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# DIGNITY

AN UNDERGRADUATE  
HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNAL



Cover art by Grace Thompson, University of North Carolina Greensboro: *“This piece connects to human rights by way of perseverance. Oftentimes those who violate our human rights and degrade others as objects, only see people as tools. With that we often find those who fight for their rights struggle, much like trying to stop someone/something from crushing your spirit. I wanted to show this perseverance and struggle to not let one’s spirit be crushed by others. Traditional methods were used for this piece because I felt that a digital media would not suffice for this very real problem. The media is watercolor with gold leaf, size is 8x10in on media board.”* The full image can be found at <https://dignityjournal.com>. Copyright 2021 Grace Thompson; used with permission.

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## Note from the Editorial Board

As we enter the third year of the pandemic, it seems that it may finally be coming to a close. The world in this sense is looking to take its first breath of fresh air since 2019. However, the struggle for human rights has never been more urgent. Through regime change in Afghanistan that has greatly curtailed the rights of all who live there, through an insurrection at the US capital that brings into question the strength of its government, and through the war in Ukraine that Russia continues to wage without provocation nor any sign of restraint. As international pressures mount and governments across the globe struggle to adapt, we as the Editorial Board of Dignity continue to gather our undergraduate scholarship to highlight the fight for human rights in all its forms.

Undergraduate research is an important way through which people can find their voice and build themselves as engaged global citizens. The scholarship we highlight in Dignity is valuable research and one of many avenues through which human rights continues to be explored and discussed. We continue to showcase a diverse collection of Human Rights scholarship across the UNC system, from multiple disciplines and a variety of perspectives. These contributions to the discourse surrounding human rights we hope will move the conversation forward and generate new interest in the field.

Dignity continues to root itself in what it means to establish human rights. The legal, economic, political and social recognition of the fundamental and equal Dignity of all persons shapes the very basis of human rights scholarship. This range of ideas is explored in this, our second issue of Dignity, by examining the rights of all people to have a Dignified work environment regardless of gender, class or creed, the ability for citizens to retain their Dignity even through the trials and tribulations of war, the rights of every society to retain their culture in a Dignified manner regardless of government interaction, and the responsibility of each government to allow their citizens to live a Dignified life free from discrimination. We hope that by continuing to explore and expand the scope of human rights discourse, we can not only encourage the consideration of human rights in all disciplines, but acknowledge the work that takes place every day to attain these rights for all people.

As you read Dignity, we hope to inspire you to incorporate these values into your everyday life and continue to envision a better and more just future amidst these periods of unrest and uncertainty. We hope that we can reach more students and faculty across the UNC system and expand the pool of human rights scholarship available for consumption. We thank the first Editorial Board for establishing Dignity and extending this great opportunity to our new members, as well as our Faculty Advisory Board who have generously given us their guidance

and knowledge across multiple institutions. We would also like to thank our Chief Advisor Dr. Linda Cornett for continuing to help us achieve our vision and Dr. Peter Haschke for guiding us through the typesetting process, as well as everyone who has led workshops to share their valuable knowledge with us. Perhaps most of all we would like to thank the undergraduate students who have entered their scholarship for publication, for truly without them there would be no journal to publish. And thank you for continuing to engage with us in the discussion of human rights and the push to extend them to all.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board, '21-'22

# Cultural Policing: Cases of South Africa and Cameroon

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## Abstract

This article discusses the debate between universalism and cultural relativism approaches to human rights and how states attempt to resolve the conflict between the two approaches. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2004) state in their article “Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa”, the contradiction between universalism and cultural tradition is present especially in the post-colony, but also in other settler states. This article displays this contradiction in multiple different cultural contexts such as in South Africa and Cameroon with the policing of witchcraft. It argues that states use cultural policing in an attempt to protect citizens from the harm that their constitutions promise to and in effect harm indigenous peoples or people who participate in traditional religious practices. Additionally, cultural policing is a solution to the conflict between the call to follow universalism and diverse cultural populations. This “call to follow ” universalism is reflective of the pressure to comply with international legal norms by the international community on developing states and is coupled by domestic pressure to prioritize and protect cultural traditions. First, I will introduce the debate of universalism vs cultural relativism and each approach to human rights. Second, I will introduce dynamics within international law that push states to adopt universalist approaches to human rights contrasted by pressure from within states to adhere to cultural relativist approaches. Third, I will explain how states use cultural policing as a solution to this conflict with specific examples from post-colonies, South Africa and Cameroon.

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## 1 Introduction

THE most consistent theoretical debate surrounding international human rights is the debate between *universalism* and *cultural relativism*. The universalist approach asserts fundamental principles of justice that are thought to transcend culture, society, and politics. Universalism is the founding principle in international law from the post World War era.



Customary international law is rooted in natural law principles that were created during the Age of Enlightenment and drew inspiration from Roman law, Christianity, and social contract theory. Natural law theorizes that all people have inherent rights created by God, nature, and reason. Natural rights have served as the foundation for many important documents in the Western world, such as the *Declaration of Independence*, *Declaration of the Rights of Men and of the Citizen*, the *UN Charter*, and the *European Convention on Human Rights*. Core instruments of international human rights law such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* are thought to be a part of customary international law. Binder in *Cultural Relativism and Cultural Imperialism in Human Rights Law* argues that these core instruments reflect a liberal individualism prevalent in the Western world but ignore concepts of group membership, duties, and respect for nature that are more likely to be prioritized than non-Western cultures (Binder 1999, 17). The cultural relativist approach believes that *rights* are socially constructed and reflect the various experiences of specific historical standards of communities. In response to universalism, cultural relativists argue that the concept of fundamental principles of justice are inherently an expression of Western imperialism and should not be used as a one size fits all moral framework for cultures around the world.

According to cultural relativist argument, since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted by a draft committee that favored Western leaders, the international legal and moral standards written in the document are biased towards fundamental western traditions. The foundation of the cultural relativist argument is that there are no inherent rights of people independent of society and culture, because rights are value judgments that are socially constructed based on historical and social contexts. Thus, rights deemed universal will always come into conflict with other cultures because no state has identical histories. Advocates for cultural relativism do not oppose the concept of human rights, but rather argue that the articulation of certain human rights as universal is too restrictive and allows for little variation in terms of cultural practice. States may encompass rich ethnic and religious diversity including groups that practice traditions that may violate natural law or constitutional law, thus putting the government in the middle of the universalism vs. cultural relativism debate.

States choose to adopt a universalist approach in their governance because of the need for legitimacy within the international community and domestically. In Thomas Franck's *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations*, he defines legitimacy as "a property of a rule or rule-making institution which itself exerts a pull toward compliance on those addressed normatively because those addressed believe that the rule or institution has come into being and operates in accordance with generally accepted principles of right process" (Franck 1990, 95) The concept of international legitimacy can be understood as the level a state is in accordance with customary international law. Thus, Western states that enumerate natural law domestically have legitimacy because core human rights documents throughout history that

were inspired by Western, Enlightenment thinkers, serve as the foundation for international human rights standards.

Legitimacy is also important at the international level and is obtained through reputation. In his paper “A Compliance Based Theory,” Andrew T. Guzman argues the relevance of reputation when determining why states follow international law. According to Guzman, “when entering into an international commitment, a country offers its reputation for living up to its commitments as a form of collateral” (Guzman 2002, 1849). A state that develops a reputation for compliance with international obligations signals to the international community that it is cooperative, allowing the state to enjoy long-term relationships with other states and a greater ability to make binding promises. Thus, because a state’s reputation has value and provides the state with benefits, a state prioritizes compliance and positioning itself in favor of other cooperative states (Binder 1999).

State governments also face pressure to comply with expectations from home. This pressure is exacerbated in the post-colony due to the relative newness of the government. After winning independence, the actors put in power must prove themselves to be legitimate rulers or face coup attempts. A legitimate government is thought of as one that has a strong national identity and fulfills its promises to its citizens. Maintaining a strong national identity is difficult due to the scars from oppressive and fracturing colonial governments. In post-colonies that adopt a representative democracy, national identity is important because it represents a new found pride in the country’s history and culture by locals who can now participate in governance. Thus, new sparks of nationalism usually occur and lead to domestic pressure for a government to protect domestic expectations over international expectations, such as spending domestic resources because of the “responsibility to protect” obligation outlined in the UN Charter.

The expectations from the international and domestic front inevitably come into conflict with each other. A method of dealing with the tension between universalism and cultural relativism is cultural policing. Cultural policing can be defined as attempts by the state to control or regulate culture. States police culture when certain cultural practices break law, domestic or international. Cultural policing is used as a strategy of internalizing universalist language of human rights and thus complying with international human rights norms to establish legitimacy. For example, countries such as South Africa adopted universalism in their constitution: “Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources; Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion” (South Africa 1997). This constitutional framework was built to protect their citizens from harm and empower them with political, civil and physical integrity rights. Adopting a constitution inspired by customary international law standards had its benefits in terms of laying the groundwork for self-governance, but had its complications when the constitution’s promises

came into conflict with cultural traditions.

## 2 Case of South Africa

A cultural norm that deeply challenges the African National Congress of South Africa is witchcraft. A belief and fear of the occult is widespread in South Africa. Indeed, witch beliefs and practices saturate everyday life. Most rural people, and many in town, consult doctors regularly to divine the cause of affliction, to guard against attack, to give a competitive edge over rivals, and to ensure their own well-being. According to Comaroff and Comaroff: “South African occult is not a form of primitive magicality or animism; but embodies a set of normative convictions about moral order, social and material equity; and that it provides a matter-of-fact repertoire of ‘first cause’ explanations in the face of human misfortune or natural catastrophe” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004, 517). To many South Africans, witchcraft is assumed to be the primary cause of misfortune. Thus, the existential imperative of occult believers to protect themselves and their community from witchcraft comes into direct conflict with the legal standards of the South African constitution. The post-apartheid constitution was modeled after European law which written in a majority Christian environment, therefore there are no precedents to follow to aid in dealing with the occult.

The Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957 was passed during apartheid South Africa, and made it illegal to practice witchcraft, or accuse anyone of doing so. This act was a prime example of European suppression of African culture, and caused accusers and the accused themselves to seek help from the informal sector such as customary courts and self justice. According to Dirk in “Occult Beliefs, Globalisation and the Quest for Development in African Societies” a number of police officers believed in the occult themselves which further complicated the enforcement of the act (Dirk 2003, 27). The reliance on the informal sector and police non-compliance led to a rapid decline in the perceived legitimacy of the South African government. Thus, the South African government was faced with the dilemma of whether to repeal the Witchcraft Suppression Act with an official recognition of the existence of witchcraft or to fight to end the witch craze. This dilemma is a symptom of the post-colony because of the desire to heal from imperialism and celebrate indigenious culture by indigenizing legislation but also the need for a stable and legitimate government that protects the human rights of its citizens.

As a solution to the dilemma of how to deal with witchcraft, the Occult-Related Crimes Unit of the South Africa Police Services (SAPS) was established. SAPS offered workshops on the forensics of witchcraft, ritual killings, Satanism, and other dangerous practices and stated that their business is “not culture but the conviction of common murderers.” According to Comaroff and Comaroff, detectives like Inspector Jackson Gopane saw their work in the SAPS as alternative policing capable of dealing with magical evil and an alternative to mob witch-

burnings (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). To accomplish this method of alternative policing, Inspector Gopane collaborated with locals as a traditional healer. His efforts were assisted by the chair of the national Traditional Healers' Association, Dr. Hitler Letsoalo, who pledged the services of his members to help the state police the occult.

Eventually, due to increasing instances of witchcraft violence, the South African government wanted to back away from incorporating the occult into traditional forms of policing and instead recognize witchcraft violence as its own problem. The National Conference on Witchcraft Violence convened by the Commission on Gender Equality in September 1998 created a logical framework of problem analysis and developed recommendations to deal with witchcraft violence. The Commission on Gender Equality recommended a comprehensive model of combined activities in the educational, legal, spiritual, community, and mental health sectors, urging the government to not simply deny the existence of witchcraft. In addition to recommending educational and legal action, the Commission argued for the use of spiritual alternatives, such as substituting witchcraft violence with spiritual healing. This solution solves conflict between the constitutional imperative to protect human rights and the need to preserve African cultural and religious beliefs after apartheid by stopping violence but also recognizing the importance of the spirit. Thus, South Africa transitioned from cultural policing from approaching it through the lens of crime to attending the mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of the victims and perpetrators of witchcraft violence.

### 3 Case of Cameroon

In the 1980s, the Cameroonian government, similar to South Africa's came under increased pressure to address witchcraft and began heavily prosecuting those who practice it. Cameroon's constitution contains common universalist promises: "every person has a right to life, to physical and moral integrity and to humane treatment in all circumstances. Under no circumstances shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment; no person shall be harassed on grounds of his origin, religious, philosophical or political opinions or beliefs, subject to respect for public policy." The constitution's language explicitly draws inspiration from natural rights principles and represents an attempt to gain legitimacy by appealing to customary international legal standards.

Cameroon has its own unique set of circumstances regarding witchcraft compared to South Africa. In "Witchcraft and the Limits of the Law," Peter Geschiere seeks to explore how the Cameroonian regime approaches the policing of witchcraft and its collaboration with traditional healers known as *nganga*. He states that the panic surrounding witchcraft was not limited to South Africa and spread throughout the African continent including Cameroon. Witchcraft is an integral part of the social order. It is believed to be an extremely evil force but if channeled correctly it can also bring riches, luck, and power. According to Geschiere,

there is an effort to compartmentalize the sphere of the occult through assigning terminological distinctions between negative and positive forms, however, these distinctions are always precarious and never self evident (Comaroff and Geschiere 2009).

The lack of ability to properly distinguish between different forms of witchcraft is just a part of the inherent circularity of legislative intervention in the field of witchcraft. While living in Cameroon, the people in Geschiere's village informed him that witch doctors called the *nganga*, can heal only because they have used witchcraft to kill before. Thus, the main protection against evil forms witchcraft involves past evil deeds, making the main protection against witchcraft witchcraft itself. This circular logic is echoed by officials in Cameroon's legal system. According to Geschiere, judges believe that witchcraft is a basic evil and must be exterminated at all costs. The main witnesses the prosecution uses in cases of witchcraft are the *nganga*, witch doctors. The *nganga* claim that they are able to aid the prosecution's case because they have a "third eye" that can see witches and catch them doing magic. These witch doctors are needed as key experts in order for Cameroonian judges to act within Western conventions of the law, such as proving the accused practiced witchcraft "beyond a reasonable doubt."- The healers used as key witnesses by the states to combat witchcraft present themselves very differently from typical villagers. According to Geschiere, healers that work within the judicial system often previously worked in public service, speak French fluently, and have a modern education (Comaroff and Geschiere 2009). They construct their identity as a government service member that works as a part of a new association of traditional healers. These healers try to separate themselves from the religious aspect of their work, instead referring to their expertise as "science" in which they are a doctor of in a hospital.

The Cameroonian courts do not address the logical fallacy of wishing witchcraft to be exterminated in order to protect citizens but at the same time incorporating witchcraft in their investigation and prosecution against accused witches. In "Witchcraft and the Limits of the Law," Geschiere argues that this is because in private life, judges, like other civil servants, are involved in the world of witchcraft to protect themselves (Comaroff and Geschiere 2009). They enlist the help of the *nganga* to protect themselves from attacks from rival political opponents or to attack opponents themselves. Thus, they don't see any inconsistency in accepting help from these witches in their struggle against witchcraft. From the Cameroonian government's perspective, witchcraft is the ultimate form of subversion of the state's authority, sabotages development keeping Cameroon "backwards" and undermines the position of the state elites. However, witchcraft is ingrained in the political and social order of Cameroon, used for state officials' advantage despite delivering harsh and long sentences to those convicted of witchcraft. The hypocrisy of the Cameroonian courts and civil servants represents the overarching struggle of the post-colony in its mission to modernize in order to gain legitimacy. The state takes a strong legal stance on witchcraft by punishing those who participate in backwards practices such as witchcraft, but at the same time legitimizes witchcraft with



the use of nganga.

## 4 Conclusion

Both the governments of Cameroon and South Africa have to navigate the difficult challenge of obtaining legitimacy, modernizing, and putting a stop to witchcraft violence. The South African government had to deal with the unique challenge of a widespread belief in the occult coupled with international and domestic pressure to establish legitimacy. Thus, the state incorporated policing the occult within their police force with the Occult Related Crimes Unit in the South African Police Force to combat witchcraft violence and eventually conferring with the Commission on Gender Equality to promote education and spiritual healing as long term solutions. The Cameroonian government incorporated witchcraft into their judicial system in order to institute better, more informed justice against perpetrators of witchcraft with the inclusion of healers. While the Cameroonian government did acknowledge spiritual beliefs, its cultural policing exacerbates panic surrounding the occult and reveals class tensions. Both the South African and Cameroon instances of cultural policing serve as examples of the conflict between respecting and uplifting spiritual beliefs and practices and respecting the rule of law states have to face. This dilemma is especially seen in the post-colony due to the large amount of cultural diversity and the need to establish legitimacy as a new government. The need for legitimacy is two-fold, international and domestic. The international side pushes states toward the universalist approach to human rights because it is the foundation of international law, while the domestic side pushes states toward the cultural relativist approach in order to preserve and protect culture. Cultural policing as an attempt to establish legitimacy among international and domestic pressure is a solution to the conflict between two opposite approaches to human rights and brings the theoretical into the practical.

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# Female Combatants and Human Rights Violations by Rebel Groups

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## Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between the gender demographics of rebel groups and the human rights abuses they commit. Cohen (2013a, 2016) conducted research essential to this topic and found that rebel groups in Sierra Leone that included women in their fighting ranks committed more acts of sexual violence than groups with fewer female combatants. This research investigates if Cohen's findings regarding sexual violence apply on a global scale and when extended to two other human rights violations: forced displacement and killings. The data demonstrate that the presence of female fighters in a rebel group has a significant and positive relationship with property destruction, killings, and sexual violence. In other words, rebel groups that include female combatants are more likely to commit human rights violations than those that do not. By determining which rebels are most abusive, this research can help inform policies to protect the human rights of civilians.

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## 1 Introduction

THE international community has long been concerned with the formation and activities of rebel organizations. These non-state actors exist in opposition to government authority with a myriad of goals ranging from gaining independence to establishing fundamental religion. Operating outside the boundaries of an official government, non-state actors engage with government forces in manners of conflict that may not follow traditional warfare or respect the human rights of civilians. Some of the tactics used by insurgents include guerilla warfare, targeting civilians, or terrorist attacks, which often abuse civilians' rights directly. However, it is clear to the international community that rebel groups differ in the tactics they employ and engage in different levels of civilian abuse. Political scientists point to several factors to explain the differentiation of rebel group behavior, such as ideology, resource

endowment, and the goals of the organization. One potential factor that has yet to be considered at length in the study of rebel organizations is gender. Some insurgent groups include women as capable combatants in their organization while other groups either relegate women to supportive roles or block them from participating in any capacity. This research will investigate if gender inclusivity in rebel groups has an effect on the behavior of rebel groups, specifically their human rights record.

Women in wartime have mainly been considered victims or non-combatants in supporting roles. If women do engage in combat, women often are expected to fill a motherly role, restraining the violence of the group (Cohen 2013b). Drawing on the work of Cohen (2013b), who provides evidence that female combatants in Sierra Leone aided and participated in sexual violence against civilians, this research instead explores the possibility that groups with high numbers of female combatants may be more likely to abuse civilians. This line of inquiry should be regarded as research of vital importance within international politics and human rights advocacy. Protecting civilians should be the primary concern in times of unrest and revolution. Civilians can be best protected if rebel organizations are wholly understood with analyses that consider their motivations, demographics, and propensity to commit human rights violations. The ability to understand or anticipate the actions of rebel groups could aid governments, international organizations, and aid groups in recognizing to what extent civilians could be in danger and how to best protect their rights.

## 2 Literature Review

Rebel groups vary greatly in their treatment of civilians, and many factors have been theorized to influence rebel treatment of civilians. This section explores aspects of the insurgent group such as political goals, military success, material resources and incentives, internal discipline, ideology, political education, and abduction. First, the political goals and military strength of the rebel group can influence how its fighters treat civilians. Stewart (2017) differentiates between non-secessionist rebels, whose aim is to overthrow the current government and replace it, and secessionist rebels, who are seeking to break away from the state. Both secessionist and non-secessionist groups utilize violent and non-violent tactics to achieve their goals (Stewart 2017, 222). Through their research, Stewart (2017, 210) finds that secessionist rebels are more likely to provide inclusive services in order to demonstrate their superior governance capabilities compared to state institutions. Stewart (2017) concludes that while secessionism influences services extended to civilians, it does not prevent violence from being leveled against non-combatants. Additionally, Wood (2010) finds that the strength of rebel groups can also influence their behavior towards civilians. Under threat of government counterinsurgency efforts, weaker groups escalate violence towards non-combatants more often than strong rebel groups (Wood 2010, 601). These two authors demonstrate that the goals and

success of rebel groups inform their treatment of civilians.

The characteristics of a rebel group's resources also have an effect on rebel behavior. Mobile resources include natural resources that can be easily transported and sold, such as diamonds. Immobile resources include assets that rebel groups cannot relocate, such as businesses in the industrial or agricultural sectors (Florea 2020, 1012). Mobile resources can lead to exploitation based on the expected revenue that rebel groups hope to capture (Florea 2020, 1022). These material incentives created by the presence of mobile resources attract opportunist fighters and have a positive and statistically significant effect on levels of abuse (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, 440).

Whether rebel groups attract activist or opportunist fighters also influences the treatment of non-combatants. Activist rebellions attract combatants committed to long-term goals, have leaders that shape the interests of their followers, and have members with shared ideologies (Weinstein 2006, 204). Alternatively, opportunistic rebellions attract members interested in short-term, material gain and lack discipline (Weinstein 2006, 204). Weinstein concludes that groups formed "around economic endowments are predicted to exhibit much higher levels of indiscriminate violence" while socially based groups tend to show more restraint (Weinstein 2006, 210). Here, economic endowment refers to wealth or resources included in the territory of a rebel group from which the group could potentially benefit. However, it is important to realize that groups can lose commitment to social goals over time, leading to violence. One example of this trend is the group Sendero Luminoso in Peru, which progressed from "highly selective" assassinations to targeting entire villages (Weinstein 2006, 243). The example of Sendero Luminoso leads to another topic of investigation: ideology and a group's commitment to their creeds.

Another factor to examine in the treatment of civilians is ideology. Thaler (2012, 547) defines ideology as a "coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values" through which groups "posit, explain, and justify ends and means of organized social action, specifically political action". Thaler studies the effect of ideology on violence against non-combatants in the context of rebel groups named The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and FRELIMO, located in Angola and Mozambique respectively. Both groups led successful campaigns for independence against Portuguese forces and created people's movements following Marxist ideology. In general, Marxist-Leninist groups operating during the Cold War were involved in longer conflicts with more battle deaths but were more disciplined regarding the use of sexual violence (Thaler 2012, 551). Florea (2020, 1024) also found that separatist states with Marxist ideologies construct more governance institutions than those with other ideologies. Marxist groups are driven by an ideology stressing civilian support, leading to more respect for non-combatant status.

As a group, FRELIMO stressed discipline, cohesion, and justice, prioritizing cooperation with civilians and restraint against non-combatants (Thaler 2012, 552). As fighting continued,



the economy of Mozambique began to collapse, and Rhodesian intelligence began to intervene, causing FRELIMO to rely on conscripted troops instead of volunteers (Thaler 2012, 555). 90 percent of FRELIMO's attacks on civilians occurred after this shift to conscripted troops; however, FRELIMO was still only responsible for 7 percent of attacks on civilians during the entirety of the conflict in Mozambique (Thaler 2012, 557). In the case of FRELIMO, it is clear that a carefully constructed ideology can be quickly undermined by changes in membership driven by circumstances of the conflict.

The internal structures of a rebel organization, or lack thereof, represent another important factor in the treatment of non-combatants. The presence of internal discipline mechanisms has a negative and statistically significant effect on rebel abuse (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, 441). Additionally, Humphreys and Weinstein (2006, 441,443) argue that abusive tendencies originate most commonly from chaotic or unorganized groups with little discipline. The authors conclude that "Patterns of abuse [...] are largely explained by characteristics of the fighting groups themselves, rather than by the types of linkages that exist between combatants and communities or the degree of contestation" (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, 442). In her research, Green (2016) explores what she calls the commanders' dilemma to investigate the internal discipline structures of rebel groups. Commanders must build a violent force but also be able to maintain control of said force. Green (2016, 619) theorizes that this control cannot be maintained through rewards and punishments but rather through the intent of commanders to align their preferences with those of the combatants.

Diffusing preferences from commanders to combatants occurs through political education, Political education (PE) is formal instruction about the purposes of a conflict which informs the behavioral norms of combatants (Green 2016, 624). Commanders may choose to institute political education of restraint (PER), instructing combatants to use limited violence. The author hypothesizes that communist rebel groups would commit fewer acts of sexual violence against civilians, because groups guided by Marxist ideology are more dedicated to PE, have strong incentives to exercise restraint regarding non-combatants, and attract more ideologically committed recruits (Green 2016, 626-7). Green (2016, 627) finds that communist ideology had a negative and statistically significant effect on rape, while groups forcibly recruiting soldiers had a positive and significant association with rape. Through this theory and quantitative study, it is clear that commanders have responsibility for the actions of combatants through political education.

In their study of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Oppenheim and Weintraub (2016, 1130) further explain the importance of political education. To clarify, the authors explain that right-wing groups such as the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the Tigers of Tamil also engage in political education. However, groups with Marxist ideologies emphasize restraint, concurring with Hoover Green's research. FARC formed with the goals of overthrowing the government and conducting large land redistribution. The political ed-

education activities of the group were extensive; there were daily lessons on FARC ideology, readings and discussions of Colombian history and economics, cultural hours for dancing and singing, and clear rules for the treatment of civilians (Oppenheim and Weintraub 2016, 1132). Through analysis of FARC units, the authors found that units in which 100 percent of the fighters reported receiving political education killed an estimated 68 percent fewer civilians (Oppenheim and Weintraub 2016, 1138). This result was found even when controlling for territorial control, poverty, and civilian support. It can be concluded that commitment to a political education based on restraint can significantly reduce the level of violence against non-combatants.

Another factor which greatly increases the prevalence of civilian abuse is forced recruitment. Dara Kay Cohen studies the use of rape among rebel groups and how membership affects sexual violence. Cohen's research finds that abduction (committed by insurgents), impressment (instigated by the state), and lootable resources all have a positive and significant effect on wartime rape (Cohen 2013a, 469, 471). Cohen (2013a, 464) explains that gang rape "create[s] a coherent force out of a group of frightened strangers who feel no loyalty toward the group." In cases of insurgent groups relying on abduction of fighters, victims of violent kidnappings become perpetrators of sexual violence in order to survive the social structure of an armed group. It is important to note that women are also abducted into rebel groups. Through her case study in Sierra Leone, Cohen (2013a, 475) found that female fighters were active perpetrators of gang rape, restraining victims or violating them with foreign objects. Abduction leads insurgents to bond over shared criminality in the absence of ideological connection and does not excuse women from their participation on the basis of sex.

### 3 Theory and Hypothesis

The preceding literature review examined various factors potentially influencing the actions of combatants. Political goals, resource endowment, ideology, internal discipline, political education, and abduction all present compelling explanations for violence or restraint against non-combatants. However, one factor that has not yet been explored is that of gender. First, it is essential to establish that women can and have participated violently in a variety of conflicts. This research does not rely on the gender informed stereotype that women act as the voices of compassion and reason that stay the hand of male driven violence. In reality, women join rebel groups for many of the same reasons men do.

Women's participation in rebel groups is also influenced by the characteristics and goals of the non-state actor, since differing ideologies hold various stances on the role of women in society. Wood and Thomas (2017) examine the motivations organizations might have for including women in their recruitment activities. To accomplish this research, the authors created the Women in Armed Rebellion Dataset (WARD) to measure the prevalence of women as

frontline combatants, suicide bombers, assassins, and trained members of civil defense groups. The research concludes that leftist rebel groups have an increased presence and prevalence of female fighters, and that Islamist ideology has a negative effect on the participation of women (Wood and Thomas 2017, 41). In general, groups motivated by desires of egalitarianism and reforming traditional society, which are often guided by leftist ideologies, have more opportunities for women (Wood and Thomas 2017, 34). Marxist or leftist groups also tend to engage in irregular warfare, or guerrilla warfare, and recruit from local communities (Wood and Thomas 2017, 33). In comparison, conservative or reactionary groups discourage women in combat, often only utilizing women in suicide attacks (Wood and Thomas 2017, 33-34). Political ideology of rebel groups is one of the most crucial factors in determining the prevalence of women within the organization, with leftist groups having the most opportunities.

Examining female fighters in Latin America is helpful in understanding the roles of female combatants. Kampwirth (2002, 2) writes that women were active participants in late twentieth century guerilla movements in Latin America, representing around 30 percent of all fighters in the Frente Farabundo Marti para Liberaci n Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador, the Ej rcito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN) in Mexico, and the Frente Sandinista de Liberaci n Nacional (FSLN) in Nicaragua. Kampwirth (2002) identifies several factors that motivated women to participate in these political movements. These factors included neoliberal economic policies, export-oriented agriculture, shortage of rural jobs, migration to urban areas, changes to Catholic ideology, and more autonomy for women. Apart from large-scale changes in Latin American society, individual characteristics such as family traditions of resistance, membership in preexisting advocacy groups, education, and young age pushed women to participate in rebel organizations (Kampwirth 2002, 11-12). In general, the author found that younger women were motivated to join due to their previous activism and goals of achieving equality while older, single mothers prioritized economic concerns (Kampwirth 2002, 8-9). A combination of external pressures and internal motivations created a prominent role for women as combatants in Latin American rebel groups in the late 1900s.

Cohen (2013*b*) studies wartime rape through the context of female fighters in rebel organizations and analyzes several theories explaining how the presence of women influences the prevalence of sexual violence in the context of the Sierra Leone civil war. The theories follow two lines of argument. The first theory predicts that having more female fighters will lead to less sexual violence. In this theory, less sexual violence will occur because women will be dedicated to making peace as the more nurturing sex, or because female fighters will take the place of potential rape victims as the sexual partners of male fighters (Cohen 2013*b*, 389-390). Cohen (2013*b*, 389) dismisses this theory since sexual violence in the form of gang rape occurs despite, or often with, the presence of female fighters. The second line of argument predicts that sexual violence increases when rebel groups include women, because conflict attracts violent individuals or because combat socialization encourages all fighters to participate in gang

rape (Cohen 2013*b*, 391, 402). However, it is unlikely that women join rebel groups seeking to rape, because rapists are almost always male during peacetime (Cohen 2013*b*, 403). The combat socialization theory suggests that the social pressure of a rebel group “can cause individuals to behave in ways that they would never do on their own” (Cohen 2013*b*, 393). Most crucial to this research, Cohen (2013*b*, 399) concluded that “the proportion of women in an armed group is positively associated with the sexual violence committed by the group.” Contrary to the other theory, the presence of female fighters does not reduce sexual violence against civilians. Rather, it is associated with more instances of sexual violence.

Drawing from the literature review above, this research investigates several hypotheses. Conventionally, one might expect armed rebel groups with women to show more restraint or commit fewer human rights abuses. However, the theories of female participation postulated by Cohen (2013*b*) and the evidence that female combatants participate in gang rape also presented by Cohen (2013*a*) indicate that groups with more women commit more acts of sexual violence in the case of Sierra Leone. The research presents a new line of inquiry in this field, hypothesizing that rebel groups that include women as combatants commit more human rights abuses than groups that do not include women. This hypothesis is based on the research conducted by Cohen (2013*b*) in Sierra Leone, expanding it to apply to other human rights violations including rape and applying it on a global scale.

This research predicts that ideology and abduction will have strong effects on the level of violence rebel groups direct towards civilians, along with the presence of women combatants. Thaler (2012) and Florea (2020) found that insurgencies adhering to Marxist ideology committed fewer human rights abuses than right-wing, nationalist, or ethnic organizations. Hoover Green (2016) concluded that leftist groups also devote more time to political education, dedicating fighters to ideology and restraint. Additionally, the abduction of fighters into service of the rebel group has been proven by Cohen (2013*a*) to lead to substantial sexual violence. This research also predicts that the goals of the organization and the group’s resources will have a secondary effect on violence against civilians. Organizations with goals of secession or controlling immobile resources will commit fewer human rights violations against civilians (Stewart 2017; Weinstein 2006).

## 4 Research Design

The data used in this research is drawn from multiple datasets. Conrad, Walsh and Whitaker (2021) compiled the Rebel Human Rights Violations (RHRV) dataset to measure “the frequency with which rebel groups engage in specific types of human rights abuse.” Rebel groups operating from 1990-2018 are included in the dataset and the violations measured include detention, forced displacement, property damage, forced recruitment, torture, sexual violence, and killings. This list constitutes a wider range of human rights violations to explore than

Cohen provides by only considering sexual violence. The authors used reports from the U.S. Department of State and Amnesty International to track the occurrence and scale of each human rights violation by rebel groups. This research utilizes the RHRV variables as dependent variables when conducting analyses. Several human rights abuses are used to represent a range of severity and situations. The variable Forced Displacement uses *misplaces* from the RHRV dataset and represents cases when insurgents deliberately cause civilians to flee their homes. This variable requires proof that rebel groups prompted civilians to leave by issuing statements, conducting terrorist attacks, or destroying property (Conrad, Walsh and Whitaker 2021). The variable Killings uses *rkillings\_s* in the RHRV dataset and measures the murder of civilians outside of the context of armed conflicts. Examples of this action include politically motivated killings of civilians, assassinations of civilian leaders, or executions (Conrad, Walsh and Whitaker 2021). Another dependent variable used is Sexual Violence, which uses *rsexual\_s* from the RHRV dataset. This variable measures instances of rape, sexual assault, mutilation of genitals or breasts, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and sexual exploitation (Conrad, Walsh and Whitaker 2021). All of these variables are ordinal variables and are assigned values of 0, indicating no evidence, 1, showing the rebel group engaged in the behavior occasionally, or 2, demonstrating the violations occurred frequently. For purposes of the analysis below, each of these variables is collapsed into a dichotomous variable, with 1 indicating that the group committed that abuse in the given year and 0 that it did not.

In this analysis, several independent variables are used. An essential dataset in this research is the Women in Armed Rebellion Dataset (WARD) compiled by Wood and Thomas (2017). This dataset records information related to the presence and prevalence of female fighters in over 300 rebel groups from 1964-2014. Female combatants are defined as “all female members who underwent military training, received combat arms, and directly participated in organized violence on behalf of the organization” (Wood and Thomas 2017, 2). The binary variable Female Combatants, sourced from WARD’s *female\_combatants\_best*, is used as an independent variable in this study and utilizes a stricter definition of female fighter, relying on direct evidence of combat participation as a member of a rebel group. To conduct a robustness check, Female Combatants Without Suicide Bombers, sourced from the WARD variable *female\_combatants\_exs*, is used as an alternative measure to ensure that Islamist groups utilizing female fighters solely in suicide attacks are not skewing the results.

Additionally, the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (FORGE) dataset provides information on rebel groups including the goals and ideology of rebel groups. Using Independence (*goalindep*) and Communism (*ideolcom*) as independent variables allows the analysis to measure the effect of secessionist goals and communist ideology on rebel human rights violations (Braithwaite and Cunningham 2019). Another useful dataset for this research is the Rebel Contraband Dataset (RCD) by authors Walsh et al. (2018). Since this data measures natural resources and crimes such as smuggling, the RCD helps identify associations



between mobile resources and human rights abuses. The variable Natural Resource Funding is drawn from the RCD independent variable `nr_anystrategy` and identifies when any strategy is being used to profit from natural resources in any year. The natural resource strategies the authors coded include smuggling, theft, extortion, or booty futures, which means that the group promises to seize certain resources.

Research from Cohen (2016) provides independent variables related to the recruitment strategies of rebel forces. Cohen (2016, 77) differentiates between Abduction, which indicat[es] whether specifically abduction by non-state armed groups was reported” and Force Recruitment, which “indicat[es] whether such groups had ever used coercive recruitment generally.” Although this distinction can seem uncertain, the author conceptualizes Abduction as the more explicit and restrictive measure while Forced Recruitment may be more gradual and allow the individual more agency (Cohen 2016, 78-79). Both of these variables sourced from Cohen (2016) are used in the analysis. Control variables sourced from the Quality of Government Standard dataset (QoG) are also included in this analysis to account for differences on the country level. The analysis accounts for Population (`wdi_pop`) and GDP per capita (`gle_rgdpc`) (Teorell et al. 2019).

## 5 Analysis and Discussion

To determine the relationship between gender in rebel organizations and various human rights violations, I conducted a series of logistic regression analyses, the results of which are presented in three tables with four models each. The first table features sexual violence as the dependent variable, followed by killings and property destruction in the subsequent tables. In addition to variables that measure the presence of female combatants, independent variables measuring the approximate percentage of female fighters in a rebel group allow for a more specific analysis.

Table 1 addresses sexual violence as the dependent variable and includes four models. Model 1 assesses the relationship between the control variables only and sexual violence. This model indicates that Natural Resource Funding and Abduction have a positive and statistically significant relationship with sexual violence. These data suggest that rebel groups that profit from natural resources and those that abduct recruits are significantly more likely to commit acts of sexual violence against civilians than other rebel groups. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Florea (2020) and Humphreys and Weinstein (2006) on resource endowment and by Cohen (2013a) on abduction. At the country level, GDP per Capita is negative and significant, demonstrating that rebel groups operating in wealthier countries are less likely to commit sexual violence. The findings for these control variables remain significant in the other models in this table.

Model 2 adds the variable Female Combatants to the analysis. This variable has a positive

Table 1: Determinants of Sexual Violence

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Female Combatants Best		1.000** (0.408)		
Female Combatants Exs			1.185*** (0.447)	
Women < 5%				0.902** (0.381)
Women = 5–10%				1.174 (0.781)
Women = 10–20%				1.239 (0.840)
Independence	−0.277 (0.569)	−0.251 (0.550)	−0.354 (0.564)	−0.237 (0.550)
Communism	0.344 (0.473)	−0.094 (0.550)	−0.328 (0.616)	−0.228 (0.751)
Natural Resource Funding	0.987** (0.467)	0.861* (0.452)	0.882** (0.433)	0.874* (0.462)
Abduction	1.247*** (0.435)	1.042** (0.408)	0.973** (0.393)	1.004*** (0.381)
Population	−0.179 (0.191)	−0.183 (0.182)	−0.169 (0.185)	−0.184 (0.182)
GDP per Capita	−0.431** (0.174)	−0.377** (0.174)	−0.318* (0.184)	−0.394** (0.166)
/cut1	−3.444 (3.431)	−2.816 (3.543)	−2.201 (3.685)	−2.980 (3.416)
/cut2	−2.865 (3.411)	−2.224 (3.518)	−1.604 (3.657)	−2.387 (3.398)
Observations	959	913	913	913
pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.121	0.135	0.141	0.136

Note: Shown are coefficients from ordered logistic regressions; standard errors clustered by rebel group in parentheses; \*\*\* indicates significance at  $p < 0.01$ , \*\* at  $p < 0.05$ , and \* at  $p < 0.10$ .

and statistically significant relationship with sexual violence. This relationship indicates that rebel groups that use female combatants are more likely than other rebel groups to commit sexual violence. This result confirms the research of Cohen (2013a) which found that groups in Sierra Leone with female fighters committed gang rape at a higher rate than groups with only male combatants. This research confirms that Cohen's findings are not only true for Sierra Leone, but on a global scale. Model 3 tests the influence of Female Combatant Ex, which excludes female combatants tasked only with carrying out suicide attacks. This variable has a positive and statistically significant relationship with sexual violence, demonstrating that rebel groups that use female fighters who are not suicide bombers are more likely to commit sexual violence than rebel groups that do not. This result ensures the robustness of the data, since Female Combatant Ex maintains and increases the significance of the relationship between female combatants and acts of sexual violence, confirming that reactionary and conservative suicide attacks are not responsible for the significance of Female Combatants Best.

Model 4 further evaluates the effects of female combatants by considering the effect of the approximate percentage of female fighters in a rebel group. Interestingly, Bowen < 5% is the only significant category, suggesting that rebel group composition has a positive and significant effect on sexual violence when women constitute less than 5 percent of the fighting force. The other categories representing intervals of 5-10 percent and 10-20 percent are not statistically significant. The data in Table 1 suggests that Cohen's research on Sierra Leone is applicable to rebel groups across the globe (Cohen 2013a). However, having female combatants in a fighting force only leads to higher levels of sexual violence when women constitute less than 5 percent of the force. Although more research is needed in this area, socialization could explain these results. If women belong to such a small minority in the fighting force, they could face more pressure to participate in acts of sexual violence and commit human rights violations than women who constitute a larger percentage of other rebel groups.

Table 2, in which the dependent variable is rebel killings of civilians, presents different but equally intriguing results. In Model 5, which focuses only on the control variables, Natural Resource Funding is positive and significant, indicating that rebel groups that profit from natural resources are more likely than other groups to kill civilians. These results are once again consistent with Florea (2020)'s and Humphreys and Weinstein (2006)'s research on resource endowments. Population is negative and significant, but only at a 90 percent confidence level, suggesting that rebels operating in countries with larger populations are somewhat less likely to kill civilians. Model 6 introduces Female Combatants Best, which is positive and significant. In other words, rebel groups that use female combatants are significantly more likely than other groups to kill civilians. This model demonstrates that the presence of female combatants in rebel groups has a positive effect on killings as well as sexual violence, meaning that rebel groups that include female combatants are more likely to kill civilians and commit

Table 2: Determinants of Killings

Variables	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Female Combatants Best		0.941** (0.309)		
Female Combatants Exs			0.885*** (0.351)	
Women < 5%				0.679** (0.303)
Women = 5–10%				1.548*** (0.451)
Women = 10–20%				1.512** (0.610)
Independence	0.041 (0.307)	−0.031 (0.315)	0.035 (0.317)	0.090 (0.320)
Communism	0.510 (0.325)	−0.017 (0.392)	−0.091 (0.446)	−0.329 (0.414)
Natural Resource Funding	0.960*** (0.271)	0.948*** (0.269)	0.901*** (0.265)	0.904*** (0.260)
Abduction	0.556 (0.365)	0.382 (0.353)	0.365 (0.359)	0.284 (0.339)
Population	−0.148* (0.082)	−0.117 (0.086)	−0.126 (0.088)	−0.143* (0.085)
GDP per Capita	0.102 (0.129)	0.099 (0.131)	0.175 (0.148)	0.072 (0.132)
/cut1	−1.212 (1.825)	−0.473 (2.049)	−0.192 (2.156)	−1.144 (2.061)
/cut2	−0.002 (1.812)	0.776 (2.046)	1.045 (2.158)	0.125 (2.055)
Observations	959	913	913	913
pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.056	0.072	0.067	0.081

Note: Shown are coefficients from ordered logistic regressions; standard errors clustered by rebel group in parentheses; \*\*\* indicates significance at  $p < 0.01$ , \*\* at  $p < 0.05$ , and \* at  $p < 0.10$ .

acts of sexual violence against civilians than groups that do not include women.

When accounting for suicide attacks in Model 7, Female Combatants Exs is positive and significant. This finding demonstrates that rebel groups that include female fighters are more likely to kill civilians than groups that do not allow female combatants, even when suicide attackers are excluded. In Model 8, Vonten 5%, Women — 5-10%, and Women — 10-20% all have a positive and significant relationship with civilian killings. Differing from Table 1, which addressed sexual violence, all included percentages of female fighters were statistically significant in Table 2. This suggests that rebel groups with female fighters have a more consistent positive effect on killings than on sexual violence, and that the percentage of women in the group is less important than their general presence.

Finally, Table 3 considers the effect of female combatants on property violations. Without considering gender, Model 9 finds that several independent variables have a positive and significant relationship with property violations: Communism, Abduction, Natural Resource Funding, and Population. The positive effect of communist rebel groups on property violations contradicts Thaler (2012)'s research in Mozambique which found that groups guided by Marxist ideology had more respect for noncombatants. Communism is only positive and significant in Models 9 and 10. This result could potentially be explained by the propensity of Marxist revolutions to redistribute land or relocate populations, disrupting property ownership (Model 9), Additionally, excluding suicide attacks, which often cause extensive property damage, from the analysis could explain why Communism loses significance in Model 11. Communism presents a less significant effect on human rights violations than expected, as it was only significant in two out of the twelve models. Abduction has a positive and significant relationship with property violations throughout Table 3, meaning that rebel groups that abduct people into their fighting force are more likely to violate property than groups that do not abduct combatants. The significance of Abduction suggests that Cohen (2013a)'s research on abduction may apply to other human rights violations in addition to sexual violence. Natural Resource Funding is also positive and significant throughout the table, indicating that groups profiting from natural resources are more likely to violate property that do not profit from natural resources. When considering the three tables, Natural Resource Funding is the only variable that is positive and significant in all twelve models.

Model 10 includes Female Combatants Best, which has a positive and significant relationship with property violations. This datum indicates that rebel groups with female fighters are more likely to violate property than rebel groups that do not include female fighters. Model 11 utilizes the Female Combatants Exs variable to exclude suicide bombers and is also positive and significant. The results for this variable confirm that rebel groups with female fighters are more likely to violate property, even when female suicide attackers are removed from the analysis. Model 12 follows the opposite pattern produced in Table 1 regarding significance. The category of rebel groups in which women constitute less than 5 percent of combatants,

Table 3: Determinants of Property Violations

Variables	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Female Combatants Best		0.756** (0.328)		
Female Combatants Exs			0.774*** (0.356)	
Women < 5%				0.397 (0.344)
Women = 5–10%				1.309*** (0.391)
Women = 10–20%				1.477*** (0.542)
Independence	0.078 (0.328)	0.069 (0.306)	0.043 (0.309)	0.192 (0.322)
Communism	1.016*** (0.332)	0.694** (0.351)	0.577 (0.394)	0.362 (0.325)
Natural Resource Funding	0.710** (0.293)	0.613** (0.282)	0.594** (0.280)	0.592* (0.265)
Abduction	0.841** (0.329)	0.694** (0.329)	0.674** (0.335)	0.567* (0.308)
Population	−0.324*** (0.098)	−0.321*** (0.099)	−0.319*** (0.101)	−0.353*** (0.101)
GDP per Capita	−0.116 (0.129)	−0.119 (0.129)	−0.065 (0.139)	−0.172 (0.129)
/cut1	−4.414** (1.966)	−4.181** (2.067)	−3.837* (2.144)	−5.148** (2.131)
/cut2	−3.609* (1.951)	−3.356 (2.055)	−3.013 (2.138)	−4.306** (2.122)
Observations	959	913	913	913
pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.085	0.094	0.093	0.107

Note: Shown are coefficients from ordered logistic regressions; standard errors clustered by rebel group in parentheses; \*\*\* indicates significance at  $p < 0.01$ , \*\* at  $p < 0.05$ , and \* at  $p < 0.10$ .

Women < 5%, does not reach statistical significance. However, the other categories, Women — 5-10%, and Women — 10-20%, are positive and significant. Unlike with sexual violence, rebel groups with female combatants are more likely to violate property when women constitute a larger percentage of the fighting force.

The three tables used for this analysis all present fascinating implications for the participation of women in the combat forces of rebel groups. Female Combatants Best and Female Combatants Exs produced positive and significant results for all three human rights violations considered in this research. Female Combatants Best has the highest level of significance in Table 2, which analyzed killings. Female Combatants Exs was most significant in when measuring sexual violence in Table 1. These independent variables retain their significance in all tables, suggesting that rebel groups that use female combatants are significantly more likely to engage in a variety of human rights violations than groups that do not use female fighters. To gain a more complete understanding of the effect women in rebel groups have on human right violations, independent variables that consider the proportion of female fighters were used. In Table 1, the results show that rebel groups that use female combatants are significantly more likely to sexually abuse noncombatants when women make up less than five percent of the combat force. The logic associated with this pattern could suggest that women feel less pressure to participate in human rights abuses once they constitute a larger proportion of the combatants. However, this explanation does not extend to the two other violations considered in this research: killings and property destruction. All three percentage variables are significant for killings while Women — 5-10% and Bowen = 10-20% are significant for property destruction. More research, ideally interviews, are needed to explain these differing patterns.

These results confirm the primary hypothesis of this research, which theorized that rebel groups with female combatants would commit more human rights violations than groups that do not use female fighters. The positive and statistically significant relationship between Female Combatants Best and Female Combatants Exs and sexual violence, killings, and property destruction provide quantitative confirmation for this theory. Another hypothesis in this research predicted that ideology and abduction would have strong effects on the level of violence against noncombatants. However, Communism only reached significance in two of the twelve models, making it much less important to human rights than anticipated. This lack of significance suggests that the ideology of a rebel group does not strongly influence its level of violence towards civilians.

The coefficient for Abduction, on the other hand, was positive and significant in all models related to sexual violence and property destruction, but none of the models in the table related to killings. These findings suggest that having fighters abducted into service can increase the likelihood of human rights violations related to looting or humiliation, but not death. The hypothesis that a group's goals would influence civilian treatment is not confirmed. Since Independence never reached significance, it seems logical to conclude that having the goal of

independence does not necessarily lead to humanitarian treatment of civilians. This research predicted that groups that profit from natural resources would be more likely to commit human rights violations. This hypothesis was confirmed by Natural Resource Funding, which was statistically significant in all twelve models. To conclude, Female Combatants Best, Female Combatants Exs, and Natural Resource Funding were only variables that were significantly related to all three types of human rights violations.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper utilizes logistic regression to examine the relationship between female combatants in rebel groups and violence perpetrated by rebel groups against civilians. The analysis combined several datasets, including the newly available Rebel Human Rights Violations (RHRV) and Women in Armed Rebellion (WARD) datasets. The principal finding of this analysis was that the presence of female combatants in rebel groups had a positive and statistically significant effect on three categories of violence against civilians: sexual violence, killings, and property destruction. These results confirm the primary hypothesis of this paper that rebel groups with female combatants would be more likely than other groups to engage in such behaviors. Additionally, rebel groups that profit from a strategy involving natural resources were more likely to commit human rights abuses against civilian populations. Rebel groups that abduct people to serve in their combat forces were also more likely to commit acts of sexual violence and property destruction. Contrary to expectations, the ideology and goals of rebel groups were not significantly related to their behavior towards civilians.

A major finding of this paper is that the research conducted by Cohen (2013*b*) holds true for a substantial number of rebel groups beyond Sierra Leone and a broader array of human rights violations beyond just sexual violence. Despite analyzing three different abuses, the data demonstrate that the same types of rebel groups are likely to engage in the abuses. The variables related to the percentages of fighters who are women create new questions for this field. If the positive relationship between female combatants and sexual violence is no longer significant when they constitute a larger proportion of the fighters, why are killings more likely to be committed by groups with female combatants at any level? And why are female fighters only significant to property destruction once they became a larger proportion of the fighters? Conducting interviews with women who have held combat roles in rebel groups could potentially provide insight into these remaining questions.



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# Human Rights Best Practices and Gender Equality In Rwanda

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WHEN thinking about human rights, it is rather easy to think about the abuses and atrocities that occur throughout the world, rather than focusing on human rights victories and success stories. We live in an overly hyper-focused world on negativity. Often when we turn on the news, we solely hear about the bad things that occur around us. I believe that although this is necessary, we must also center our attention on the positive occurrences around the world. The World Economic Forum has shared its annual Global Gender Gap Report, where it ranks countries based on their degree of women's participation in the economy, education achievements, and their health and political involvement. Rwanda, an underdeveloped country in the east of Africa, has been ranked fourth for gender equality. Rwanda is the only African country in the top 10, while the US comes in at number 49 (World Economic Forum 2021).

Gender equality is a highly important aspect within human rights. It determines the outcome and development of the economy, and its impacts can have immense effects on the growth of the nation as a whole. It is necessary to note that gender equality encompasses fundamental human rights and is essential to achieving full human potential, sustainable development, and a peaceful society. A lack of female empowerment is directly correlated to the economic status of a country; a lack of education, leads to lower pay, and this spirals into women staying home, unable to contribute to the overall economic growth of the nation. It is no question that empowering women spurs productivity and economic development. An increase in female participation increases the economic standing of a country. Additionally, money and resources in the hands of mothers also promote an increase in expenditures on children, allowing for a better standard of living in the critical years of child development. Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. However, the demographics of Rwanda look a little different. In 1994, Rwandan society was left in utter chaos. With death tolls roaming around 800,000 to 1 million, Rwanda's population of 5.5 million became 70 percent female. These women were predominantly uneducated or raised with any career-oriented expectations. It is important to highlight that women owning land or working a job outside their home was completely unheard of during pre genocide

Rwanda. Just like World War II led to an increase in working women, the genocide in Rwanda similarly opened it to Rwandan women.

However, in contrast to common practice, the call for equality within the Rwandan women was not led by thousands of females but by one man. This man was President Paul Kagame. He has been the man in charge of leading the country since his army stopped the genocide. “Kagame decided that Rwanda was so demolished, so broken, it simply could not rebuild with men’s labor alone. So the country’s new constitution, passed in 2003, decreed that 30 percent of parliamentary seats be reserved for women” (Warner 2018). Additionally, the government began encouraging the education of women. These women were appointed to leadership positions, including government ministers and police chiefs. “Kagame vowed to not merely play catch-up to the West but leapfrog ahead of it” (Warner 2018). The country successfully embraced Kagame’s policies and went beyond his mandatory minimum, leading to an astonishing 48% of parliament seats going to women in 2003. In 2020 that number raised to 61.3% (World Bank 2018). Today Rwandan politics is cited as a model of gender inclusiveness.

This radical change within the structure of Rwanda’s political frame was predominantly due to the nature of Rwanda’s leadership. Kagame, a strong military ruler who “allows little dissent or free speech. His word — and his vision — are often the country’s command.” Kagame’s strong popular mandate for sweeping change essentially allowed for the end of the Rwandan Genocide. However, although this was clearly effective on paper, can a country truly shift its cultural ideals by one man? If we take a look at the women’s movement in the USA, this proved to be an indication that only after decades of fighting, envisioning what a better life could look like, and launching a movement could make change occur. In other words, never without struggle. This aggressive shortcut through history led to other issues.

Justine Uvuza, a Rwandan who grew up in a refugee camp in Uganda, moved back to post-genocide Rwanda in 1994 and wondered if such actions could ever occur. Uvuza worked in the Rwandan government, working for Kagame promoting the pro-women policies. When she was getting her Ph.D. at Newcastle University, she wondered how much progress had been made. This led her to return to Rwanda to interview female politicians about their lives. Not simply about their public positions but also about their private lives, with their husbands and children.

Justine Uvuza found that in essence, no matter how powerful these women were in public and how intellectually challenging and important their positions were within their labor, that power did not extend into their households. “One told me how her husband expected her to make sure that his shoes were polished, the water was put in the bathroom for him, his clothes were ironed,” Justine says. And this husband wanted not only his shoes laid out in the morning, but his socks placed on top of the shoes. And he wanted it done by his wife, the parliamentarian. These female figures were expected to perform and comply with ceremonial domestic duties. “It was rarely an option to outsource such tasks to a maid or get your husband

to shoulder more work at home.” Some of these women feared violence from their husbands if they didn’t comply with these expectations, and one said that she had felt so trapped, she had contemplated suicide (Uvuza 2014).

Justine added to explain that for some of these women, “the very real strides that they were making outside the home could feel less like liberation and more like a duty to be fulfilled.” Being a “good Rwandan,” as she termed it in her research, meant both being patriotic — serving her country through her public work and career — but also being docile and serving their husband. As a result, Justine said, “a female politician could stand up in parliament, advocating for issues like stronger penalties for sexual violence and subsidized maxi-pads for the poor, but find herself scared to speak out about the oppression in her own home.”

Justine would end each interview asking these female legislators what seemed to her to be an obvious question: “Would they support a Rwandan women’s movement? A movement to change not just the public roles for women but to re-evaluate gender relations on all levels? Would these powerful Rwandan women be willing to stand under the banner of feminism?” Almost all of the women said no. Feminism? “That’s not Rwandan,” they told her. “That’s for Westerners” (Uvuza 2014).

However, it is important to note that Justine was not shocked. In fact, she had held the same views earlier in her life. She says that “because of the way that gender equality came so rapidly to Rwanda, from the outside in, with no psychological buildup or women’s liberation movement, it was harder for these politicians to talk about equality without appearing disloyal, not just to their spouses but to their country.”(Uvuza 2014) In turn, this leaves for a complicated situation between what looks “good” on paper regarding the rates of gender equality and the reality of what Rwandan women face within their households.

I keep coming back to the question; Is Rwanda a best practice success story? In my opinion, I believe that yes, although it may not be perfect, through small actions like these, Rwanda is increasing its proliferation of female power through the Rwandan political system. It is certainly not a traditional way of approaching the issue, it certainly does not portray the desired outcomes in the domestic lives of these females. However, these high authoritative positions in government will increase the female education rates in the future leading to a higher female workforce. This will eventually slowly begin to shift the cultural standings of females in society. In conclusion, it is important to note that there is definitely a lot of work to be done, however, Rwanda should also be seen as a country to look up to in terms of participation rates. Rwanda has come a long way, with time and progress, these females will continue and empower themselves. I am hopeful that this is, and will be a good example of a coming of age human rights best practice.

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# Learning to Kill the Angel in the House

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## Abstract

In an education system drilling the importance of quantitative work, it is important to examine issues through the creative lens of the arts. In this piece, Virginia Woolf's critique of Coventry Patmore's 19<sup>th</sup> century poem, the "Angel in the House," provides insight on reaching an understanding of gender inequality within the gas and oil workforce. A unique opportunity within this workforce has come to light – a majority of its population is retiring soon. This leaves a gap to fill. How will this gap be filled, or as Woolf asks – how will this new room be furnished? Woolf's insight that the symbol of the Angel in the House represents an internalized and harmful limit telling women to be self-sacrificing, passive and pure, shows that the issue of gender inequality requires a much more deeply-rooted solution than the solutions the gas and oil companies are currently presenting. More than 90 years after Woolf's piece, this limit is still present in the workforce. This essay will discuss different perspectives on how this Angel-in-the-House-informed gender inequality in the workforce should be approached and deconstructed.

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ENGLISH Victorian poet Coventry Patmore (1826-1896) describes the idea of "The Angel in The House" as a self-sacrificing, passive and pure woman. Although this description might seem insignificant, it can actually create a stereotype of a domestic angel that can induce serious harm. Virginia Woolf's explains in her essay critiquing the Victorian ideal of womanhood, *Professions for Women* (1931), that even when women are given more rights in society, the "Angel in the House" still acts as a barrier and thus gender equality cannot be reached when women are given "freedom" within conditions and structures that restrict their agency. In Woolf's era (1882-1941), reform was picking up speed– yet women were still expected to move up the class structure through marriage to men, and thus women were expected to be soft, not bold, as men viewed this quality as marriageable. Woolf cites that these "Angel in the House" qualities needed to be killed in order for women to reach true equality. More than 90 years after Woolf's piece, however, the angel is not dead, but heavily engaged within the workforce. Virginia Woolf's critique of Coventry Patmore's 19<sup>th</sup> century poem, the "Angel in

the House,” provides insight on reaching an understanding of gender inequality within the workforce.

Many influential companies have released ad campaigns attempting to address this gender discrimination and inequality, especially within the oil and gas industry where gender discrimination is heavily present. Shell Oil Company’s ad campaign on gender inequality will be used as an example in this essay because it does not address the conditions and structure limiting women within the company. For instance, Shell Oil company has a 22% gender pay gap, yet launched a “Closing the Gender Gap in Engineering and Technology campaign” (2018). An ad from this campaign tells women to “Be the difference. Close the gender gap. Let’s make the future.” (Shell 2018). However, these statements are not substantiated by actions. By telling women to make choices within conditions that limit their choices, these ad campaigns may actually be ignoring a cycle that has been underlying women’s oppression for over a hundred years, as outlined by Virginia Woolf. In order to make a substantial impact, Woolf’s idea of the “Angel in the House” as a limit within women needs to be considered when launching ad campaigns that address gender inequality within the workforce. Viewing the issue of gender discrimination through a literary lens can help create more understanding around the issue that informs more impactful ad campaigns and creates more deeply rooted solutions.

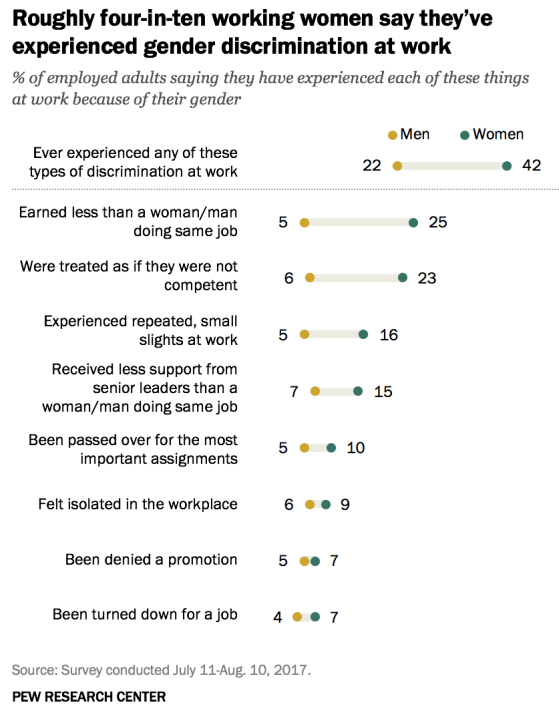
Despite definite progress in career opportunities for women since 1931 when Virginia Woolf published *Professions for Women*, the “Angel in the House” is still at work through significant gender discrimination in the workplace today. According to a Pew Research Center study, “about four-in-ten working women (42%) in the United States say they have faced discrimination on the job because of their gender” (Parker and Funk 2020). This actively opposes Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed 74 years ago on December 10th, 1948, which cites that “everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work” (United Nations 1948). According to a Pay-scale’s 2022 State of the Gender Pay Gap Report, women earn 82 cents for every \$1 men earn; a statistic that is unchanged from 2021 (Miller 2022). Additionally, the presence of gender discrimination within the workplace today actively opposes the signed treaty from the United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) which occurred 42 years ago on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1979. The treaty cites that discrimination against women “violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity,” and Articles 10, 11, and 13 establish women’s rights to non-discrimination in education, employment, economic, and social activities (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner N.d.). Gender discrimination violates human rights established on a global level decades ago.

Although the most prevalent factor of this discrimination is unequal pay, the treatment of women is a close second, as seen in Figure 1.

To address this discrimination, Shell’s ad campaign says it “will maintain year-on-year improvements in female representation in our top 150 Senior Executive leaders, initially achiev-



Figure 1: Types of Gender Discrimination In the Workplace (Pew Research)



ing 30% and then aiming for gender equality” (Shell Global N.d.). However, are women given the means to do so? Woolf cites that “even when the path is nominally open—when there is nothing to prevent a woman from being a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant—there are many phantoms and obstacles, as I believe, looming in her way” (Woolf 2010). While Shell cites that gender equality is found in representation, Woolf cites that Coventry Patmore’s Angel in the House still looms over these newly established positions, as seen in the varying ways gender discrimination is played out in the figure above. By ignoring these different ways gender discrimination plays out, Shell’s ad campaign shows a lack of understanding around the issue. Even if there is an increase in female representation, women are still about “four times as likely as men to say they have been treated as if they were not competent because of their gender,” (Parker and Funk 2020) and this “Angel in the House” also “plucks the heart” out of passion in the workplace. Woolf explains this passion is robbed when “the consciousness of what men will say of a woman who speaks the truth about her passions [rouses] her from her artist’s state of unconsciousness [...] and her imagination can work no longer” (Woolf 2010). Expectations of what men will say can interrupt and take away a woman’s passion for her endeavor. Ac-

According to Woolf and the women cited in the Pew survey, gender equality is about more than achieving a position in a field dominated by men— it is the way in which women are treated in that position. Shell's lack of understanding around this leads to placing the responsibility of societal change solely on individual women—telling women what to do while ignoring the lack of the means to do so, which reveals the ad campaign's ineffectiveness.

Shell's ad campaigns hold power in changing this treatment of women and thus can not be taken lightly, as the company exists within a historically white male and economically influential oil and gas industry. Woven into the economy as a relied-upon resource around the globe, oil and gas industry giants "occupy three of the top four positions in the 2012 Fortune 500 list" (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2014). Because the global oil and gas industry is so influential worldwide, Shell's ad campaign could have an impact, but does it? In the oil and gas industry, "participation of women in its global workforce remains less than 20%, and between 10% and 15% at senior levels" (World Economic Forum 2020). Gender discrimination within the oil and gas industry is severe and deeply rooted, a problem that requires more than scraping the surface with an ad campaign. Accountability needs to be enforced within this industry, and ad campaigns are only the beginning of the process, a process that can be delayed no more. Discussion needs to happen now, as there is a rare recent opportunity to completely flip the oil and gas industry employment force because "the oil and gas industry stands to lose a majority of its current geo-science workforce to retirement within the next 15 years" (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2014). Especially now and in the next few years, campaigns and other programs working to prevent gender discrimination in the oil and gas industry can not be taken lightly as there is a recently-opened space within the workforce to start anew.

Despite recent proclamations of diversity advancement within some of these major companies, not enough has been done to seize this opportunity of openings within the workforce. There is still "a strong perception that women stall out in mid-career and eventually leave their jobs at the major companies" (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2012, 552). Additionally, "the glass ceiling is firmly in place in the oil and gas industry, with very few women represented at the executive levels and on boards of directors" (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2012, 552). Representation at the executive level is highly important in giving women a means to truly influence the company. As a highly influential oil and gas industry giant, Shell's efforts towards diversity in the workplace need to be carefully examined and held accountable. If carried out effectively, "workplace innovations in this industry" have the potential to create rippling effects across the economy (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2014). However, this opportunity to rewrite representation in the oil and gas industry is "only a beginning," as this new room given is "still bare" and still "has to be furnished; it has to be decorated; it has to be shared" (Woolf 2010). Upon whose terms is this new age of employment going to be established?

Not only is it important to increase female representation at the executive level, but it is also vital to integrate better treatment of women throughout the company. One way oil and

gas companies, specifically Shell, are attempting to work for this is through implementing mentor programs. While these programs can be enriching and offer support, they are also reflective of ineffective ad campaigns and again tell women what to do without giving them the means to do so. Again, this begs Virginia Woolf's question of how are we "furnishing" this new room, this new opportunity, and on whose terms? (Woolf 2010). These programs scratch the surface, guiding women through "coping" with "gendered obstacles" (Kay and Wallace 2009, 445), but have no power in removing these obstacles (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2014, 458). In an in-depth interview study titled "Corporate Diversity Programs and Gender Inequality in the Oil and Gas Industry" published in the U.S. National Library of Medicine (2014), a woman summed up her experience with workforce mentor programs.

*"Even times when I had a formal assigned mentor, that is not necessarily where I got the best or the most guidance." The most difficult stage of her career, she told us, was when she turned to her mentors for advice when she decided to have children. She said, "I didn't get any negativity except in terms of actually how to do this and how to deal with it." Her mentors sent her to HR, who rejected her request for a temporary part-time schedule. She believed that "even some of the women in the higher up roles, there wasn't a lot of support for that kind of work schedule." One senior woman told her, "If you try to go part-time, you don't get the good assignments." The lack of support almost convinced her to quit her job." (Christine L. Williams and Muller 2014, 458)*

It is important to ask how diversity programs are being implemented and carried out. Are they a way for executives to avoid blame instead of making real change? Mentor-ship programs cannot alone create change but need to be partnered with the ability to affect company systems. Women need to be given the capability to have true influence within the company. Oil and gas companies are extremely conscious about their public image but need to go further than acting to shed positive light on themselves. To do this, companies need to understand that the problem is rooted in telling women to make progress in restrictive conditions. This new room cannot be furnished within a limiting structure.

In order to ethically furnish the room and begin to remove limits on women in the workforce, the "Angel in the House" needs to be killed both outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly, as explained previously by the example of ineffective mentor programs, it is important to continue to address the tangible limits and "obstacles" for a woman compared to a man in achieving a job position and achieving representation in the workplace. (Woolf 2010). Inwardly, the battle is much more complex. Woolf cites that women still have "many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome" in order to be able to work "without finding a phantom to be slain, a rock to be dashed against" (Woolf 2010). In order for a woman to break out of her stereotypical, claustrophobic gender role and find herself within her passions, Wolfe argues that she needs to kill the "Angel in the House" qualities within herself and recognize

the effect that mistreatment of women has on one's value of self (Woolf 2010). These qualities include associating the soft, passive, pure, gender role subconsciously within herself, as these subconscious unequal expectations, along with the treatment of women, steal their ease of expressing themselves, which can be subduing. In the 2021 *Global Gender Gap Report*, the Economic World Forum cites that "women experience a bigger gender gap in potential-based job transitions in fields where they are currently under-represented." (World Economic Forum 2020) This highlights the connection between internal and external limits, as in this case, under-representation is leading to a lack of confidence for potential-based jobs. Not only do outward limits such as representation need to be addressed, but internalized limits need to be addressed and fought as well.

Furthermore, in order to work through these "phantoms" and kill the "Angel in the House," discussion is vital because it gives a voice to and empowers those within the fight. Woolf agrees by saying the phantoms need to be "discuss[ed] and define[ed]," because "only then can the labor be shared" and "solved"(Woolf 2010). Discussion gathers voices together, creating power in numbers, and defines these phantoms so that they are no longer evasive invisible ghosts but concrete problems that can be clearly addressed in the light. Gender discrimination is easier to approach when it has already been brought to light and a path to create change has already been started. Instead of starting a new trail, or joining disconnected small trails, a wider road can be paved when working together.

Discussion is also important because it brings about differing perspectives, which are important in showing that there is no singular correct way this fight is expressed. Sharing one solution through one or very few perspectives parallels to telling women what to do without understanding how to give them the means to do so. In this fight against an internalized limit, the individual woman is important because she is "in process of showing us by [her] experiments," by her "failures and successes [...] what a woman is" (Woolf 2010). Both failures and successes need to be discussed and given an accessible way to be brought to light in order to recognize women as individual people. Through discussing the struggle of this process, the humanity of women is allowed to be seen, thus advocating for women as more than a statistic with low representation, and thus further empowering them to express their individual passions.

Although this discussion and awareness is important, it is not an end, but the first step of a long process. On its website, Shell cites that it signed, along with many other oil and gas industry giants, the World Economic Forum's declaration on closing the gender gap in the oil and gas sector. (World Economic Forum 2020) This call to action is one page in length, including context that the industry is predominantly male and seven guiding principles: "leadership, aspiration and goal setting, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) pipeline, clear responsibility, recruitment, retention and promotion policies, inclusive corporate culture, and work environment and work-life balance" (World Economic Forum 2020, 1).

The second page lists the 21 major companies that signed it. Similar to the United Nations Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) mentioned earlier, the World Economic Forum declaration gathers major leaders onto the same page around the issue of gender inequality. While this awareness opens the discussion for change, it cannot be the only step a company takes toward restitution. Since the signing of CEDAW in 1979 and the World Economic Forum declaration in 2016, companies still settle on ineffective ad campaigns, mentor programs, and other programs that do not fully understand the full extent of the problem and thus do not work to address its structure that limits women. In order to make a substantial impact, awareness cannot be seen as a one-step process, but a way to produce action deeply rooted in an ongoing discussion.

Gender discrimination in the form of psychological deminishment and role limitations that comes with employment discrimination is a human rights violation that continues to be a social problem and must be taken seriously. Virginia Woolf's commentary on Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House" provides insight that gender equality cannot be reached when women are given agency within conditions and structure that restrict that agency. Additionally, it is important to view gender discrimination through this literary lens because it can create a better understanding that can inform more impactful solutions. When launching an ad campaign to address gender inequality and discrimination, gender inequality needs to be holistically seen and understood as a deeply rooted problem, as the "Angel in the House" subconsciously keeps a woman from asserting herself in society and from finding the passions within herself. Today, progress in closing the gender pay gap and ending gender discrimination within the workforce is moving at a very slow rate. Shell's ad campaign on gender inequality does not address the conditions and structure limiting women within the company, but there is a rare opportunity for gender inequality change within the gas and oil industry now, and the ads from these companies need to be held more accountable. In "Professions for Women," Woolf is fighting a Victorian ghost in her modern era - a ghost that continues to afflict women in contemporary times 200 years later. In order to take advantage of the opportunity for change within the oil and gas industry, Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House" needs to be fought and learned to be killed both outwardly and inwardly. Without this action, company ad campaigns will continue to contribute to the slow steady pace against gender inequality. The fight against gender discrimination should be seen as ongoing and a process, not as something that can be ended with a few words in an ad commercial

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