

# **The Centrality of Women in Hutu Militias**

**Hollie Nyseth Nziyatira, Jared F.  
Edgerton, Elizabeth L. Brannon, and  
Dagmar Heintze**



AFP

In just 100 days in 1994, about 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda by ethnic Hutu extremists. They were targeting members of the minority Tutsi community, as well as their political opponents, irrespective of their ethnic origin.

## Rwanda's minister for women's affairs at the time of the 1994 war is accused of an incomprehensible evil — inciting Hutus to rape thousands of female Tutsis. Pauline Nyiramasuhuko is now the first woman ever on trial for genocide. A Woman's Work

By Peter Landesman

**S**laughter, and then worse, came to Butare, a sleepy, sun-bleached Rwandan town, in the spring of 1994. Hutu death squads armed with machetes and nail-studded clubs had deployed throughout the countryside, killing, looting and burning. Roadblocks had been set up to cull fleeing Tutsis. By the third week of April, as the Rwanda genocide was reaching its peak intensity, tens of thousands of corpses were rotting in the streets of Kigali, the country's capital. Butare, a stronghold of Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus that had resisted the government's orders for genocide, was the next target. Its residents could hear gunfire from the hills in the west; at night they watched the firelight of torched nearby villages. Armed Hutus soon gathered on the edges of town, but Butare's panicked citizens defended its borders.

Enraged by Butare's revolt, Rwanda's interim government dispatched Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the national minister of family and women's affairs, from Kigali on a mission. Before becoming one of the most powerful women in Rwanda's government, Pauline — as everyone, enemy and

crisscrossed Butare's back roads, announcing that the Red Cross had arrived at a nearby stadium to provide food and guarantee sanctuary. By April 25, thousands of desperate Tutsis had gathered at the stadium.

It was a trap. Instead of receiving food and shelter, the refugees were surrounded by men wearing bandoleers and headdresses made of spiky banana leaves. These men were Interahamwe, thuggish Hutu marauders whose name means "those who attack together." According to an eyewitness I spoke with this summer in Butare, supervising from the sidelines was Pauline, then 48, a portly woman of medium height in a colorful African wrap and spectacles.

Before becoming Rwanda's chief official for women's affairs, Pauline was a social worker, roaming the countryside, offering lectures on female empowerment and instruction on child care and AIDS prevention. Her days as minister were similarly devoted to improving the lives of women and children. But at the stadium, a 30-year-old farmer named Foster Mivumbi told me, Pauline assumed a different responsibility. Mivumbi, who has confessed to taking part in the

# Puzzle

Which characteristics defined women who played central roles in Hutu militias?

# Gender Inequality and Grievances

Journal of  
**Peace Research**

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**Women on the frontline: Rebel group ideology and women's participation in violent rebellion**

Journal of Peace Research  
2017, Vol. 54(1) 31–46  
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DOI: 10.1177/00223433166075023  
jpr.sagepub.com/home/jpr



**Reed M Wood**  
*School of Politics and Global Studies, Arizona State University*

**Jakana L Thomas**  
*Department of Political Science, Michigan State University*

**Abstract**  
Despite the frequent participation of women in armed groups, few studies have sought to explain the variation in their roles across different rebellions. Herein, we investigate this variation. We argue that the political ideology a group adopts plays a central role in determining the extent to which women participate in conflict. We find that both hierarchical and gender-based division hypotheses drawn from these arguments sample of rebel organizations active between 1970 and 2010. We find little evidence that nationalism has a general inverse relationship between the number of women in rebel groups and the extent to which they incorporate female fighters into their ranks.

**Keywords**  
female combatants, rebel ideology, re

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**Conflict, Peace, and the Evolution of Women's Empowerment**

Kaitlyn Webster, Chong Chen, and Kyle Beardsley

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**Abstract** How do periods of conflict and peace shape women's empowerment around the world? While existing studies have demonstrated that gender inequalities contribute to the propensity for armed conflict, we consider how the anticipation and realization of armed conflict shape women's opportunities for influence in society. Some scholars have pointed to the role that militarization and threat play in entrenching male dominance, while others have argued that periods of warfare can upend existing gender hierarchical orders. We posit mechanisms by which the preparation for and experiences during war affect change in women's empowerment. We develop and test observable implications using cross-national data from 1900 to 2015. We find that, at least in the short and medium term, warfare can disrupt social institutions and lead to an increase in women's empowerment via mechanisms related to role shifts across society and political shifts catalyzed by war. Reforming institutions and mainstreaming gender during peace processes stand to have important legacies for gender power relations in postconflict societies, though much more may be needed for more permanent change.

# Gender Inequality and Grievances

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**Women on the frontline: Rebel group ideology and women's participation in violent rebellion**

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**Abstract**

Despite the frequent participation of women in armed groups, few studies have sought to explain the variation in their roles across different rebellions. Herein, we investigate this variation. We argue that the political ideology a group adopts plays a central role in determining the extent of women's participation, particularly their deployment in combat roles. Specifically, we link variations in women's roles to armed groups' ideologies.

**Keywords**  
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## Conflict, Peace, and the Evolution of Women's Empowerment

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# Fear and Peer Pressure

## Sex and Death: Gender Differences in Aggression and Motivations for Violence

Rose McDermott

**Abstract** Greater theoretical consensus and cohesion could offer critical insights for the broader community of international relations scholars into the role that gender plays in spawning and sustaining processes of violence. This review essay examines the role of gender in generating and perpetuating violence and aggression, both in theory and practice. I make four central claims. First, in many studies involving the role of sex and gender in violence, specific causal models tend to remain underspecified. Second, a divergence in fundamental assumptions regarding the ontological basis of sex differences implicitly permeates and shapes research. Third, the evidence suggests that women are more or less likely to fight than men and women may pose under different circumstances and for different reasons. Fourth, the ways in which men and women exert predictable conduct of war in particular.

## Honor and political violence: Micro-level findings from a survey in Thailand

Journal of  
Peace Research

Journal of Peace Research  
2017, Vol. 54(3) 748–761  
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DOI: 10.1177/0022343317711241  
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Elin Bjarnegård

Department of Government, Uppsala University

Karen Brounæus

Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

Erik Melander

Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

**Abstract**

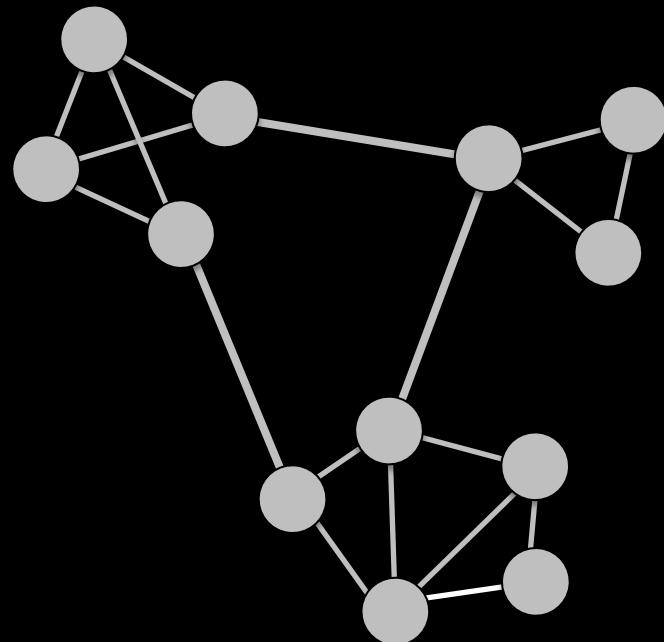
Who participates in political violence? In this study, we investigate the issue at the micro-level, comparing individuals who have used violence in political uprisings with those who have not. We develop our argument from the observation that men are strongly overrepresented in political violence, although most men do not participate. Literature on masculinities emphasizes the role of honor and its links to different forms of violence, such as domestic abuse, criminal violence, and violent attitudes. Building on this literature, we discern two separate but related aspects of honor: honor as male societal privilege and control over female sexuality, that is, *patriarchal values*, and honor as ideals of *masculine toughness*, that is, the perceived necessity for men to be fierce and respond to affronts with violence or threats of violence in order to preserve status. We argue that *patriarchal values* combined with ideals of *masculine toughness* together constitute honor ideology, which contributes in turn to the explanation of who participates in political violence. We present new and unique individual-level survey data on these issues, collected in Thailand. We

# Our contribution

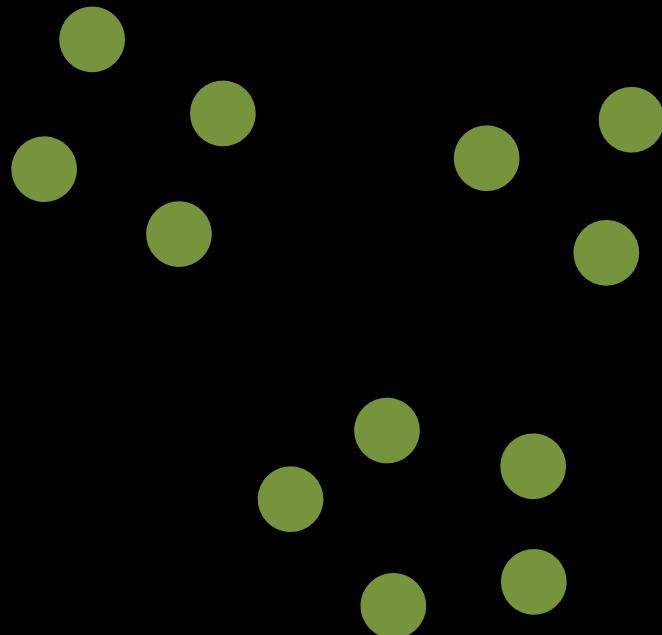
Women's participation in Genocide  
What makes women more influential in  
participation in violence?

**What is a co-participation network**

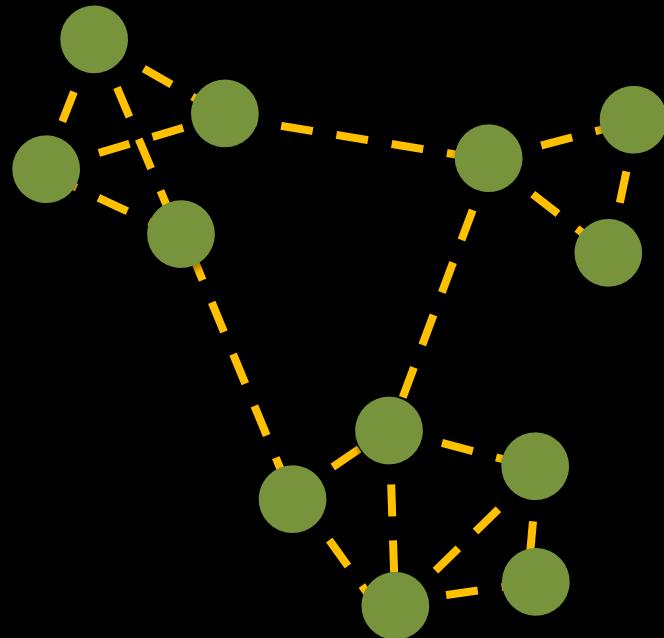
# Network terms:



Network terms:  
Nodes/vertices



Network terms:  
Nodes/vertices  
Edges/ties

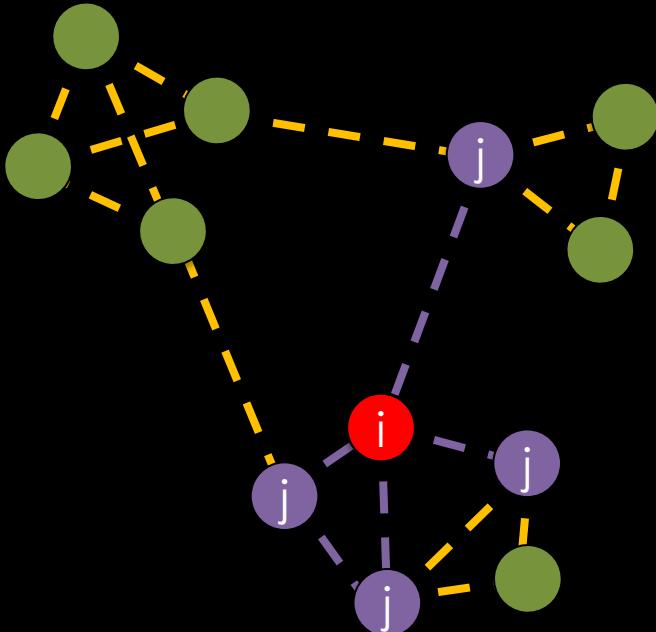


Network terms:

Nodes/vertices

Edges/ties

Degree centrality



# Women Centrality in Hutu Militias

Nodes: Participants

Ties: Number of Co-Participants

Degree of Centrality: Number of violent acts with co-participants

# Hypotheses

H1: Higher Age leads to more  
Centrality

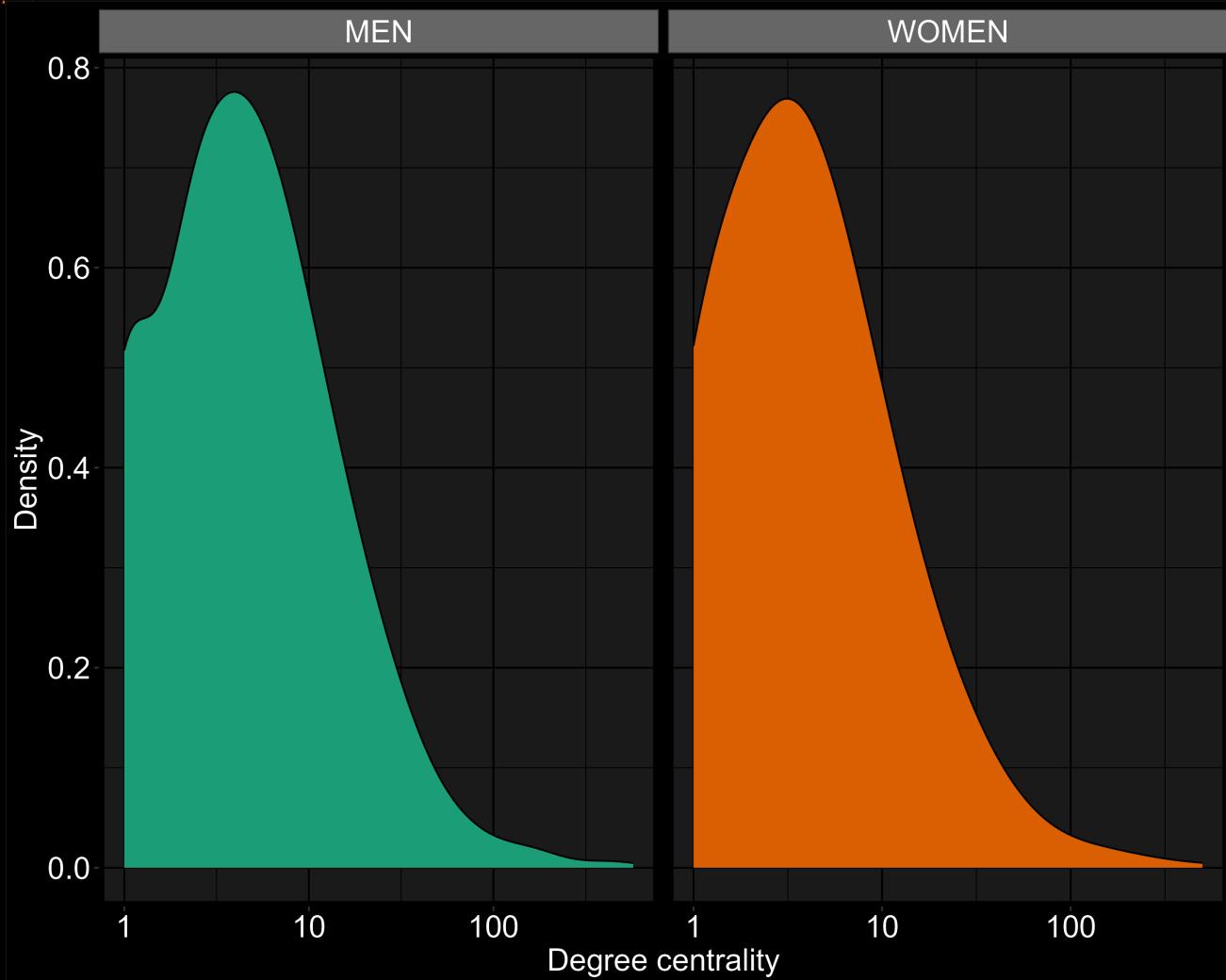
# Hypotheses

H1: Higher Age leads to more  
Centrality

H2: Higher Education leads to more  
Centrality

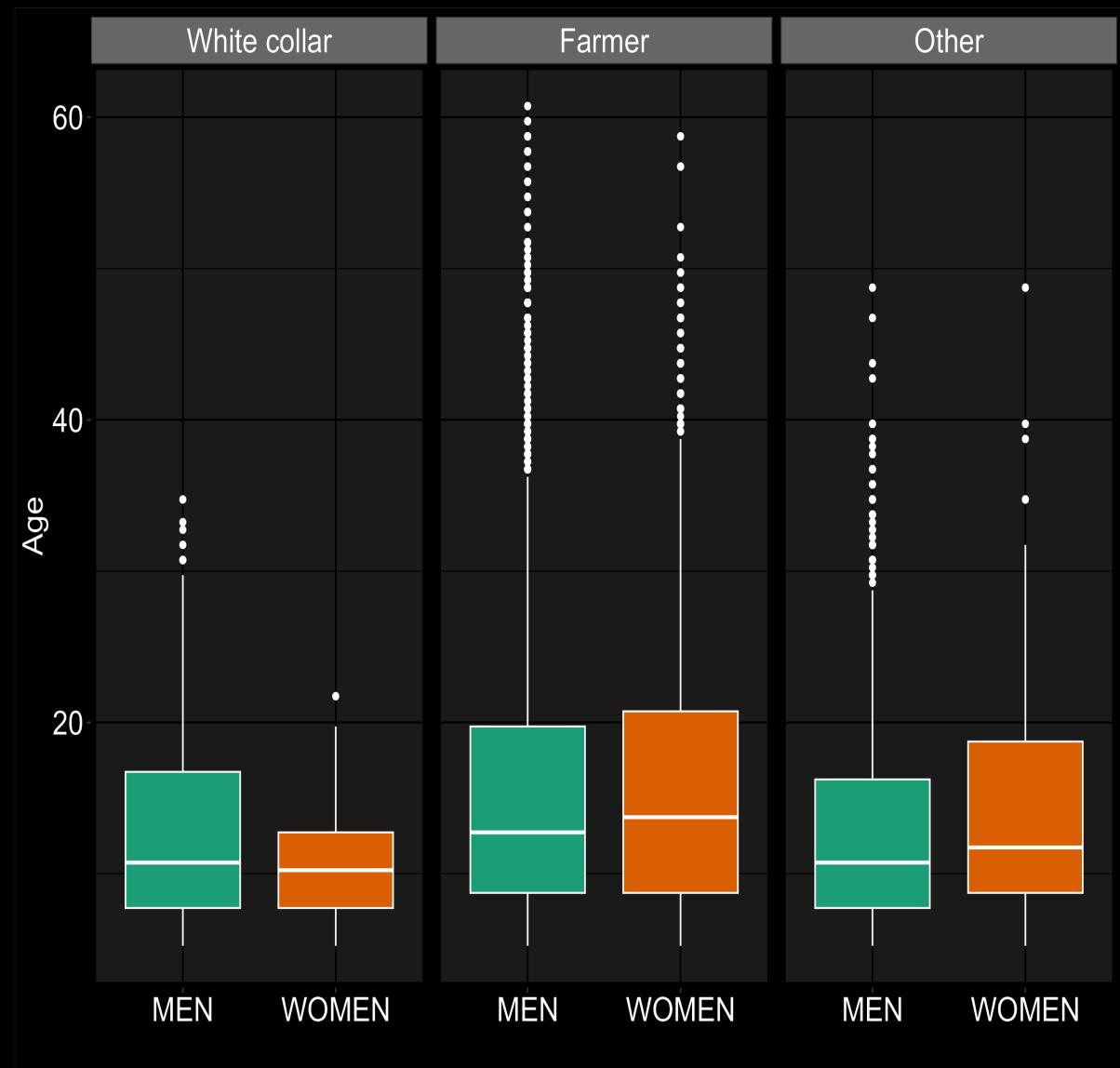
# Questions

- *Network centrality*



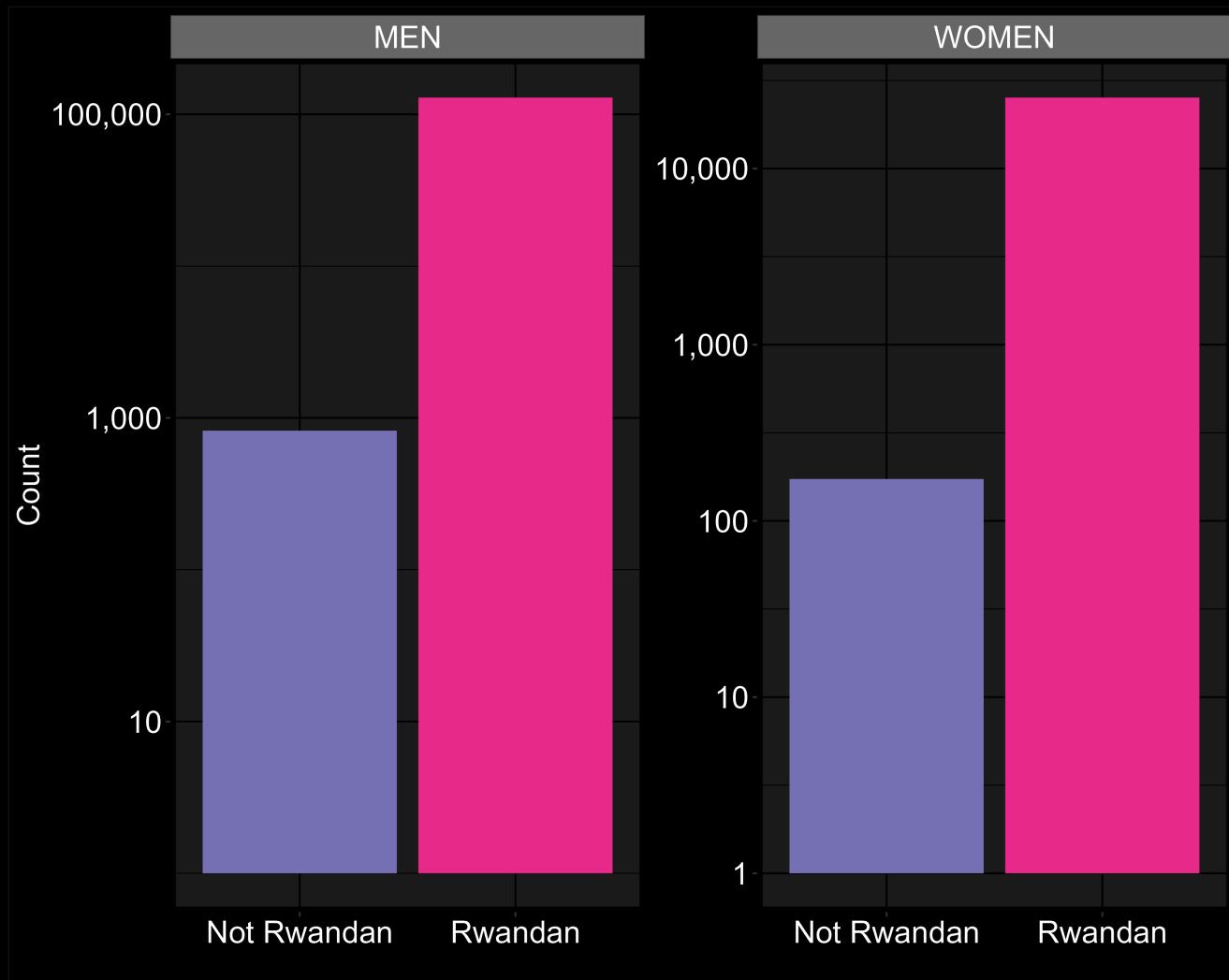
# Questions

- *Age x Women*
- *Education*  
“Occupation” x  
*Women*



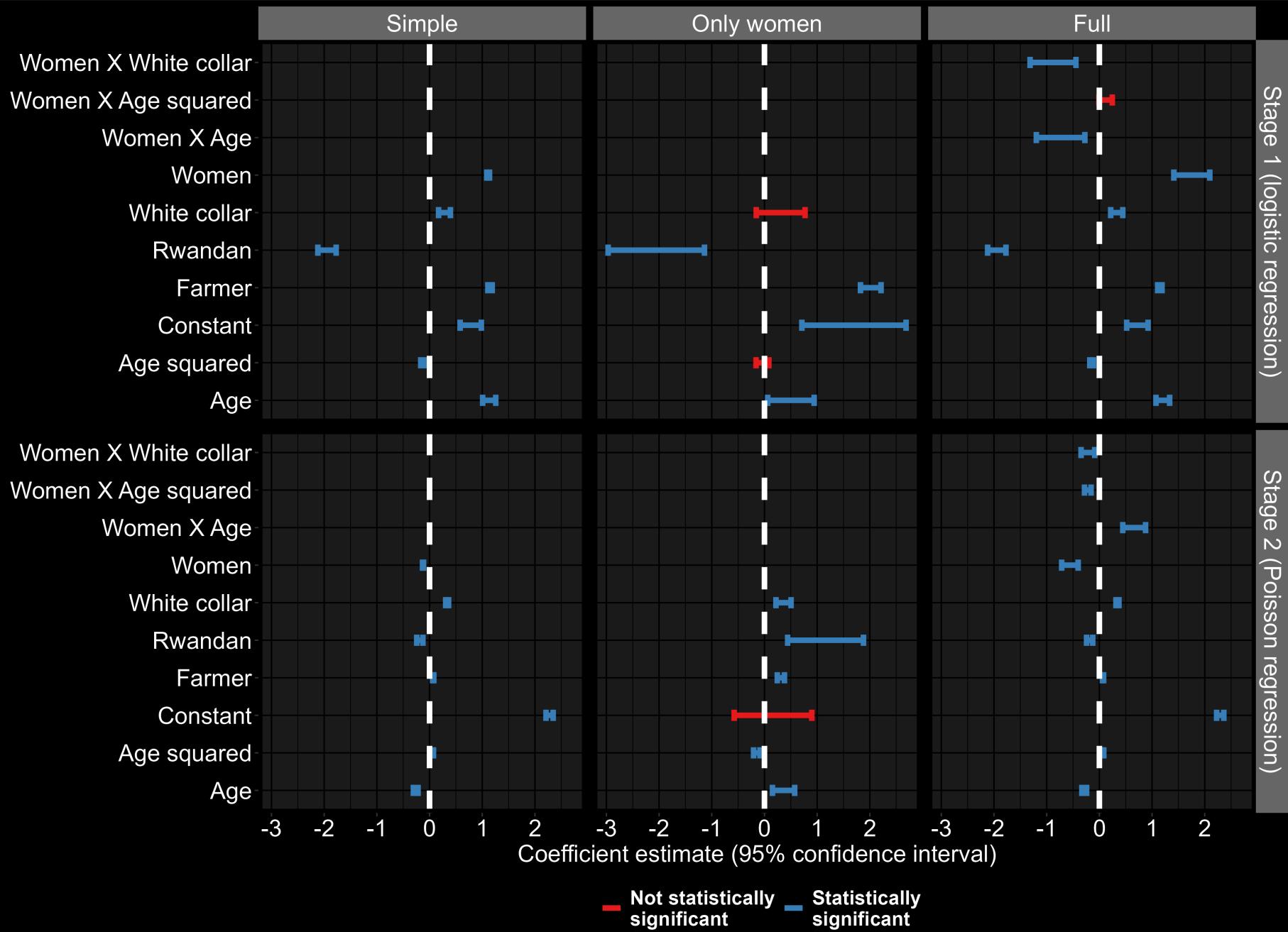
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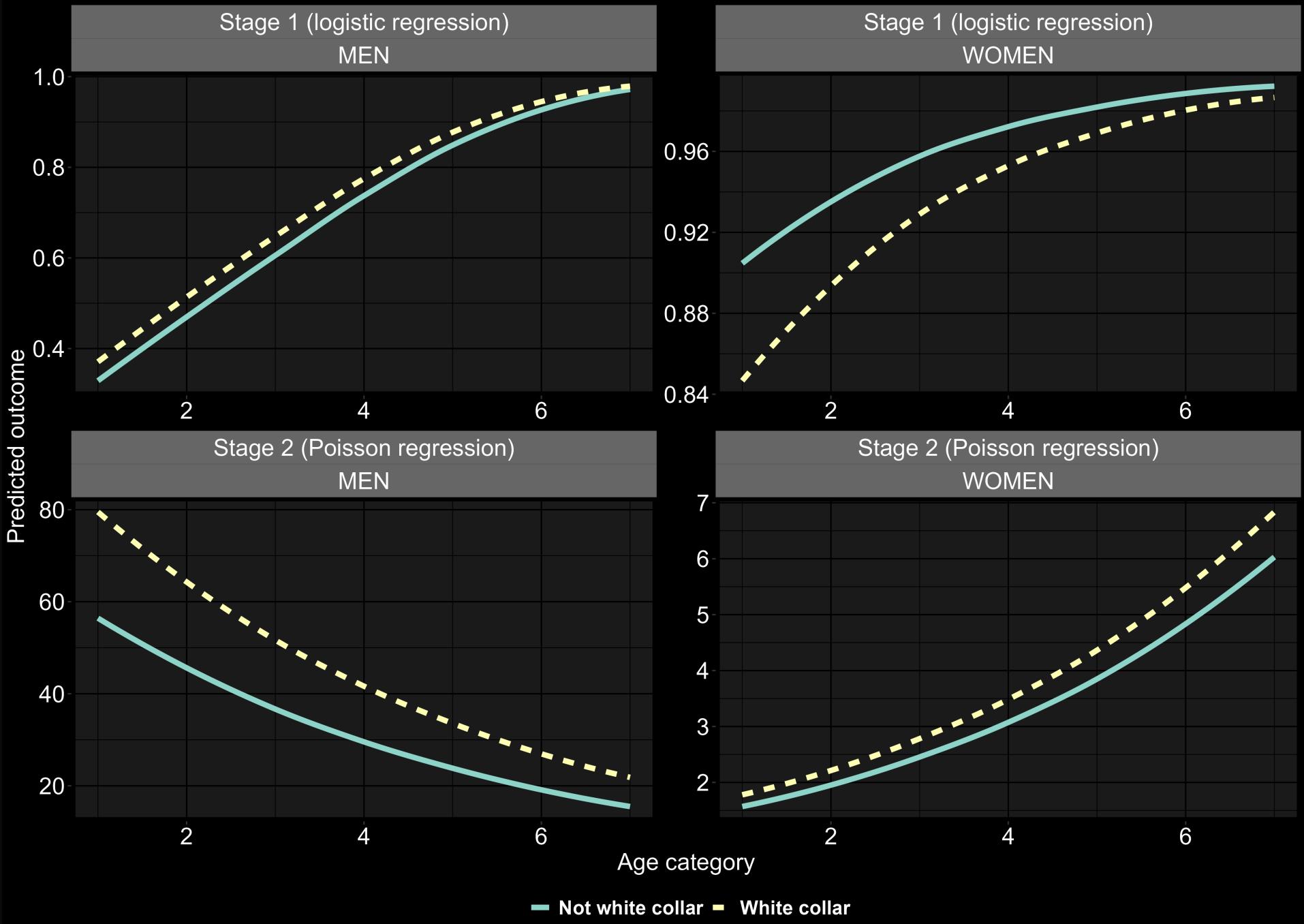
- *Nationality*
- *Main effects*



# Questions

- *Network centrality* → Dependent variable (violent/ how central?)
  - *Age x Women*
  - *Occupation x Women*
  - *Main effects*
  - *Nationality*
- 
- Independent variables of interest
- Control variables





# Summary

Conditional on participation -

Women are more likely to be violent in genocide

Women are less central in genocide

Women who are central are older and better educated

# Next steps

Use different specifications to measure centrality

Different types of violence

Alternate sensitivity

# Thank you

[dagmar.heintze@utdallas.edu](mailto:dagmar.heintze@utdallas.edu)