

Philipp Schulz, *Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence: Perspectives From Northern Uganda*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

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The focus of Philipp Schulz's *Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence: Perspectives From Northern Uganda* on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against male victims in Uganda fills gaps in existing academic work on SGBV against women and girls in wartime and in Uganda. While there has been extensive academic research conducted on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in wartime,¹ this scholarship lacks a male-centered analytic, focusing primarily on SGBV committed against women and girls. Similarly, although much work has been published on the war in northern Uganda and the atrocities committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA),² the violence done onto Acholi men by the Ugandan army has largely gone unexplored. Seeing this lack of scholarship on the experiences of male survivors of sexual violence in northern Uganda, Schulz sets out at the beginning of the book to give voice to these survivors who have been effectively silenced in academic and political spheres for decades.

Methodologically, Schulz seeks to emulate the Acholi proverb "A long stick cannot kill a snake."³ This survivor-centered approach has three components: 1) listening to the perspectives and priorities of the interviewees, who are all survivors of *tek-gungu* (male anal rape); 2) analyzing the problems affecting male survivors before putting forward a solution; and 3) demonstrating that in responding to sexual violence against men in northern Uganda, justice measures must be "contextual, culturally appropriate, and in direct response to local needs and concerns"⁴ in order to potentially contribute to the solution. Additionally, he acknowledges his positionality in relation to his interviewees and how his identities may limit or unknowingly affect his research.

Schulz conducted his research in the Ugandan region of Acholiland over a nine-month period, during which he was affiliated with the Refugee Law Project (RLP) at Makerere University's School of Law. In order to collect data about survivors, Schulz conducted 79 in-depth interviews and facilitated participatory workshops with 49 male survivors of sexual violence who are involved in survivor support groups. Schulz's status as a research

associate of RLP gave him a head start in building mutual trust with the interviewees, as the outreach project had already gained the trust of community members via its work with survivor support groups prior to Schulz's arrival.

Organized in seven chapters, the book analyzes both the immediate and lasting effects of sexual violence on male survivors in northern Uganda. Following the introduction provided in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 critiques the historiography of wartime sexual violence as too often reproducing a conception of "men as universal aggressors and women as universal victims during armed conflicts."⁵ Chapter 3 argues that sexual violence against men perpetrated by the Ugandan National Resistance Army (NRA) was a widespread strategy used to punish, terrorize, and retaliate against the civilian population. Drawing on existing feminist scholarship on the gendered implications of wartime sexual violence, Chapter 4 shows that acts of violence against men impact their masculine identities, and thus, their gendered roles in the larger Acholi community. Direct quotes from male survivor interviewees were especially useful in this chapter. When interviewees described challenges to their masculinity due to their experiences of SGBV, more interviewees expressed their emasculation in totalizing terms ("I am not a man anymore") than partial terms ("I am less of a man"⁶).

Chapter 5 analyzes how male survivors exercise agency in the aftermath of their rape, challenging familiar narratives of male rape victims as being forever bounded by their vulnerabilities and victimhood. One form this agency can take is participation in support groups, which allow survivors to rebuild relationships severed by social stigmatization, repair and reimagine their masculinities, and receive validation and recognition of their experiences in the experiences of others. Chapter 6 describes how male survivors of SGBV in northern Uganda have formulated new conceptions of justice after formal justice routes failed to address their needs. This chapter also addresses the importance of governmental recognition for many male survivors of sexual violence perpetrated during the war. Finally, Chapter 7 looks toward a survivor-centered future, both in scholarship and politics. Pointing to his findings put forward in the rest of the book and the quality of the information obtained through his own research, Schulz argues that examinations of male victims of wartime sexual violence should

center around the testimony given by survivors, as his research does. Importantly, any potential solutions or redress should take this survivor-centered approach.

While the author skillfully and sensitively analyzes the gendered experiences of survivors of SGBV, the book leaves a few unanswered questions. What are the survivors' feelings toward their rapists? Is their anger and frustration directed more towards the government and its silencing of their experiences? Is governmental recognition enough for the male victims to regain their masculine identities, or is physical or legal retaliation against their individual attackers necessary in achieving this? I believe that examining this dynamic would contribute to Schulz's conversation on masculinity, especially in considering how male survivors can regain their gendered identity. Additionally, how did the support groups facilitate participants' reintegration into their wider communities? To this point, Schulz notes that, by participating in support groups, the male survivors are able to reconnect with estranged family and community members. However, it remains somewhat unclear how the support groups specifically enable the participants to do so.

In sum, *Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence* provides a skilled and detailed analysis of wartime sexual violence against men in northern Uganda. The book is accessible for both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as lay readers. Schulz's analysis serves as an excellent jumping-off point for other researchers interested in examining wartime sexual violence against males.

Notes

¹ See Stiglmeier 1994; Seifert 1996; Thornhill and Palmer 2000.

² See Behrend 1999; Finnström 2009

³ Schulz, Philipp. *Male Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence Perspectives From Northern Uganda*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021., 12

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 7

⁶ Ibid., 99

