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Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)

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Abstract

This article explores the ways soldiers in the Congo speak about the massive amount of rape committed by the armed forces in the recent war in the DRC.

It focuses on the reasons that the soldiers give to why rape occurs. It discusses how the soldiers distinguish between “lust rapes” and “evil rapes” and argues that their explanations of rape must be understood in relation to notions of different (impossible) masculinities. Ultimately, through reading the soldiers’ words, we can glimpse the logics—arguably informed by the increasingly globalized context of soldiering—through which rape becomes possible, and even “normalized” in particular warscales.

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