

Using Latent Variable Models to Estimate the Prevalence of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: An Introduction

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This workshop builds on ongoing research with

and



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Wartime Sexual Violence

- ▶ Includes the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence
- ▶ Constitutes a severe human rights problem
- ▶ Is difficult to observe and document as a practice

A lack of systematic data impedes empirical analysis with regard to extent, spatiotemporal trends, and patterns.

Why Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Is Hard to Measure

- ▶ Shame, fear of retaliation, stigma and rejection due to socio-cultural taboos
- ▶ Inconsistency in testimony and lack of clear narrative due to trauma-induced memory loss
- ▶ Differing conceptualizations and language used to refer to sexual violence events
- ▶ Perpetrators' incentives to conceal activity and evade accountability for war crimes
- ▶ Blending of state actors and institutions with regard to the perpetration and reporting of these crimes

All of these issues vary over space and time.

Why the Observation of Wartime Sexual Violence May Improve over Time

- ▶ Improved documentation practices
- ▶ Increasing international focus
- ▶ Changing norms and perceptions of survivors
- ▶ Recent challenges to societal taboos
- ▶ Growing initiatives to empower survivors to speak out
- ▶ Changes in the wording of sexual violence experiences leading to more explicit descriptions

While these trends vary across space, we will likely see higher reporting rates in some places over time.

