Sociological Work on Violence: Gender, Theory and Research

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Abstract

The suffering caused by violence is senseless, persistent and demoralizing (Gordimer, 2003). For perpetrators there is the hollowness of holding power over others, a power that illustrates the fragility of their situation (Card, 2002; Mason, 2002). Yet despite the obvious relevance to sociology, violence in everyday and intimate practices has not been a central concern for sociological theory (Hearn, 1998; Ray, 2000). This may reflect the 'taken for grantedness of violence', the hierarchical and gendered nature of sociological work, especially on theory, combined with an earlier marginalization of gender, ethnicity and age. In this paper I draw upon the work of Midgley (2003) and her definition of 'myths' to offer an over-arching analysis of the images and ideas that surround and imbue sociological work on violence. Highlighting the barriers evident in, and recreated through, the sociological analysis of violence, the paper explores the challenges for sociology. A review of the tendency to atomistic approaches in sociological analysis and explanation reaffirms the need for theoretical pluralism in social sciences on the topic of violence (Eagleton, 2003).

Keywords: Violence, Violation, Gender, Social Theory, Myths

Introduction

> No one engaged in thought about history and politics can remain unaware of the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs, and it is at first glance rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration.... (Arendt, 1970: 8)

1.1 Human beings are capable of doing serious harm to strangers. They may also act in harmful ways to those they know. Harm can take a number of forms and include physical, psychological, economic and social acts that may be defined as constituting violations or violence (Hearn, 1998; Stanko et al., 2002). These are acts of oppression. The implications of these acts might be described as 'the senseless, persistent suffering and demoralisation of violence that is the inhuman condition' (Gordimer, 2003: 7). Thankfully, few of us residing in post-industrial societies will be involved in conflicts such as war or terrorism. However, there are a range of ways in which we can experience violence or the threat of it. Families, organisations, and public spaces, provide a range of contexts in which we might anticipate, or actually experience, violence. Violence pervades numerous dimensions of culture and media, and thus most aspects of our everyday lives (Mason, 2002; Jewkes, 2004; Kitzinger, 2004). However, current foci in research, politics and media on the 'war on terror', and physical violence in public spaces diverts attention from the more prevalent, everyday, experiences of violence in families, relationships and organisations.

1.2 Given the persistence of violence in, and between societies, a range of sociological work addresses empirical and theoretical dimensions of this major social problem (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Giddens, 1996, Kelly et al, 1996; Hearn and Parkin, 2001; Mason, 2002). Underlying much of this work are long standing theoretical debates in sociology on social practices, social cohesion, state responses, and the interaction of groups within differing, and sometimes competing, social, cultural and economic structures (Durkheim, 1976; Habermas, 1987; Byrne, 2000). The topic of violence is one on which sociology can, and does, promote dialogues beyond the academy. Studies have informed debates, policies, and practice developments, on topics such as domestic violence (Hearn, 1998; Stanko, et al., 2002, Scottish Executive, 2003; Walby and Allen, 2004), civil unrest, religion and memory (Ray, 2000; Brewer, 2003; Misztal 2003; Ray, 2000) and war, conflict and denial (Giddens, 1996; Cohen, 2001). Yet there is a patterning in sociological work on violence. The study of violence in intimate relationships and families tends to be located in the arena of gender and women's studies with attendant conferences, journals and networks. By

contrast, sociological work on war and civil unrest resides in what might be termed mainstream work with theorising on states, institutions and international relations, again within specific networks and outlets for work. While the former is notable for feminist and pro feminist perspectives, the latter draws upon classic and contemporary work that tends to consider the inter-play of social structures, social cohesion and institutions at a macro level. The prevalence of violence in everyday lives, and the gendered experience of much violence, remains an absent presence in what might be described as main or male stream work.

1.3 The location of sociological work on violence reflects gendered divisions and hierarchies in the academy and society more generally. These were described by Smart (2005: 1048), in a review of contemporary sociological and social policy work on families, as leading to 'those of the feminine persuasion … doing the equivalent of the essential, but hardly visible small scale housework.' It is my contention that sociological work on violence similarly reflects boundaries and hierarchies and, further, that these inhibit the potential for sociology to inform research, policy and practice.

1.4 In the following sections definitions, and the recording of violence and violations, are discussed. Midgley's (2003) notion of myths is then introduced. This is drawn upon to explore patterns of ideas on violence and in sociological work. Subsequent sections address, respectively, sociological work on violence in mainstream sociological theories, and gender and women's studies. In the concluding comments the potential to draw across the varied arenas of sociology to create a theoretical pluralism is considered (Eagleton, 2003).

Definitions

2.1 Violence may be defined from a number of standpoints; that of the violated, the violator, those dealing with the consequences of violence, and those who observe violence (Hearn, 1998). These perspectives may overlap as well as compete. The prominence given to any one perspective (or definition) reflects the shifting nature of power and oppression. Violence arises from a complex interaction of political, social, cultural and economic factors. Definitions and terms provide parameters to discourses and debates as to what may, or may not, be considered or highlighted in policy work. Violence may be evident in individual and social relationships, and the myriad ways in which people and relationships are embedded in communities through, for example, neighbourhoods, schools, shops, health centres and places of employment. Further, governments, judiciary and military systems, international organisations, and groups seeking to achieve specific ends through civil unrest, also illuminate the varied and multi-faceted ways in which violence and violations may be experienced.

2.2 Violence is often equated with physical force that leaves some obvious mark or injury on the person. Here the emphasis is upon the corporeal experience of violence. In families, relationships, communities and societies, there can be varied and sometimes competing ideas about acceptable forms of physical violence. For example, domestic violence may be tolerated in certain religious and cultural contexts where men are considered dominant and socially sanctioned, if not legally so, to resort to the use of violence in relationships. In societies that are working to achieve gender equality, taboos and stigma continue to surround domestic violence, resulting in women expressing feelings of guilt and shame, hiding injuries, and feeling reticent about disclosing abuse to others. Further, recent debates on so called rendition flights, and the use of torture to gain information on possible terrorist activities, highlights how governments and agencies may place the security of the state beyond individual human rights[1]. Yet tolerance of domestic violence, or violence in interrogation, is consistently challenged by non-governmental organisations, individuals and from within governments and the judiciary. And an increasing number of organisations and agencies are developing strategic interventions across a range of services to prevent and manage the consequences of violence and conflict (see for example, Scottish Executive, 2003; World Health Organization, 2002). In noting these various perspectives on defining, and addressing, violence it is clear that this is a complex and multi-layered arena in which personal stances can contradict governmental and organisational policies and practices, and vice versa.

2.3 While there is a growth in work to eradicate violence and promote conflict resolution much of this concentrates on the consequences of physical forms of violence. These remain easier to identify and achieve a greater social and legal sanction than, for example, a husband restricting his wife's access to financial resources, or harassment and bullying in the workplace. While a focus upon physical forms of violence is necessary to ensure the immediate safety and security of victims, this diverts attention from acts of harassment, bullying, and social and economic control. Self-esteem and well-being are undermined in a range of ways and this can lead to psychological and physical harm, including self-harm. Definitions of violence, therefore, need to encompass an array of behaviours and actions, between individuals, groups and institutions that result in oppressive behaviours and outcomes. Thus violence may also be considered as violation, a broader concept that allows for the study of the societal and organisational process and behaviours that are oppressive and damaging (Hearn and Parkin, 2001; Besteman, 2002). Structures,

actions, events and experiences may violate or be considered as violating. For example, relationships based upon disparities in power and resources, intimidation in organisations, surveillance by police or governments, discrimination and socio-economic exclusion of low income women with children; there are all experiences that can lead to negative impacts on physical and psychological health and well-being.

Recording Violence and Violations

3.1 Sources of data on violence include mortality and morbidity statistics, self-reported incidents and experiences, studies of communities and neighbourhoods, crime statistics, economic data, and governmental and organisational records on law, institutions and their practices and services. Defining acts of violence and violation remains problematic. Recording is restricted by the ways in which various organisations define and categorise forms of violence, with some violations receiving limited attention, for example, stalking (Walby and Allen, 2004). Non-governmental transnational organisations, such as Amnesty International, chart trends in violations and violence by governments, organisations, and individuals that are considered to constitute human rights abuses. As an organisation it works with categories agreed by its governing body. These categories draw upon the work of supranational institutions, such as the United Nations, and are combined with specific organisational concerns about human right abuses. In the case of domestic violence there is no agreed definition across the nations of the United Kingdom. And within nations, agencies and services have slightly differing ways of recording and categorising domestic violence. Scotland, offers one example, where the government adopted the word abuse rather than violence, domestic abuse, to better capture both psychological and physical dimensions of violence among adults known to each other (Scottish Executive, 2003). The collation of statistics on murder and violent crime is also open to challenge and change as these are based upon constantly shifting, and politically sensitive, debates and definitions. Further, studies suggest that violence is under-reported, especially sexual violence, and violence among people known to each other through familial or intimate relationships (World Health Organization, 2002). A range of taboos and social sanctions limit reporting, particularly for those that adhere to particular codes or cultures or those who are in socially and economically vulnerable situations. The majority of violence and violations are non-fatal and result in physical, mental health and reproductive injuries, sexually transmitted diseases and a range of social and economic problems. Longer-term impact can include permanent physical or mental disability and social exclusion (for example, civil unrest and war may result in refugee status for many, while the experience of domestic violence can lead to seeking safety in a women's aid refuge).

3.2 Hynes (2004) notes 9 out of 10 people who die from the direct or indirect consequences of war are civilians. While bombs and weapons may kill and maim civilian men and women in equal numbers other aspects of war, and its aftermath, affect women and girls disproportionately; for example, rape, trafficking, landmines, displacement, widowhood, and attendant socio-economic and health problems. In global terms the rate of violent related death in low to middle income countries, as a whole, is more than twice that in high income counties. Figures on violent deaths also differ between regions and within countries (World Health Organization, 2002). And lest these trends present a picture of relatively safe and secure post-industrial societies, it is estimated that 1 in 4 women in the UK experience domestic violence at some point in their adult life (Stanko et al., 2002; Scottish Executive, 2003).

3.3 Although strangers and acquaintances are responsible for the majority of crimes and assaults against men, especially men aged under 30, women and children are more likely to be beaten, stalked, raped or killed by intimate relatives or partners than any other type of assailant (World Health Organization, 2002). The weight of evidence demonstrates that men predominate across the spectrum of violence as perpetrators. Global trends follow patterns illuminated in, for example, the US and Australia where 90% of those arrested for murder and manslaughter are male, and rape is overwhelming by men on women. And the majority of military forces are male. Not all men are violent and as Bob Connell (2002: 215) points out: 'though most killers are men, most men never kill or even commit assault' and this is the case both within and outside the context of the family. So not all men are violent but violence appears to be an accepted part of the male repertoire that on occasions, such as war, is actually promoted and sanctioned by the state. Further, the emphasis in many dimensions of the media and public on 'stranger danger' ignores evidence on the everyday experiences of women and children in violent intimate relationships. This also furthers ideas that men who perpetrate acts of violence are unknown to the victim, and are in some obvious way physically different from the 'ordinary family' man (Collier, 1995).

3.4 In the case of violations the picture is not so clear given that most organisations and agencies do not collect relevant data. One area where data are collected is in work organisations, partially due to the economic consequences of violations. The UK Health & Safety Executive, estimates the costs of bullying to employers is the equivalent of around 80 million working days and up to £2 billion in lost revenue, in 2003. Violations in the workplace also result in poor morale and productivity and higher staff turnover. The 2002/2003 the British Crime Survey estimated about 850,000 incidents of violence at work, with over half of

these assaults. Homicide is the second most common cause of death in US workplaces. There are, however, larger issues still. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 1.1 million people, including 12,000 children, are killed at work every year. The figures are especially high in developing countries, where the death rate in the construction industry is more than 10 times that in industrialised countries. The ILO estimates that 160 million people develop occupational diseases and 250 million suffer workplace injuries every year. In all of these violations existing gender inequities in work and organisations add to the on-going oppression of women and girls (Hearn and Parkin, 2001; Ishmael and Bunmi, 2003).

Myths

4.1 Many interpretations of experiences, and ideas about, violence (or sociology) might be explored through the notion of myths (Midgley, 2003: 1):

> Myths are not lies. Nor are they detached stories. They are imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. They shape its meaning.

4.2 Myths about violence, for example, can be powerful, not least that violence is most readily associated with particular contexts such as war, civil unrest, or physical attacks in public spaces. Many aspects of culture and media promote these ideas through a range of discourses and actions, for example, peace negotiations involving supranational organisations and campaigning groups. Consideration of global forms of conflict, and civil wars, for example, Sudan, is imperative and yet this can create a smokescreen to everyday experiences of violations in for example, refugee camps, work places and families. Most of us grow up in families, and spend much of our lives in these and workplace, relationships. These can be among the most intimate and supportive relationships we encounter over our lifetime. Yet violence in families may be taken less seriously given the powerful myths of the home as a safe and secure place. The 'home' and our 'lifestyles' have become strong purveyors of personal and group identities as well as a focus for the growth in the consumption of an array of goods and services. The thought of the 'home' and families, as threatening and violent contexts can seem an anathema and present particular challenges to researchers and policy-makers.

4.3 In dissecting the notion of myths, Midgley (2003: 4) asserts that 'patterns of thought that are really useful in one age can make serious trouble in the next one'. In the case of violence, contemporary ideas and practices evolve across a spectrum of experiences from outright war, to neighbourhood experiences of crime, to individual experiences of threats and intimidation at work or in the home. An absence of war is considered synonymous with peace and security. Given the prevalence of violence in everyday social practices is the attainment of peace at worst a myth, or at best a smokescreen? Clearly for some this is the case; take for example violence against women in refugee camps or the continued use of torture in interrogations. Conflict resolution, like mainstream sociological theory, is dominated by concerns about governmental conflicts, civil unrest and wars. The relationship between the everyday experiences of violence, and structural forms of societies, seem to have drifted apart. Aspects of sociological work on violence can be divorced from the everyday experience of those who grapple with conflicts, in and outside, the home and workplace. Sociology, as a discipline, is imbued with myths, not least of which is that theory and research may be best pursued among sub-disciplines that are bounded by particular perspectives on theories, networking and dissemination.

4.4 Social scientists have subjective experiences of families, gender, and violence, as do all human beings. For many sociologists the search for a sense of credibility for their work has encouraged a distancing from everyday and personal experiences. Yet there has been a notable growth in sociological work on over-arching themes that include social solidarities (Crow, 2002), social exclusion (Byrne, 2000) and citizenship (Delanty, 2000). Under the umbrella of these themes analysis has spanned across structures, institutions, and everyday socio-economic and political practices.

4.5 Sociology is by no means immune to the on-going workings of gender and hierarchy, and resultant divisions in terms of topics of study, status of work and positioning of themes and people in the academy (Cohen, 2001; Eagleton, 2003; Midgley, 2003). Work on gender and relationships is dominated by women; 'those of the feminine persuasion' (Smart, 2005: 1048) and in the context of a sub-discipline, gender and women's studies, work on violence and violations in families and relationships has burgeoned. Given divisions and boundaries within sociology it might not be so surprising to find the topic of violence addressed in partial ways leading to parallel universes of main or male stream work on wars, conflicts and terror, and gender and women's studies focused upon violence in families and relationships. To explore these assertions the following two sections outline, respectively, a selection of mainstream theories, and feminist and pro-feminist studies.

Mainstream Theories: An absence of Violence in the Lived Experience?

5.1 Ray (2000: 145) asserts that while 'violence is a persistent feature of social life … (with a few exceptions) it has not been central to sociological concerns.' Sociology, Ray (ibid) continues, has tended to focus upon social cohesion and consensus with the study of violence considered 'as a residual category of power.' What might be termed 'classic' sociological theories tackled issues around the development of legitimate forms of social control, consensus and cohesion (Durkheim, 1976) or sources of division, exclusion and conflict (Marx, 1970). Theories that might be broadly premised upon the exploration of conflict are drawn from the study of the distinctive nature of the social in human life. For example, Hegel's assertion that man produces himself (sic) through thought, may seem somewhat naïve given the complexities of the social and economic forces we now engage with, but this idea gave prominence to the individual and her/his engagement with their social world (Hegel, 1953). For Marx, Hegelian ideas offered a framework for tenets of his theories, namely that the need to engage with capitalism through labour markets produces the person (Marx, 1970). Marxist approaches to social order have devoted a lot of time to the concepts of ideology and class relations (Ray, 2000). However, Marx did not theorise violence per se and perhaps this results from what may have seemed the distance between the potential for consciousness and the realisation of revolution. Again, in studies from a Marxist perspective, the recourse to revolution, hard to realise without conflict and violence, remains relatively under theorised (Besteman, 2002). Thus when violence is addressed this generally reflects interests in the wider workings of authority and power (Arendt, 1970).

5.2 The work of Weber (2002) is indicative of aspects of classical sociology on the topic of the state, and state sanctioned, conflicts. Weber (2002: 13, emphasis in original) defines the state as a 'human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory*'. He asserted that the state is the only social institution that can claim legitimacy to engage in violence in national and international law (Besteman, 2002: 3). For a given social order to persist for any length of time, Weber argues, it would need to be based on non-violent forms of domination that are considered normative and legitimate forms as they operate through the state. In contrast Arendt (1970: 56) argues that violence is never legitimate and for her violence is not about the operation of legitimate forms of power but the destruction of power:

> Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance.

5.3 C. Wright Mills (1959: 171) adds to the study of authority and social order through his assertion that 'all politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence.' By contrast theories on consensus and solidarity emphasise norms and values as basic tenets of social life and cooperation. Early origins of these theories are embodied in the work of Durkheim (1976) who suggested that organic solidarity would emerge largely through individuated means of the sacred embodied in, for example, human rights.

5.4 The work of Giddens (1996) and Habermas (1984; 1987) offer possibilities for theoretical development on conflict and consensus more generally. In his work on social theory Giddens (1996) devoted some time and effort to a consideration of violence in his book *The Nation State and Violence*. However, he paid limited attention to violence in families, focusing instead on military power and the 'monopoly of violence' in the nation-state. In his theory of structuration, Giddens, sought to explain the dynamic relationship between the person and society; the fluid relationships between structures and the agency of individuals, groups and organisations. Habermas (1984; 1987) proposed the 'lifeworld' as a conceptual frame to define and explore the 'symbolic space' within which culture, social integration and personality are sustained and reproduced. In the context of the lifeworld shared ideas and values begin to inform relationships and cultures. The private workings of families and relationships (the lifeworld) are critical to the (re)production of a committed labour force while in public spheres the state establishes economic institutions and legal systems. Drawing across the work of Habermas and Giddens there are a range of ideas and theories (for example, structuration and the lifeworld) that offer opportunities for the study violence and violations as it evolves and occurs in everyday life.

Bringing Gender and the Everyday onto the Sociological Stage

6.1 Feminist theories and research have been at the forefront of questioning established methods of research, in particular the relationship between the researcher and researched, and the ethical implications of research (Letherby, 2003: 144). Women's and gender studies, including the study of masculinities, have also broken down some disciplinary boundaries to create the potential for alternative paradigms on families, family life, and violence.

6.2 The arrival of feminist and gender theories presented challenges to the analysis of social practices, social worlds and social change, and thus, many mainstream sociological theories. In considering violence

in families, feminist and pro-feminist work has argued that mainstream theories, and some family violence researchers, have downplayed the influence of gender, power and the dominance of heterosexuality in families; in summary the workings of patriarchy (Walby, 1990; Mason, 2002; Stanko et al., 2002; Marshall and Witz, 2004). Given differentials in employment, care and domestic labour, leisure, and income that favour men, especially men in heterosexual partnerships, equality among women and men remains elusive. Power is not gender neutral, and to argue so is to ignore the global patterns and working of patriarchy. Further, what has been termed the recent 'backlash' against the on-going progress of feminism and equality among the sexes has provoked keener debates on the role of nuclear families, parents and women (Fauldi, 1991; Smart, 2005). Debates belie realities but today most households require two wages for economic survival, and strategies and resources to ensure adequate care for dependents. Choices about roles become uneasy and exhausting compromises. Women continue to have main responsibilities for combining caring and working in public and private arenas, while men are slow to undertake the scripting and practical work in domestic labour (Connell, 2002).

6.3 Studies from feminist perspectives have contended that violence, especially men's violence to known women and girls, should be analysed as part of structured power and patriarchal social relations (Kelly et al. 1996). These studies often interlink, and offer, explanations of violence that include social divisions in class, sexualities, race, religion and age. In general, studies have argued that to legitimate positions of power and privilege some men resort to violence. While legal and social sanctions are in place to challenge violence in intimate relationships, there continues to be cultural nuances that place blame on the victims of violence; - why do they stay?; why don't they leave for the sake of children?; perhaps they nagged their partners?

6.4 Even when the immediate threat of violence is absent, women and girls are aware (unconsciously) of the dynamic but ever present range of threats posed by patriarchy. What they wear, where they walk at night and how they negotiate relationships will all come under scrutiny and can lead to accusations of provoking violence. Dobash and Dobash (1992) have argued that explanations require analysis of both the actual episode of violence (concrete event) and the dynamic development of violence (relevance of the relationship). Further, the theory of the normalization of violence for women proposes that the avoidance, and experience, of violence and abuse, frame the lives of girls and women (Pylkkanen, 2001). Women and girls negotiate rules of engagement with others, recognising that without attempting to adhere to these they may themselves been blamed for experiencing violence or harassment. By contrast, men negotiate complex, and sometimes contradictory, ideas about masculinities and violence, and the myriad ways in which gender and violations infuse everyday activities. Implicitly, sometimes explicitly, governments work in ways that are gendered and create inequities. Many supranational organisations and governments work to promote human rights (considered by most to be a worthy goal) and yet at the same time they can violate the lives of people. That violation can take many forms, including the failure to tackle inequalities (symbolic violences), an inability or reluctance to challenge cultures that allow for harassment and bullying, the imprisonment of suspects, the use of rendition flights, and the call to war (whether considered a just war or otherwise). In all of these aspects and dimensions of violence feminists position the working of patriarchy as central to research, analysis, and policy and practice work.

Concluding Comments

7.1 The continued study of violence in families and relationships in gender and women's studies, while war and civil unrest reside in main or male stream sociologies, restricts opportunities for a broader conceptualisation of, and research on, violence. So why is the study of violence in sociological work seemingly trammelled around two broad, and gendered, arenas? The premise to this question may be considered something of a generalisation[2]. Nevertheless, trends can be identified. Without addressing violence as imbued in everyday social practices and cultures, sociology can offer only partial explanations and challenges to what Gordimer (2003: 7) describes as the 'suffering and demoralisation of violence…'.

7.2 Stan Cohen (2001: 64) has commented that family members, agencies and governments have a great capacity to 'ignore or pretend to ignore what happens in front of their eyes, whether sexual abuse, incest, violence, alcoholism, craziness or plain unhappiness'. Cohen (2001: 277) goes on to contend:

> Most people, at most times, in most societies, are more interested in 'making life' than 'making history'. Their sustaining ideology is… keep a low profile and don't let yourself get too bothered by big problems. …. But surely social justice deserves more than law. There are states of being such as good citizenship, which are less than heroic but more than mere law-abiding. They do not demand extraordinary heroism, but they do discourage silence.

7.3 The study of violence in sociology reflects both the 'heroic', in so far as colleagues have addressed many aspects of violence and violations, but sociological work (or the lack of it) also illuminates the potential for 'a low profile' and silences. Documenting, analysing and offering explanations can give voice to

those experiencing violence, further debates, and inform policies and practice at regional, national and transnational levels. Considered across transnational and trans-disciplinary contexts theoretical pluralism in sociology, and social sciences, can offer a useful explanatory project (Eagleton, 2003). As Midgley (2003: 5) asserts it might be better to 'talk organically of our thought as an ecosystem trying painfully to adapt itself to changes in the world around it.' When it comes to violence and 'senseless, persistent suffering' (Gordimer, 2003: 7) the challenge is to construct what Fraser and Lacey (1993) term a 'discourse bridge' that mediates between the work and experiences of those active in a range of sociologies.

Notes

[1]Rendition flights is the term used to describe the forced transportation of people from one country to another on the basis that in the country of destination torture, as a method of interrogation, is not illegal or, if it is, legal redress may be difficult if not impossible. In this way governments that profess to uphold *habeas corpus* (a requirement that a detained person be brought before a court so that they legality of their detention might be reviewed) and outlaw violence in interrogation, sanction violence in other states.

[2]There are exceptions to the generalisation I assert. For example, the work of Enloe (2001) has drawn across gender studies and macro work on the military, states and conflict. Enloe (2001) has documented the ideological importance of evoking divisions between public and private, men and women for the machinery of state sanctioned violence. Images of 'our boys' defending women and children remain standard rhetoric in the cultural repertoires intended to generate support for the military. Appeals to be 'hard' and set aside all that is 'soft' also remain standard rhetoric at the everyday level of military training. While a great deal of empirical work has documented some aspects of the role of family practices in supporting or subverting these gendered constellations, surprisingly little research has looked explicitly at the role of family practices in shaping the legitimacy of violence for men and women.

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