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Living in a Conflict Zone: Gendered Violence during the Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies[1]

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When visiting the Dutch Resistance Museum in Amsterdam in late 2016, I discovered a small section of the museum, physically demarcated from the rest, devoted to the former colony of the Netherlands East Indies. Here, displays on the wartime experiences of Dutch people during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) featured enlarged photographs of women and children in internment camps, mirroring the emphasis on imprisonment in published memoirs of this period (Colijn 1996). Alongside these photographic exhibits, positioned within a display wall were pull-out wooden slots, which a visitor could hold momentarily to read more about women's experiences. Only here on these slots, which snapped back into the wall, could one glimpse the experiences of Dutch so-called 'comfort women', women subjected by the Japanese forces to enforced prostitution during the occupation. The fact that these experiences were hidden in a museum, despite a prominent transnational movement for redress for the former so-called 'comfort women', reminds us that histories of sexual violence are still sidelined in mainstream accounts of the past.[2]

It took until the 1980s and 1990s for the history of sexuality to be included in histories of war. A key reason for this was the enduring stigmatisation of all women who had sexual relationships of any kind with enemy soldiers during war, including both consensual relationships and women who were assaulted. The turning point for greater scholarly attention to wartime sexual violence was the early 1990s, when media accounts of such violence in the unfolding war in the former Yugoslavia and the Rwandan genocide prompted new questions for historians about how common an occurrence this had been in past wars and genocides (Heineman 2011). This led to new research on sexual violence committed by Soviet forces in Germany at the end of World War Two (Grossman 1995). In the same time period, research on the so-called 'comfort women' of the Japanese army began to escalate (Yoshiaki 1992).

Research on sexual violence during the Japanese occupation of Asia during World War Two has, however, mostly focused on the case of forced prostitution of local women by the

Japanese military, known by the controversial term ‘comfort women’ (Tanaka 2002; Yoshiaki 1992). The term is controversial because of the suggestion that the women provided ‘comfort’ to the soldiers in contrast to the view of many survivors that they were repeatedly raped and abused (O’Herne 1997). The generalised experience of a ‘comfort woman’ is understood to entail forced prostitution within a so-called comfort station, where a woman is held under guard and against her will for a period of time (Morris-Suzuki 2015). Sexual violence, however, is defined relatively broadly by the United Nations Human Rights Commission to include any sexual act including rape, sexual enslavement, forced prostitution, forced nudity, and other forms of sexual abuse (UN 2014). Furthermore, in comparison to research on Europe (Herzog 2011), there has been less scholarly attention to the broader issue of sexuality in Asian theatres of the war and especially consensual relationships between Japanese soldiers and women in occupied countries, with the exception of the work of Eveline Buchheim (2014).

The relatively late opening up of the histories of sexual violence in both the European and Asian theatres of World War Two was not the result of insufficient evidence (Timm 2017, pp. 353–354). In the case of the Netherlands East Indies, the Dutch kept records for the purposes of intelligence gathering both during and after the occupation. The records of the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS), for example, held in the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague, include short testimonies and observations from former prisoners of the Japanese, local inhabitants, former forced labourers, and men who had worked in the Japanese police force or as auxiliary soldiers (*heiho*). There a small number of files in the General Office of the Dutch Indies government archives (*Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering en daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven*) (1944–50) found in the National Archives in The Hague that include several records of forced prostitution. These files focus on documenting Japanese, Dutch and Indonesian persons who played a role in recruitment or control of related facilities and were compiled for the purpose of preparing for temporary court martials. The combined records were first used in the Dutch War Crimes Tribunals in 1948 for charging a select number of Japanese soldiers, mostly for crimes against Dutch women. They have also been used in reports written for the purposes of a 1993 Dutch government enquiry into this issue following the emergence of international advocacy for this case and an investigation sponsored by the Japanese organisation, the Asian Women’s Fund (Poelgeest 1993; Yamamoto and Horton 1998).

In this chapter, I make more extensive use of these records to piece together what we know about sexual and gendered violence during the Japanese occupation. I use the term 'gendered violence' to refer to broader contexts of violence stemming from multiple forms of unequal relationships across the occupied society. Across both sets of archives, observations about Indonesian women are generally less detailed, including passing observations about seeing these women been transported on ships, hearing from them that they had been tricked with promises of other jobs, or even the records of the number of women held in one facility. The individual testimony of these women is almost never recorded. One reason for this is that the Dutch were primarily concerned with documenting crimes against Dutch people (Eurasians included). The marginal position of Indonesian women within these records means that we need to think critically about what these sources might reveal and how we might overcome the limitations of colonial archives while still working with them. Indeed, a core debate in post-colonial scholarship flagged by Kirsty Reid and Fiona Paisley concerns 'the extent to which the "subaltern" (meaning variously colonised, oppressed or exploited) voices can be heard in the archive and what these traces might mean for our approaches and methods' (2017, p. 3). Despite their limitations, I argue that these records can still shed light on the experiences of Indonesian and Dutch women.

This chapter uses sources from both these Dutch archives compiled during and just after the Second World War and the first Indonesian press reports from the 1990s on women's experiences of sexual violence and sexual relationships with Japanese men. Specifically, I reflect on the challenges each historical source bears in relation to the particular time at which these accounts were collected. This includes the expectations of the interviewers, dominant social codes, and the purposes for which persons compiling records or reports were collecting information. Drawing upon broader literature on sexual violence in the context of war, I unpack the difficulties historians have in peeling back judgements and latter-day framings of women's experiences to understand how women viewed diverse experiences during the war—including experiences of forced prostitution, rape, forced marriage—as well as relationships that involved at least some negotiation under conditions of predation and highly unequal relations of power. I focus on how sexual violence and sexual relationships have been narrated at different times by different people. I reflect on the ethical questions raised by attempts to label women's experiences and award them agency, while at the same time, acknowledging the conditions of predation during a period of military occupation. In

considering the conditions of the occupation, I am mindful of Annette Timm's (2017, p. 363) observations that 'war dramatically complicates the boundary between truly consensual and violent, forced, coerced, or in some way publicly shameful sexual relationships.' At the same time, though, I pay attention to how women's generally lower position in society underpinned sexual violence and contributed to the other forms of gendered violence and coercion behind that violence.

The System of Enforced Military Prostitution and Power Relations in Japanese-Occupied Netherlands East Indies

The system of enforced military prostitution is rooted in the history of Japanese imperialism and state-endorsed prostitution. Long before the creation of Japan's formal and informal empire, Japanese entrepreneurs established brothels throughout Asia in which Japanese women, known by the term *karayuki-san*, worked (Mihalopoulus 2011). The Japanese government established a licensed prostitution system in Japan in the late nineteenth century, and this system was replicated in its colonies following, for example, the annexation of Korea in 1910 (Soh 2008, pp. 9–10). Many patterns from this system of procuring young poor women, by means of coercing families and moving them far from home, were replicated in the military system of enforced prostitution. The military first used the system in China in the 1930s. During the Second World War, women from occupied China, Korea, the Philippines, Malaya, Portuguese Timor and the Netherlands East Indies were detained by the military for the purposes of serving soldiers. The stated reasons for the system were to protect local women from abuse, to protect soldiers from venereal disease, and to provide the soldiers with reprise from the battlefront.

There have been several studies of the system in the Netherlands East Indies (Hartono and Juliantoro 1997; Horton 2010; Janssen 2010; Mariana 2014; Tanaka 2002). We know that women were held or forced to work in different facilities, including 'movie theatres, bars, restaurants, hotels and comfort stations' across army- and navy-controlled areas (Horton 2010, pp. 186–196). They were held under circumstances of highly curtailed freedom, in terms of their ability to leave, and constant exposure to sexual abuse including rape The Japanese initially procured Indonesian sex workers. Women were often tricked into forced

prostitution with promises of becoming performers, getting an education or training as nurses in distant locations (Horton 2010, p. 185). Some were sent to far-off islands or even to other countries based on these promises, only to find themselves working in brothels.

It is difficult to estimate the precise number of 'comfort women' across all Japanese occupied territories given the fact that many women died or were killed at the conclusion of the war. Estimates range from 20,000 to 200,000 women, the majority of whom are believed to have been Korean (Soh 2008, p. 23). Figures for the specific number of Indonesian women are similarly imprecise. One advocacy organisation estimated based on the number of men each woman served and the number of soldiers in the colony that 22,454 women would have experienced sexual violence at the hands of the Japanese military and civilians (Forum Komunikasi Ex-Heiho 1996, pp. 72–74). Meanwhile, in 1993, the Dutch government estimated in an official report that 200 to 300 Dutch and Eurasian women were 'recruited' into the system (Poelgeest 1993, p. 2). There were thus a great many more Indonesian than Dutch women involved, although the figure for Indonesian women included cases of women sexually abused, but not necessarily held in 'comfort stations'.

The existence of Dutch archival records and some latter-day testimonies from survivors means that in the case of the Netherlands East Indies, it is possible to compile at least an overview of patterns in sexual violence during the occupation. Yet due to the partial nature of these sources, we need to pay attention to several factors. One factor is the diversity of women's experience and the difficulties that Tessa Morris-Suzuki has highlighted (2015) in making any generalisations about women subjected to enforced military prostitution. The second factor is the specific conditions of the occupation. On this note, Yonson Ahn's work on colonial Korea reminds us to pay attention to 'the power dynamics that existed within the colonial ruler's web of gendered and racialized hierarchies' (2018, p. 3). Before turning to records of this past and the diversity of women's experiences, let us then reflect on the specific historical and cultural context of power dynamics between men and women and across 'racial' categories in the former Dutch colony.

In Dutch colonial society prior to the Japanese occupation, the Dutch classified residents under three hierarchical categories: European, native and foreign oriental. Being Dutch was technically determined by whether or not a person had a Dutch father and was born of a legal union (Bosma and Raben 2008, p. xvii). The legal category 'European' thus included Eurasian children, who resulted from relationships between Dutch men and local women. From their arrival in 1942, the Japanese sought to completely reverse Dutch colonial hierarchies by placing persons of Dutch background or Dutch allegiance at the lowest level of the social hierarchy in line with their anti-Western ideology. Dutch men who had worked for the colonial bureaucracy or military were imprisoned in prisoner of war camps from 1942 onwards (Kemperman 2010, pp. 165–166). Other persons were detained in internment camps. Men were interned first, followed by women, children and the elderly. People with so-called 'pure' Dutch descent were imprisoned, whereas most Eurasians were not due to cautious assumptions about their potential loyalty to the Japanese, as persons who could also be considered 'Asian' (Heiderbrink 1990, 336-340). There were approximately 100,000 Dutch people interned. Persons who were imprisoned had significantly diminished power because they had few ways to control the conditions in which they lived except through negotiation.

Indonesian men, and ostensibly women, were placed above Dutch people on the basis of an alleged pact of Asian solidarity against Westerners symbolised by the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Duus 1996, p. xxii). The Japanese destroyed symbols of Dutch status and power, and promised Indonesian leaders support in moving towards independence if they co-operated. The elevated status of Indonesians, however, operated perhaps only at the most elite levels of society. Throughout the occupation, it became increasingly clear that the Japanese occupying forces viewed all Indonesians as resources that could support the war effort (Principles Governing the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas 1941).

Men in the Japanese occupying forces frequently used violence or the threat of violence, including sexual violence, against both Indonesian and Dutch people. The circumstances of the occupation in which the Japanese ruled over the colony, combined with the fact they were fighting a larger war, provide context for this violence. As Elizabeth Heineman has observed, the context of conflict zones 'diminishes sensitivity to human suffering, intensifies men's sense of superiority, and gives social licence to rape' (Heineman 2011, pp. 2–3). Due to the

threat of the use of force by Japanese soldiers, men and women faced pressure to obey soldiers' commands (Sato 2010 199). It was in this context that women often faced severe violence from soldiers, from beatings to death, if they resisted sexual advances (Janssen 2010, pp. 58–59). Civilian Japanese men who worked in the colony as, for example, journalists and colonial administrators, also held power over locals because of the fact that they could call on the military to enforce their will and because they were part of an occupying force.

Within the family structure Dutch women were usually designated the roles of wife and mother and had control only over certain aspects of the household, including Indonesian domestic workers (Locher-Scholten 2000). Indonesian women generally had less power than Indonesian men, but social class, at least in the pre-war period, also determined a woman's access to education and opportunities (Locher-Scholten 2000). Having a husband or father around sometimes gave Dutch, Eurasian and Indonesian women more protection from abuse from soldiers, but not always. Internment or forced labour meant many husbands and fathers were absent from homes. Widows were also vulnerable. Young women and girls were the most vulnerable because the Japanese army considered them less likely to have venereal diseases and because they were seen to be more attractive. Furthermore, within the family, daughters had less power than sons or mothers. Patriarchal values and traditions of respect for elders and those of higher social status also meant that daughters and young women were more likely to obey fathers or local officials who were coerced to hand over young women (Hartono and Juliantoro 1995, p. 61).

In order to reflect the complex dynamics of power across this occupied society, I use the term 'gendered violence' to broaden our understanding of multiple forms of violence during the occupation beyond the more exclusive category of 'comfort women'. The term gendered violence allows us to consider multiple forms of violence. This includes the most common cases of sexual violence committed by men against women, as well as other kinds of violence such as extreme coercion applied by women on other women, or men on women across relations of unequal power.

Women's Experiences and Archival Sources

Despite the far greater number of Indonesian women caught up in the system, Dutch archival sources provide more detail about the experiences of Dutch women. Like any archive sources, these are not neutral accounts of the past. Because of prevailing ideas around morality at this time, information on the sexual violence or relationships is generally found under the subheadings 'unethical practices' and 'prostitution'. There is close attention to whether or not women were 'voluntary' or forced into sex work, and whether the women were 'decent' or so- called 'public' women. The bases for making these judgements were often second-hand reports or moral judgements.

Despite the problems of these kinds of categorisations of women, and the fact that the archives do not offer extensive testimonies in women's words, the range of examples of women's experiences provide a broader picture of gendered and sexual violence during the occupation. These include experiences of kidnapping and rape, women working in bars and cafes subjected to sexual violence, sexual abuse within camps, and women in coerced or seemingly more consensual live-in relationships. Consistent with the requirements for use of some files in both the National Archives of the Netherlands and NIOD, the names of persons will not be used.

Accounts of Kidnapping, Rape and Detention

The archives include frequent reporting of routine kidnapping and the short-term detention of women for sex. A farmer in Sorpong, Western New Guinea, testified that local women were often caught and kept for a night, much to the resentment of the local population.[3] The conditions of the occupation here, including the fact the soldiers were armed and could use threats of death against locals, made such practices possible. There were reports of women frequently being attacked by Japanese soldiers at night if they were out on the streets in Surabaya, East Java, highlighting a sense of women's vulnerability.[4] In Kaloran, Central Java, and Kertosono, East Java, there are similar accounts provided late in the occupation of Japanese men taking women they liked to their barracks and returning them the next day.[5] At Air Madidi, near Menado in Sulawesi (known at the time as Celebes), a village head's 14-

year-old daughter was taken away by the Japanese for five days and then sent back with five guilders, unable to walk and seriously ill.[6] Although the archives include records of these experiences, they are not frequently evoked in discussions of the overall system of the comfort women, which usually included longer periods of abuse.

There is, however, repeated second-hand reporting in the archives, often from ship hands, of Indonesian women being moved around the colony by the Japanese army or navy via ship to be taken to so-called 'comfort stations' on the outer islands, such as Halmahera (in Maluku), Ambon and Biak islands.[7] In these accounts, we learn that many women were tricked into passage with promises of other jobs. It is not possible to trace what happened to these individual women as they are almost never named, but there are also frequent mentions of places of detention and of women being subjected to sexual slavery on the outer islands. Latter day testimonies from a small number of Indonesian women who publicly disclosed their fates provide far more detail on their experiences (Hindra and Kimura 2007).

The archives reveal instances of women who allegedly had prior sexual relationships with Japanese men being targeted for forced recruitment. In Pontianak, for example, the Japanese naval police took women who were identified as 'having had relations with Japanese men' and placed them in a brothel that they could not leave.[8] In some cases, this seemed to be a measure to avoid other kinds of ongoing relationships between Dutch or Indonesian women and Japanese soldiers.

There is also evidence that women were targeted by the Japanese army as revenge for men resisting the Japanese. In Korido village in Papua, a man who spoke out in support of the Dutch was beheaded after being forced to dig his own grave.[9] His wife was subsequently forced to live with a pro-Japanese man from Papua before being moved to a hospital where she was forcibly kept with other widows. This woman was at first forced to live with, and presumably have sex with, a local man, suggesting some complicity of locals in sexual violence. This account opens up more of the complexity of the conditions of war and occupation and what Primo Levi (1988) terms 'grey zones', when alluding to the complexities of Jewish persons' behaviour during the Holocaust. The hospital where the

woman was then taken was known locally as ‘the Japanese Squaw Camp’ and functioned as a site of sexual slavery which soldiers frequently visited.[10] In this case, it seems that the widows of persons who rebelled against the Japanese were potential targets of sexual violence.

Accounts of Women Working in Bars and Hotels

There are also accounts of Dutch and Eurasian women working in Japanese army-run facilities such as bars or hotels. William Horton (2010) notes that in practice, this usually meant that there were expectations of sexual service. In the pre-war period, bars and hotels were sites for sex work, but I argue that during the occupation, the power relations between clients and women would have changed. Whereas in the pre-war period women could presumably negotiate a sexual contract with payment depending on the expectations of their employees, during the occupation Japanese soldiers were much more powerful in relation to the women because refusing them could lead to beatings or death. There are frequent accounts of women resisting sexual violence being beaten or killed. Working in bars and hotels during the occupation therefore carried a greater risk of sexual violence.

Women were recruited to bar and hotel work from amongst sex workers and through advertisements. The records highlight a range of different scenarios for the recruitment of Dutch or Eurasian women who were not yet detained in camps. In Bandung, as the Japanese grouped women together in preparation for internment, they approached some women with the choice of prostitution or internment (Poelgeest 1993, p. 14). We know that most women faced increasingly difficult economic circumstances as the occupation progressed, which led them to look for any kind of work. Some women subsequently took up bar or hotel work. In these contexts, it was not always Japanese men recruiting such women to work in these facilities. The archives again indicate others forms of local complicity. There is a recorded account of a Dutch woman in Salatiga who encouraged her daughters to take up bar work to improve their collective circumstances. She tried to convince another Dutch woman to give up her daughters.[11] This suggests that there were other forms of gendered violence or coercion within families under difficult conditions.

Later in the occupation, from 1943 to 1944, there was forced recruitment of women from internment camps for different kinds of sex work, including work in comfort stations and bars and hotels (Poelgeest 1993, p. 14). Attempts were made during this period to take women from camps in Bandung, Magelang and Semarang. In Padang between June 1942 and December 1943, there were repeated attempts by Japanese officers in charge of internment camp to persuade women aged 18 to 25 to work in the canteens and tea houses as bar maids.[12] Strict conditions for recruitment were negotiated with a Dutch friar and women in the camp, including alleged respect for 'free will' and consent from parents where the girls were minors. The conditions included the proviso that if a woman volunteered then her parents, brothers and sisters would be freed from internment. In October 1942, two women consented and were taken to Fort de Kock to work in the club, De Eendracht.[13] It is unclear if their families were released, but the women's cooperation raises issues about the nature of consent and potential family coercion behind this. This incident again sheds new light on different forms of gendered violence, which included pressure on young women to help save their families.

Discerning the extent to which women genuinely 'volunteered' to participate in sex work or knew what they were volunteering for is contentious. Living conditions in the camps grew progressively worse with less and less food, clothing and medicine and declining sanitation (Kemperman 2010, p. 167). Under such difficult conditions, the Japanese tried to lure women in internment into prostitution sometimes with promises of jobs such as barmaids (Tanaka 2002, pp. 68–69). Other women were taken from the camps against their will, with no knowledge of what they were going to be doing. The two most prominent Dutch survivor activists, Ellen van der Ploeg and Jan Ruff-O'Herne, were forcibly taken from Halmaheira and Ambarawa camps respectively (Goos 1995; O'Herne 1997). One of the significant factors is that most women were not free to leave these places of work and they could therefore be considered to be held under conditions of detention.

Accounts of Abuse within Camps of Women, Boys and Girls

Internment camps were also sites of potential sexual abuse inflicted by camp guards. There are reports of rapes of women inside the camps, such as one case of the rape of two women in

a camp in Endeh (Flores) in May and June 1942.[14] Dutch archives also record cases of sexual violence by camps guards against boys and girls. Boys over the age of 10 were often separated from their mothers and moved to men's camps where their fathers may not necessarily have been held, thereby exposing them to greater risk of abuse due to the lack of parental protection (Redde and Onderdenwijngaard 1984). One record details a case in Adek Camp in Batavia of young boys being forced to perform dances and kiss each other for a Japanese guard.[15] Another record indicates that in Bangkong Camp in Semarang boys were maltreated by two Japanese officials including being forced by one into what are described as 'lewd actions in the bathroom'.[16] In an internment camp in West Sumatra, NEFIS reports record mention of a Japanese Heiho commander who 'enticed in a very wrong way young boys towards him' in addition to efforts to groom young girls in the camp.[17]

Four cases of sexual violence against boys inside and outside internment camps in the Netherlands East Indies were reported by survivors under conditions of anonymity in the 1990s as part of the compensation scheme run by the Dutch Project Implementation Committee (PICN), supported by the Japanese based Asian Women's Fund (Hamer de Froideville 2013, pp. 110–111). Women and girls remain by far the most targeted groups for sexual violence during wars and occupations, yet sexual violence against men and boys in wartime contexts has been documented in many historical and contemporary conflicts. Here, there is an even greater degree of under reporting due to shame surrounding the experience and negative attitudes towards sexual contact between men (Touquet and Gorris 2016, p. 37). Despite the prevalent image of women held in 'comfort stations', sexual abuse was therefore much more widespread and included shorter term kidnapping of women, abuse in places of work and in internment camps. It also included reported cases of abuse of Indonesian, Eurasian and Dutch girls and women, and Dutch boys.

Accounts of Women in "Live-In" Relationships

The practice of soldiers during occupations forcibly taking local women to live with them and provide both free manual labour and sexual service to their captors is common across multiple conflicts in modern history (Loney 2018; Pohlman 2015; Protschky this volume). This kind of domestic servitude and forced marriage is included by the 1998 UN Special

Rapporteur as another form of sexual slavery (UN 1998). There is occasional mention in the Dutch archives of Indonesian women forced to live with Japanese men. This was referred to by the Japanese as '*siang baboe, malam nyonya'* (day-time maids, night-time wives).[18] There is greater attention, however, to Dutch or Eurasian women in such relationships. A handful of free non-interned women testified that they were forced into live-in relationships with Japanese men. A woman with a Dutch surname, for example, records that in 1942 the military police began to detain young girls from villages near Bondowoso and Banyuwangi in East Java and place them in brothels. Some of these women were also forced to become wives.[19] A Dutch woman working as a typist for the Japanese air force testified that from November 1944 she was forced to 'take up with' a Japanese police officer and had a baby as a result.[20] An Eurasian woman in Makassar, Sulawesi was also forced to live with the Japanese company man after her father was severely beaten when she first refused to do so.[21] She testified that she was repeatedly raped by this man and treated poorly. In Malang, another Eurasian woman of eighteen years of age accused of resistance was 'severely maltreated' for refusing to marry a Japanese officer.[22] These last two accounts highlight the extreme coercion which could precede forced 'marriages'.

Some accounts in the archives suggest that occasionally women 'chose' to live in relationships or provide sexual services from their homes to avoid either detention in internment camps, to escape other forms of sexual abuse by many men such as that which occurred in so called comfort stations or hotels or bars, or to improve their material conditions. Here we need to reflect on the relative meaning of choice. Amongst women who became live-in 'wives' of Japanese soldiers were mothers, whose Dutch husbands had already been detained. Japanese officials sometimes offered Dutch women the chance to live with a Japanese man to escape internment.[23] Other women were given the choice of working in a hotel (with the expectation of sex work) or living with one Japanese man.[24] Some women moved out of club or bar work into such relationships again presumably because of better conditions including the fact they would only have to have sexual relations with one Japanese man.[25] One Dutch woman, for example, worked at the Sakura Bar and then Hotel Bristol in Surabaya to provide for her family. She accepted the offer from a Japanese economist to live with him and quit her work if he provided for her and her children.[26] In this case, a Japanese civilian had more power than a Dutch woman due to his access to better resources.

The NEFIS intelligence archives document, often with a strong tone of moral condemnation, either first or second-hand accounts of Dutch or Eurasian women who had sex with Japanese men and especially women who allowed officers to visit their residences.[27] The first-hand accounts take the form of confessions by women who did this. Second-hand accounts are taken from persons informing on other women, with possible consequences for these women in terms of post war migration choices. Women deemed to have collaborated with the Japanese, for example, may have had their assets seized and been arrested (Buchheim 2014, p. 134).

In archival material, these women are described by a range of extremely derogatory terms, such as 'Nippon whore', women of 'bad reputation', 'loose morals' and 'perverted'.[28] Here the central critique is that women have 'given' their sexuality to the enemy. This language is consistent with that used to describe women in other wartime contexts and indeed Dutch women in the metropole of the Netherlands who had relationships with German soldiers during the German occupation of the Netherlands. In her research into this topic, Monika Dierderichs (2005, p. 151) notes that these women were frequently described by the term *moffenhoeren,* a derogatory term which connects 'dislike of the enemy' (*mof* is a derogatory term for Germans) with prostitution (*hoer* means 'whore').

Despite the general tone of condemnation in records concerning the occupation of the Netherlands East Indies, some testimonies reveal that women occasionally chose to enter such relationships because of the possibility of better provisions for themselves and/or their children.[29] Again here these decisions were shaped by the increasingly trying conditions of the occupation, including diminishing availability of food and basic supplies as the war progressed. It is difficult to discern the extent of choice women really had. Persons reporting on other persons may have exaggerated the degree of freedom women exercised. Given prevalent moral codes some women would also have reasons to emphasise coercion, yet the general conditions of the occupation by themselves also created a context where women had fewer choices. Writing about women in the Holocaust, Kristy Chatwood (2010, p. 7) attempts to capture several dimensions of this kind of 'sex for survival', arguing it should still be considered sexual violence because 'women would not have had to participate if they were

not in situations that made them vulnerable to predation'. Chatwood therefore suggests we need to view the women simultaneously as victims and resisters.

In her work on sexuality in wartime, Annette Timm (2017) argues that war produces a greater spectrum of sexual relationships. Taking this into account, what is missing in the archives are women's accounts of romantic relationships between Dutch women and Japanese men. Occasionally the term 'lover' is used by others to describe Japanese men that women had attachments to and there are some mentions of children resulting from relationships, but the framing within the archival records emphasizes the treasonous positions of women in such relationships. The main concern for Dutch intelligence gathering purposes in the colony was that if there was a relationship, this could also potentially lead to espionage. The focus of these records was therefore to identify Dutch traitors.[30] The positioning of women who had sexual relations with the Japanese as traitors replicates patterns across other wartime contexts. The logic went that they had betrayed their country because they had allegedly 'given' their bodies to the enemy. Although there are still barriers to full disclosures of love-based relationships during the occupation, in recent years oral history accounts have revealed evidence of such cases. Drawing on interviews from a major Dutch oral history project on which she worked, historian Eveline Buchheim (2008) has uncovered testimonies of more complex sexual relationships between Dutch women and Japanese men and examples of Dutch women describing love-based relationships with Japanese soldiers.[31]

Thus far, I have focused on the experiences of Dutch and Eurasian women because these women's experiences are emphasised in the archives. I have reflected on how the context of wartime and immediate post war reporting influenced these records and the way in which the women's stories were framed. I have outlined diverse forms of gendered violence during the occupation. I will now turn the clock forward to examine how Indonesian women narrated experiences of the occupation and extend the discussion here to the problems of labelling women's experiences.

Accounts of Women's Experiences in Indonesian Newspaper Reporting from the 1990s

In the early 1990s, as the global 'comfort women' movement was escalating, journalists from one of the leading journals in Indonesia, *Tempo*, reported both on the evolving movement including the case of the famous Korean survivor, Kim Hak Sun, and on Indonesian experiences (25 January and 25 July, 1992). Despite the efforts of Indonesian journalists to seek out the stories of 'comfort women', some women recalled more complicated stories of relationships with Japanese soldiers beyond places of detention. There are several troubling aspects of this early reporting. In effect Indonesian journalists went out and tracked down these women to expose their stories to the Indonesian public (*Tempo*, 8 August, 1992). Many women feared being identified in these interviews and did not want to provide their names. This was most likely due to the ongoing stigma attached to their experiences. Survivors of the system were frequently scorned in their local communities for being 'Japanese castaways' (Hindra and Kimura 2007). There were accounts here of sexual abuse by soldiers, but there were also more complicated stories. The fact that these accounts were generally longer than the accounts taken during and just after the war in Dutch records allows us to gain greater insights into the complexity of women's experiences.

One article entitled 'Screams from the Bamboo Hut' features the story of a woman from Bangka Island, known during the war by the Japanese name Fumiko, who did not want to give her real name (*Tempo*, 8 August, 1992, pp. 52–53). She was kept in a house with 13 women and worked as a waitress for the Japanese army. During that time, soldiers pressed her to provide sexual favours and provided gifts in return. She came to work there after her neighbours reported she was not married, but widowed. The Japanese promised she would be married and sent to Tokyo, and in return they would look after her parents. She recalled her family had difficulties getting enough food and they were at that stage wearing clothes made from itchy hessian sacks. The journalist comments that in this situation, neither she nor her family had much choice. This story reveals certain assumptions about young widows at the time of the occupation, including the enduring view that they were sexually available because they were single, but had been sexually active (Parker 2016, pp. 7–8). It also reveals assumptions about daughters and the expectation that they would sacrifice themselves. The article ends by noting that one day, a soldier took the woman home to live with him until the end of the war. The soldier is described by the journalist as *kekasihnya* (the woman's loved

one). The journalist comments that this story is possibly ‘not that convincing’, on the presumed basis that readers expect a certain kind of story of a ‘comfort woman’ (*Tempo*, 8 August, 1992, p. 53). The article implies that because she ended up as a soldier’s temporary wife, her experience is somehow less exemplary.

In another report entitled ‘They Had No Choice’, a woman from Solo shared her story (*Tempo*, 8 August, 1992, pp. 62–63). This woman did not want to give her name because she was ashamed her neighbours might find out.[32] When the Japanese came in 1942, she was 16 and living with her father and five siblings. Her mother had died when she was small. Her father, who was fighting with the Dutch, was killed so the family had to fend for themselves. She was offered work in a Japanese restaurant and it was there she met a soldier who was 25 years old. As the story unfolds, the journalist lapses into voyeuristic and detailed descriptions of the attractiveness of both the woman and the soldier. The journalist describes the soldier’s sexual overtures to the woman, providing a detailed sexualised account of the first time the woman was assaulted.

The woman recalled that she went on dates with the soldier and lived with him, eventually becoming pregnant. She described the relationship also as pleasurable, stating ‘he needed entertainment. I entertained him. He enjoyed it, I enjoyed it’ (*Tempo,* August 8, 1992, p. 6). How are we to understand this description of a relationship which seemingly began as one based on sexual assault? Thinking about the relationships between some so-called ‘comfort women’ and soldiers, Ahn (2018, p. 10) has referred to a process of traumatic bonding, which she defines as ‘ties of interdependence in the face of emotional crisis and trauma.’ She uses this term to allude to the process of seeking affection during war wherever it can be found, including within abusive relationships. This could be one explanation for the way the woman frames her experiences. Yet her story is more complicated than this.

At the end of the interview, the woman disclosed that she had a child with the soldier, but he was called to fight before the baby was born. She declared: ‘I was not a prostitute. Only [he] had relations with me. We loved each other’ (*Tempo*, 8 August, 1992, p. 62). What is noticeable here is the woman’s framing of the relationship as a love-based relationship and

her clear rejection of the label ‘prostitute’. In 1990s Indonesia, the term ‘prostitute’ had strong moral condemnation attached to it, thus making her rejection of this label understandable. Her emphasis on a love-based relationship may also be underpinned by the fact that a child resulted from the relationship. For children being the result of a love-based relationships rather than from sexual abuse is much more acceptable (see Buchheim 2008; Dragojlovic 2011). This narrative framing, however, noticeably parallels the framing used by many soldiers to describe their relationships with so-called comfort women (see McGregor 2016b) and exonerates soldiers from any wrongdoing.

There are other possible motives at work, however, for this framing. Writing about rape, love and war, Kjersti Ericsson (2010, pp. 79–80) observes that by emphasising a love-based relationship, women who have had relationships with enemy soldiers may be able to escape some of the stigma associated with their experiences. An emphasis on true love is a way to provide a more socially acceptable narrative of a wartime liaison. Ericsson’s explanation leads us to reflect on the social context in which the account is narrated, yet it does not really address the issue of how a scholar can negotiate such labelling. Here, Yonson Ahn’s work is again useful. Ahn insists that women’s experiences ‘cannot be understood within a rigid binary of victim and agent’, because women still attempted where possible to negotiate their positions through interactions with soldiers (2018, p. 11) Writing about the Holocaust, Anna Hajkova (2013, p. 503) similarly observed that women engaging in sex for survival did not preclude love-based relationships. These observations remind us of the diversity of women’s experiences, the possibility of the movement between different kinds of abusive relationships, the mixed emotions associated with these experiences, and that simplistically categorising women’s experiences reduces the complexity of their situations and experiences.

Conclusions

Sexual and gendered violence remains marginalised in mainstream histories of war, yet research on this topic has begun to open up new perspectives on gender relations during wars. Across both wartime sources and interviews long after the war, there are however challenges in representing the range of experiences of women and others who were subjected to sexual violence. These challenges result from the stigmas associated with sexual violence against

both women and men, and also the stigmas attached to women who had consensual relationships with enemy soldiers. In this chapter, I have presented some of the difficulties historians face in assessing how women viewed experiences of forced prostitution, rape, forced marriage, as well as relationships based on at least some degree of agency.

Through an analysis of archival records and journalistic accounts, I have pointed to other forms of gendered violence during the occupation, such as violence or coercion applied to women and sexual violence against boys. In this sense, the concept of gendered violence is useful if we are alert to, and also interrogate, multiple forms of violence, including not just man-on-woman, but also woman-on-woman and man-on-man violence or gendered forms of coercion within families. The term helps to broaden our understanding of multiple forms of violence during the occupation. It is potentially also more useful than a narrow focus on the category so-called 'comfort women', which has many specific connotations associated with ongoing detention for repeated sexual abuse by many men. In order to more fully reflect the diversity of women's experiences during wars and occupation then, we need to think critically about the categories of analysis that we as scholars use and apply to women's experiences and to try capture more of the complexity of their lived experiences.

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[2] There are, however, several museums devoted exclusively to remembering the comfort women such as The Women's Active Museum in Tokyo. See Watanabe (2015).

[3] National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague [hereafter: Nl-HaNA], Netherland Forces Intelligence Service [NEFIS] en Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst [CMI] in Nederlands-Indië [hereafter: NEFIS/CMI], 2.10.62, inventory number 44, 'Interrogation report of Two Natives from Waigeo Captured R. N.N. Submarine on 24 April 1944, 8 May 1944'.

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[9] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.nos. 2000 and 2001, interrogation reports dated 26 October 1944.

[10] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.nos. 2000 and 2001, ibid.

[11] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 2388, interrogation report dated 19 March 1946.

[12] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 1971, investigation summary dated 24 January 1946.

[13] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 1971, ibid.

[14] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 1950, interrogation report dated 7 December 1945.

[15] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 1951, investigation summary dated 12 March 1946.

[16] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 2389, interrogation report dated 12 March 1946.

[17] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62. inv.no. 1977, 'Translation of the official report on the women interned in Sumatra West Coast', Chapter 12.

[18] Nl-HaNA, NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 48, 'Interrogation Reports No 184 (Part III),' 18 October 1944.

[19] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 2443, interrogation report dated 8 August 1947; Nl-HaNA, Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service [hereafter NEFIS], 2.10.37.02, inv.no. 6, interrogation report Bandung dated 3 November 1945.

[20] Nl-HaNA NEFIS, 2.10.37.02, inv.no. 8, BAS/5554, declaration, Purworejo.

[21] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62 inv.no. 1966, interrogation report dated 11 May 1946.

[22] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 1952, interrogation report dated 17 March 1946.

[23] Nl-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no. 1961, declaration, Makassar, dated 19 March 1946.

[24] Nl-HaNA NEFIS, 2.10.37.02, inv.no. 1, interrogation reports Bandung, May-July 1947.

[25] Nl-HaNA NEFIS, 2.10.37.02, inv.no. 1, ibid and inv.no. 14, interrogation report Bandung, 22 May 1947.

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[28] Nl-HaNA NEFIS, 2.10.37.02, inv.no. 3, ibid; inv.no. 8, report Bandung 31 October 1947; inv.no. 13, report Magelang, 14 September 1946.

[29] Nl-HaNA NEFIS, 2.10.37.02, inv.no. 21, 'Rapport Kandy Nr. 2 dl 2', interrogation report 21 March 1946.

[30] On the search for traitors and collaborators more broadly see Cribb (2011).

[31] Buchheim (2008) estimates that between 800 and 8000 children were born from these cross-cultural relationships.
[32] For a more detailed discussion of shame around this issue, see McGregor 2016(a).