we have identified key thematic (and interconnected) 'indicators' that highlight the complex relationship between conflict, transition and democratisation. These include:

- Demilitarisation
- Institutional transformation
- Peacebuilding and reconciliation
- Justice and accountability
- Poverty, inequality and socio-economic factors
- Politics, crime and violence

It is an appreciation of these 'indicators' that underpins our understanding of the relationship between violence and transition, and how, in turn, they impact – positively or negatively – on democratic consolidation. This series strives to understand their impact on the deepening of democracy in South Africa and their intersection with addressing the democratic deficits inherited from apartheid governance. The research also illustrates our limited understanding of the multifarious and evolving relationship between politics and crime, dispelling notions of a 'clean' shift from an era of political violence to one of criminal violence, and raising fundamental questions about the extent to which South Africa can be accurately described as a post-conflict society.

In order to understand – and prevent – violence in South Africa and elsewhere, an ongoing action-research agenda is required. Through this series the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation offers an exploratory, yet detailed, contribution to this process. The Violence and Transition Series aims to inform and benefit policy analysts; government departments; non-governmental, community-based and civic organisations; practitioners; and researchers working in the fields of:

- Violence Prevention;
- Transitional Justice;
- Victim Empowerment;
- Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;
- Human Rights, and
- Crime Prevention.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and they do not necessarily reflect those of CSVR.

The Violence and Transition Series is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada.

Copies of the reports can be freely obtained from the CSVR website (www.csvr.org.za)

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CSVR's mission is to develop and implement innovative and integrated human security interventions based upon a commitment to social justice and fundamental rights for people who are vulnerable or excluded. CSVR pursues these goals as essential to our aspiration of preventing violence in all its forms and building sustainable peace and reconciliation in societies emerging from violent pasts – in South Africa, on the African continent and globally.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
FAR	Rwandese Armed Forces
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
MRND	*Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement* later renamed *Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développment*
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCD	*Rassemblement Congolaise Démocratique*
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTLM	*Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
VTP	Violence and Transition Project (of the CSVR)

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION

VIOLENCE AND TRANSITION SERIES

Over the past several years, there has been a great deal written about the political, economic, social and cultural character and content of South Africa's 'democratic transition'. Much of this growing body of literature has tended to downplay and/or ignore the violence and conflict that has been an integral part of this transition in a number of arenas. These include both state-community conflicts as well as conflicts among and between communities.

It is within such a research context, that the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) initiated the first phase of its Violence and Transition Project (VTP 1). This research examined the causes and effects of conflict and violence, and its changing patterns and continuities in relation to a number of key sectoral and institutional focus areas between 1980 and 2000. The focus areas included: the taxi sector; foreigners; ex-combatants; vigilantism; and, relations between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In following up on VTP 1, CSVR has embarked on a second research programme known as VTP 2, which seeks to address some of the questions raised during the first phase of research but also to make more targeted policy interventions and concrete recommendations.

During VTP 1, violence perpetrated against foreigners was researched as a new form of violence in South Africa which was, nevertheless, rooted in historical racial divisions in South African society. This research, therefore, introduced attention to possible conflicts between citizens and foreigners. In addition, underlying much of the previous set of reports has been recognition of the impact of violence on victims and the need for victim empowerment interventions. From these sources, then, came the need for a report that looks in more detail at trauma in the context of armed conflict and political transition. This research was conceptualised to achieve this through a case study of refugee women. In this way, it also contributes a gender analysis to the VTP project - a gap in some of the previous reports.

The South African Refugee Act (no 130 of 1998) was passed in 1998 and became effective in 2000. This Act has typically been considered to be in line with South Africa's international obligations[1], as well as with the South African Constitution. In spite of this, implementation has often been lacking and has been driven, at least in part, by a popular and political resistance to the presence of foreigners in South Africa. In December 2001, there were 18 605 recognised refugees in South Africa and 11 417 asylum seekers. However, in 2002 and 2003 respectively about 55 400 new applications were lodged. At the end of 2003 a total of 152 414 applications had been received since 1994 (Fedde Groot, 2003). Large backlogs in processing applications have plagued the system since its inception. In addition, the asylum system has become a significant challenge to South Africa's commitment to human rights and reports of ongoing abuse and violations of refugee rights have been rife.

Within this context, the possibilities for trauma interventions with refugees have been difficult and have been shaped by the barriers that refugees face in accessing their rights. In this research, I explore the varied social contexts that impact on the expression of trauma among women refugees. I draw on a longstanding commitment within the CSVR to understanding the impact of violence on different communities. In particular, I am concerned with the ways in which gender, as just one such social position, might shape the expression of trauma.

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[1] These obligations stem from South Africa having ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

Executive Summary

This report is a part of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR's) Violence in Transition Project (VTP). In this research, I examine the causes and effects of conflict and violence, and its changing patterns and continuities in relation to a number of key sectoral and institutional focus areas. Past VTP research has focused on a number of faultlines for violence in the South African transition to democracy. The presence of forced migrants in South African cities has been one such source of ongoing tension and conflict. Alongside this has been the recognition that refugee groups are often extremely vulnerable and have themselves lived through extremes of violence.

For this report, I conducted research with a group of refugee women living in Johannesburg, South Africa through in-depth interviews. The forty women who participated in this project were from the African Great Lakes Region, particularly Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The interview questions focused on women's experiences of armed conflict; their views on peace efforts; political transition in their host countries; and their experiences of accessing resources in South Africa.

In this research, I aim to influence current trauma service delivery in a number of ways. Firstly, by offering a gender analysis, I look at how war shapes gender relationships and gender-based violence in ways that are not always well recognised in the services offered to refugees or in broader asylum and peace-building processes. Secondly, drawing on the experiences of the refugee women, I argue for broadening the scope of trauma interventions to provide integrated programmes that include memorialisation projects, transitional justice initiatives, counselling and peace-building. Finally, I aim to further CSVR's commitment to victim empowerment and human rights for all groups, as well as the trauma and refugee services sector more broadly, by contributing to existing debates on the design of interventions.

In part one of the report, I provide the background on the methodology for this research. In addition, I provide some background to the violence in the African Great Lakes in order to contextualise the narratives of the women who participated in the research. Finally, I give an overview of the ways in which trauma has typically been understood, along with some emerging critiques of these models of trauma, particularly where they have stemmed from developing contexts and from situations of armed conflict.

In part two of the report, I look in detail at how gender has shaped the violence that the women suffered during the conflict and their displacement. I begin to unpack the significance of patrilineal systems of inheriting ethnic and national identity[2] for maintaining the illusion of 'pure' social groups – a central part of the wartime ideology deployed within the Great Lakes' conflict. In doing so, I

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[2] Given the extent to which conflict in the Great Lakes region has been based on both ethnic and national boundaries, I have used these interchangeably when making general points about the conflict. Having said this, notions of national identity in Africa have not always corresponded to national boundaries. For example, Afrikaner nationalism or Zulu nationalism in South Africa have reflected an ethnic affiliation.

highlight how much of the violence that the women suffered was a result of their marriages to members of the 'other' group or of being children of such 'mixed' marriages. The significance of managing marriage relationships for the ideology of war is, therefore, unpacked here. In addition, the ways in which motherhood created a range of social expectations on women is explored. The social expectation that women can, and will, provide for their children, and that they will be entirely self-sacrificing in accomplishing this, is a source of great distress for women who were unable or unwilling to care for children. In addition, such social expectations shape the recourse that women have and the decisions that they take in the course of their displacement. In this section I also consider the devastating effect of sexual violence for women. Sexual violence, for the women interviewed, existed on a continuum from forced marriage following rape to forming relationships with men for economic gain. The tendency to consider these personal (rather than political) violations frames the recourse that women seek following such a violation. Finally, in this section I look at women's unequal access to resources in times of conflict and peace, and how this shapes the kind of violations they suffer. For example, women without husbands who are unable to own land were particularly vulnerable to having land taken from them in the context of the war. This section ends with some initial conclusions about the tendency to consider all women's violations domestic rather than political and how a concern for distinguishing domestic violence from political violence ignores the extent to which domestic violence is rooted in the violence of war.

In part three of the report, I explore these initial implications in more detail by considering how women situate their experiences within the armed conflict and what solutions they see as possible. Most striking, in this section, is the extent to which the women claimed to have no knowledge of, or interest in, what was happening in their home countries and expressed extreme distrust of the reconciliation processes happening there. In this section, I highlight the need to incorporate systems of healing that have meaning for these women, but also to ensure that displaced communities are a part of *peace-building* efforts in the region.

Finally, in the fourth section, I outline some suggestions for a holistic approach to working with refugee women. I do not go into detail about particular projects but rather consider, in light of the testimonies of the refugee women, the interventions that might be most meaningful. Most of these are already taking place at one level or another. The challenge remains to integrate them in ways that address the range of needs that refugee women have.

PART ONE: Background to the study

Introduction

In this report, I[3] aim to contribute to existing practices and knowledge on trauma and trauma service delivery in the context of armed conflict. In doing so, it is hoped that this report can draw on and contribute to the ongoing debates among practitioners about how to design interventions in conflict situations. Many of the debates that I generate here are not new but have been raised by trauma service providers who are themselves working in situations of armed conflict across the globe. In this report, I hope to consolidate some of these debates using a case study of refugee women who fled from the Rwandan and Congolese conflicts and are now living in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The nature of doing a piece of research into trauma, gender and armed conflict is such that clear solutions and universal models are unlikely. Indeed, this has been one of the central critiques of many mainstream models of trauma service delivery, as they often seem not to be easily applied to contexts outside of which they were developed. For this reason, I pay close attention to the context of armed conflict and how it has shaped women's war trauma. As such, I do not seek to make recommendations that apply equally to trauma interventions in all contexts although some of the lessons may well be transferable.

The purpose of this research is, therefore, twofold. Firstly, I aim to generate debate among service providers about the range of possible interventions that could be useful in the management of trauma and its relationship to the political processes that accompany conflict zones. Secondly, I aim to highlight some of the well-documented limitations of the current mainstream approach to trauma- the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) model. Such limitations include that it is overly symptom and individually focused. One of the central premises of this research therefore, is that a trauma service delivery system should incorporate a whole range of peace-building, advocacy, support / counselling and economic interventions. It is clear from this, and previous research, that the trauma of an event or violation lies not in the event itself but in the meaning people attach to it and the context in which it occurs. The analysis below is centrally concerned with exploring this meaning and context further. My concern here is not to go into great detail about the merits of different counselling approaches or even to go into detail on the dominant model of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Rather, I want to consider what women identified as the central traumas of their lives and how this was shaped by their gendered social positions. I will also consider the women's understanding of these events within the context of the conflict and, finally, I will consider some of the solutions that the women recommended for management of the distress of war. I will explore the implications of the research for those of us engaged in peace and reconciliation work on the continent as well as trauma counselling in the final sections.

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[3] Throughout this report the first person, 'I', is used. This is a conscious decision intended to situate me, the researcher, firmly within the research and thereby to illustrate my subjective, active presence within the process. Rather than feigning any neutrality or 'objectivity' through the third person, I want to acknowledge that I have shaped, interpreted and contributed to the ways in which knowledge is produced here - both through the interviews and my analysis thereof.

In the first section, I give some background both to the models of trauma that have become the most widely used as well as to the conflict that the women were fleeing. I also outline the methodology for the research that informs this report. In part two, the key themes in the literature are explored in relation to the women's own descriptions of their experiences of the war and the meaning that they attributed to these. This is an attempt to draw out aspects of discussions that are taking place across the world (and in particular in Africa and South America) on what trauma means in these contexts, and to consider which of these debates is most relevant to refugee women living in South Africa. For this reason, this section is arranged into key themes, each of which is based on a lesson gleaned from the narratives of the women who participated in this research. In the third part of this research, I focus on the possibilities and obstacles for incorporating women's trauma into an understanding of armed conflict. It is a central premise of this report that there is no universally appropriate trauma response and different socio-political and cultural contexts will shape the response needed. As such, in part four, I offer some suggestions for a comprehensive programme of trauma work with refugee women. The intention underlying the presentation of this illustration is not to suggest that it is a model that can be applied in all kinds of settings, or that it is somehow more accurate than existing universal models. Rather, my aim is to give an illustration of comprehensive and coordinated trauma service planning in the hope that this might direct and assist in the design of interventions. This illustration is shaped very clearly by the narratives of the women involved in this research but it is also driven by the years of experience generated within the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation – in its range of programmes and services. By paying attention to a specific group, refugee women, this is an opportunity to refine approaches and ideas about trauma through specific case studies.

Background to the research

In 2003, forty in-depth interviews were conducted with women from the Great Lakes Region (primarily from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) although several also came from Uganda, Congo-Brazzaville or Burundi). Legally, these women were almost all asylum seekers (only two had official refugee status) and many of them had been awaiting a decision about their asylum status for several years. I am, therefore, using the term 'refugee' to refer to all the women in spite of the fact that they do not necessarily have refugee status. Legal status forms a central part of the context of the meaning that they made of their displacement and the violence they had suffered. It is a theme that is recurring in their narratives, given the ways it shaped access to services (of which security and safety are one), and other rights contained in South African legislation. The extracts that are presented below should, therefore, be read in the context of an international asylum system that defines women's rights to services and safety. In addition, the focus on women is a central part of the methodology and shapes the recommendations that are generated from this research. This is the second central context for the extracts where women, by virtue of the specific social position they occupy, have a particular experience of the asylum system and of armed conflict.

The process of the interviews was largely unstructured but each interview began with questions about the conditions and events under which the women had come to be in South Africa. This lack of structure was, at least in part, because I was concerned with the aspects of their displacement that they felt most important to tell in the context in which the interview was taking place. I went on to ask

them about how they explained the violence they had suffered and what they thought the causes of the conflict were. In addition, I asked about their experiences of coming to South Africa and the extent of their ongoing engagement with what was happening in their countries of origin. I also asked about the interventions that they thought were most important for women refugees. Each interview was transcribed in detail and coded for common themes. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the women who participated in this study, they are simply identified in the extracts below by a single letter, which is not the letter that any of their names begin with.

One of the main difficulties in this research was deciding who should be included. One of the complexities of the conflict in the Great Lakes Region has been the way in which the conflict has crossed over ethnic and national lines. This has resulted in a great deal of criticism within the research field of 'area studies' of the tendency to focus on conflicts within national borders without attention to their broader, international implications and effects (see Mamdani, 2001). This was the case in this research from very early on. Many women described having spent time in several countries, most notably, the DRC and Rwanda and the conflict in the one country was closely related to that in the other. For example, some of the women told of having been forcibly removed from the North Eastern Congo as a result of their 'Rwandan' name and, therefore, being forced into Rwanda, a country they did not know. Many others have been displaced across these international boundaries sometimes over several generations. For this reason, it was decided to interview women across this national DRC-Rwandan boundary as well as others where appropriate.

It is important to note that trauma was not a word that the women themselves used to describe negative life events and questions were not, therefore, asked about their 'trauma'. Rather, these questions were usually framed as being about what things were most distressing. Women were also asked what events they continued to remember most clearly and what events touched them the most. Thus, one of the assumptions of this research is that distress is explained in a number of ways and the terms used by the women are accepted as such. This is supported by Swartz and Levitt (1985) who argue that, not only does the notion of what is stressful differ in different contexts, but how we phrase distress is class and culture bound and requires reflection if we are to avoid imposing the concepts of researchers or practitioners. For this reason, some of what appears in this research may seem not to be strictly about trauma as it is usually defined by psychiatrists and psychologists. However, as I will go on to argue, questioning the definition of trauma is central for post-conflict societies. In addition, the use of different words by both the research participants and me, assumes a set of 'common-sense' definitions of what trauma is.[4]

In addition to the interviews, two workshops were held to which all participants were invited. As there were already a series of ongoing workshops for refugees taking place within CSVR, I took the opportunity to invite the women who I had interviewed to these workshops rather than convening separate ones for research feedback. The original purpose of the workshops was to educate refugees on their rights in South Africa and internationally. We began each workshop by discussing participants' expectations for the workshop. In both workshops, one of the expectations was to know what CSVR and NGOs generally are doing for refugees. A video was then shown which reflected the lives of refugee women around the world. We then had a discussion on this video followed by three

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[4] For the PTSD diagnostic criteria as defined in the DSM see the following section.

breakaway groups. Each group was given a question to discuss. For the first workshop, these questions were: 1) What are the barriers in our own communities that prevent us from accessing our rights; 2) what are the barriers in South Africa that prevent us from accessing our rights; and 3) how can refugee women better organise to access our rights? Following this, there were inputs from CSVR staff members about national legislation and international instruments for the protection of refugees. During the second workshop, some of the same people attended even though they had already been to the first workshop. We, therefore, changed the last question to 'what barriers prevented us from enacting the decisions made at the last workshop?' and directed it to those who had attended previously. Feedback was given by participants on these small group discussions and the second day of both workshops focussed on the way forward. The workshops were, therefore, intended to be a first attempt to generate mobilisation among women refugees and strategise for ongoing advocacy. The conversation also centred a great deal on who the different service providers were in South Africa, what the women could expect (and demand) of them and who was responsible for improving the lives of refugees. After the workshops, some of the women continued to meet to discuss these issues as they related to refugee women.

Given the multi-lingual nature of the participants, there were many occasions in both the interviews and the workshops where the participants and I relied on interpreters. For ease of reading, however, all the extracts are presented in the first person. Translation necessarily shapes the nature of the interview and the information that was discussed, although detailed attention to this is beyond the scope of this report (for more detail on translation see Venuti, 1992). However, for the purposes of this report it is useful to note that translation required a balance on the part of the interpreter between accuracy (saying what the person said exactly as they said it) and meaning (making sure that what was being said would make sense in English) (Nogueira, 2002; Leonardi, 2000). The most complex issues in the translation were metaphors and other words that did not easily translate into English from French, Swahili or Kinyarwanda. An emphasis was placed on discussing such words after the interview (or during it when it seemed appropriate) to ensure that there was a common understanding of their usage. In this sense, I have relied extensively on the interpreters for their analysis of the situation and have discussed the research at length with them.

One of the difficulties I faced was being unable to find a woman interpreter for some of the Kinyarwanda interviews. Initially, I was extremely concerned about using a man, especially in instances where the women described sexual violence. However, these interviews did not differ significantly in content from those done with female interpreters. This was intriguing and required me to consider that the gender differences between the women I was interviewing and the interpreter were perhaps no more significant than the class, 'race' and age differences between the women being interviewed and myself. Indeed, perhaps the strongest difference reflected in the research was the power that I had as a service provider, which meant that I had frequent requests for assistance. Rather than being understood as a limitation or strength of the research, I am working from the assumption that *every* interview is a self-presentation that is shaped by the context in which the research took place. As such, it is more useful to consider how this particular context of NGO service delivery might impact on the nature of the information that is produced for this report. Although this is a complex theme that cannot be explored further at this point, this discussion highlights the need to read the

interviews within the context they were generated and the sections that follow do this wherever possible.[5]

In addition, this analysis was shaped by discussions with a range of people working in counselling with refugees and other groups in order to draw on their experience. This has shaped what aspects of the women's narratives I have used and the meaning I give to them. In particular, I have consulted with practitioners to discuss with them the approaches that they find useful when working in a post-conflict situation and with vulnerable groups such as women refugees. In doing so, I have tried to generate a report that reflects the complexities and debates that practitioners in the sector are grappling with.

Background to the conflict

Although my purpose here is not to give a comprehensive overview of the complex conflict that has played itself out in the African Great Lakes region, a few comments are worth making in order to contextualise this study and give background to the events described in the women's narratives in the sections that follow. Because this section is necessarily brief, a timeline is included in Appendix 2 in order to further contextualise the research.

The documented history of the Rwandan conflict is generally dominated by the genocide in 1994. Although there is no agreement on the origins of the ethnic division of Hutu and Tutsi, the most commonly accepted version is that, prior to colonisation, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were not separate groups but shared a single language, religion, culture and set of philosophical beliefs (see Mamdani, 2001). Colonial theories that people could be classified into different 'race' groups, based on their physiology, were central in reinforcing any division that may have existed and, under colonial rule, Tutsi were assigned superior status and socio-economic privileges because of their apparently more European appearance (Green, 2002).

The 1959 revolution was one of the first conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi and resulted in the deaths of thousands of Tutsi along with the abolishment of the ruling Tutsi monarchy. Following this, the First Republic was proclaimed in 1962 led by Grégoire Kayibanda and his party *MDR-PARMEHUTU*. The gradual elimination of opposition parties after the 1959 revolution ensured that, in the 1961 elections which saw Kayibanda elected president, *MDR-PARMEHUTU* was the only party to present candidates. Early 1973 saw renewed violence (particularly between the North and South of the country) resulting in further deaths and displacement of the Tutsi minority. This violence culminated in a military coup by General Juvénal Habyarimana on 5 July 1973. The coup resulted in a shift in power not only from civilian to military hands but also from the Hutu of central Rwanda to the Hutu of the northern *Préfectures* of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 2001).

In 1975, President Habyarimanda founded the *Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement* (MRND). With Juvénal Habyarimana and his (MRND) National Revolutionary Movement in power since 1973, threats of invasion from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a

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[5] For more detailed analysis see Palmary (forthcoming/2006).

Ugandan based group of primarily Tutsi refugees, created ongoing uncertainty and instability. These tensions were further heightened because of a system of ethnic and regional quotas that had been applied between 1973 and 1994, which increasingly were perceived to be discriminating against the Tutsi minority. On 1 October 1990, the RPF mounted an attack. Habyarimana responded with widespread arrests of suspected RPF supporters. Following international and internal pressure Habyarimana permitted multiple parties and a new constitution was adopted on 10 June 1991. His party was renamed *Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développment* (MRND). The transitional government that was established consisted mostly of MRND members after the main opposition parties refused to take part (Prunier, 1995).

After the second transitional government in 1992 the MRND, for the first time, became a minority party. Negotiations with RPF began at this point and resulted in the signing of the Arusha Accords on 4 August 1993 in Tanzania (Des Forges, 1999). These provided for power sharing between the RPF, the opposition parties and MRND, and established power sharing quotas among political parties and armed forces. This represented a significant loss of power for MRND and from 1990 Habyarimana and his associates began a campaign of inciting fear and hatred of the Tutsi as a way of rebuilding Hutu solidarity and maintaining their power. This operated alongside campaigns to divide and weaken the Hutu opposition parties (Green, 2002). This campaign was furthered by the assassination of Melchior Ndandaye, the democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi, by Tutsi soldiers. Alongside this went the organisation and training of youth wings of the political parties most notably the *Interahamwe* (the youth wing of MRND), the preparation of lists of people to be eliminated, the distribution of weapons to civilians and the massacre of Tutsi in various parts of the country.

The media was equally mobilised to incite hatred, especially the *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) and the newspaper *Kangura.* In particular, these media were used to spread anti-Tutsi messages that emphasised the Tutsi as foreign settlers, in contrast to the Hutu who were considered native. The propaganda drew on a range of theories put forward throughout the years of colonisation that classified the Rwandans into Tutsi who were thought to be originally of European descent and the Hutu who were considered to be native to the region. Although these theories have gone through many formulations over the years, these systems of classification were based on the Hamitic hypothesis which, drawing on biblical references, claimed that Ham, one of the sons of Noah, was cursed after seeing his father naked and not covering him.[6] None of the Biblical references say that the curse of Ham's descendants was to be born 'black'. However, Mamdani (2001) notes that this idea begins to appear in the Jewish oral tradition of the 6th century in the Babylonian Talmud. From these beliefs came the notion that the Tutsis were in fact European albeit with 'black' skins and, equally significant, that they were a 'race' of lost Christians (Mamdani, 2001). It was these early theories that were used to legitimate privileging the Tutsi over the Hutu under colonial administration. It is ironic, perhaps, that this same theory that was used under colonisation to disadvantage the Hutu was turned around in the post-colonial era (at a time when nationalism was emerging on the continent) to claim Hutu entitlements because of their indigeneity.

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[6] As the narrative goes, Ham, one of the three sons of Noah, saw his father naked when he was asleep. Unlike his more modest brothers Shem and Japeth, Ham did not turn his back and cover his father with his eyes averted. As a result Noah is said to have cursed Ham's sons saying: 'A slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers' (Genesis 9 v 25-29).[6]

The early nineties were marked by numerous political assassinations and massacres of the Tutsi minority. In early 1994, members of MRND staged violent protests against the Arusha Accords, which successfully delayed their implementation (Prunier, 1995). These events reached crisis point on April 6 1994 when the plane carrying president Habyarimana was shot down over Kigali. In the hours following the crash it was decided at a meeting of members of *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR) to establish an interim government. However, on the morning of the 7 April, groups of militia had already begun assassinating political opponents including the Prime Minister and some of the members of her government and the president of the constitutional court. At the same time, MRND ministers were being evacuated to places of safety. After the massacre of Belgian troops stationed to protect the Prime Minister, most Belgian troops were withdrawn. Given the political and constitutional void created by the deaths of many national political authorities, a government was set up based on the 1991 Constitution. It comprised solely of Hutu and was sworn in on 9 April 1994 (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 2001).

In the hours following the plane crash, militia set up roadblocks and conducted house-to-house searches for Tutsi and killed them. The primary source of identifying Tutsi was on the basis of the identity cards, which stated the ethnic identity of the carrier. Following its formation, the Interim Government began to encourage the implementation of the plan for genocide already in place. A number of directives were issued to aid and abet the extermination of the Tutsi and Hutu political opposition. Between 500 000 and 1 million people were killed in less than 100 days in this genocide (Green, 2002). Although these were predominantly Tutsi, many Hutu were also targeted, particularly if they were perceived to be Tutsi supporters.

The events in Rwanda have had a key influence in the region especially in the DRC. Belgian Congo received independence in 1960 following growing resistance to colonial invasion from the 1950s. The first independent republic of Congo was lead by President Kasavubu. A mutiny began five days after the declaration of independence and three months later, Colonel Mobutu Seso Seko seized power. In 1961, power was restored to Kasavubu, however, Colonel Mobutu again seized power in 1965 in a coup (Matthews and Solomon, 2000) after which the region was renamed Zaire. Mobutu's pro-Western stance during the Cold War brought him support from powerful Western governments and allowed him to retain power until 17 May 1997 when, with the support of Uganda, Angola and Rwanda, he was defeated and Laurent Kabila declared himself president of the region, which he renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (Mtembu-Salter, 2000).

After the Rwandan genocide in 1994, over one million Hutu refugees, militia and soldiers from the Rwandese Armed Forces (FAR) fled into Zaire. The ex-FAR used Zaire (later the DRC) as a base from which to conduct raids into Rwanda as well as attacks on Tutsis living in the DRC. In response to these raids, and with the support of Congolese rebel groups, Rwanda attacked Hutu refugee camps in Zaire. In spite of the change of government from Mobutu to Kabila, the Congolese army was unable to prevent Hutu militia using the DRC as a sanctuary and they began attacks on Rwanda from their DRC bases. Relations between Kabila and the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, who had supported him in overthrowing Mobutu, began to sour and, in July 1998, Kabila asked his Rwandan military advisors to leave the country and replaced his Rwandan army commander. As a result Rwanda and Uganda attacked the DRC and almost succeeded in deposing Kabila. However, the intervention of Zimbabwe and Angola prevented this (Mathews and Solomon, 2000).

As with the rebellion to overthrow Mobutu, security concerns have been invoked by Rwanda and Uganda to justify their continued occupation of large parts of the Eastern Congo to date. Rwanda continues to claim its interventions are legitimate to eliminate *Interahamwe* and ex-FAR as well as claiming to protect Congolese Rwandophone populations (Borello, 2004). In addition to the international dimension of the conflict, there has also been conflict between supporters of Kabila and those of the Rassemblement Congolaise Démocratique (RCD) from the beginning of independence with outside countries being drawn into the conflict (McNulty, 1999). In July 1999 the then OAU brokered a cease-fire in Lusaka, however, little progress on peace was made and violence continued with the murder of Laurent Kabila by one of his bodyguards in January 2001. Peace talks were revived in 2002 at Sun City in South Africa and an inclusive peace agreement was signed on December 17 2002 (Borello, 2004).

In spite of this, low intensity conflict has continued to the present day (especially in the North Eastern Ituri region of the DRC). In 2004, two coup attempts were made. In the first, former Zairian Armed Forces attempted to take over the capital Kinshasa and in the second, members of the presidential guard rebelled. On 26 May, Colonel Jules Matebusi, former commander of RCD supported by Laurent Nkunda (also a former RCD commander) clashed with Congolese troops claiming to protect the Banyamalengu[7] from 'genocide' by Congolese troops. They took Bakavu, the capital of South Kivu, which prompted violent protests around the country. They left the town on June 9th and the Congolese army re-entered. Tensions between the Congolese and Rwandan governments remained strained when Kabila accused Rwanda of supporting the rebellion. Rwanda denied this and closed the border with the DRC. The deployment of additional Congolese troops to Kivu was seen by Rwanda as a threat of war. However, after the June 2004 summit in Nigeria, tensions eased and both governments re-committed themselves to the Pretoria (Sun City) Agreement (Borello, 2004).

The conflict in the DRC has been further intensified by the mineral wealth of the region. Ituri is one of the richest areas of the Congo with mineral deposits of gold, diamonds, coltan, timber and oil. The foreign governments of Rwanda and Uganda as well as the DRC government have exploited the conflict to gain access to these resources. For example, gold exports from Uganda more than doubled after their troops crossed into the DRC. Similarly, although there were no diamond exports recorded from Uganda in the decade prior to the conflict, between 1997 and 2000, diamond exports increased from 2000 to 11000 carats (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

Thus, the Great Lakes region conflict has, over the years, involved a complex combination of both internal and international violence and this is reflected in the extracts in later sections which show how women refugees have been caught at the intersection of both ethnic and nationalist programmes.

In 1996, following years as a refugee-producing country, South Africa signed the United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (Landau, 2003). The principles of these

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[7] The Banyamalengu was a term originally used to refer to those people living in the Malengu hills in the DRC. However, it is increasingly used as a general term to refer to all Rwandaphone populations in the DRC. There is some evidence from this research that this term is also increasingly being used to refer to the Tutsi Rwandaphone populations specifically.

international instruments were endorsed in the 1998 Refugee Act (no. 130 of 1998) which became effective in 2000. In December 2001, there were 18,605 recognised refugees in South Africa and 11,417 asylum seekers. However, in 2002 and 2003 respectively about 55,400 new applications were lodged. At the end of 2003 a total of 152,414 applications had been received since 1994. Large backlogs in processing applications have plagued the system. According to UNHCR representatives, more than 90 per cent of refugees are males with the majority of refugees being from the Great Lakes region, especially the DRC (Groot, 2003). Although not a core focus of this report, some of the possible reasons for the predominantly male population are implicit in the gender analysis that follows. These include the expense of travelling such a vast distance to South Africa as well as the difficulties of travelling with children. In spite of the small numbers of women refugees, countries with larger numbers of female refugees have experienced similar difficulties to those that I will describe in getting women's cases recognised (Spijkerboer, 2001).

South African migration legislation has been seen as progressive and generally in line with the South African constitution and international obligations. However, implementation has been extremely slow and has clearly lacked political will and popular support. For example, xenophobic sentiments have been expressed on a number of occasions by key political representatives. In February 1998, the then Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, stated that:

> With an illegal alien population estimated between 2.5 million and 5 million, it is obvious that the socioeconomic resources of the country, which are under severe strain as it is, are further being burdened by the presence of illegal aliens. The cost implication becomes even clearer when one makes a calculation suggesting that if every illegal costs our infrastructure, say R1000 per annum, then multiplied with whatever number you wish, it becomes obvious that the cost becomes Billions of Rand per year (quoted in Crush, 1999, p.4).

As a result, although on paper South African legislation is in keeping with its international obligations, the practice has been very different. Landau (2003) has shown that major problems faced by forced migrants in South Africa include lack of access to health care and education, inability to find affordable accommodation, and unemployment. Although there are no formal restrictions on work, health care and study in South Africa, it is clear that forced migrants lack access in practice and hospitals and schools have been excluding forced migrants. Similarly, reports of widespread corruption and abuse in the reception offices have been rife (Landau, 2003).

Defining trauma

This section aims to briefly define the notion of trauma that I am working with in order to situate it within the broad debates on trauma in the existing literature. Debates about trauma, and its management, have largely taken place within psychiatry and psychology and as such it is worth considering these in more detail. In particular, there have, for quite some time, been critiques of models of trauma articulated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) - the manual produced by the American Psychiatric Association that classifies mental disorders[8]. Many of these have come from

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[8] The DSM has been through a series of revisions over time, with the addition of new disorders and the exclusion of those no longer considered appropriate. These changes are reflected in the numbering of each revised

practitioners trying to use models of trauma across diverse contexts. Here, I want to provide a brief background to the history of the understanding of trauma that is most commonly used. It is also worth outlining some key difficulties that a range of practitioners have had in working with current models of trauma in developing contexts, as these are difficulties most relevant to the narratives of the women who participated in this research. This section is by no means comprehensive but rather draws out the approaches to trauma that are the most relevant to the research findings.

Box 1: PTSD DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA (from DSM IV 309.81 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present: a) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others   b) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. **Note:** In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganised or agitated behaviour
B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways: a) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. **Note:** In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.   b) recurrent distressing dreams of the event. **Note:** In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognisable content.   c) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated). **Note:** In young children, trauma-specific re-enactment may occur.   d) intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event   e) physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event

version: DSM III, DSM IIIR, DSM IV etc. The current version is the DSM IVR with the R representing 'revised' where the revisions have been textual. The DSM is a manual that lists symptoms of various disorders in order for mental health workers to make a diagnosis.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

  a) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma

  b) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma

  c) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma

  d) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities

  e) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others

  f) restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)

  g) sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:

  a) difficulty falling or staying asleep

  b) irritability or outbursts of anger

  c) difficulty concentrating

  d) hypervigilance

  e) exaggerated startle response

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than 1 month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Specify if:

- **Acute:** if duration of symptoms is less than 3 months

- **Chronic:** if duration of symptoms is 3 months or more

Specify if:

- **With Delayed Onset:** if onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor

Differential Diagnosis

Adjustment Disorder; Symptoms of avoidance, numbing, and increased arousal that are present before exposure to the stressor; another mental disorder (e.g., Brief Psychotic Disorder, Conversion Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder); Acute Stress Disorder; Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder; Schizophrenia; other Psychotic Disorders; Mood Disorder With Psychotic Features; a delirium; Substance-Induced Disorders; Psychotic Disorders Due to a General Medical Condition; Malingering.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of mental health services for refugees and increasingly these kinds of services are being included in humanitarian interventions as a matter of course (Bracken, 1997). This has taken place more and more in developing contexts through interventions aiming to alleviate the psychological consequences of armed conflict (Summerfield, 1998). The increase in mental health services has, in part, been driven by ethical concerns for the wellbeing of refugee groups and their lack of access to services. This concern for mental health in war-affected communities resulted in the emergence of specialised services in the 1970s and 1980s, which produced increased trauma services for those from developing contexts who were living in the West and, through its inclusion in humanitarian interventions, in conflict and post-conflict developing countries.

Most of this trauma work is based, to a varying degree, on the DSM model of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD was first incorporated into the DSM III in 1980, although its history goes back much further than that. Its inclusion was based on the assumption that it describes a psychiatric disturbance following trauma. The classification of PTSD consolidated earlier concepts of post-torture syndrome, concentration camp syndrome and rape trauma syndrome (Bracken, 1995) evident in earlier versions of the DSM.

The emergence of PTSD as a psychological syndrome itself lacks a clear historical and theoretical continuity but is documented in a number of places. Its history has been particularly well documented by Young (1995) who identified John Erichsen as one of the first to diagnose it in the 1860s. This early trauma work was predominantly in response to victims of railway accidents who showed symptoms that were typical of lesions in spite of none being evident. Alongside this, during this pre-World War I period, it was also a concept used and popularised by Charcot who gave the study of hysteria increasing credibility within psychoanalytic circles. Charcot classified those with 'railway spine' as suffering from hysteria believing that intense fright could produce the traumatic syndrome regardless of physical injury. However, it was primarily Janet and Freud who 'discovered' that hysteria was linked to psychological trauma. Freud, in particular, claimed it was linked to sexual assault, abuse and incest perpetrated against women in the family (Herman, 1992). This claim left Freud ostracised and he increasingly began to ignore female exploitation as a source of hysteria and rather claimed that women in fact longed for the abuse they complained of (Herman, 1992). The extent of this focus on violence in the family is evident in the fact that prior to 1870, hysteria was thought to exist almost exclusively in women.

During World War I, however, the focus shifted away from railway accidents and hysteria to traumatogenic shell shock as the most common of a cluster of war neuroses. With the advent of World War I the idea of men suffering from hysteria became more accepted although Charcot did attribute it to gendered causes seeing it as only possible in young, effeminate men who had suffered excesses, disappointments and profound emotions. He ruled out the possibility of a 'vigorous, well built artisan' becoming hysterical for the same reasons as a woman' (cited in Young, 1995, p. 20). Although the details of this history are beyond the scope of this report, the notion that fear could bring on an equivalent response to physical shock gained increasing popularity in American and European medical circles at this time. Documentation of people dying from shock in spite of showing no medical injuries began to emerge in this period. In addition, it is significant to note the ways in which notions of trauma, and its effects on people, have been gendered since it was first conceptualised.

As a result of World War I, the establishment of specialised centres for the treatment of trauma took place and more and more people were diagnosed with hysteria and neurasthenia[9]. This was strongly class-based with officers seldom receiving the stigmatised label of hysteria – a category that implied (at least in part because of its historical association with women) that one was morally and mentally weak. The explanation given for the anxiety neuroses in officers was that they have too much zeal, too great a sense of responsibility and that they are good officers and, thus, the label of neurasthenia was thought to be more suitable for them (Young, 1995).

The first account of the symptomology of war neuroses can be found in *The Traumatic Neuroses of War,* which was published by the National Research Council in America in 1918. The current symptom list in the DSM can be traced to this source. Based on the wartime events of 1917-1918, it drew heavily on the Freudian notion of traumatic events causing breaches in the brain barrier. Following this influential report, *War Neuroses* is perhaps the most commonly cited monograph on World War II and was produced in 1945. In this manual, cases were classified on the basis of symptoms rather than aetiology, which further paved the way for current trends in diagnosis. The symptoms in this manual were varied and contradictory and, as a result, the United States War Department created a committee to classify neuroses in terms of their psychopathology rather than their symptoms. Because, at this time, the prevailing approach to trauma was psychodynamic there was a general lack of interest in classifying symptoms. This is because the underlying assumption of a psychodynamic tradition was that the psychodynamic processes would be the same across patients but personal history and the context would shape individual reactive symptoms. As a result, the general term psychoneuroses was used without a separate category of traumatic neuroses and without a standardised psychiatric nosology.[10]

These early attempts at codification were, therefore, largely ignored at the time and only received attention in the 1980s when PTSD was included in the psychiatric nosology of the DSM III. The inclusion of PTSD into the DSM III was largely in response to a political struggle by activists and psychiatrists following the Vietnam War to have the impact of the war on soldiers recognised. Indeed, notions of PTSD continue to be useful to activists in order to gain recognition for their suffering. For example, it has been commonly used in court cases involving battered women to highlight the impact of domestic violence on women (see Herman, 1992). According to Young (1995), the work of Rivers was a bridge between the age of traumatic memory as seen in the work of Freud and Janet and the modern notions of trauma as seen in the work of Herman, Leed and Showalter because Rivers was concerned with the symptomology of the war neuroses. In addition, he is also one of the first to talk about the problems of people faking the symptoms of war neuroses in order to gain compensation, an issue that attracts a great deal of attention today.

In 1974, the Council on Research and Development of the American Psychological Association (APA) began work on the first DSM. By 1979, the APA had approved the first draft. This was followed by consultation and field testing. In spite of this consultation, no discussion or negotiation was held on the structure of classification although it was antithetical to some approaches, most notably the

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[9] This term was used in psychiatry in the late 1800s to refer to a collection of symptoms brought about by stress but has since then been almost entirely abandoned.
[10] Nosology refers to the systematic classification of diseases or the branch of medicine that is concerned with this.

psychoanalytic ones. The DSM III was biologically focused rather than emphasising unconscious conflicts and defences more typical of psychoanalytic approaches.[11] There was a great deal of criticism and rejection of the DSM III at the time of its publication as it was believed to be produced by a small clique of practitioners who ignored the variety of contested approaches available. Since that time, and with its widespread application in a range of contexts, these critiques have continued and some of these will be considered at a later stage of the report, where relevant.

Treatment for trauma and associated distress has been equally contested. For example, during World War I, typical treatments for war neuroses included rest, food, electrotherapy and reassurance or encouragement. However, around the 1920s, the notion of relieving symptoms through talking became more popular. This approach initially faced resistance as some doctors questioned the idea that one should seek to relive (through talking) the event that brought about the symptom in the first place. However, by the end of the 19th century the idea of pathogenic secrets (that is, memories that the patient concealed from himself/herself that cause disorders), and the associated assumption that these need to be voiced, was becoming increasingly accepted.

With the acceptance of talking as a cure, the notion of memory became central as a vehicle for bringing emotion to the surface. The assumption behind treatment that began at this stage, and that continues to be widely applied, is that clients should confront traumatic memories and replace self-defeating cognitive schemas with realistic or rational ones. Similarly, the DSM III approach to understanding and treating PTSD put the emphasis on verbal memory as the source of subjectivity. This is, therefore, a particular theory of memory that is rooted in the belief that remembering is an individualised and self-contained activity during which a person seeks to align individual beliefs with social environments.

The consequences of this history are worth commenting on briefly. One is that we currently have approaches to working with trauma rooted in the DSM that tend to be based primarily on a scientific theory that sees human suffering as amenable to standardised measurement, analysis and intervention in fairly linear ways (Bracken, 1997). In addition, the human response to trauma is considered universal. Within psychiatry and psychology, there has been a great deal of resistance to accepting the often stated critique that PTSD, as outlined in the DSM, is a model that reflects a worldview peculiar to most cultures in the world. Rather than recognising that understanding distress through a biomedical model rooted in the individual is itself a cultural phenomenon, with a particular history in the Western world, it has been put forward as theory-free and objective - merely describing, rather than creating, an illness. As a result, culture and context are largely ignored and the emphasis is placed on the individual removed from context (Bracken, 1995). The DSM sees an event (outside the range of normal experience) as damaging in an objective and universal way without attention to the context in which it emerges. For example, the DSM states that somatic symptoms such as headaches or other pains, as a result of trauma, are atypical. In spite of this, somatic symptoms have been documented as extremely common in developing contexts. In making such claims, the model of PTSD (implicitly or explicitly) prescribes how people should act, how their distress should be expressed and what remedy should be applied in all contexts. In its universal claims, PTSD is a worldview that privileges the biological over the socio-cultural and ignores the extent to which health and ill health

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[11] The DSM III classification was later included in the WHO psychiatric nosology and that of the Centre for Disease Control.

are culturally defined (Eisenbruch, 1991). This impacts on the kinds of treatments that are considered desirable and appropriate. The PTSD model assumes that people can change with insight into themselves and their personality – through exploring cognitions and emotions. As such, it is based on the idea of an individual separate from their social context (Bracken, 1995). For example, Horowitz, whose approach has been extremely influential, has understood trauma as a block in cognitive and emotional processing. Although he acknowledges cultural and social phenomena, he then separates them from cognitive and emotional ones. The symptoms identified in the DSM are assumed to be the norm because they are present in the West (Bracken, 1995) with very little attention to how they may vary across contexts.

What is implicit in this critique is that the DSM approach, with its emphasis on symptomology, is unable to illustrate what might be the difference between two very difference traumatic experiences, for example, the trauma of war and the trauma of domestic violence. Although a person who is a victim of domestic violence and a person who is a soldier in combat might both have nightmares and sleep disturbances, the underlying event, and its social significance, is likely to be the significant feature of their distress, rather than the nightmares (Summerfield, 1998). Nightmares may be a common theme of distress but they do not represent the entirety of the experience. Rather, suffering arises from a social context, such as war or domestic violence which each have very different meanings. Similarly, the resolution of distress is shaped by a range of social contextual factors such as family situation, the social significance of the violation and so on, that frame its meaning.

Summerfield (1998) notes an increasing tendency of trauma professionals to see war as first and foremost a mental health emergency. He notes that there has been increasing lobbying for mental health approaches within humanitarian interventions. In spite of this, war-affected people seldom see mental health as their primary priority - particularly when such interventions fail to address their other needs such as poverty and access to basic needs (Bracken, 1997). Nevertheless, large aid budgets go to psychological and psychiatric interventions in conflict ridden societies (Summerfield, 1998). In addition, there is now a fairly large body of literature showing that there is no increase in psychiatric breakdowns in times of armed conflict. Some have explained this as an increase in community cohesiveness during war which offers greater social support (see Young, 1995). However, the brief review of the Rwandan conflict and the extent to which the genocide was perpetrated by civilians against people that were often known to them suggests this may not be the case. This is also very unlikely to be the case for raped women who often experience social rejection and stigma as a result of the rape. In this way, since the early eighties, many practitioners have called for more bottom–up driven approaches to working with trauma that address the priorities of people in conflict-affected, often poverty stricken, societies. For example, current models ignore the extent to which poverty and discrimination may be the cause of people's distress and focus rather on the cognitive and emotional elements of this distress. More recently, in Africa, the increase in nationalism and associated xenophobia and the enforcement of migration restrictions post-independence will shape people's subjective distress. This has led to the critique that the practice of counselling and psychotherapy ignores the problems of groups of people who are discriminated against and prioritises individual change over structural, social and economic change (see for example Chantler, 2005).

Drawing on these critiques, writers from developing contexts have focussed on the ways in which the context shapes the experience of distress, which influences the illness and (by extension) the

solutions that will be appropriate. In particular, they have paid attention to the symbolic construction of a traumatic event. For example, where, following torture, a person is heroised by their community and feels their sacrifice was a meaningful part of a legitimate conflict, they may experience far less distress than a person who believes they were simply a bystander who had no engagement with the conflict, or that the war was not rooted in any legitimate moral basis. The former belief may well result in the most therapeutic approach being to integrate the 'hero' into an armed force or into processes of memorialisation that affirms their contribution.

Working from this perspective, Sideris (2003), notes that many Mozambican women in her research explained their experience of war and displacement as depriving them of cultural and social belonging, of losing their sense of purpose and being lost and alone. Similarly, Eisenbruch (1991) describes how the refugees he worked with suffered a social loss and nostalgia as a result of the emphasis that their host countries placed on integration into the new culture. He calls this 'cultural bereavement' and found it more common in societies where there was a great deal of pressure on refugees to leave their old culture behind along with its associated rituals for dealing with suffering (Eisenbruch, 1991). Similarly, Bracken (1995) in relation to work in Uganda claims that political and social realities structure the meaning people attribute to trauma, how their distress is reported, the type and extent of support available and the type of therapies that are available and appropriate. As Rechtman (2000, in Andermann) notes,

> Even if refugees have lived the same events, this does not mean that they have experienced the same trauma. Both trauma and culture shape human experience and may give the illusion of a common destiny which would flatten out varying individual fates (p.19).

For the purposes of this report it is, therefore, necessary to pay attention to the variety of contexts in which forcibly displaced people live and how these shape their experience of trauma more than the presence of the symptomology listed in the DSM.

A further concern for some critics of the PTSD model is that a culture of victimhood has emerged (predominantly in the West) which confers moral and psychological advantages (Bracken, 1997) to those belonging to victim groups. Reflecting back on the ways in which the context shaped these interviews, it was clear in the interviews that a particular understanding of victimisation was expected by both the research participants and myself based on popular ways of understanding women's wartime experiences. This was a notion of victimisation that represented women as outside of the conflict and of politics and, therefore, the 'true' victims of war. This is a primary theme of Part Three but is worth mentioning as it is an expectation that emerged, at least in part, through my position as a potential service provider. Within this victim culture, doctors and psychologists are the gatekeepers of 'authentic' suffering. That is, by diagnosing people's suffering in measurable, quantifiable ways, they give legitimacy to this suffering. This is rooted in a theory that adverse experiences have long term effects which can be measured. It is clear from the above discussions that notions of PTSD draw on a scientific credibility that offers a testimony and proof of the horror of trauma and people's suffering. As a result it can, and has, been used to justify reparations and damages claims as well as providing ammunition for advocacy against human rights abuses. This has made alternative methods of working with trauma increasingly difficult as the absence of symptoms is equated with the absence of distress. For example, Liebling (2002) argued for reparations for Ugandan women by showing that

thirteen years after the war they continued to show signs of PTSD. Without these symptoms a case may have been less possible.

However, to the extent that this model, and the solutions it sets up, has been taken for granted and put forward as universal, it closes down other explanations and solutions including religious ones, legal ones, political ones etc. In doing so, it does not pay attention to systems for managing trauma that may already exist in local communities. One of the purposes of the trauma model has been to help people to see their problems in terms of the biomedical approach rather than in the ways already described above. Linked to this, it also denies people's coping and resilience by drawing on the notion that traumatic experiences inevitably have long term consequences requiring professional intervention.

Alongside these critiques has been the emergence of work dealing with memory in post-conflict settings. Notions of memory in the traditional psychotherapeutic context have seen it as verbal memory and as a reflection of thought processes; as a faculty of a unitary, individual, single mind (Brockmeier, 2002). Based on this understanding there has been something of a crisis in mainstream psychology around memorial accounting as it relates to armed conflict (see the controversy surrounding the autobiography of Rigoberta Menchu, for example) and repressed memories of sexual violence (see Reavey and Warner, 2003). This controversy is rooted in contesting the accuracy of memory and is based on an approach that is also necessarily used in criminal tribunals and other legal remedies for conflict. However, it has been increasingly argued that 'memory', rather than being contained within the individual, is rooted in:

> [An] array of different cultural-historical discourses within which this term…is used to describe and carry out certain practices. As a consequence the topic, and concept of memory must be seen as a cultural-historical phenomenon (Brockmeier, 2002, p. 7).

Social memory carries views on one's history, identity, coping, adapting and problem solving on a collective basis (Summerfield, 1998). Remembering is a purposeful activity and the meaning of memories can change with changing contexts. Clearly, the experience of displacement, and of being a woman displaced, will shape the meaning attributed to how memory is formed.

The functionality of memory is seen in the ways that governments, militia and politicians attempt to shape, manipulate and control social memory. For example, the Hutu propaganda worked to reshape the history of the region by stating in the media that the Hutu and Tutsi were two different people and that the Tutsi were foreign conquerors that had refused to accept their loss of power in 1959 (Green, 2002). However, and less insidious, are truth commissions that aim to re-tell history in a way that promotes telling of wartime violations and reconciliation after conflict. This is often done with the express purpose of promoting peace through narratives of conflict and memorialisation. These kinds of memory are rooted in an assumption that war and the extent to which it is founded on memory is social rather than individual.[12] The question then arises, for this piece of research, as to how memory is used and shaped within an international asylum system that categorises, rejects and includes people on the basis of a testimony (and to some extent the traumatic content of that testimony). Testimony

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[12] In spite of this, these kinds of interventions have at times drawn heavily on an individual models in the ways in which trauma is managed and expressed.

of a particular type is an imperative for an asylum seeker and a basis for evaluating their need for, and right to, services. In addition, some have argued (see Bhabha, 1996) that the asylum system privileges individual violations and individual trauma over social ones. For example, most states have tended to define gender-based persecution (such as persecution because of the refusal to participate in a gendered practice such as female genital cutting or observing dress codes for women) as cultural and, therefore, as norms of behaviour that states are entitled to impose on citizens (Bhabha, 1996). This is in contrast to the more 'classic' cases of persecution based on public, political activism. Similarly, Spijkerboer (2001) notes that women in the Netherlands are most likely to be successful in their asylum applications if they show extremes of gender-based violence (and passivity in the face of it) or if they engage in 'classical' (generally male) political activism.

Although a few people in this research did describe the symptoms of PTSD, such as recurrent recollections of events and hypervigilence, none of them saw these as central to their experience and only one woman found these symptoms to be a major source of distress. Most expressed no sign of such symptoms or did not experience them as their primary concern. In spite of this, talking about their experiences was important to them and one woman in particular was grateful for the research as she said it made her feel that her experiences were important and reaffirmed for her the fact that she had been violated and deserved recognition for it.

Another person said:

> But you know there's one thing I've seen that does trouble people. It did happen to me. So long as you have withheld inside yourself a feeling it's going to trouble you. It's going to trouble you and it is all said in a session in counselling because that thing that you don't want is here. Anyway, it's true that you withhold your things until you get the right person to talk to.

Similarly, the women did indicate a psychological and emotional aspect to their distress stating for example that 'my mind was not at peace', or 'I do not feel mentally fine'. Therefore, the approach here is not to undermine the value and usefulness of psychological approaches, but rather to draw on recommendations from the literature to elaborate how women made sense of their experiences and, within that process of meaning making, to explore their priorities for intervention. From this perspective, counselling and other psychological interventions are one aspect of a broader intervention that takes into account the socio-political context in which people make sense of the violence and displacement they have lived through. Based on the priority concerns expressed by the women in this research, we can begin to elaborate an intervention strategy that accounts for both the strengths and weaknesses of the current methods for dealing with trauma and integrates the variety of possible interventions for refugee women.

Based on the current research, and the above outline of theories of trauma, the following core learnings for interventions with refugee women can be made:

- The socio-political context shapes what women experience as traumatic. As such it is necessary to understand their experiences within their social position as women as well as their national and ethnic positionings;

- The meaning that different women in the research attached to the same events was not the same and shaped the extent to which a violation was experienced as traumatic;

- Rather than educate people on the meaning and source of their trauma, it is important to understand and acknowledge their own explanations for a symptom, event or solution. To this end, traditional systems for coping can be important ones;

- It is important to focus on people's resilience and coping as much as their distress. This goes hand in glove with not using the expression of PTSD as evidence of authentic or more extreme suffering but rather to recognise that distress and its expression is culturally shaped;

- Healing takes place at a number of levels and it is as important to focus on healing at community and national levels as well as on an individual level. This will mean that the solutions offered for dealing with trauma are more diverse than counselling approaches alone.

In this report, I will consider the priorities, explanations and concerns raised by the refugee women I interviewed in relation to these core lessons. The purpose of this report is, therefore, to elaborate on some of these key findings in order to outline a programme of intervention for refugee women and to generate debate among service providers on the creation of contextually appropriate interventions.

PART TWO: Key lessons from forcibly
displaced women

Women and armed conflict: Unpacking the social and political context of trauma

Taking seriously the need to attend to the socio-political context in which we understand trauma, this section considers how gender (as one way in which our social lives are organised) has shaped the meaning that the women in the research gave to the violations they suffered. An introduction of gender in this way is, therefore, in line with demands from those working in trauma service delivery to pay attention to the meaning people attribute to their wartime experiences in order to design interventions that fit with their worldview (Summerfield, 1998).

Testimonies from war survivors remind us that war does more than simply violate an individual's bodily integrity. It also crushes social and cultural institutions that connect people to their history, identity and values. It results in breakdowns of social services and the related social upheavals interfere with the continuation of social rituals and relationships. In this section, I will consider how social contexts place responsibility on women for maintaining marriage and family relationships, for child care and for sexual purity as well as mediating women's access to social justice. These topics were a central part of the narratives of the women I interviewed and shaped both their experience of violence and the interventions they deemed useful.

In times of war, identity is redefined and central identities prior to the war such as mother or teacher are reshaped by the wartime propaganda and one becomes first and foremost part of an ethnic or national group, for example, Tutsi or Hutu (Mamdani, 2001). In addition, there is little room for ambiguity in ethnic identity. This was a central theme in the narratives that the women in this research told, and has been mentioned by many writers on the region. However, what is less well articulated is the way in which gender is central in achieving this uncontested identity. For the women in this study, their persecution (whether it was ethnically - or nationally - based) was mediated by their gender, which assigned them a specific role in the maintenance of group identity. It is these points that I want to explore in more detail here. In this section, I will consider four different ways in which gender shaped women's trauma and distress before considering the implications that this has for service delivery.

Intersections of gender, ethnicity and nationalism

One of the most common descriptions that women gave of the violence they suffered was of their position as children of a mixed marriage or as being themselves in such a marriage. This, at times, referred to being in a mixed Rwandan-Congolese relationship or at other times a mixed Hutu and Tutsi relationship depending on the areas the women had lived in or their particular family

arrangements. For example, in the extract below this woman describes how she was forcibly repatriated from the DRC because of her refusal to accept the Congolese name of her estranged husband. This left her with a Rwandan name inherited from her mother, in spite of her father also being Congolese. The violent military removal of people deemed to be Rwandan from the Eastern Congo following 'insufficient' voluntary repatriation resulted in many people fleeing further westwards and for this woman was the event that led to her torture and ultimate displacement to South Africa (see Stockton, 1998). She says:

> M: My daughter was kicked out of the boarding school because she you know she - my daughter - has my mother's name
> Ingrid: Yes, yes
> M: And my mother's name is a Rwandese name, so when they found
> out she was kicked out.
> Ingrid: She was out
> M So I went to see the Bishop (names the Bishop)
> M: So, so we asked him to call the director of the school – you know - the governor and told them that. In Congo it's, you know, everything it's patriarchal [patrilineal] it goes on the father's side
> Ingrid: Yes
> M: Not on your mother's side, so therefore you know my daughter is a Congolese because her father was a Congolese, not because you know – I am
> Ingrid: Yes
> M: So I asked my daughter to to - you know - for a name change, but my daughter refused that it would be changed.

She goes on to describe her own detention and torture and the explanations she has for what happened to her:

> M: After all the beatings (showing us photographs of her wounds)
> Ingrid: Do you know why they arrested you and harassed you the way they did?
> M: Because my Mum was Rwandese. Ja.
> Ingrid: It was as simple
> M: Ja. It was as simple as that. Yeah.
> Ingrid: So
> M: And Tutsi. Yeah as especially since my mother was living you know with me and they knew about you know about all of the Rwandese or the Tutsi who ever are living in Congo that time. So the Minister made a speech and told us that "we're gonna um you know we're gonna take pictures of each of you and then uh and these pictures you know you'll be surprised one day because we'll take you from here to your country. We'll take you back to your country". So I asked him the question um you know "our home, where?"
> Ingrid: Mmm
> M: "Our home where?" And then other people you know the other Rwandese told me "well back home, back to our home in Rwanda". And then I said "No I'm not Rwandese, I'm Congolese".

This extract highlights something that is often taken for granted or seen as natural. That is, the idea of national and ethnic purity – that there are two national groups, Rwandan and Congolese, and each person belongs to one without ambiguity – is reliant on a patrilineal system that transfers the identity

of the father to that of the children regardless of the mother's national (and indeed ethnic) identity.[13] This is conflated by her classification as Tutsi. Most literature on this context simply states this as a fact. For example, Mamdani (2002) states that what is most striking about Rwanda and Burundi is the 'purity' of difference where everyone identifies clearly as Hutu or Tutsi. He states that:

> When cohabitation takes on the form of marriage, the wife takes on the identity of the husband…the social identity is passed on through patrilineal descent (2002, p. 53).

In this extract, M's daughter refuses to change her name to that of her estranged father even in the face of persecution because of her Rwandan name. She does this as an explicit act of resistance (M says: I asked my daughter for a name change but my daughter refused that it would be changed). Resisting this gender norm put her at great risk and, in this instance, resulted in her being excluded from school. In spite of this, she insists on keeping her mother's Rwandan (and, as she states, Tutsi) name. In many instances, this would be taken as a resistance to a gender norm (presumably because she no longer keeps contact with her father) but it also works to undermine the notion of national purity – in this case that one cannot be a Congolese with a Rwandan name. Similarly, M, who has not taken the name of her former husband, is detained and tortured as a result of this because she is taken to be Rwandan regardless of the fact that she has never been to Rwanda and has no contacts there. In this example, M was violently assaulted whilst in detention because of her refusal to accept the way in which she is positioned within this national discourse (she says, "no I'm not Rwandese I'm Congolese").

Many writers have commented on the ways that women's bodies and sexuality are central to the construction of ethnic and national identity and this extract highlights how refusing such gendered norms disrupts projects of nationalism and can be the basis of persecution. In this way, women's resistance to family norms of identity transmission become a central challenge to notions of 'pure' imagined, extended communities (Hobsbawm 1983) and, in this example, ensures that an ideology of nationalism can be sustained (Mamdani 2001). This extract, therefore, highlights the importance of critical reflection on the role of gendered relationships in the ideologies of ethnicity and nationalism. Moreover, it reminds us of the need for an understanding of women's political agency and resistance. Women, in times when ethnic and nationalist identities are being reasserted, have to negotiate gender within nationalist movements that often have an investment in minimising the political nature of gender norms given their potential to disrupt the national project (Walker 1982; Geisler 2004). Not only is the woman in the extract above defined as Rwandan and Tutsi, but as a woman, with the expectation that she should have the name of her husband. Her refusal to take it is what makes her vulnerable to deportation. In this example, it is not possible to separate out her resistance to gender norms from her resistance to Congolese nationalism that defines the so-called Banyamalengu as Rwandan and demands their removal from the North Eastern Congo. In spite of this, popular understandings of armed conflict tend to reinforce the idea that wars are fought over ethnicity and nationalism and gender is not a part of these conflicts, except to the extent that women also hold these identities.

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[13] Some authors (see Human Rights Watch, 2004) state that it is not typical in Rwanda or the DRC for women or children to take their husband's last name but rather that this is an emerging, and predominantly middle class feature. However, for the purposes of this report the extent to which it is or is not the norm does not detract from the significance of family relationships in passing on ethnic or national identity.

Bhabha (1996) has critiqued the ways in which violence against women is regularly defined as private or domestic within asylum systems (and this is, of course, not unique to the asylum system) in contrast to political persecution that is assumed to be as a result of one's membership of an ethnic, religious or 'racial' group. What the above extracts suggest is that it is not possible in any absolute way to separate out political acts from private acts. Indeed, the politics of resisting gender norms has been a central component of the women's movement in its attempts to recognise the personal as political. In spite of this, armed conflict remains a forum where it is very difficult to understand the relationship between resistance in the family and the broader conflict. Resistance to a gendered norm (in the above example women and children having the last name of their husbands/fathers) that is manifested at the level of the family is central to the political conflict over ethnicity and nationality. The way in which the war shaped, and was shaped by, family life and family relationships is also seen in the extract below. This statement was made by a woman who is a Tutsi married to a Hutu man. Unlike the woman above who challenges the patrilineal transmission of ethnic and national identity in spite of the violence she faces, this woman accepts that her children are Hutu, in spite of her being Tutsi, as a result of her husband being Hutu. This is something that causes great distress to both her and the children. As she states:

> She [my daughter] doesn't understand. I said [to her] you know you're a Hutu and I'm a Tutsi. She said 'No mum! I can't believe it, no. The Hutus kill'….

This woman expressed extreme distress at the way in which a patrilineal system of identification caused enormous rifts and divisions within families resulting in violence at a family and a national level. Her daughter's distress comes from being identified as a member of a group responsible for her mother's persecution. Later in the interview she went on to describe how, in spite of her extreme poverty, her husband's family were willing to provide for the child but not for her because the child was a Hutu. In addition, as the extract below suggests, the war and the ideology it supported encouraged domestic violence, killing and rape as particularly patriotic and evidence of one's unwavering commitment to the cause of ethnic purification. As one woman said:

> That's where from '59 a Hutu is the enemy of the Tutsi. That's how they taught me - as a Hutu they are enemies. You see like in '94 if you – like my husband was Hutu. He could kill me with all my children because they've got that blood of the Tutsi. Then as a case I give you a good example. I first start with my wife, kill [her]. Then my wife if the children are lying with your wife [kill] all. I'll show you that this blood, I don't need it again.

The first extract contrasts with the previous woman's experience because she describes how her child is positioned as ethnically 'pure' rather than 'mixed' or tainted with Tutsi blood. The extent to which the former or the latter is the case shaped whether the children were eligible for death and this is, therefore, an issue that was strongly contested and negotiated. Clearly, the system of patrilineal transmission of ethnicity (or nationality) is a contradictory and complex one that is shaped by the demands of evolving constructions of identity through armed conflict. The need to define each person clearly, and the extreme difficulty of such a task, is likely to be the reason that the women in this study reported such intense monitoring of 'mixed' relationships.

The second extract relates a narrative that was told on more than one occasion where people were targeted by their own family members because of their ethnic group. In showing how killing of a family member of the other ethnic group is taken to be the ultimate act of commitment to ethnic purification we see the significance of the management of marriage relationships in order for the project of ethnic purity to be successful. What is most significant about this extract is the extent to which this is about more than simply a bureaucratic system of passing on identity through the father but, at the level of family and community interactions, requires negotiation in relation to one's family situation. This begins to hint at the complexity of managing family relations where relationships fail to be defined by the official system of patrilineal descent. This is, of course, not unique to the Rwandan situation and similar examples have been seen in most colonised countries albeit in varied forms (such as in the Immorality Act and Mixed Marriages Act in South Africa). It does, however, show how women's targeting was shaped both by their ethnic identity and their social positioning as wives and mothers within a patrilineal system of identification.[14]

It is not, therefore, surprising that much Hutu nationalist propaganda during the genocide was focussed on women in their socially prescribed roles as wives and mothers. For example, of the widely promoted Hutu Ten Commandments published in a December issue of the newspaper *Kangura*, four regulated marriage and sexual relationships across ethnic divisions. They stated that:

- Every Hutu should know that a Tutsi woman, wherever she is, works for the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Hutu who: marries a Tutsi woman; befriends a Tutsi woman; employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or concubine;

- Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?;

- Hutu woman, be vigilant and try to bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to reason;

- The Rwandese Armed Forces should be exclusively Hutu. The experience of the October [1990] war has taught us a lesson. No member of the military shall marry a Tutsi (Green, 2002, pp. 733-755).

According to Green (2002), Tutsi women were socially positioned at the permeable boundary between the two ethnic groups which accounts for particular focus on them. This propaganda was evident in the high levels of rape in Rwanda and surrounding countries affected by the war as will be discussed in later sections. The implied lack of reason that men are assumed to show in relation to sex draws on a gendered stereotype of men's sexuality as uncontrolled. Indeed, rather than condemn this, the lack of sexual control of men is legitimated within the 'Ten Commandments' and the responsibility for its control placed on women.

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[14] For Tutsi men married to Hutu women, their wives would also have the ethnic identity of their husbands. However, these marriages were extremely rare. Several reasons for this have been put forward including that, with the marginalisation of Tutsis in Rwanda and their declining opportunities, a marriage to a Hutu man was more desirable (Mamdani, 2001).

As already mentioned policy, legislation and popular understandings have often drawn on and reinforced an artificially rigid division between domestic and state violence; between political and criminal acts with gender-based violence on the criminal or domestic side of this dichotomy. Debates about the nature of resistance and what constitutes 'the political' inevitably involve a discussion on the nature of warfare. For Turshen (1998) there have been significant changes in recent years, including the blurring of boundaries between civilians and armed forces and the increasing targeting of non-military in combat. In resource-poor countries, wars are not fought with expensive and technologically advanced weaponry but by private armies, mercenaries, vigilantes, criminal gangs and paramilitaries. The arms used in these conflicts are typically light arms that are cheaply available.[15] Often unpaid military forces rely on the population for economic support and terrorise this support from them. Thus, contemporary conflicts in Africa privatise violence and blur the boundaries between civilians and armed forces and, therefore, between acts of criminal and political violence. This is a very different situation from that implicit in much of the international legislation governing armed conflict and attempting to mitigate its effects. For example, the Hague and Geneva Conventions have attempted to set out the rules of war. The Geneva Convention sets out international rules regarding civilians and soldiers in a manner that assumes a clear distinction between the two and states that:

> [T]he two groups [combatants and civilians] must be treated differently by the warring sides and, therefore, combatants must be clearly distinguishable from civilians….In order for the distinction between combatants and civilians to be clear, combatants must wear uniforms and carry their weapons openly during military operations and during preparation for them (1949).

In the post-colonial context there has been an increasing withdrawal of funding for arms from former colonial powers and large multi-national corporations, resulting in the increasing purchase of smaller arms which can be used as easily by women and children as men. This suggests, firstly, that the binary opposition between male (perpetrator) soldiers and female (victim) civilians as easily distinguishable groups be thrown into question. Additionally, overlaps between (political) military activities and (private) criminal activities become blurred as the spaces occupied by soldiers and civilians merge.

The potential consequence of this is that much policy and writing on war fails to adequately capture the situation of women in the Great Lakes conflict where small, often local, groups have fought one another with the most extreme example perhaps being the extent to which civilians perpetrated the genocide of 1994. This plays itself out in family relationships and in the ways in which war-time propaganda focuses on the family. The level of suspicion described by the women among civilians also testifies to the lack of boundaries between civilians and soldiers. The changing nature of war also shifts the kinds of violence that are possible. Light weapons are easily used to intimidate people, for example to rape women, in a way that heavy arms are not. This is no less the case post-conflict where small arms slide easily into ongoing violence after wars end. An example of this is in South Africa where a number of researchers have noted increased levels of gender-based violence following the transition to democracy as well as how arms 'disappeared' after the war only to re-emerge in criminal activities (Pillay 2001).

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[15]In Southern Africa an AK47 can cost as little as US$6 and landmines US$25 (Turshen and Twagiramariya, 1998).

This begins to suggest the ways that notions of what constitutes political persecution in policy and research might fail to account for the needs of women whose actions fall outside of a particular definition of the political, namely, where violence taking place between family members and as a result of one's marriage and parentage is not the kind of violence one immediately considers to be political. In spite of there being many illustrations of the kind above, where the women's violence was as a result of their marriages and family make-up, violence within the family has typically not been seen as political in wartime and post-war interventions, at times, reinforce a separation of public and private; criminal and political in the way they are set up.

Motherhood as a defining feature of womanhood

The above discussion has already mentioned the significance of women as wives and mothers in the ways that they were violated during war. Because motherhood was such a central defining feature of the women's narratives it is worth looking at this in more detail. In addition to the ways in which the transmission of ethnicity and nationalism is managed in families through patrilineal traditions, the women in the research also described their social position as mothers as central to their experiences of displacement. In many societies womanhood is seen as inseparable from motherhood and the women I interviewed saw their motherhood as a central part of their identity. In spite of this, their responsibility for children was something that they felt very ambivalent about. Narratives of motherhood were often framed in relation to a social expectation that they should be entirely self-sacrificing and consumed by their mothering activities - and feel satisfied and experience no ambivalence with this role. In some contexts, motherhood offered them a form of social status and helped them to cope and recover from persecution and displacement. In others, however, it was a burden they could not cope with and made accessing assistance more difficult or was a source of social isolation. In these cases, many women experienced a great deal of distress at not being able to carry out their socially prescribed mothering roles in a context that expects motherhood to be something that they undertake willingly in spite of the sacrifices and risks it involves. Their inability to be the kinds of mothers that society expected was a defining feature of their distress.

This woman spent two months hiding in a forest in the North-Eastern DRC after fleeing her home. She describes her situation as follows:

> R: So that very day we joined the family in the forest where we met there was a sister-in-law who gave birth in the forest that very day. When we reached, that's when she delivered. And uh it was terrible because we had to move because these people were behind us they were shelling. So on that day the invaders were just behind us and they were shelling and they were firing so we had to move immediately after she delivered. Can you imagine such an experience?

She was later separated from all people that she knew and she went on to say:

> So when they left me I walked around in the forest then I found some men who were seated alone there then when I tried to [go to] them they said, "no your child is crying and he could make it possible for these people hunting us to find where we are so you better move or we'll kill you with your child. So you have to move". So I moved.

The women I interviewed emphasised the burden that motherhood was in contexts where they lacked family and broader social support for this role, not only as a result of being displaced but also as a result of social expectations that mothers will be the primary caregivers of children. In the above extracts, this is very clearly a burden that others imposed on them. However, far from simply being an external imposition, women, at different moments, both challenged and drew on this expectation themselves. The extract above is one example of how women with children were further isolated and rendered more vulnerable even within their 'own' groups because of the additional burden that children posed whilst fleeing. This woman's responsibility for children under these conditions made her vulnerable to attack and left her isolated from groups that could have assisted in her protection. This is in stark contrast to the popular expectation that men 'protect' women and children in times of armed conflict.

However, the social significance of motherhood was also evident in the way that women described the deaths of children. Although these women had lost many loved ones, the deaths of their children were often described as the most unresolved and the most painful deaths they had experienced. This was, at least in part, as a result of their inability to meet their motherhood responsibilities. This is described in the following extract. This woman was fleeing the conflict in Rwanda and crossed the border into the DRC. After remaining there for some time she decided to go back home because she had been unable to find adequate food or assistance whilst being displaced. She says:

> U: Ja, now people were saying that - OK people feel because they were asked to choose - this is a matter of a choice now. Either I remain behind or I decide to surrender and then they take me over and they kill me whatever. It was just a very big decision to make. So that's how the situation was at that moment. That day that I mean the next day before the dawn of the next day I had made the decision that the next day I'm going home
> Ingrid: Mmm
> U: Nothing to wait for. My child was collapsing by then and I thought OK let me go home maybe I'll reach home when it's or myself I'll collapse when I'm there – because everybody by that time had become so tiny due to malnutrition and you know it was it was not all that good. You are no longer you are no longer a person you have been minimised to something tiny and you've got all these forest conditions on your shoulders you know you've got skin rash you've got lice. You've got lice you know biting, all those things and the injuries, swellings, bones all those things.
> Ingrid: Mmm
> U: That was the day that we had to cross from the region of refugees hiding into the occupied region uh zone of Banyamalengu - the so called Banyamalengu but RPF.
> Ingrid: Mmm hmm
> U: So we are preparing the so called food that we had and we are now eating stems not roots but stems of the yams. So yams were finished but now we were going back to the plantations and we get stems instead of roots because the edible part is roots not the stem.
> Ingrid: Ja
> U: And it's so hard to cook you know from the roots you come to the stem and the stem is something not easy to cook and from there you have leaves now so we're now looking for stems that's what they're going to cook. So in due course when we had tried to cook that's when the child collapsed. So it was a tragic point you know and uh you know we didn't have a decent burial for him and it was a situation where you just had to dig with your hands a small shallow grave and put him there. So that was the time I decided to go home. Interpreter speaking in Kinyarwanda (comforting her) About 30 second pause getting a tissue
> Ingrid: Are you feeling OK?

U: Ja, it's OK, it's OK

The burden of her responsibility for making choices that could save or jeopardise her and her child's life is evident in the first parts of the extract where she is forced between choosing to return home and continuing to hide in the forest. The fact that either choice could result in the death of herself and the child makes returning home a last attempt to save both of their lives. This extract shows how her humanity was eroded through the lack of hygiene, food and basic needs. The indignity of having to live on leaves and stems was a large part of her decision to risk returning home. In addition, her own malnutrition made her unable to produce breast milk for her child. Later on in the interview she described doing permanent damage to her breasts trying to get breast milk for the child.

Throughout the interview, this event was described as the most difficult to deal with and distressing part of everything she lived through. That this woman's child died just as she had decided to return home makes this a particularly tragic death. The loss of children was, for many of the women, rooted to their feelings of responsibility as mothers and their inability to care for children given the circumstances they faced. This social expectation is often further entrenched in wartime propaganda as evidenced by the extent to which the Hutu Ten Commandments mentioned earlier emphasised Hutu women as good wives and mothers. This has been well-documented in African and other post-colonial contexts where gender divisions are further entrenched in times of armed conflict with women being remembered primarily as mothers and caregivers and men as soldiers. The women of a nation are often portrayed as symbols of cultural identity (Yuval-Davis 1990). In particular, they are, through their roles as caregivers, educators of children and guardians of familial relations, given the task of transmitting social and cultural customs and values. What this suggests is that, far from being outside of conflict women, through their traditional roles as mothers and socialisers of families, are called to participate in the reproduction of the fatherland. Women, in times of war, are remembered only in a way that reinforces, or at least does not challenge, a (mythical) public/private dichotomy, with women's place deemed to be in the private sphere of home and family. Cock (1989), for example, considers the extent to which the military in South Africa required a representation of women as disengaged from the conflict, which reinforced an artificial division between protectors and protected. The carefully drawn lines between public and private, and its mapping onto masculine and feminine, is central to wartime propaganda, at least in part because these artificially rigid notions of femininity as outside of the public, political realm of war have been mobilised to justify war in the name of protecting the 'women and children' (Yuval-Davis 1990). Of course, in relation to the extract above, this is exactly what the men do not do. This is indicative of the extent to which a gendered narrative of war equally addresses men in stereotyped ways. Although this is beyond the scope of this research, it does indicate the extent to which an understanding of the mutual construction of masculinity and femininity is part of a broader social system of regulating behaviour.

What is also evident from the above discussion is that not all deaths have the same significance for all people. In the above extract, this incident was described by her as the one day she will never forget and was the main feature of the interview. For her, as a result of the social meaning of motherhood, she has a particular experience of violence, trauma, loss and social belonging. This extract and the emphasis she placed on losing her child shows that how a person expresses distress will also be shaped by social processes. There are, for example, a range of different norms that shape the subjective expression of distress and the social significance of how our position in a society will also

influence this (Sideris, 2003). Gender is an organising social principle that defines us and is relevant to our experience of death and trauma more generally.

Along these lines, the extract below shows the sense of responsibility this woman felt for the difficult conditions under which her daughter was living in South Africa:

> W: Ja that's for sure. With the war you can say maybe after the war you go back but with the family [being mixed ethnicity] I don't know. I imagine if I die like in this country my daughter (gasping, crying). And when we came she didn't know the problems. Like now where we are living the food it is the food which is not good. She asks, "Why did we come? At home we are eating well and you bring me here". She doesn't know. I told her I think the country's still unsafe
> Ingrid: She doesn't understand.
> W: She doesn't understand

Her distress at being unable to provide meaningfully for her child is acute and is rooted in earlier statements she made about fearing that coming to South Africa had been a mistake. The burden of the decisions she was required to make and of providing for her daughter under conditions of extreme hardship was particularly distressing for her. This was exacerbated by the South African asylum procedure which most of the women described as being corrupt with them having to pay bribes in order to get access to the reception office. For women with children these bribes were higher and this made it increasingly difficult for women with children (see also CASE, 2003)[16]. There is a strong social expectation that mothers can, and will, provide care for their children and that they experience motherhood as unambiguously positive and this shaped women's subjective distress. In spite of this social expectation, motherhood outside of socially regulated boundaries and contexts (as with the women who were mothers of children with different ethnic identities) results in women's rejection and, at times, persecution. Another example of this was in cases of rape and, given the extent to which the women's narratives focused on rape, it is worth considering this in more detail below.

What is evident in the discussion above, however, is that this notion of women as first and foremost mothers is a social expectation that we all share and participate in. I am not, therefore, suggesting that women resisted the idea of being positioned as self-sacrificing mothers routinely. Rather, they negotiated this expectation, as did I, in the process of the interview and it was present in the meaning they made of their experiences and which narratives they told and how. It is also quite possible that, given my position within the NGO sector, this was a narrative that they imagined I expected. The notion of women as first and foremost mothers is an image that is easily accepted and is often drawn on in trying to mobilise resources for women. For example, a UNHCR video that was used for the workshops in this research stated:

> Once she finds relative safety, a refugee woman doesn't look back. She focuses on the future using whatever means available to keep her family and community together… With dignity and without question they take on their new roles, mother, father, breadwinner and

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[16] Since this research ended, the Rosettenville reception office has been closed (with the Department of Home Affairs citing reasons of health and safety) and all asylum seekers are required to go to the Marabastad office outside Pretoria for processing their applications. In addition, no new applications are being accepted making access to the system very difficult.

sometimes peacemaker. Refugee women use their brains and their hearts to help themselves and others (UNHCR, 2003).

In this example, the image of a self-sacrificing woman is a powerful one that aims to illustrate the extent to which refugee women are deserving of assistance. However, the notion that women do not question, but rather simply carry out their social roles, also reinforces the expectation that this is what women should do. The kind of refugee women being described in this representation was continually being both drawn on and challenged by the women in this research.

In any interview, not all experiences can be told and people participating tell them based on the context in which they are interviewed. In this case, the NGO context in which this research was done, and the hope that this might lead to additional services for the women, will have influenced the extent to which this was a theme that they emphasised.

Understanding gender as a series of social norms in which we all participate raises a number of complexities for policy. Often, as in the video extract above, policy makers have simply reinforced these ideas about what women do in times of war. One of the implications of this research is that there are a number of levels of intervention. Clearly, interventions that focus on mothers are important given the burden that motherhood was for these women. However, interventions with women might equally aim to focus on the moments where they challenged these social expectations and use these as opportunities for challenging the additional burden that women carry for childcare. In this way, we might want to challenge the guilt associated with an inability to mother in a particular way and consider alternative and more equitable ways of dealing with the care of children in times of conflict.

The social significance of women's sexuality:
Sex work, forced marriage and rape

There is a great deal of literature documenting the increase in sexual violence in times of armed conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2002; Richters, 1998). Little of it, however, considers why sexual violence and exploitation should be different to other forms of torture and abuse that take place in such times. Nevertheless, there is an implicit sense in the literature that this is a violation with a unique significance and it is, therefore, worth unpacking further. Understanding the significance attached to sexual violence requires us to consider the social meaning attributed to it, and to women's sexuality in general. For example, research on women who have been raped has shown how they suffer stigma, social exclusion and shame, in addition to possible long term health consequences (Richters, 1998; Schanks and Shull, 2000). That this shame may render women increasingly isolated and unable to talk about rape, as well as the fact that displacement may break down social relationships, serves to undermine social support as an important source of healing. Rape was a commonly mentioned violation in this research although it was often very difficult to talk about and in occasional cases was discussed only after the interview.

Rape was repeatedly cited by many of the women, regardless of their own experience of sexual violence, as one of the primary ways in which women in general were affected by war. As one said:

> E: No it was the soldiers. When the war started it was between soldiers but then with time you see the population got involved. There was civil war so the population has just got involved. There were rapes, there were many rapes
>
> Ingrid: Mmm Mmm hmm. And so um it was a something like a general situation of instability that made you come rather than specific instances?
>
> E: When I came to [names a place] men were trying to rape me because I was alone among them and then since we came with our father because our father was transferred with the government so the Rwandans…
>
> Ingrid: Yes, It was better for you to…
>
> E: It wasn't right for me to stay because I was among men
>
> Ingrid: Mmm Mmm And um I mean rape is something we've heard a lot about. How it affects women…
>
> E: Most of the time it its rape it's that's one of the ways that women are affected.

In many contexts where virginity and child bearing are considered to be a woman's greatest assets, rape takes on a particular social significance that shapes the extent to which, and the ways that, the actual experience of rape is experienced as traumatic (Summerfield, 1998). For Sideris (2004), gender discrimination locates responsibility for sexual integrity with women. This is shaped by patterns of lineage where the father of the child must be known, as already described above. This has been linked to the large numbers of abandoned babies in Rwanda where a child without a father cannot be accepted and is a source of shame to women. If we recall the discussion in the previous section on the importance of patrilineal systems in reinforcing the notion of ethnic or national purity, rape becomes a tool central to the conflict that has devastating consequences for women both because of gender inequalities that place unequal responsibility on them to maintain sexual purity and because of ethnic prejudices that divide mothers from their children of different ethnic groups. Rape is, therefore, a violation of the individual and social body in a context where women are given a particular role in the reproduction of their ethnic and national groups.

In this way the psychosocial outcomes of war are framed by gender relations and draw on them to reinforce violence based on ethnicity and nationalism. Considering the gendered implications of war and, in particular, the ways in which gender intersects with and sustains systems of ethnic and national prejudices may result in different priorities for recovery following rape than if it were seen simply as a private violation. For example, emphasis may be placed on social reintegration following war rather than individual given that the social impact of rape is one of social isolation and rejection. Whether people feel their sacrifices have been worth their suffering and how the war is remembered frames whether their experiences are seen as necessary and brave sacrifices or humiliating and degrading violations. The significance of rape comes from the fact that it is never socially heroised and is not seen to be a noble sacrifice in the interests of a greater good.

This speaks to how social memory projects are conceptualised and the extent to which they incorporate the violations women suffer during wartime. For example, in World War II, 20 000 South Asian women were abducted as 'comfort women' by the Japanese troops. This group continues to fight for recognition and to claim some kind of restitution but have been unable to gain this. Activities such as these have challenged the ways that rape has been silenced and considered shameful and have demanded its recognition as a central part of the war (Richters, 1998). In spite of this, it has been a campaign that has received a great deal of resistance. What this example illustrates is that, although rape is often perceived to be a unique form of trauma for women, whether or not that discreet

experience is the most significant or whether it results in more of the symptoms associated with PTSD and other indicators of distress will depend on the context in which it took place and in which the survivor continues to live. Thus, it is the social meaning attributed to rape and women's sexuality that makes this one of the most significant violations a woman can suffer.

What was clear from the experiences described by the women was that rape was only one example of a range of sexual exploitation that was rooted in the political and economic climate of the war. For example, this Tutsi woman described her family forcing her to marry another Tutsi who had a senior army position because of the benefits it would bring for the family and because of the family's refusal to accept her choice of a Hutu husband. They did this in spite of the senior army official raping her.

> R: Ja I think here it looks as if it's personal the way I was treated when I was treated when I remained behind [from my current husband] because it included this forced you know being forced to marry somebody who was in fact somebody who's hunting [my husband] down and then my family were saying "what are you going to do, forget about that *Interahamwe*"
> Ingrid: Mmm Mmm
> R: He said, "Marry me" and I have family also forcing me to do that because they are saying, "this man is poor, this other one is a big person"
> Ingrid: Yeah?
> Interpreter: He's a colonel in the army
> Ingrid: Ja
> R: "And why should you go after that one"? So they made me. Just a few, the weekends before the marriage, there was something that took place and I had mixed feelings
> Ingrid: Mmm
> R: … they were pressurising me to marry this guy and due to some things that happened - and that guy was aware - and then he did something very very bad to me and I had to run away. So when I came over (to South Africa), that was it and that's how I came here and here I am. Maybe I can tell you my experience here but there it's something that uh the abuses they are forcing you to do this and that and eh of course I had accepted because I was having pressure on both sides the man and the family telling me - especially the family - saying that "what are you going to do with that *Interahamwe* no you better you rather marry this Colonel here he's of your blood and uh you've got a blood lot and you can do better than going down there". So in fact when I came I escaped. Nobody knew that I was coming. Even people from my family don't know how I came here and they don't have any traces. Only my young sisters could know that I was here. But communication only is done through a nun. There's a nun who is so close to me and uh there is another one in Belgium. She's the one who knows my things well.

With the tape recorder off she described how the very very bad thing that had happened was the man raping her. However, her decision to leave the country after this experience indicates the expectation that she would still marry this man. This pressure to marry her rapist was not an isolated story and is indicative of social attitudes towards women and sex regardless of whether or not it is consensual.

Only in a context where women are given the primary responsibility for maintaining sexual purity and where they are held responsible for rape can marrying one's rapist be a socially accepted solution. It indicates the lack of distinction between consensual sex and rape. It was this social expectation that forced her to leave her family and move to South Africa with no further contact with them in order to marry her current Hutu husband. However, alongside gendered expectations, this marriage was equally shaped by mobilisation of ethnic identity during the war. The ethnic, military and economic

position of the rapist, the situation of the woman and how she was located in the conflict shaped the significance of the rape. That he was, like her, a Tutsi, with significant military and economic power was an important part of the pressure that her family placed on her to marry him regardless of the violence he inflicted on her. Her determination to marry a Hutu and ignore the demands of her family following her rape is, as in the extracts above, a resistance to both gender and ethnic norms. In spite of this, rape is generally depoliticised. In most contexts, rape is seen as accidental and individualised, not as a political violation that may be linked to a campaign of ethnic cleansing. This was clear in the above extract where she began by describing what happened to her as "personal" (she said "it looks as if it's personal the way I was treated"). This will shape the recourse that women seek and the meaning they make of their experience of sexual violence (Richters, 1998) as will be discussed in the next section. Like the extracts above, this is an illustration of how a seeming private act – running away from her home to marry her choice of partner – is shaped by the war and the way in which it regulated marriage in the name of ethnic purity. It is as much a form of political persecution as it is a gendered persecution.

This was not an isolated incident and another woman who had also been raped described the need to consider marrying the man who had raped her. However, she too rejected this as a solution to the rape.

> M: A few of you a few days I was there looking after cars… Until I was forced [to leave] because I didn't have peace in my mind. And I came here. When I was coming here for first time it was not good. Ja always when you are a young lady you can get men problems. You get raped. I was even raped you know?
> I: Mmm
> M: Men always saying, "oh I want to marry you."
> I: Mmm
> M: I was raped but he was not a man who was going to be a uh [good] husband. Lucky with all those problems I didn't get AIDS….thank God
> I: Ja
> M: Um then I was married
> I: When were you married?
> M: Here now I'm married I'm having two children
> I: Mmm
> M: Three years the girl and the boy will be two.

In this extract, this woman describes how following the rape she faced the decision of marrying the man who raped her. She too rejects this as a meaningful solution and was extremely pleased that subsequent to the rape she was able to get married to another man and have children. Unlike the previous extract the need to consider marrying this man did not come from family but from her sense of what the rape meant.

What is important here is an understanding of how the meanings of rape might be shaped by the way that the armed conflict was taking place and, as in the examples above, the ways in which ideas about ethnic and national purity regulated women's sexuality and made them accountable for maintaining the purity of their group. The above examples are almost all likely to be seen as domestic rather than political violence and this will in turn shape the ways in which reparation and social justice are conceptualised. This reminds us of the need to see rape within its social context; a social context

where the multiplicity of identities people have (such as teacher, parent etc) are sidelined for the overarching identities of the war, namely ethnicity and nationality. Green (2002) has shown how the propaganda against Tutsi women (as mentioned earlier in the Hutu Ten Commandments) focused on their sexuality. They claimed that Tutsi women looked down on Hutu men and showed cartoons of Tutsi women as prostitutes for Western forces stationed in Rwanda. In this way, they mobilised hatred on the grounds of gender and ethnicity in a way that made rape an effective strategy for humiliating and degrading these women.

These are undoubtedly some of the possible reasons for why women should feel they have to consider marrying the men who rape them. However, there are potentially also more practical reasons for this. Extreme poverty and insecurity were reasons why women described the need for having relationships with men, which were often exploitative. For example, this woman described the increasing pressure being put on her to have a sexual relationship with a man as a result of her ongoing poverty in South Africa. It was her response to my question about how war and displacement affects women:

> L: Ja, it does affect women so much to the extent that normally a woman in the home wants somebody to sit down and feel at home and the husband provides for the family. That's what the wife must do, just sit in the home, you know be comfortable, feel at home, do this and this in the house. Ja, then abruptly, they find themselves in a home where there's no husband
> Ingrid: Mmm
> L: you know, and now it has a great effect on them, it must have to open their eyes, to see that now they're supposed to do this because they have to fill the gap because the man - the husband - is not there so something you know just to provide for your children
> Ingrid: Mmm
> L: To fill the gap is a very big problem. Ja, and so much from their families because they find themselves in a situation that they could not cope with
> Ingrid: Mmm. I suppose that's what many people have said hey, that it disrupts normal life completely, that normal life is not possible when war
> L: Ja, she said this is very important because that women were so much affected and due to the fact that they could not cope they are used to so many things, you get the point? They were used. Do you get that?
> Ingrid: No?
> L: They were used so that they can survive you know, you don't have a husband your husband is providing everything for the family. Your husband is not there, you are not able to provide so how are they - how are you going to look after your family? How are you going to feed - put food on the table? So that means you are going to be used by some other people, you get that, do you get that?
> Ingrid: You mean going to another man or a…?
> L: Ok something like that you know people are going to use you so that you can survive
> Ingrid: Mmm
> L: There's nothing that uh there's nothing that a woman cannot do you know even if she feels that it's not the right thing to do because the child is starving
> Ingrid: Mmm
> L: She will for the sake of the child

This conversation about how women might have relationships with men or engage in sex work was clearly an uncomfortable one to have and one where there was little explicit mention of the pressures to rely on men financially. However, it was clear that for women marriage, and relationships with men

regardless of whether they could be termed consensual or not, were a source of survival. This fact was a source of great distress to women who felt it undermined the understanding of womanhood that was significant to them, especially in relation to motherhood. In this extract, this woman explains these relationships as being forced by women's desire to care for their children in a context where they are used to only engaging in housework. This extract is particularly significant given that none of the women I interviewed had ever actually lived a life where they had been full time homemakers. However, this woman portrays it as the life for which she strives and the appropriate social position for women which is then disrupted by the war. This extract, like so many of the others thus far, shows gendered violations are shaped by social expectations that were held by the women as well as their social environment.

Gender, social justice and restitution

One of the critiques of African conflict research is the tendency to focus on ethnicity and nationalism and to undermine the extent to which the wars being described here are about access to resources and privilege. As Summerfield (1998) notes, wars are about economics and are most common in countries where people are poor or where there is extreme inequality. For example, research in Cambodia has shown the extent to which people emphasised socio-economic needs over mental health ones in a range of contexts. In spite of this, treatment approaches in that context continue to focus on cognitive and emotional processing outside of the economic context. This can similarly be seen in the ongoing conflict in the North Eastern DRC, which has the largest mineral supply in the country and one of the largest on the continent (Samset, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2003). Many of the women in this study described how the primary way in which they were targeted was by having their possessions taken from them. However, for the purposes of understanding this it is useful to consider how their gender shaped their access to resources in a time when they were under threat and where ethnicity or nationalism also shaped people's entitlement to access jobs, land and other resources. This is evident in the following extract:

> V: OK so they in fact they took my husband you know to work for Kabila's government. To fill in to be in the same role. When the problem with the Rwandese started, the Congolese wanted to chase the Rwandese out of the country. Some were for, others were against that that decision. So he - my husband - had welcomed some Rwandese in his home in our home.
> Ingrid: Mmm
> V: So this is where our troubles started. So he was he was uh taken by the secret service. When they took him they asked him questions. And so we felt insecure. So at that time my husband asked us to leave the country because we didn't feel secure. So we went, we left home and that's how we came in South Africa. So we came in 2001
> Ingrid: Mmm
> V: And then and they called me they told me that my husband was hospitalised they don't really know the reason why. I went back to Congo and I found him in Congo and we got married so we all came with my husband in South Africa we had been given money so we came here and he died here. They found out that he was poisoned so they found some uh stuff in his blood. The government and the family have set money aside for us to go back home and also to go with my husband's body. So since I felt really insecure and then you know mentally I was not
> Ingrid: Mmm

V: Fine. So my body my husband's body went back home, was flown was flown back home and I stayed here. So I thought that staying here … I thought that by coming here I would find better work

Ingrid: Mmm work

V: Yeah Better work. And then after the funeral my husband's family has taken everything all my husband's belongings everything that we owned. So I said "well why should I go home without having anything?"

Ingrid: Mmm Mmm

V: So it's better for me to stay here maybe I will find something but up till now there's nothing. I haven't had anything.

This extract illustrates the extent to which pre-war gender relationships shape the impact of the war for women. Here her lack of power as a wife to claim her husband's inheritance significantly increased the burden she faced during her displacement and in her attempts to provide for their children. The rights of women to inherit are not a direct cause or effect of the war but shape this woman's ability to cope with the effects of it on her and those she is financially responsible for. Her distress comes, in part, from the way in which gender relationships limit her economic position during conflict and flight, but also in times of peace.

Her distress equally stems from her inability to attend her husband's funeral and to get final answers on why he died and who was responsible for his death. That this was a significant death, described as one of her worst experiences, was not only because she lost her husband but it was also because it rendered her destitute and without family support.

This is not unlike the situation described in the extract below where this woman describes how in Rwanda, prior to her fleeing to South Africa, her land was taken from her by a local government member. She links the targeting of her land to both her husband's ethnic identity and her gender. In this extract, the interpreter played a central role in asking some of the questions and explaining the implications of this narrative to me.

C: But I came to hear that somebody is building in our plot without our consent. Then I wanted to go there and check. So when we went to check and I found it was that the chief the councillor

Ingrid: The councillor

C: The councillor. You know putting up a house there. And I couldn't bear it. I said to him, "what are you doing here, this is our plot and you don't you don't deserve to have any rights to use anything on this plot". Then you know there were things went on and on and he started telling me, "you don't even have a family, your husband is *Interahamwe*, he's a Hutu and his family also is considered to be nothing" and I told him that I don't have muscles to fight with you but I'm pleading with you not to continue building. Then the councillor came up to me with a lie like I said I mean that I abused the president the current president in Rwanda that I abused him. And that was the case

Ingrid: Like saying bad things about him?

C: Like "here in this country there is no president. Our president is useless." Something like that. Yeah all those kinds of things. So that is the case can make you to…

Ingrid: The kind of ja …

C: They can cut off your head because of that. Ja, and there's this issue. My husband was not around at the moment I mean by that time

Ingrid: Mmm

C: He had gone to Dubai to do his business there and I'm the one who was aware [of the situation] by then. So the councillor kept on asking, "why are you the only one coming to ask me about the issue of your plot? Why not your husband?" So you see there is maybe some confusions there

Ingrid: Mmm?

Interpreter: As my one as I see the issue because partly in the Tutsi, that's what I comment on my own, part being a Tutsi maybe she could have a say in the authorities to say they are stealing I mean they are taking our plot by force but the husband being a Hutu could not have any say.

Ingrid: (To C) Do you think that's a fair assessment?

C: Ja, as a as a woman, I didn't have you know I did not have the right, the authority maybe to do that.

Ingrid: To question

Interpreter: To question and uh be she was acting on behalf of a man the husband whereas the husband was not there. So she did not have the right authority maybe to do that. But you know somewhere behind the reasons why the councillor was about the issue of not I mean asking why the husband is not the one coming to ask for the

Ingrid: Mmm

Interpreter: For these issues

Ingrid: How did you understand that situation? What do you think his motives were, the councillor was it the issue of you being a Tutsi, or

C: Ja, the issue here is, the reason why the councillor kept on insisting on why my husband is not the one coming to ask the question of this plot, the problem of this plot, the reason being that he wanted my husband to come and then be arrested there and then and be accused of some you know participating in the Genocide

In this extract, this woman tells a narrative about the loss of her land. She describes how she, rather than her husband as would be the norm, challenged the councillor on his right to have access to build on her land. She is aware that her husband's ethnic identity (Hutu) means that he will not be able to challenge the Tutsi councillor as the councillor could simply accuse him of genocide and arrest him. However, her position as a woman means that she is not the real land owner and the councillor is equally able to reject her claim to the land. It is significant that the interpreter (in this case a Hutu Man) provides an analysis of the situation which is located in her ethnic position in the context of the Rwandan genocide (he says, "she is a Tutsi and therefore may have a say that her husband – as a Hutu may not"). He emphasises this as his own comments by saying "that's what I comment on my own". When I check this analysis with her, she explains it as being located in her gender, that is, the only reason her queries about his actions can be dismissed is because she is a woman and as such she is asking on behalf of her husband (the real land owner). She goes on to say that she cannot get her husband to take up the issue because as a Hutu, it would be easy for the councillor to accuse him of genocide and therefore dismiss his claim to the land.

So we see that in this interview the intersection of ethnicity and gender are at times contradictory positions, which on the one hand function to increase her power to demand the land, and on the other undermine it. Neither of these is incompatible and both she and the interpreter agree on the combined influence of ethnicity and gender in her fight to reclaim her land.

Once more, this extract shows the ways in which the impact of the war is mediated by women's social position more generally. There has been increasing documentation of the burden women have faced

after conflicts where large numbers of men have been killed and the costs of maintaining children and rebuilding social institutions falls to them. Following armed conflict, women, particularly widows, experience increased levels of poverty, ongoing violence and increasing responsibility for rebuilding institutions such as hospitals, schools etc. However, the artificial boundary that is equally created, for example, in refugee law, between economics and politics and the fact that these activities and victimisations after the conflict are continuous for women means that little relief is aimed at this. For example, Goldblatt and Meintjies (1998) note that the IMF denied Mozambique and other governments aid after the war because it was earmarked for 'social spending'. This implies that wars are fought over something other than economics and the economic suffering of people can be separated from their political suffering. Because women's resistance has often not been recognised as political and is rather considered separate from armed conflict by its classification as domestic or socio-economic, this binary is likely to reduce the possibilities that post-war reconstruction meaningfully addresses their needs. By creating an artificial dichotomy between the economic and political we risk not attending to the ways in which war may differentially impact on the lives of women. The focus of NGOs in Rwanda has been in this area. According to an evaluation of human security interventions by Gervais (2003), women's groups (which have formed either spontaneously or with the support of NGOs) have concentrated on lobbying for a review of discriminatory laws, extreme poverty facing women, non-egalitarian customary practices and gender-based violence. Each of these is arguably not about armed conflict directly. However, what the above discussions have indicated is that in constructing a difference between them, women's experiences in times of war are likely to be marginalised. Thus, these NGO agendas are as centrally about the armed conflict as they are about gender equity in Rwanda.

In addition to the failure to attend to economic redistribution and social justice in some post-war settings, there has also been a tendency to ignore the extent to which economic restitution post-war might simply return women to their previously disadvantaged position where, as in the extract above, they are unable to be equal owners of land. Many writers have commented on how war disrupts gendered relationships and as a result offers women opportunities for improving their social position following the conflict (Turshen and Twagiramariya, 1998). In this instance the pre-war situation of women where their access and rights to land are limited needs equally to be addressed in post-war reconstruction. Thus, post-war reconciliation initiatives need to account for social justice outside of the ethnic and national inequalities over which the war is fought if they are to have meaning in the lives of women.

Some initial implications: The impact of gender on war and displacement

The above discussion raises a number of lessons for the way in which interventions for refugees can account for the gendered nature of armed conflict. Perhaps the most significant is the need to unpack the binaries of political and domestic violence and the way in which they map onto the dichotomy male / female. I have argued that gender-based violence forms a central part of wartime violence. Far from being a separate category of violation that is simply more common in wartime, it is central to the context in which conflict takes place and its ideology. Considering women's varied positioning(s) in conflict from this perspective allows for the violence perpetrated against women to become a

meaningful part of post-war interventions and can ensure that our understanding of political persecution and political violence does not simply reflect the experiences of men. Similarly, the above discussion has indicated how related dichotomies might equally need to be challenged. For example, the division between economic and political might also mean that the post-war burden that women have for reconstruction in contexts where large numbers of men have been killed or disappeared means that this economic suffering is seldom seen to be 'political'. This is equally evident in the way the asylum system offers protection to those fleeing political persecution but not those migrating for economic reasons. That these two aspects of social life may be impossible to separate for women in armed conflict means that issues of social justice and restitution need to be firmly on the agenda of a gender sensitive intervention.

Linked to this, one needs to consider the use of notions of tradition in the design of trauma interventions. Although drawing on 'traditional' interventions may have been done to avoid imposing the agendas of parties outside of the context, constructions of tradition have often disadvantaged women as the previous example of social justice indicated. A further example is the use of the *Gacaca* process in the processing of genocide accusations in Rwanda. This has been seen as important because it is a traditional system of conflict resolution. However, the extent to which it can be a strategy meaningful to women will depend on whether they are able to eliminate practices that discriminate against women. If they do not recognise the structural inequalities that women face, including their lack of inheritance rights and lack of access to land, then they will not be just in their dealings with women and women's wartime experiences will be marginalised by these processes.[17]

At the heart of the above discussions is a concern raised by many African feminist movements about the tendency to rely on essentialist notions of womanhood without acknowledging the complexity of women's views, experiences and expectations. The above discussion has emphasised the extent to which 'women' (and associated categories such as wife, mother, daughter) is a social position that comes with a range of expectations and investments that women have to negotiate and the moments where they resist or draw on these. These gendered expectations are often mobilised by wartime propaganda making them especially rigid and polarised. The management of war trauma might, therefore, need to include an awareness of how the social expectations on women might have been manipulated in wartime and a community-based process of challenging women's social position as a central part of post-war reconciliation. The demands and priorities of local women's groups should drive this. This may mean that the priorities that these groups have may not, from an outside perspective, appear to be the most important ones. For example, the previous extract indicated the extent to which the women themselves often had an investment in a romanticised notion of being a fulltime homemaker. Whether this is, or is not, a position of resistance will depend on the context. In a context where women have been removed from and denied a home it may be an acceptable lobbying point for some refugee women. However, women who have been denied work because of their gender, may reject such a campaign. The central point is that there can never be a culturally neutral or universal position from which to evaluate whether such an act is, or is not, discriminatory. This may mean that aspects of discrimination are not seen as priority in a particular context even

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[17] Women's rights to inherit land in Rwanda have been amended although this did not happen immediately post-genocide meaning that it is likely to affected some women returning. Monitoring these post-war changes is an important and ongoing area of work.
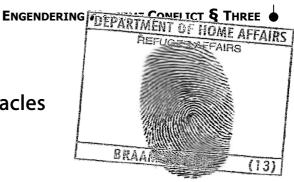
when such discrimination clearly treats women unequally. This points to another central theme that I take up in the next section, namely, the need to tap into local coping and resilience.

Linked to this is the complexity of determining when a war begins or ends. To understand women's experiences of war, it is necessary to look beyond the period of violent conflict to consider the social position that women occupy before and after the violence and how this mediates their experience of violence. Women's violations do not immediately begin or end with war, and gender-based violence, continues in times of peace and war. This means that understanding and intervening in women's trauma will need to consider the continuous nature of the violence they suffer as well as the ways in which the meaning they make of the violence and the reasons behind it might well differ in times of war and peace.

What the above discussion implies is that trauma management that accounts for women's social position will potentially take place at a range of levels including the individual, community and national levels. The integration of peace-building, memorialisation, lobbying and advocacy, public testimony and counselling interventions could form part of a holistic intervention. The need to consider the gendered impact of war will necessarily run through each of these levels of intervention in order to challenge existing notions of the separation of political and gender-based violence, and to reconceptualise women's experience of armed conflict in a way that challenges wartime propaganda. More will be said on this in Part Four.

At this point it is perhaps useful to make a comment about what this might mean for understanding men's trauma in times of armed conflict. I would not accept that men and women have universally different experiences. However, the nature of the violence and the sense men make of it will equally be shaped by their social positioning(s) as men. For example, expectations that men are 'naturally' fighters is likely to shape how they understand the fear they have, and the actions they take in war. In discussing, informally, this project with one male colleague he described how, in a similar wartime situation, he had felt enormous pressure to kill others and feel no remorse about it. Clearly, this falls outside of this research and the need to focus this research on women stems from the ways in which the experiences of men have tended to be normalised. However, unpacking the ways that masculinity is shaped in times of armed conflict is a significant intervention.

PART THREE: Solutions for women:
            opportunities and obstacles

If, as I have argued above, interventions for refugee women should go beyond counselling approaches to incorporate social and political interventions, then it is useful to consider the extent to which women are already engaged in such activities and their views on their relevance. In addition, there have been increasing demands that the emphasis not only be on distress and suffering but on coping and resilience. For these reasons, this section considers women's engagement with existing processes of reconciliation and transitional justice as well as their views on the solutions to armed conflict and ongoing tensions among different parties to the conflict in the Great Lakes and in South Africa.

Politicising the domestic:
Women, politics and family violence

The above sections have shown how many of the experiences that women faced were centrally rooted in the conditions of the conflict, in spite of being violations that are typically seen as personal or domestic. Given the ways that the above sections have thrown into question the notion of political persecution it is worth considering in more detail the ways in which the women explained their actions and the extent to which they saw them as rooted in the conflict. Throughout the interviews, women were asked how they saw these kinds of violations in the context of the political changes taking place in Rwanda and the DRC at the time. This was largely an attempt to gauge the extent to which women felt there was recognition of, and engagement with, the violence they had suffered in their home countries. This included discussions about the progress of peace agreements, transitional governance and the possibilities of peace. Most striking was the extent to which the answers they gave consistently distanced themselves from politics or from the conflict. On the one hand, it was clear that my use of the word politics was interpreted to mean only formal politics undertaken by politicians. On the other hand, the resulting discussions provided a useful insight into how women positioned themselves within the broader processes of violence prevention, reconciliation and peace-building taking place in the region. The following extract from a Rwandan woman is an illustration of this:

> E: The reason why they [RPF] came was that they had stayed in refuge for quite a long time - thirty years, you know? So they were forced to go back home despite [the fact] that there were some accords - this Arusha Accord - whereby they were given political positions to come peacefully. But they still used force. Ja, I'm not a politician and I do not like to involve myself with politics but what I hear from other people is uh when they agreed on whatever they had in front of them in Arusha, the Accord
> Ingrid: The Accord right
> E: They [RPF] were not happy with the concession that they had, they thought it was small for them and, therefore, the position they were to hold or the role they were to play in the Rwandan politics they thought they were still going to be inferior so they preferred to use force rather than agreeing to that….

When referring to the Arusha Accord she emphasises that she personally has no knowledge of 'Politics' and that this is simply what she has heard from 'other people'. Her analysis of what we can assume is the invasion of Rwanda by RPF in 1991, and the resulting negotiations and Arusha Accord signed in 1993, is consistent with many other narratives as well as the historical documentation that exists. She offers no view about whom she may support or who was at fault in the conflict and emphasises that these are events that she only heard from those who were interested or involved in them. She accentuates an already assumed division between civilians and politics and the lack of civilian interest in politics by people such as herself. The following extracts from an interview with a woman living in Kigali have a very similar theme:

> Ingrid: Then what were the things that were happening generally in Kigali when you left, what was the conflict about and what was going on at that time?
> R: Ja, I did not, I had no interest in politics. But uh what I heard or what I saw was that the problems that were prevailing were political
> Ingrid: Mmm
> R: Ja, the way I saw it was political due to the fact that there were two ethnic groups which were fighting for power and um there was a war and there were people who were hunted….

Later she goes on to say

> Ingrid: So what, if you have a view on it, what are some of the origins of this hatred for Tutsis?
> R: First of all I emphasise again that I was not involved in the politics and I did not like it but the way I saw things was that there were people who wanted - you know - to have a say in the in the political sphere.
> Ingrid: Mmm
> R: And then maybe they were denied that so they used some means to achieve what they wanted and the other side also resisted them so there was conflict there was war and that's how it came.
> Ingrid: So the people were in conflict were people who saw it as an opportunity to get more power for themselves. Are you saying that?
> R: Ok you understand there are two parties, there are those ones in power and there are those ones who want power so which ones do you want to know [about]?
> Ingrid: Well on both sides
> R: Ja I understand that first of all when the war started there was ceasefire and then they came to an agreement where they signed an Accord but let alone it seems as if it failed and everybody sorted his own way to solve problems and so that's how it was, that's what created conflict.

Again, she is at pains to emphasise that the political situation had nothing to do with her or her everyday life. She describes herself as a person who is outside of what took place in the country, simply observing, and entirely passive in relation to political decision-making and how it may affect her life. She herself described fleeing from Kigali because she was in a 'mixed race' relationship as described in the previous section. Once more, it is because of an assumption that politics and everyday family life are separate that she is able to say that 'the way she saw it, it was political' to imply - and later explicitly state - that this was a part of life in Rwanda that she had no association with. This is particularly significant given the earlier sections, which highlighted how what was happening in the country at the time implicated women in significant, gendered ways. Once more we are reminded that one of the central horrors of the Rwandan genocide is the extent to which civilians

perpetrated it (Africa Rights, 1995). The ideological arguments for violence were provided over radio and other media in order to incite public support for the violence. She speaks of the conflict as if she was in no way situated in what was happening. This was also the case in the following interview. Again the interpreter participates in the questioning. She says:

> Ingrid: Um just one other thing that I wanted to ask also was the effect on women. Are women in Rwanda involved in the politics at the moment?
> Q: I didn't know anything. I only heard from the radio when they were talking about those high ranking politicians prominent ones
> Ingrid: Mmm
> Q: Like Agathe [Agathe Uwilingiyimanaes who became Prime Minister in 1993 and was one of the first killed in the genocide] but the usual peasants, these ladies in the villages, did not have any role to play in the politics they were just victimised - you know? They didn't have anything to do with politics.
> Ingrid: I was thinking about the elections now that's taken place?
> Q: Asks a question in Kinyarwanda
> Interpreter: She says why do I think about it, about the elections? So I said yes what do you think what are your, you know remarks, or recommendations?
> Ingrid: Because I wonder also about the elections as well, do people have faith in peace processes, the kinds of things happening now?
> Q: But I've not followed the elections, maybe I was less informed.

Again, this woman emphasised that she had no involvement in 'Politics' and aligned herself with the 'usual peasant ladies' rather than with any female politicians. She emphasised that women like her were 'just victimised'. What is most significant in this extract is that it suggests a notion of victimhood that sees any political agency as diminishing the authenticity of her victimisation. Although at the end of the extract the interpreter probes for her opinions ('she says why do I think about it, about the elections? So I said yes what do you think what are your, you know remarks, or recommendations?'), she closed down any further discussion on this topic by stating that she had not followed the election and was not well informed. It is her lack of agency and knowledge that was used to highlight the extent to which she was victimised. By highlighting their own agency, women risk diminishing their potential to position themselves as victims in a context where victims and perpetrators are seen to exist in simple opposition to one another.

The tendency of these women to see themselves as outside of the conflict and not party to it can be read within a broader expectation that emphasises women as passive in the face of conflict and the 'true' victims of what is essentially a male act. This is an expectation that is likely to have arisen in the context of these interviews given my position within the NGO sector where decisions about service delivery are often based on notions of innocence and culpability with women and children being seen as the most innocent victims of armed conflict. However, even in the arena of formal 'Politics', women's representation in Africa has been increasing markedly with the SADC summit declaration on Gender and Development committing member states to achieve at least 30 per cent representation by 2005 (for more illustrations see Geisler, 2004). Rwanda has been exemplary and leads the world with a female representation in parliament of 48.8% of the National Assembly of Rwanda following the 2003 election.[18] Thus, it would seem contradictory that these women emphasised only the extent

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[18] This change has been extremely rapid as prior to 1990 only 5.26% of the executive branch of government were women (Nowrojee, 1996)

to which women were excluded from politics. Of course this does not exclude the possibility that these women in formal political structures are exceptions and do not represent the actions of the majority of women. But, by defining as politics only those activities that take place within formal structures of governance, women are able to distance themselves from these actions. In this light, the distinction between 'peasant' women and 'political' women made in the extract above is perhaps most significant. It sets up formal political avenues as the only ways of being political and occludes women's organising, activism and resistance outside of formal politics (Geisler, 2004).

In addition, these extracts indicate the extent to which the women did not consider the violence they had suffered as within the remit of politics, or as in any way linked to the political situation. This positioned them as outside of any transitional justice or reconciliation initiatives. Almost all of the women I interviewed had claimed asylum on the basis of the actions of their male partners regardless of whether they had travelled with them to South Africa. This could render them dependants within the asylum system and reinforces the (artificial) distinction between male political activists and politically disengaged females. Once more, it is equally possible that male asylum seekers are likely to offer understandings of their actions that are intertwined with those of their partners and children. My claim is not that this is unique to women but rather that the forms it takes are gendered and shaped by the ways in which gendered expectations are central to the war – not least of which is the representation of women as politically naive and passive.

It is equally possible that women felt that distancing themselves from the political changes taking place in their countries of origin might be a strategy for coping with displacement that allows them to commit to life in South Africa and leave past violence behind them. However, it does raise concerns about the extent to which those outside of the country, which in the case of both Rwanda and the DRC is a significant proportion of the population, are able to move past the identities that framed the violence and create new and more positive ways of interacting across ethnic and national boundaries.

In line with this, women felt similarly separated from other national reconciliation projects taking place in both the DRC and Rwanda at the time of the interviews. Their lack of faith in these processes raises some significant concerns for sustainable peace in the region. As one woman said:

> Ingrid: Ja, the other thing I wanted to ask is how you feel about the current sort of attempts at peace in the DRC and Rwanda, Burundi.
> A: I'd say it's a bit of theatre. Really they're just playing around.
> Ingrid: Yeah?
> A: They're really acting, so I don't [pay attention]

The lack of engagement with peace and justice efforts in the region or women's simple lack of knowledge about the processes, was highlighted on many occasions. The following extract is from a woman whose parents were displaced to Uganda as a result of the 1959 violence and she was later displaced in 1994 to South Africa. She says:

> Ingrid: So then, because of that it's been in your family so long these troubles around the conflict. Do you think you would go back?
> O: To Rwanda?
> Ingrid: Or to Uganda. Is there anybody left there?

O: Now there's an election on the 25th. Monday there's an election. The President is Tutsi, but the opposition, they are Hutus, so until now we'll see who's been elected. If there's a Hutu then those who are out they come then they start to go back. Like now they can't go back home. Like me they can't go. We can't go ja.

Ingrid: So if a Hutu had to be elected you wouldn't want to, but you might consider it if there was a Tutsi.

O: Of course I would also prefer a Hutu because my husband would come back. Still my mother is there. So still there's a problem.

This extract raises a number of concerns. Firstly, it is clear that attempts to reconcile Hutu and Tutsi have not extended to refugee communities and she does not have faith in a government dominated by one ethnic group to protect her, or her loved ones of the other group. This highlights the importance of transitional governments gaining credibility and showing legitimate attempts at power sharing. The consequences of refugees being left out of reconciliation efforts are that as structures in the country are set up to move beyond an ethnic conflict and create meaningful power sharing, refugee groups may continue to hold on to the ethnic divisions that caused their displacement and, therefore, lack investment in political transitions that attempt to move beyond them. For this woman's family, which has been divided along ethnic lines, participation in national reconciliation may be one way to heal these divisions. A failure to be part of such an effort means that there is no political solution that could allow the family to reunite and they will always be divided along ethnic lines with a favourable solution for some family members being an unfavourable one for others.

This equally has implications for refugee host countries trying to develop policies to deal with refugee flows. It suggests a role for host countries in the peace-building efforts in refugee producing countries to ensure that refugees participate in them. Indeed, the asylum system in many parts of Africa identifies people according to their ethnic identity and requires the same kind of identification when making decisions about eligibility. For example, many refugee camps that have Rwandan people in are divided along ethnic lines (Mamdani, 2002). One woman in this research, who identified herself as being 'mixed', stated how she felt afraid in camps for Hutus, in spite of being Hutu by patrilineal definition because of her 'mixed' status.

Conversely, national reconciliation interventions need to take account of how ethnic division has manifested at the level of the family. The extract above is also, therefore, a reminder that reconciliation cannot only take place through national level reconciliation but needs to happen at community and family levels in a way that recognises the intersections of family and political violence in times of war. This is particularly significant for the women in this research given the extent to which they emphasised the effect that the war had on their family relationships and how the domestic was shaped by, and in turn shaped, the political.

This was equally evident in the following extract, which was a discussion about the Rwandan *Gacaca* process and this woman's belief that it was being used to exact revenge and simply switch power to another group that would not necessarily create peace. This woman was a Tutsi woman who was staying with her Hutu in-laws at the time when the genocide began.

B: Ja, the next day I mean the president was shot down 6th, the next day which was 7th my brother-in-law went to my house to see whether he could do anything to save my family's lives

Ingrid: Ja

B: And reaching there he found everybody was lying down dead and he couldn't do anything by then. And when he came back with that bad message he just told me that everything's over they're all dead we have to get out of here. He said you have to be courageous but then the amusing thing is that after the genocide they were telling me to go and witness that they killed during the genocide

Ingrid: That her husband's family?

B: *Yes*

Ingrid: Had killed?

B: The ones who protected me and who was the one to protect my family

Ingrid: Yes

B: That they are killers you know? People came to kill me during the genocide. I was with my in-laws family. They entered the house, they ordered me to lie down. Then my husband started pleading with them they [not] kill me. Then he was pleading saying that even if she's a Tutsi she's married to a family of Hutu and it doesn't mean that I mean she does not hate them because she's accepted to get married in the family and why's she there if there are only Hutu's if they're Hutu's You get the point?

Ingrid: I get it, like explaining to them that obviously you support Hutu's, you're not a …

B: You can see they cut me here (showing her arms and hands). They cut also my leg (showing scars on the backs of her legs). They cut my chest but they didn't kill me. My husband was crying, begging them. So when they came in, you know, the family was trying to get them money so that they could you know buy me out but that did not stop them from, you know, chopping me.

Ingrid: They were going to give money to…

B: Ja

Ingrid: To save your life?

B: Ja everybody gave whatever he or she had. Like my husband gave away his vehicle, my in-laws gave money, my father-in-law had contributed by paying in some money - you know?

Ingrid: Mmm

B: Ok my mother-in-law has got her hand [chopped] off. My mother-in-law has got a very big scar in her in her hand. What happened was, one of the *Interhamwe* wanted to finish me by chopping off my head. And then when he was bringing down [the machete] my mother-in-law held it and it cut her palm here. So you can imagine?

Ingrid: Mmm I can imagine?

B: So people wanted to tell me like that. I could not go and say that these people are killers.

Interpreter: If I ask a question (Speaks in Kinyarwanda). It is like this, I asked her who was telling her to go and witness the genocide

Ingrid: Yes

Interpreter: And what interest those very people had to ask her to witness

B: Ja, in the location where we were staying it's a place where it was mostly populated by Tutsi's

Ingrid: Mmm Hmm

B: And due to the fact that most people who are there, the Tutsis who are there were cleared then. And you find there's maybe one survivor in the area. And she has a son in the RPF. And when the son comes back he wants to revenge so he finds his sisters or his families all cleared…

This woman's experience of people using the justice process in Rwanda to exact revenge was one of the things that resulted in her fleeing to South Africa. Her lack of faith in the process to bring about any meaningful justice and to do so in a way that promotes peace, rather than ongoing violence, was clear. What is ironic about this situation is that the danger she faced was from members of her own ethnic group as a result of her being supportive of her in-laws who had tried to save her during the genocide. The expectation that families would divide along ethnic lines and her refusal to accept that given the support she received from her in-laws was, in this case, what led to her displacement.

Many countries emerging from conflict have faced complex decisions regarding the balance between justice and avoiding ongoing violence. For many writers the value of the *Gacaca* process is that it is community based. The neighbourhoods in which the *Gacaca* are held have elected the judges and local communities assist the *Gacaca* benches and general assemblies as well as listing genocide victims and suspected perpetrators in their community (Amnesty International, 2002). This clearly offers a potential space for the consideration of violations against women as they can deal with local level experiences and are a point of potential lobbying for recognition of women's violations to be taken seriously. However, as is evident in the above extract, there is the risk of over-romanticising community participation and failing to recognise the ways this might further perpetuate violence. This concern has been raised by a number of human rights organisations, most notably Amnesty International, given that community members can, potentially, both provide information about genocide offences and judge the suspected perpetrators (Amnesty International, 2002). The fact that they take place within communities may be an advantage for some cases (for example in the instance of the woman whose land was taken) and not in others (such as the women who were raped). That communities may emphasise a return to a previous pre-war way of life would not be positive for all women and the emphasis placed on traditional justice may mean that, for example, the woman who lost her land cannot reclaim it without her husband's consent. It is, therefore, an area of necessary but critical engagement for women seeking justice. This is particularly the case for refugees who are likely to lack access to these very local level processes that are happening in their home areas. The incorporation of refugees into such processes is an important first step in increasing their credibility among displaced groups.

Victims or survivors:
Understanding coping and resilience

One of the main critiques of understanding trauma only in terms of the symptoms people display is that the emphasis is on the consequences of the notion of long term effects of suffering. For example, in a range of African contexts, studies on trauma have shown that people are suffering with symptoms of PTSD for long periods after the conflict (see Liebling and Kiziri-Mayengo, 2002). It is clearly true that some people do suffer for extended periods of time as a result of witnessing widespread violence; however, the problem with this approach is that it recasts people as victims and as helpless to change without expert intervention (Bracken, 1997).

Similarly, one of the main arguments for providing trauma counselling has been that it prevents long term antisocial problems such as alcoholism, mental disorders, criminal violence and domestic violence. In this way, Post Traumatic Stress is seen as a significant public health issue in a range of contexts. In 1995, a UNICEF survey claimed that 3030 Rwandan children were damaged for life. They

also claimed in 1996 that 10 million children were psychologically traumatised by war (cited in Summerfield, 1998). Similarly, in South Africa there is common reference to a 'lost generation' of children caught up in the violence of the 1980s. However, in World War II, much of the trauma suffered by soldiers and civilians was not 'processed' but no corresponding rise in these problems was reported. In Northern Ireland, there has been no increase in reporting to mental health services during the conflict. This does not mean that people do not suffer terrible pain during war. Rather, it means that this is handled in a range of places by informal support networks. It is with understanding these networks that mental health practitioners in the developing world have been increasingly concerned. Not to do so can result in a devaluing of people's capacity for survival and effective adjustment (Bracken, 1997). This argument is particularly acute when we consider that Kinyarwanda has no word for trauma. Indeed, the first counselling in Rwanda was introduced by UNICEF. One of the critiques of the Rwandan aid approach was that it was, what has been termed, a 'bread and counselling' approach that did not provide physical protection or reparation as part of the transitional justice process. Inequality cannot be separated from war and interventions to address the trauma of war need to account for the political, socio-economic and cultural forces at play in a war (Summerfield, 1998).

These debates have resulted in a call for greater attention to the sources of coping and resilience that people have as well as their suffering and distress. In this research, what women described as the most difficult parts of their lives were sometimes surprising and unexpected and likewise, their ability to cope with what would seem to be very difficult experiences was also clear. This is evidenced in some of the earlier extracts where women challenged gendered and ethnic norms at great personal risk. Others showed resistance to the violence and its underlying ideology in spite of the risk to themselves. This is evident in this extract which was from a woman working as a nurse during the genocide. She too described herself as being mixed and she had helped to hide Tutsi during the genocide.

> E: …until they realised I'm helping those who are supposed to die. And then I remember one day it was in the afternoon, they came to where I was staying yes. People [Tutsi] who were staying there all of them so they were killed… and me too I was cut just there. In the morning I woke up. I said, "OK let's go and see what's happening…" It was something really terrible, if you had somebody who was supposed to die…you are just to die for that one…so people knew I was supposed to die because they knew I was helping someone who was supposed to die.
> Ingrid: So why was she wanted?
> E: She was wanted because you know there were both tribes
> Ingrid: Yes
> E: Fighting, the tribes, so I was helping her. And they didn't know me which tribe I am. I told you I I…
> Ingrid : Are mixed
> E: But even if I was not mixed I was not going to allow that!

This woman's refusal to accept the basis of the conflict resulted in her endangering her own life to help other Tutsi in Rwanda. That she simply refused to accept the ideology of the genocide is somewhat unique, however, that she was willing to risk her life to continue helping people in her role as a nurse is extraordinary. The level of violence she faced is very likely to be a central reason why more women did not act in similar ways to the woman in the above extract. Focusing on moments such as these, where women acted against the violence that was being perpetrated, is as important as

focussing on their victimisation. Narratives such as these could serve the basis of important memorialisation interventions that seek to rebuild trust between people of different ethnic groups.

Still other women found ways of avoiding all kinds of violence, including sexual violence, and showed incredible survival skills. One woman describes an attempted rape as follows.

> H: So then something came to her mind that oh we are going to die or they are going rape us. She thought immediately she said no they are going to rape us and then after they kill us. Then she told her sister in law that OK let's turn back and then when we meet them we tell them we've not found where they directed us to go. If we don't then we escape. Immediately when we turned back we met them there they said where are you going? Let's go let's go. So we went with them in that small hut. They started questioning us. They were start questioning us are you married uh what were you doing in the forest, people like you who look like this, why did you flee? Why what else that kind of thing. Then they asked me if I don't have a child. Then I told them well my child has just died of AIDS. I don't know how it came about but I just told them I've got AIDS. I think that's what stopped their actions.

What is clear from existing research is that social support is a factor that mitigates the effects of traumatic experiences on people. One of the things that was emphasised repeatedly throughout the research was that their displacement and the ways in which the war disrupted and divided families rendered them particularly isolated. This was furthered in instances where the nature of their experiences, such as rape or forced sex work, was a source of shame to them. The suspicion and distrust created by the perpetration of violence by people who were known to them created social divisions. As one woman said:

> J: You know when you've got people, Rwandese people. Put them somewhere and then in different place like in South Africa. Then bring them let them meet on the street. Hutu can easily identify a Tutsi but a Tutsi cannot easily identify a Hutu because the Bantu's are everywhere even in South Africa there are Bantus. But when the Tutsis would walk on the streets in Johannesburg they see everybody the same as a Hutu so they can't easily tell this is a Hutu this is not a Hutu but for you because you know the physiology and you know. You can easily know that this one is a Tutsi. For example me, when I come here everyone is just speaking to me in Sotho or what
> Ingrid: Laughs
> J: They just, they don't even know

Later on in the interview she said:

> Ingrid: The other thing I was interested in is in your experiences here in South Africa. Do some of these things follow you to South Africa? Are they present here as well or are they slightly different to how they are back home the tensions or the hatred between Hutus and Tutsis?
> J: Ja, at the beginning there were such differences and misunderstandings there was the conflict that we had back home it was also brought here. But the time they started going to the Ambassador - the Embassy - they were made to realise that they have to abandon such kind of attitudes because you know it was as if they were sensitised to forget about the conflict the differences that is at the Embassy. The Ambassador he used to make parties for people so they'd go there and they even started paying air tickets for people to go back home so she doesn't
> Ingrid: There is more integration or there is more kind of solidarity?
> Inter: Yeah

In spite of this woman's experience, other women did continue to express distress at the ongoing tensions and conflicts in their communities. Many described a loss of solidarity and ongoing suspicion. This suggests that a clinical relationship is only one kind of relationship and, in fact, most support happens outside of this kind of relationship. Most of the women emphasised the importance of the relationships that they had kept in their lives. Indeed, it was the loss of social support that was central to women's feelings of distress. Often this was a result of the ways the conflict split up families but also it was about being displaced and isolated. When organising workshops for this research, some of the women described how the Rwandan and Congolese women would not sit together or talk because of the ongoing friction between these groups of refugees in South Africa. Where we do not account for people's own understandings of trauma, we risk undermining clients' own knowledge and choices. A great deal of work has been done in war contexts in the developing world and is nowadays trying to support people in a way that works with their existing sources of support and within their own worldview (Bracken, 1997).

For many in this research, one such source of support was religion. In addition, many saw religion as offering potential for reconciliation and peace in their home countries. Working alongside religious institutions could, therefore, be a central way in which peace processes could gain legitimacy and aid in the resolution of conflict. As one woman stated:

> Ingrid: I wanted to ask something about going back to the conflict in Rwanda. Something about the effect that it's had on women if she has a view about that um is it different in any ways?
> F: Ja, that um looks as if whatever happens to women in Rwanda it's the same because there are those ones who were killed, others lost their relatives, others were raped, others those human abuse. But on my behalf what happened for me the way I sees it, it's done and it's not easy to erase those images on people's mind.
> Ingrid: Mmm
> F: So not being that easy there's only one thing that can help people, just by accepting the Gospel to forgive: Forgive and forget. To forgive each other, forgive and forget, that's what I say. Otherwise people are still hurt.

She continued to say:

> Ingrid: I imagine a lot of people will have those bad feelings?
> R: Mmm, ja it seems people have still have that bad hurt or bad feelings towards their fellow colleagues in the country of the opposite ethnic group. Ja people who came or fled from the country there are those ones still have fresh grudges but those ones who left you know immediately after the war maybe it is reduced maybe to a certain degree. But then I feel we should not be like that where people still keep these hostilities
> Ingrid: Mmm
> R: We have to forget and to forgive because for me already I have forgiven them and I don't see any point for people to keep grudges.
> Ingrid: Yes... Is there anything else she wanted to add that she thinks is important?
> R: Ja, uh just briefly, like charity begins at home. So if we here as refugees try to live together in harmony then we can set an example for those ones in the country to see that for us here we are able to live together without problems, no matter where you are from or you're ethnic group or what what, we live together here in South Africa, then we can set an example for those people back at home and then show them that we have made it here so that they can also learn from us to do the same

Ingrid: Mmm
R: And then when we go back we can stay together, forgive each other and I believe that whatever happened - because it was a tragedy - I believe that even God, if we happen to repent ourselves, even God can forgive us
Ingrid: Mmm

These extracts show the importance of religion for *peace-building* for these women. This may not mean that reconciliation should take place through the churches or that indeed to "forgive and forget" is necessarily the best option, however, it does suggest that the involvement and support of religious institutions would lend credibility to systems of transitional government and justice. In the second extract this woman also points out the need for this to happen within displaced groups as much as with groups living in Rwanda. The ways in which women did not see the possibility of meaningful reconciliation as described in the previous section highlights the need for interventions within the Diaspora from the Great Lakes Region that will build relationships and peace. This is particularly important for Rwanda where many of the attacks the country has faced have been launched from outside the country by refugee populations, making refugees a source of suspicion and further dividing relationships between those inside and those outside the country.

However, it is also important to note the diversity in the statements of the women in this research. Although religion was a significant source of comfort and support for many of the women, this was not the case for all women. This woman described how, when fleeing the DRC, she was angered by people's continued acceptance of, and reliance on, religion during a time when she was experiencing malnutrition, the threat of violence and death, and related hardships. She says:

Interpreter: I found them you know in a group and it was Christmas and they said let's celebrate Christmas let's pray to Mary. She's going to help us and for me it didn't make any sense. Maybe it seemed as if they were mad. And for me, I don't believe that even whatever they talk about the Bible - it doesn't exist. Because if Jesus suffered, he never suffered like we were suffering.
Ingrid: Mmm
R: So I moved I saw them like, I saw them as bad people I just had to leave

This extract is a warning to us about the tendency to oversimplify people's belief systems and needs. Similar concerns can be raised about 'traditional' approaches to reconciliation. Although traditional approaches, such as drawing in the *Gacaca* process, may well serve to increase the legitimacy of the prosecutions and, therefore, result in greater community participation, they have also often discriminated against women. The earlier sections of this report have shown how tradition, as it has been applied to gender roles, was something that further stigmatised women, for example where they were persecuted for refusing to take their partners' names or for marrying people they were not supposed to. Thus, traditional approaches need careful analysis of their potential impact on women. The same can be said of religious interventions where they form a significant point of entry for peace-building but nevertheless need to be critically evaluated for their impact on the lives of women in light of the earlier sections of this report.

Further implications

What is perhaps most striking in this section is the extent to which women did not see their violations as part of the conflict but tended instead to view them as personal or domestic violations. This went alongside scepticism of peace-building and reconciliation attempts in the country. This raises a number of issues for the sustainability of peace in the region. Firstly, it suggests an opportunity for engaging in a series of advocacy discussions about the nature and definition of political violence to ensure that women can participate in the reconciliation attempts in their home countries. This may involve the development of women's groups for engaging with the state in South Africa and in their home countries. That women saw very few possibilities for sustained peace raises serious concerns for ensuring that refugees are not left out of reconciliation and justice mechanisms in their home countries, particularly if they are to return home. Their expectation that there will be revenge violence in their home countries, and their experience of this, means that they are not engaged in any meaningful way in promoting peace and reconciliation. Secondly, this means that the resistance that women did show to the violence and their refusal to take part in it is seldom acknowledged and was often played down. The popular perception is that women are not engaged in political violence and this needs to be challenged in these two ways.

In spite of the general lack of faith in peace, religion was a significant part of these women's lives and a large number of them saw this as one of the ways to enact peace. This offers a window of opportunity and may, for example, suggest the need to incorporate reconciliation into the existing church-based activities. In spite of this, these interventions, alongside those typically seen as traditional, would need to be examined from a gender perspective. Religion was a source of support for women but the church did not necessarily offer any recognition of women's violations in a way that other interventions similarly did not.

PART FOUR: A Holistic Intervention with Refugee Women

What was clear from this research is that there is no universal approach to trauma management if we are to take the social context of trauma into account in meaningful ways. This suggests that a necessary first step to trauma management might be to engage beneficiary groups in project planning and in shaping the implementation of projects in ways that account for their priorities and demands. To this end, one of the most useful activities for refugee women would be the formation of women's groups in order to discuss and debate the issues raised in this research such as the definition of politics, the benefits and costs of participating in reconciliation projects, and the solving of conflicts within and among refugee communities. Women's groups may, of course, only be useful at very specific moments and in relation to very specific topics. At other moments it may well be more meaningful to organise on the basis of national or ethnic identity or as foreigners more generally. The experience gained from the workshops held at CSVR showed that women responded most positively to this intervention and many of the women continued to meet after the workshops on a regular basis to discuss women's difficulties and strategies for intervention. This may simply require facilitation or the provision of meeting space by local NGOs.

In addition, it is clear from the report that trauma management may incorporate a range of activities that fall under the broad headings of peace-building, reconciliation, truth telling and transitional justice. As a result, a holistic intervention would require a great deal of coordination between service providers who specialise in these different areas of work. My purpose in this section is, therefore, not to provide detail on any of these interventions but rather to point to possibilities for the incorporation of the findings of this research.

Counselling interventions

The above discussion in no way suggests that counselling, whether individual or group-based, is not a meaningful trauma intervention. Rather, the critiques raised offer opportunities for engaging in counselling activities in ways that account for the context of war and integrate the range of other wartime and post-war interventions. The two main lessons from this report for counselling interventions are:

- Counselling approaches can be integrated into other approaches to reconciliation, peace-building, transitional justice and memorialisation;
- Counselling might involve engagement with existing social practices and norms in the cultural context of clients.

An example of a counselling intervention that incorporates the first principle is that of Narrative Exposure Therapy implemented by the Vivo Foundation (see Schauer, Neuner and Albert, 2005). Based on the premise that, for trauma survivors, the expression of a coherent and painful autobiography is extremely difficult, they assist in the telling of this narrative in a therapeutic setting. This telling of one's experiences has the benefit of assisting with the psychological impact of trauma

as well as documenting human rights abuses. With the agreement of the person testifying, these testimonies are used for prosecuting human rights abuses or for developing memorialisation and advocacy interventions. This approach to therapy recognises that many people cannot attend counselling on a regular or long-term basis and consequently can instead be focused on the events taking place that impact on the meaning people attribute to their trauma, such as truth commissions, elections or criminal tribunals. For the displaced women in this study, this therapeutic approach could support them in gaining access to these processes as they are taking place in Rwanda and the DRC as well as assisting in the preparation of submissions. In addition, in situations where it is deemed safe and desirable for the women, group-based therapy could accommodate the joint submission of statements to truth commissions or criminal tribunals.

This kind of approach to therapy was first developed, and has been most successful, in South American contexts. Lira and Weinstein in Chile first developed it. Called Testimony Therapy, witnesses to human rights violations have been invited to testify to their experiences in a therapeutic environment. Similarly, Beker *et al.* (1990) in their therapeutic practice identify the most important challenge to therapists as maintaining the link between psychotherapeutic work and the socio-cultural context which, after conflict, is continuously changing. Their primary challenge is to connect the personal narrative of the client with the social reality as it is unfolding. For example, they describe the complexity of the satisfaction that relatives of the disappeared have in knowing efforts are being made to trace their relatives alongside the distress that comes from confirmation that their loss is definite. Alongside this, their therapeutic approach has been, for example, to support clients in developing their own community-based testimony groups.

The second key lesson for counselling interventions has also been incorporated into therapeutic contexts, particularly in Africa and South America. For example, Eisenburch (1991) notes how participating in culturally appropriate rituals decreased the symptoms of PTSD. In one case study he describes how a refugee woman experienced extreme distress because of her inability in her host country to carry out the appropriate rituals related to childbirth as well as because the labour had been induced meaning that her son had been born on the wrong day and the fact that the obstetrician had thrown the placenta away after the birth rather than burying it as was customary for her. In a therapeutic relationship, they were able to ensure that she carried out the appropriate rituals and made merit to her ancestral spirits. Following this her symptoms (hallucinations, nightmares and blackouts) were relieved. Rather than a psycho-education approach, this is one illustration of how therapy might work with the worldview of the client. Given that trauma training does not easily equip therapists in South Africa with these kinds of skills, there would need to be ongoing research and enquiry in order to understand and document the cultural practices of a range of groups and their incorporation into therapy.

Public memory and truth telling

The social nature of memory has been central to the creation of memorialisation projects in a diverse array of post-conflict settings. To a greater or lesser extent these interventions deal with trauma as an act of social remembering. As mentioned before, the ways in which the violations people suffer are recognised and awarded a social significance can shape the extent to which they are understood as traumatic. To some extent, memorialisation projects are, therefore, creative attempts at trauma management on a social level (see also Naidu, 2004) that account for people being embedded in

social, cultural and economic contexts. In order for public memory to be meaningful to displaced women, this would need to incorporate the lessons above. Perhaps most centrally, this would require the redefinition of political persecution in ways that can better accommodate the violations that women have suffered. This would need to go alongside advocacy for public recognition that political and domestic violence are not clearly separable and the consequence of enforcing such a separation may be to ignore the experiences of many women. In addition, it needs to be recognised that the nature of violations people suffer are shaped by their gender among other things.

One of the central challenges will be how violence against women is managed within these processes. This was a concern in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) where a balance was deemed necessary between ensuring that testimonies of sexual violence were heard in order to challenge the stigma associated with it and ensuring the confidentiality of women who feared this stigma (Giesler, 2004).

Goldblatt (1998) in her analysis of women who testified before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission notes how many women and girls were detained by the apartheid state in the 1980s, however, at the TRC, most women testified regarding the experiences of their male relatives. Goldblatt blames this in part on the structure of the TRC stating that,

> In the first week of the Truth Commission's hearings in the Eastern Cape, the widows of the 'Cradock Four' came to speak about their murdered husbands. They themselves had been harassed and arrested, yet their stories were not probed and were treated as incidental. Our society constantly diminishes women's role and women themselves then see their experiences as unimportant. (Goldblatt 1998, p.37)

This was present even among the most prominent women in the South African struggle such as Albertina Sisulu who said that she felt "more able to talk about her husband and children's experiences than her own" (Goldblatt, 1998, pp. 37). The extent to which there is a social recognition of women's violations relies on a redefinition of the political as well as challenging the popularly held perception that women are not involved in armed conflict.

The (South African) asylum system

One of the primary contexts in which we see the division between political and domestic struggles - with the former being over ethnicity or nationalism and the latter being about gender - has been in the structuring of asylum policy. This has, for example, been seen in the ongoing conflicts over whether one can apply for asylum based on persecution on the basis of gender. At the (1951) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, gender was raised as an issue to be included in Article 3, which states that 'the contracting states shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin'. In other words, it was proposed that gender be included along with race, religion and country of origin as a category of potential discrimination. This proposal was rejected as it was stated that 'equality of the sexes was a matter for national legislation' (Spijkerboer 2000, p.1). Spijkerboer (2000) quotes the then High Commissioner on Refugees as saying that:

> The original idea underlying Article 3 was...that persons who had been persecuted on account of their race or religion, for example, should not be exposed to the same danger in the country of asylum. I doubt[ed] strongly whether there would be any cases of persecution on account of sex. (Spijkerboer 2000, p.1)

No further reference was made to the inclusion of gender until three decades later. In 1983 Goodwin-Gill argued for the recognition of women's resistance to cultural practices as political activity. This argument gained momentum in the 1980s and several attempts were made by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to consider the rights of women under asylum legislation.[19] This lobby to have gender-based persecution recognised in legislation represents significant progress.

Similarly, the gender-blind definition of a refugee in the 1951 convention (as well as the OAU convention) makes no distinction between male and female applicants. However, the emphasis that these international systems of protection place on individual targeting and the deprivation of civil and political rights over socio-economic rights – alongside a popular discourse of the family as a site of private violence rather than political persecution makes women significantly less successful asylum seekers in all countries that have documented their applications (Kelly, 1993). Many have already argued that the asylum system privileges the public, political actions of men, and their resulting persecution, over the activities and persecution of women which presumably take place in the private sphere. Very little information exists in South Africa about which asylum applications are successful and which are not, and this is an important area of future research and advocacy.

Incorporating the displaced

One of the central findings of this research has been the extent to which the women in this research lacked faith in the reconciliation processes in their home countries. As NGOs working regionally there is potential for projects that integrate processes for those in the country and those outside of it. This can ensure that those who fled the country do not hold onto the ethnic and national divisions in spite of progress on integration and power-sharing in the home country. These projects would clearly need to make the safety of those in exile a top priority, however, the extent to which there are organisations that are working in a number of African countries on issues of peace-building and conflict resolution opens the space for matching projects to be run with groups who are displaced.

Furthermore, ensuring that the displaced are a part of such a process might facilitate their possible reintegration should they return home. For many in this study their persecution was by people known to them and the possibility for return will be shaped less by whether there is formal peace or political stability than by the possibility for reconciliation within families, neighbourhoods and communities.

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[19] Some examples include the 1990 decision by the UNHCR Executive Committee that severe discrimination as outlined in CEDAW could form the basis for granting refugee status; the 1991 release by UNHCR of guidelines on the protection of refugee women; and the 1993 UNHCR resolution that asylum seekers who had been victims of sexual violence should be treated with particular sensitivity.

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APPENDIX 1: Timeline of key events in the Rwandan and Congolese conflict

Rwanda

1959	Hutu uprising results in the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy in Rwanda
1962	First Republic of Rwanda proclaimed with Grégoire Kayibanda as President
1973	Military coup results in General Juvénal Habyarimana overthrowing Kayibanda
1975	MRND founded by President Juvénal Habyarimana
1990	RPF invade Rwanda from Ugandan bases
1993	Arusha Accords signed in Tanzania
1994	Rwandan genocide results in the deaths of an estimated 800,000 Rwandese following the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane.

Democratic Republic of Congo

1960	Belgian Congo gains independence led by president Kasavubu
1960	Colonel Mobutu Seso Seko seizes power
1997	Rebellion unseats Mobutu Seso Seko from power. Forces loyal to Kabila entered Kinshasa and assumed power. Rwanda and Uganda become adversaries of the new government by backing the creation of a new rebel movement which occupied the Eastern Congo.
1998	President Kabila demands that Rwandese leave the DRC
1999	Cease fire agreed in Lusaka Zambia by the then OAU
2001	President Kabila murdered by one of his bodyguards.
2002	Adoption of inclusive peace agreement in South Africa
2003	Interim Constitution adopted setting June 2006 as the deadline for elections.
2004	Two coup attempts (March and June) in Kinshasa. On 9th June rebels leave Bakavu.
2004	More than 160 Congolese refugees massacred in camp of Gatumba, Burundi. Responsibility for the attack was assumed by Forces nationales de liberation.
2004	Congolese and Rwandese governments recommit to the Pretoria agreement in Nigeria