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Militarized social reproduction: women's labour and parastate armed conflict

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ABSTRACT

This article brings together research on civil wars and militarization with feminist scholarship on the household in order to push theorization on civil wars in new directions. By introducing the concept of militarized social reproduction to capture the multiple ways in which women's everyday labour in both the household and the army underpins militarization processes, this article proposes that parastate armed conflict is enabled, at least in part, through women's everyday gendered activities. It suggests that this labour is particularly important in parastates experiencing long-term civil wars. In these settings, public funds, to the extent that they exist, are diverted from social welfare services to enable the expansion, or simply survival, of military power. Under these circumstances, the duty to reproduce both the individual soldier and the army writ-large is placed disproportionally on the shoulders of women. Several general types of this gendered labour, though interrelated, can be distinguished from one another through a typology of militarized social reproduction. This typology considers not only physical labour, but also the emotional and symbolic labour used to resource and legitimize armed conflict in non-material ways. It is therefore not only the physical effects of the labour that have consequences for the war, but also the ways in which women are called upon to symbolize and legitimize warfare. Such a focus enables important insights into the nexus formed between the everyday space of the gendered household and conflict, and furthers knowledge about the relationship of gender to different modalities of militarization.

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Introduction

How can attention to the household explain the longevity of insurgent warfare? Extant feminist analyses have demonstrated how women's everyday labour sustains both state militaries and militarization processes (Enloe 2000; Basham and Catignani 2018); manifested the household as an object of military strategy (Owens 2015; Parashar 2013); and revealed the gendered notions legitimizing and facilitating warfare (Shepherd 2006; Sjoberg 2014). These suggests that the household is a gendered and militarized space that is affected by and affects conflict. Yet none situate the household as a critical subject for and source of *insurgent warfare* that has the potential to *both* reproduce and upset

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military power through everyday gendered labour. In other words, while the importance of gendered labour to militarization processes are recognized in feminist literature, this is rarely analysed in relation to parastate armed conflict, or contextualized within a gendered, and conflict-afflicted, political economy of the everyday.

Building on critical and feminist research in political economy, International Relations (IR) and security studies (Sjoberg 2015; True 2012; Enloe 2017), this paper foregrounds the role of the household in sustaining protracted parastate armed conflict. It proposes that a feminist political economy of the household can be theorized in ways that expand critical and feminist analyses of conflict, militarization, and civil wars. It suggests this can be done through the concept of *militarized social reproduction*. Militarized social reproduction is defined as the everyday emotional, material, and symbolic labour undertaken by women within the household and the non-state or parastate armed group in communities embroiled in civil wars (Hedström 2018). Unlike existing theorizations of insurgent warfare and civil wars (Coller and Hoeffler 2004; Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Keen 2012; Korf 2005; Sobek and Payne 2010), the conceptualization of militarized social reproduction manifests women's gendered labour, understanding this as underwriting parastate armed conflict. This focus expands the concept of reproduction to include women's everyday labour undertaken in response to civil war, including, *inter alia*, military conscription, frontline provisioning, veteran care, and revolutionary marriage (Hedström 2018). It proposes that this labour is particularly important in parastates experiencing long-term civil wars. In these settings, public funds, to the extent that they exist, are diverted from social welfare services to enable the expansion, or simply survival, of military power. Yet even with this diversion of spending, the mobilization and maintenance costs for armed organizations may remain prohibitively expensive (Collier and Sambanis 2005). This is especially the case when these costs include financing for long-term military deployment and funding for political and administrative bodies associated with parastate armed groups. Under these circumstances, the duty to reproduce both the individual soldier and the army writ-large is placed disproportionally on the shoulders of women. This suggests that attention to the household, and the gendered roles and labour it (re)produces, can help explain the outbreak, sustainment, and longevity of insurgent warfare. Thus, women's work, far from being peripheral, carries with it the possibility to both maintain and transform parastate armed conflict.

By foregrounding militarized social reproduction, this article attends to the relationship between the gendered political economy of the household and civil wars. It asks: What is the impact of women's everyday gendered labour on parastate armed conflict? How does the gendered political economy of the household shape possibilities for enabling, or resisting, parastate armed conflict? If women have the power to sustain conflict through their everyday gendered labour, do they also have the power to transform it?

The article is structured as follows. First, critical scholarship on militarization, feminist political economy and security studies is discussed, after which the concept of militarized social reproduction is briefly introduced. Next, drawing together key insights from these bodies of research, a typology of militarized social reproduction is developed: enabling; supporting; symbolizing; legitimizing; and finally, rejecting. The typology is presented as a heuristic device envisioned to facilitate analysis and thinking about

gendered relations of power in conflict and civil wars, and as way to explain and theorize protracted parastate armed conflict. These categories are neither stable nor fixed, but rather fluid and temporally specific: a woman may engage in different types of militarized social reproductive work at different times in her life. Some types of militarized social reproductive work overlap; others do not. This article ends with a discussion on the relationship between the gendered political economy of the household and civil wars, suggesting that the outbreak and sustainment of parastate armed conflict can be (partly) explained by the concept of militarized social reproduction.

Feminist conceptual framework: households, gender, and militarization

Feminist analyses of both the causes and consequences of conflict have made women, and the gendered underpinnings of peace and conflict, visible (Tickner 1992; Enloe 2017). In these works, militarization – and subsequent war making – is understood to rely on specific notions of femininity and masculinity to maintain support, creating a gendered hierarchy wherein that which is deemed masculine is privileged (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016; Enloe 2000; Peterson 2010). Of particular interest for this article is how feminist studies reveal that militarization extends into spaces supposedly disconnected from overt conflict, such as 'ordinary daily routines' and everyday activities undertaken in the household (Elias 2017; Elias and Gunawardana 2013). They render visible how militarization practices are camouflaged within an everyday gendered division of labour that props up national objectives and military campaigns (Enloe 2000).

Hyde's work on military wives is particularly useful for illuminating the gendered effects of, and conflict readiness performed in, everyday spaces supposedly disconnected from conflict, such as households (Hyde 2015). Her research on military wives extends on what militarization is and does by paying attention to how militarization 'is understood, absorbed or negotiated by subjects' in domestics spaces: kitchens and living rooms geographically detached from the battlefields, yet intimately connected through affective and personal relationships (Hyde 2015, 858). Similarly, Alexander's research on militarization practices identifies the multiple ways in which militarization is experienced through the bodies of people, and equally importantly, the multiple ways in which people resist this in their everyday lives (Alexander 2016, 871). Finally, Chisholm and Stachowitsch's work on the experience of Nepalese private-security contractors extends our understanding of how broader political-economy processes coalesce at the level of the individual (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016). They illustrate the gendered (and racialized) logic of global value chains that frames certain men in the Global South as uniquely suited for military work (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016, 820), akin to the gendered narratives positioning women in these same countries as 'naturally' inclined for factory work due to their 'docile' nature and 'nimble fingers' (Elson and Pearson 1981, 93). Together, their research builds on Enloe's assertion that militarization practices are pervasive and underpinned by gendered assumptions (Enloe 2000, 3). They both demonstrate and problematize militarization's normalizing effects by illustrating how these processes do not 'just occur', but are processes closely managed and organized by state, or as this article will show, parastate actors. Notably, these processes create a cheap and feminized labour force to be drawn upon when markets and industries are in need of labour: to borrow from Marxist analysis, women become, literally, the reserve army of

labour. As Basham and Catignani (2018, 155) states, '"[h]ome and hearth" is, therefore, a significant site from where war materializes'.

Here, highlighting social reproduction enables a better understanding of the role everyday activities (re)produced from the 'home and the hearth' play in resourcing and legitimizing conflict. At its most basic, social reproduction can be defined as the sustainment of the labour force, and of human life itself. Hoskyns and Rai (2007) refer to it as the 'glue that keep households and societies together and active' (37). It is the seemingly mundane and therefore invisible everyday labour underpinning communities and markets. As Elias and Rai underscores, 'social reproduction *is* the everyday' (Elias and Rai 2018, 203; italics in the original). Feminist studies on social reproduction tend to include three or four different but interrelated aspects: biological reproduction and motherhood; unpaid work and production of goods and services in the home; unpaid work and production of goods and services in the community; reproduction of culture and ideology; and sexual and emotional/affective duties (Bakker 2007, 541; Hoskyns and Rai 2007, 300; Laslett and Brenner 1989, 382–383). In Federici's research, women's reproductive duties are demonstrated as underpinning the market by virtue of reproducing labour power, not just biologically, but by enabling participation in the workforce on an everyday basis (Federici 2012, 94; see also Federici 2004). In short, it is the undervalued and often invisible work that enables wage earners to earn a wage (Arruzza 2016, 10). Or, as this article suggests, enables soldiers to wage a war.

A central tenet of feminist political economy holds that by deeming women's reproductive work as 'natural', rather than productive, the critical role played by women in keeping their communities, and by extension, the armed forces, alive, is disguised. Yet, scholarship on militarization and security studies demonstrates how the exploitation of women's paid and unpaid labour centred on the household may in fact underpin armed conflict. For example, Chisholm and Stachowitsch note that migration abroad for soldiers engaged in private security labour is enabled and supported by 'their' women staying behind (Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016, 824). Similarly, Howell argues that Anglo-American militaries are upheld by women's affective labour, in which the individual soldier's emotional and physical well-being is in effect resourced out to their families, and in particular, their wives (Howell 2015, 142). In Myanmar, Kamler suggests that the commercialization of women's reproductive labour in Kachinland – as sex workers, surrogates or wives to Chinese men – keeps communities displaced by fighting alive by virtue of remittances (Kamler 2015, 220).[1] Also in Kachinland, I found that women's social reproductive duties are so important that the Kachin army regularly organizes mass-weddings and compulsorily mobilizes women into 'women's units' to ensure the continued reproduction of the armed forces (Hedström 2018). These works suggest that women's labour – harnessed through the institution of marriage and the household – is central to the maintenance of armed organizations, whether private, state, or parastate.

This labour takes on a particular urgency in communities experiencing long-term armed conflict. As Tilly shows, war contributes to (para)state formation through the raising of funds and resources, the protection of territory, and institutionalization of the (para)state apparatus (Tilly 1982). Extant research on civil wars demonstrates the importance of shadow or illicit economies in underpinning armed rebellions, because 'in most circumstances the establishment of a rebel army would be….prohibitively expensive'

(Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009). Rebel armies need significant material support to equip, outfit, and deploy soldiers. Armed actors associated with parastates also need to fund extensive administrative, political, and economic infrastructural projects (Wennmann 2011). Yet, civil wars often have devastating individual as well as economic effects, with resources diverted from investments in public welfare to the military apparatus, just when the need for social provisioning is growing. Under these circumstances, the responsibility to ensure the well-being of their communities is pushed disproportionately onto the shoulders of women. In short, as armed groups become poorer and more desperate, more women are called upon to provide the emotional, material, or symbolic resources needed to keep the revolution going. Here I depart from earlier critical work forwarded by Cooper, Pugh, and Goodhand (2004), and Peterson (2009) by arguing that different modes of informal war economies, including combat, shadow and coping economies, are not just interdependent but importantly predicated upon militarized social reproduction.[2] This analytical handle enables a more comprehensive analysis of the gendered economies I propose underpin, and indeed make possible, revolutionary warfare.

I suggest that this labour is particularly important for the sustenance of conflict being fought by poor non-state armed forces controlling smaller areas of land such as those found in Myanmar, where I have worked in different capacities with women's groups associated with non-state armed groups since 2005. Inspired by Geertz 'deep hanging out' (1998; also see Wogan 2004), this article draws on unstructured ethnographic interviews with female and male soldiers, community activists, and displaced communities collected during several years of working alongside and researching armed organizations, primarily in the east and the north of the country, to develop a theoretical framing able to identify and examine the types of gendered labour I propose underwrite parastate armed conflict.[3] These non-state armed groups have sophisticated governance structures, inclusive of relief and welfare wings, taxation, educational and health facilities, and typically mobilize women's support under so-called women's wings to fight war, send remittances to frontline troops, build weapons, and – literally – produce new soldiers for their nation. For those armed groups engaged in long-lasting conflict, as in the case of the Kachin civil war, the importance of women's reproductive activities has become even more urgent. I have found that the Kachin army can no longer afford to regularly pay its soldiers, compelling the wives and daughters of male soldiers to engage in unsafe income-generating activities in order to send materials to soldiers on the frontline. These income-generating activities often draw on the commercialization of women's reproductive duties, resulting in women migrating abroad as maids, sex workers, and surrogate mothers, further highlighting the importance of the household, and women's labour, in sustaining parastate armed conflict (Hedström 2018).

Thus, to paraphrase Enloe, women are used in insurgencies, but never randomly. Gender roles are utilized to fit overarching military objectives, yet in ways that result in 'minimal alterations' to the overarching gender order (Enloe 1980). Understanding the household not as a fixed location of gender identities/relations, but 'as a *key site* for the production of gender roles and identities' (Elias and Louth 2016, italics added) brings to the forefront the ways in which gender roles (re)produced from the household can and have been used to advance military objectives in ways that ensure male privilege and power. These 'gender roles and identities' can be, and indeed are, militarized in times of

war: a gendered division of labour ensures that women's reproductive work can be operationalized to support non-state armed struggles. The 'feminization' and devaluation of this labour renders it under/unpaid (Peterson 2005; Elson and Pearson 1981; True 2012), and therefore affordable, maybe even profitable, for rebel groups lacking in financial prowess. Consequently, the household cannot be analysed as separate from the market or indeed, militarization: it is a gendered, militarized, and fluid space that affects the community in which it exists by providing or withholding resources and legitimacy for the non-state armed group (Hedström 2016a). Of course, not all militarization processes look exactly the same, but a focus on the household – and militarized social reproduction – helps illuminate the broader political economy of war in which these processes take shape.

Militarized social reproduction: a typology

Applying this understanding of the household, and of social reproduction, to communities experiencing insurgency warfare can enable analysis of how women's gendered duties can sustain the economies of parastate armed actors. Here, the concept of *militarized social reproduction* helps foreground subsistence and reproductive labour as critical for maintaining war efforts. The general types of this gendered labour, though they interrelate, can be distinguished from one another by examining the impact of this labour on the military group, and on conflict. To this end, a typology of *militarized social reproduction* drawn from the literature recounted above is developed, through which this article hopes to identity and articulate how particular forms of gendered labour relates to military objectives, in particular parastate armed conflict. In other words, the focus is not (only) on what makes women (or indeed men) support war but to enable a comprehensive analysis of the critical, but hidden, social reproductive work I suggest facilitates parastate militarization practices by situating social reproduction *in relation* to revolutionary warfare. A note of caution: this typology is neither exhaustive nor discreet. There is slippage: the categories overlap and connect. Moreover, the gendered economies of war this typology aims to explore are of course marked by, *inter alia*, gerontocratic, class, caste, religious and ethnic hierarchies. Yet, as this article contends, in contexts of long-lasting civil war, the importance of militarized social reproduction takes on a particular urgency, suggesting that attention to women's labour can facilitate a more comprehensive analysis of civil war and violence. However incomplete, this typology allows us to look deeper into the relationship of everyday gendered labour to parastate armed conflict, where other studies have abstracted it from the conflict. A (second) word of caution: the causality noted above (and below) is complex and bi-directional. While militarized social reproductive labour contributes to para-state armed conflict(s), the types of reproductive labour found within these contexts are informed by, embedded within, and legitimized through a specific economy of war. This two-causality is not explored in any great detail in this paper.[4]

The first category, **enabling**, refers to the material and physical reproduction of the military labour force undertaken both within and outside of non-state armed forces. This includes provisioning, nursing, conscription, and the physical reproduction of new soldiers through childbirth. **Supporting** denotes a variety of emotional activities women undertake in support of armed struggles, for example through praying, singing,

or participation in public manifestations. This also includes other forms of non-material caretaking, such as shaming pacifists and those rejecting warmongering practices. **Symbolizing**, the third category, relates to the work that women's gendered labour does in maintaining the dichotomy between the private and the public/military through compliance with a strict regulation of gender roles. For example, women often join non-state armed groups in lower-ranking and feminized non-combat positions, such as nurses and seamstresses, and are typically forced to retire upon marriage in order to reproduce the armed forces through childbirth. **Legitimizing** conveys the ways in which the framing of the female body as especially vulnerable to sexual abuse by the enemy provides a key rational for armed struggles. This is also done through the symbolic representation of women – as mothers, wives or daughters to male soldiers – as the household/home in need of defence. Finally, **rejecting** refers to the gendered duties undertaken by women in opposition to war making. Examples of this include public grieving, and the drawing on maternal identities for conflict resolution practices. We will now look at these in more detail.

Enabling

Enabling, the first category in the typology, relates to the material and physical reproduction of the military labour force. Women are tasked with (re)producing the body politic, duties that are seen to primarily take place within the domestic, and therefore, apolitical sphere (Dowler 1998). This role emerges from a gendered vision of labour in which women are situated as mothers and wives, urged to support 'their' men and 'their' struggle through feminized reproductive and productive duties. This means physically giving birth to new soldiers, but also keeping the family alive despite male family members being injured, on the run, or away fighting, and thus uncapable to contribute to household upkeep. In effect, women are keeping the armed revolution alive by virtue of their gendered labour. For example, in Angola, the Philippines, and Kachin State (Myanmar), women engaged in subsistence food production, farming rice and other critical supplies for the armed forces and the communities caught in the fighting (Ducos 2000; Hedström 2015, 2016a). In Northern Ireland, India, and Kashmir, women equipped soldiers with uniforms and food and sent provisions to imprisoned fighters (Alison 2004; Dowler 1998; Parashar 2011, 2013). In Algeria, *moussebilate*, or female civilian activists, hid fighters in their homes (Mortimer 2012), and in Kayah State (Myanmar), women concealed weapons in the crawlspace under their houses. But militarized social reproduction does not only take place within the confines of the physical household. Gender roles are replicated across military structures to facilitate women's armed mobilization. In El Salvador, women were primarily conscripted to the FMLN as cooks and nurses (Viterna 2013). In the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, women joined as wives and mothers (Baines 2014). Gender norms frame women as especially suitable for these 'support' roles and constrain opportunities for questioning or opposing overarching gendered division of labour (True 2012; Peterson 2005). These gender norms also obscure how physically hard and risky this work can be, while rendering it separate from the political struggle. A former soldier in the Kachin armed forces spoke about the fear still waking her up at night some thirty years later – heart pounding, legs running, a sour, metallic aftertaste clouding her mouth. Her work: serving

as a nurse in the army in the early 1970s, working on the frontline without access to weapons (as she was a woman, the reasoning went, she wasn't a real soldier and didn't need one) or even regular pay, while *at the same time* providing for her family through hard subsistence work, the latter made all the more difficult, almost impossible, due to the many times her family had to flee.

Problematically, the devaluation of the gendered everyday work that goes into materially enabling armed conflict, including caretaking and provision, detrimentally affects women and girls' physical security, emotional wellbeing, and income (Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas 2014). This is particulate acute in communities embroiled in longlisting conflict. In these communities, investment in military spending is typically privileged above investments in social welfare, including health care. Under these circumstances, the responsibility to ensure the well-being of their communities is pushed disproportionately onto the shoulders of women. In this way, 'female altruism' (Tanyag 2017), in particular motherhood, is harnessed for military purposes to prop up both military institutions (through material reproduction) and individual soldiers (through physical reproduction) as a substitute for welfare provisioning. However, the lack of social provisioning leaves many women without access to adequate healthcare, rest, and replenishment. This dependency on women as hardworking and loyal daughters and mothers heightens the vulnerability of the parastate, as the very gendered bodies situated the centre of this political economy of war are threatened (Tanyag 2017; Hedström 2018). This is a very real material contradiction in the political economy of gendered nationalism that women experience viscerally in their bodies and in their everyday lives, with implications far beyond the individual body. The wider normative and material implications of this, including most immediately, maternal mortality, are not only the erasure of women's concerns and needs from the revolutionary agenda, but the viability of revolutionary goals. If women are relied upon to resource revolutions materially as well as physically, and yet their bodily needs are seconded to the militaristic agenda, the viability of the revolution is also compromised.

However, it is important to recognize that these gendered practices involve the complicity of women.[5] They generate material as well as non-material rewards, and afford women a position from which they can inform, or at least contribute to, revolutionary aims and objectives. For example, women interviewed in a displacement camp in Northern Myanmar reported going hungry, yet would not put aside food for themselves, insisting on sending their meagre proviants (including money) to their sons and other male relatives on the frontline (Hedström 2018). The affective tie of family and community relations ensures that everyone is invested in supporting the revolution. This includes through conscription.

Female soldiers I met in Kachinland explained that they signed up for army duty on behalf of their brothers, complicating feminist accounts of women supporting revolutionary warfare through notions of militarized agency (see for example Alison 2009; Gowrinathan 2017). In Kachin communities, men inherit the property as well as the family name, (ideally) having wives join them in the paternal home to ensure household social reproduction, including caring for elderly relatives. This is all the more important in long-lasting civil wars, where parastate resources are being diverted to support the armed forces, rather than general social welfare. As each household has to sacrifice a soldier for the revolution, and girls will in any case have to move away when marrying,

why not send a daughter to the army instead of a son, families I met with reasoned. An interview with a high-ranking commander of the Kachin armed forces confirmed that although they prefer male recruits, if a household only has one son at home, they will recruit the daughter instead to 'accommodate family needs' (Hedström 2018). This renders conscription as a form of social reproduction, especially in contexts of long-lasting conflict where individual households are buckling under the pressure to resource the armed organization *and* sustain the immediate family. In these contexts, the more valuable family members (usually boys) are encouraged to study or work, rather than fighting on the frontline. Fourteen female young recruits I meet at a Kachin army camp in northern Myanmar had all joined the army to free up time for male inhabitants of the household to engage in income-generating activities or attend further studies. 'It's everyone's duty to support the homeland' they tell me, 'it's just that women have to support it a little bit more.' Thus, whether the women stay home as head of household or join the armed forces, they end up materially enabling the military no matter what the other able-bodied members of the household do.

Supporting

Supporting, the second category in the typology, relates to emotional activities such as praying, singing, or participation in public manifestations in support of violence. In Kashmir women 'were at the forefront of mass protests, shouting anti-India slogans and shielding men' (Shekhawat 2011); in India, female *sadhvis* called upon 'masculine Hindu warriors' to defend the nation (Banerjee 2006); and in Pakistan, 'mothers' grief' were deployed to mobilize support for armed militancy (Haq 2006). These cases both draw on and subvert dominant gender norms that posit motherhood, and femininity, as above all domestic. The participation of women in these forms of public protest is enabled precisely because of notions that frame women as less of a threat and imbues women, especially mothers, with a gendered form of moral authority. This makes women's participation strategically viable, and therefore, profitable. Women can supposedly participate in protests, deliver messages and food across enemy lines, or hide it at home, with less immediate risk to their personal security, as compared to men. While it is not always possible to quantify this kind of labour, recent conversations with women living in Kayah State, Myanmar indicate the toll this takes on individual women with extensive family responsibilities living in communities embroiled in long-lasting conflict: one woman I met wanted to 'remove part of her head'; one explained she needed medicine for her fear; one went into premature labour due to stress while imprisoned in her house 'as a shield' for her husband.

Supporting also relates to the work undertaken by women in transmitting knowledge across generations. Women living in ethnic minority areas of Myanmar are taught lullabies containing warnings about State soldiers by their mothers, who also teach them the correct way to pack the basket always standing by the door in preparation for attacks and subsequent flight: rice, chillies, a blanket, oil, something to cook in. Men, apparently, do not know what to put in the basket, or how to sing the lullabies (Hedström 2018). In this way, a gendered division of labour affects the ways in which wars are understood and experienced, and shapes the ways in which women's informal duties are incorporated into parastates, who often institutionalize this gendered labour through

their administrative departments. Research indicates that civil war detrimentally affects state expenditure on education (Lai and Thyne 2007). While no comprehensive data exists for parastates, we can assume that this most likely holds true also in rebel governed areas in Myanmar. For example, my research on the war in Kachin State revealed that, due to an intensification in fighting since the ceasefire broke in 2011, funding is currently being diverted from schools to the Kachin armed forces (Hedström 2018). This means that women, who make up the majority of heads-of-household in conflict-affected areas, have to completely support their children's schooling, rather than relying on parastate support for this as they did prior to the 2011 resumption in fighting. In other words, as pressure increases on the parastate to resource armed conflict, pressure intensifies on the individual woman to keep the household, including the ideology of the revolution, alive. Women's wings serve a particularly important role in this regard.

In Myanmar, armed organizations affiliated with parastates all have a specific women's unit to harness gendered labour and through this, generate support and consent for militarization practices. The women's wing of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the Kachin Women's Association, mobilizes female soldiers and the daughters and wives of male soldiers to make uniforms, grow rice, and nurse injured men back to life (Hedström 2015). Women are situated as uniquely suited for this labour due to gendered abilities, yet the institutionalization of this labour through the establishment of women's wings suggest anxieties about both women's appropriate roles and the (over) reliance on women's labour for parastate armed conflict. If women were naturally inclined to engage in emotional labour and prefer it to soldering, why would this work need to be managed and demarcated as separate from soldiering? This narrative mask the not-insignificant amount of work required to both manage the boundaries of gendered labour and encourage women to engage in it for no, or next to no, profit.

Symbolizing

Symbolizing relates to the work that women's gendered labour does in maintaining the (symbolic) dichotomy between the private and the public/military through compliance with a strict regulation of gender roles (re)produced from the household. The household serves as the source of symbolic (as well as physical, as noted above) reproduction. It is site from where the nation is produced, figuratively and literally (McClintock 1995). Yet it is not enough to simply note that household represent the home front, the domestic sacred sphere – the imagined new nation – which men are called upon to protect (Elshtain 1987; Yuval-Davis 1993). One must also understand that households underpin the political economy of war in the sense that soldiers are conscripted from the household to defend the household and are urged to return to the household to reproduce the army. The household is space *both* physical and imagined. It is material and political, and above all, gendered. Thus, nation, gender, and armed conflict are not distinct spheres, but come into existence in and through relation to each other at the level of the household (McClintock 1995). As a result, gender roles must be controlled, despite the active participation of women in parastate military activities. This is achieved through coding certain military activities, such as combat, masculine, and only recognizing male participation in these activities (Fieseler, Hampf, and Schwarzkopf 2014). For example, female soldiers interviewed in Kachinland (Myanmar) talked about engaging in battle; carrying

fallen soldiers up and down mountains; and digging trenches and bunkers, hard physical as well as dangerous work. Yet, their commanders maintained that women are too weak to be trusted in combat, and hence, only men are frontline soldiers (Hedström 2018). This renders invisible the many roles actually played by women, as well as reinforcing a gendered division of labour in which men are positioned as the defenders and heads of both the army and the household. In this context, marriage takes on a particular urgency: if women's primary responsibility is the home (Vuic 2007), and if women (re)produce the nation through their gendered duties, women as mothers and wives must be kept at home. In Kachin State, female soldiers are retired upon marriage, denied contraceptives, and encouraged to give birth for the new nation (Hedström 2018). In the northernmost parts of the country, soldiers in the Restoration Council of Shan State, warn women's rights activists against providing family planning services (Quadrini 2019).

The practice of 'revolutionary marriage' (Roy 2006), controlled by military commanders and regulated through military codes of conducts within revolutionary movements, suggests widespread anxieties about gender, sexuality, and women's labour. Revolutionary marriages are above all, *arranged marriages*, structured through the military to harness women's labour and realize the new nation. In Acholi, women were forcibly married into military units replicating households, symbolizing new lines of kinships and dependency through childbirth (Baines 2014); in Kachin State (Myanmar) the military regularly organizes mass weddings to ensure the continued reproduction of the Kachin nation (Hedström 2018); within the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Tamil women were strongly encouraged to wed Tamil, and not Singhalese or Muslim men (Terpstra and Frerks 2017). Underpinning this practice is a fear of miscegenation, revealing the embeddedness of nation-building projects with normative ideas about 'appropriate' gender roles and sexuality. Women's compliance with these practices are required in order for parastates to actualize the new nation and ensure continued mobilization for military purposes. Put differently, women must be controlled within the home, whether this home is an actual space or an imagined nation. If women are not symbolizing, as well as physically reproducing, the home, how can men be motivated to mobilize for conflict? Resultantly, control over women and girls' reproductive freedom cuts across many revolutionary movements, and suggests that military objectives, rather than religious or moral beliefs as commonly argued, play a critical role in perpetuating restrictions to female bodily autonomy. Restrictions on reproductive rights 'perpetuate harmful norms that effectively deny women and girls the means to take better care of their own bodies' (Tanyag 2017), and moreover obscure the violence that women may endure within marriages, or indeed within armed forces associated with revolutionary movements (Roy 2006, 2008). Young female soldiers interviewed in Kachinland talked about taking turns watching the door of their all-women unit at night. The threat: not the Burmese soldiers they were drafted to fight, but the men in their own unit (Author 2018).

Legitimizing

The framing of the female body as especially vulnerable to sexual abuse by the enemy appeals to a gendered logic in which female sexuality and reproduction must be situated within the home. The vulnerable female body must therefore be protected. As discussed above, this leads to the centring of female body: controlling women's sexuality takes on

precedence, as female bodies are seen as potential transmitters of miscegenation (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Yuval-Davis 1999). Consider motherhood, as above. This is linked to control over the new nation, and serves to reify boundaries between the home and the military, between the nation and the enemy (McClintock 1995). The vulnerable female body is, then, more than a metaphor: it is gendered labour, it is power. It has a very real material side to it: women are taunted, sexually harassed, raped. A key informant in Kayah State (Myanmar) explained that during the height of the conflict in the mid-1990s, afraid to go home each day after school, she would instead circle the perimeter of the plot of land her empty house sat on for hours on end, afraid to be home alone because of the State soldiers stationed in her village. At night, they would often enter the house, guns pointing at her father, asking how much she was worth. She would crawl under the bed and stay there until daybreak, at which time she would run to school, and after school let out, circle the house again. Now, a grown woman, she doesn't eat sitting down: she eats standing up, throwing rice in her mouth, always ready to run. The fear is still real, the vulnerability (perhaps) not.

Sexual violence serves the state military's objectives. However, the symbolic use of this violence can also be harnessed for parastate military purposes. In Myanmar, since 2002 over 15 reports have been released documenting the strategic use of sexual violence committed against ethnic minority women by members of the State armed forces. Imagery and reports highlight in great detail the ordeals and suffering of mutilated female bodies, reinforcing their victim status, suggesting potentials for miscegenation. The injuries and injustices suffered by the female body are used to spatially differentiate between enemy and friend, representing the revolutionary struggle as above all a righteous struggle: women interviewed in Kachinland explain that the insurgency is their only line of defence against a genocidal State military, intent on 'wiping out' minority communities through, among other tactics, sexual violence. In Myanmar, the notion that ethnicity lies with the father aligns with the objectives of the nonstate armed group to legitimize non-state warfare. Feminist research show how the female body is 'deemed useful to the war propaganda efforts' (Edwards 2013) and for 'legitimizing the ideology and practices of terrorism' (Sanyal 2008). The use of femininity to legitimize armed conflict emerges from the notion of women as 'beautiful souls' (Elshtain 1987) representing the 'home and hearth' (Basham and Catignani 2018) in need of protection (see above). In fact, information departments associated with non-state armed groups in Myanmar will often conscript women for propaganda work because of gender norms imbuing women's participation with a moral authority, this serving the dual purpose of shaming reluctant men and providing legitimacy for the cause (for European examples, see Lopez 2016; Fodor 2002). Recent research from Kachinland suggest that young women are deployed in recruitment videos with the explicit purpose to 'inspire' young men to sign up (Hedström 2018). However, this research also suggest that while gender ideologies are instrumental in ensuring consent to military objectives on a community level, the longevity of the conflict – the prospect of never-ending war – means that individuals will not join voluntarily. My interviews reveal that many boys either leave home to avoid conscription, or have their sisters join on their behalf. In other words, widespread militarization, while undoubtedly reliant on gendered identities and symbols to enable action and importantly, consent for that action (see Peterson 2009), must be contextualized within the specific political economy of the war being fought. In these

areas of northern Myanmar, women's inability to inherit or own property (as detailed above) and the reliance of (female) family members to sustain (male) troops through cash remittances makes it more financially viable for individual household to enlist a daughter, rather than a son, to the armed forces. It is cheaper for the armed forces as well, as women are recruited to lower-ranking and lower-paid positions. While this gendered labour is legitimized and recognized on a community level as a form of resistance to State violence, the absence of adequate or equal pay suggest that female soldiers are not valued as soldiers in their own regard: women are recruited *on behalf of* their brothers, the 'real' soldiers. One colonel I met in 2018 said, with a sigh, 'Yes, our female soldiers, they are very motivated, but it's one thing to be motivated, but another thing is actually doing it, it's very difficult … We want to protect them, we don't want to put them through such hardship. It [war] is dangerous'. Yet, the lack of men forces the army to (regrettably) turn to women to fulfil not just immediate social reproductive needs but often defence needs, underwriting critical military objectives.

Rejecting

Rejecting, the final concept in the typology, refers to the gendered duties undertaken by women in opposition to war making practices, such as public grieving, and the drawing on maternal identities for conflict resolution practices. The deployment of motherhood and other forms of conventional feminine performance can serve as 'a collective action frame' (Viterna 2006) to protest war and defy the actions of the state. For example, in Argentina, the women of the Plaza de Mayo drew on their authority as mothers and grandmothers to demand justice for the children disappeared under the military regime (Pauchulo 2009). In Somaliland, women surrounded the meeting halls of the peace delegation, demanding an end to the war and a concrete resolution before letting the men out again (Walls 2013). In Northern Ireland, mothers from opposing religious factions found a commonality on shared experiences of trauma, motherhood, and grief (Cockburn 2000), and in India, the mothers of Manipur stripped naked to protest rights violations (Rehman 2017). In this way, intimate and personal forms of remembrance and grief are used to agitate for different forms of resistance, defy state power, and demand justice for human rights violations perpetrated by state forces. In drawing on, and politicizing, personal experiences of trauma and violence, women defy state practices and forms of gendered power that marginalize women and their concerns from political and public agendas. Traditional feminine roles are then not necessarily 'passive but powerful' (Author forthcoming). But are they transformative?

The framing contributes to a particular construction of in/security, whereby insecurity *and* security are both understood to be emanating from men occupying public space. While true to some extent, this framing is problematic when it fails to illustrate the structural relations of gendered power that results in women's insecurity. Violence is not separate. Intimate violence is continuous with more public forms of violence, facilitated by gendered structures of power that deny women equal access to legislative power, judicial authority, and influence over community and household decision-making (True 2012). Yet, the assumption is that women, or their children, only experience insecurity in the public space, disguising the 'continuum of violence' (Cockburn 2004; True and Tanyag 2017) informing women's experience of both

conflict and post-conflict periods. Moreover, as women's access to public space is necessitated by the public imagining of women as mothers, women's involvement in activities rejecting violence is often predicated on gendered norms positing women as above violence, while underscoring the idea of man-as-violent. These are problematic gender norms. They not only obscure the ways in which women experience and shape armed conflict, but contribute to a marginalization of women in transitional and post-conflict dialogues and decision-making processes. If women are primarily seen to be positioned in the domestic sphere, and if the domestic sphere is physically as well as normatively understood as separate from the masculine/public sphere of violence and politics, then women's access to politics is constricted. Thus, deployment of motherhood to reject war risk reinstating, rather than transforming, the status quo: a patriarchal state wherein women are the grieving mothers and men the dispensers of power, and of violence.

However, as the typology has detailed, women inform and shape armed insurgencies in multiple, sometimes conflicting, ways. This suggests that we need to carefully situate and contextualize gendered labour in relation to the specifics of the war being fought. In Myanmar, women reject and resist armed conflict through international advocacy and reporting, documenting human rights abuses committed by the State armed forces (see above). At the same time, in this context of ongoing, and long-lasting, revolutionary warfare, resisting means more than simply rejecting warfare: a woman from the All Burma Students Democratic Front, fighting in an alliance with the Kachin armed forces, explains that 'men don't understand what peace means – they will be satisfied with business opportunities. But we need sustainable peace, for everyone, and to get that we must fight'. Another woman sitting next to her, a Kachin women's rights activists, agrees: resisting is fighting, and only women have the tenacity to do that right. These comments emerge from a context in which women are situated as uniquely sustaining the wellbeing of both immediate families and the army-writ large, and reveal the importance of broader political-economy relations informing women's mobilization to and consent for armed conflict. In the absence of a welfare state, and in the context of war and increased household poverty, the pressure on women to regenerate the community is heightened, fuelling desires for lasting, and sustainable, solutions to conflict, whether through violent or non-violent resistance (also see Tanyag and True Forthcoming).

Conclusion

This article brings together research on civil wars and militarization with feminist scholarship on the household in order to push theorizations on civil wars in new directions. It suggests that attention to the household can enhance theoretical endeavours aimed at explaining non-state armed conflict by paying attention to the multiple everyday labour this inheres. By bringing in the concept of militarized social reproduction to capture the multiple ways in which women's everyday labour in both the household and the army underpins militarization processes, this article proposes that conflict is enabled, at least in part, through women's everyday gendered activities. This focus enables important insights into the nexus of the everyday space of the gendered household and conflict and adds to the empirical basis for understanding the household as a modality of war.

The typology of militarized social reproduction extends feminist work on social reproduction and builds upon key insights gathered from critical research on civil wars and militarization and feminist scholarship on the household. The typology, while by no means exhaustive, is meant to render visible the multiple everyday labour militarization and war inheres and through this engender theorizations and thinking on the relationship between gender and war broadly speaking, and the relationship between social reproduction and militarization more specifically. Deploying this analysis to conflict helps centre the critical social reproductive work undertaken by women to reproduce both individual soldiers and the armed forces writ-large, and reveals how seemingly mundane and everyday labour are operationalized to support warfare in parastates experiencing long-term civil wars. In such contexts, social reproduction and conflict *are* the everyday. In other words, war economies need to be analysed in relation to social reproduction, upon which everything else depends.

The purpose of the typology is to therefore to make apparent different types of reproductive labour underpinning, or rejecting, long-term armed struggles. This can facilitate and push theorizations on the outbreak and sustainment of conflict in new directions. It is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis, or a fixed one: rather it is envisioned to spur and engender theorizations and thinking on the relationship between gender and war broadly speaking, and the relationship between social reproduction and militarization more specifically. Through this typology, this article hopes to facilitate analysis of protracted armed conflict, and attend to the relationship between the gendered political economy of the household and the outbreak and conduct of wars.

Notes

1. See also Kachin Women Association Thailand (2013).
2. Thank you Reviewer 1 for this point.
3. Thank you Tomas Cole for helping me think this through (also see Nilsson 2019; Borneman and Hammoudi 2009).
4. Thank you reviewer 1.
5. Thanks to Maria Tanyag for this insight.

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