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Title: Globalization masculinities, empire-building and forced prostitution: a critical analysis of the gendered impact of the neoliberal economic agenda in post-invasion/occupation Iraq.

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Abstract

Adopting a transnational feminist lens and using a political economy approach, this article addresses both the direct and indirect consequences of the 2003 war in Iraq, specifically the impact on civilian women. Pre-war security and gender relations in Iraq will be compared with the situation post-invasion/occupation. It examines the globalized processes of capitalism, neoliberalism, and neocolonialism and their impact on the political, social, and economic infrastructure in Iraq. Particular attention will be paid to illicit/informal economies: coping, combat, and criminal. The 2003 Iraq war was fought using masculinities of empire, postcolonialism, and neoliberalism. Using the example of forced prostitution, this article will argue that these globalization masculinities – specifically the privatization agenda of the West and its illegal economic occupation - have resulted in women either being forced into the illicit (coping) economy as a means of survival, or trafficked for sexual slavery by profit-seeking criminal networks who exploit the informal economy in a post-invasion/occupation Iraq.

Keywords: globalization masculinities; postcolonialism; neoliberalism; gender-based violence; transnational feminism; political economy.

Introduction

In an interview with Nicola Pratt, discussing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Susan Abbas, director of the Iraqi women's leadership, stated:

I do not believe that there are any women that faced the challenges of lack of security and peace more than women in Iraq. For a very long time, women in Iraq have been living with wars, conflicts, and occupation.¹

Indeed, before the outbreak of war and armed conflict, Iraqi women enjoyed relatively good socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions.² During the 1970s, women's status and rights were formally encoded within the new Iraqi Provisional Constitution. This granted women equal rights before the law. Changes were also made to labor, employment, and personal status laws. These granted women enhanced education and workplace opportunities and greater equality in marriage, divorce, and inheritance.³ However, after over three decades of conflict⁴ Iraq's political and economic landscape has weakened dramatically. Following Iraq's defeat during the first Gulf War in order to consolidate power, Saddam Hussein turned to religious fundamentalists and conservatives for support. This had a detrimental affect on women. Restrictions on their freedom of movement were reinstated and their protections under the law were removed.⁵ Following the most recent US-led war in Iraq, increases in insecurity and sectarian violence have increased

exponentially. Instability (both social and economic), looting, and violent attacks have characterized the post-invasion period in Iraq. Iraqi women and girls have become victims of domestic violence, abduction, honor killings, and rape.⁶

Following the invasion and the removal of Saddam Hussein, the Security Council passed UN Resolution 1483. Of importance for this piece is section 14, which states:

...the Development Fund for Iraq shall be used...to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, for the economic reconstruction and repair of Iraq's infrastructure, for the continued disarmament of Iraq, and for the costs of Iraqi civilian administration, and for other purposes benefiting the people of Iraq.⁷

We will examine the impact of the US economic regime in more detail in due course. Briefly, according to Whyte this economic 'shock therapy' experiment was based on the profit-seeking activities of American companies causing a '...profligate and criminal waste of Iraqi resources.'⁸ Put simply, this Western capitalist agenda did not benefit Iraqi people.

Aim of the article

There is a corpus of literature on the war in Iraq and the war on terror more generally. Topics include, but are not limited to: examining gendered narratives and the US war on terror,⁹ a feminist analyses of the US-led invasion,¹⁰ the Abu Ghraib prison scandal,¹¹ and the economic rebuilding/reconstruction of Iraq.¹² Yet, as Lee-Koo has pointed out, relatively little has been dedicated to studying the impact of the Iraq war on girls and women. Lee-koo has drawn attention to the gender-based

violence being perpetrated against civilian women in Iraq.¹³ This article extends this discussion in two ways. Firstly, by focusing explicitly on the links between the neoliberal agenda in Iraq (viewed as an economic war crime) and the situation of civilian women in Iraq. Indeed, David Whyte has argued that the economic governance of Iraq raises questions about the legality of the occupation. For him '[t]he legality of economic rule - as opposed to military rule - in Iraq has attracted very little comment.'¹⁴ Secondly, by addressing these issues following the formal withdrawal of Western troops from Iraq.

Criminologists have described the war in Iraq as a state crime, a crime of aggression, and an illegal intervention under International Law.¹⁵ Whyte looks specifically at the economic dimension of the occupation and argues that the economic agenda should be viewed as a war crime under the terms of The Hague and Geneva treaties. Given this, it is important that we acknowledge both the direct and indirect impact this Anglo-American invasion has had on the people of Iraq. This is not to suggest that security was not a problem prior to Western intervention. Rather, it is to demonstrate the discrepancies between what the US-led coalition claimed was its mission in Iraq - to promote gender emancipation and human rights - and the real motive of the invasion. The aim also, is to highlight how security and violence have worsened following this supposed humanitarian intervention.

Sjoberg states that: '[g]ender is necessary, conceptually, to understanding the nature of war(s); empirically, to understanding wars' causes and consequences'; and, 'ethically, to understanding its implications.'¹⁶ Conceptually, this article will

demonstrate that the nature of the Iraq war falls under Kaldor's concept of 'new wars.'¹⁷ This term recognizes that increasingly wars are fought on the home front and that the majority of the casualties are civilians, mainly women and children.¹⁸ Conceptually, it will demonstrate how particular masculinities and femininities inform war policies and practices. Empirically, this article will address the causes and consequences of the war in Iraq, specifically the impact it has had on civilian women. In attending to gender (conceptually) and the causes and consequences of war (empirically), it is important to highlight that the history of empires, nation building, and imperialism is the history of men and masculinities. This global geopolitical analysis of gender leads to the creation of 'globalization masculinities.' These include masculinities of conquest and settlement, masculinities of empire, and masculinities of postcolonialism and neoliberalism.¹⁹ The Iraq war was a pre-emptive war. This article will demonstrate that it was fought using the masculinities of empire, postcolonialism, and neoliberalism. Ethically, it will consider the impact these globalization masculinities - specifically the Western neoliberal agenda - have had on the day-to-day lives of Iraqi women. It will do so by acknowledging Enloe's rephrasing of 'the personal is political' to 'the personal is international' and 'the international is personal.'²⁰ This reformulation reminds us that people at the margins of global politics matter in war-making and war-fighting

Transnational feminism and a political economy approach

This piece draws upon a transnational feminist lens as well as a political economy approach. Transnational feminism '...sees women's subordination as more than a by-product of political inequality or an exploitative economic system.'²¹ This feminism

views women's political, social, and economic marginalization as a direct result of capitalism/class exploitation, neo-imperialism, and neo-colonization. It draws upon the idea of glocalization: a concept that addresses the unequal relationship between globalization, capitalism, neoliberalism, and localization.²² It is a useful analytical framework that attends to the '...micropolitics of everyday life as well as to the macropolitics of global economic and political processes.'²³ Moreover, transnational feminism pursues an intersectional analysis, which recognizes that women's inequality and oppression cuts across numerous structural constraints that are linked to age, clan, caste, tribe and economic class; as well as, religion, gender, race, sexual orientation, and nationality.²⁴ A feminist political economy approach addresses the micro (local), meso, and macro (global) contexts in which gender-based violence occurs.²⁵ This local-global analysis broadens what is meant by violence against women and how we end such violence.

I will be using the term gender-based violence (GBV) in this article when critically analyzing the impact of the global political economy on the lives of women. True uses the term violence against women (VAW).²⁶ The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) defines VAW as:

...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.²⁷

According to the report of the special rapporteur on VAW, GBV refers to two broad categories of VAW: interpersonal and institutional/structural. The former includes

physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological forms of violence and abuse. The latter refers to any form of structural inequality or discrimination that maintains women's subordinate position. These definitions acknowledge that most perpetrators of GBV are men.²⁸ Structural violence - operationalized here as women's lack of access to employment, education, welfare, healthcare, and social, economic, and political infrastructure - is particularly gendered. Women are especially vulnerable to this type of violence not only during war, but also in peacetime societies that are deeply patriarchal, where material inequalities between men and women are high, and women's status as equal citizens is undermined.

A political economy approach highlights the linkages between the economic, the social, and the political. In this instance, the neoliberal economic globalization agenda of the West and the social and political reality of women's everyday lives in Iraq. Using the example of forced prostitution – which is included in the DEVAW definition of GBV - this article will demonstrate how the West's attempt to control the distribution of Iraqi oil revenue (to enhance its own capitalist agenda) has resulted in women either being forced into the illicit economy as a means of survival, or trafficked for sexual slavery by profit-seeking criminal networks who exploit the informal economy in a post-invasion/occupation Iraq.

Empire, nation-building and imperialism: justifying the US-led 'regime change' in Iraq

'[E]conomic interests, geopolitical concerns, military power projection, and imperial domination were the primary motives for invading Iraq.'²⁹ Following the 9/11 attacks,

the Bush administration began its war on terror. Since then the US have attempted to overthrow regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. The US has reoriented its security strategy to create the right of pre-emptive self-defense. According to the UN Charter and the fundamental principle of international relations, the fact that the US and its allies invaded a sovereign nation without provocation or legal authorization makes this act illegal and a state crime.³⁰ Official narratives used by the Bush administration in the run-up to the war used the plight of Iraqi women to justify its political and economic interests in Iraq. Ostensibly, the rescue narrative of ‘...white men saving brown women from brown men’ was about saving women in ‘foreign’ lands from the oppression of Muslim (‘other’, inferior) men.³¹ In reality this hypermasculine, Orientalist pursuit was about the ‘remasculinization’ of the US empire following the attacks of 9/11.³² Indeed, according to the US State Department, the US committed \$21 billion to the reconstruction project in Iraq during 2003 and 2004, yet only a portion (\$500 million) was allocated to supporting the social and political development of Iraqi women.³³ Critics have been outspoken in their cynicism of this invasion, captured succinctly here by these two examples: ‘...the US does ‘do women’, but only when it suits the goals of empire-building.’³⁴ And: ‘...wars are not fought ‘for’ gender issues in the way that they are sometimes fought ‘for’ oil resources or ‘for’ national autonomy.’³⁵

A gendered analysis of wars/armed conflicts and their aftermath

In her book *Gendering Global Conflict*, Sjoberg argues that the ‘...meanings, causes, and consequences of war cannot be understood without reference to gender.’³⁶ Indeed, the international community (writers and policy-makers alike) has drawn

attention to the gender-specific ways in which men and women suffer during war and armed conflict. UN Resolution 1325 with its aim of mainstreaming gender has paid attention to the impact that war and armed conflict has on women. It also outlines the role women can, and should, play in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and resolution.³⁷ Commentators argue that, overwhelmingly, war-making and war-fighting is man's work.³⁸ Men who fight in wars constitute the vast numbers of the casualties. However, with the changing nature of wars and conflict, the majority of casualties are civilians, among them women and children. New wars are new in terms of their goals, methods, and financing. They entail blurred lines between fighters and non-fighters, high civilian deaths, the direct targeting of civilians, and the deliberate targeting of social, political, and economic infrastructure. All of this results in mass displacement. And women and children make up the majority of refugees and internally displaced people seeking to escape the violence of the conflict.³⁹ Women also have the added burden of having to maintain households, keep families together and care for the sick, the young, and the elderly.⁴⁰ Responsibilities they take on board in a context of a dismantled infrastructure and increased insecurity.

Women, for the most part are non-combatants. Despite the non-combatant immunity principle, they are far from 'protected' during times of war.⁴¹ Notwithstanding Carpenter's claim that the immunity frame has been distorted by a reliance on the proxy of 'women and children' for 'civilians' - which marginalizes men⁴² - Sjoberg maintains that although most women do not fight in wars, most women in war zones experience war in gendered ways (as described above).

Furthermore, pre-war gender arrangements and gendered divisions of labor increase women's vulnerability and insecurity during war and armed conflict. Women's unequal status in society prior to war '...leaves them vulnerable to a variety of socially, economically, and sexually exploitative relationships.'⁴³ I will return to this shortly when we consider forced prostitution in post-invasion/occupation Iraq.

In gender-neutral accounts of war, women are peripheral to war-making and war-fighting. In this narrative, war is regarded as a quintessentially masculine arena. Transnational feminism suggests that war is far more complex than this. According to Cohn '...if we want to understand the multiple relations of women to wars we need to always ask the question: what is the context within which war takes place, within which people fight, suffer, survive and recover?' Answering this question, she states, requires paying attention to the '...local histories and prewar gender relations' as well as the '...global processes...within which they are embedded.'⁴⁴ Taking on board this suggestion by Cohn, this article will now consider pre-war gender relations in Iraq, comparing them with the situation post-invasion/occupation. It will also consider the impact of global processes of capitalism, neoliberalism, and neocolonialism on glocal gender relations, specifically GBV and the illicit/informal economy.

Women, GBV in Iraq post the 2003 'humanitarian' intervention

Even under Saddam Hussein's regime of religious conservatism women still enjoyed certain freedoms. These included freedom of movement, access to education and employment opportunities.⁴⁵ This changed significantly following the US-led

invasion. Increases in violence, fear of rape and sexual violence, as well as military presence, have excluded women and girls from participating in public life and from attending school, going to work, and accessing health care or simply leaving their homes.⁴⁶ Professional women and female political activists have been killed and armed groups have attacked women's organizations and family-planning clinics.⁴⁷ It is important to remember that even before the 2003 war, the economic sanctions had a massive impact on the basic infrastructure of Iraq, leading to major social and economic strain for ordinary Iraqi families. Limited electricity, restricted access to healthcare, and a shortage of food and water make women's domestic responsibilities even more demanding and labor-intensive.⁴⁸ Ali-Ali lists '...child mortality, malnutrition, increased rates of cancer, epidemic diseases and birth defects as some of the most obvious 'side-effects' of the sanctions regime.' High unemployment and the breakdown of the economy have also had a huge impact on the day-to-day lives of Iraqi women.⁴⁹ In addition, the level of everyday violence in Iraq is worse now than during the period of formal military occupation. Despite the promises, freedom and democracy did not prevail following the 2003 invasion. Instead Iraq has been plagued by waves of violence as well as social, economic, and political chaos. Since 2003, there has been an increase in women's victimization of random 'street' violence, domestic violence, violence inflicted by militias/armed groups, targeted abuse or abduction, sexual abuse, and violence inflicted by the Multi-National Forces in Iraq (MNF), as well as rape and honor killings.⁵⁰

The United Nations Development Fund for Women estimates that since April 2003 at least 400 women and girls, some as young as eight years old, have been

raped during or after the war. They also noted that given the stigma attached to victims of rape, it is plausible that the real number is much higher than this. Increases in sexual violence against women account for the dramatic increase in honor killings since the invasion. Women who have been raped bear the shame of this act, which subsequently shames their family honor. These honor killings are used to simultaneously remove shame and restore family honor.⁵¹ The Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Ministry for Human Rights reported 166 honor killings during 2007 and 163 in 2008.⁵² The KRG passed the Family Violence Law in 2011, with the aim of criminalizing domestic violence and honor killings. However, officials have not enforced this law. Human Rights Watch (HRW hereafter), reports that a number of male family members have continued to attack and kill female relatives since the introduction of the law.

In addition to GBV on the street and in their homes, women have been subject to a number of violations within the Criminal Justice System. A recent report by HRW entitled 'No One is Safe: The Abuse of Women in Iraq's Criminal Justice System', has highlighted the deleterious conditions for women prisoners and detainees in Iraq. Poor conditions range from overcrowding, a lack of water, light, food, and fresh air, to being deprived of adequate access to health care and education. According to the report, women were beaten, tortured and sometimes sexually abused by security forces. Such tactics are used to intimidate or punish male family members suspected of terrorist activity. The report also found that many women were subject to illegal arrests as well other due process violations. These abuses take place at every stage of the criminal justice process, from arrest, to

interrogation, to trial and imprisonment. HRW argues that US practice in the form of UN Security Councils 1546, 1637, and 1723 - which authorized Coalition forces to detain indefinitely (without going to court) any persons considered a 'security risk' - provided a precedent for Iraqi security forces (this is in addition to the wider power granted by the Anti-Terrorism Law).⁵³

In her interview with Nicola Pratt, Susan Abbas attributes GBV against women in Iraq to a combination of the following: social attitudes, limited political will to address VAW, misinterpretations of religious scriptures, increases in poverty and unemployment, a weak legislative framework, and the lack of security in Iraq. To this we can add: gendered inequality, power imbalances between the sexes, and women's inferior status.

Abbas states:

The presence of the occupying international troops in Iraq has contributed to the increase in violence against women and girls, because the occupation has caused the collapse of state institutions, the disintegration of social control mechanisms, and the spread of extremist groups that target and use women. Extremist groups deliver their messages by targeting women, either by killing them or kidnapping them, or even threatening them, leading to forced migration.⁵⁴

A feminist analysis of informal economies in Iraq

To reiterate: a political economy approach looks at the relationship between GBV and the macro processes of political and economic power. When the formal

economy collapses, people are forced into illicit economies. '[A] key feature of illicit economies is the re-commodification of women and children as 'resources' to be trafficked and exploited.'⁵⁵

Informal economies in post-conflict situations consist of three types: coping, combat, and criminal.⁵⁶ To elaborate: coping economies are aimed at survival and the social reproduction of families/households. Strategies may include the selling of the following: organs for transplants, infants for adoption, children for sexual exploitation and slavery, and daughters for marriage. Combat economies are motivated by military objectives. They directly supply and fund fighters and insurgent activities. Finally, criminal economies are concerned with profit-making. They directly or indirectly supply and fund conflict activities. Coping strategies are gendered in the case of Iraq. As discussed above, decades of war have had devastating consequences on the economy of Iraq. Another effect of over three decades of war is the large number of widows and female-headed households in Iraq. This means that because women, exclusively, are expected to maintain households, they bear a disproportionate share of the burden.⁵⁷

Margaret Owen provides a sobering account of the plight and needs of conflict widows and wives of the disappeared in her article on 'Widowhood Issues in the Context of UN Security Resolution 1325.' Referring to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) 2001, she states: '[w]idowhood is one of the most neglected of all gender and human rights issues.'⁵⁸ It is estimated that there are between 1 million to 5 million widows and wives of the missing in Iraq.

Describing widowhood as a 'social death' - and despite the heterogeneity of this group - Owen argues that due to discriminatory practices in matters relating to inheritance, land, and property rights, these women are among the poorest of the poor. As a 'survival' strategy, children of widows are removed from school to help support the household. Daughters are more at risk of having their education revoked and are at a higher risk of underage marriage or trafficking.⁵⁹ This is corroborated by Abbas who argues that Iraqi widows, who find themselves in vulnerable financial positions, are forced into the informal/illicit economy where they are trafficked for the purpose of prostitution.⁶⁰ I will return to this shortly.

Returning to Peterson's claim that coping strategies are gendered, we can observe that, despite unemployment levels rising for both men and women in post-invasion Iraq, men are much more likely to resort to combat and criminal activities. Feminists have suggested that as a result of their perceived impotence and emasculation - caused by unemployment, an inability to provide and support their families, and the presence of foreign forces - men engage in aggressive behaviors. Both directly through physical violence, and indirectly, through engaging in combat and criminal economies.⁶¹ Involvement in the latter includes activities such as looting and/or kidnapping to make financial and political demands. Women are much more likely to engage in coping economies, involving informal activities which include, but are not limited to, forced prostitution. Following military intervention and the collapse of the formal economy in Iraq, women have been pushed into prostitution as a means of survival (coping economy).⁶² Or, they have been trafficked for sexual slavery by profit-seeking criminal networks that exploit the informal economy (criminal

economy). Recent human rights discourse on the subject of ‘forced’ prostitution has argued that ‘force’ does not necessarily involve coercion from a third party. It can also refer to a lack of alternative means to support oneself and family. Article 6 of the UN General Recommendation on VAW acknowledges that poverty and unemployment can force women and young girls into prostitution. Furthermore, understanding force/coercion as a condition of poverty and unemployment – a condition that disproportionately affects women and girls globally – means treating gender inequality as a form of force.⁶³

Official statistics are hard to come by and are methodologically problematic. Given those concerns, it is estimated that approximately 3,500 Iraqi women have gone missing since 2003. The likelihood is that many have been trafficked for the purposes of prostitution.⁶⁴ Iraq is the country of origin. Major destinations include Syria, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf countries.⁶⁵ In their report, ‘Prostitution and Trafficking of Women and Girls in Iraq’, the Organization of Women’s freedom in Iraq (OWFI) documented over 70 cases of trafficking and forced prostitution in 2008 (47 of those females were under the age of 18). They estimated that at least 200 women and girls are sold into sexual slavery each year. Using confidential documents, the report is based on a police investigation into a criminal ring responsible for trafficking 128 women from the province of Diyala in 2007.⁶⁶ Many of these women and girls, which include some as young as 12, are recent refugees who have either been tricked into prostitution as part of the criminal economy, or use it as a survival mechanism.⁶⁷ In addition, prostitution exposes women to sexual violence and abuse, disease and exposure to HIV/AIDS.⁶⁸

In an interview with Zoepf, Sister Marie-Claude Naddaf - a Syrian nun at the Good Shepherd convent in Damascus - states: '[s]o many of the Iraqi women arriving now are living on their own with their children because the men in their families were killed or kidnapped.' She continues: 'I met three sisters-in-law recently who were living together and all prostituting themselves. 'They would go out on alternate nights — each woman took her turn — and then divide the money to feed all the children.' Arranged and forced marriages are also used as a means for traffickers to transport women internally and internationally. In some cases the family are responsible for forcing the girl into marriage in order to alleviate dire economic circumstances.⁶⁹ Here we are reminded of Cohn's observation that women's unequal status/vulnerability leaves them open to sexually exploitative relationships. The activities of traffickers can be placed in Peterson's criminal economy. These are sophisticated and complex criminal networks. Younger girls, especially under the age of 16, are the most lucrative. Girls as young as 11 and 12, can be sold for as much as \$30,000, whilst older women are sold for as little as \$2,000.⁷⁰

Female victims of trafficking and those who engage in (forced) prostitution are subject to harsh and unfair treatment by the CJS, and many find themselves in prison. The Iraqi government prosecutes and convicts female victims for unlawful acts committed while they are being trafficked, for example, for using false documents and for engaging in prostitution. HRW accuses the Iraq government of doing little to tackle trafficking in girls and women. They state that there have been no criminal prosecutions of those engaged in human trafficking and negligible

support for victims. Furthermore, despite the implementation of counter-trafficking laws in 2012, enforcing this law has not been a priority for authorities.⁷¹

For Peterson prostitution is a '...reflection of how the coping, combat and criminal economies intersect.' He argues:

an upsurge in prostitution subjects increasing numbers of women and girls to adverse conditions that impede their role in social reproduction, while it simultaneously 'satisfies' male desires for access to women's bodies in the combat economy (occupying forces as well as Iraqis), and provides illicit profits for pimps and traffickers in the criminal economy.⁷²

Employing a transnational feminist/gendered lens allows us to appreciate that prostitution - either as a coping strategy or trafficking for the purposes of prostitution - is not a natural or necessary part of war. As argued earlier, it is linked to macro/structural exploitative economic systems.

Anglo-American masculinities of empire, postcolonialism and neoliberalism

Forced prostitution and the trafficking of women for sexual slavery is an example of GBV that is being perpetrated against women and girls in and out of Iraq. True argues that when trying to address global VAW many approaches fail to make connections between the effects of the financial crisis, macroeconomic policies and trade liberalization and the prevalence of GBV. What is missing then is a political economy approach that provides a thorough gendered analysis of the socioeconomic conditions that facilitate GBV. Attention needs to be paid to the links

between economic structural violence - operating at the meso and micro levels - and global economic processes, that operate at the macro level.

Jacobson argues that the neoliberal model has had a profound global impact in both the industrialized North and the developing South. Jacobson traces the implementation of this model to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. As a result of war, armed conflict, and the economic crises of the 1980s, national governments in developing regions borrowed from these two Western institutions. These loans were approved on condition that these countries adopted the neoliberal model.⁷³ In simple terms, neoliberalism involves transferring the control of the economy from the public to the private sector. The goal is to create a more efficient and effective government, while at the same time strengthening the economy of the nation. As Isenberg notes, military subcontracting and privatization are just some elements of neoliberalism.⁷⁴ In the context of Iraq, and under the leadership of the Bush administration, to paraphrase Looney:

Globalization, free markets, and reduced government involvement in the marketplace were regarded as the necessary components for rapid economic recovery in Iraq. For Iraqis, however, neoliberalism, particularly in its 'shock therapy' form, is just another example of an imprudent Western experiment imposed upon fragile state.⁷⁵

The key political justification for the imposition of this neoliberal regime was the argument that this was the only way to eradicate corruption from within Iraq's public sector.⁷⁶ Yet, neoliberal reform in Iraq has come under wide-ranging criticism

from both within and outside the country.⁷⁷ Herring and Rangwala, for example, argue that the Iraq economy is being reconstituted from above, below, and outside to represent a range of globalizing agendas. Furthermore, they argue that in order to understand how the Iraqi state is being reconstituted, we need to consider national, international and transnational currency/investments, institutions of global neoliberalism, and US empire-building. Put simply the Iraqi state, contrary to section 14 of UN Security Resolution 1483, has been locked into neoliberal economic model. This is a constituent element of imperial globalization. As such we can apply Connells' masculinities of empire, postcolonialism and neoliberalism.⁷⁸

Space will not permit an in-depth review of the various executive orders that were issued by the Coalition Provisional Army (CPA) with the aim of privatizing Iraq's economy and their potential breach of international law.⁷⁹ Suffice to say, in addition to the '...profound and perhaps irreversible *structural* consequences for the Iraqi economy', under Anglo-American occupation and the CPA's privatization agenda, '[n]ational and international laws were...subordinated to neoliberal principles of economic organization.'⁸⁰ In other words, this top-down socio-economic model endorsed by the CPA, involved the transferal of Iraqi oil revenue (from those at the bottom) into the hands of Western corporations/elites (those at the top).⁸¹

Using a transnational feminist lens, feminists have drawn attention to the economic and political dimensions of armed conflict.⁸² Indeed, as Duncanson points out, feminists are skeptical of Western military interventions that draw upon narratives of civilization and democracy to resolve violent conflicts in 'troubled

lands.’ This story precludes a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict in the first place. Jacobson argues that the neoliberal agenda - clearly a violation of UN Security Resolution 1483, specifically the section concerning the development fund for Iraq - has gendered impacts. Speaking specifically about the gendered impact on war-shattered economies, neoliberalism involves ‘shrinking the state’ which leads to cuts in welfare and public spending. This monetary reduction, Jacobson argues, impacts in precisely the areas that could be most enabling and empowering for women and girls affected by conflict. Macro-structural processes – in this instance, neoliberal economic restructuring – leads to socio-economic inequality (at the local level) that forces women into the illicit economy and into prostitution as a coping/survival strategy. Applying this thinking to Iraq and the GBV being perpetrated against women and girls, in diverse ways, we arrive at a similar conclusion to Peterson: practices of gendered violence interact with infrastructural crises with devastating consequences for women and children.⁸³

Achieving peace in post-conflict situations

Kamp argues that empowerment policies alone cannot secure women’s rights. What is needed is the rebuilding of civil society in a way that addresses the impact of war and civil conflict on women. Peace for women does not mean the cessation of armed conflict. As we have seen in the context of Iraq, women’s security needs are not necessarily met in ‘post-conflict’ situations, as GBV still remains rampant in reconstruction periods. Peace is about improving women’s position on a structural level and addressing macro structural economic processes that are linked to GBV. It is suggested that women are less vulnerable to GBV – both interpersonal and

structural GBV - if they have full access to socio-economic (full-time professional employment), sociopolitical (land and property rights), and social (education, welfare, healthcare, and social security) structures and institutions.⁸⁴ Securing these basic, yet fundamental, entitlements for Iraqi women is the key to reducing GBV that is being perpetrated against them.

Historically postwar negotiations have been masculinized affairs and women have been marginalized from formal peace processes.⁸⁵ UN Resolution 1325 was passed in October 2000. The goal was the inclusion of women and the mainstreaming of gender into all peace and post-conflict operations. However, Ali-Ali argues that in reality this has not happened and, if the resolution is acknowledged at all, it has simply resulted in adding a few women into governments and ministries. For all its rhetoric around 'gender mainstreaming', UN Security Resolution 1325 fails to address the causes of war and occupation.

Ethics, colonialism and globalization masculinities: unpacking the US-led empire-building agenda in Iraq

Referring to Western governments Riley asks: '[h]as their mission been a colonial one?' Did it result in 'the Westernization of...Iraq? Or has their goal been to continue to maintain the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' boundaries that are necessary for transnational sexism?'⁸⁶ Similarly, Duncanson examines how British soldiers construct their identities in relation to ordinary Iraqis. She asks: to what extent are British soldiers re-enacting and reinforcing hierarchical relations? To what extent are they 'doing Empire'? Conversely, to what extent do they challenge Self/Other

dichotomies and could be seen as 'undoing Empire.'⁸⁷ For Kamp both historically (when British colonialism informed the constitutional process in Iraq) and more recently (as a result of direct US involvement in the drafting the 'new' constitution of Iraq), Western interventions have invoked a 'colonial contract.'⁸⁸ Indeed military interventions such as these, which are based on aggressive masculinities - masculinities of empire, postcolonialism and neoliberalism - do not address the root causes of conflict, which are often related to empire-building, colonialism, and the current global political economy.⁸⁹ While this may be the overarching narrative, Duncanson, based on the individual narratives of soldiers, firmly believes that soldiers do depart from neocolonial radical Othering of Iraqis. It is important to acknowledge that Duncanson is not suggesting that the intervention has been successful in bringing peace and security to the people of Iraq. Rather, Duncanson's argument is that we must avoid arriving at '...the conclusion that soldiers can *never* be forces for good.'⁹⁰

The challenge ahead, as identified by Duncanson, is to '...identify ways that military interventions can serve genuine security, rather than reinforce imperial structures.'⁹¹ In a similar vein, Caprioli and Douglas ask whether military interventions can benefit women? Speaking specifically about Iraq, Ali-Ali and Pratt posit that the invasion and occupation of Iraq has not, for the most part, been positive in terms of empowering women and ensuring their rights. At best, they argue, the interventions in Iraq were irrelevant to improving women's lives. At their most dangerous, they believe that these transnational interventions empower individuals and structures that undermine and threaten women's rights. In the run

up to the war in Iraq, as part of its narrative of humanitarian intervention (the liberation of Iraqi women from Saddam Hussein), the US established relationships and provided financial support to Iraqi diaspora, promising the participation of women in the 'new Iraqi' constitution. However, as has been argued throughout, reforming gender relations was not the intention of Bush administration. The objective in Iraq was strategic: to enhance US national security by taking control of Iraq's political and economic structures. To fulfill their goal they accommodated and supported certain Iraqi political actors who sought to restructure gender relations in a way that had negative consequences for women's socio-economic and socio-political status. Added to this, Ali-Ali argues that the return of diaspora and their disproportionate role in the new Iraqi government - supported by the US - has been received with anger and hostility. In an attempt to take leadership of women's issues and women's organizations, they have been regarded as patronizing or, worst still, as representing Western interests.

In Iraq Ali-Ali and Pratt argue that the invasion and occupation has simply weakened the authority of the state and has promoted and strengthened the authority of ethnic/sectarian leaders. It has led to an informalization of the economy, leading to an increase in domestic and political gendered inequality. As demonstrated in this article, the privatization of the economy in Iraq has had a detrimental affect on women, particularly widows and female-headed households, where women and girls have been forced into prostitution as a survival mechanism. Or, they have been trafficked for sexual slavery by profit-seeking criminal networks that exploit the informal economy in post-invasion/occupation Iraq.

Moving forward we need to listen to the voices of Iraqi women themselves. More attention needs to be paid to the material reality of their lives. Campbell and Kelly do just that in their work using the blogs of young women writing about life in a post-Saddam, post-invasion Iraq. The blogs of HNK and Aunt Najma provide accounts of what it is like to grow up female in post-invasion Iraq. It has been well established that the rescue narrative used by the US was an erroneous claim: this article has shed light on the fact that since the invasion many Iraqi women have been forced to give up their jobs and their education, they have been forced to stay in their homes for fear of rape, sexual violence, and abduction or, conversely, they have been forced into the illicit sex trade market. The bloggers that Campbell and Kelly have followed – HNK, Aunt Najma, Riverbend, Neurotic Iraqi Wife and Faiza – all ‘...claim that life in post-invasion Iraq has little to do with ‘democracy’ ‘freedom’ or ‘liberation.’⁹²

Conclusion

A feminist ethics of war involves more than abstracting human suffering in war, it seeks accountability for the impact (immediate and long-term) of the war-fighting. ‘It...pays attention to the impacts of strategic and tactical decision-making on ‘real’ people’s lives particularly at the margins of global politics.’⁹³ In other words, it pays attention to the GBV (both interpersonal and structural/institutional violence) suffered in the aftermath of war. In the context of Iraq, a feminist ethics of war includes a recognition of the following: the impact of the neoliberal/privatization agenda on the state’s poorest citizens (resulting in informal coping, combat, and

criminal economies); the effects on family structure, for example, widowhood, reactive gender conservatism, and a general lack of security which results in GBV. Interpersonal and structural GBV in Iraq includes: domestic violence, abduction, honor killings, rape, trafficking, and forced prostitution. Using a transnational feminist lens, and adopting a narrative of glocalization, this article has provided a critique of masculinities of empire, postcolonialism, and neoliberalism. It has demonstrated that advocating for the most vulnerable and marginalized women involves negotiating local, national, global, and historical planes. It also involves listening to the voices of women on the ground.

Whyte is unequivocal in his analysis: economic war crimes were committed by the West in their pursuit of a '[neoliberal] colonial order' in Iraq.⁹⁴ In making feminist sense of this neoliberal colonial order, this article, using the example of forced prostitution (GBV), has highlighted the gendered impact of the war in Iraq on the lives of civilian women.

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Notes

1. Pratt, "Iraqi Women and UNSCR 1325," 613.
2. This is not to suggest that GBV did not occur in Iraq before the war. As we know, GBV is a cause and consequence of gender inequality and discrimination that is exacerbated by contexts of war and conflict. See United Nations General Assembly. A/HRC/17/26, *Report of the Special Rapporteur*, 4.
3. Human Rights Watch, "No One is Safe," 16-17; and UN Development Fund for women, *Gender Profile of the Conflict in Iraq*.
4. This dates back to the attack on Iran in 1980, the invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990, followed by the coalition military response in 1991, and the subsequent economic sanctions endorsed by the Security Council. See Kamp, "Fragmented Citizenship," 197.
5. Human Rights Watch, "No One is Safe," 17.
6. Human Rights Watch, "Climate of Fear," 1; Human Rights Watch, "At a crossroads," 8; Human Rights Watch, "No One is Safe," 17; Human Rights Watch, "World Report Iraq"; and Oxfam International, "In Her Own Words." At the time of writing, and with the distribution of the Internet videos depicting the killings of James Foley and Steven Sotloff, ISIS have come to global prominence. However, this article focuses on the period up to, and including, the formal withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.
7. United Nations S/RES/ 1483, 2003, 4.
8. Whyte, "The Crimes of Neo-Liberal Rule," 189.

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9. Kapur, "Un-Veiling Women's Rights"; Lobasz, "The Woman in Peril"; Nayak, "Orientalism and 'Saving' US State Identity"; Riley, *Depicting the Veil*; Steans, "Telling Stories about Women"; and Youngs, "Feminist International Relations."
 10. Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War*; Sjoberg, *Gender, Justice and the Wars in Iraq*; and Sjoberg, "Gendered Realities of the Immunity Principle."
 11. Caldwell, *Fallgirls*; Richter-Montpetit, "Empire, Desire and Violence"; Sjoberg, "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others"; Sjoberg and Gentry, "Reduced to Bad Sex"; and Struckman, "The Articulation of Lynndie England."
 12. Duncanson, *Forces for Good?*; Herring and Rangwala, "Iraq, Imperialism and Global Governance"; Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies"; and Raven-Roberts, "Women and the Political Economy."
 13. See Lee-Koo, "Gender-based Violence."
 14. Whyte, "The Crimes of Neo-Liberal Rule," 177.
 15. Kramer and Michalowski, "Empire and Exceptionalism," 104.
 16. Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*, 42-3.
 17. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*.
 18. Ali-Ali and Pratt, "Introduction," 12.
 19. Connell 1998, 2005 cited by Hearn, "Men/Masculinities," 41.
 20. Enloe 1990, 196 cited by Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*, 164.
 21. Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal," 23.
 22. Howe, "Violence against Women," 38.
 23. Mohanty 2002, 509-10 cited by Howe, "Violence against Women," 46.
 24. Ali-Ali and Pratt, "Introduction," 6; and Cohn, "Women and Wars," 2.
 25. Banwell, "Rape and Sexual Violence," 46-7.
 26. True, *The Political Economy of Violence*, 8-9.
 27. See United Nations General Assembly. A/RES/48/104, *Declaration of the Elimination*, Article 1.
 28. United Nations General Assembly. A/HRC/17/26, *Report of the Special Rapporteur*, 8-9.
 29. Kramer and Michalowski, "Empire and Exceptionalism," 106.
 30. Ibid.
 31. Spivak 1998, 93 cited by Ali-Ali and Pratt, "The United States," 69.
 32. Ali-Ali and Pratt, "The United States," 69. See also Nayak, "Orientalism and 'Saving' US"; and Richter-Montpetit, "Empire, Desire and Violence."
 33. Caprioli and Douglas, "Nation Building and Women," 51.
 34. Riley, *Depicting the Veil*, 51.
 35. Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal," 29.
 36. Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*, 3.
 37. Ali-Ali and Pratt, "Introduction," 2.
 38. Ali-Ali and Pratt, "Introduction," 12; Cohn, "Women and Wars," 1; Duncanson, *Forces for Good?* 5; Hearn, "Men/masculinities," 37; Sjoberg, *Gender Justice and the Wars*, 87; and Sjoberg, "Gendered Realities," 895-6.
 39. Ali-Ali and Pratt, "Introduction," 12; and Sjoberg, "Gendered Realities," 901.
 40. Ibid.
 41. See Sjoberg "Gendered Realities."
 42. Carpenter, "Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups," 303.

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43. Cohn "Women and Wars," 8.
 44. Ibid, 27.
 45. Ali-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 743.
 46. Human Rights Watch, "Climate of Fear," 1. See also United Nations Development Fund for Women, *Gender Profile of the Conflict in Iraq*.
 47. Lee-Koo, "Gender-based Violence," 1626; and Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies," 51.
 48. Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies, 48."
 49. Ali-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender", 744.
 50. Human Rights Watch, "Climate of Fear," 1; Lee-Koo, "Gender-based Violence," 1622; and Oxfam International, "In Her Own Words," 5.
 51. Lee-Koo, "Gender-based Violence," 1628.
 52. United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq 2008, 13.
 53. Human Rights Watch, "No One is Safe," 14.
 54. Pratt, "Iraqi Women and UN SCR 1325," 614.
 55. Raven-Roberts, "Women and the Political Economy," 45.
 56. Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies," 42-3.
 57. Ibid.
 58. Owen, "Widowhood Issues," 616.
 59. Ibid, 618-619.
 60. See Pratt, "Iraqi women and UN SCR 1325," 614.
 61. Lee-Koo, "Gender-based Violence," 1629; and Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies," 43. See also True, *The Political Economy*, 46. True talks about disaster masculinities in the context of Katrina.
 62. See Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War*, 38; Dakkak, "Tackling Sexual Violence"; Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, "Prostitution and Trafficking of Women and Girls"; Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies," 42-3, 50; Riley *Depicting the Veil*, 72-3; Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*, 256; United Nations Development Fund for Women, "Gender Profile of the Conflict," 12; and Zoepf, "Desperate Iraqi Refugees."
 63. See End Violence against Women, *Submission to Amnesty International's Global Policy*.
 64. Dakkak, "Tackling Sexual Violence."
 65. Human Rights Watch, "At a Crossroads," 11.
 66. Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, "Prostitution and Trafficking of Women and Girls," 3, 10.
 67. Zoepf, "Desperate Iraqi Refugees."
 68. Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*, 256.
 69. See Human Rights Watch, "At a Crossroads," 12; and United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons*.
 70. Human Rights Watch, "At a Crossroads," 12.
 71. Ibid, 16.
 72. Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies," 56.
 73. Jacobson, "Women 'After' Wars," 228.
 74. Isenberg, "The Neoliberal Wars."
 75. Looney, "Neoliberalism in a Conflict," 1.

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76. Whyte, "The Crimes of Neo-Liberal Rule," 180.
77. Looney, "Neoliberalism in a Conflict," 5. See also Duncanson, *Forces for Good?*
78. Ibid.
79. See Whyte, "The Crimes of Neo-Liberal Rule."
80. Ibid, 182 and 186. (Emphasis in the original).
81. Duncanson, *Forces for Good?* 28-9.
82. See True, *The Political Economy*; and Raven-Roberts, "Women and the Political Economy."
83. Peterson, "Gendering Informal Economies," 48. Peterson uses the examples of domestic violence and unwanted pregnancies, to which I would add honor killings, kidnapping, trafficking and forced prostitution, in addition to the other GBV discussed in this piece. In relation to infrastructural crises he uses the examples of unsafe drinking water and epidemic diseases. I would add all the other social and health related disasters that have affected Iraqis since the 2003 war.
84. True, *The Political Economy*, 184.
85. Ali Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 742; and Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's*, 214.
86. Riley, *Depicting the Veil*, 148.
87. Duncanson, *Forces for Good?* 102.
88. Kamp, "Fragmented Citizenship," 207.
89. Raven-Roberts, "Women and the Political Economy," 40-2; and True, *The Political Economy*, 7-8. See also Duncanson, *Forces for Good?*
90. Duncanson, *Forces for Good?* 163. (Emphasis in the original).
91. Ibid, 164.
92. Campbell and Kelly, "In/between Feminism and Foucault," 186.
93. Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*, 298.
94. Whyte, "The Crimes of Neo-Liberal Rule," 191.

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