

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA

XXIII

2023

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CHARLES UNIVERSITY
KAROLINUM PRESS
2023

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ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)

ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 23 of the journal *Studia Territorialia*. This special issue is titled “Exploring Conflict and Political Violence through the Woman’s Lens.”

Although past and present armed conflicts have all had deleterious effects on women, the topic of those effects is still under-explored in academia from the women’s perspective. As Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf point out, “The situation of women in armed conflict has been systematically neglected.”¹ This lacuna persists even though women are almost always present in war zones, willingly or not, right up to the front lines. Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and the 2022 feminist uprising in Iran offer new opportunities to engage with women’s experiences in the midst of conflicts and after their end.

There are a variety of reasons why the pain of women affected by armed conflict and political violence is frequently overlooked in recorded history and official celebrations of memory. Women’s voices and the memory of the ordeals they have suffered during conflicts and at the hands of oppressive regimes are often subsumed in a grand narrative of the suffering of the nation as a whole. The voices, testimonies, and claims of female victims, resisters, survivors, caregivers, fighters, and mediators have been stifled. Although men inarguably suffer greatly from the physical violence of political repression and armed conflict, women and girls are far more exposed to psychological torture and sexual violence. This happens because they are commonly regarded as the essential repositories of ethnic

¹ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-building* (New York: UNIFEM, 2002), 1.

and cultural identity. Moreover, women are exposed to multiple, continuing, and intersecting forms of exclusion from society. In the aftermath of conflict, women's experiences in bearing the burdens of displacement differ considerably from those of men.

We at *Studia Territorialis* are proud to provide a platform for scholarly exchange on this neglected topic. This special issue of our journal features three full-length articles, each of which provides a distinct national or transnational perspective on the issues of gender, conflict, and violence. The first is a contribution to the study of the politics of memory in contemporary Spain. Kateřina Valentová and Marc Macià Farré show how female victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship are depicted in the few contemporary Spanish graphic novels that address their roles. Laura Mues takes a critical look at post-unification East Germany in the 1990s. She analyzes the experiences and autobiographical narratives of women of color, a doubly marginalized social group in East Germany. Finally, Kirsty Campbell reviews from a feminist post-colonial perspective the role European white women played in shaping colonial violence. As examples, she draws on case studies of the British and German colonial empires.

On behalf of the editorial board,

Maria Alina Asavei, Lucie Filipová, and Jan Šír
doi: 10.14712/23363231.2023.7

ARTICLES

GIVING A VOICE TO THE SILENCED WOMEN OF FRANCOIST SPAIN

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Received May 2, 2023; Revised September 21, 2023; Accepted September 29, 2023.

Abstract

During the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship that followed, women were shielded from the public eye. Their predetermined social role was that of submissive and devoted wives to their husbands as well as homemakers and childcare providers. There are few artistic works that suggest otherwise. However, during the Civil War and after, many women were in fact politically active. They occupied important positions in the resistance and were present along with the men in the trenches. Spanish graphic novels have managed to create many works of fiction based on the Civil War, mainly drawing on (auto)biographical accounts. There are so many significant works dealing with the war and Francoist repression that they represent a genre of their own. Nevertheless, the authors of these works, as well as their main protagonists, are usually men. This is true despite the fact that after the war, during the four decades of the Franco dictatorship, many women suffered from political persecution. The aim of this article is to analyze the role of women outside the domestic space as it appears in selected graphic narratives set in the period of Franco's regime. Given the extent of the regime's repression, these works are frequently set in the prisons around Spain where female prisoners were incarcerated and tortured. The narratives we analyze are based on real

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testimonies from real victims. Their individual experiences are joined together in a collective whose voice has long been silenced until recently.

Keywords: comics studies; graphic women; war narratives; Francoism; violence; repression

DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2023.8

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze certain Spanish graphic novels published between 2007 and 2023, which are set in the period of Francoism (1939–1975) and feature women as their main protagonists. The first impulse for undertaking this study is the scarcity of such stories in the vast archive of literature set in the Francoist period. The topic of the Civil War and the period of Francoism represents a genre of its own. Carmen Moreno-Nuño notes an almost total absence of female authors working in the genre. However, she has highlighted three who are mostly left off of the list of authors who have dealt with the Civil War. They are the authors of *Todo lo que nos contaron nuestros abuelos* [Everything Our Grandfathers Told Us] (2012) by Cachete Jack, *Winnipeg, el barco de Neruda* [Winnipeg, Neruda's Ship] (2014) by Laura Martel and Antonia Santolaya, and *Tante Wussi* (2015) by Katrin Bacher and Tyto Alba.¹ Moreno-Nuño discusses three other graphic narratives in which a female character plays a prominent role. The first of these is *Las damas de la peste* [The Ladies of the Plague] (2015) by Javier Cosnava and Rubén Rincón, which narrates the experiences of three women who fought against fascism in different historical contexts: the Revolution of Asturias in 1934, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, and May 68. The second novel, *El convoy* [The Convoy] (2015) by Denis Lapière and Eduard Torrents, depicts the life of a Catalan woman, Angelita, who lives in exile in France in 1975. The third and last book is entitled *Asylum* (2015) by Javier de Isusi. It tells the story of an exiled ninety-four-year-old woman who reminisces about her long journey from Otxandio to Venezuela.

We could add other significant graphic works to the list, such as *El Ala Rota* [The Broken Wing] (2016) by Antonio Altarriba. That novel is about the author's mother, and is the second volume in the biographical saga of the author's parents. It was preceded by *El arte de volar* [The Art of Flying] (2009),

¹ José Joaquín Rodríguez and Paula Sepúlveda Navarrete, "La legislación franquista frente al cómic femenino (1938–1977)," *Foro. Revista de Derecho*, no. 33 (2020): 103–123, doi: 10.32719/26312484.2020.33.6; Carmen Moreno-Nuño, "La Guerra Civil española en el cómic de autoría femenina," *Dictatorships & Democracies, Journal of History and Culture*, no. 9 (2021): 49–78, doi: 10.7238/dd.v0i9.390805.

which the author dedicated to his father. Another possibility is an homage that author Ana Penyas pays to her grandmothers in her work *Estamos todas bien* [We Are All Alright] (2017).

Although all the foregoing narratives are important contributions to the genre, they do not meet our criteria for inclusion in this paper. We require (1) the presence of female protagonists, (2) exclusively during the Francoist repression, (3) outside the domestic space, (4) playing an active role in the historical context. The only graphic narratives that fully correspond to our requirements for inclusion in this study are *Dentro* (2021) by Isabel Ruíz Ruíz and *Cuerda de presas* (2017) by Jorge García and Fidel Martínez.

We focused our analysis on those two graphic narratives and their representation of the many forms of repression of women which were carried out by the Francoist regime. One egregious form was physical violence, including detentions, interrogations, tortures, rapes, and incarceration in different Spanish prisons. A second form was moral and religious repression inflicted on homosexuals (both men and women), who were stigmatized and persecuted as “perverts” and denigrated as “*violetas*.” Homosexuals had to endure not only harassment by the police but also social pressure that used derogatory language to demean and psychologically mistreat them. Lastly, cultural repression was mainly practiced by depriving people, especially women from rural areas, of a proper education and prohibiting cultural performances of any kind within the Francoist prisons.

We established the year 2007 as the starting point for selection of the graphic novels included in this study because an important milestone was reached in that year, the approval in Spain of the Law on the Historical Memory of the Spanish Civil War. This law echoed through Spanish culture in many ways, including an increase in the number of graphic narratives published about that episode in Spanish history. The law will be discussed in more detail below.

Context Matters: Culture and History

The historical context in which the Spanish graphic narratives analyzed in this article were produced has been called the fourth wave of feminism by historiographers and scholars of other disciplines. This feminist wave, which arose in the second decade of the twenty-first century, was marked by the arrival of new communication technologies, major scandals, global media campaigns, the opening of new spaces for association, and the social mobilization of a large part of the population, especially youth. The intellectual contributions of this fourth

wave have included the very concept of feminist “waves” itself, ideas of gender identity and intersectionality, and new demands for social inclusion.²

The narrative thrust of Spanish comics and graphic novels from the second decade of the twenty-first century onwards has been reframing the country’s past as a dystopia. This perspective results from economic crises, recession, indignation against neoliberalism that has dismantled the welfare state, the resurgence of the extreme right, an increase in concern for the environment and climate change, and so on. According to Theodor Adorno, the products of popular culture tend to reproduce tensions in the labor culture of their time. Aspects of the contemporary capitalist world of work, such as flexible work environments, multitasking, pressure for creativity, and now teleworking, are immediately reflected in visual creations such as comics and graphic novels, as well as other audiovisual and transmedia products. However, as Tony Judt and Timothy Snyder have warned, these mnemonic manifestations of the past are partial, insufficient, and selective. A critical gaze is required of the reader, who must always bear in mind that these mnemonic manifestations are not in themselves true knowledge.³

In analyzing the graphic novels for this study, it was necessary to take into account the contributions of recent historiography regarding Francoism. This includes a long debate about the relationship between Francoism and fascism. Key elements of the Spanish model of fascism were humiliation of the vanquished, their dehumanization, and their designation as anti-Spain agents. The totalitarian project of the Falange dominated society through a single party and its organizations, including the Organizaciones Juveniles, Sección Femenina, Sindicatos, and Milicias. Young people, women, and workers were called upon to join their respective organizations. For example, before the mobilization of the Spanish Azul Division in the summer of 1941 to participate in Germany’s Operation Barbarossa against the USSR, the Falange Women’s Section was mobilized to make outerwear for the Spanish soldiers in Russia and collect donations for the *aguinaldo* (Christmas gift) intended for volunteers. Graphic narratives about females produced in the Francoist period, like *Mis Chicas* (1941)

² Abanella Di Tullio and Romina Smiraglia, “Debatiendo el papel de la reflexión feminista contemporánea: Judith Butler y Martha Nussbaum,” *Astrolabio. Revista internacional de filosofía*, no. 13 (2012): 443–453; Judith Butler, *El género en disputa. El feminismo y la subversión de la identidad* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2007).

³ Tom Moylan, *Becoming Utopian: The Culture and Politics of Radical Transformation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry* (London: Routledge, 2001); Tony Judt and Timothy Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin Press, 2012).

or *Florita* (1949), were ideologically slanted in favor of the regime, whereas the recent graphic novels we analyze focus on women's victimization and the ideology they embraced.⁴

War in Graphic Narratives

Graphic narratives dealing with historical events have become a very popular literary genre since the publication of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1980) about a Holocaust survivor and Joe Sacco's works such as *Palestine* (1996) and *Safe Area Goražde* (2000). The latter narratives recount Sacco's experiences in war and conflict in the two troubled areas. They are considered non-fiction graphic narratives because they are written in a journalistic style intended to depict reality shorn of artistic pretensions. It is not our aim to discuss the extent to which a graphic narrative is or is not fiction. In the case of the texts analyzed in this article, which depict a crucial part of the history of Spain, the authors make no claim that their works are objective. Rather, they say they are based on eye-witness testimony and transmit a particular narrative. Their main aim is to visualize and empower the many voices which were silenced during the Francoist regime. In this paper, produced in the midst of the fourth wave of feminism, we focus mainly on the voices of female victims and their historical experiences, which the graphic narratives recount in the first person. The women's voices are historical sources that have inspired new narratives.⁵

Graphic narratives about Francoism began to appear around the year 2007, when the Law on Historical Memory about the Spanish Civil War was enacted. They arose within a specific political context: the end of the conservative government of the Partido Popular (PP), which until then had held an absolute majority in the Spanish parliament. This marked the beginning of a progressive government led by the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and supported by Catalan republicans during its first two years. The 2007 law, popularly known as the Historical Memory Law, was Spain's first official attempt to revisit the past and repair the damage of the Franco period. It was a response to Spanish

⁴ Ferran Gallego, *El evangelio fascista: la formación de la cultura política del franquismo (1930–1950)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2014); Joan Maria Thomàs, *Los fascismos españoles* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2011); Stéphane Michonneau and Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, eds., *Imaginarios y representaciones de España durante el franquismo* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2014); Carme Agustí Roca, *¡Rússia és culpable! Memòria i record de la Divisió Azul* (Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2003).

⁵ Aurore Ducellier, "La represión franquista en el cómic español: cárceles, campos y ejecuciones en la novela gráfica española (2009–2019)," *L'Entre-deux*, no. 8 (2) (December 2020): 1–25, <https://www.lentre-deux.com/?b=140>.

society's demand for knowledge about the Civil War and its consequences, especially post-Civil War Francoist violence and repression.

The Historical Memory Law was intended to recognize the victims of the Civil War and the Francoist regime, make amends to them, and extend rights to those who suffered from persecution of a political, ideological, or religious nature. It promoted moral reparations and the recovery of lost memories in order to enhance cohesion and solidarity among Spanish citizens. The law was based on democratic principles and provided open access to documents related to the Civil War and the dictatorship, ensuring they would be conserved in public archives. However, after elections in 2011 and the victory of the right-wing PP, implementation of the law was postponed. Money for its implementation was not included in the national budget for the years 2013–2014. The most conservative parts of Spanish society firmly disagreed with the law's premises, arguing that it would be insensitive to “reopen old wounds.”⁶

The Historical Memory Law was based on other initiatives such as Catalonia's Democratic Memorial Law (2007). Later, a Catalan Graves Law (2009) was enacted, which established protocols for opening mass graves, including those of victims of the Civil War, Francoism, and the transition from Franco to democracy. A new version of the Spanish Democratic Memory Law was enacted in 2022. It represented an advance over the previous law, especially in terms of recognizing and facilitating the prosecution of Francoist crimes, but it is still too early to predict its social impact.⁷

Public policies regarding historical memory have not focused merely on promoting literary and graphic creations. Such works are only one result of the process of institutionalizing a social movement with strong connections to academic and intellectual spheres. The policies aim to enshrine historical memory as a positive social value and assist the families of the victims of repression and war to recover the remains of their relatives or ancestors. This is a global phenomenon, which has led to social movements organized to recover democratic memory in countries such as Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, Rwanda, and Bolivia. These movements follow in the context of the

⁶ Ruben Varillas, “La novela gráfica española y la memoria recuperada,” in Alessandro Scarsella, Katiuscia Darici, and Alice Favaro, *Historieta o Cómic: Biografía de la narración gráfica en España* (Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2017), 107.

⁷ Joan Sagués San José, “Han vuelto a pasar (casi) cuarenta años. Memoria y políticas públicas de memoria en España desde la muerte del dictador,” in *Duelo y memoria. Espacios para el recuerdo de las víctimas de la represión franquista en perspectiva comparada*, ed. Conxita Mir Curcó and Josep Gelonch Solé (Lleida: Universitat de Lleida, 2013), 19–39.

vindication of human rights following the end of the Second World War, the issuance of the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, and the consolidation of liberal democracy and the European welfare state in the second half of the twentieth century.⁸

The process of institutionalizing these social demands accelerated with the election of the PSOE and Podemos government of 2019, which in January 2020 created the post of Secretary of State for Democratic Memory. The Secretary of State's office consolidated powers previously exercised by the Ministry of Justice under the Office of the President. Since 2020, the Secretary has been Fernando Martínez López, a professor of contemporary history at the University of Almería and a specialist in the history of Spanish republicanism. In June 2018, during the first government of Pedro Sánchez, a General Directorate of Democratic Memory was created, headed by Diego Blázquez Martín. Blázquez Martín's office has an eminently political nature. It coordinates the bodies that help victims of Francoism find redress and plan political actions in their memory. On the other hand, the Secretary of State is in charge of promoting the preservation of places of memory, enforcing the Law on Democratic Memory as it relates to those places, and collaborating with local public administrations. All of this suggests a clear intent to institutionalize democratic memory, proving that memory is capable of being managed like any other area of public policy. The number of relevant publications peaked in 2011 during the first phase of the Law's implementation (2007–11). According to Michel Matly, that was the year when the largest number of graphic narratives about the Civil War was published.⁹

The process of institutionalization also includes academic discussion of the concept of memory and its social uses. In this sense, we cannot avoid reference to Pierre Nora, who has characterized places of memory as living spaces. These places keep alive the collective memory of a community and carry with

⁸ Carlos Ernesto Ichuta Nina, "Bolivia: memoria, insurgencia y movimientos sociales," *Polis. Investigación y Análisis Sociopolítico y Psicosocial* 5, no. 2 (2009): 203–210; Ángel del Río Sánchez, "La Memoria Histórica en escena. Demandas y movimientos sociales," in *La recuperación de la memoria histórica: una perspectiva transversal desde las ciencias sociales*, ed. Gonzalo Acosta Bono, Ángel del Río Sánchez, and José M^a Valcuende del Río (Sevilla, Fundación Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2008); Fernández Fernández Íñigo, "El engaño de la memoria: Una revisión histórica de los movimientos sociales en México," *Historia y grafía*, no. 5 (1995): 305–309; Gabriel Izard Martínez, "Del olvido a la memoria y la presencia: Estrategias de visibilización de los movimientos sociales afrovenezolanos," *Humanía del Sur: Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Africanos y Asiáticos* 8, no. 14 (2013): 121–133.

⁹ Michel Matly, *El cómic sobre la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2018), 175–194.

them a symbolic element. Nora uses the concepts of “material” and “ideal” in referring to places of memory. His concepts are highly flexible and allow a broad definition of specific places of memory in the urban fabric. However, he leaves out objects such as flags, books and, as in the case at hand, comics and graphic novels.¹⁰ If we accept that a graphic novel can be analyzed as a record of memory, we can understand that an interdisciplinary approach to analysis is required.

Spanish graphic narratives about Spanish Civil War and Francoism published after 2007 focus on the Republican side of the conflict, documenting the testimonies of its participants. The sons and daughters, and even the grandchildren of the protagonists, convert their parents’ testimonies into graphic narratives. Thus we are given direct and indirect testimony about events. Such works belong to the genre of (auto)biography and the subgenre of *testimonio*. The personal voices in the graphic narratives add up to the voice of a collective that has shared similar experiences. However, women occupy a prominent role in only a very few of these works. Our main aim here is to analyze those few.

The Spanish civil war has inspired many works of an interdisciplinary nature. Vicente Sánchez Biosca says the memory of the war “has become one of the most powerful cultural industries in recent years, involving in its framework the publication of books, the broadcast of television reports, the edition of facsimiles of the time, and the capture of testimonies in different media of the Spanish tragedy of 1936.” Moreno Nuño claims that the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War has become the main theme of Spanish graphic narratives. Samuel Amago says that the boom in the recovery of historical memory is “one of the country’s most visible and noteworthy cultural phenomena.”¹¹

As they strive for a high degree of realism and veracity, the authors of graphic narratives appeal to the emotions of their readership. They employ a number of stylistic and rhetorical devices in the process. For instance, the works incorporate tangible objects such as documents and reports, photographs, letters and parts of journals, which are fictionalized only in the sense that they are transformed into illustrations which form part of the narrated story. Many graphic narratives rely on objective sources of information, including historical docu-

¹⁰ Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

¹¹ Vicente Sánchez Biosca, *Cine y guerra civil española. Del mito a la memoria* (Madrid: Alianza, 2006), 39; Moreno-Nuño, “La Guerra Civil española”; Samuel Amago, “Drawing (on) Spanish History,” in *Consequential Art: Comics Culture in Contemporary Spain*, ed. Samuel Amago and Matthew J. Marr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019): 31.

ments, and mix them with personal testimonies (intra-stories). Together they are creating a contemporary collective memory of Spain under Franco that is based on verifiable history.¹²

Physical Violence

On February 9, 1939, the Francoist regime approved a Law on Political Responsibilities. This law was applied retroactively and applied to all who had collaborated with the republican government in the years before the so-called National Uprising. Thousands of men and women were executed or physically abused. This abuse included unjustified detentions, long interrogations, torture, and even rape. The exact number of inmates in the Francoist prisons all over Spain remains unknown because the regime did its best to hide it. As far as can be determined from public documents, the number of incarcerated females exceeded the estimated capacity of the women's prisons by the thousands. For instance, the Ventas prison in Madrid had an official capacity of 500 inmates, but it harbored 14,000 female prisoners during those times. Francoist censorship kept the physical abuse of women in the prisons under wraps. Even after the transition to democracy in Spain, it remains little known thanks to the Pact of Forgetting agreed to by the Spanish left and right after the death of Franco in 1975.¹³

The life of women in Francoist prisons is well depicted in two graphic novels, *Cuerda de presas* by Jorge García and Fidel Martínez and *Dentro* by Isabel Ruiz Ruiz. Both works use visual and documentary resources to portray the women's experience of being deprived of liberty and in many cases, tortured. It is interesting that many of the individual stories narrated in the two books coincide. Both authors based their stories on available historical documents, including books by Tomasa Cuevas, one of the survivors of the Francoist prisons. Cuevas collected the testimonies of other female inmates from all around Spain, as well as stories by other authors about the situation of women suffering Francoist repression. A bibliography appears in the back of *Dentro* by Ruiz. In a similar way, the authors of *Cuerda de presas* used authentic documents to source the different stories they included in their book.¹⁴

¹² Ducellier, "La represión franquista en el cómic español," 5.

¹³ Felipe Hernández Cava, "El terror blanco" in García Jorge and Martínez Fidel, *Cuerda de presas* (Bilbao: Astiberri, 2019).

¹⁴ Jorge García and Fidel Martínez, *Cuerda de presas* (Bilbao: Astiberri, 2019); Isabel Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro* (Ilustropos, 2021); Tomasa Cuevas Gutiérrez, *Testimonios de mujeres en las cárceles fran-*

The power of fiction and particularly that of graphic novels lies in the aesthetic choices made by authors as they recount certain experiences. They appeal directly to their readers' emotions. That is something historians cannot do because their duty is to maintain objectivity. Both graphic narratives are filled with metaphors and metonymies. For example, in the story "Behind Bars" from *Cuerda de presas*, the authors play with the double meaning of the word *rejas* (which in Spanish can mean either a plowshare or prison bars). To the protagonist, the word implies not only her lack of liberty in prison but also her position as a rural woman and the daughter of a farmer.¹⁵

Significantly, in the graphic narrative, the symbolism of the bars follows the prisoner into the street after she is released. By means of a high-angle shot and the composition the authors choose, the long shadow of the bars literally crushes and eats the shadow of the protagonist at the moment of her escape, foreshadowing her future. That image goes hand in hand with the conclusion of "Behind Bars." The story's ending implies nothing less than the continuation, outside of prison, of the lack of freedom imposed by the dictatorship.

In *Dentro*, the illustrator plays with the shadows of trees that resemble prison bars in the eyes of an inmate. This way of suggesting the protagonist's lack of freedom, rather than directly showing it, is even more powerful than talking about incarceration in words.¹⁶

With regard to physical abuse, both graphic novels dedicate one episode to the tortures inflicted on women in the prisons. Historical testimonies affirm that women were tortured with electrodes in order to obtain information about the organizations to which they belonged. In the episode "Rings" in *Dentro*, Ruiz depicts a woman sitting in a chair, with wires around her fingers. This scene is juxtaposed with a picture of her taking off her wedding ring. The rings of wire inflict pain, as can be seen in the close up of her face, contorted in suffering (Figure 1). Ruiz quotes Petra Cuevas, an inmate from the Ventas prison: "I was

quistas (Huesca: Institutos de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 2004); Tomasa Cuevas Gutiérrez, *Presas* (Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 2005); Rodolfo Serrano and Daniel Serrano, *Toda España era una cárcel* (Madrid: Frida Ediciones, 2016); Enrique González Duro, *Las rapadas. El franquismo contra la mujer* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2012); Fernanda Romeu Alfaro, *El silencio roto. Mujeres contra el franquismo* (Barcelona: Ediciones de Intervención Cultural, El Viejo Topo, 2002); Ricard Vinyes, *Irrendentas. Las presas políticas y sus hijos en las cárceles franquistas* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2002); Verónica Sierra Blas, *Cartas Presas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2016); Carlos Fonseca, *Trece rosas rojas. La historia más conmovedora de la guerra civil* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2004).

¹⁵ García and Martínez, *Cuerda de presas*, 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.



Figure 1: *Dentro*, “Rings.” Courtesy of Isabel Ruiz Ruiz.

plugged in and plugged in again with my hands soaked in gasoline so that the current would be stronger.”

The third story in *Cuerda de presas* is entitled “The Room under the Stairs.” It also depicts a scene in which a woman is being tortured, but instead of her fingers, the electrodes are placed on her naked nipples. The close up of the victim’s face is very similar to the one in Ruiz’s book. This scene of torture is part of a wider narrative frame, which portrays multiple rapes of the woman by a guard. Prison rapes occurred on a regular basis, according to the available historical sources.¹⁷

Ruiz’s story “Attractions” acknowledges the ubiquity of rapes by the guards, which she claims could continue for several days. Ruiz has decided to emphasize

¹⁷ Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, “Rings.”

the details by insinuating but not explicitly showing them. Her illustrations show hands and feet being tied with a rope. Readers witness the act from the perspective of the victim and see only her legs full of wounds. The victim's helplessness is juxtaposed with the face of a woman guard who is preparing the prisoner for the men's pleasure. The detail of a guard opening his fly and a long queue of men chatting outside the interrogation room need not be more explicit. The reader puts the puzzle pieces together in his or her mind and becomes directly involved in the scene. Its brutality is palpable. On the other hand, in "The Room under the Stairs," the rape scene is not shown at all, but rather implied in a conversation between two women prisoners talking about the victim. García and Martínez provide harrowing details, for instance, the shaving of the women's hair – except for that of the most beautiful women, who were taken away to suffer sexual abuse at the hands of the guards.

Death often resulted from the inhumane treatment of the inmates. Many female prisoners died due to their brutal treatment or the lack of food and hygiene in the prisons. Others were simply executed. These deaths are not explicitly portrayed in either book. Instead, they are conveyed symbolically: tally marks on a cell wall for each gunshot heard from outside, an inert, dead hand filling a panel, and silence.

Both books dedicate an episode each to *la saca*, which was the act of taking a prisoner from their cell in the Ventas Prison to be executed against a wall in a nearby cemetery. Executions were sometimes announced by certain noises during the night. The condemned prisoners would put on clothes to keep their dignity. After being forced to confess their guilt to a priest, they were allowed to write a farewell letter. It is said that in Ventas, the cemetery was so close that the prisoners in their cells could hear the *coup de grace*, followed by profound silence. In *Dentro*, horizontal/landscape panels show keys opening a locked door, the steps of a guard, and the open mouth of the prisoner sentenced to death. This collage-like technique uses aspect-to-aspect transition with changing viewpoints of the same scene, which leaves the reader with an emotional, figurative impression of the victims.¹⁸ After the condemned women are dressed, another illustration shows the truck into which they are loaded leaving the prison yard. In the nine square panels that follow, the illustrator shows the troubled, tear-stained faces of the inmates as they listen to the *coups de grace* coming from the nearby cemetery.

¹⁸ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, 1993, <https://archive.org/details/UnderstandingComicsTheInvisibleArtByScottMcCloud>.

The second episode in *Cuerda de presas*, “Ballad of Ventas,” tells a similar story. We see soldiers dragging a wounded woman who had been previously tortured to her death. The inmates comment on the noises they hear, the *coups de grace* which are perfectly audible from the nearby cemetery. They count the shots to know how many people are being executed that day. Meanwhile, their daily routines continue. They eat only once a day. A tortured woman, Elisa Vázquez, has a headache. The authors say she has been in the office of one Núñez Balboa, who is known for torturing prisoners with electrodes. In *Dentro*, we are told that this kind of torture had several different consequences for the health of the victims. Elisa is sentenced to death as the soldiers guarding her have a casual conversation about the weather. Illustrations resembling German expressionism highlight the juxtaposed realities of the situation. The inmates discuss the possibility of yet another *saca*, as well as the meager supply of water, which tastes of gasoline.

As previously mentioned, during the period of Francoism women prisoners were progressively deprived of their humanity. After they arrived in the prison, their heads were shaved and they were given a uniform reminiscent of the concentration camps elsewhere in Europe. The inhuman living conditions, lack of water, scarce and poor food, plagues, and isolation in cells where women were deprived of any contact or sunlight, all worked to make the prisoners lose hope, give up, and abandon the resistance. In his introduction to *Cuerda de presas*, Felipe Hernández Cava quotes Franco himself:

It is not possible to return harmful, perverted, politically and morally poisoned elements to society, or as we should say, to social circulation, because their re-entry into the free and normal community of Spaniards without further ado would represent a danger of corruption and contagion for all.¹⁹

It is well-known that Franco’s objective was to do away with his enemies by any means necessary. Moreover, under the influence of the eugenics movement, children of those enemies who did not die in the prisons’ insalubrious conditions were subjected to “positive segregation,” a term coined by psychiatrist Antonio Vallejo Nájera. Vallejo Nájera defended the kidnapping of the children of democrats and communists as necessary to preserve the “Hispanic heritage” and cleanse the Spanish race of the “reds.” The children of inmates were breastfed by their mothers and lived with them in separate cells, but at the age of three, they

¹⁹ García and Martínez, *Cuerda de presas*, 6.

were placed in adoptive families by the Catholic Church. One story in Ruiz's *Dentro*, entitled "Garden," denounces another common practice during Francoism: women sentenced to death who were pregnant (many times as a consequence of the rapes they suffered during their interrogation) were kept alive until they gave birth. After a few months of breastfeeding, they were separated from their child and executed. The children were adopted with the assistance of the Church.²⁰

Another form of physical repression forced many families into involuntary exile beyond the Spanish borders. There are accounts of such experiences in graphic narratives like *El convoy*, which depicts the life of a Catalan woman, Angelita, who lives in exile in France, and *Asylum*, which tells the story of an exiled ninety-four-year-old woman who reminisces about her long journey from Otxandio in the Basque country to Venezuela. *Asylum* offers a new look at the experience of exile from a female and clearly intersectional perspective. De Isusi's graphic narrative explores the maturation and the rite of passage that is exile. It explores generational contrasts from racial, feminine, and class perspectives as the author intertwines various stories that knit together the experience of exile in different times and places.²¹

In a similar vein, a paperback adaptation of the animated film *Josep* was published in 2020. The film was directed by the French cartoonist and filmmaker Aurel, with a script by Jean-Louis Milesi. Together with Audrey Rebmann, Milesi participated in the production of the graphic narrative as well (which like the film also involves adaptation and composition). Adapting the visual elements of the film to the graphic novel entailed several difficulties, but the book manages to convey some of the emotionality of the film. In both versions, women occupy a secondary position as desired, sexualized, or idealized objects, depending on the character. *Josep* assigns women a very marked gender identity, defined by their presence in professions linked to care (nursing) and creativity (gallerist and artist), but also by abuse of their bodies (in the form of prostitution, consensual or not, in a concentration camp).²²

The plot of *Josep* revolves around the protagonist's search for his missing wife. It makes the woman into an immanent, almost mythological being. The mystery that surrounds her is not resolved at any point in the graphic narrative.

²⁰ Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, "Raising"; Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, "Jardín/Garden."

²¹ Denis Lapière and Eduard Torrents, *El Convoy* (Barcelona: Norma Editorial, 2015); Javier De Isusi, *Asylum* (Bilbao: Astiberri Ediciones, 2017); Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–1299, doi: 10.2307/1229039.

²² Aurel, Jean-Louis Milesi, and Audrey Rebmann, *Josep* (n.p.: Símbol editors, 2020).

The Mexican artist Frida Kahlo also plays a part in the story. The author uses her well-known public personality to embody a sexually charged and politically committed discourse. Frida strips naked and leaves behind a corset with a red hammer and sickle painted on it. The pregnancy of Josep's girlfriend is also a recurring theme in the novel. Her fate, and that of her unborn child, remain a mystery to the reader.²³

Moral and Religious Repression

The Franco regime persecuted homosexuals for their “deviant behavior.” Under the Law on Social Dangerousness, homosexuals could be imprisoned for up to three years. Many of them were sent to a concentration camp for “the perverted” called Tefía, situated in Fuerteventura. Although its true purpose was a well-known fact, the government officially called the place an “agricultural penitentiary colony.” Imprisonment did not only involve seclusion and deprivation of liberty, but also electroshock therapy and medical experiments, supposedly to cure the inmates of their alleged illness.²⁴

The graphic novel *El Violeta* (2018) by Juan Sepúlveda Sanchis and Antonio Santos Mercero, illustrated by Marina Cochet, narrates the story of Bruno, a homosexual who is arrested by the secret police in the Ruzafa cinema in Valencia, which was known as a meeting place for homosexuals. After being imprisoned and witnessing how homosexuals were treated in prison, Bruno is released thanks to his father's political influence. Ultimately, he becomes a policeman and gets married. The story illustrates the many difficulties homosexuals suffered during Francoism in what was at the time an ultra-catholic, fascist state. The Franco regime repressed homosexuals because they were considered as offending the country's morals and causing harm to its social order. At the time, it was even believed that homosexuality could be cured by electroshock therapy.²⁵

Although the main protagonist of this story is a man, Bruno, there is another character in the story who is important to our study: his wife, Maricruz. Maricruz represents the many Spanish women who married homosexuals and suffered from frustration, shame, and above all, a feeling they had been fooled and trapped into an unhappy marriage. For homosexuals, getting married was the only way to go unnoticed and survive in the time of Francoism.

²³ Ibid., 136–137.

²⁴ Arturo Arnalte, Jerónimo Saavedra, and Pedro Zerolo, *Redada de violetas: la represión de los homosexuales durante el franquismo* (Madrid: La esfera de los libros, 2003).

²⁵ Juan Sepúlveda Sanchis et al., *El Violeta* (Madrid: Editorial Drakul, 2018).



Figure 2: *Dentro*, “Silencio/Silence.” Courtesy of Isabel Ruiz Ruiz.

One episode in the graphic novel *Cuerda de presas* tells the story of two women, Matilde and Nieves, who are caught in an embrace in the prison wash-room and reported to the authorities. The two are brutally beaten and Matilde is sent to another prison, her whereabouts unknown to Nieves. The story describes Matilde’s efforts to find Nieves by sending notes through inmates who were being transferred to other prisons all over Spain, hoping to obtain some news in response. The story ends with a question: “And what if she finds her?” The question points up the futility of same-sex love under a regime that regarded homosexuality as a frightening plague corrupting the morality of the Spanish nation.²⁶

A similar story appears in *Dentro* as well, albeit very briefly. The text reads: “The prison bathrooms were meeting places during the night. Women secretly gathered in them to read, share news, do chores, sing, dance, and even make love.” The latter act is portrayed in a panel showing two women facing each other, one with her arm around the other’s neck (Figure 2).²⁷

Cultural Repression

In the microcosm of the Spanish female prisons, cultural repression by the Francoist regime translated into prohibitions of any kind of cultural

²⁶ García and Martínez, *Cuerda de presas*, 90.

²⁷ Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, “Silencio/Silence.”

performances. For instance, both *Cuerda de presas* and *Dentro* mention clandestine concerts that were organized in Ventas. Both graphic narratives also mention a song that is an abiding relic of the Francoist past, and which connects the two stories. The song was sung by the prisoners to entertain themselves and escape the harsh reality of prison life, if just for a while. The episode “Balada de Ventas” [Ventas Ballad] tells the story of an imprisoned woman who dances with other female prisoners in a prison bathroom. In Ruiz’s book, the illustrations are accompanied by a quotation from Tomasa Cuevas who, after getting out of prison, went back to interview other prisoners: “She dressed herself slowly and confidently. The official, nervous about the silence and the emotion-filled eyes of the women, wanted her to hurry up. Her answer, as clear as it was full of contempt, was: ‘Wait, don’t you see that I’m shrouding myself in life?’”²⁸

The fact that many women did not know how to read and write can also be considered a form of cultural repression. Both graphic narratives, *Cuerda de presas* and *Dentro*, speak of a sorority among the female prisoners in which the young women taught the older ones to read and write so they could receive and send letters home. One story in *Dentro*, “The Letter,” says:

Inmates who were teachers organized themselves to teach other women to write and read. They met clandestinely in the cells, in the corridors, and in the courtyards to pass their knowledge on to one another... When a woman learned to read, she went on to teach other women, creating a network of knowledge and solidarity that grew day by day.²⁹

During the Civil War and for some time thereafter, 30 percent of the Spanish population was illiterate. Many people had no access at all to an education. Women would be the last to receive one in any event. Graphic narratives became very popular during the Civil War because they appealed to the illiterate part of the population. Among other things, “comics” were used to communicate news from the war front and to educate soldiers in basic hygiene and avoidance of health problems.³⁰

²⁸ Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, “La saca.”

²⁹ Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, “La carta/The Letter.”

³⁰ Michel Matly, *El cómic sobre la Guerra Civil*.

Conclusions

In this article we have seen how certain graphic narratives take history and convert it into artistic expression. We also see how the narratives convey the painful experiences of the female victims of Francoism. The graphic media relies on poetic resources such as metaphors, metonymies, ellipsis and other rhetorical tools to reproduce the emotions, pain, and brutality of the Franco regime. In this case, language alone is not enough to convey the horror.

Both *Cuerda de presas* and *Dentro* are illustrated in black and white. As Ruiz, the author of *Dentro*, tells us, the illustrations' somber colors "reflect the oppressive environment in which Franco's female prisoners lived and died."³¹ Similarly, the black and white drawings in *Cuerda de presas* evoke early twentieth century expressionist wood cuts, with the demonic faces of the torturers animalized by their brutality. In addition, the illustrations skillfully play with contrasts of light and shadow, reinforcing the sadness of the atmosphere of the women's prisons. The framing, perspectives, and angles chosen by the authors and illustrators purposely emphasize how repressive prison life actually was.

It is curious how these works can still maintain the feel of a comic book when they deal with such adult content. In *Cuerda de presas*, the executioners' faces are contorted with exaggerated anger and sadism, reminding us of the "arch-villains" of the comic books. Both graphic narratives counterbalance their simple illustrations with an emotionally charged plot set against a historical background whose complexity is difficult to understand, even nowadays.

The trait that differentiates the two accounts is the creative license taken by the storytellers. Ruiz opts for illustrations organized in panels and mixed with texts and quotes she found in the research she did. *Dentro* does not so much resemble a graphic novel as it does a book with illustrations (albeit with a nod to comic book conventions). In *Cuerda de presas* on the other hand, García and Martínez choose diverse narrative forms: a letter, an interview, etc. They interweave different timeframes from the past and present.

The authors of both works state that their main aim was to give voice to the silenced women who were imprisoned during the Francoist dictatorship and to repay a historical debt. In particular, Ruiz claims that although the Pact of Forgetting was agreed among politicians in order to support a peaceful transition towards democracy, it did a lot of damage to historical memory. Therefore, the authors of both graphic narratives seek to transmit the silenced voices by means

³¹ Ruiz Ruiz, *Dentro*, "Foreword."

of eye-witness storytelling. They always remain conscious of the huge responsibility they have shouldered in their work.

Some critics have warned of a need to take a critical approach to testimonies presented in graphic form because of the gender perspective of most comic books. Most comics are drawn from the perspective of the male gaze and are steeped in a patriarchal and sexist context. They distort the reality of women and, above all, their personal, frequently overlooked experiences. When it comes down to graphic narratives, the task of giving voice to the women of the Spanish Civil War is still a work in progress. As Tony Judt and Timothy Snyder have warned with regard to history in general, it is work that requires a critical approach.³²

³² Elena Masarah, “Cuando dibujar es político. Historiografía y memoria de las autoras de cómic en la transición,” *CuCo. Cuadernos de comic* 5 (2015): 54–75; Judt and Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*.

VIOLENCE AS A “GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE” OF GROWING UP IN POST-WALL EAST GERMANY? FEMALE EXPERIENCES OF RACIST OTHERING AND ASSAULT IN EAST GERMANY 1989–2000

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Received April 15, 2023; Revised September 3, 2023; Accepted September 12, 2023.

Abstract

As an often-overlooked period of conflict, the era of transformation after German re-unification represents a time of collective and individual identity crisis for East Germans, who experienced a loss of their *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld; Edmund Husserl) and a devaluation of their life achievements that often led to severe discontent, causing conflict both in and between East and West Germany. During this period, People of Colour experienced a discharge of the general tension through a sharp increase in violence directed against them by radical right-wing actors. Since then, their experiences have gone largely unnoticed in popular media and publications, having only recently found their way into a broader discourse of remembrance. This paper seeks to contribute to a shift away from a discussion about People of Colour and towards a position that focuses on their narratives, experiences and opinions. In doing so, it takes a firmly female-centred perspective, using written and video-recorded material from Women of Colour as a doubly marginalised group.

Keywords: German re-unification; German transformation; People of Colour; Women of Colour; violence; conflict

DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2023.9

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Introduction

Das bisschen Totschlag bringt uns nicht gleich um, sagt mein Mann
[That bit of murder won't kill us, my husband says]
Ich kann den ganzen Scheiß einfach nicht mehr hör'n, sagt mein Mann
[I just can't listen to all that shit anymore, my husband says]
Ist ja gut jetzt, altes Haus, wir haben schon Schlimmeres geseh'n
[It's all right now, old man, we've seen worse]
Und ich sag noch: Lass uns endlich mal zur Tagesordnung übergeh'n
[And I say: Let's finally get back to business as usual]

Die Goldenen Zitronen – Das bisschen Totschlag (1994)¹

Every year on the anniversary of German re-unification, images of November 9, 1989 dominate the media and public commemorations, showing people beaming with joy, embracing each other and dancing on the Berlin Wall. Sometimes, these images are accompanied by footage of the preceding protest of the *Montagsdemonstrationen* (Monday Demonstrations), leaning into the symbol of an overwhelming collective force that succeeded in bringing down the well-established communist regime in the pursuit of freedom.² Together, they broadcast a series of events that is commonly referred to as the *Friedliche Revolution* (Peaceful Revolution). The choice of these images portrays all German citizens, both East and West, as the collective, driving force of this development, rather than emphasizing a single social group, such as the participants of the *Montagsdemonstrationen*, members of the notoriously anti-governmental church milieu or punk scene, or the political elites of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), who had to formally and legally set the re-unification process in motion. In this deliberately broad definition of the

¹ All translations from German into English are courtesy translations by the author.

² For an in-depth analysis of the influences and impact of visual and linguistic images of re-unification in the memory discourse after 1990 compare Benjamin Nölting, Carolin Schröder, and Sören Marotz, "Von 'Blühenden Landschaften', dem 'Jammertal Ost' und 'Neuland': Der Einigungsprozess im Spiegel von Bildern und ihrer Diskurse," in *Diskurse der deutschen Einheit: Kritik und Alternativen*, ed. Raj Kollmorgen, Frank T. Koch, and Hans-Liudger Dienel (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 193–222; and Konrad Sziedat, "Die 'Friedliche Revolution' im Westen: Bundesrepublikanische DDR-Bilder 1989/1990 und die Erinnerung heute," in *(Ost)Deutschlands Weg 1989–2021*, ed. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, Holger Kulick, and Frank Ebert (Berlin/Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2021), 237–249.

memory collective, the memory rhetoric and symbolism are almost exclusively positively occupied and strongly emotionalised.

What is missing from this, however, is two-fold: More broadly speaking, these images exclude the subsequent phase of a long period of transformation, which certainly saw its peak in the 1990s, but was also a major drive of influence on Germany's developments in the early twenty-first century as well as still being of tremendous political and social relevance today. It is certainly less attractive a narrative than that of communal effort, overarching consensus and sheer force of collective strife, which finally led to the toppling of the anti-democratic regime and the separation of the German people. Not only does it feature economic hardship with rising numbers of unemployment and labour mobility,³ but it also represents a time of collective and individual identity crisis to East Germans, who experienced a loss of their *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld; Edmund Husserl) as well as a devaluation of their life achievements and a replacement of the security of a relatively certain future with the great unknown.⁴ The major consequences of this were the disruption of a general sense of belonging and the destruction of East German communities, both on a level of family and close personal relationships as well as on a wider societal level. The cumulation of those circumstances have since led to a wide array of discontent, causing a rift of conflict both within East Germany and along an East-West German axis.⁵ It is therefore necessary to complement the dominant images of joy over German re-unification with a perception of the 1990s and their comprehensive transformation claims as a time of crisis. Ambivalent feelings of belonging, individual and communal hopes and fears for the future as well as experiences of devaluation must be understood as the framework for social and personal action. As such, the East German society in the upheaval of the 1990s can rightfully be understood as a society of crisis and

³ Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, "Woanders ist auch Scheiße! Die Auswirkungen der Transformation nach 1990 auf die Gesellschaft in Ostdeutschland. Ein Überblick," in *(Ost)Deutschlands Weg 1989–2021*, ed. Kowalczyk, Kulick, and Ebert, 33–35.

⁴ Steffen Mau, "Ostdeutsche Frakturen für immer? Zwischen Entwertungsgefühlen und Ohnmachtserfahrungen – Welche Wege führen heraus?," in *(Ost)Deutschlands Weg 1989–2021*, ed. Kowalczyk, Kulick, and Ebert, 363–375.

⁵ A few well-known examples include the protest against the social welfare reforms (Hartz IV) in 2004, the PEGIDA (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, i.e. Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) movement of 2014/2015 and the following widespread support for the EU-sceptical and right-wing liberal party Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD) as well as the protests during the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. For a more comprehensive overview, see Detlef Pollack, *Das unzufriedene Volk: Protest und Ressentiment in Ostdeutschland von der Friedlichen Revolution bis heute* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2020).

conflict. With sociological studies as its starting point, this shift in the academic sphere began in the early 2000s and is now a long-established part of the canon in historical studies as well. In broader social contexts, especially in media and journalism, this change has lagged behind for a long time but has found its way into books, films and documentaries more recently. However, in everyday communication and remembrance these more challenging aspects of re-unification are still often glossed over, especially in West Germany.

More specifically, this narrative also excludes actors who either could not or did not want to identify themselves with a collective force for revolution arising from the people, or who were not externally perceived as part of it. On the one hand, this includes people who had either settled in with the existing system or who actively advocated for and supported it. On the other hand, it othered people who would not be recognised in the phrase *Wir sind das Volk* (We are the people) because of its inherent implication *Wir sind das deutsche Volk* (We are the German people): migrant workers and students (*Vertragsarbeiter:innen; Vertragsstudent:innen*) from allied socialist countries in the Global South as well as refugees from Cold War theatres that had often lived in the GDR for a long time and were an important part of everyday life. Großbölting has comprehensively explained the extent to which the call for re-unification is an inherently national interpretation that assumed citizenship as the requirement for access to participation in the restructuring of the state.⁶ The inclusion of desires, fears and needs in the negotiation process of the conditions of the two German states was thus closely linked to citizenship, most often excluding the interests of immigrants entirely. Although their perspectives have finally started to be taken into account when discussing the impacts of re-unification, the discussion is still in its infancy both in academia and especially in broader social contexts.

This article centres the perspective of the second group by exploring the transformative period of post-wall East Germany as a period of conflict and violence by analysing the experiences of Women of Colour in East Germany in the 1990s.⁷ While a lot of the current research focuses on people who have experi-

⁶ Thomas Großbölting, “Was Einheitsjubiläum und rassistische Gewalt miteinander zu tun haben: Nationale Identitätspolitik in der Wiedervereinigungsgesellschaft,” in *Jahrbuch Deutsche Einheit 2021*, ed. Marcus Böick, Ralph Jessen, and Constantin Goschler (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2021), 13–30.

⁷ The term People of Colour is used in this article when referring to members of more than one ethnic minority. Going back to its use as self-designation in the USA, the term is used in Germany as well as the British variant BIPoC within the community itself. Despite its limitations, especially its tendency to paint with a very broad brush and the understanding of “white” as colourless, the term is currently the most widely spread self-referential term.

enced the impact of the transformation as adults, this case study aims to broaden this view with the perspective of adolescents and young adults. Understanding this stage of life as a major drive for the development of identity, the analysis is particularly interested in how experiences at a young age are remembered and interpreted as adults as well as in how they are integrated into the individual's self-perception. It will therefore first contextualise which institutional and social structures contributed to the racism experienced by People of Colour pre 1989 and how these structures of subliminal aggression escalated into an initial peak of violence in the early 1990s. Subsequently, the potentials and challenges of the available source corpus are examined paying special attention to the underrepresentation of reports created by both victims and perpetrators as well as the milieu dependency of the existing sources. Four case studies are then used to explore if and how racism experienced as children and adolescents is integrated into narratives of one's own identity in adult narration. Which strategies are used to contextualise the experiences of racist othering and violence in relation of their own identity formation processes? How are feelings of both belonging and marginalisation expressed? How do the narrators engage with claims to dominance over public space as well as the restriction of their own agency? And how is agency displayed in the way adolescent experiences are retold and reframed? Is the role of People of Colour in the public narrative of remembrance concerning re-unification and transformative period addressed? Are experiences of being East German, a Person of Colour and female interwoven?

Being a topic that has only recently started to be explored in the social, political and academic sphere in Germany, both the primary sources as well as the secondary literature still leave a lot to be desired. This goes hand-in-hand with the fact that English language research on the topic is still almost entirely missing, and translations of relevant sources are largely unavailable. To bridge this gap, courtesy translations of all quotes are provided. To keep the inherent subjectiveness of translation in check, the German originals are provided to allow for more transparency and accountability by enabling readers to review and verify the source material.

The 1990s – Violent Climax of Racist Othering and Alienation

As People of Colour had long faced discrimination in the GDR, this othering experience of the protest in 1989 were hardly surprising. Despite being legally guaranteed equal rights with GDR citizens in many regards, immigrants were often confronted with situations of severe exclusion and discrimination in

everyday life.⁸ For many of them, their everyday life pre-1989 was influenced by segregation from the white majority population. Some aspects of that segregation were shaped through social practices of exclusion, where many People of Colour felt essentially barred from publicly organised community activities such as sports and cultural associations and festivities.⁹ Other aspects were organised by institutional structures. Financially, migrant workers found themselves affected by the fact that they not only usually supported their family at home, but also had to pay relatively high percentages of their salary to their states of origin as well as compulsory dues to unions and other organisations in the GDR. Socially, they were bound by restrictions that determined not only where they lived, but also who they shared their lives with. For example, many migrant workers lived in supervised boarding houses, often in shared rooms, and were subject to curfew and visitation restrictions. Marriages and familiar relationships of migrant workers and students were heavily regulated by the state. For instance, it was not permitted for spouses or children of migrant workers or students to enter the GDR to join them and live together. The regulations were particularly strict for female workers, whose residency permits were revoked if they became pregnant, leading to a situation where many women felt pressured to terminate their pregnancies.¹⁰ Marriages with GDR citizens were also limited by legislation and everyday political practices, often even when couples already had children together. These regulations were most strictly applied to couples where the foreign partner was male, black and/or Muslim.¹¹ Legally and most importantly, their situation was in general overwhelmingly determined by precarious working conditions and easily-revoked residence permits. For many of them, re-unification meant immediate repatriation. Even those who were able to stay

⁸ Patrice G. Poutrus and Katharina Warda, "Ostdeutsche of Color: Schwarze Geschichte(n) der DDR und Erfahrungen nach der deutschen Einheit," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 72, no. 12 (2022): 19–25.

⁹ Peggy Piesche, "Schwarz und deutsch? Eine ostdeutsche Jugend vor 1989 – Retrospektive auf ein 'nichtexistentes' Thema in der DDR," accessed April 14, 2023, <https://heimatkunde.boell.de/de/2006/05/01/schwarz-und-deutsch-eine-ostdeutsche-jugend-vor-1989-retrospektive-auf-ein>.

¹⁰ Maja Bogojević, "'Wenn wir schwanger werden, werden wir abgeschoben': Feministischer Zwischenrud," Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Gunda Werner Institut – Feminismus und Geschlechterdemokratie, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.gwi-boell.de/de/2021/03/04/wenn-wir-schwanger-werden-werden-wir-abgeschoben>; Seyda Kurt, "Vertragsarbeiter*innen in der DDR: 'Heute können sie keine Kinder mehr kriegen, weil sie kaputt sind'," *zeit*, October 16, 2018, <https://www.zeit.de/zett/politik/2018-10/vertragsarbeiterinnen-in-der-ddr-heute-koennen-sie-keine-kinder-mehr-kriegen-weil-sie-kaputt-sind>.

¹¹ Christoph Lorke, "Verhandelte Grenzüberschreitungen: Binationale und interkulturelle Eheschließungen und Paarbeziehungen in der DDR," *Deutschland Archiv*, October 13, 2021, www.bpb.de/342017.

in Germany after 1990 were disproportionately affected by unemployment as well as the devaluation of qualifications and educational attainments. The lack of agency over physical and social space can therefore be understood as the shaping factor of the Other's quotidian life in the GDR.

The experience of othering, alienation and subliminal violence escalated in the transformation period of the 1990s, when overarching tension started to be vented in the form of a sharp increase of violence by radicalised right-wing actors. The target group of the facilitated attacks included everyone who visibly deviated from the majority society. First and foremost, this included People of Colour, especially (former) migrant students and workers as well as refugees. However, the hostility was also directed against punks and other visible politically left-wing groups, homeless people, people with disabilities, members of the queer and Jewish communities as well as members of other minorities in society.¹² One of the defining tipping points was the 2nd and 3rd October 1990. While millions of people were engaged in the grandiose celebrations of two German states becoming one, extreme right-wing actors used the opportunity to facilitate widespread, armed and coordinated attacks. The police were at best overwhelmed, at worst ignorant or even supportive of the violence.¹³ The assaults that night included hooliganism, small-scale scuffles and lighter physical attacks on individuals, but also escalated to mobs and mass riots in city centres. Private homes of migrant worker and refugee accommodation as well as left-wing political centres and squats were subject to arson attacks and mass sieges, with some of these attacks escalating into physical assaults and violent trespassing.¹⁴ Although some of the attacks were deliberately directed against celebrations of German re-unification, these acts of violence have received little public or academic attention and have not become part of the public discourse of remembrance of the year of unification. This is particularly concerning since an uptick in right-wing violence can be observed on the anniversary of reunification on the 2nd and 3rd October each year to this day.¹⁵

¹² Till Kössler and Janosch Steuwer, "Einleitung," in Kössler and Steuwer, *Brandspuren* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2023), 9.

¹³ zweiteroktober90, "Der 2. Oktober 1990: Ein Überblick," in zweiteroktober90, *Die Gewalt der Vereinigung* (n.p.: zweiteroktober90, 2021), 12–17.

¹⁴ For an in-depth overview see: zweiteroktober90, ed., *Die Gewalt der Vereinigung* (n.p.: zweiteroktober90, 2021) as well as the accompanying online project zweiteroktober90, "Die Gewalt Der Vereinigung," accessed April 3, 2023, <https://zweiteroktober90.de/>.

¹⁵ zweiteroktober90, "Chronik," in zweiteroktober90, *Die Gewalt der Vereinigung* (n.p.: zweiteroktober90, 2021), 42–45.

The attacks described here marked the beginning of an escalation of violence that reached its preliminary climax in 1991–1993. The commemorations of the pogroms of Hoyerswerda in September 1991 and Rostock-Lichtagen in August 1992 and the deadly arson attacks in Mölln in November 1992 and Solingen in May 1993 have become something of an annual ritual ever since. While those attacks on People of Colour were certainly the most visible, well-recorded and most widely known through their extensive media coverage as well as high number of active perpetrators and supportive bystanders, giving them an almost performative nature, Kössler and Steuwer have extensively explored how the implied uniqueness of these events through this almost mantra-like list is misleading and how these events must be seen as merely the tip of the iceberg in a larger context of all-out violence.¹⁶ Instead, it is necessary to understand violence as one of the determining influences on everyday life that had to be taken into account at all times. A phrase commonly used by witnesses summarises the experience to the point: it can happen anytime and anywhere anyway, dismissing resistance and avoidance as pointless.

However, it is also important to emphasise that, although the 1990s were a peak period of right-wing violence, this was not a sudden or unforeseeable eruption. The actors were able to draw on well-established structures of racism and violence. In addition to the extensive everyday racism and exclusionary practices, Virchow has identified an emerging right-wing skinhead scene in the GDR since the 1970s that had become markedly politicised in the 1980s and radicalised in the 1990s.¹⁷ Ideas that right-wing violence only emerged in East Germany with or because of re-unification are therefore clearly too short-sighted and it is more accurate to speak of a continuity of violence that reached a new level of escalation in the early 1990s.¹⁸ However, similar structural characteristics

¹⁶ Kössler and Steuwer, “Einleitung,” 9–12.

¹⁷ Fabian Virchow, “Rechte Gewalt in Deutschland nach 1945. Eine Einordnung der 1990er Jahre,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 72, no. 49–50 (2022): 10–14. For further details, see also Harry Waißel, *Rechte Kontinuitäten: Rassismus und Neonazismus in Deutschland seit 1945* (Hamburg: Marta Press, 2022); Rainer Ericces, “Hetzjagd im August 1975 in Erfurt: Wie Ausländerfeindlichkeit in der DDR verharmlost und verleugnet wurde,” *Gerbargasse 18. Thüringer Vierteljahrszeitschrift für Zeitgeschichte und Politik* 23, no. 4 (2018): 22–25; Walter Süß, *Zur Wahrnehmung und Interpretation des Rechtsextremismus in der DDR durch das MfS* (Berlin: Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 2000); and Bernd Wagner, *Rechtsradikalismus in der Spät-DDR: Zur militant-nazistischen Radikalisierung – Wirkungen und Reaktionen in der DDR-Gesellschaft* (Berlin: edition widerschein, 2014).

¹⁸ For a statistical evaluation and overview, see Janosch Steuwer and Till Kössler, “Gewalttaten, Gewaltdeutungen: Historische Perspektiven auf die rechte Gewalt der frühen 1990er Jahre,” in Kössler and Steuwer, *Brandspuren*.

can also be identified for the FRG and West Germany. For instance, Manthe illustrates that the 1980s in the FRG was also a time in which right-wing action started to possess a new quality of potentials, dynamics and practices of violence.¹⁹ Both Herbert and Zeppenfeld demonstrate that right-wing violence was continuously linked to migration and directed against people who did not conform to the image of the majority society, in the sense of a primarily white-presenting one.²⁰ In both East and West Germany, People of Colour were particularly exposed through their visible otherness and were subsequently often the primary targets of right-wing attacks, as opposed to other target groups such as left-wing agents who at least theoretically were able to blend in through conforming to the visible, social standards expected by right-wing aggressors.²¹ The frequently-held theory that right-wing extremism and violence boiled up in the GDR or East Germany and spilled over into the West is therefore not tenable. Consequently, two of the most common narratives about radicalised right-wing violence must therefore be questioned, if not discarded entirely: It is neither a sudden nor an exclusively East German development we are confronted with but rather a continuing, state-wide issue. However, the magnitude of the attacks and the high spatial dominance neo-nazi and other extreme right-wing actors were able to exert is specific to East Germany. This was clearly linked to a

claim of not only implementing isolated acts of intimidation and punishment, but to exert a lasting influence on the social order by controlling the space through their own presence and targeted violence. [...] Right-wing extremists [attempted] to shape public space and everyday life and decide on permitted or non-permitted behaviour.²²

¹⁹ Barbara Manthe, "Vom Rechtsterrorismus zur rechtsradikalen Gewalt: Die Bundesrepublik in den 1980er- und frühen 1990er-Jahren," in Kössler and Steuwer, *Brandspuren*, here in particular 107.

²⁰ Ulrich Herbert, "Migration und rechte Gewalt: Deutschland 1980 bis 1993," in Kössler a Steuwer, *Brandspuren*; Stefan Zeppenfeld, "Feuerlöscher, Revolver und der Kampf um Anerkennung: Migrantische Reaktionen auf die rechte Gewalt der frühen 1990er Jahre," in Kössler and Steuwer, *Brandspuren*.

²¹ Christian Bangel, "#Baseballschlägerjahre," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 72, no. 49–50 (2022), 6. For a comparison between xenophobic violence in East and West Germany see Michael Kohlstruck, "Maskuline Jugendszenen und fremdenfeindliche Gewalt in den 1980er und frühen 1990er-Jahren in Ost und West," in Kössler and Steuwer, *Brandspuren*.

²² Virchow, "Rechte Gewalt in Deutschland nach 1945," 14: "Anspruch, nicht nur vereinzelt Akte der Einschüchterung und Bestrafung umzusetzen, sondern mittels Kontrolle des Raumes durch eigene Präsenz und gezielte Gewalt möglichst nachhaltig Einfluss auf die soziale Ordnung zu nehmen. [...] Rechtsextreme [versuchten] den öffentlichen Raum und das Alltagsleben prägen und über erlaubtes beziehungsweise nicht-erlaubtes Verhalten entscheiden."

Friedemann Schwenzer explored the effectiveness of these claims of dominance in his analysis of the Twitter hashtag *#baseballschlägerjahre* (*#baseballbatyears*), in which those affected describe the everyday influence of right-wing dominance and violence.²³ The baseball bat quickly became a social and academic symbol of the 1990s after the emergence of this hashtag.

Drawing on the above, a number of central points emerge. East Germany in the upheaval of the 1990s constitutes a society of economic and social crisis that led to a heightened potential for conflict, which must be understood as the framework for the escalation of violence examined in this article. Both the GDR and the FDR portrayed long-term structures of racist discrimination that found a relatively wide-spread support beyond the borders of radical right-wing groups. Since the 1970s at the latest, both German states faced an increase of racially motivated violence, especially in the form of street attacks on individuals and arson attacks on residences. Therefore, the 1990s must be recognised as the preliminary peak of the escalation of extreme right-wing violence. Although extreme right-wing violence during this period was directed against all those who did not outwardly correspond to the conforming image defined by right-wing actors – including punks and other politically left-wing activists, homeless people, people with disabilities and members of other minorities in society – People of Colour were affected with particular severity and frequency of attacks. Furthermore, the attacks on People of Colour differed from those on other groups in that they found a broader understanding of the motives for the crime in society, even if such violent enforcement was not met with approval. This is a phenomenon in both East and West Germany that draws on a long history of right-wing violence and racism. The commonly referred to narrative that extreme right-wing radicalisation was able to be fostered on the ruins of the GDR and then spread to the west can therefore not be upheld. However, structural differences between East and West Germany need to be taken into account. Eastern Germany stands out due to the high spatial dominance of extreme right-wing acts of violence as well as due to the much wider spread support the motives found in society, even if the violence itself did not. Bangel even goes so far as to describe these conditions as specifically East German generational experiences of children and young adults of the 1990s.²⁴ In doing so, he takes up strategies of communalisation used by young East Germans to form boundaries of belonging and origin, which have

²³ Friedemann Schwenzer, “#baseballschlägerjahre: Ostdeutschland erinnern” (Master’s Thesis, Universität Potsdam, 2021), https://www.academia.edu/92378684/Baseballschl%C3%A4gerjahre_Ostdeutschland_erinnern.

²⁴ Bangel, “#Baseballschlägerjahre,” 7.

seen an influx of use in the last couple of years.²⁵ This tendency ties into a development that has been booming for more than twenty years in the academic, political, media and cultural spheres.²⁶ The term “generation” aims to order history and, in particular, to break down the complexity of historical upheavals such as revolutions and system changes as well as the heterogeneity of political and social developments.²⁷ With these considerations in mind, it is not surprising that the term has been claimed by various groups after the re-unification to make sense of their situations and to claim an impact on their own identity formation that is perceived as unique, non-replicable and non-recurring.

Confronting the Limitations of the Source Corpus whilst Accessing Underrepresented Narratives

In terms of research, we are faced with the great difficulty that many of the violent acts were not recorded at all or were not distinctively categorised as racially or politically motivated. Furthermore, there are few records of the perpetrators and victims themselves. Consequently, the available evidence instead consists predominantly of secondary reports by the police and media.²⁸ Direct access is therefore mostly not possible and the perspective of those affected is often lost from view. This is particularly true for the age group examined here because they have only recently begun to deal with their own life story in public and through the media, demanding that their experiences be integrated into the narrative of memory. First attempts to focus on the experiences of People of Colour and their perspectives on right-wing attacks are finally beginning to spread into public and academic discourse.²⁹ Women of Colour constitute a doubly marginalised group, as female perspectives are also often overlooked and

²⁵ For an initial insight see the collection of contributions in Corinne Orlowski, ed., *Metamorphosen 28: Nachwendekinder* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2020). For a more in-depth exploration see Johannes Nichelmann, *Nachwendekinder: Die DDR, unsere Eltern und das große Schweigen* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2019) and Valerie Schönian, *Ostbewusstsein: Warum Nachwendekinder für den Osten streiten und was das für die Deutsche Einheit bedeutet* (München: Piper, 2020).

²⁶ Bernd Weisbrod, “Generation und Generationalität in der Neueren Geschichte,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* no. 8 (2005): 3.

²⁷ Ulrike Jureit, “Einleitung zu Karl Mannheims ‘Das Problem der Generationen,’” 2, accessed April 7, 2023, https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument_de&dokument=0100_gen&object=sources&st=&l=d.

²⁸ Steuer and Kössler, “Gewalttaten, Gewaltdeutungen,” 24–25.

²⁹ For instance, see Steuer and Kössler, “Gewalttaten, Gewaltdeutungen,” zweiteroktober90, “Die Gewalt der Vereinigung” and Massimo Perinelli and Lydia Lierke, eds., *Erinnern stören: Der Mauerfall aus migrantischer und jüdischer Perspektive* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2020).

remain unheard, both when discussing the present and the past. As such, this essay attempts to widen the nascent discussion by bringing female perspectives on racist othering and violence in the 1990s to the fore. However, it is important to emphasise that women form a double void in the current state of research: Decidedly female perspectives on being a victim *and* being a perpetrator are both still overwhelmingly missing. For, although the radical right-wing scene is still dominated by male claims to power, the perspective of an exclusively male right-wing extremism and perpetration of violence is certainly outdated.³⁰ Beate Zschäpe, member of the Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground; NSU) serves as the most prominent example. Another one is the far-right and ultranationalist political party Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany, NPD) that has always had female representatives and supporters which often acted and spoke publicly in support of its extremist views.

While a lot of the existing research focuses on people who experienced the violence of the 1990s as adults, the conditions portrayed above also provided the framework for growing up and finding one's own identity for people who experienced this time as children or adolescents. This group has so far not been taken into consideration on a wider scale. This essay tries to bridge this gap by linking the female perspective to that of youth. The aim is not and cannot be to historically reconstruct the reality of the 1990s, but to categorise and classify the memory of that time according to perception of those affected. Special focus is given to the role of personal experiences in influencing self-construction and social location, and in making this influence tangible by taking into account the perception of *space*.

The specificity of this question is inherent in the fact that the source corpus here is small, especially since the source situation, as already explained, is generally rather unsatisfactory. The case studies examined here therefore by no means claim to be exhaustive but are intended to offer a first insight into an intersectionality that has received little attention so far, forging a path for further research. This essay will use works of four women from East Germany who experienced the 1990s as children or teenagers. Nhi Le, born 1995 in Thuringia, is a journalist, speaker and spoken word poet. Working on topics centred around

³⁰ The Forschungsnetzwerk Frauen und Rechtsextremismus (Research Network Women and Right-Wing Extremism) headed by Prof. Dr Michaela Köttig has been trying to close this gap for some time. Their research can be found here: Forschungsnetzwerk Frauen und Rechtsextremismus, "Forschungsnetzwerk Frauen und Rechtsextremismus," accessed April 7, 2023, <http://frauen-und-rechtsextremismus.de/>.

feminism, anti-racism and media culture, she has received the Juliane-Bartels-Prize for her work in 2017 as well as being named part of the top 30 journalists under the age of 30 by the *Medium Magazine* in 2021.³¹ Thembi Wolf, born 1990 in Jena, is a journalist and information managing editor at the online magazine *krautreporter*, after having left her position as editor-in-chief at VICE Germany. She has received numerous journalistic fellowships, working on ethics and diversity in journalism as well as the topic of East Germany.³² Katharina Warda, born 1985 in Wernigerode, is a sociologist, literary scholar and doctoral student writing a dissertation on diary blogs and marginalised identities in Berlin and Princeton. She works as a freelance writer and journalist focusing on East Germany, marginalised identities, racism, classism and punk.³³ Olivia Wenzel, born 1985 in Weimar, is an author and musician that primarily writes and produces theatre plays. Besides writing, she organises workshops with children, teenagers and young adults. Her debut novel *1000 Serpentinien Angst*³⁴ received wide-spread recognition and was honoured with multiple literary awards.³⁵

Three things are worth noting in this context. First, working with existing sources instead of deriving a sample by structuring and conducting interviews relies on the information the narrators themselves provide about their regional and social background information. The narrators also present this information in a way that has a specific aim, structure and intention. This essay has repurposed this information, and so some questions remain unanswered. Who were the narrators' parents, where were they from? Why, when and how did they come to the GDR or East Germany? Because this information is lacking, we also do not know about the legal status of the parents and children in Germany. Hand in hand with this goes the lack of information about the narrators' legal status in Germany, which is tightly interlinked to questions of security, precariousness and available resources. Are the narrators German or dual citizens, do they rely on permanent or temporary residence permits? Which specific educational and linguistic background do they have? Which political affiliations do they have? Some of this information can be inferred but is not directly addressed. This lack of sociological background information is particularly unsatisfactory because

³¹ Nhi Le, "About Me," accessed April 11, 2023, <https://nhi-le.de/about-me/>.

³² Thembi Wolf, "Über mich," accessed April 11, 2023, <https://www.thembiwolf.de/ueber-mich/>.

³³ Krautreporter, "Katharina Warda," accessed April 11, 2023, <https://krautreporter.de/57331-katharina-warda>.

³⁴ Originally published Olivia Wenzel, *1000 Serpentinien Angst* (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 2020), English edition *1000 Coils of Fear* (London: Dialogue Books, 2022).

³⁵ S. Fischer Verlag, "Autor*innen: Olivia Wenzel," accessed April 11, 2023, <https://www.fischerverlage.de/autor/olivia-wenzel-1009108>.

it makes it hard to take into account the social capital available to the narrators when considering the experience of racism as well as their reaction to and interpretation of it.

Second, it is significant that three out of the four individuals are from Thuringia and are therefore far from providing a meaningful picture of East Germany in terms of regional distribution. In further research, questions of regionality should find a more prominent role. Do the experiences differ between different federal states? Which role does the difference between urban and rural regions play?

Third, all the narrators studied here have an educated, journalistic and artistic background. All of them are well educated, all of them are journalists, artists and activists, many of them are academics. As such they are not representative of the average East German and the multiplicity of their roles blurs the line between oral history reports and academic discourse, especially because the sources consist of mix of articles, essays as well as written and video-recorded interviews. However, the perspectives of people from these backgrounds often take a pioneering role in expressing their experiences and opinions publicly. Hopefully the study of a more extensive and representative corpus will be possible as the field spreads into the public eye, more open discussions are had, and more people are willing to publicly share their experiences. A larger and more diverse range of sources can be accessed through approaches of oral and digital history, for example by conducting larger-scale interview studies, as well as analysing the large corpora available through social media.

Racist Othering, Marginalisation and Exclusion as a Quotidian Experience

In all the case studies examined here, the narrators foreground the everyday nature of the racist discrimination they experience(d). This means that they did not perceive racist othering, marginalisation and exclusion as an exceptional situation, but rather as something that permanently accompanies them and frames their lives. For instance, Le uses the term *Alltagsrassismus* (everyday racism) implying an almost mundane experience.³⁶ Wolf explicitly rejects the idea of racism as an occasional experience by saying “The idea that racism is a singular event [...] is nonsense. It is quotidian”, centring the omnipresence of

³⁶ Nhi Le, “Think Tank: Immer wieder das Gleiche,” in *Ost Deutsch Now*, ed. Sebastian Jung (Jena: Kerber Verlag, 2019), 16.

marginalisation.³⁷ For the 1990s, Warda mentions “stories of everyday fear and violence”, while Wenzel goes one step further assessing the time period as everyday terror.³⁸ The terms “everyday life” and “quotidian” is thus not only an analytical tool used to examine racism through an academic lens but also a source term used by those affected. Even though the German terms *Alltag* (everyday life) and *alltäglich* (quotidian) have a less formal and academic connotation than the English terms, it remains to be seen whether this duality is found in the sources analysed here due to the educational background of the narrators or whether a more widespread use can be found in research with larger sample groups. However, the emotional statements in the source corpus examined here correspond to those of other studies such as that of Schwenzer.³⁹ Therefore, it seems likely that the emotion communicated here will also be found in other sources, even if the language used to verbalise them might differ.

The description of everyday terror reveals the special significance of the 1990s as a time in which violence is experienced as transgressional and all-encompassing. The emotions felt by the narrators during this time are mirrored by Schwenzer’s findings in his social media analysis, indicating that this was a very common phenomenon. The feeling of constant fear is also the defining emotion Wenzel links to this time period, who strongly identifies with the symbol of the baseball bat for the time she spent growing up:

What some like to call the “baseball bat years” today, I perceive the same way in retrospect – as this terrifying everyday terror in the 90s, when neo-Nazis aggressively performed their neo-Naziness in public. These images of youths in bomber jackets with shaved heads and baseball bats ambushing me and my friends from time to time, this raw, blunt threat they posed, their unconditional will to spread fear – these images are still far too present for me. [...] [I] was [...] really scared when I was young.⁴⁰

³⁷ Elsa Köster, “Was kostet ein rassistischer Tweet?: Interview mit Thembi Wolf,” *der Freitag*, no. 42 (2020), <https://www.freitag.de/autoren/elsa-koester/was-kostet-ein-rassistischer-tweet>: “Die Vorstellung, dass Rassismus ein singuläres Event ist, [...] ist Unsinn. Er ist Alltag.”

³⁸ Katharina Warda, “Der Ort, aus dem ich komme, heißt Dunkeldeutschland”, *Krautreporter*, October 1, 2020, <https://krautreporter.de/3521-der-ort-aus-dem-ich-komme-heisst-dunkeldeutschland>; “Geschichten von alltäglicher Angst und Gewalt”; Corinne Orłowski and Olivia Wenzel, “Interview mit Olivia Wenzel,” *Metamorphosen* 28, ed. Orłowski, 66: “Alltagsterror”.

³⁹ Schwenzer, “#baseballschlägerjahre.”

⁴⁰ Orłowski and Wenzel, “Interview mit Olivia Wenzel,” 66–67: “Was manche heute gern die ‘Baseballschlägerjahre’ nennen, empfinde ich rückblickend genauso – als gruseligen Alltagsterror in den 90ern, als die Neonazis ihr Neonazidasein aggressiv in Öffentlichkeiten performten. Diese Bilder von glatzköpfigen Jugendlichen in Bomberjacken mit Baseballschlägern, die mir und meinen Freunden ab und zu auflauern, diese rohe, stumpfe Bedrohung, die von ihnen ausging, ihr

This description illustrates that the violence experienced is such a regular occurrence, exerted by so many perpetrators that it is centred less on the individual aggressors and more on the general phenomenon. In her description of an unconditional will to spread fear, Wenzel portrays herself as powerless in comparison to the omnipotence of her attackers. They are presented as a monolithic force, a movement rather than a group of individuals, acting according to values that find widespread social support. This description is linked to the media portrayal of pogroms as mass events in which actors from the openly and visibly radical right-wing milieu appear together with those who superficially seem to belong to a more moderate political milieu, suggesting support that reaches beyond social fringe groups. To understand the feeling of transgressional and all-encompassing aggression and threat, it is less important in how far those emotions are statistically anchored. Instead, the way the aggressions themselves are mirrored by media portrayals of attacks directed against others makes it the narrators' emotional reality and therefore lived experience.

The powerlessness expressed here is underlined through the enormous age gap between the aggressors and the victims, as evident in Warda's description of her childhood:

1992, I am seven years old and attend the second grade of primary school. On the way home my real lessons begin: running, hiding, not showing fear. I learn to dash away when the group of girls from the vocational college hurls stones at me while calling me the N-word. I learn to hide in time when groups of men in bomber jackets come towards me, and to slowly become numb because there is no way out of this hell that is home.⁴¹

The aggression is so high and so excessive that it transgresses a boundary that is traditionally seen as universal. Children of Colour are excluded from the social contract that defines children as a vulnerable part of society that must be protected by all its members.

unbedingter Wille, Angst zu verbreiten – diese Bilder sind mir immer noch viel zu präsent. [...] [Ich] hatte [...] richtig viel Angst in meiner Jugend."

⁴¹ Warda, "Der Ort, aus dem ich komme, heißt Dunkeldeutschland": "1992, ich bin sieben Jahre alt und besuche die zweite Klasse einer Plattenbaugrundschule. Auf dem Weg nach Hause beginnt mein eigentlicher Unterricht: wegrennen, verstecken, keine Angst zeigen. Ich lerne zu flitzen, wenn die Mädchengruppe aus der Berufsschule mich mit dem N-Wort beschimpfend mit Steinen bewirft. Lerne mich rechtzeitig zu verstecken, wenn Männergruppen in Bomberjacken auf mich zu kommen, und langsam abzustumpfen, weil es aus dieser Hölle Heimat keinen Ausweg gibt."

This explains why a lot of space in the narratives is also given to the feeling of exclusion and violence as a component of earliest childhood memories. Their experiences differ especially from the narratives of first generation immigrants because a time before racist violence moulds their lives and actions is unknown to them as it has accompanied them “from the beginning”.⁴² The specificity of their experience as children and adolescents of the 1990s, especially for the younger actors studied here, lies in the fact that they were often not yet able to categorise and express their feelings and experiences themselves. For example, Wenzel says that as a child and young teenager she was “very angry about the conditions and the everyday racism” but while she could clearly feel “injustices and inequalities” she was not yet able to find words to voice her experiences.⁴³ This feeling is shared by Warda, who explains, “I realised very early on that I am seen as different. And that this is not a good thing. I don’t understand why, but I understand that my life is potentially in danger”.⁴⁴ However, the experience of this violence does not end in the wake of the new millennium and can therefore not be regarded as a phenomenon of the past. For instance, Le links her experience as a child closely to a systemic and systematic marginalisation and the constant fear of verbal and physical racist violence she still experiences as an adult today. The violence directed against her personally throughout her life and the pogroms she was exposed to in the 1990s through the media and the narration of others can therefore be understood as a multilayered trauma that is being reinforced through ongoing and regular exposure to threats or acts of violence.⁴⁵

Dominance and Agency in Public Space

Consequently, a central point of the narratives is the high spatial dominance of extreme right-wing and neo-nazi groups in combination with the ignorance or support of the majority society. For instance, this perceived dominance

⁴² Thomas Grimme, *Katharina Warda – Dunkeldeutschland* (2020), accessed April 8, 2023, <https://www.grimmchronik.com/katharina-warda-dunkeldeutschland/>, 00:09:14–00:09:48: “von Anfang an.” All video transcripts were created by the author and linguistically adapted to the requirements of written standard German.

⁴³ Orlowski and Wenzel, “Interview mit Olivia Wenzel,” 66–67: “sehr wütend auf die Zustände und den alltäglichen Rassismus”; “Ungerechtigkeiten und Ungleichbehandlungen.”

⁴⁴ Warda, “‘Der Ort, aus dem ich komme, heißt Dunkeldeutschland’”: “Mir wird sehr früh klar, dass ich als anders angesehen werde. Und dass das nichts Gutes ist. Ich verstehe nicht, warum, aber ich verstehe, dass mein Leben potenziell in Gefahr ist.”

⁴⁵ Corinne Orlowski and Nhi Le, “Interview Mit Nhi Le,” in *Metamorphosen 28*, ed. Orlowski, 72.

becomes very clear through the unimpeded neo-nazi marches witnessed by Warda as a child:

1990, Wernigerode. I am five years old. My mother's hand tightens around mine. On my right, against a backdrop of half-timbered houses, a gathering in rank and file, a march of neo-Nazis. My mother's grip tightens even more, nearly hurting now. She takes to her heels and disappears into the next alleyway with me.⁴⁶

The scene displays that People of Colour felt unprotected in the public sphere and felt the need to avoid potential dangers by fleeing, because they were unable to trust executive powers such as police or the moral courage of bystanders to guarantee their protection. The inaction and lack of support even extends to situations that go beyond the potential for violence, as evident in the teenage memory Warda shares next. Here, she and her friends are threatened with a loaded gun to their head in a shopping centre. Meanwhile, "indifferent shoppers walk past as if we're invisible".⁴⁷ Even a situation that would normally fall completely out of any and all social and legal norms almost becomes mundane in this description. Thus, People of Colour felt like they had to give up their right to public space in an act of self-preservation, fearing for their physical safety and even life. This often came at great emotional loss as evident in Wenzel's comment on a situation where she herself left instead of helping a family subjected to racist slurs and intimidation by neo-Nazis:

[...] because we were both unsettled and you can't really behave properly either way in a situation like this. So if you run away, you feel like a coward, like I did. [...] If you stay you involuntarily provoke more tension and then people might get seriously hurt. [...] No matter what we did I felt like we couldn't get it right.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Warda, "Der Ort, aus dem ich komme, heißt Dunkeldeutschland": "1990, Wernigerode. Ich bin fünf Jahre alt. Der Griff meiner Mutter um meine Hand wird fester. [...] Zu meiner Rechten, in der Kulisse der Fachwerkhäuser eine Versammlung in Reih und Glied, ein Aufmarsch von Neonazis. Der Griff meiner Mutter wird noch fester, tut fast schon weh. Sie nimmt die Beine in Hand und verschwindet mit mir in der nächsten Gasse."

⁴⁷ Warda, "Der Ort, aus dem ich komme, heißt Dunkeldeutschland": "unbeteiligte Einkäufer laufen an uns vorbei, als wären wir Luft."

⁴⁸ Nico Gutjahr, *Olivia Wenzel: „Rechter Terror macht wenigen Angst in Deutschland!“* YouTube video. #Webtalkshow, February 28, 2021, 00:14:11–00:16:02, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMOKQGRsEN4>: "[...] weil wir beide verunsichert waren und man sich in so einer Situation nicht richtig verhalten kann. Also wenn man abhaut, fühlt man sich feige, so wie ich dann. [...] Wenn man dableibt, provoziert man unfreiwillig vielleicht mehr Stress und dann kom-

She feels ashamed of herself and guilty, having outwardly succumbed to the same pattern of behaviour she condemns in the majority society. The choice of her own role as either a bystander or a victim seems to be perceived as binary and is closely linked to a lack of agency. While the narrators examined here do not see options outside of this binary scope, Zeppenfeld has started to explore other reactions such as community-based self-defence campaigns.⁴⁹ Further insight can be gained by Farin and Seidel's interviews with radicalised and violent groups of young adult People of Colour.⁵⁰ Those examples offer initial evidence that reactions centring loss and reclaiming of agency might be much wider spread than often claimed. In the future, it would be vital to broaden the current research not only by centring perspectives of differences between regions, ethnicities, and gender. How do the reactions differ between East and West Germany, and can those differences be linked to regionally different circumstances? Do responses vary between communities of different ethnicities? Are there gender-specific ways of dealing with racially motivated violence?

Furthermore, not only did these events and the permanent state of insecurity inflict primary trauma on the narrators examined here but the way those experiences are excluded from society's communal and public remembrance of the re-unification and its aftermath are a constant source of secondary trauma as well. It is exactly the recurring images of the *Friedliche Revolution*, which contradict their own experiences so directly and completely that often make them feel alienated:

First of all, all the disparaging remarks on all sides are not peaceful, and then there was all the violence during reunification. As I said, stories of People of Colour from that time are so seldom told; instead, especially on anniversaries, people always [...] try to bring back such a very positively overloaded narrative in which nothing else, no criticism, no other experiences have any place. And that is difficult. In my experience, that has nothing to do with reunification, with the experience of many others I know who come from East Germany.⁵¹

men richtig Leute zu schaden. [...] Also egal wie hatte ich das Gefühl, wir können das nicht richtig machen.”

⁴⁹ Zeppenfeld, “Feuerlöscher, Revolver und der Kampf um Anerkennung.”

⁵⁰ Klaus Farin and Eberhard Seidel, *Wendejugend: 14 Interviews* (Hirnkost: Berlin, 2019).

⁵¹ Grimme, *Katharina Warda – Dunkeldeutschland*, 00:16:10–00:16:57: “Die ganzen Abwertungen allen Seiten sind erst mal nicht friedlich, dann die ganze Gewalt während der Wiedervereinigung. Wie gesagt, es werden so selten Geschichten von People of Colour aus der Zeit erzählt, sondern gerade zu den Jubiläen wird immer [...] wieder ein so sehr positiv überladenes Narrativ zu bringen [versucht], in dem nichts anderes, keine Kritik, keine anderen Erfahrungen irgendwie Platz haben.

This assessment illuminates the feeling that the opinion and experiences of People of Colour are unappreciated. According to Warda, they feel like they have to edit their experiences and outlook to suit what they see as an artificial perspective on the transformational era. Subsequently, they feel left out and dismissed in the majority society. The feeling is shared by Wolf, who comments sarcastically: “If you want to tell a story as an East German, [...] you do well by telling a fable. A nice round fable, with a clever punch line that stands *pars par toto* for the essence of the East German of a certain generation. [...] A nice, standardised story [...]”⁵²

Her own story of a white GDR mother and a black, South African father whose family is wealthy and so politically influential that they include some of the “most prominent black exiles [...], future MPs, CEOs and female bankers” does not fit this expected mould.⁵³ She therefore often feels like she has to justify her own experiences and life story, to make it more palatable to the majority society, which she understands as both white and West German. Wenzel and Le go even further by assessing not only the lack of violence against People of Colour in the dominant narratives but even the ignorance of their existence at all. Both criticise the fact that East Germans are equated with exclusively white people and that the stories of People of Colour therefore remain untold.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in her poem for the 2022 anniversary festivities of the re-unification, Le especially stresses that People of Colour who came to Germany as migrant workers are doubly marginalised:

With chapped hands, on bent backs
In factories and in combines
Uncountable stories
often unheard, even untold

Und das ist schwierig. Das spricht überhaupt nicht aus meiner Erfahrung mit der Wiedervereinigung, aus der Erfahrung von ganz vielen anderen die ich kenne, die aus Ostdeutschland kommen.”

⁵² Thambi Wolf, “Eine ganz klassische, ostdeutsche Geschichte, in der zwei Diktaturen untergehen und ein Brummi-Fahrer heult,” in *Metamorphosen 28*, ed. Orłowski, 46: “Wenn man als Ossi eine Geschichte erzählen möchte, [...] tut man gut daran, eine Fabel zu erzählen. Eine schöne runde Formel, mit einer gescheiten Pointe, die Pars par Toto steht, für das Wesen des Ostdeutschen einer beliebigen Generation. [...] Eine nette, normierte Story [...]”

⁵³ Wolf, “Eine ganz klassische, ostdeutsche Geschichte,” 47: “einige der prominentesten, schwarzen Exilanten [...], zukünftige Abgeordnete, CEOs und Bankerinnen.”

⁵⁴ Madlen Geidel, *Olivia Wenzel über das Leben als schwarze Frau in Deutschland* (arte.tv, 2020), accessed April 11, 2023, <https://www.arte.tv/de/videos/099109-000-A/olivia-wenzel-ueber-das-leben-als-schwarze-frau-in-deutschland/>, 00:00:21–00:00:37; Orłowski and Le, “Interview mit Nhi Le,” 72.

When we talk about German Unification

I ask myself:

Who are we actually talking about?

And who is left out?

Who felt growing pains?

And who suffered massive fractures?

Is there room?

Between blossoming landscapes and
burning houses.

What's tangible and what's an act?

And who's going to say that I divide,
when I only point out gaps.⁵⁵

Not only is their contribution in factories and combines at the cost of their physical and mental health not appreciated, but they are also subjected to a low social status. Consequently, they remain invisible in the public discourse about re-unification. The choice of the word “unification” instead of “re-unification” also signifies that the perspective of a national framework that Großbölting has illustrated does not emotionally resonate with migrant workers. Partially due to their lack of either GDR or FRG citizenship but even more so because of their lack of connection to a return to the historical idea of a united Germany, they are excluded from this narrative. This also contributes to migrant workers not sharing their experiences so they remain “untold”. However, even when they find the courage to share those experiences, the majority society ignores their narratives so they remain “unheard”. Hence, in Le’s interpretation, migrant workers are not

⁵⁵ “Festakt zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit: ARD Sondersendung,” October 3, 2022, ARD Mediathek, 00:34:08–00:34:48 <https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/ard-sondersendung/festakt-zum-tag-der-deutschen-einheit/das-erste/Y3JpZDovL2Rhc2Vyc3RlLmRlL2FyZC1zb25kZXJzZW5kdW5nL2NiOWI4NDUxLWZmNzgtNDJiMi05YjE2LWw5NGFmNTAyMzlhMw:> “Mit rauen Händen, auf derben Rücken./ In Fabriken und in Kombinat / Unzählige Geschichten, / Oft ungehört, gar unerzählt. // Wenn wir über deutsche Einheit sprechen, / dann frag ich mich: / Wer ist da eigentlich mitgemeint? / Und wer wird außen vorgelassen? // Wer empfand wohl Wachstumsschmerzen? / Und wer erlitt massive Brüche? // Wo ist Platz? / Zwischen blühenden Landschaften und / brennenden Häusern. // Was ist Fest und was Theater? // Und wer wird sagen, dass ich spalte, / obwohl ich nur auf Lücken hinweise.”

“included” when talking about the impacts of the German re-unification and the subsequent transformation. Furthermore, East Germans of Colour were politically double disappointed. Like all East Germans they were promised “blossoming landscapes” (*Blühende Landschaften*) by Helmut Kohl, i.e. the promise of a future in prosperity and contentment, but instead experience depreciation of their financial, social and cultural capital. However, other than the white majority of East Germans, People of Colour also received “burning houses”, i.e. an escalation of racist violence and a threat to their safety.

Continuity in the Experience of Racism

Within this critique, the narrators draw a connection to continuity of the racism experience(d) both in the past and in the presence. They are still constantly confronted with racist slurs in their everyday lives as well as often being subjected to verbal or physical threats to their safety.⁵⁶ They still plan their day-to-day lives according to right-wing presence, for instance staying at home at times of AfD demonstrations.⁵⁷ They still avoid certain public spaces, like specific streets or neighbourhoods, sometimes even entire regions and federal states altogether.⁵⁸ Wenzel even goes so far as to assess, “If I were a teenager now and grew up there, I would very probably have to write the same book again in ten years’ time”, implying that the situation in East Germany has barely changed in the last thirty years.⁵⁹ Through their high-profile and media presence, the narrators are now additionally subjected to a high level of online abuse that is strongly linked to far-right ideology and rhetoric, deeming them less worthy and even less human as People of Colour and women.⁶⁰ Additionally, some of them express worry about their journalistic or artistic work outing them to the organised and well-connected far-right movement, putting them on a death list.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Le, “Think Tank.”

⁵⁷ Thembi Wolf, “Wir Kanarienvögel,” *Der Spiegel*, June 19, 2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/fall-walter-luebcke-thembi-wolf-a-1273168.html>.

⁵⁸ Wolf, “Wir Kanarienvögel”; Orłowski and Wenzel, “Interview mit Olivia Wenzel,” 65.

⁵⁹ Geidel, *Olivia Wenzel über das Leben als schwarze Frau in Deutschland*, 00:01:08–00:01:20: “würde ich jetzt jugendlich sein und da aufwachsen, würde ich sehr wahrscheinlich noch mal das gleiche Buch schreiben müssen in zehn Jahren.”

⁶⁰ Nhi Le, “TEDxUniHalle: The Offline Origins of Online Hate and What to Do About It,” YouTube video, #TEDx, September 4, 2019, 00:01:50–00:05:22, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbQkVXUSELY>; Wolf, “Wir Kanarienvögel.”

⁶¹ Gutjahr, *Olivia Wenzel: “Rechter Terror macht wenigen Angst in Deutschland!”*, 00:21:25–00:25:20.

Furthermore, almost all of the narrators notice a strong uptick in the public exertion of violence after 2015 with the rising influence of the PEGIDA and AfD movements and tightly link this back to their experience in the 1990s. This is particularly present in Le's account who, unlike the three black narrators, locates the escalation of violence in the 1990s on a general level, while on a personal level she identifies 2015 as the starting point of an increased violence directed against herself:

With the emergence of the Leipzig Pegida offshoot in 2015, the mood intensified: the initial everyday racism developed into open hostility, while jibes and othering became outright racism and willingness to use violence. For all those who, unlike Asians, were not perceived as "hardworking foreigners", this had long been a reality.⁶²

This is also one of the few instances where the sources examined here explicitly name differences in perception and treatment between members of different minority groups. For the future, it seems promising to expand the corpus of sources and to focus on the specifics of minority groups and the influence of community building. In a wider context, the narratives assessed here make it possible to identify two upticks of violence, one after 1990 and a second one after 2015. This observation is in line with the data collected by the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, which records a sharp increase in fatalities of right-wing violence in 2016 after years of declining cases since 2000 as well as more than double the number of cases of anti-refugee incidents between the beginning of the records in 2015 (1248 cases) and the following year 2016 (3767 cases).⁶³ In addition, the data does not take into account the changing language in political discourse, which has sharpened with the emergence of the AfD in 2015 as well as the change of government in 2022.

While the narrators see a stronger societal interest in their experiences now than they did in the 1990s, many of them feel like this interest remains superficial and normally short-lived, normally linked to events like elections with relatively

⁶² Le, "Think Tank": Mit Aufkommen des Leipziger Pegida-Ablegers im Jahr 2015 hat sich die Stimmung verschärft: "Der anfängliche Alltagsrassismus entwickelte sich zu offener Feindseligkeit, Sticheleien und Othering wurden zu blankem Rassismus und Gewaltbereitschaft. Für all jene, die anders als Asiat*innen nicht als 'zumindest fleißige Ausländer' wahrgenommen wurden, war dies längst Realität."

⁶³ Amadeu Antonio Stiftung and Pro Asyl, "Chronik Flüchtlingsfeindlicher Vorfälle," accessed August 31, 2023, <https://www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/service/chronik-vorfaelle>; Amadeu Antonio Stiftung, "Todesopfer Rechter Gewalt," accessed August 31, 2023, <https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/todesopfer-rechter-gewalt/>.

high outcomes for right-wing parties or particularly prominent attacks on People of Colour.⁶⁴ In addition, they perceive that interest remains almost exclusively on a level of debate, with little to no political and social action.⁶⁵ Wenzel attributes this to the lack of emotional affect, meaning that the majority society only recognises far-right populist and extremist movements and action as a problem on a cognitive level, failing to take the affectational reaction into account because they “still think they are not meant by it,” i.e. they do not identify as a target of right-wing and neo-nazi actions.⁶⁶

The Influence of Intersectionality in Identity Formation

Finally, the public discourse about racism and right-wing violence affects many of the narrators particularly through the way it addresses East Germany. This perception relates primarily to the portrayal of racism and right-wing violence as an exclusively East German problem in predominant media and societal narratives. While all of the narrators identify this as a commonly made argument, its impact on them personally depends on how strongly they identify as East German. For example, Le completely rejects a reference of the regional identity categories Thuringia or East Germany, instead exclusively choosing the labels “German” or “Viet-German” for herself.⁶⁷ Hence, her comment on the specificity of East German right-wing violence remains almost completely analytical, stating the necessity to identify the structures that strengthen right-wing networks in East Germany in particular, while not losing sight of racism and right-wing violence as a problem that affects and always has affected Germany on a national, not just a regional level.⁶⁸ Wenzel and Wolf, who both take a somewhat ambivalent role of anchoring their identity between being East German and black, tend to discuss both problems mostly separately. While they point out problems with the portrayal of East Germany and East Germany and the

⁶⁴ Le, “Think Tank”; Petra Köpping, Le Nhi, and Christian Schwochow, “Ostdeutsche Perspektiven nach der Wende: Worüber müssen wir reden?,” *Berliner Tageszeitung*, November 2, 2019, <https://taz.de/Ostdeutsche-Perspektiven-nach-der-Wende/!5636189/>; Wolf, “Wir Kanarienvögel.”

⁶⁵ Geidel, *Olivia Wenzel über das Leben als schwarze Frau in Deutschland*, 00:01:50–00:02:10; Michaela Pichler, “Autorin Olivia Wenzel im Interview,” *Radio FM4*, September 23, 2020, <https://fm4.orf.at/stories/3007423/>; Köpping, Nhi and Schwochow, “Ostdeutsche Perspektiven nach der Wende.”

⁶⁶ Gutjahr, *Olivia Wenzel: “Rechter Terror macht wenigen Angst in Deutschland!”*, 00:18:36–00:19:49: “immer noch denken sie sind damit nicht gemeint.”

⁶⁷ Orłowski and Le, “Interview mit Nhi Le,” 73.

⁶⁸ Köpping, Nhi and Schwochow, “Ostdeutsche Perspektiven nach der Wende”; Le, “Think Tank.”

regional influences on their own lives and identity, they tend to not link those narratives to their experience as People of Colour.⁶⁹ However, Warda strongly identifies with her East German origin and specifically links this experience to her experience of being black in a white majority society:

On the one hand, I was East German, which I shouldn't be any more, but on the other hand, among East Germans I wasn't really East German either, because I'm not white. To put it bluntly, it was just twice as annoying all the time. Because you fight on one front and say, "Hey guys, there's a devaluation happening here against us East Germans." And then you fight on the other front and somehow have to discuss it and say, "Hey, I'm also really East German and what's happening here is racist."⁷⁰

The devaluation she experiences therefore happens on different levels according to the context and the audience of her discussion. Consequently, the narrators that identify strongly with their identity as East Germans feel doubly marginalised as East Germans of Colour. Interestingly enough, only Wenzel establishes a direct relationship between her experience of identity and marginalisation as black, East German and female, when offhandedly sharing:

Let me explain:

1. Eating a banana in public as a black person: racist monkey analogies, uga uga uga. Ouch.
2. Eating a banana as an East German – the banana as a symbol of the inferiority of beige East Germany in comparison to the golden West. The banana as a bridge to prosperity, exotic southern fruits as a symbol of economic superiority. And those stupid East Germans stood in line for hours for 'em after the Wall fell, amirite?

⁶⁹ Orłowski and Wenzel, "Interview mit Olivia Wenzel"; Gutjahr, *Olivia Wenzel: "Rechter Terror macht wenigen Angst in Deutschland!"*; Wolf, "Eine ganz klassische, ostdeutsche Geschichte"; Thembi Wolf, "O-Lennials: Was die Generation der Ost-Millennials ausmacht: Wer sie sind und was sie wollen," *Der Spiegel*, April 1, 2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/millennials-aus-ostdeutschland-was-diese-generation-ausmacht-a-ec93004c-df35-4000-94c6-ec57275c5001>.

⁷⁰ Grimme, *Katharina Warda – Dunkeldeutschland*, 00:12:36–00:13:15: "Auf der einen Seite war ich Ostdeutsche, was ich nicht mehr sein sollte, auf der anderen Seite, unter Ostdeutschen war ich dann aber auch keine richtige Ostdeutsche, weil ich nicht weiß bin. Um es jetzt platt zu sagen, es ist einfach doppelt nervig gewesen, die ganze Zeit. Weil man kämpft auf der einen Front und sagt: 'Hey Leute, hier passiert eine Abwertung gegen uns Ostdeutsche.' Und dann kämpft man auf der anderen Front und muss irgendwie darüber diskutieren und sagen 'Hey, ich bin aber auch wirklich auch Ostdeutsche und das ist rassistisch, was hier passiert.'"

3. Eating a banana as a woman – blowjob, this, that. The banana as penis analogy and tool of sexism. Insecure, pubescent teenagers traumatise other insecure, pubescent teenagers. Why don't you give it a deepthroat, hee hee. Haa haa.⁷¹

However, she does not go into more detail about the intersectionality at those three parts of her identity after the initial quote. The other narrators also do not include the intersectionality between their experiences as People of Colour, East Germans and Women despite all identifying publicly as feminist and therefore using the quality of being female as a distinct marker of their identities. This tendency not to or to only partially present themselves through an intersectional lens is especially surprising, given the work environment and the activism the narrators are part of. Here also it would be interesting to compare these results to a wider sample of sources to explore how the identity markers “women” and “East German” are discussed in a wider discourse as well as how those markers are integrated with that of “race”. Is the way the case studies analysed here exceptional in the way they discuss those identity markers or can a similar tendency to sectionalising and localising be found in a wider sample of sources as well? Are strategies of dealing with the overlap of gender, race and being East German gender specific? Do West Germans of Colour link their experiences of race and racism to regionality?

Conclusion

The case studies examined here strongly support claims of a drastic escalation of violence in the early 1990s as well as highlighting how this development was neither unprecedented and unexpected for those affected by it, nor did it end after the initial surge of attacks on People of Colour. The feeling of a transgressional and all-encompassing violence as well as the lack of support from state forces and private individuals provided a framework for the narrators' youth that is tightly linked to fear for their physical and emotional well-being. While the data also suggests a sharp increase of violence directed against People

⁷¹ Wenzel, *1000 Serpentina Angst*, 49–50: “Let me explain: / 1. Öffentlich eine Banane essen als schwarze Person: Rassistische Affenalogien, uga uga uga. Aua. / 2. Eine Banane essen als Ossi – die Banane als Sinnbild für die Unterlegenheit des beigen Ostens gegenüber dem goldenen Westen. Die Banane als Brücke in den Wohlstand, exotische Südfrüchte als Symbol wirtschaftlicher Übermacht. Boah und die blöden Ossis standen da nach'm Mauerfall stundenlang für an, ey. / 3. Eine Banane essen als Frau – Blowjob, dies das. Die Banane als Penisanalgie und Werkzeug des Sexismus. Unsichere, pubertierende Teenager traumatisieren andere unsichere, pubertierende Teenager. Mach doch mal Deepthroat, hähähä. Hähähä.”

of Colour, the more important factor is that their own experiences mirrored by media portrayals of attacks against others make this the framework of their emotional reality and lived experience. As such, the everydayness of the racism they experience becomes almost mundane in its terror. In this, the experiences of othering and violence are presented as an integral part of their identity formation process, especially as they are so deeply ingrained that it is impossible for them to remember a time “before racism” and subsequently imagine the person they could have become had things been different. Therefore, racism and the violence linked to it have to be seen as a rite of passage, and an inseparable part of growing up in East Germany as a Person of Colour. However, all of the narratives analysed here stress the continuity of their experience of othering as well as the threat of racially motivated violence beyond the 1990s. As such, Christian Bangel’s statement of radical right-wing violence as a “generational” experience in the sense of a unique, irreplicable or singular experience does not hold up to the assessment of the narrators. Nevertheless, it raises the question whether and to what extent racism and right-wing extremist violence are integrated into collective concepts of identity in which *generation* serves as self-description of both a marker of belonging and a boundary to the perceived outsider. Are People of Colour part of the designed category of a *Generation Ost* (Generation East Germany) after the fall of the Wall? Are their experiences of the re-unification and the transformative period of the 1990s integrated into collective memory?

And while their accounts are voiced in adult words, the violence and overwhelming insecurity described was experienced by children’s bodies and had to be processed by children’s minds, who often were not able to make themselves heard and understood at a time they were often left unprotected by legal and moral codes. Consequently, it is not only the threat and experience of violence directed against them that is an integral part of their own identity forming process but even more so the loss of agency they were subjected to. From their earliest memory, being marked as different is perceived as one of the most prominent characteristics of their interactions with(in) society. An important part of their coming of age lies in the growing grasp of the reasons, strategies and impact of their othering. Only with the strong uptick of violence they experienced after 2015, now as adults, were the narrators able to share those experiences through their political, artistic and journalist work and platform. It is not surprising that many of the narrators examined here, who do not remember a time in which they were not subjected to omnipresent racist othering and violence, found that race became a central part of their identities. However, the strategies used to verbalise this feeling and perception differ between the

individual narrators by how tightly they are linked to individual and collective experiences and identities as well as by how explicitly they share personal experiences. While Wenzel and Warda share intimate memories of their childhood and adolescence, Le choses to argue with collective and as such general examples, and Wolf takes an ambivalent role between those two positions. In this context it is important to note that in the narrators' assessment, the persistent omission of the experience of People of Colour in the remembrance of reunification and transformation constitutes a retraumatising experience. This emphasises the importance of advancing the discussion of the topic both in academic research and in social discourse.

Especially considering their background, the narrators' tendency to not or to only partly take intersectional approaches in their strategies to deal with the ubiquity of othering is particularly noteworthy. A specifically female perspective on racism and violence remains largely unaddressed by the narrators. Future research must therefore stress gender approaches to both the way violence is exercised and perceived. Furthermore, it remains to be explored why the varying identities of being People of Colour, being East German and being female are often not interwoven in the narratives. Is it that the lack of a cohesive, social, identity-defining space means that identity issues are dealt with sporadically and individually? Were the experienced acts of violence directed only against individual elements of their identity at different times and in different spaces so that the narrators' processing of them is separate? Does it take into account an attempt to externalise the acts of violence from a sense of self that does not centre those elements of identity?

Importantly, all narrators examined in this case study share similar educational and professional paths. While the information about their sociological background and subsequently the social capital available to them is limited, their shared work environment in journalism on topics of feminism and anti-racism suggests the navigation of and identification with a similar social milieu. Consequently, all four individuals are likely to be similar in terms of their world views as well as the language and terminology used to contextualise their experiences and opinions. Despite these limitations, the case studies examined here raise important questions and hypotheses that have not yet been adequately addressed in the current research. Therefore, it seems crucial to explore the questions raised here with a much broader and more representative sample size. Promising sources include oral history material such as larger-scale interview studies as well as the large corpora available in the form of social media networks, which can be made available using methods of digital history. Using

such a large corpus allows special attention to be paid to the regional and social milieu of the narrators when selecting the sample, in contrast to the small-scale cases studies selected here. The conclusions drawn in this analysis can serve as a stepping-stone when composing both the research questions and the design of such a study.

TAKING WOMEN SERIOUSLY: A FEMINIST APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE

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Received April 17, 2023; Revised September 12, 2023; Accepted September 19,
2023.

Abstract

Since the end of official empire postcolonial research has changed our image of colonialism to foreground the multiple forms of violence that lay at the heart of it. Drawing on increasingly critical feminist research approaches, I argue that this understanding must and can be extended to our conception of white women's role in colonialism. In order to push this research further, this paper advocates for a more systematic approach to the study of European women in colonial violence. Therefore, using case studies of both German and British empires, a theoretical argument is made to show how we can conceptualise white women's violence in empire. Then, the paper proposes a systematic approach to how such studies of European women's role in colonial violence may be undertaken by combining feminist International Relations scholarship and postcolonial feminisms with Bourgeois' continuum of violence.

Keywords: feminism; postcolonialism; colonialism; violence; women; perpetrators; imperialism

DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2023.10

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Introduction

Postcolonialism has drastically changed our understanding of what empire looked like. One of these changes has been to show us just how violent colonialism was, that violence took many forms within imperialism, and that the violence did not stop with the official end of empire. Meanwhile, feminist scholars have shown the role of women within empire. At times, colonial spaces are figured as ones of emancipation for white women – although this framing has been successfully contested as an ideal that was sold to women but rarely matched their lived realities.¹ More often, feminists have highlighted the nooks and crannies which empire afforded white women for agency, how they fought to expand them and consolidate white women's significance within the nationalist enterprise that imperialism undoubtedly was.² More critical feminist postcolonial scholars have shown the intricate connections between hierarchies of race, class, and gender that were navigated by white women in imperial spaces.³ Often, these reveal how white women used bourgeois norms and racial hierarchies to advance their personal position in settler colonies. This scholarship often indicates and includes the interaction of such negotiations with violence. Rarely, however, is violence the sole focus of such research and even less frequently is it systematically analysed.

This, I argue, needs to change. Since the end of official empire our understanding of empire has changed to foreground the multiple forms of violence that lay at the heart of imperial enterprises. I show how this understanding can be extended to our conception of white women's role in colonialism by a more systematic approach to categories of violence. In this paper I therefore make a theoretical argument to show how we can conceptualise white women's violence in empire and demonstrate its applicability using case studies of both German and British colonialism.

First, I draw on feminist International Relations scholarship to show that women must be taken seriously (Cynthia Enloe), which includes their violent behaviour (Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry).⁴ The relevance of this approach

¹ Katharina Walgenbach, "Emanzipation als koloniale Fiktion: Zur sozialen Position Weißer Frauen in den deutschen Kolonien," *L'Homme* 16, no. 2 (2005): 47–67.

² Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

³ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): 829–865, doi: 10.2307/2700385.

⁴ Cynthia Enloe, *Seriously! Investigating Crashes and Crises as If Women Mattered* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013); Cynthia H. Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists*

has been shown in postcolonial feminist scholarship, which has frequently highlighted the role of white women in perpetuating racialised hierarchies. Feminist IR is central to my argument, as this is the space in which theoretical arguments have been made to demonstrate the significance of understanding women as violent actors. One of the most important, albeit seemingly obvious, arguments is that only if we understand all of those involved in violence can we understand violence in its full scope.⁵ Clearly, this must therefore involve research on women's violent actions, which are frequently left out. Alternatively, those women whose violent actions are not simply ignored are often depicted in such a way that they are not taken seriously as political actors but instead are seen as unnatural women or driven by uniquely feminine urges.⁶ Thus, feminist International Relations sets the agenda for studying women's violent actions as both significant to the overall study of violence and as legitimate acts of political agency.

These insights will be connected to postcolonial feminist scholarship, which has increasingly proven the significance of white women in shaping colonial contexts, cultures, and violence, but has not sufficiently nor systematically addressed their role in colonial violence.⁷ This leaves a gap in our understanding of the violent cultures of empire and reasserts our gendered understandings of violence and colonialism as dominantly masculine spaces. Building further on feminist IR, I show that the project of taking women seriously in colonial contexts is two-fold: firstly, understanding that women are capable of the same things as men, whilst secondly also being aware that their gendered role in colonial society will have shaped the motivations, scope, and form of women's actions.

Thus, I theoretically argue for embedding research on violent women in the colonies in a detailed discussion of women's role in empire. This is crucial to understand the potential motivations behind white women's violence in empire, but also to understand the spheres of agency that were open to women and in

Make the Link (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2013); Caron E. Gentry and Laura Sjoberg, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

⁵ Patricia Pearson, *When She Was Bad: Violent Women & the Myth of Innocence* (New York: Viking, 1997); Jean Bethke Elshtain, "On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3-4 (1982): 341-348, doi: 10.1016/0277-5395(82)90043-7.

⁶ Sjoberg and Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, 2-3.

⁷ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*; Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 829-865; Anna M. Agathangelou and Heather M. Turcotte, "Reworking Postcolonial Feminisms in the Sites of IR," in *Handbook on Gender in World Politics*, ed. Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe-Belfrage (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), 41-49.

which they could exercise their influence violently. I will finish this section by outlining how these concepts fit to both German and British colonial contexts, highlighting overarching similarities and differences in their roles in empire and how this could impact their spheres of violent action.

Secondly, I combine feminist approaches with Bourgois' continuum of violence to provide a roadmap to conceptualise white women's role in colonial violence.⁸ This establishes a balance between seeing women as capable of the same violence as men, whilst leaving room for the significance of other, non-physical forms of violence more in the scope of women's permitted agency in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I will therefore briefly outline the scope of violence that women may have been engaged in, ranging from normative, cultural, and discursive violence to private and everyday violence or forms of engagement with state violence. Indeed, the fact that mainstream depictions of violence rarely include women as violent actors is perhaps because dominant conceptions of perpetration are more suitable for male than female actors. Underlining this will be the theoretical argument that all forms of violence are significant. Even if women's violence was often less physical, it is nevertheless important to study and understand.

Thus, my suggested approach allows an embedding of and research into the entanglements of multiple forms of violence. In order to understand the interconnected relationships of various forms of violence I make the case for studying both non-physical and physical forms of violence together. At the end of this section, I will again reflect on German and British imperial contexts to demonstrate how the proposed approach represents a valuable avenue of research in both instances.

Women and Violence: Depicting Violent Women

Prior to discussing women as violent actors, it merits delving into the origins of the construction of women as innately peaceful, as well as the methods used to uphold them as such even when the evidence points against it. This uniquely informs us about the gendered construction of women in the context of violence, which is a crucial first step in helping to deconstruct such norms as well as appreciating the ways in which gendered constructions will have shaped women's actions, including violent ones.

⁸ Philippe Bourgois, "The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador," *Ethnography* 2, no. 1 (2001): 5–34.

A theoretical shift within feminism occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s. Previously, feminists drew on the stereotypical image of women as inherently peaceful to legitimate their political agency and peace activism on a global scale.⁹ By the end of the twentieth century, some feminists began critically questioning the claim of women's innate peacefulness and how that functioned to silence and exclude women's violent actions. Jean Bethke Elshtain is famous for bringing scholarly attention to the way women are constructed in the context of conflict and militarism as "beautiful souls" that are inherently innocent and averse to violence, yet in need of just warriors to protect them from wars caused by others.¹⁰ As such, women are simultaneously construed as the victims of the conflict as well as its cause. In both factors, woman's passivity is central to her role as it secures her innocence both in the violent conflict and underlies her virtue as a "beautiful soul".¹¹ Notably, as wars are thereby fought in the name of protecting women's "beautiful souls", they become noble and just causes. Thus, whilst feminist peace activists could use the concept of women as "beautiful souls" inherently desiring peace to legitimise their actions, the dichotomy of (feminine) beautiful souls and (masculine) just warriors could also be utilised effectively by proponents of war. Indeed, this narrative of war based along the lines of "beautiful souls" in need of saviour by "just warriors" has been used to justify numerous global conflicts, ranging from World War I, the Cold War, and the First Gulf War to the conflict in former Yugoslavia and the war on terror.¹² Notably for this paper, the relevance of the construct of "beautiful souls" has been highlighted specifically for women's role in the British empire, where their purported virtue and purity lay at the heart of their position in the colonies.¹³ Its application in a variety of contexts speaks of the widespread strength of the narrative and therefore also of the shared investment of powerful actors in the continuation of this gendered construction.

The concept of "beautiful souls", whereby women's virtue relies on her passivity and this is in turn a powerful justificatory narrative for conflict, helps explain the demonisation of women who do not fit the gendered mould, in particular when it comes to conflict. Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry have

⁹ Mona L. Siegel, *Peace on Our Terms: The Global Battle for Women's Rights after the First World War* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2021).

¹⁰ Elshtain, "On Beautiful Souls."

¹¹ Sikata Banerjee, *Muscular Nationalism: Gender, Violence, and Empire in India and Ireland, 1914–2004* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 8.

¹² Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via, "Introduction," in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 1–13, here 4–5.

¹³ Banerjee, *Muscular Nationalism*, 8.

outlined that women involved in violence are treated both in the media and within academia separately from men and that violent women are construed as outliers.¹⁴ Yet they powerfully argue that “women have always been, and continue to be, among the people engaged in violence in the global political arena”.¹⁵ Rather than being taken seriously as political actors who may also use violence as a form of agency – in the way that violent men are understood – Sjöberg and Gentry show that violent women are depicted as aberrant. Specifically, they find that violent women are categorised either as mothers, monsters, or whores, each of which foregrounds their gender in understanding their violent actions and denies women any political agency or individual meaning in the violence and its underlying motivation. Instead, depicting all violent women as mothers, monsters, or whores subsumes their violent actions into feminised images of women. The image of violent women as mothers insinuates that her motivations are driven purely by maternal instincts. The category of whore, on the other hand, makes the violent action seem driven purely by a woman’s relationship to a male in her life, once again making the woman passive. The category of monsters relies on the belief that violent women are breaking with the idealised image of women as innately peaceful and virtuous and thereby constructing them as unnatural and monstrous. This reveals that violent women are not only censored and potentially feared due to their violent actions, but first and foremost for the gender transgression such actions mean they committed. All categories deny women any complex reasoning for their actions, reassert the gendered expectations of women, and limit any understanding of women’s actions to their gender. Thus, understanding women’s violent actions as rational, based on their own agency, and a decision to be taken seriously, offsets prevalent misconceptions both in the media and academia and underlies this paper’s feminist approach to violent women in the colonies.

Patricia Pearson was one of the first to prominently challenge the myth of innocent women, by showing how women that committed rape and murder in the USA were often able to blame their actions on premenstrual syndrome, battered women syndrome or postpartum depression.¹⁶ This corroborates Sjöberg and Gentry’s argument, as the women were able to obscure their violent actions by highlighting gendered elements of their existence. Pearson argues: “Perhaps above all, the denial of women’s aggression profoundly undermines our attempt

¹⁴ Sjöberg and Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

¹⁵ Gentry and Sjöberg, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, 2.

¹⁶ Pearson, *When She Was Bad*, 33–63.

as a culture to understand violence, to trace its causes and to quell them.”¹⁷ Thus, taking women’s violent actions seriously is not just a matter for feminism, but also for peace and conflict studies. Only by studying the actions of *all* violent people can we truly understand cultures of violence and therefore begin to counteract them. Clearly, this must also be applied to colonial contexts, where women settled, worked, and lived, but have as of yet largely been ignored in research focusing on colonial violence.

How to Take Women Seriously

Cynthia Enloe has written multiple ground-breaking books to show how significant feminism is to understanding and studying the world, as well as outlining several useful approaches for how to do so.¹⁸ As the basis of this paper I will be applying key concepts as proposed in *Seriously! Investigating Crashes and Crises as if Women Mattered*, as Enloe therein lays the groundwork for any feminist study on women’s roles and actions.¹⁹ The first step is, indeed, to acknowledge the continuous privileging of masculinities in the subject areas that are deemed serious and worth studying. The innocuous and normalised privileging of male subjectivities and subjects works in both ways, as it not only erases women as serious subjects but also erases the male gender of the studied subjects. As Enloe puts it: “because I did not take women seriously, I did not see these men as men”.²⁰ This once again points to the significance of feminism to any subject area, because it highlights gender as an important factor in any context, regardless of who is being studied. When considering violence, this approach is vital, as the inclusion of women highlights gender as an important influence for all people whose violent actions are being studied. Too often, the exclusion of women from violence (apart from as victims) makes gender an invisible and overlooked force shaping violence. This, in turn, reinforces masculinised conceptions of violence and further buttresses the previously outlined image of violent women as aberrant from the norm.

Enloe therefore argues that this is based on a long tradition whereby the feminisation of any subject area or person makes the research or person be taken less seriously. Between individuals, “feminization is a potent weapon in the

¹⁷ Ibid., 243.

¹⁸ See for example Cynthia H. Enloe, *The Curious Feminist Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁹ Enloe, *Seriously!*.

²⁰ Ibid., 2.

masculinized contest between men over who will be taken seriously”.²¹ Enloe further claims “that most social commentators, contractors, and policy makers still do not think deeply about women unless they are pushed to do it”.²² Therefore, taking women seriously can become the heart of any feminist agenda with the aim of unapologetically placing gender at the centre of one’s research. One thereby demonstrates the relevance of gender and women to a subject area and does so not by applying masculinised norms to women in order to prove their relevance, but by making space for women’s agency. Enloe thus defines: “To be taken seriously does not mean to be liked or to be admired. Rather, to be taken seriously means to be listened to, to be carefully responded to, to have one’s ideas and actions thoughtfully weighed. It means that what one does or thinks matters – that is, significant consequences flow from it.”²³

In the context of violence, this means first of all understanding that women’s ideas and actions matter because they have significant consequences. Rather than applying masculine notions of significant actions being purely physical violence, I therefore propose including various forms of actions as long as they significantly contributed to violence. This establishes a symbiosis with current trends in perpetrator studies, which lay the focus on acts of perpetration rather than definitive labels such as perpetrator or bystander.²⁴ A useful approach is proposed by genocide scholar Timothy Williams, as he suggests focusing on single actions by individuals and analysing them for their consequences.²⁵ As such, one can also highlight the complexity of individuals, who may at times engage in violence and at other times protect people from violence. From a feminist perspective, this also enables one to move beyond images of perpetration as acts of physical violence, to focus – as Enloe suggests – on the consequences of actions.

²¹ Ibid., 6.

²² Ibid., 3–4.

²³ Ibid., 5.

²⁴ See for example Scott Straus, “Studying Perpetrators: A Reflection,” *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 1, no. 1 (2017): 28–38, doi: 10.21039/jpr.v1i1.52; Christian Gudehus, “Gewalt als Handlung,” in *Zwischen Tätern und Opfern*, ed. Philipp Batelka, Michael Weise, and Stephanie Zehnle (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 23–46, doi: 10.13109/9783666300998.23; Christian Gudehus, “Some Remarks on the Label, Field, and Heuristics of Perpetrator Research,” *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 2, no. 1 (2018): 3–8, doi: 10.21039/jpr.2.1.20; Christian Gudehus, “Action Action Action,” *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 3, no. 1 (2020): 188–195, doi: 10.21039/jpr.2.1.35; *Perpetrators and Perpetration of Mass Violence. Action, Motivations and Dynamics*, ed. Timothy Williams and Susanne Buckley-Zistel (New York: Routledge, 2018).

²⁵ Timothy Williams, “Thinking beyond Perpetrators, Bystanders, Heroes: A Typology of Action in Genocide,” in *Perpetrators and Perpetration of Mass Violence. Action, Motivations and Dynamics*, ed. Timothy Williams and Susanne Buckley-Zistel (New York: Routledge, 2018), 17–35.

I propose that such an approach can help move us beyond masculinised images of perpetration and to display the significant role of women in cultures of violence by documenting the violent consequences of their actions.

Cynthia Enloe shows how “in narratives of wartime and revolution, women are presumed to be confined to ‘the home front.’ They are (merely) ‘the protected.’ They are the (silent) ‘grieving.’ They are the (voiceless, idea-less) ‘victims.’ They are the symbols of ‘the nation,’ not its makers.”²⁶ These images of women clearly reassert gendered stereotypes of dependent women whilst further highlight their insignificance in matters of war, conflict, and violence. Rather than accepting such gendered notions, this strand of critical feminist research interrogates them and highlights the agency women wielded despite being depicted as dependent on men and solely symbolic to the nation. One way in which this has been done has been to document the private space as political.²⁷ What this does is to show that spaces of agency not even acknowledged as significant – due to masculinised understandings of what is to be taken seriously – can and must be taken seriously. Moreover, studying spaces in which women rather than men tend to have a strong influence foregrounds the significance of women’s actions whilst demonstrating how their agency is inevitably shaped by gendered expectations. Ultimately, it shows how taking an approach that actively includes women to what spaces and actions are deemed relevant broadens our understanding of how politics and society function. As Enloe summarises: “when we take women seriously we have to wonder about the pressures on them to be feminine – or sometimes to pass as manly.”²⁸ This, I argue, must also be done to include women’s role in violent cultures, such as those of empire.

This approach followed by a significant strand of feminist IR scholarship reveals a relevant symbiosis with some postcolonial feminisms. Postcolonial feminisms have shown how feminist scholarships have always been contested and multiple, as some understood the need to address all forms of inequality, whilst others sought solely to address the subjugation of women.²⁹ This highlights the common critique levied against first and second wave feminist

²⁶ Enloe, *Seriously!*, 11.

²⁷ See for example *ibid.*, 39–52; Christopher Nelson, “The Domestic Is Political, and the Political Is Gendered: An Analysis of Veiled Subjects, Gendered Epistemologies, and Muslim Bodies,” *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 3, no. 1 (2015), doi: 10.13169/islamstudies.3.1.0106; Linda J. Nicholson, “‘The Personal Is Political’: An Analysis in Retrospect,” *Social Theory and Practice* 7, no. 1 (1981): 85–98.

²⁸ Enloe, *Seriously!*, 17.

²⁹ Vron Ware, “To Make the Facts Known: Racial Terror and the Construction of White Femininity,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 103–34; Chandra

as a singularly white project of emancipation. Thus, both the above outlined feminist IR scholarship and many postcolonial feminist scholars foreground the need to understand the world through an intersectional gaze, whereby not only gender but also categories such as race or class establish significant hierarchies.³⁰ Following on from this insight is the somewhat evident yet for a long-time overlooked understanding that white women also played an important function in upholding a racialised world order. As Agathangelou and Turcotte argue: “In doing so, postcolonial feminisms intervene in the project of feminism as a homogenous, unified area of study. They complicate the subject of ‘woman’ within their transnational attention to inequitable distributions of power, gender, race, class, religion and sexuality.”³¹ An attention to intersectionality therefore allows a critical interrogation into white women’s roles, both in the past and present.

Moreover, postcolonial feminisms interact with the strand of feminist IR theory outlined above, by similarly arguing for the relevance of looking beyond purely physical forms of violence. Thus, just as some feminist IR theories highlight the private and intimate spaces as significant for understanding violence, postcolonial feminisms “focus on the embodiment of the *personal-as-political* and the site in which to name racial, gender, sexual and geographic inequities as a process of rewriting a violent system”.³² Scholars such as Stoler and McClintock, whose work I will outline in more detail later, have demonstrated what this can look like for studies of white women in the colonies.³³ Thus, postcolonial feminisms have specifically engaged with white women’s critical role in violence against people of colour both historically and in the present. For example, Haggis has criticised how “the white woman, by her own accounts, is rendered irresponsible, a victim of the white male colonising adventure, who, through this exclusion, is uniquely positioned, nevertheless, to forge a different, more benevolent, colonial relation with her ‘native’ sisters in the interstices

Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

³⁰ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*; Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (London, New York: Verso, 1992).

³¹ Agathangelou and Turcotte, “Reworking Postcolonial Feminisms,” 43.

³² *Ibid.*, 44.

³³ Ann Laura Stoler, “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 198–237; McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.

of the masculine project”.³⁴ She further argues that “such recuperative histories of white women risk colonising gender for white men and women rather than gendering colonialism as a historical process”.³⁵ This body of postcolonial feminist work has continuously shown the significance white women played within the private space in colonialism and indicated its violent forms. Yet such research has not yet been extended to a more systematic approach to understanding violence, which I propose can be done by integrating feminist IR and the continuum of violence.

Perpetration by Women

Women must therefore also be considered as people capable of perpetrating violence. I argue that to do so, we can apply Cynthia Enloe’s methodology of taking women seriously. Drawing on research on violent women, I propose a two-step approach for taking women seriously in the context of colonial violence. First, we must understand that women are capable of the same things as men. When considering violence, this means analysing and looking for forms of perpetration that are usually ascribed to men, such as murder or other forms of physical violence. The second step, however, reiterates Enloe’s call to understand and investigate the relevance of gender. As such, I argue that researchers must enquire into the ways in which gendered norms inherently shaped women’s actions and therefore made female agency different to that of male agency. In the case of violence, I propose that one must delve into the context in which violence occurred and thereby understand the limitations within which women were acting. Then one can extrapolate and analyse how such gendered expectations shaped the forms of violence women were able to engage in. The significance of their actions can nonetheless still be demonstrated through highlighting the violent consequences of them. Just because women were not always acting in the same violent manner as men does not mean that their actions were not violent. I will therefore conclude this section by examining how the colonial context shaped women’s agency within German and British empire and show how this can function as the groundwork for analysing women’s role in colonial violence as well as their motivations.

³⁴ Jane Haggis, “White Women and Colonialism: Towards a Non-Recuperative History,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 161–189, here 163–164, doi: 10.1515/9781474470254-008.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

Feminists have recently increasingly studied women as perpetrators to highlight that female perpetrators exist and must be studied just as much as male perpetrators.³⁶ On the one hand, this approach questions the status quo image of male perpetration. On the other hand, by including women it enables a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of what perpetration looks like. Alette Smeulers conducted an extensive explorative study of women perpetrators, based on an understanding of perpetration that focuses on physical violence and criminal acts³⁷ – arguably an approach which endorses masculine understandings of what violence looks like. Yet even when applying such a definition from the outset, Smeulers was able to conclude that “women have played a much larger role than we have generally assumed so far and that women can be just as evil as men”.³⁸ Whilst women are shown to be capable of the same physical violence and crimes as men, Smeulers’ findings nonetheless indicate that, in general, more men than women are involved in mass atrocities.³⁹ At the same time, Smeulers goes to lengths in her paper to show that more “passive” roles within violent cultures and regimes, often ones fulfilled by women, are essential to enabling and upholding such violent cultures. Among such more “passive” roles she describes bystanders, supporters of the regime, and administrative and supporting personnel.⁴⁰ Many of these are often overlooked in their significance, as they take place in the private sphere or do not entail criminal responsibility. These roles, the actions they include and their consequences, are “far more important than we tend to think”.⁴¹

³⁶ Elissa von Joeden-Forgey, “Women and the Herero Genocide,” in *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, by Joyce W. Warren and Elissa Bemporad (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: Routledge, 2013); Elissa Bemporad, “Memory, Body, and Power: Women and the Study of Genocide,” in *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, ed. Joyce W. Warren and Elissa Bemporad (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018); Martha Mamozai, *Schwarze Frau, weiße Herrin* (Hamburg: robor, 1989); Wendy Lower, *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013); Sara E. Brown, *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda: Women as Rescuers and Perpetrators* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018); Alette Smeulers, “Female Perpetrators: Ordinary or Extra-Ordinary Women?,” *International Criminal Law Review* 15, no. 2 (2015): 207–253, doi: 10.1163/15718123-01502001; Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

³⁷ Smeulers, “Female Perpetrators.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 211–15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

These findings reassert the relevance of Enloe's approach, demonstrating that the spaces and roles taken seriously when researching violence are starkly gendered, and that a feminist approach delving precisely into these spaces and women's positions will provide for a deeper understanding, in this case, of colonial violence. Furthermore, Smeulers' research highlights the need to both conceptualise women as capable of the same violence as men, whilst also considering how gendered norms will have shaped women's roles in violent cultures. This reflects the findings of feminist authors in a variety of violent contexts. Studying the role of women in the Rwandan genocide, Sara E. Brown highlights the significance of the "deeply entrenched patriarchal system that limited their agency".⁴² Whilst acknowledging the constrained agency of women due to the influence of a patriarchal social order, Brown finds that although women may have committed less crimes than men, those they committed were nonetheless "similar to those perpetrated by men".⁴³ She conceptualises the violence as direct violence, which necessitate the use of physical force, and indirect violence "that may not require physical force".⁴⁴ One main reason she finds for the prevalence of women's indirect rather than direct violence is their limited agency, as women were not allowed to enter the primary groups tasked with murder due to their gender.⁴⁵ This finding underscores the willingness of women to act violently, frequently resulting in physical violence, but that their constrained agency often shaped the outlet of such violent urges to be indirect rather than direct. Similar to Enloe's emphasis on consequences, Brown argues that "indirect violence is no less dangerous or murderous than direct violence".⁴⁶

Research on women in Nazi Germany further highlights women's agency, as the "women who followed Hitler, like the men, did so from conviction, opportunism, and active choice".⁴⁷ Just as in Rwanda, the violent nature that this active choice to support a violent movement took was shaped by context and ranged from committing murder, everyday violence against prisoners in concentration and death camps, to enabling and supporting the violence of their husbands and sons.⁴⁸ Notably, historian Wendy Lower shows the significance of imperial

⁴² Brown, *Gender and the Genocide in Rwanda*, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴⁷ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 5.

⁴⁸ Elissa Mailänder Koslov, *Female SS Guards and Workaday Violence: The Majdanek Concentration Camp, 1942–1944* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2015); Lower, *Hitler's Furies*.

ideologies in shaping women's actions. Focusing on the multiple types of violence committed by German women in eastern Europe, including outright and public murder, she highlights their role as "agents of Nazi empire-building".⁴⁹ This position was only assigned to them due to their gender and thus equation with a civilising force, yet conversely also provided them with an unusual scope for physical violence, as civilising and destruction are inherently connected in any empire. The role of gender in (racialised) ideologies of violence is reiterated in Kathleen Blee's study of the significance of women in the Ku Klux Klan. Thus, she finds that "the women's Klan of the 1920s was not only a way to promote racist, intolerant, and xenophobic policies but also a social setting in which to enjoy their own racial and religious privileges".⁵⁰ Not only does Blee underscore the unique agency and power that racialised and patriarchal ideologies provide for white women, but also that women used this to play a significant role in shaping the Klan's activities and recruitment, enabling them to assert their own political agenda.⁵¹ Precisely the multiplicity of contexts from which these insights stem highlights the relevance of gendered and racialised ideologies and contexts for understanding how women shaped their own roles within violent cultures, including empires.

This paper is therefore shaped by Smeulers' conclusion: "it is important that it (research) is gender sensitive but not stereotyped. We, in other words, need to take the context and specifics of the context in which women operate into account. This context can constrain their choices (just like it does for men) but that does not mean that they lack agency."⁵² This points to a certain ambiguity, which is difficult to grasp but is precisely therefore necessary to grapple with the complex relationship between women and violence. Going forward, both women's ability to act as violently as men and a consciousness of their actions within constrained spaces of agency will be at the heart of this proposed research approach. Thus, the context of empire and a deep understanding of women's position within it must function as the basis of any research into women's role in colonial violence. In my proposed approach, I suggest building on top of that foundation using Bourgois' and Scheper-Hughes' concept of the continuum of violence, which serves as a framework to conceptualise the multiple types of violence women in the colonies were engaged in and the complex interactions of such violent actions.

⁴⁹ Lower, *Hitler's Furies*, 7.

⁵⁰ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁵² Smeulers, "Female Perpetrators," 251.

Women's Role in the Colonial Context: *Kulturträgerin* and the White Woman's Burden

Prior to delving into the conceptual framework for dealing with acts of violence, this section is dedicated to the groundwork of feminist work, which highlights women's ability to act like men whilst acknowledging their constrained agency. This section will therefore outline women's role in the colonial context and show how this shaped women's spaces for agency and thus also their role in colonial violence. Whilst the former is based on existing research, using the case studies of British and German empires, the latter is largely based on logical conclusion I draw from this research, as no studies have yet been dedicated to researching women's role in colonial violence. As such, the considerations of the impact of women's constrained agency on their role in colonial violence is imagined as mapping out logical spaces for future enquiries on women's violence in empire.

Feminist postcolonial scholars like Vron Ware have pointed out the need to analyse and historically understand the construction of white femininity through deconstructing its relationship to racialised hierarchies of difference.⁵³ With this in mind, it becomes obvious how women's roles in the colonies were deeply engrained with racial fears and hierarchies. As postcolonial literary scholar Edward Said famously pointed out, the Other is often depicted not in order to understand the Orient, but rather to serve as a foil for the Occident, whiteness, and European self-identification.⁵⁴ Thus, racial hierarchies also lay at the foundation of establishing women's role in the colonies, as they were given a special position in colonial ideologies based on the purportedly inherent feminine characteristics of upholding civility and culture. Their reproductive capacity to bear white children further strengthened white women's position in the colonies based on racialised fears and hierarchies.

German women who went to the colonies were described as *Kulturträgerinnen*, which translates literally as (female) carriers of culture.⁵⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, culture in German had a twofold meaning and was semantically connected to race, as biological-Darwinist conceptions of race had

⁵³ Vron Ware, "Moments of Danger: Race, Gender, and Memories of Empire," *History and Theory* 31, no. 4 (1992): 116–137, doi: 10.2307/2505418.

⁵⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

⁵⁵ Lora Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (California: University of California Press, 1997).

become entwined with anthropological-cultural interpretations of it. Thus, it was commonly believed that culture was racially determined.⁵⁶ The role of *Kulturträgerin* thus held both a racialised and a cultural determination, positioning women as carriers and protectors of German civilisation, culture, and racial markers, namely whiteness. Evidently, this position reasserts patriarchal gender norms, as it draws on the image of women engaged in arts and culture, as inherently civilised and peaceful, and as responsible for domesticity. Moreover, it highlights their role as procreators, including as mothers and thus educators of future German sons. Very similar features are drawn on in the construction of British women's role in empire, which relied on their apparently innate cultural facilities and whiteness figured in terms of purity.⁵⁷

One significant difference between the two contexts is, however, that whilst British women drew on their purportedly unique cultural power to forge spaces for themselves as a civilising force in the colonies, German women never did.⁵⁸ This distinguishing feature is further revealed by Antoinette Burton's description of British women's imagined role in empire in terms of the "white woman's burden"; she thereby draws on the phrase "white man's burden" famously coined by Rudyard Kipling to describe the duty of the coloniser to "uplift" and "civilise" the allegedly inferior colonised populations.⁵⁹ German woman's role as *Kulturträgerin* saw them as merely maintaining German culture for Germans in their colonies, not as spreading it to indigenous populations. Whilst German women

⁵⁶ Peter Walkenhorst, *Nation – Volk – Rasse: Radikaler Nationalismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1890–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

⁵⁷ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 6; Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 17; Sheryl Nestel, "(Ad) Ministering Angels: Colonial Nursing and the Extension of Empire in Africa," *Journal of Medical Humanities* 19, no. 4 (1998): 257–277, here 265, doi: 10.1023/A:1024908110021; Antoinette M. Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and the Indian Woman, 1865–1915," *Women's Studies International Forum* 13, no. 4 (1990): 295–308, here 295–297, doi: 10.1016/0277-5395(90)90027-U; Jane Haggis, "Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender? Gendering Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13, 105–115, here 106.

⁵⁸ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Rhonda Anne Semple, *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism, and the Victorian Idea of Christian Mission* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003); Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Jane Rendall, "The Condition of Women, Women's Writing and the Empire in Nineteenth-Century Britain," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101–121, here 106.

⁵⁹ Burton, "The White Woman's Burden"; See also Haggis, "Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender?," 161.

were involved in missionary activities, mainstream German activists never drew on the same legitimization of spreading civilisation as British ones did.⁶⁰ Regardless of this difference, both British and German contexts relied heavily on gendered expectations of women in creating their purported role in their respective colonies.

Lora Wildenthal's research has shown how colonial women's organisations and individual activist women based in Germany used the gendered role assigned to women to elevate their agency in matters of empire.⁶¹ Similar arguments have been made for British colonialism, as women were also shown to elevate their gendered role in empire by highlighting racialised stereotypes.⁶² The centrality of racialised hierarchies to European women's power in the colonies becomes evident, as their idealised role as protector of German or British culture and white racial purity can only ever be significant in the context of racialised fears. Specifically, Wildenthal documents how colonial activist women in Germany found agency for women in the German empire by highlighting the alleged threat posed by contact between white men and indigenous populations. The fear that they drew on are epitomised by the terms *verkaffern* ("going native"), "degeneration", and "miscegenation".⁶³

Notably, each of these fears is found in essentially all European colonial contexts, with similarities being shown here between British and German empires. The concept of *verkaffern*, akin to the phrase "going native" in British colonial contexts, refers to the fear that Europeans would become less European and more like the racially inferior indigenous populations through long stays in the colonies and too much contact to European culture and civilisation.⁶⁴ "Degeneration" refers to a similar fear but was often connected to theories on climate

⁶⁰ Lora Wildenthal et al., "Forum: The German Colonial Imagination," *German History* 26, no. 2 (2008): 251–271, doi: 10.1093/gerhis/ghn005.

⁶¹ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945*; Lora Wildenthal, "Rasse und Kultur: Frauenorganisationen in der deutschen Kolonialbewegung des Kaiserreichs," in *Phantasiereiche: Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, ed. Birthe Kundrus (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), 202–219; Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire."

⁶² Rendall, "The Condition of Women"; Burton, "The White Woman's Burden."

⁶³ Wildenthal, "Rasse und Kultur," 278–279.

⁶⁴ Walgenbach, "Emanzipation als koloniale Fiktion," 61; Eva Bischoff, "'Heimischwerden deutscher Art und Sitte' – Power, Gender, and Diaspora in the Colonial Contest," *Itinerario* 37, no. 1 (2013): 43–58, here 46–47, doi: 10.1017/S0165115313000259; Anette Dietrich, *Weisse Weiblichkeiten: Konstruktionen von 'Rasse' und Geschlecht im deutschen Kolonialismus* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 200; Felix Axster, "Männlichkeit als Groteske. Koloniale (Un-)Ordnung auf Bildpostkarten um 1900," Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, 2017, accessed February 2, 2022, <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1708>; Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois*

and how lengthy exposures to more southerly climates leads to degeneration amongst white people; due to the influence of Darwinist racial thought, this was often figured as becoming more like People of Colour. In the British empire, this often resulted in parents sending their children back to Britain for their schooling and the belief that one must regularly return to Britain to avoid “degeneration”.⁶⁵ “Miscegenation” describes the racist fear related to children being born from sexual relations between white and indigenous populations, as these caused difficulties for strictly binary racialised hierarchies.⁶⁶ In both British and German imperial contexts strict laws were put into place to try and stop such sexual relations. Often, these came at a similar time as European women’s arrival in the colonies, as it could then be argued that white men could and thus should only have sexual relations with white women in order to safeguard the continued racial purity of the colonisers.⁶⁷ For example, “in the mid-eighteenth century, up to 90 per cent of British men in India were married to Indians or Anglo-Indians, but, by the mid-nineteenth century, intermarriage had virtually ceased”.⁶⁸

World, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56, here 5; von Joeden-Forgey, “Women and the Herero Genocide,” 318.

⁶⁵ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 232–257; Harald Fischer-Tiné and Susanne Gehrman, “Introduction: Empires, Boundaries, and the Production of Difference,” in *Empires and Boundaries: Rethinking Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings*, ed. Harald Fischer-Tiné and Susanne Gehrman, Routledge Studies in Cultural History (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1–22, here 12; Bischoff, “Heimischwerden deutscher Art und Sitte,” 46; Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 87–151; Nestel, 265; J. Howell and others, “Nursing the Tropics: Nurses as Agents of Imperial Hygiene,” *Journal of Public Health*, 35.2 (2013), 338–341, here 339, doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdt016.

⁶⁶ Nicola J. Cooper, “Gendering the Colonial Enterprise: La Mère-Patrie and Maternalism in France and French Indochina,” in *Empires and Boundaries: Rethinking Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings*, ed. Harald Fischer-Tiné and Susanne Gehrman (New York: Routledge, 2009), 129–145, here 134–135; Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3–7, 139; Fischer-Tiné and Gehrman, “Introduction,” 12; Walkenhorst, *Nation – Volk – Rasse*, 102–103; Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster: Lit, 2001), 70–81; Walgenbach, “Emanzipation als koloniale Fiktion,” 49–50; Krista O’Donnell, “Home, Nation, Empire: Domestic Germanness and Colonial Citizenship,” in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Ruth Reagin (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 40–57; Willeke Sandler, “Deutsche Heimat in Afrika: Colonial Revisionism and the Construction of Germanness through Photography,” *Journal of Women’s History* 25, no. 1 (2013): 37–61, here 46, doi: 10.1353/jowh.2013.0000.

⁶⁷ Bischoff, “Heimischwerden deutscher Art und Sitte,” 46–47.

⁶⁸ Alison Blunt, “Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1886–1925,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, no. 4 (1999): 421–440, here 426, doi: 10.1111/j.0020-2754.1999.00421.x.

European women were able to underscore the significant role they could play in the colonies by drawing on patriarchal gender norms and elevating their significance through racialised fears based on cultural or sexual contact between indigenous and European people in colonial spaces. Indeed, Ann Laura Stoler has pointed out that sharp contrasts between different European colonial powers and their racial policies are outlined in conventional historiography, but that their striking similarities in racial discourse are often overlooked.⁶⁹ Thus, whilst German and British empires were different, the racialised fears European women drew on in order to forge spaces of agency for themselves in the colonies are remarkably similar.

In Germany, women's role in the colonies was thereby described as *Kulturträgerin* – (female) carrier of culture. In Britain, women were similarly depicted as uniquely able to carry and uphold British civilisation and whiteness in a beleaguered colonial context. In both cases European women therefore relied on racial fears and hierarchies to maintain their role in empire.⁷⁰ These insights reveal how central racism was to women's position in the colonies. One can therefore extrapolate that women undoubtedly played a significant role in strengthening and shaping racialised fears, as these were one of the main sources of agency for white women in the colonies. This must be understood in the context of colonial violence. Both in German and in British empire racism legitimated and inherently shaped all forms of colonial violence, ranging from different legal systems to everyday, cultural, state, and settler violence.⁷¹ Therefore, studying women's role

⁶⁹ Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers," 199.

⁷⁰ Wildenthal et al., "Forum: The German Colonial Imagination," 263–264.

⁷¹ See for example Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Radha Kumar, "Seeing like a Policeman: Everyday Violence in British India, c. 1900–1950," in *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World*, ed. Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 131–149; Kim A Wagner, "Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency," *History Workshop Journal* 85 (Spring 2018), 217–237, doi: 10.1093/hwj/dbx053; Deana Heath, "Colonial Violence," in *Using Primary Sources: A Practical Guide for Students*, ed. Jon Hogg (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021); Michael T. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Richard N. Price, "The Psychology of Colonial Violence," in *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World*, ed. Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 25–52; Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck, "'Savage Wars of Peace': Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World," in *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World*, ed. Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1–22; Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner*; Marie A. Muschalek, *Violence as Usual: Policing and the Colonial State in German Southwest Africa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019); Thorne, *Congregational Missions*; George Steinmetz, *Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

in shaping, reiterating and strengthening racialised hierarchies in the context of their gender is an important step to understanding their role in colonial violence.

At the same time, the role assigned to women in the colonies relied on maintaining idealised images of women as peaceful, cultured, and important for maintaining their husband's well-being.⁷² For this reason, their space of endorsed agency was less likely to fall amongst physical violence, but rather in other forms of violence that enabled women to maintain their purported purity. Whilst women certainly did not always act wholly in accordance to patriarchal expectations, they had to be aware that their physically violent actions were more likely to be criticised. In German South-West Africa, for example, a German woman was put on trial for the murder of an indigenous servant and received great public backlash for her actions, unlike any that similar crimes of German men received.⁷³ Thus, as Sjöberg and Gentry would point out, women were certainly able to act in the same violent manner as men in the colonies, but the risk they took by doing so was significantly greater as they were more likely to become ostracised. This was not because their actions resulted in the suffering of indigenous people, but solely because their actions did not conform to gendered expectations.

Boundaries and Border Guards

Due to the role of women in upholding racial hierarchies in colonial contexts, their function in marking, maintaining, and policing racialised boundaries between coloniser and colonised has often been highlighted. In particular in Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper's work the concept of boundaries has been picked up to describe colonial relationships and their significance to colonial politics and policies.⁷⁴ Central to their work is the acknowledgement that racialised boundaries were frequently depicted as rigid to reinforce idealised images of a colonial order. These depictions however did not reflect the complex lived reality in the colonies, where the tenuous nature of racialised boundaries lay at the heart of colonial fears and violence.⁷⁵ The edited volume *Empires and*

2007); Jürgen Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte – Formen – Folgen*, 6th ed. (München: Beck, 2009); Matthias Häußler, *Der Genozid an den Herero: Krieg, Emotion und Extreme Gewalt in "Deutsch-Südwestafrika"* (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2018); Klaus Bachmann, *Genocidal Empires: German Colonialism in Africa and the Third Reich* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018).

⁷² Haggis, "Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender?," 105.

⁷³ Martha Mamozai, *Komplizinnen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990), 66.

⁷⁴ Stoler and Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony."

⁷⁵ *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

Boundaries: Rethinking Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings showcases in multiple contexts how imperial order was sought to be established through rigid hierarchies that ran along racial, class, and gendered lines.⁷⁶ Precisely because other factors like gender and class also influenced hierarchies, racial hierarchies became a source of power for white women in the colonies. Furthermore, their prescribed role as *Kulturträgerin* or protector of Britishness in the colonies depended on their maintenance of strict racialised boundaries, as their bodies and actions became markers for racialised boundaries. Women's role was therefore to strictly delineate and uphold boundaries that were, in fact, inevitably tenuous due to the close and regular contact between indigenous and European populations in the colonies.⁷⁷

In the case of Germany, the edited volume *The Heimat Abroad: Boundaries of Germanness* details the significance of boundaries in particular in the liminal spaces of a nation, including linguistic enclaves or colonies.⁷⁸ In the multiple case studies therein discussed it becomes apparent how the setting of boundaries and attempts at upholding them in colonies makes them the ideal locus for setting the boundaries on Germanness. This is because their geographic distance from the centre of the German homeland and the inevitable close contact with other population groups makes it possible to demarcate difference and thus delineate what makes somebody German. Thus, boundaries must be understood as something particularly relevant in the colonies and of great significance to national identity. German women's importance in setting boundaries, due to their role as keepers of whiteness and German culture, therefore elevated their position within the nation and the colonies and became a central source of their power.

Catherine Hall studied the role of intersectional hierarchies in the making of the English Imagination, in a reference to Benedict Anderson's theory on the imagined community.⁷⁹ She claims that whilst class and gender were certainly crucial, "questions of race and ethnicity were also always present in the nineteenth century, foundational to English forms of classification and relations of power".⁸⁰ By tracing connections between the colony and the so-called

⁷⁶ Harald Fischer-Tiné and Susanne Gehrman, eds., *Empires and Boundaries: Rethinking Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁷⁷ Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers."

⁷⁸ *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Ruth Reagin (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005).

⁷⁹ Hall, *Civilising Subjects*; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed (London: Verso, 1983).

⁸⁰ Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 8.

“metropole”, Hall finds that “identities are constructed within power relations, and that which is external to an identity, the ‘outside’, marks the absence or lack which is constitutive of its presence”.⁸¹ This Saidian approach underscores how marking difference, in this case racial, was crucial to forming an English identity. Just as in the German case, establishing and maintaining difference through boundaries therefore became a national imperative and one in which women’s role as child-bearers and civilising force gained importance.⁸² It can therefore be conjectured that women were deeply invested in upholding, maintaining, and policing racialised boundaries in order to reinforce their position in the colonies. The establishment and daily reiteration of these boundaries almost certainly required violence, whether on a discursive, everyday, or physical level.

Thus, European women’s bodies in the colonies have been conceived as boundary markers and their actions as those of border guards. In the German context, Eva Bischoff argued that “both the colony’s administration as well as the activists regarded German women as corporeal boundary markers, who would physically police the borders of the settlers’ body politic”.⁸³ This was to be done through their mere presence, which should reacquaint German men with German culture and prevent them from having sexual relations with anyone but white women. Looking at Empire in India, Sikata Banerjee describes muscular nationalism, whose “focus on the purity and chastity of female bodies stems from their role as border guards. By border guards I mean the notion that the boundaries separating ‘we the people’ from ‘them’ are represented by chaste women’s bodies”.⁸⁴ This is related closely to Elshain’s conception of “beautiful souls” and its prevalence in Western thought. Women’s mere presence certainly does not make them violent. Yet, I would argue that European women were deeply aware that racialised boundaries provided them with their main source of power in the colonies and that they were willing to act violently to publicly demonstrate their role. However, as their spaces of agency were limited in particular due to their reliance of a gendered vision of idealised womanhood, this violence was unlikely to frequently have taken overt physical forms. Rather, it was likely to have taken on non-physical forms, either through discursive

⁸¹ Ibid., 9.

⁸² Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, “Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire,” in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–31.

⁸³ Bischoff, “‘Heimischerwerden deutscher Art und Sitte,’” 47.

⁸⁴ Banerjee, *Muscular Nationalism*, 7–8.

violence or by legitimating or calling for physical violence by men. Additionally, the violence will likely have occurred within the home, a space deeply connected to feminine agency and responsibility.

How the Private Is Political: Forging Domesticity in the Colonies

One of the main ways in which class played a role in forging hierarchies was by providing a roadmap for what British or German civilisation and culture should look like, and therefore also the way in which domesticity was to be performed in the colonies. Thus, upholding bourgeois norms was an imperative for legitimating a woman's role in the colonies and was largely measured by the way in which her household was maintained. Both in German and in British contexts, there were clear images of how a bourgeois household should look and the role of women in the colonies was to replicate the German or British household to reassert national sentiments and legitimate racial superiority.⁸⁵ Thus, in both contexts class played a role in which women were actively supported in moving to the colonies, whether as missionaries or as settlers.⁸⁶ The household therefore became a political space, as it was where national identities and therefore also colonial legitimacy was cemented. Home life in the colonies has therefore been described as "a microcosm of the state and society",⁸⁷ a concept taken further

⁸⁵ Walgenbach, "Emanzipation als koloniale Fiktion"; Dietrich, *Weisse Weiblichkeiten*; Nancy Reagin, "The Imagined Hausfrau: National Identity, Domesticity, and Colonialism in Imperial Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 1 (2001): 54–86, doi: 10.1086/319879; Bischoff, "Heimischwerden deutscher Art und Sitte"; Volker Langbehn, "The Visual Representation of Blackness During German Imperialism Around 1900," in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 90–100; O'Donnell, "Home, Nation, Empire"; Blunt, "Imperial Geographies of Home"; Christian Geulen, "'The Final Frontier...' Heimat, Nation und Kolonie um 1900: Carl Peters," in *Phantasiereiche: Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, ed. Birthe Kundrus (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), 35–55; *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Clare Midgley, "Bringing the Empire Home: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790s–1930s," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 239–250; Elizabeth Dillenburg, "Domestic Servant Debates and the Fault Lines of Empire in the Early Twentieth-Century South Africa and New Zealand," in *New Perspectives on the History of Gender and Empire: Comparative and Global Approaches*, ed. Ulrike Lindner and Dörte Lerp (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 179–207; Thorne, *Congregational Missions*; Patricia Grimshaw and Peter Sherlock, "Women and Cultural Exchange," in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 173–193.

⁸⁶ Grimshaw and Sherlock, "Women and Cultural Exchange," 184–185; Midgley, "Bringing the Empire Home," 241; Dietrich, *Weisse Weiblichkeiten*, 308–309.

⁸⁷ Dillenburg, "Domestic Servant Debates," 184.

by Eva Bischoff's claim that "notions of home and domesticity fulfilled a similar function: they separated European colonists from their colonial subjects, both physically and socially".⁸⁸

Due to gendered norms, the private sphere was the woman's domain of responsibility; in colonial contexts, this meant that European women were responsible both for maintaining bourgeois standards and racial boundaries within the home. As postcolonial feminist scholars have shown, we must extend the spaces of enquiry into colonial violence beyond the public and into the private sphere.⁸⁹ The imperative of maintaining racialised boundaries and a bourgeois household – both reliant on the subservience of indigenous people and servants – almost certainly bred a variety of forms of violence. This is particularly to be expected, as the domestic was a space of intimate contact between the coloniser and the colonised, one where boundaries were most likely to be blurred and thus most rigidly reasserted.⁹⁰ Ann Laura Stoler thus prefers the terms "intimate sphere", as this highlights that the interactions occurring between colonisers and indigenous servants, labourers, and child-carers within the home were more personal and vulnerable, away from the overt public gaze even whilst the home was understood as a space where national identities were forged.⁹¹ Notably, Stoler has indicated that these were the spaces where "domination was routinized and rerouted in intimacies".⁹² Clearly, the household was a politically significant space in the colonies due to its imperative for reasserting racialised boundaries. As such, it was a space where German and British women were expected to mark, police, and enforce racial domination on a daily basis. The household or, as Stoler calls it, the "intimate sphere", is therefore a crucial space to investigate not only women's agency – which has been done extensively – but also women's role in colonial violence.

The Continuum of Violence

Thus far in this paper, two types of violence have largely been discussed: physical violence (often falsely connoted solely with men) and non-physical

⁸⁸ Eva Bischoff, "Being at Home: Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender in Settler Colonial Australia," in *New Perspectives on the History of Gender and Empire: Comparative and Global Approaches*, ed. Ulrike Lindner and Dörte Lerp (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 209–238, here 209.

⁸⁹ Agathangelou and Turcotte, "Reworking Postcolonial Feminisms," 44.

⁹⁰ Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 842–843.

⁹¹ Ann Laura Stoler, "Matters of Intimacy as Matters of State: A Response," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001), 893–897, doi: 10.2307/2700391.

⁹² Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 864.

types of violence. Drawing on Enloe's method of taking women seriously, I have argued that women in the colonies must be seen on the one hand as being capable of the same violence as men, whilst on the other hand acknowledging the ways in which their constrained agency likely changed the forms of violence they were committing. Subsequently, I demonstrated how their role as *Kulturträgerin* (in Germany) or idealised image as a beautiful soul (in Britain) meant their violence was deeply connected to intersectional imperial hierarchies and thus likely to have been committed in order to maintain racialised boundaries – which, in turn, reasserted white women's significance to a colonial order. Additionally, I showed how the role assigned to them in a patriarchal society meant their agency and significance lay in the domestic sphere, wherefore it is important to look at precisely this space when researching women's colonial violence. Now that I have outlined how context should shape research on women's colonial violence – in terms of motivating factors, likely forms, and spaces of violence – I will next propose how to categorise and interpret such violence.

In order to conceptualise multiple types of violence and highlight their significance, the continuum of violence outlined by anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois is instructive.⁹³ Their concept leaves space for the opaque nature of violence, whilst embracing the ability to name and research specific forms of violence and its relation to other violence. Thus, their explanation of the concept begins with the insight that, “violence is a slippery concept – nonlinear, productive, destructive, and reproductive. It is mimetic, like imitative magic or homeopathy. ‘Like produces like,’ that much we know. Violence gives birth to itself. So we can rightly speak of chains, spirals, and mirrors of violence – or, as we prefer – a continuum of violence.”⁹⁴ At the centre of their conceptualisation is the belief that all forms of violence impact other forms of violence. This elevates the importance of each type of violence, inculcates each form of violence with a unique position in the continuum of violence, and reiterates the necessity to see violence as inevitably connected in complex ways to other violence. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois are therefore unsurprisingly proponents of understanding violence in its broadest sense, arguing: “Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality – force, assault, or the infliction of pain – alone. Violence also includes assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense

⁹³ Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, “Introduction: Making Sense of Violence,” in *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

of worth or value of the victim. The social and cultural dimensions of violence are what gives violence its power and meaning.”⁹⁵

Hence, the continuum of violence enables the concretisation of research into multiple connected forms of violence beyond the simple dichotomy of physical and non-physical violence. In this way, all types of violence and their consequences can be researched in depth and the significance of under-researched forms of violence highlighted. In particular this latter element aligns with the previously discussed feminist agenda that seeks to move research on perpetration beyond masculinised conceptions of physical violence. In the colonial context, the continuum of violence therefore shows a symbiosis with my proposition to focus on women’s roles in establishing and maintaining racialised boundaries and violence occurring in the “intimate sphere”. Indeed, the continuum of violence has been usefully applied to multiple feminist research agendas – even if largely to investigate gender-based violence.⁹⁶ This application has rested on the acknowledgement that various types of violence must all be taken seriously and inform other types of violence. This connection is important for feminist agendas focusing on violence against women, as it shows how often neglected or subtler forms of violence – such as discursive, structural, or symbolic violence – are important to understanding how more obvious forms of violence like femicide or sexual violence occur. I will demonstrate how the continuum of violence is not only useful to comprehend violence against women, but can be used as a conceptual framework to understand women’s role in colonial violence.

Just as feminists do in the context of violence against women, I argue that these subtler forms of violence are more likely to be committed by women and yet must also be understood as deeply significant to colonial violence. Whilst studies focused on violence against women may focus on the denigration of women in a patriarchal order, I propose that research into colonial violence must actively integrate existing research on the denigration of a specific group – in this

⁹⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁶ Lorraine Bayard de Volo and Lynn K. Hall, “‘I Wish All the Ladies Were Holes in the Road’: The US Air Force Academy and the Gendered Continuum of Violence,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 40, no. 4 (2015): 865–889, doi: 10.1086/680328; Denisa Kostovicova, Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, and Marsha Henry, “Drawing on the Continuum: A War and Post-War Political Economy of Gender-Based Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22, no. 2 (2020): 250–272, doi: 10.1080/14616742.2019.1692686; Ulrike Krause, “A Continuum of Violence? Linking Sexual and Gender-Based Violence during Conflict, Flight, and Encampment,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2015), 1–19, doi: 10.1093/rsq/hdv014; Jacqui True, “Continuums of Violence and Peace: A Feminist Perspective,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 34, no. 1 (2020): 85–95, doi: 10.1017/S0892679420000064.

case indigenous populations – to legitimate and reinforce violence in a colonial context. Evidently, the continuum of violence functions as a lynchpin, demonstrating the significance in studying each type of violence on its own, whilst highlighting the importance of each type of violence through its impact on other forms of violence. I therefore argue that more research on women’s role in colonial violence must systematically analyse multiple forms of violence and then, in turn, research the complex entanglements of such violence. I propose a more comprehensive approach to violence which always places interconnections at the centre of any research agenda. As I will show in selected examples of German and British colonial contexts, this is particularly relevant to understanding how violent colonial cultures formed and changed over time.

The Private Is Political Also Concerns Colonial Violence

As I have already shown, the phrasing of the term “the private is political” also pertains to violence in the colonies. Thus, I propose that European women’s roles can be figured as border guards who functioned largely within the private domain, as that was their locus of agency. The ways in which women established, maintained, and policed boundaries of difference can be understood through a continuum of violence. Firstly, women likely re-asserted and shaped hierarchies of difference that underlay and legitimise other forms of colonial violence. This likely involved multiple forms of non-physical violence. In the context of the British feminist movement and its engagement with British India, Antoinette Burton reminds us that “historians must not lose sight of the fact that feminism is and always has been as much a quest for power as a battle for rights”.⁹⁷ The conclusion Burton draws is that the quest for white women’s power “included the construction and domination of Indian women as the female Other by white western feminists”.⁹⁸ As critical feminists have shown, we must extend this to not only include the repression of the Indian woman, but also of the Indian man, whose usurpation by white woman demonstrated even more clearly that race rather than gender was the most significant ordering hierarchy in the colonies.⁹⁹

Due to the dependence of women on their racial and class identities, they relied on racism to ensure their own space and agency within colonies. The next

⁹⁷ Burton, “The White Woman’s Burden,” 106.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁹⁹ Blunt, “Imperial Geographies of Home,” 429–433.

critical reflections that must be drawn from this insight are twofold. Initially, the construction of racialised hierarchies must in and of itself be understood and analysed as a form of violence. Depending on the research area and approach, the establishment and maintenance of racialised hierarchies can be seen as epistemic, normative, or discursive violence. These three forms of violence are all deeply intertwined and relevant to the study of racism, as they highlight that norms, knowledge and belief systems, and the language which transmits these can all be violent in and of themselves. As Claudia Brunner has argued for the case of German colonialism, epistemic questions quickly regress to the shadows as soon as the discussion turns specifically to violence. Yet rather than placing it in the background, researchers must understand the ways in which epistemic violence “makes connections between knowledge, violence, and domination on a global scale recognizable, nameable, and plausible, without appearing as a magic formula of analysis or even of overcoming all violence”.¹⁰⁰ The concept of the continuum of violence therefore seems particularly pertinent to the study of colonial structures, as it can help unearth precisely these often overlooked connections between non-physical and physical forms of violence. In this example, the fact that the construction of racialised hierarchies as a non-physical form of violence impacted and legitimated other, physical forms of violence.

The second insight must be that European women did not simply parrot existing discourses, but actively shaped discourses, knowledge, and belief systems, including in the construction of racialised hierarchies. This is particularly likely, because their role in the colonies was so deeply dependent on racialised hierarchies as well as expectations of class and gender. As European women sought to forge a space for themselves in the colonies, they must therefore also have shaped racialised hierarchies in such a way as to profit their own position in the colonies. For German and British empire, much research has already been conducted based on the writings and publications of European women who settled there.¹⁰¹ Rather than simply seeing such textual documents as a space from

¹⁰⁰ Claudia Brunner, *Epistemische Gewalt: Wissen und Herrschaft in der kolonialen Moderne* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2020), 12, translation by author.

¹⁰¹ See for example Dillenburg, “Domestic Servant Debates,” 186; McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 252; David Ciarlo, “Picturing Genocide in German Consumer Culture, 1904–10,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 69–89, here 69; Jörg Lehmann, “Fraternity, Frenzy, and Genocide in German War Literature, 1906–36,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 115–125, here 120; Jürgen Zimmerer, “Kolonialismus und kollektive Identität: Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte,” in *Kein Platz an der Sonne: Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, ed. Jürgen Zimmerer and

which to extract information, researchers could see these publications as spaces of knowledge production and therefore also of discursive or epistemic violence.

Reminiscent of critical whiteness approaches, Jane Rendall's study of women's writing in nineteenth-century Britain for example shows how women constructed the Other in order to forge a clearly defined space of agency for themselves. Rendall writes:

These representations were part of the construction of white British middle-class femininity in the early nineteenth century. From the mid-1770s onwards, representations of savage and "Eastern" women were used to signal the superiority of white British femininity by differentiating it from its "others" in the prescriptive literature addressed to young women.¹⁰²

Similarly, Nancy Reagin has shown how German women in German Southwest Africa (GSWA) "included descriptions of their African servants and the African dwellings, which usually surrounded the German homestead and provided a sharp contrast to German housekeeping".¹⁰³ Descriptions of the homes of indigenous populations were actively derogatory and contrasted with European domestic spaces to underscore the significance of European women's role in the colonies. Existing research has therefore already indicated that British and German women engaged with and shaped racialised hierarchies of difference in order to foreground their own purportedly innate strengths as white woman. Significant research, as outlined above, has taken the first step in taking women seriously, acknowledging the violence they were a part of, and researching the ways in which such violence shaped and reinforced racialised hierarchies and physical violence in the colonies. Of course, further research in particular into the complex entanglements with other forms of violence would be fruitful to more systematically trace the connections between different forms of violence.

Much recent research has admittedly considered the intersections of race, gender, and class in both German and British empire, highlighting women's

Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013), 9–37, here 30; Reagin, "The Imagined Hausfrau"; O'Donnell, "Home, Nation, Empire"; Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 37; Rendall, "The Condition of Women."

¹⁰² Rendall, "The Condition of Women," 104.

¹⁰³ Nancy Reagin, "German Brigadoon? Domesticity and Metropolitan Germans' Perceptions of Auslandsdeutschen in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Ruth Reagin (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 248–266, here 251.

relevance to constructing racialised hierarchies – these studies have simply not actively considered women’s actions and texts as forms of violence. Yet when it comes to state or structural violence in the colonies, women appear almost non-existent. This is despite European women’s undeniable presence in the colonies and therefore also their inevitable engagement with structures of violence, in particular in their daily encounters with indigenous labourers in their homes. Many forms of state violence enabled or structured violence in the household and therefore inevitably involved women’s participation.

In GSWA, for example, strict laws introduced after the Herero and Nama genocide (1904–1908) meant that the behaviour and movement of indigenous labourers was rigidly controlled by their employers. As German husbands often had to leave their German wives at home for long stretches whilst on business trips, this meant that they were responsible for maintaining rigid rules of behaviour in their absence. Marie Muschalek’s detailed work on the German police force in GSWA has shown the arbitrariness of law as well as the many options open to settlers to use violence against their indigenous labourers. The forms open to them included “a penalty in a criminal case, a disciplinary measure within a military or state institution, or a paternal chastisement (*väterliches Züchtigungsrecht*), that is a civil, customary right”.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, the police could be called on to discipline the workers for the settlers or to hunt down indigenous people staying in remote areas to avoid being forced into the colonial labour market.¹⁰⁵ These are all ways in which violent colonial structures were deeply embedded in the everyday running of a settler household, as these depended on the control of an indigenous labour force. As such, the involvement of German women in these structures seems inevitable, due to their role in running a settler household, but has as of yet not been researched. This would not only be taking women seriously and adding women into the picture of state violence, but would help uncover the complex, everyday, and violent workings of a settler society, wherein state and settlers had both competing and overlapping interests in particular regarding relations to the indigenous population.

A further form of violence which has gained increasing attention in postcolonial literature is the extreme physical violence in the colonies directed against indigenous peoples. Research on the psyche in particular of settler men has uncovered how racialised fears and uncertainties in new living environments together with a sense of being left to fend for their own interests by the colonial

¹⁰⁴ Muschalek, *Violence as Usual*, 135.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 137–139.

state introduced a violent dynamic to many settler societies. This research has underscored the extreme physical brutality that white men settling in the colonies committed.¹⁰⁶ Yet it has as of yet not introduced women into the picture. Individual cases have however cropped up in detailed readings of secondary literature that indicate the relevance of women to this research area. Some commentators on British India suggest that European women's arrival in the colony triggered a shift towards a more violent settler colony, thereby demonstrating the importance of women's role in creating cultures of violence.¹⁰⁷ A case in GSWA similarly suggests that women's presence may have been important for racial antagonisms and violent cultures. The case of the Cramer family became famous both due to a well-reported court case, memoirs, and then also due to its inclusion in the Blue Book published by the British to report of German mismanagement of GSWA after the First World War.¹⁰⁸ In this case, the torture of indigenous servants by the Cramer family, largely due to their belief of being threatened by their servants, highlighted how the wife, Adelheid Cramer, aided the torture of the servants. This included both in her support of the violence, as well as actions such as taking off the clothes of the servants prior to their torture. It therefore seems that considering European women's role in supporting acts of physical violence is an important avenue of research. It would further develop a continuum of violence by intertwining multiple forms of physical and non-physical violence.

Keeping in mind Enloe's approach to taking women seriously, I argue that it is just as important to consider physical violence perpetrated wholly by European women in the colonies. Martha Mamozai has pointed out that there are documented cases of German women single-handedly murdering indigenous people, such as the cases of farmer Elisabeth Ohlsen or Maria von Weiherr.¹⁰⁹ Mentioned as a side note by Mamozai, these cases merit deeper research and demonstrate the need for further research into physical violence perpetrated by European women in the colonies.

Conclusion

Women have not been completely ignored in research on colonialism in the last centuries, as multiple feminisms have demonstrated the complex

¹⁰⁶ Price, "The Psychology of Colonial Violence"; Häussler, *Der Genozid an den Herero*.

¹⁰⁷ Blunt, "Imperial Geographies of Home," 423.

¹⁰⁸ Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

¹⁰⁹ Mamozai, *Komplizinnen*, 66.

entanglements of race, gender, and class for empire. There is a rich resource of feminist scholarship that critically analyses white women's role in colonial violence, which demonstrates the importance of this research. It also, however, reveals the many complexities that shape the field and therefore require more dedicated critical scholarship. I suggest that a fruitful avenue for future research would be a systematic approach to the study of white women's violence, which combines postcolonial feminisms with feminist IR.

Drawing in particular on Cynthia Enloe's work, I argue that taking women seriously in the context of violence means understanding that context will inevitably have left women with a constrained agency that shaped the violence they committed, whilst at the same time acknowledging that women were capable of the same violence as men. This opens up an ambiguous space that I believe we must embrace to understand the complexity and multiplicity of white women in empire. Future theoretical contributions to unpack this ambiguity might be able to do so by integrating scholarship from the field of perpetrator studies, which negotiates complex and overlapping roles of individuals within violence.

Research on white women in the colonies has shown that their role was deeply dependent on the construction and maintenance of rigid racialised hierarchies and the creation of bourgeoisie domesticity in a colonial space. I therefore suggest that these present important spaces for research into women's role in colonial violence, as they provided both their space of agency and what their agency depended on. The concept of the continuum of violence lastly functions as a structuring device for further research, highlighting long-term trends and impacts, the importance of studying a multitude of different forms of violence, and the complex connections that exist between them. Drawing on examples from German and British colonialism, I have shown how this conceptual framework opens up spaces for research on women's role in colonial violence in non-physical, state, and physical forms of violence. This solely presents a roadmap or starting point, a suggestion of avenues for future research and a conceptual framework for how such research can usefully be structured for a more comprehensive view on violence, colonial spaces, and women as perpetrators.

REVIEWS

M. E. Sarotte, **Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021. 568 pages. ISBN 978-0-300-25993-3.

Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate, written by M.E. Sarotte, centers around US-Russian relations and the impact on NATO expansion. The book was published in 2021, less than a year before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and continues to feel extremely relevant. The author is currently a professor at Johns Hopkins University; her work has primarily been about the fall of the Berlin wall and transatlantic relations following the end of the Cold War. *Not One Inch* is her newest book, and it analyzes the development of NATO in the post-Cold War space. The title comes from a quote by former Secretary of State, James Baker, who allegedly promised Gorbachev that if Moscow released East Germany, NATO would “not shift one inch eastward from its present position” (p. 1). Obviously, this promise did not last. The book confronts the issues that transpired from this comment and the events that took place after. Sarotte’s argument is that NATO expansion was not necessarily the problem, but the strategies used from both the American and Russian sides created some of those issues that led to no improvements for the situation between the US and Russia. The book covers important themes such as diplomacy between leaders, NATO expansion in Central and Eastern Europe, and the question of Ukraine and Russia.

Sarotte sets out to discuss how NATO expanded after 1990 and who benefited from it. The thesis of this book is that the challenges caused by the entreaties of developing democracies in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s justified Western leaders expanding NATO, although the way NATO expanded into Central and Eastern Europe was problematic. While Sarotte does not think that expanding NATO was a bad idea, the way that NATO was expanded did not improve the status of the US and Russia or set the countries on a positive trajectory together. The argument is split into three parts; it is divided into 1989–1992, 1993–1994, and then 1995–1999. It begins with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of East and West Germany, then progresses to Bill Clinton’s inauguration and transition to US president, and lastly concludes with the downfall of both Russian and American leaders, and the further transition to the twenty-first century. This works well because Sarotte sets a lot of the responsibility of NATO on the rulers of these countries, and begins with Gorbachev and Bush, to move onto Clinton and Yeltsin, and then conclude with Putin.

There are three questions that Sarotte sets at the beginning and then answers at the end. She confronts issues such as the intentions of the US to expand NATO after the Cold War, how American decisions coincided with post-Soviet Russia, and interactions between the two countries that ultimately led to a decline in relationships (p. 338). These questions demonstrate that Sarotte views the US as a leading decision maker on NATO expansion. The answer to the first question is that the Americans wanted to cement their cooperation with European countries, especially those with nuclear arsenals. They wanted to avoid replication of the Cold War and creating a new division over Europe, but sadly this is exactly what happened (p. 341). Secondly, Sarotte believes that it should have been

assumed that Russia would remain a major international player especially because of the nuclear arsenal (p. 344). As Russia would be in possession of such a powerful tool, that meant that the US should have given Moscow more autonomy and say over the decisions that directly and indirectly affected them. Finally, the last question is that there is a “need to make a virtue of necessity” (p. 350). NATO is the answer to the US’s involvement with Europe. Russia is impossible to ignore when dealing with Europe; the best decision would have been to foster that relationship, but this is where both the US and Russia failed. Sarotte finishes her book on a rather pessimistic note. Despite any hope for a better US-Russia relationship in the twenty-first century, the relation between the two powers remained the same as the US-Soviet relationship regardless of efforts made by the political leaders of the 1990s. Overall, Sarotte does a great job of showing the evolution of US-Russian relations. She does not blame NATO enlargement for the weakened relationship, but blames it on communication, domestic policy, and assumptions made by both sides (p. 7). Unfortunately, the book does not offer an optimistic outlook on the future, because she was unclear if Russia and the US could return to a potentially positive future. Since the publication of the book, this is not an option.

One of the primary themes throughout the book is the relationship between Boris Yeltsin, Bill Clinton, as well as Helmut Kohl. To an extent, Sarotte implies that the future of NATO expansion and US-Russian relations depended entirely on the personal connection Yeltsin and Clinton had together. One of the biggest elements within the relationship between Yeltsin and the various political leaders were the attempts of flattery by Clinton. Unfortunately, this relationship had to deal with the individual problems of both Clinton and Yeltsin. Yeltsin was a severe alcoholic and that began to alter his health and his ability to lead during the second half of his presidency. This had been a problem from the very beginning, but at the start this was tolerated by other leaders, especially Clinton. He thought that “Yeltsin drunk was better for the United States than most other Russian leaders sober” (p. 157). Yeltsin was seen as a collaborator with the United States. Unfortunately, when he was no longer to carry out his presidential duties, he could no longer be useful. Clinton also faced his own problems at the end of his presidency which negatively altered his career. Towards the end of Clinton’s presidency, his reputation was severely affected by the cheating scandal with Monica Lewinsky. The impeachment trials ruined public opinion of him worldwide. While the intentions at the beginning of the 1990s were to transform the US-Russian relationship into a positive one, these vanished when the leaders were no longer capable of such change. The lack of change they were able to enact led to Putin’s rule, which caused Russia to revert to their past and attempt reclamation of their former territory.

Another major theme is the expansion of NATO into Central and Eastern Europe. It was a sensitive subject for Moscow to have its former satellites now move further towards the West. At the beginning, Kohl recommended that Russia be treated the same as Germany in 1945, “a defeated adversary in need of essential help.” But priorities changed, and the Americans knew that they could not continue to protect Russia’s future without also listening to the wishes of Central Europe to join NATO (p. 155). Polish president Lech

Wałęsa continuously expressed his desire to join to Bush and Clinton. He said that “we resolutely desire to join Western Europe and the United States in political, economic, and military terms” (p. 109). One of the biggest challenges faced in allowing them to enter NATO, according to American leadership, was the unwillingness of Russia. As an attempt at a compromise, other organizations and alliances were offered as alternatives or promised as “steppingstones” for acceptance into NATO. Eventually, Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic were invited to and joined NATO in 1999 as full members, but it meant having to go against what Yeltsin wished for. Instead, Russians were provided with a NATO-Russia Council that merely provided Russia a space for communication with NATO without providing any other involvement (p. 317). Although Russia would never join NATO, the inclusion of Central Europe with benefits such as Article 5 did not improve the political standing of Russia at all. This looks especially worse for Russia when compared with former Soviet satellites in Central Europe.

While Ukraine was not a primary topic, it was an underlying issue consistently mentioned throughout the chapters. When Ukraine is mentioned, it is regarding Russia’s continued hold over Ukraine. Issues on how to deal with Ukraine happened even before the Soviet collapse; US Secretary of Defense at the time, Dick Cheney, hoped to bolster any partnership or communication with Ukraine due to their nuclear arsenal (p. 121). Yeltsin was unready to let Ukraine go. The history of Ukraine as a part of Russia was strongly established in his mind. A contention point developed early on is the matter of the Black Sea Fleet. Ukraine’s Leonid Kuchma and Yeltsin argued over the continued military presence of Russia in Sevastopol, with Yeltsin insisting on a document limiting NATO’s influence over Ukraine (p. 313). Even though a conclusion was reached eventually, the Black Sea Fleet matter has not been truly resolved. It has been clear for a long time that Russia’s need to control Ukraine will continue, and Sarotte suggested that “Western efforts should focus on creating political rather than violent means of addressing the discord” (p. 331). Unfortunately, Russia’s war on Ukraine has taken away any chance of the two countries coexisting without conflict. Despite attempts at sanctions after annexation of Crimea and the 2022 full-scale invasion, Russia is not going to give up Ukraine and the role of the West has been to provide aid in the forms of military equipment and resources beyond the scope that Sarotte may have intended.

Following the timeline after the book, the question of NATO, Russia, and the United States rested on the hands of Vladimir Putin. The book establishes the framework for many issues that have heavily influenced Russian aggression against Ukraine in the twenty-first century. Concerns set after Soviet collapse have continued to remain concerns for over 30 years. Reflecting on Sarotte, one of the most relevant questions is that of Ukraine’s wish to join NATO. The line on what is comfortable for Russia has inched further and further east. If Ukraine had been admitted into NATO, this would have drastically reduced Russia’s sphere of influence, and they would have had to share a significant border with a new NATO country; this is an idea that was sure to be seen as unacceptable by any Russian leadership. Additionally, comparing the themes studied within the book, it is clear how some of the matters discussed have impacted Putin. Throughout

Putin's speeches, he has actively dismissed many former Soviet and Russian leaders, particularly Yeltsin and Gorbachev. In contrast with Yeltsin, Putin did not build close connections or trust with Western leaders. The treatment of Ukraine is a stark contrast with Yeltsin; although begrudgingly, Yeltsin promised Bush that if Ukraine wanted independence by more than 70%, Ukraine would be recognized as independent from Russia (p. 129). Yeltsin might not have truly believed in these actions, but this is an area where Putin feels that Yeltsin made fools out of the Russian people. This is one reason that he argued for the invasion; Ukrainians and Russians are "brothers" and they should not be separated. Putin no longer sees two independent countries as a possibility; instead, it has become his mission to take over Ukrainian territory and gain back what Yeltsin had lost.

In conclusion, *Not One Inch* provides a good background of the politics and interpersonal relations of world leaders in the post-Cold War era, and it should be recommended. Sarotte's argumentation is strong overall and the book provides useful background information; however, it feels like she may oversimplify her argument by suggesting that so much of NATO expansion rested on the hands of the US and Russian leaders. It does not consider much autonomy other countries had over NATO admittance or their opinions. She sporadically mentions UK, France or Spain throughout the book, but when she does it feels like an afterthought rather than relevant information to her main argument. Despite this weakness, the research throughout the book uses a wide variety of sources that provide a unique and in-depth analysis. She makes wonderful use of speeches, interviews and previously unpublished documents including from NATO headquarters, and using materials from both the East and the West helps cement her argument. This book was published at a rather coincidental timing; original publication of the book was in September of 2021, and while Sarotte could not have predicted it, Ukraine was brutally invaded only a few months later in late February of 2022. Because Putin and other leaders have all referred to various historical events and leaders as their reasonings behind their actions, this provides a strong context into the history that they are referring to and often reinterpreting. She does not directly state ideas such as NATO expansion being one of the justifications of Russia has continuously decided to attack Ukraine, but she does demonstrate that Russia felt misrepresented or undervalued during NATO expansion. This has prevented Russia's relationship with the West from improving since the Soviet Union, and Sarotte would place the blame on the US for this. It remains open for debate if the decision making from Western leaders after the Soviet collapse could have set Russia on a better trajectory for the future.

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doi: 10.14712/23363231.2023.11

REPORTS

Ukraine in a Changing Europe: A New Research Centre at Charles University's Institute of International Studies

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 not only disrupted the lives of Ukraine's 40+ million inhabitants but also posed multiple challenges for adjacent states. The invasion called into question the very foundations of the existing European order and international order more broadly. The European public and scholarly circles came to recognise that this war, unequalled for decades on the European continent in terms of the scale of the military engagement and consequent destruction, is a historic event that has upended established geopolitical patterns and the paradigms of scholars of international relations. The resulting push to revise our epistemologies and practices requires the development of new knowledge based on nuanced analysis of developments on the ground in Ukraine and their reverberations elsewhere in the world.

Taking into account the steep rise in the demands for expertise on Ukraine of the state and the public in the Czech Republic and beyond, the Institute of International Studies has established a special unit that brings together scholars working on contemporary Ukraine. The goal is to consolidate their efforts and raise the profile of Ukrainian studies at Charles University, Prague, both domestically and internationally. The Centre opened in February 2023 at the time of the first anniversary of all-out war in Ukraine. Its research agenda is twofold. First, to put developments in contemporary Ukraine into their broader context and connect them to regional and global trends. This explains the centre's name, Ukraine in a Changing Europe. Second on the agenda is recentring East European Studies by delinking them from their traditional Russocentric focus and opening up a space for local voices and minor agencies.

The new Centre operates at the intersection of the humanities and the social sciences. It fosters an interdisciplinary perspective that is open to collaboration with various academic and civic institutions. It takes recent developments in and around Ukraine as a point of departure to examine the broader implications and repercussions of what became known as the "Ukraine crisis" and later escalated into a full-blown war. Russian invasion has caused a huge wave of migration, a looming threat of hunger in Africa, and an economic crisis in the EU and elsewhere – not to mention hundreds of thousands of human casualties and the destruction of towns, critical infrastructure, and cultural treasures. The underlying assumption is that Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine (and in Russian propaganda, against "the West" as well) is the ultimate disruption of the post-Cold War world. It is a conflict which resists containment and demands the revision of existing paradigms.¹ This epistemological and political challenge has already resulted in new academic trends (including the decolonisation of East European Studies) and new political projects (e.g., the European Political Community).

¹ See Valeria Korablyova, "Why is Ukraine important? Challenging the colonial and Cold War legacies in European social sciences," *Soziologie* 52, no. 3 (2023): 309–319.

The Centre's broadly conceived approach opens up a number of fruitful avenues for academic research. Interesting possibilities include – but are not limited to – the following topics:

- the 24/7 mediatization of the war around the globe with minimal delay and the role of effective political communication in garnering public support for the Ukrainian cause (the so-called 'Zelensky effect')²;
- Increasing confidence in democracy in wartime Ukraine and the conflation of national and democratic self-identification, in that democratic practices are increasingly perceived as a national heritage and a competitive advantage vis-à-vis Russian authoritarianism³;
- nationwide resistance to the invasion that not only enabled the country's survival from the very first days of the war but also exposed a complex social structure that exists beyond power verticals and state institutions.⁴

The interdisciplinary nature of the Centre's research interests invites the participation of academics engaged not only with the history and politics of East Central Europe but also specialists in social and political theory, European studies, theories of democracy, media studies, peace and conflict studies, ethics, and more.

The conceptual foci of the centre include:

- decolonisation of East European studies and their re-centralisation around multiple agencies and indigenous perspectives;
- Ukraine's idiosyncrasy – the peculiarity of its history and contemporary political and societal makeup;
- grassroots democracy – Ukraine's contribution to democratic theory and practice;
- the transformation of symbolic geography and emergent new readings of Central/Eastern Europe provoked by the Russian war;
- Ukraine as a (Central) European nation and its prospects for EU membership;
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a challenge and an opportunity for the European project;
- post-war recovery and its potential pitfalls;
- visions for the future of the world after the "end of history";
- the pillars of new global security, economic, and political orders.

² Olga Onuch and Henry E. Hale, *The Zelensky Effect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

³ Mykola Riabchuk, "Rallying Around the Flag: War Challenges and Civic Mobilization in Ukraine," (Working paper, Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, Princeton University, May 2023); Olga Onuch, "Why Ukrainians Are Rallying Around Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 33, no. 4 (October 2022): 37–46.

⁴ See Mychailo Wynnnyckyj, *Ukraine's Maidan, Russia's War: A Chronicle and Analysis of the Revolution of Dignity* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2019); Serhiy Kudelia, "The Ukrainian State under Russian Aggression: Resilience and Resistance," *Current History* 121, no. 837 (October 2022): 251–257, doi: 10.1525/curh.2022.121.837.251.

The Centre is led by Dr Valeria Korablyova, Assistant Professor at the Department of Russian and East European Studies. Dr Korablyova holds a Doctor of Science degree in social philosophy from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (2015). She has conducted research and taught special courses on Ukraine at a number of leading institutions in Europe and North America including Stanford University, the University of Basel, Justus Liebig University Giessen, and the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. Her research delves into the post-Soviet transformation of Ukraine and the region, with a special focus on mass protests, grassroots nation-building, and performative politics.

The other distinguished members of the Centre are Professor Ota Konrád, whose broad expertise in modern European history focuses on wars as turning points in the trajectories of different polities; Dr Ondřej Klípa, who specializes in migration processes and ethnic conflicts and who is a member of the expert group for Ukraine created by the Faculty of Social Sciences last year; and Dr Martin Laryš, who studies political violence and military conflicts in the post-Soviet space and who has conducted extensive fieldwork in Ukraine since 2014.

In the winter semester of 2023/24, the Centre will host Dr Olga Oleinikova, who is a Senior Lecturer and Director of the Social Impact Technologies and Democracy Research Hub (SITADHub) of the School of Communication at the University of Technology (Sydney, Australia). Dr Oleinikova is among Forbes' Top 40 Global Ukrainians, Forbes 30 Under 30 in Asia, and is a finalist for the Australia Council of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Future Leader Award. At the Centre, Dr Oleinikova will conduct research on new migration trends in Eastern Europe, building upon her recently published book, *New Eastern European Migration to Australia: From Ukraine, Czech Republic and Hungary to Sydney and Beyond* (Palgrave, 2023).

The Centre opened to the public with a lecture, "Ukrainian IDPs and War Refugees: Resilience and New Civic Activism" by Dr Viktoria Sereda, director of the research group PRISMA UKRAJINA: War, Migration and Memory at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, and head of the recently established Virtual Ukraine Institute for Advanced Studies. Later, the Centre hosted two panel discussions with leading experts that tackled the two most burning Ukrainian issues: the wartime migration of Ukrainians to the EU instigated by the war and the challenges related to it (Dr Sereda and Dr Yana Leontiyeva, Czech Academy of Sciences) and problems of doing research fieldwork in war zones (Dr Jan Šír, Institute of International Studies, and Dr Anna Osypchuk, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy).

The opening of the Centre and its research projects were funded by grants from the rectorate of Charles University, 4EU+/UA/F2, part of the 4EU+ Alliance project.

The Centre's mission is to create a meeting point for scholars and experts from different localities who are working on Ukraine. It also serves to connect Czech and Ukrainian academics with those in other national academic institutions and with practitioners in diplomacy and civil society. To that end, the Centre is seeking out and establishing various partnerships. Its strategic partners in Ukraine are the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. In the EU, it cooperates

with Justus Liebig University Giessen in Germany, the Research Centre for the History of Transformations (RECET) at the University of Vienna, and the European Humanities University in Vilnius, Lithuania. In the Czech Republic, it has teamed up with the French Research Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences (CEFRES) in connection with its non-residential fellowships for Ukrainian scholars and its RETHINK Seminar, “Objects, Models, and Methods in Humanities and Social Sciences Since the Invasion of Ukraine”. The Centre also cooperates with the Czexpats for Ukraine initiative and the Czech Academy of Sciences in the project “Ukrainian Cinematography: On the Path to Its Own Identity” (part of the Academy’s Strategy AV21, The Anatomy of European Society). Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Prague Civil Society Centre are partners who are helping the Centre to escape the academic bubble and reach out to a broader audience.

These partnerships have resulted in various events for academics and the general public. The Centre has hosted several workshops and lectures, including a public lecture by Professor Martin Schulze Wessel from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, “Imperial Legacies in Russia’s War Against Ukraine” and a guest lecture by Sonya Koshkina, a renowned Ukrainian journalist from lb.ua, “How Do Ukrainian Media Work During the War?” (delivered as part of Dr Korablyova’s course entitled The Zelensky Phenomenon: The Rise of Audience Democracy and Performative Politics in Ukraine).

In the academic year 2023–24, the Centre plans to organise several international events in cooperation with its partners. On 28–30 September 2023, the conference “Decolonization of Education and Science in Belarus and Ukraine: Theoretical Challenges and Practical Tasks” will be held at the European Humanities University in Vilnius in cooperation with the Ukrainian Catholic University with the financial support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The conference will bring together scholars and practitioners who are working towards the “decolonization of minds” in what used to be known as the “post-Soviet region”.

On 18–20 October 2023, the conference “600 Days of All-Out War: Fighting for Freedom, Fighting for Democracy”, co-organised with the Research Centre for the History of Transformations at the University of Vienna and financially supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, will be held in both Prague and Vienna. This event aims to discuss the broader effects of the Russian war against Ukraine on neighbouring polities, the EU project, democratic imaginaries, and the future security order.

On 8–10 March 2024, the conference “Re-Thinking Post-Socialist War(s): Comparative Dimensions of the War in Ukraine (2014–2024)” will be held at Justus Liebig University Giessen as part of the project “(Un)Disciplined: Pluralizing Ukrainian Studies – Understanding the War in Ukraine” (UNDIPUS) sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. This conference will compare the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war with other military conflicts in the post-socialist area (broadly understood) and track narratives, patterns, and the war’s effect on self-identification in the polities concerned and among the actors within them.

In 2023, the Centre began awarding a certificate, “Ukraine: Contemporary History, Politics, and Society”, from the Institute’s anglophone Master’s degree program, Balkan,

Eurasian, and Central European Studies. Students who wish to gain special expertise on Ukraine are invited to participate in an internship at the Centre to get first-hand exposure to cutting-edge knowledge production related to Ukraine and the region. They prepare and attend conferences, workshops, guest lectures, and other events organised by the Centre and its partners. They are also expected to take special courses taught at the Institute and at partner institutions in Ukraine. Their choices range from contemporary politics and modern history to migration studies and postcolonial studies.

The establishment of the Ukraine in a Changing Europe research centre responds to current and anticipated future interest in deepening scholarly research about Ukraine and further separation of the academic field from the largely Russocentric East European/Slavic studies. It is conceived as a platform for open dialogue between scholars from various national academies. Inside and outside perspectives on Ukraine will complement and enrich each other to create a more nuanced and multi-faceted view of multiple burning issues. Apart from supporting high-quality research on Ukraine and related matters, the Centre's team is motivated to raise a generation of students with deep regional expertise, which they can bring to their future employment in diplomatic institutions, international corporations, and non-governmental organisations. The Centre is actively searching for new partners and fruitful collaborations, and it hopes to inspire the creation of similar academic structures in other EU states and beyond.

Valeria Korablyova

doi: 10.14712/23363231.2023.12

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Citations should always include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), if the cited material has one.

Electronic sources should be cited including the date of last access, if appropriate.

6. Reference Examples

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XXIII

2023

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Published by Charles University,
Karolinum Press, Ovocný trh 560/5, 116 36 Praha 1
Czech Republic
www.karolinum.cz

Typeset by Karolinum Press

Printed by Karolinum Press

MK ČRE 18588

ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)

ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)