

# Gender Matters in Global Politics

A feminist introduction to international relations

*Edited by*  
**Laura J. Shepherd**



# GENDER MATTERS IN GLOBAL POLITICS

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*Gender Matters in Global Politics* is a comprehensive textbook for advanced undergraduates studying feminism and international relations, gender and global politics and similar courses. It provides students with an accessible but in-depth account of the most significant theories, methodologies, debates and issues.

This textbook is written by an international line-up of established and emerging scholars from a range of theoretical perspectives, providing students with provocative and cutting-edge insights into the study and practices of (how) gender matters in global politics.

Key features and benefits of the book:

- Introduces students to the wide variety of feminist and gender theory and explains the relevance to contemporary global politics.
- Explains the insights of feminist theory for a range of other disciplines including international relations, international political economy and security studies.
- Addresses a large number of key contemporary issues such as human rights, trafficking, rape as a tool of war, peacekeeping and state-building, terrorism and environmental politics.
- Features extensive pedagogy to facilitate learning – seminar exercises, text boxes, photographs, suggestions for further reading, web resources and a glossary of key terms.

In this innovative and groundbreaking textbook, gender is represented as a noun, a verb and a logic, allowing both students and lecturers to develop a sophisticated understanding of the crucial role that gender plays in the theories, policies and practices of global politics.

**Laura J. Shepherd** is a Lecturer in International Relations at the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS), University of Birmingham. She teaches and researches in the areas of gender politics, international relations and critical security studies.



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Laura J. Shepherd  
University of Birmingham, UK  
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## FOREWORD

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Cynthia Enloe

Recently, I was reading an American military officer's detailed report of the step-by-step 'ethnic cleansing' campaign undertaken by an Iraqi sectarian militia in a Baghdad neighborhood. The campaign succeeded in driving out many residents of this once-comfortable, formerly mixed urban neighborhood and filling the abandoned houses with people displaced from other Iraqi towns.

The reporting officer included in his meticulous account a list of the militiamen's entrepreneurial activities, commercial projects the militia set up in the neighborhood designed both to assert its local control and to pay its members and finance its operations elsewhere: selling weapons, charging rent, collecting protection money from local businesses. But there on the list, squeezed in between gun selling and the extortion of shopkeepers, was the militia's operation of a 'whore house'. This was the American male officer's chosen term. A brothel. The author of the report didn't seem to think that any more details needed to be asked, any more information needed to be given. Militiamen driving people from their homes, wielding intimidation to homogenize a neighborhood, selling guns, collecting rents and setting up a brothel – they appeared to be all of a piece in this analyst's mind.

Where were Laura Shepherd and all her feminist contributors when we needed them? As I read and reread the report and vented my frustration at the very limited curiosity of its author, I realized yet again how reliant we all are today on feminist analysts such as those whose questions and findings enliven this book. They ask deeper questions, they take less for granted; they explore multiple causal dynamics simultaneously (a practice sometimes called 'intersectionality'). In other words, with their eyes on the interplay of personal, local, national and international dynamics, with their carefully honed gender analytical skills, with their willingness to be reflexive (they think about their thinking) and their feminist attentiveness to the workings of power, feminist analysts make us more realistic.

As these authors would insist, if there is a new brothel operating in this 'ethnically cleansed' wartime neighborhood, there must be women inside the brothel. Brothel owners, in this instance, sectarian militiamen, cannot generate profits if they cannot supply women's bodies. Whose bodies? And whose minds? That is, if Laura Shepherd's energetic contributors formed a research team, they would want to find out which

women's bodies were being commercialized inside this local brothel; they would want to know what those women thought about being there, what experiences had brought them to this place; who, if they survived, would they never tell that they had been there; and the research team would want to know how both the masculinized members of the gun-toting militia and the brothel's paying male clients thought about their own bodies and how that translated into their treatment of the women inside this brothel. But that would not be the end of their feminist international politics inquiry. This 'dream team' of feminist IR researchers would want to discover what was going on in the head of the American officer when he deemed it reasonable to list a 'whore house' in a list of militia enterprises without any follow-up inquiries. What sort of masculinized and militarized thinking would produce this failure of curiosity?

Members of this team are equipped with the skills and curiosity enabling them to Think Big *and* to Think Small or, perhaps more accurately, to Think Small *in order to* Think Big. Thus while they would explore the experiences and interpretations of each of the women inside the brothel, they would also seek to discover how the creation and operation of this one brothel related to prostitution's role throughout the entire Iraqi wartime. They would look for patterns in their findings so that they could reveal how the control of women's sexuality and how the militarization of diverse (Iraqi, British, American) men's sexuality shed light on war waging itself. In other words, these feminist IR scholars would make us more realistic.

And then, rather than putting their smart report 'Women in Brothels in Wartime Iraq' on the shelf to gather dust and earn academic promotions, all of the members of the Feminist IR Dream Team would send copies out to scholars in a dozen countries for reactions, they would ask their diverse students to read it and offer their own questions and comments, they themselves would go back and look again at their field notes, reexamine their starting assumptions and get together to re-weigh their findings.

Feminist IR isn't a static thing. It is something you try to *do*. As the contributors to this lively book show, to engage in the hard and invigorating work of doing feminist IR means to think and re-think, to listen and re-listen, to explore and re-explore.

## GLOSSARY

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- Aboriginal** Beings or things that are native to a specific region or territory.
- Activism** Action in protest against or support for a political cause.
- Advocacy** Offering information and opinion in favour of a political cause. See also 'lobbying'.
- Aesthetics** The study of what is pleasing, often visually and aurally, through the senses and to the imagination (the nature of beauty, taste).
- Agency** The capacity to act.
- Anarchy** The absence of political authority. In International Relations, the international system is assumed to be anarchic, because there is no legitimate authority higher than the sovereign state.
- Anti-foundationalism** The belief that there is no basic or foundational belief (e.g. in God, rationality, senses) from which to create a system of values or meanings.
- Autonomy** The capacity to act independent of external constraints.
- Balance of power** The mechanism by which the international system is assumed to seek equilibrium, with (groups of) states forming and dissolving alliances in order to 'balance' the waxing and waning powers of other (groups of) states.
- Blog** Abbreviation of 'web-log', a kind of online diary or series of short statements.
- Bonded labour** Also known as 'debt bondage'. Involves the exchange of labour in return for a loan, where the value of the labour often exceeds the value of the loan, working conditions are often poor and the terms of the arrangement are often unspecified.
- Capitalism** An economic system in which one section of society owns the means of production and exploits the labour of the remainder to generate profit.
- Cartography** The study of maps.
- Caste** Class or subclass grouping of individuals, usually on the basis of ethnicity and hereditary privilege.
- Citizenship** The claim to rights and acceptance of responsibilities as a citizen of a particular nation-state.
- Civil society** Any actors or groups of actors that are assumed to be separate from the state.
- Civilian** An individual who is not involved in military or paramilitary activity. Also used informally to describe non-members of a particular organisation or institution.
- Collective security** A formal agreement between states that any attack on one member of the group will be perceived, and responded to, as an attack against all.
- Colonialism** The practice of extending authority over, controlling or coercing external territories.
- Communalism** Support for the claims, aims and objectives of one's own racial or ethnic group rather than the interests of society as a whole.

- Communism** An economic system in which property and the means of production are owned collectively and society is organised for the common advantage of all.
- Communitarianism** Belief system that emphasises the importance of the community in political life, in contrast to ‘cosmopolitanism’.
- Comparative advantage** The idea that every actor (region, state, bloc) can produce some type of goods or service at a lower cost than any other actor.
- Complex interdependence** The neoliberal idea that states working through various institutions and organisations will become embedded in a variety of relationships that will in turn increase the extent to which the states are connected.
- Constructivism** The theoretical position that sees reality as intersubjectively constituted rather than existing objectively.
- Cosmopolitanism** Belief system that envisions humanity as a single community, with shared interests, in contrast to communitarianism.
- Cultural relativism** The idea that values and beliefs are dependent on the social context rather than universally determined.
- Cyberspace** The totality of computer-mediated virtual existence.
- Cyborg** A humanoid hybrid of organic (biological) and inorganic (technological) materials.
- Decolonisation** The process by which former colonies achieve self-determination (self-governance).
- Deconstruction** Proceeding from the assumption that reality is socially constructed, a range of techniques that allow an analyst to unpack or ‘deconstruct’ the way meaning – and therefore reality – is constructed.
- Demography** The study of population and their characteristics.
- Deregulation** Reducing or removing regulations governing practice or behaviour, usually used to describe policies that lessen governmental control of industries and corporations.
- Digital divide** The increasing gap between those that have access to information and computer technologies and those that do not.
- Dimorphism** The guiding assumption that beings or things can be divided into two forms or shapes.
- Discipline** A subject-specific area of study in academia, e.g. International Relations. Can also be used as a verb in a Foucauldian analysis, to describe the ways in which boundaries between beings and things are created and maintained.
- Discourse** A system of linguistic and non-linguistic signifiers that produce meaning.
- Discursive** Pertaining to discourse.
- Emancipation** Freedom from tyranny or oppression, the production of autonomy.
- Empire** A political unit governed by a single political authority spread over several territories.
- Empiricism** The belief that reality can be objectively identified through experiential data.
- Empowerment** Increased capacity for action.
- Environmental sustainability** The ability of a process or practice to continue without having a negative long-term effect on the environment.
- Epistemic** Relating to epistemology. An ‘epistemic community’ is a group of people who accept or espouse one particular epistemology; it is also more generally used to describe a group of people who share a particular theory or set of ideas.
- Epistemology** Theory of knowledge, beliefs about how we know what we know.
- Essentialism** The belief that beings or things have innate characteristics that are largely unchanging.
- Ethnic cleansing** The mass killing of a particular ethnic group, and/or the forced movement of people out of a territory or homeland.

- Ethnicity** The quality of belonging to an ethnic group, defined more precisely than race.
- Ethnography** The study of people and society.
- Export processing zone (EPZ)** An area of a state where trade regulations (and sometimes certain other standards and safeguards) are reduced or removed to encourage overseas investment.
- Export-oriented industrialisation (EOI)** An economic development policy that seeks to exploit a state's comparative advantage by increasing exports in that area and thus speed up industrialisation.
- Femininity** Characteristics and modes of behaviour associated with being female.
- Feminisation** Either the attribution of feminine characteristics to that which is not usually considered feminine in an effort to delegitimise it (e.g. the feminisation of an enemy), or the disproportionate effect on women of a particular political process (e.g. the feminisation of poverty).
- Flexibilisation** The process of making trade and industry less regulated and more dynamic.
- Foundationalism** The belief that there are basic or foundational beliefs (e.g. in God, rationality, senses) from which to create a system of values or meanings.
- Fundamentalism** Belief in and adherence to a strict set of principles, often derived from a single authoritative text that is religious in nature.
- Gender gap** The idea that men and women vote differently on different issues.
- Gender mainstreaming** Ensuring that all institutional policies and practices are formulated with attention paid to the impact they will have on individuals as a result of their gender.
- Geopolitical** A combination of geographical and political factors.
- Global governance** The institutions and organisations that manage or regulate international behaviour (despite there being no legitimate political authority higher than the sovereign state according to many theories of IR).
- Global politics** The totality of political interactions, relationships and transactions (broadly conceived) occurring in the world.
- Globalisation** A short-hand way of explaining the increasing interconnectedness of states and other actors in areas of trade, culture and governance.
- Governance** The process of exercising political authority.
- Great Power** A state that has the capacity to exert influence in global politics.
- Hegemon** A state that exerts influence in global politics through coercion, persuasion or compulsion.
- Hermeneutics** A word that can relate to either a methodology for interpreting meaning in texts, or more generally, the philosophy of interpretation.
- Heterogenous** Comprised of many different elements.
- Heteronormative** Practices that privilege heterosexual behaviours or beings.
- Hijab* Arabic word meaning 'modest dress for women'.
- Homogenous** Comprised of many identical elements.
- Homophobia** The hatred or fear of homosexual behaviours or beings.
- Human rights** The rights that human beings are assumed to hold by virtue of their humanity.
- Human security** The idea that security should be sought on behalf of human beings rather than on behalf of states.
- Humanitarian intervention** Military, economic or political interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state aimed at alleviating human insecurities or suffering. Many scholars use a narrower definition confining HI to the use of military force for human protection purposes.
- Hypermasculinity** The exaggeration of characteristics or modes of behaviours that are associated with being male.

- Iconography** The study of representations (beings or things) that carry symbolic meaning, or the representations themselves.
- Ideology** A belief system or set of ideas through which proponents make sense of the world. According to Marxist theory, a belief system aimed at perpetuating the status quo to benefit the few at the expense of the many.
- Imperialism** Attitudes or policies in international relations that seek to extend one state's economic or political control or influence over other states.
- Intelligibility** The ability to be known and understood.
- Interdisciplinary** An approach that bridges disciplinary divides or draws on different subject-specific knowledges.
- Internally displaced person(s)/IDP(s)** Individual or community that has been forcibly or voluntarily relocated (usually as a result of conflict) but remains within the boundaries of their home state.
- International organisation** An institution made up of state members, e.g. United Nations, World Bank, World Trade Organisation.
- International Relations** The academic discipline devoted to studying global politics. Written in lower case ('international relations'), the policies and practices of global political actors.
- International system** The location of international relations, assumed to be comprised of but greater than the sum total of state actions.
- International/domestic divide** The assumption in International Relations that politics at the international and domestic level are analytically and practically separate.
- Interpretivism** Theory that is based on an analyst's interpretation of a given phenomenon, event or dataset, in contrast to 'empiricism'.
- Intersectionality** The notion that different markers of identity (e.g. race, class, gender, sexuality) interconnect to produce different forms of exclusion and inequality.
- Intersex** The medical term for individuals born without clear physical characteristics distinguishing them as male or female.
- Intersubjectivity** Collective or social meaning or opinion; where meaning and opinion is formed in negotiation or coincidence between autonomous subjects.
- Intertextuality** The idea that all texts necessarily refer to and draw meaning from other texts.
- Jihad* Arabic word meaning holy war or spiritual struggle.
- Levels of analysis** Also known as 'images of analysis'. The neorealist division of international relations into three discrete areas of study: the individual (state leaders), the state and the international system.
- Liberalism** A political theory that emphasises human capacity for positive behaviour and the autonomy of the individual human subject. Also, an economic theory that prioritises trade freed from state preferences (free trade) and market activity freed from government regulation.
- Lobbying** Action in support of or protest against a particular political idea or policy.
- Maquiladora* A manufacturing operation or factory at the US-Mexican border built to take advantage of the free trade agreements between the two states.
- Marginalise** To metaphorically push to one side or ignore.
- Marketisation** The application of market rules and economic logics to a previously non-market enterprise such as a national industry.
- Masculinisation** Either the attribution of masculine characteristics to that which is not usually considered masculine in an effort to legitimise it (e.g. the masculinisation of a leader), or the disproportionate representation of men in a particular political process (e.g. the masculinisation of governance).
- Masculinity** Characteristics and modes of behaviour associated with being male.

- Materiality** Substance or physical form.
- Media** Modes or channels of communication, e.g. television, radio, newspapers, advertising, etc.
- Mediate** Either to negotiate between two or more parties to reach a peaceful resolution to a conflict or dispute, or to act as a link or conduit between two or more different symbols or concepts.
- Metaphor** A figure of speech in which a term or phrase is linked to something to which it is not usually or otherwise linked in order to suggest a resemblance, e.g. 'Her office was a pigsty' (her office is not literally a pigsty, but the metaphor suggests that it shares the characteristics of a pigsty, i.e. her office is dirty, smelly and/or untidy). NB If the figure of speech makes a comparison using 'like' or 'as', it is a simile, not a metaphor, e.g. 'Her office was like a pigsty'.
- Methodology** The study of methods, usually research methods, and/or a description of the actual methods use to conduct research.
- Militarisation** The process by which beings or things become associated with the military or take on military characteristics.
- Militarism** The belief that the most appropriate solution to a problem or response to an event is the military one.
- Militia** An armed force not under the control of the official state military.
- Misogyny** The hatred of women.
- Modernity** Era associated with the privileging of rationality, progress and scientific method, and the belief in the legitimate authority of those.
- Multinational corporation (MNC)** Industry or business that conducts activities and has assets in more than one state.
- Multiplicity** The recognition of many beings or things.
- Narrative** The communication (recounting, telling) of a sequence of events, or things that have happened so as to establish a meaningful connection between them (story, sequence).
- Nation** A grouping of people who are assumed to share language, custom, territory and history.
- Nationalism** A belief system that prioritises the interests of the nation.
- Neoliberalism** A political and economic theory that adds to classical Liberalism a central concern for economic growth.
- Neologism** New word.
- Neorealism** A theory of International Relations that attempts to rework classical Realism and produce a rigorous and testable account of why states behave as they do in the international system. Also known as structural Realism, not to be confused with 'structuralism'.
- Non-governmental organisation** An institution or group that is not part of any government and is therefore assumed to have political autonomy.
- Nonstate actors** Any actors in International Relations other than sovereign states.
- Normative** Pertaining to what should be (rather than what is).
- Objectivity** Where meaning and existence are assumed to exist independently from individual bias or belief.
- Ontology** The study of the nature of being and what exists to be known.
- Paradigm** Set of guiding beliefs and assumptions about a given matter.
- Patriarchy** Literally means 'rule of the father', now generally extended to mean the power and authority of masculinity.
- Performativity** The theoretical idea that discourse constitutes the objects and subjects of which it speaks.
- Positivism** A set of beliefs about knowledge that values empiricism (the belief that reality can be objectively identified through experiential data), progressivism (the belief that social and political science should further progress the aims and knowledge of humanity), secularism (the belief that



- science and politics should be separate from religious beliefs) and unity of scientific method (where both social and natural sciences should use the same methodology).
- Postcolonialism** A theoretical approach that is rooted in the difficult experiences of constructing cultural and individual identity during and after colonial rule.
- Postpositivism** A theory of knowledge that critiques the foundational assumptions of positivism, without disregarding the need for coherent and valid theories of meaning and reality.
- Poststructuralism** A theory that builds on a critique of structuralist linguistics, materialism and positivist approaches; in opposition to singularity and fixity of meaning, poststructuralism emphasises multiplicity and fluidity.
- Praxis** Action, practice or mode of behaviour (plural 'praxes').
- Privatisation** Abdicating state authority over enterprises or industries that were previously managed by the state.
- Public/private divide** The assumption that social life can be separated into two discrete realms, characterised by formal political phenomena and informal social phenomena.
- Radical** Concerned with the root cause of a phenomenon, also used to mean extreme or drastic.
- Rationalism** The belief that reason is the foundation of knowledge (rather than experience or intuition).
- Rationality** That which is reasonable, in contrast to that which is emotional or uncontrolled.
- Realism** In International Relations, a theory that explains state behaviour by assuming that the international system is anarchic and that states will pursue self-interested policies aimed to ensure their own survival.
- Reflectivism** The belief that rationalism is a flawed and partial way to understand meaning and reality and that instead attention should be paid to the interpretative, experiential and intuitive.
- Reification** The process of misunderstanding an abstraction as a physical being or thing, e.g. writing about the state as an actor is a reification.
- Relations of constitution (constitutive relations)** The signifiers and chains of connotation that produce meaning and make a being or thing what it is.
- Representation** Three meanings: 1. The act of standing in for an individual or collective to advance their interests (e.g. the UK is represented at the United Nations); 2. The act of symbolising or signifying a being or thing (e.g. the Union Jack is a representation of the UK); 3. The symbol or signifier itself (e.g. the Union Jack).
- Semiotics** The study of signs and symbols.
- Signifier** Something that carries or conveys meaning, a symbol.
- Solidarity** Unity and sympathy, usually for a particular political cause.
- Sovereignty** Independence from external interference, political autonomy.
- Spatiality** Of or relating to space.
- Stakeholder** An individual or collective who has an interest in or will be affected by a particular policy or practice.
- Standpoint** Perspective. Also used to describe a branch of feminism that emphasises the legitimacy and authority of experience and argues that women have unique access to a particular kind of knowledge and experience by virtue of their femininity.
- State** A notionally autonomous political entity that has a population and a territory.
- State-centric** An approach to International Relations that assumes the analytical primacy of the state.

- Structural adjustment policies (SAPs)** A much-critiqued set of standards and guidelines implemented by the World Bank from the 1970s to the 1990s aimed at alleviating poverty in lesser-developed countries.
- Structural violence** Harm or suffering caused by systemic problems and inequalities in society.
- Structuralism** A theory of International Relations that draws on Marxist and neo-Marxist works and argues that the (capitalist) structure of the international system is unequal and unjust.
- Subjectivity** Where meaning and existence are assumed to be dependent on individual bias or belief.
- Supranational** Above the state.
- Sustainable development** Modernisation or industrialisation that occurs with minimal long-term damage done to the natural environment.
- Technocratic** A belief in the primacy of technical or technological solutions.
- Text** Any collection of signifiers and representations, most frequently used to describe a written document but also includes films, adverts, flags, buildings, cartoons, songs, etc.
- The personal is political** Feminist slogan aimed at drawing attention to the interrelationship of private and public spheres.
- Transnational corporation (TNC)** See 'multinational corporation'.
- Universalism** The belief that some codes or rules should apply to all people, irrespective of their cultural context.



# SECTION ONE THEORY/PRACTICE

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# Sex or Gender? Bodies in World Politics and Why Gender Matters

Laura J. Shepherd

The title of this textbook can be read in two ways. It is ambiguous, and deliberately so, as it seeks to draw attention not only to the subject matter of the book – ‘gender matters’ in global politics – but also to an epistemological belief espoused by its contributors: that gender *matters* in global politics.<sup>1</sup> As Jindy Pettman argues, ‘it should be possible to write the body into a discipline that tracks power relations and practices which impact so directly and often so devastatingly on actual bodies’ (1997: 105). If this is the case, and in this book various contributors argue that it is, then it behoves us to delve deep into the meaning of the body and explore the implications of studying gender in a global political context. This chapter, then, explores why and how gender matters, and interrogates various conceptions of the body in global politics through the discussion of some key gendered narratives of international relations (and International Relations as an academic discipline). In the second section, I present two accounts of bodies in global politics: bodies in social movements and bodies as scientists. I conclude with a summary of Judith Butler’s work on the performativity of gender and the implications of such theory for the study and practices of global politics.

## EVERYONE HAS A THEORY OF GENDER

To understand what I mean by the claim that ‘everyone has a theory of gender’ it is necessary to unpack both what I mean by theory and what I mean by gender.

Theory is often represented, especially by those who see it as a tool, as ‘objective’ and ‘value-free’. A ‘theory’ is supposed to explain and predict things about the world (see Smith and Baylis 2005: 1–12) and it is supposed to be ‘scientific’. This has important implications for the study and practices of global politics, because International Relations as an academic discipline is usually described as a ‘social science’. However, theory needn’t be seen as a tool or device. Rather than retaining a commitment to theory as a something that can be applied to the world as it exists independent of our interpretation of it, we can see theory as practice and ‘theorising [as] a way of life, a form of life, something we all do, every day, all the time’ (Zalewski 1996: 346).

This is relevant to international relations scholars because it means that first, we are *all* theorising (not just the ‘theorists’) and second, that the theorising that counts or that matters, in terms of affecting and/or creating international political events, is not confined either to policy makers or to academics.

(Zalewski 1996: 346, emphasis in original)

‘Theorising’, in this context, means that the way we think about the world is constitutive of that world. How we think we might be able to ‘solve’ certain problems of global politics, whether we think certain issues are problems in the first place and who gets to make these decisions: all of these affect and effect how we perceive the world we live in and therefore our responses to it. These responses in turn affect and effect our social/political reality; this is what is meant by ‘constitutive’. On this view, theory is a *verb* rather than a tool to be applied, and is something that informs our everyday lives. If we think of gender as something we are ‘theorising’ daily, we can perhaps begin to see why gender matters. Ideas about appropriate and inappropriate gendered behaviours are wide-ranging, influential and sometimes unconscious, but because they affect and effect how we behave in the world, they are of interest to the scholar of global politics.

An example might help clarify the issue. Look at the image in Figure 1.1. Can you make sense of those signs? If so, then you have a theory of gender. You have a theory, or an understanding, of what the signs signify and of their social importance, because in order to make sense of the signs you have to accept that there are two types of people and that each type of person is represented by one or the other figure in the sign. (Furthermore, the difference between the two types of people is predicated on their bodies, a point to which I return below.) If you recognise yourself as part of the group signified by the picture on the right, you would certainly not (apart from in exceptional circumstances) go through the door on the left, and vice versa. As Butler says, ‘[d]iscrete genders are part of what “humanizes” individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right’ (1999: 178). We know what the signs mean, and even though they bear no necessary relevance to the way we look, today or ever, they order the way we act in the world.<sup>2</sup>

If we accept that gender is the social meaning attached to the shape of our bodies, we can begin to understand why it is that feminist IR scholars insist that gender is not something we add to the study of world politics, but rather is integral to



Figure 1.1 Can you make sense of these signs? Source: Copyright to LJS.

its functioning. That is, you cannot ignore (or abstract) the ways that gender informs and affects the practices of world politics. Gender is, on this view, not only a noun (i.e., an identity) and a verb (i.e., a way to look at the world, as in the phrase ‘gendering global politics’) but also a logic, which is produced by and productive of the ways in which we understand and perform global politics. This chapter wants to explore further the issue of gender and the body, and to suggest that the relationship between sex and gender is not as straightforward as it is commonly represented.

[T]he genital area accounts for only 1 percent of the surface area of the body. But – 1 percent or not – genitals carry an enormous amount of cultural weight in the meanings that are attached to them, and I would argue that they constitute nearly 100 percent of what we, as both cultural members and as producers of cultural knowledge, come to understand and assume about the body’s sex and gender.

(Valentine and Wilchins 1997: 215)

We in the Anglophone world conventionally share an ontological assumption of the duality of gender: humans (and most other living things, for that matter) come in either ‘M’ or ‘F’. This is best described as a commitment, most often unconscious, to *dimorphism*: the assumption that human beings can be easily and unproblematically divided into two (*di*) distinct categories based on their physical forms (*morphism*). This essential separation informs the ways in which we think about the



body and also the ways in which we think about a host of social and political events and relationships that we conceive of as being ‘to do’ with the body – for example, marriage ceremonies, parenting, sports, even eating. Because the separation occurs at a subconscious level, we are not even aware most of the time that our preconceptions about bodies are influencing how and what we eat, what sports we think we should or shouldn’t learn at school and who other people should and shouldn’t sleep with. The crucial insight of this book is that these assumptions about bodies are intrinsically, inherently related to the study and practices of global politics, because *global politics is studied and practised by gendered bodies*.

It is very comforting to think of the body as something that we cannot change,<sup>3</sup> something that does not affect our social or political lives, or even not to think of it at all. Conventional contemporary theories of International Relations do not speak much of bodies because the individual does not matter – only collectives of individuals known as ‘nations’ feature, and only then insofar as they are assumed congruent with the state (hence ‘nation-state’). Admittedly, in classical realist theory, representations of state behaviours draw heavily on ideas relating to ‘human nature’ (Morgenthau 1952: 963). Classical realism claims as its antecedents theorists of ‘human nature’ such as Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes, and appeals to logics of ‘human nature’ to explain self-interest and rationality as ‘evidenced’ by the unitary state. However, the ‘human nature’ under discussion is, on closer inspection, the nature of ‘man’ (see Morgenthau 1973: 15–16). ‘Men’ feature, then, but only inasmuch as they are abstract universalised individuals; men as bodies do not enter into discussion. This is largely due to the conventional understanding of the body as *natural* rather than social or political. However, as Chris Weedon explains, ‘[t]he appeal to the “natural” is one of the most powerful aspects of *common-sense* thinking, but it is a way of understanding social relations which denies history and the possibility of change for the future’ (1997: 3, emphasis in original).

Formulating a politics of the body, or a perspective on global politics that takes the body seriously, requires that we think carefully about how the body manifests in our understandings of international relations. ‘Formerly, the body was dominantly conceptualized as a fixed, unitary, primarily physiological reality. Today, more and more scholars have come to regard the body as a historical, plural, culturally mediated form’ (Bordo 2003: 288). This claim is a useful starting point for thinking about the body in global politics: how and in what ways is the body mediated? How have our understandings of ‘appropriate’ bodies changed over time? How do variously located practices of global politics mediate and situate bodies differently? As Michel Foucault argues, ‘the body is . . . directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs’ (1977: 26). If this is the case, then we need to understand the ceremonies and signs, and acknowledge that our understanding is affected by the bodies that carry and are carried by them. This is not a politics of aesthetics, that is, how the body *looks* in specific circumstances. In this volume we do investigate how bodies are represented, but also interrogate the political practices through which bodies come to matter at all in global politics.

## Seminar exercise

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INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR: If you are planning to run this exercise in your class, you will need either to ensure that the students are told to bring a picture with them to class or to provide sufficient images for analysis, quantity dependent on the size of the group.

From online or print media sources, find a selection of images that represent contemporary practices of global politics. In small groups of two to four, discuss the images and prepare a brief presentation for the rest of the group, focussing on the following questions:

1. How does the image represent bodies?
2. How does this representation of bodies fit with 'common-sense' understandings of bodies in the world?
3. Is the image congruent with or disruptive of conventional conceptualisations of sex and gender?
4. What does the image tell us about global politics?

## OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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In the previous section, I outlined a way to conceptualise or think of theory, particularly in relation to a 'theory of gender'. I encourage you to think outside of the discursive limits that impose rather crude sex binaries on our conceptual frameworks, and instead to see gender as a performance, a series of representations.

While these concepts are discussed further in the concluding section of this chapter, there are numerous carefully crafted accounts of the ways in which gender, when marked upon (and performed by) specific bodies, matters in global politics. Christine Sylvester argues that 'men' and 'women' as social subjects are just collections of the stories that have been told about men and women, and that we behave in accordance with these stories – remember: 'Boys don't cry', 'That's not ladylike' and so on (1994: 4).<sup>4</sup> For the study of global politics, this means we have to pay attention to the stories that are told about men and women as well as attending to the positioning and marking of bodies, both male and female. (Analyses of masculinity in global politics – accounts of 'men being men' – are an integral part of studies of gender; an important function of this book as a whole is to remind its readers that 'gender is not a synonym for women' [Carver 1996]). Following this logic, I offer two accounts of bodies in global politics in this section: bodies in social movements and bodies as scientists. I have chosen these two accounts as they map on to and serve to problematise the description of International Relations as a 'social science', as discussed above. This section also makes an analytical contribution to the discussion, as I demonstrate how, in two different contexts, narratives about the body and representations of the body function in political space.

**Gender: a conceptual summary**

- Many theorists argue that sex is biological (that is, 'natural') and gender is social (or 'cultural'). Such theories accept that gendered behaviours are largely a product of socialisation, i.e., they are constructed through interaction with society and vary according to social and historical context. This is one way to think about gender, and is generally known as a *constructivist* account.
- Some scholars claim that there are gendered social behaviours that issue directly from biological sex – for example, women are inherently more peaceful than men, mothering comes naturally to women, men are usually more aggressive than women and so on. This is known as an *essentialist* account of gender as it rests on the assumption that there is an 'essence' of man/woman that determines behaviour in spite of socialisation.
- In this chapter I draw on Judith Butler's work to argue that gender is *performative*. On this view, the sexed body is as much a product of discourses about gender as discourses about gender are a product of the sexed body. This can be seen as a *discursive* account. As I explain below, such an approach encourages us to look at gendered behaviours as 'representations of gender'. Importantly, unlike the essentialist account, the discursive account does not seek to find a 'doer behind the deed' of gendered behaviours – the 'doer' is at once produced by and productive of their representations.

Figure 1.2

The following account of social movements *begins* with the body, in particular the female body, and behaviours appropriate to it. Symbols of motherhood, which represented both the women at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in the UK during the early 1980s, who campaigned for the removal of US nuclear weapons from the Greenham Common military base, and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina from 1977 onwards, who congregated in the Plaza to protest at the illicit arrest and capture of their (biological and symbolic) relatives, had profound implications for the social movements and for the study and practices of gender in global politics. (Although these were both local social movements, both attracted the attention of and, in the case of the latter, support from the international community. Besides, problematising the divide between politics designated international and that designated domestic is an important analytical contribution of feminist scholarship in IR.) I identify three discursive practices, common to both groups but enacted in different ways, through which the women reaffirmed their identities as mothers. The first of these is biologically determined separatism. Second, I discuss the question of boundaries and political space and third, the role of 'the child' as metaphor and physical embodiment of vulnerability informing the politics enacted by these groups.

Both movements were explicitly 'women-only': the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo from its inception and the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp from a year after the protestors set up camp in 1981. Despite the cultural, political and temporal differences in the context of the movements, the accounts offered in explanation for their separatism are startlingly similar. From Greenham, the opinion that 'women-only actions offered a more complete guarantee of nonviolence' (Liddington 1989: 235) echoes the statements made five years previously by women

on another continent: 'We endure the pushing, insults, attacks by the army. . . . But the men, they never would have stood such things without reacting' (Mariá Adela Antokoletz cited in Arditti 1999: 35). In terms of the Mothers' protest, it was both justified and justifiable: the junta in power at the time, influenced by the Catholic family-oriented values of a traditional Argentine way of life, was less likely to 'disappear' mothers than fathers. This was in keeping with the gender expectations of the time that idealised motherhood and the family in the hope of rebuilding society in an image pleasing to the eyes of the regime. While it could be argued that by virtue of their femininity and in the voicing of a public protest, both movements offered resistance to the discourses of gender that construct properly passive female subjects, I interpret this separatism with a degree of gender scepticism. In maintaining a 'women only' ethos, both movements conserved rather than challenged gendered expectations about feminine passivity. However, the Greenham women also articulated a desire for greater equality of participation and less hierarchical social organisation, which they suggested would be best achieved through single-sex arrangements. This was represented in contemporary media coverage as threatening to family values at best and at worst as providing a sanctuary for 'lesbians, one parent families, and lost causes' (Newbury resident quoted in the *Daily Mail*, cited in Cresswell 1994: 50).

The question of boundaries is the second element of the discursive construction of motherhood common to both groups. In addition to declaring themselves women-only, both groups self-consciously transgressed metaphorical and physical boundaries and used these transgressions to frame their protests. Both movements were comprised of women who would not 'sit still and keep at home' (Rowbotham 1972: 16) as women were expected to do, leaving the realm of formal politics to masculine/ised subjects. Instead they used their weapons of protest – their bodies, their *female* bodies – in a carefully articulated statement of female agency. Initially the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo organised their protests in socially sanctioned 'women's spaces', 'using feminine/maternal public parks and tea houses as places to make plans and exchange information' (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996: 157), but in taking their protest to the steps of the government buildings in the Plaza de Mayo the Mothers altered the social and spatial impact of the movement. Through associating themselves with the Plaza de Mayo, which is deeply significant in Argentine history and politics, the Mothers achieved recognition and a public space for their political protest. This, however, is not the same thing as saying that the Mothers 'moved in' to that public space; it should be remembered that the Plaza de Mayo was occupied by the Mothers just once a week. In contrast, the peace camp at Greenham Common was a permanent fixture. The women involved in the camp inhabited an altogether more liminal space. They had left their fixed houses for tenuous settlements on common land; the mothers at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp *did* 'move in' to that public space, both with and without their children by their sides in a confrontational bid to challenge notions of home and security in the shadows cast by missile silos. The permanence of their move is reaffirmed in the memories recorded by the women who lived there: 'women who have been there . . . say they will never be the same' (Elshtain 1995: 241). The women's refusal to return 'home' at the end of each day was interpreted as the challenge to public order that it

intended. Instead of questioning that order, however, the widespread response in UK media coverage of the events was to question the behaviour of the women. 'The question of women's roles as mothers was used frequently as a stick of castigation with which to beat the Greenham women: if they were so fond of children, why were they not at home with them?' (Young 1990:68).

Finally, the third discursive practice that helped construct the collective identity of 'mother' for the women in question was a commitment to child-centred politics. While the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo searched for their *niños desaparecidos*, the disappeared children from their past in the present, the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp was dedicated to ensuring a better life for the children of the future in the present. The same key terms resonate in both cases: both movements sought to offer children protection, to provide them with security and to honour a notion of maternal care. The symbols used to denote this child-centred commitment are also similar. The Association of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo adopted a white headscarf, symbolising a baby's nappy, as their emblem of collective identity. As one mother suggested, 'a gauze shawl, a diaper . . . will make us feel closer to our children' (cited in Bouvard 1994: 74). The whiteness signifies peace as well as life, in a tacit refusal to don the black *mantilla* worn as part of traditional mourning dress in Argentina. The symbolic function of the baby's nappy reinforces the notion of maternal care mentioned above, as well as evoking thoughts of birth, thus life, and hope. The nappies and toys pinned to the fence at Greenham Common were among the many symbols of 'mundane' domesticity deployed in contrast to the high-powered high politics of a nuclear base in the nuclear age. These symbols sought to idealise motherhood and legitimise the presence of the protestors. This is by no means an unproblematic view, but a culturally intelligible narrative nonetheless; the children of tomorrow represented by a soft toy pinned to a hard wire fence being protected, cared for, *mothered* by the women at the Peace Camp, who felt 'a special responsibility to offer them [the children] a future – not a wasteland of a world and a lingering death' (cited in Liddington 1989:227).

Despite surface similarities between two social movements that drew on representations of and myths about motherhood to inform their protests, the dynamics of the two movements were radically different. Later media coverage of the Mothers describes them in positive language, with words such as 'courage' and 'inspiration' (Fisher 1998) validating the Mothers' struggle and reporters acknowledging that the Mothers became 'world icons of courageous demands for accountability, the assertion of human rights' (Omang 2006). References to Greenham Common frame the women's efforts in a wholly different light, describing the Camp as a 'debacle' and denying the protest any efficacy or legitimacy (Vuillamy and Hinsliff 2001, see also Pettitt 2006). The Camp was variously represented as 'a criminal activity, a witches' coven, a threat to the state, the family and the democratic order' (Young 1990: 2). In widening their protest from 'acceptable' women-as-mothers protecting the children of the future to 'deviant' women questioning the gender order that assisted in the construction of the missiles that sparked their protest, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp lost the focus of its collective identity and the legitimacy this identity afforded their protest. In contrast, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo maintained a conservative representation of motherhood, restricting their protest to the

recovery of the disappeared and denouncing the authority of the military regime. These two different performances of body politics in global politics had very different effects.

A second set of significant bodies emerge as visible through the feminist interrogations of weapons technology and strategic culture. In 1987, Carol Cohn published an analysis of ‘nuclear strategic thinking’ evidenced in the ‘almost entirely male world’ of ‘distinguished “defence intellectuals”’ (Cohn 1987: 678–79). This article remains one of the most significant accounts of the impact of gender, gendered language and bodily images on the study and practices of global politics. Cohn also draws our attention to the complex intersections of race, gender and class (referring to ‘white men in ties discussing missile size’ [Cohn 1987: 683] in a typically snappy turn of phrase). In earlier analysis of the development of nuclear technology, the gendered imaginings used to make sense of the new weaponry are obvious, and function to inscribe a link between violence and masculinity that feminist scholarship has long sought to problematise. When the first fusion device was tested in the United States of America in 1952 the telegram reporting its success to authorities – describing an explosion about a thousand times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945 – read ‘It’s a boy!’ (Easlea 1983: 130; see also Cohn 1987: 701).<sup>5</sup> Admittedly, that was back in the 1950s; surely we can expect to see contemporary defence experts refusing to deploy the gendered metaphors employed by their ancestors? On the contrary, Cohn reports that defence intellectuals continue to construct their language, which Cohn names ‘techno-strategic discourse’, using a gendered framework. Cohn witnessed a country without tested nuclear capacity being referred to as a nuclear ‘virgin’ (Cohn 1987: 687). Similarly, phrases such as ‘more bang for the buck’, ‘the Russians are a little harder than we are’ and the assertion that ‘you’re not going to take the nicest missile you have and put it in a crummy hole’ all contribute to the ongoing masculinisation of nuclear weapons technology (Cohn 1987: 683–84). One recent example is worth quoting at length:

At one point, we re-modelled a particular attack, . . . and found that instead of there being 36 million immediate fatalities, there would only be 30 million. And everybody was sitting around nodding, saying, ‘Oh yeah, that’s great, only 30 million,’ when all of a sudden, I heard what we were saying. And I blurted out, ‘Wait, I’ve just heard how we’re talking – Only 30 million! Only 30 million human beings killed instantly?’ Silence fell upon the room. Nobody said a word. They didn’t even look at me. It was awful. I felt like a woman.

(cited in Cohn and Ruddick 2003: 14)

Feeling ‘like a woman’ compromised this interviewee’s masculinity, but also his professionalism: the underlying assumption is that women (irrational, emotional creatures) have no place in the hard-headed world of defence strategy. Crucially, Cohn’s research draws attention to the ways in which gender functions in security by not only interrogating the actions of physical bodies but also by asking what work gender is doing to organise and make sense of security discourses. The rationality employed and deployed by the communities in which Cohn has conducted her

research is literally dis-embodied, amounting to the denial of human experience in the narratives of the defence intellectuals: 'it is not only impossible to talk about humans in this language, it also becomes in some sense illegitimate to ask the paradigm to reflect human concerns' (Cohn 1987: 711–12). It is precisely these 'human concerns' to which Cohn wishes to draw our attention, facilitated by a nuanced and convincing analysis of the ways in which bodies, and particularly masculine bodies, delimit the domain of nuclear weapons technology.

## PROBLEMATISING 'BODIES THAT MATTER'<sup>6</sup>

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Above, I have illustrated how (certain) bodies matter in global politics and, more importantly, how certain *performances of gender* produce and are produced by (further, legitimise and are legitimised by) political practices on a global scale. In this section, I challenge the ways in which the valuable political interjections described above are still framed in reference to a narrative of dimorphism. This framing is in part due to what Butler identifies as a 'matrix of intelligibility' (1999: 24). Put simply, this means that in order to be recognisable to others and ourselves, our gender must be performed within particular cultural and historical boundaries. 'The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of "identities" cannot "exist" – that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not "follow" from either sex or gender' (Butler 1999: 23–24). Taking such a perspective on gender matters in global politics demands that we ask, How are various performances of gender congruent with or disruptive of the limits of intelligibility in a given cultural context? Seen in this light, the tales offered above describe actors that both remain within the boundaries (the scientists and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) and contest those boundaries (the Greenham women). The latter were seen as less 'successful' and more threatening precisely because they transgressed appropriate behavioural limits.

The question then becomes: How are these limits set? Who gets to decide that 'boys don't cry' or that to 'throw like a girl' is an insult? In various ways, the contributors to this volume argue that gender does not 'read' from sex in any straightforward way. I would suggest that sex is as much a fiction as gender – that the foundational narrative of dimorphism on which our 'matrix of intelligibility' is so heavily dependent is itself contestable. Moreover, we frequently amend the bodies to fit the dominant (dimorphic) theory of gender, and not vice versa. At the moment of gendering – when an infant human is named as a 'boy' or a 'girl' – medical intervention is sometimes required to align the body with one side or the other of a dichotomous gender framework, so as not to disrupt the 'matrix of intelligibility'. Interestingly, medical experts tend to focus on the importance of socialisation in such cases, arguing that it is a matter of whether the child is raised (read: trained to perform) as a boy or girl. 'Of course, at normal [sic] births, when the infant's genitals are unambiguous, the parents are not told that the child's gender is ultimately up to socialization' (Kessler 1990: 17). This would suggest that sex, as well as gender, is dimorphically constructed.

Throughout this section, I have used the term ‘performance’ to describe the ways in which gender manifests in social/political life. This is a concept most closely associated with the work of Judith Butler (see Figure 1.3 below), and refers to the identifiable linguistic and non-linguistic practices that constitute our understanding of gender. It does *not* mean that pre-formed individuals are free to perform gender as they wish; rather, the ‘matrices of intelligibility’ constitute the limits of sex (Butler 1993; see also Segal 1997).

One way to think about performativity is through the gender classification of a child at birth, as mentioned above:

Consider the medical interpellation which . . . shifts an infant from an ‘it’ to a ‘she’ or a ‘he’ and in that naming, the girl is ‘girded’ . . . But that ‘girling’ of the girl does not end there; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reenforce or contest this naturalized effect.

(Butler 1993: 7–8)

The ‘reiteration’ to which Butler refers is the continuing construction of identity through what she terms ‘performativity’. In this way, bodies themselves take on the gendered characteristics appropriate to their designated ‘sex’ from birth and throughout life gender is performed repeatedly. Crucially, in order to have a ‘liveable’ life, an infant must be ‘shifted from an “it” to a “she” or a “he”’. There are variations within the discursive construction of gender and it is therefore more appropriate to recognise and interrogate multiple masculinities and femininities, as do the authors in this book, rather than some fixed or essential notion of what constitutes a ‘man’ or ‘woman’. However, performances of gender, where gendered subjects are ‘tenuously

What continues to concern me most is the following kinds of questions: what will and will not constitute an intelligible life, and how do presumptions about normative gender and sexuality determine in advance what will qualify as the “human” and the “liveable”? In other words, how do normative gender presumptions work to delimit the very field of description that we have for the human? What is the meaning by which we come to see this delimiting power, and what are the means by which we transform it? (1999: xxii).

From Judith Butler’s 1999 preface to the second edition of her highly influential *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge).

Judith Butler’s works on gender theory, political philosophy and ethics have been highly influential across a range of subject disciplines. It is specifically her work on the performativity of gender that is of interest here, not least because it can usefully be employed as an analytical frame to great effect in the study of global politics. David Campbell (1992), for example, draws on her theory of performativity in *Writing Security*, his exploration of US foreign and security policy. Lene Hansen (2000) uses Butler’s work to critique the ‘Copenhagen School’ of security theory and Maria Stern (2006) draws on Butler to interrogate the concept of insecurity.

Figure 1.3



constituted in time . . . through a *stylized repetition of acts*' (Butler 1999: 179, emphasis in original), despite the variants, must be congruent with culturally and historically specific gender narratives in order to be recognised as legitimate – the 'matrix of intelligibility' I discussed above. Crucially, on this view, 'gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed . . . There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler 1999: 33).

This chapter has provided an overview of one way in which it is possible to conceptualise sex and gender,<sup>7</sup> and introduced you to some illustrations to show how and why gender matters in global politics. As you proceed through this text, you will be presented with different perspectives on the relationship between sex and gender, and the contributors would all encourage you to reflect critically on the stories they tell about bodies in global politics. We encourage you to develop a 'feminist curiosity' (Enloe 2007: 1) about the study and practices of global politics. Challenging the assumptions of conventional theories and approaches, unsettling that which was previously taken for granted – these are among the ways in which a feminist curiosity works. Through its attention to the fact that, and the ways in which, gender matters in global politics, this book is both pioneer of new ways of studying gender and acknowledgement of the noteworthy feminist scholarship without which it could not have been thought.

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### Questions for further debate

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1. Why should the study of global politics attend to the practices of bodies? In other words, why is 'gender' a useful category of analysis?
2. What additional examples of bodily actions in global politics can be included alongside those mentioned here? What do these practices tell us about the relevant 'matrices of intelligibility'?
3. Why might people be resistant to the idea that gender matters in global politics?
4. Is it helpful to think of trans/intersex as a 'third gender'?
5. Are you persuaded that there is a significant difference between sex and gender?

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### Relevant web-based resources

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- Theory.org on queer theory, available HTTP: <<http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-quee.htm>>, and on Judith Butler, available HTTP: <<http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-butl.htm>>.
- Center for Gender Sanity, which provides a series of resources for transgender individuals and 'A refuge from male/female dichotomies', sex-based stereotypes, and other gender madness . . .', available HTTP: <<http://www.gendersanity.com/index.shtml>>.

- Public Broadcasting Service companion website to *Sex: Unknown*, a film that interrogates conventional assumptions about gender, available HTTP: <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/gender/>>.
- The website of Stonewall, a UK charity and professional lobbying group aimed at securing equality rights for LGBTIQ (lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer) individuals and communities, available HTTP: <<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>>.
- Trans-academics, ‘a place where people of all genders can discuss gender theory, the trans community and its various identities, both as a part of the academic world and day-to-day life’, available HTTP: <[http://www.trans-academics.org/about\\_us](http://www.trans-academics.org/about_us)>.

### Sources for further reading and research

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### Notes

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- 1 An ‘epistemology’ is a theory of knowledge. Ontology, epistemology and methodology are discussed fully in Chapter 2.
- 2 Interestingly, the BBC News website recently ran a story about ‘transsexual toilets’ at Kam-pang Secondary School in north-east Thailand. The school built the facility for the male students who ‘consider themselves to be transgender’; now, ‘[b]etween the girls’ toilet and the boys’, there is one signposted with a half-man, half-woman figure in blue and red’ (Head 2008). However, even this discourse of gender, which apparently offers more than two options, is still faithful to the narrative of dimorphism discussed above, as the sign on the door signifies that ‘transgender’ is still seen as half-and-half of the two genders we accept in humans.

- 3 Of course, the body can be shaped and adorned according to, or in transgression of, social norms, but the physical form cannot be re-gendered except through recourse to complex sex reassignment therapies including hormone treatments and surgery.
- 4 Cynthia Weber calls these stories ‘unconscious ideologies’, which she describes as ‘the foundations of our ideological and political thinking that we place beyond debate’ (2005a: 4). She suggests, and I agree, that drawing these common-sense accounts of gender back *into* debate can be profoundly unsettling as it can threaten our own ideas about being in the world (see also Peterson and True 1998).
- 5 The nuclear weapon dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 was named ‘Little Boy’.
- 6 This subheading is borrowed from Judith Butler’s 1993 text of the same name.
- 7 In this chapter, I have not discussed various other ways to conceptualise this relationship, which are explored in sophisticated detail in a range of political writing. In addition to the suggested readings, see, for example, Oakley (1972), Fuss (1989), Connell (1995), Lloyd (2005).

# Ontologies, Epistemologies, Methodologies

Lene Hansen

All academic approaches make three sets of decisions: about *ontology*, that is the question of what exists, what should be studied, and what the basic nature of that which is studied is; about *epistemology*, that is, the question of what we can know and how to achieve this knowledge; and *methodology*, that is, the concrete steps and techniques that allow one to carry out an analysis. Because ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies have fundamental implications for how research agendas are put together, what is considered important to study and how studies are conducted, it is crucial to examine the way in which they have been adopted by feminists working in the field of International Relations (IR).

To say that ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies are *decisions* rather than given once and for all is also to say that there are different ways in which ontology, epistemology and methodology can be chosen. These decisions may be either explicitly discussed or they may be implicitly assumed – but even if studies do not go into detailed discussions of ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, they still have to make assumptions about them since they are the ‘motor’ that makes the analytical engine run. Many IR feminist writings do however discuss ontology and epistemology, probably because the dynamic of academic disciplines is one where non-mainstream approaches have to invest energy in laying out their ontologies and epistemologies, precisely because they challenge taken-for-granted assumptions.

Since ontology, epistemology and methodology are so significant to the study of gender and world politics, this chapter provides an overview of how the main approaches to gender in the discipline of IR – most label themselves as feminist, others as doing gender analysis – define them. Since debate over ontology and epistemology

is a main feature of IR, the chapter will also show how feminist approaches are located on the broader terrain of IR.

## CONNECTING ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

At the level of ontology, there are two main questions as feminism and IR are brought together: how to theorise the state and international relations and how to theorise gender. The state is the main analytical entity in IR, even for those who criticise its privileged status. So while sharing a concern with the state and its relations to other states and non-state actors, the ontological assumptions that IR theorists make about the state vary greatly. They disagree over the extent to which the state should be seen as the only significant actor in global politics, whether one should have a critical and normative approach to the state or try to objectively explain its behaviour, and finally, whether states are doomed to acting in a 'Realist' manner (driven by their own interests and power politics) that makes conflicts and war inevitable, or whether states are more 'Idealist' or 'Liberal' and thus able to cooperate, build lasting international institutions, and solve their disagreements peacefully.

Turning to gender, feminist approaches to IR have adopted three different ontologies, first as given through biological gender; second, as biological gender mediated through social understandings of masculinity and femininity; and third, of both social and biological gender as socially and performatively constituted (see Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1). These gender ontologies have been coupled to three epistemological perspectives which correspond to Sandra Harding's division of feminist epistemologies into empiricist, standpoint and poststructuralist (or postmodern), a division which has been institutionalised in feminist IR debates (Sylvester 1994; Keohane 1989; Weber 1994). Empiricist feminism belongs to what Robert Keohane has labelled rationalist approaches to IR, that is positivist analysis that builds causal theories about the behaviour of states, international institutions and transnational actors. Because 'empiricism' is a somewhat problematic term, and 'rationalism' is the common term in IR, this chapter will refer to 'rationalist feminism' rather than 'empiricist'. Standpoint feminism comes out of a post-Marxist tradition, and hence has affinities to Critical Security Studies, Human Security and neo-Gramscian International Political Economy. Poststructuralist feminism is both a part of IR Poststructuralism and has influenced this approach in significant ways.

### Ontology, epistemology, methodology

- Ontology: What exists? What should be studied?
- Epistemology: What can we know? How can we gain knowledge?
- Methodology: What techniques should we adopt? What material should we examine and how?

Figure 2.1

The rest of this chapter will present the state and gender ontology, epistemology, and methodology of rationalist, standpoint and poststructuralist feminism as well as the criticism most often levied against each perspective. Yet before we do so, there are a few general points that should be clarified. First, ontology is about making *assumptions*, they are analytical abstractions, they define what one takes as a given and they cannot therefore be tested or proven wrong. Ontologies therefore cannot be said to be true or false, but we can discuss what the consequences are of making different ontological choices.

Second, the ontologies and epistemologies described in this chapter are analytical distinctions and have an 'ideal-type' character. In reality feminist studies frequently cross boundaries, particularly between standpoint and poststructuralist feminism and work with a wide variety of methodologies. Third, choices at one level have consequences for the others and ontology, epistemology, and methodology have therefore to go together. If for instance one works with an IR ontology of the state as being a utilitarian actor driven by self-help, and a positivist epistemology that stresses causal relationships between particular variables and state behaviour, then one will usually adopt a methodology either of quantitative, statistical analysis, or of comparative case-studies. Usually, there is also a connection between the ontologies of state and gender, so that if the state is seen as the given unit of IR, gender tends to be seen as a biological variable, whereas if the state is seen as the product of social practices, gender is too.

Fourth, that said, we should be cautious not to assume that there are only a limited number of fixed ontology-epistemology-methodology combinations, or that there is one feminist approach which is superior to all others. IR feminists have in fact been quite open-minded about the combinability and co-existence of different epistemologies and methodologies, because different ontology-epistemology-methodology constellations might tell us different things and provide different ways of being critical. A feminist rationalist analysis can for instance search for the variables explaining the likelihood of rape being adopted as a tool of war, while a standpoint feminist analysis casts light on the way in which wartime rape victims narrate their experiences, and a poststructuralist shows how competing discourses link the rapes to different foreign policies to be pursued. But one might also think strategically about the co-existence of multiple IR feminisms. IR is a field made up of a variety of approaches, and since it is very unlikely that one perspective is going to convince or conquer all others, we would want to have feminists represented in as many IR camps as possible.

## RATIONALIST FEMINISM

Rationalist feminism for the most part assumes that the state is the central actor that defines international relations, both as an empirical practice and as a discipline, and that the state can be treated as a utilitarian actor concerned with its own survival. The key ambition for rationalist IR is to explain the way in which states and international institutions behave, that is the conditions that determine such central questions as whether states go to war, how they trade or form alliances. It is important to

note that rationalists may be Realists as well as Liberals, and that there is a strong quantitative rationalist tradition in the fields of Conflict Resolution and Peace Research that seek to find the causes of war so that they might be avoided in the future. This tradition breaks ontologically and normatively with rigid Realist understandings of conflicts and war as inevitable. The influential 'democratic peace' literature that argues that democracies do not go to war with one another is a case in point. The ontology of gender in rationalist feminism treats the division of women and men as fairly unproblematic biological empirical categories. Combining the ontologies of state and gender, the research agenda that appears is one where gender is a variable that may impact state behaviour, or inverting the question, where state type or foreign policy might impact men and women differently.

Empiricism in its original formulation stresses that theories should be tested (and falsified) against empirical evidence. Compared to experimental sciences like biology and chemistry, IR has virtually no possibilities of running controlled laboratory experiments. This means that rationalist IR has had to adopt other methodologies, usually quantitative ones where statistical material that comprises a very large number of observations can be coded and tested in an infinite number of combinations (the advent of computer technology provided a huge leap forward for this kind of research) or carefully selected case-studies that control for dependent and independent variables.

Putting ontology, epistemology and methodology together, we can identify two main rationalist feminist research agendas. First, there are quantitative feminists whose research ties in with the quantitative Peace Research tradition of tracing the causes of war. These researchers ask how gender impacts state behaviour, for instance whether there is a correlation between the level of gender equality in a given country on the one hand and this country's likelihood of going to war on the other (Caprioli 2000; Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Regan and Paskeviciute 2003).

A more indirect causal relation between gender and foreign policy is examined by works on the so-called 'gender gap' in foreign policy attitudes (Togebly 1994; Eichenberg 2003). Survey data and election and referenda results have often shown that women are more sceptical of EU integration and that they have less 'Realist' views of foreign policy: that they are more reluctant to support war and more susceptible to withdraw support when casualties occur. Adopting the methodologies of quantitative analysis, the explanatory power of gender may then be correlated with a number of other possible explanatory variables like income, ethnicity, education, rural/urban residency and level of political participation (party membership for example). Studies that come to the conclusion that gender makes a difference thus also raise the question *why* that may be the case: are women more peaceful than men or are their different views a product of socialisation and/or a particular (disadvantaged) location within society? Most quantitative studies leave that question open, but it takes us back to classical discussions within Feminist theory of whether gender is biologically determined or whether it is a politically produced identity that women come (or are forced) to embrace.

A second body of rationalist research shifts from quantitative methodologies to comparative case-studies, a methodology that is common in influential American

journals like *International Security* and *International Organization*. Among the works in this tradition is Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea Den Boer's study of how sex-selective abortion in China and India lead to a disproportionate larger number of male children being born. This, the authors hold, might cause these countries to adopt aggressive foreign policies in the attempt to usurp their male surplus population (Hudson and Den Boer 2004). Conventional constructivists self-identify as positivists to different extents, but their shared concern with the causal explanation of state behaviour provides enough of a link to rationalist IR to include them in this category. Gender analysts from this perspective also adopt case-study methodology in the study of how gendered norms impact foreign policies such as for instance the evacuation practices adopted by humanitarian organisations operating in war zones (Carpenter 2003; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Rationalist scholarship has been criticised for making state behaviour the object of analysis: to study gender becomes 'only' a matter of discovering the impact of gender variables on how states respond, not of uncovering the structural disadvantages that women face and the ways in which these are linked to dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity (see Chapter 1). Some quantitative feminists, most prominently Mary Caprioli (2004a), have responded to this criticism arguing that there is indeed a prominent space for rationalist analysis in feminist IR and that it does have critical potential. First, some studies turn the causal interest around asking what explains women's status rather than state behaviour. Caprioli (2004b) asks for example whether democracy and human rights ensure women's security (defined through measures of fertility rates, rape, birth attended by health staff, economic and political inequality, and education). Second, quantitative analyses allow feminists working in other traditions to document their assumptions in more rigorous ways. Third, knowledge about correlations might provide the platform from which better to target practices that one seeks to redress.

## STANDPOINT FEMINISM

Moving from rationalist to standpoint feminism ontology, epistemology and methodology change. Beginning with the ontology of the state, standpoint feminism has an explicitly critical understanding of the state as a set of patriarchal practices that support, yet silence, the structural disadvantages that women face. Crucial to standpoint feminism's criticism of the patriarchal state is the historical separation of the public and the private sphere, with women being located in the latter whilst men would be the governors of the public as well as the patriarchal family. In order to bring out the implications of the patriarchal state, one should, holds standpoint feminism, shift the study from abstract states to how real living women are impacted by economic and security structures within and across state boundaries. This involves a double shift of focus from mainstream IR and rationalist feminism in that it moves from states to gender and from abstract structures to concrete individuals. Standpoint feminists argue further that one should focus in particular on marginalised women as these are particularly disadvantaged, yet systematically overlooked.



Combining ontology and epistemology, marginalised women are seen as having knowledge that is different from that of men's (and privileged women's), and which is essential to getting a full, and more objective, picture of global politics.

This critical reading of the state – domestically and in international relations – also reflects a change in gender ontology from the one of biological sex in rationalist feminism. Standpoint feminism maintains women as a particular subject defined by physical bodies, yet understands the meaning that these bodies holds to be constituted through socially powerful understandings of femininity and masculinity. Masculinity and femininity are deployed to produce and reproduce the proper ways to be women and men, both at the general level of heroic and just warriors defending women and children (and hence the nation) (Elshtain 1987) and concretely for instance in male peacekeepers' constructions of masculinity and femininity (Higate and Henry 2004). Standpoint feminism is careful to point out that one should not take femininity and masculinity to be uniform constructions that are identical across time and place nor assume that women are inherently peaceful and men violent. Studies have for instance pointed to women as agents of violence (Alison 2004) or to the gender-mixed messages of the Abu Ghraib scandal, particularly the role of – and media obsession with – the female guard Lynndie England (Enloe 2004). Crucially though, standpoint feminists still maintain the understanding that there is a concrete living female subject that can be referred to and who should be at the centre of the analysis.

Epistemologically, the social constructions of femininity and masculinity mean that women have historically been considered less suited for scientific careers. The construction of the male as rational implies that 'scientific', positivist forms of knowing are privileged, while other more narrative, hermeneutic and contextual forms of knowledge are constituted as feminine and inferior. In this view, the epistemologies adopted by rationalist feminist scholars are therefore not simply one choice amongst many, but a masculine one which silences other, feminine forms of knowledge. Some standpoint feminists take the view that women have a particular form of knowledge that is more emotional, concrete, dialogical, aesthetic and narrative (Stec 1997: 140). Others hold that it is problematic to essentialise a particular form of knowledge. Regardless of the view on this issue, standpoint feminism calls for bringing attention to the forms of knowledge that women have by uncovering and studying their experiences as this provides a prism onto how global politics is felt and constituted by real living embodied beings.

Methodologically, the concern with how subjects 'document their own experiences in their own terms' (Tickner 2005: 19) means that there is a preference for an 'ethnographic style of individually oriented story-telling typical of anthropology' (Tickner 1997: 615) and other hermeneutic and interpretative methodologies. Some even go as far as saying that proper feminist research cannot be conducted unless extensive fieldwork and interviews are carried out (Jacoby 2006: 158). Standpoint feminists also pay attention to the interaction between researcher and research subject, not only as part of establishing a situation that is conducive to the gathering of empirical material, but because 'the researcher cannot simply disappear from the text' (Jacoby 2006: 162; Cohn 2006). However, the concern with the structural inequalities women face means that studies often include quantitative material as

well as secondary sources such as court transcripts, media coverage (including interviews), parliamentary debates, commission reports and even fiction.

The attraction of an epistemology of experience is that it allows for a focus on those subjects who are marginalised by state-centric understandings of international relations. However, there are also difficulties connected to choosing experience as an epistemology through which to uncover the meaning of gender in IR (Dietz 2003: 403–5). Standpoint feminism has been attacked for assuming a single coherent female subject and diversity feminism that understands identity as informed not only by gender but by ethnicity, class and race was developed in response. This opened for a bigger variety of, in Donna Haraway's words, situated knowledges or group-based experiences, but it also created the problem of how to assess multiple experiences. More importantly, 'experience' is a concept that promises a direct link to the everyday lives of (marginalised) subjects and to a deeply subjective, narrative and often emotional form of knowledge. Yet, this subject is simultaneously constituted through a gendered structure: it is only conceivable as a 'gendered experience' if gender is already accepted as an identity frame of reference. Individual experiences have in short to correspond to a feminist idea of what 'women' are and what they might say, write or feel. Since 'experience' is simultaneously presented as an expression of the feelings of the individual and derived from a given identity structure the researcher is required/empowered to make decisions about which experiences are more genuinely feminist than others.

## POSTSTRUCTURALIST FEMINISM

Beginning with ontology, poststructuralists agree with standpoint feminists that the public/private distinction has had fundamental consequences for women's political, economic, and cultural marginalisation. Women were to reside in the private due to their fragile, emotional, short-sighted, everyday-oriented and irrational nature, while men were decisive, rational, responsible and long-term planners. These constructions of femininity and masculinity legitimised the public-private distinction, but were also simultaneously upheld and reproduced by discourses and practices that kept these understandings in place.

If feminist are to 'bring gender in', it is not, argue poststructuralists, sufficient to point to women as marginalised bodies, it requires a reworking of the political assumptions and 'identity solutions' that the modern state entails (Walker 1992). One has to reconstruct the way in which the state has offered a particular powerful solution to questions of citizenship, belonging, identity, order and power, questions that evolve around the public/private gendered split. Even if the public individual may have shed its explicit link to male bodies – women can be politicians, bank directors and presidents – the expectation of how the proper public person acts and reasons is one that concurs with the masculinity assumptions previously reserved for men. Linking feminist poststructuralism to poststructuralism as a general IR approach, poststructuralists like David Campbell (1992) and Roxanne Lynn Doty (1996) have traced the continued significance of gendered discourse in the construction of national identity, security policies and development thinking.

Standpoint feminism does, as noted above, point to the significance of socially constituted understandings of femininity and masculinity, yet it maintains women as a referent object with a real-world existence based on biological gender. Poststructuralist feminism follows instead Judith Butler's view of gender as performative, as 'always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed' (Butler 1990: 25, see also Chapter 1), hence there is no extra-discursive biological gender that stands apart from the social constitution of femininity and masculinity.

Putting epistemology and gender ontology together poststructuralist feminist analysis is concerned with how discourses, often competing ones, construct subjects, how this delineates or legitimises particular courses of action, and how certain subject positions are silenced as a consequence (Kronsell 2006). As there is no 'woman' subject constituted outside of discourse, there are also no 'lived experiences' that can be taken as authentic statements of what (marginalised) women really think, feel or want. This does not imply that poststructuralists are uninterested in what women – or men – say, but rather that they treat statements about lived experience as texts and discourses through which subjects constitute themselves with identities, goals, interests and desires (Scott 1992). Since discourses are shared structures of meaning, women 'speaking experience' are thus simultaneously speaking to those structures in place and potentially reworking or deconstructing them. To poststructuralists, the ontological and epistemological emphasis on discourse also means that the idea of 'the authentic' experience is itself a particular discursive construction rather than something that can be uncovered 'in reality'. Poststructuralists have also warned against depicting women as marginalised 'victims' insofar as this subject position entails an understanding of women as passive, subdued, and to be pitied rather than as proper political agents (Aradau 2008; Penttinen 2008). In effect, this concurs with classical constructions of femininity as fragile, passive, and reliant upon masculine protection.

Poststructuralism's discursive ontology and epistemology imply methodologically that most deconstruct texts to show the complex relational constructions of identity that govern world politics. Yet, there are also many feminist poststructuralists that include ethnographic fieldwork and interviews, one of the most wellknown being Carol Cohn's study of defence intellectuals during the Cold War discussed in Chapter 1 (see p. 11–12) (Kronsell 2006; Penttinen 2008). The difference between standpoint feminism and poststructuralism is thus not in terms of what kind of material is studied, but whether it is used to uncover women's experiences or the constitution of 'women' in discourse.

The most important criticism levied against poststructuralist feminists from within the feminist camp is that its deconstruction of the gendered subject undermines a critical feminist project. If 'women' are not a subject that can be referred to, but 'only' constituted in discourse, it becomes difficult if not impossible to speak of the structural inequalities that women face. And, if we cannot speak of women as 'victims' what alternative vocabularies should we use? The reply from poststructuralist feminism is that discourses do indeed silence and legitimate and hence a discourse analysis needs to critically engage the subject positions that are closed off by particular discourses.

<i>Feminist IR perspective</i>	<i>State ontology</i>	<i>Gender ontology</i>	<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Familiar IR perspective</i>
Rationalist	Empirically open, state may be liberal and/or norm driven	Variable based on biological gender	Positivist – causal connections between state action and gender	Large-scale quantitative or causal qualitative analysis (comparative case-studies)	Quantitative Peace Research/Conflict Resolution Conventional Constructivism
Standpoint	Patriarchal	Biological gender mediated through social construction of feminity and masculinity	Experience – combines structure and individual/ everyday	Fieldwork, narrative analysis, interviews, hermeneutic, quantitative documentation	Critical Security Studies, Human Security, neo-Gramscian IPE
Poststructuralist	Patriarchal	Biological gender constituted in discourse	Discursive	Discourse analysis, texts and fieldwork, interviews	Poststructuralism

Figure 2.2 Feminist IR perspectives – an overview.

### Seminar exercise

**INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR:** Depending on the degree to which your students are used to navigating the Web, you may have to direct them to a relevant newspaper website or a print news media database, or provide them with a recent story yourself (link or print).

**PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE:** A discussion of the way that sex trafficking may be analysed from rationalist, standpoint and poststructuralist perspectives.

How can we analyse sex trafficking from the feminist perspectives described in this chapter?

1. What may a rationalist research question that links trafficking and state behaviour be? What data and methodologies would you use if you were to carry out this analysis?
2. What would a standpoint feminist research agenda on trafficking look like? What material would you use to identify experiences? How would you study it? What would be the status of different forms of empirical material?
3. How would a poststructuralist analysis of trafficking differ from a rationalist and a standpoint feminist analysis? Find a recent newspaper story of sex trafficking and discuss to what extent it constructs women as innocent victims or as illegal immigrants? What are the policy implications of the way in which women are constructed?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective? What kind of knowledge do we get from each?

## CONCLUSION

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This chapter has shown that there are different ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies in feminist IR, hence also that there are different ways of being critical. All feminist approaches share a concern with the way in which the state impacts upon women's security, economic standing, health and political status: rationalist feminism interrogates the consequences of state type or foreign policy behaviour for women, standpoint feminism has a critical view of the state as a patriarchal structure, and poststructuralist feminism deconstructs the subject constructions that are linked to the state and which have implications for domestic as well as foreign policy.

Situating feminist IR on the broader landscape of IR we find that while standpoint is the dominant feminist perspective, it belongs to a group of critical perspectives that remain marginalised within IR as a whole, particularly in the American context (Tickner 1997: 614; Caprioli 2004a; Dietz 2003). Rather than seeing the battlefield as feminist it is more fruitful to think of it as feminists engaging not only each other, but also those in their own 'home IR camp'. Precisely because of rationalism's privileged IR status, rationalist feminism may be an important strategic player in the fight to have gender become an integral part of IR. The broader field of feminist world politics is in short well advised to maintain its multi-ontological, multi-epistemological and multi-methodological identity.

### Questions for further debate

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1. Is it important to discuss epistemology?
2. What may a feminist foreign policy look like? What strategies could be adopted to make the state more feminist?
3. What would you consider the strengths and difficulties of interviews as a research methodology?
4. Why do you think that critical IR approaches are more common in feminist IR than in IR as a whole?
5. How can one create dialogue across different IR perspectives? How could non-feminist IR become more concerned with gender?

### Relevant web-based resources

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- *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, the leading journal devoted to gender and international politics, available HTTP: <<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/routledge/14616742.html>>.

- *SIGNS*, the leading journal on general feminist issues including political theory, ontology and epistemology, available HTTP: <<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/signs/current>>.
- Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection organises a long list of annual summer courses covering both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, available HTTP: <<http://www.essex.ac.uk/methods/>>.
- The paper archive of the International Studies Association, a good place to search for rationalist, standpoint and poststructuralist gender analysis along a variety of empirical topics, available HTTP: <<http://www.isanet.org/paperarchive/>>.
- The Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights provides a wealth of material, including a collection of resources on gender, feminism and international relations, available HTTP: <<http://www.genderandsecurity.org/index.htm>>.

### Sources for further reading and research

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# Feminist International Relations: Making Sense . . .

Marysia Zalewski

For an explanation to be useful, a great deal of human dignity has to be left on the cutting room floor.

(Enloe 1996: 188)

## INTRODUCTION: 'LITTLE OBVIOUS CONNECTION'?

A recent visit to Australia provided me with fresh opportunities to reflect on how we learn about our international political world(s). Taking a tour around the Old Parliament House in Canberra I was drawn to a terracotta panel entitled 'The Greek Mother', which, as the caption states, tells a stark tale of a 'Spartan mother giving her son a shield. She commands him to come back from battle carrying the shield with honour, or on it – dead.' Intriguingly, the gift had been described by the curator of the exhibit as having 'little obvious connection to the world of politics' (a point which our tour guide reiterated enthusiastically!).

Yet for a scholar of feminism this gift is intensely political; it illustrates the intimate connections between gender and politics, especially international politics given the example involves one of its archetypal concerns – war. The panel depicts formidable expectations of dutiful masculinity (combined in the figure of a good son/Spartan warrior); alongside a powerful demonstration of civic motherly duty, to the extent of preferring her son's death, than his return from battle without honour. This is a potent illustration of the work gender does and how gender matters. Or at least, this is the 'sense' that a feminist scholar would make of it.

In this chapter I illustrate some of the ways feminist scholarship makes sense of international politics. I borrow the idea of making sense from Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, first published in 1989. That Enloe chose this title is extremely important; calling her book 'Applying Feminism to International Politics' (or something similar) would have implied a vastly different and much less interesting or radical book. Rather than recycling knowledge, the idea of making sense is fundamentally concerned with how we produce, construct and contain knowledge about our international political world(s). What issues do we count as important to take into account when investigating international politics? What kinds of knowledges do we regard as legitimate and authoritative? What concepts or categories – theoretical, methodological, philosophical, epistemological – do we regard as appropriate to use?<sup>1</sup> What international stories become credible? Whose lives and what kind of lives count as important? Though feminism is often assumed to be simplistically 'only' about women's lives and experiences, it is more appropriate to think of feminism as primarily concerned with the kinds of questions just raised, questions which are fundamentally about 'how we organize life, how we accord it value, how we compel the world' (Butler 2004a: 205).<sup>2</sup> Feminist scholars implicitly and explicitly work with these kinds of questions, often starting, and sometimes staying, with women's lives, but usually using the multi-faceted prism of gender to tell the ensuing narratives. This minimally implies that feminist scholars will present very different accounts of international politics than those conventionally provided.

A number of approaches have been used to tell these varying feminist accounts or 'stories'<sup>3</sup> about international politics; each with their own method of dealing with the constraints of creating the landscape of international politics through feminism. Some scholars work with the ontological, political and disciplinary parameters of the discipline of International Relations (IR) through which to create feminist IR. J. Ann Tickner's early work might be included in this genre as her work, for example on security, is constituted in response to the failure of the discipline of IR to properly acknowledge the importance of gender (1992). More recently Tickner engages the tension between remaining committed to insisting that feminist scholarship is both credible and necessary to IR, while simultaneously 'knowing' that the parameters of IR are antithetical to the political and ethical demands of feminism (2001, 2006). Christine Sylvester's earlier work similarly worked with IR's frame in order to demonstrate the latter's abject failure in regard to gender (1994). Her more recent work, though still responsive to IR's frame, is more dismissive of IR's authority or necessity (2007, 2008).

A significant book in the development of feminist IR is V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan's book *Global Gender Issues* (1993, 2nd edition 1999).<sup>4</sup> This offers not only an accessible and exceedingly informative feminist account of how gender matters in international politics; it also offers an innovative conceptual tool to students and scholars still unconvinced. Using the metaphor of a 'lens', Peterson and Sisson Runyan demonstrate that seeing the world of international politics through an alternative (gendered) focus, facilitates the ability to 'see' depictions (realities) of international politics alternative to those conventionally offered. They include a picture to illustrate how the 'gender-lens' metaphor works: it shows two



giant-like (in size) white men (with miserable expressions!) each wearing a western-style man's suit, a shirt and tie and both are wearing spectacles. In front of one of the men is a 'normal' size white woman (i.e. not giant-size) standing on a ladder, wearing an apron, a scarf on her head and carrying a bucket (one is led to assume she is a 'cleaning lady'). She is shown on top of the ladder reaching up to clean the spectacles the two men are wearing and working on the second lens of the first man's glasses having, we assume, wiped the first lens clean. The second man's spectacles are still completely darkened. The attached caption explains this is a 'graphic depiction of how lenses affect fields of visions and how women at the bottom of the world politics hierarchy are struggling to make elite men see the world more clearly' (Peterson and Runyan 1993: 20).

*Global Gender Issues* and the idea of gender as a lens is such an interesting example of feminist work in IR; epistemologically, methodologically and politically. Politically, the link with what we can still call radical feminism<sup>5</sup> is clear – we can see this in the insistence that it is crucially important to centralize women's lives, particularly given women's on-going place on many of the 'bottom rungs' of significance or international care (Enloe 1996). Without this concentrated focus on women we will not see these 'other' worlds of international politics as they are methodologically obscured when we fail to see through gender(ed) lenses. Moreover, epistemologically the lens approach reveals one of the persistent paradoxes that infuses feminism (within IR and further afield) which can be illustrated through these two questions. Are feminist scholars producing better truths, indeed more *complete* truths which would imply the empirical, theoretical and ethical *necessity* of feminist scholarship in a field of study (IR) given the latter insists it is producing rigorous and useful knowledge about the world of international politics? Or are feminist scholars simply producing an *alternative* set of stories which may be deemed ultimately *unnecessary* in the generic pursuit of useful knowledge about international politics?<sup>6</sup>

These are just a few examples of the wide range of work that might be regarded as 'feminist IR', a field in which there is a vast range of contemporary research; readers are directed to the footnotes (and the other chapters in this book) for further reading.<sup>7</sup> What I want to do in the rest of this chapter is focus on two of the main questions that feminist scholars still continue to prioritize: where are the women? And, what work is masculinity doing? I am intentionally not starting with a rigid definition of feminism even though I think it is the case that most students who want to know about feminism and International Relations think that an early and 'clear' definition will help. But there is a deep violence in reducing something to a single feature (Zizek 2008: 52), indicating that definitions may not be as useful – or as innocent – as they promise especially if they are meant to *importantly* capture the meaning of something. It is clearly impossible to include all the complexities and complications of something in a single sentence (or two) which begs an important question – what gets left *out* to make the definition workable (or make sense)? Conversely, the idea of 'capturing meaning' suggests that only specific things get counted *in*; the question begged here is, what gets counted in or assumed, and on what basis and to what effect?

However, defining something is perhaps perceived to be particularly important and necessary when the thing being defined is understood to be controversial or

particularly challenging.<sup>8</sup> This, I think, is the case with feminism. In the context of the study of international politics and indeed more generally (academically and popularly), feminism remains the focus of a wide array of seemingly contradictory questions and criticisms. Is feminism still relevant; or is it old hat? Is it more necessary than ever in our deeply inequitable societies? Is it overly theoretical or a-theoretical? Is it too political? Is it too reactionary? Is it too western? Isn't it just about women or women's issues? What about men? What about other categories?<sup>9</sup> These questions indicate some of the political and theoretical complexities inflecting contemporary feminism which suggests starting with a narrow definition will not be very helpful in constructively understanding how feminist work makes sense of international politics. My preference is to defer commencing with a tight definition, and thus risk (violently) closing off the potential of feminism right at the beginning, and instead look at some of the *work* of self-identified feminist scholarship in and about international politics. I want to explore what some of this work does, and what kinds of knowledges or stories it produces, and ultimately to consider where this work might take us; intellectually, empirically, politically. I will start with the radical<sup>10</sup> question – where are the women?

## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Paying serious attention to women can expose how *much* power it takes to maintain the international political system in its present form.

(Enloe 1989: 3, emphasis in original)

We are very used to seeing men at the centre of international politics, though their ubiquitous presence still generally invokes little or no response. In *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1989) Enloe suggested that one of the most useful functions of Margaret Thatcher when she was Prime Minister of the UK, was that her constant singular female presence amongst groups of elite men starkly illustrated how the world of high politics was still very much a 'man's world'; 'one woman in a photo makes it harder to ignore that the men are men' (1989: 6).<sup>11</sup> Even in more contemporary times, the image of a lone, if putatively powerful woman amongst many men might give us pause to think.

It's not that there haven't always been women in high politics, sometimes very senior and internationally significant women (Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Margaret Thatcher and Benazir Bhutto for example). But this fact alone has never done anything to change how we think about what international politics is, or to what gets counted as important to analyse internationally, or how we think international politics actually works. But when we ask about women, how we think about these questions about international politics – and the potential content of the answers – begins to change, though perhaps not always with immediate or conventionally visible effect. By paying rigorous attention to women's apparent absence feminist scholars initially expose two things. One is the abundant active presence and work of women (even if in often seemingly insignificant roles) in constituting international political practices. The second is the integral and constitutive role



Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2 Images from G8 summits in 2007 and 2008. The G8 is an international forum of the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK and the USA – a powerful global grouping. There is an annual meeting (summit) of the G8 heads of government.

*Source:* Images in the public domain, courtesy of Wikipedia Commons.

gender plays (particularly through expectations of what it means to properly behave as a man or a woman) in the reproduction and enactment of international political practices. Let me clarify and offer some examples, first turning to a conventional site of international politics – the military.

What does the presence of military women tell us, about gender or about international politics or about power? On-going questions about their presence indicates a persistent uneasiness attached to the idea (and practice) of a woman in the military, unless, of course, a military wife. Where there is a societal and legislative emphasis on gender equality (most obviously in democratic societies), women's military participation can be offered as evidence of the success of justice and equality measures, a putative achievement further enhanced if full citizenship requires (usually symbolically) the capacity to defend one's country. Moreover, the activities of military women arguably help to dispel the myth that women are inherently less

violent than men; as such a focus on female violence perhaps demonstrates the maturity of feminist analysis. But paying closer attention to the idea that women can be violent illustrates that the violence of women (soldiers) means something different, or is understood to be different to the violence of their male counterparts. The ‘notorious’<sup>12</sup> case of the US soldier Lynndie England posing in the now iconic photographs with Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib<sup>13</sup> well illustrates this point. England’s violence – or read through her sex – appears more abhorrent (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Lloyd 1995). Theorizing why we think women should be radically different (to men) and investigating how we learn to think like this, supplies more than richer empirical information about women; it helps to start an unravelling of some of the gendered foundations which help to constitute conventional narratives about international politics.

Further, from a starting point of asking questions about women, or *a* woman in this example, we are drawn to an investigation of femininity and sexuality. Thinking about or theorizing about how sense is made of Lynndie England’s activities for example, which were generally deemed an unacceptable display of femininity, or, to bring in a fictional example, Demi Moore’s character – Jordan O’Neil – in the film *G.I. Jane* (1997), begins to expose that the crux of the problem does not centre on *women* in the military, but rather *femininity*, and crucially femininity ‘out of place’. In *G.I. Jane*, signs of Jordan O’Neil’s femininity are viscerally removed throughout the film, for example through the removal of ‘excess’ hair<sup>14</sup> and the disappearance of her ‘excess’ (feminized) body fat via a punishing exercise regime. The abject horror with which one of her Seal colleagues apprehends Jordan’s tampons (though still in the box and unused), indicates a level of fear and loathing about women’s bodies which is hard to comprehend, at least conventionally. Yet though Jordan’s femininity – and military women’s femininity in general – has to be managed in particular ways, often by eviscerating the traditional signs of it, the opposite is the case in regard to her heterosexuality which is vehemently confirmed in the film.<sup>15</sup>

Homosexuality is clearly a problem for militaries, though the regulations on whether homosexuals can legitimately serve in the military vary internationally (Whitworth 2008). The ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ policy of the US military allows homosexuals to serve as long as they keep their ‘sexual orientation secret’ and remain (homosexually) celibate. However, although the use of the word ‘homosexual’ is officially intended to include both men and women (and actually includes homosexual *and* bisexual people), it is the homosexuality of men which transpires as that which seems to create the greatest tensions. This is illustrated through two of the conventional justifications for refusing (out) homosexual people (really men) the opportunity to serve in the military; (i) the impact their inclusion would have on unit cohesion, and (ii) the potential health risks (Cohn 1998). Cohn argues these are spurious justifications, arguing that it is rather straight soldier’s fears of the assumed reversed predatory gaze of gay men that emerges as the most serious threat.<sup>16</sup>

“ . . . if you place one [homosexual] in my room, bunker, tent or shower, I’d bash his head in.”

“I’d go AWOL, I don’t want fags staring at me while I shower or dress or anything.”

(cited in Cohn 1998: 138)

The idea that (all) gay men might be lustily gazing at the bodies of (all) straight men, or more specifically the rabid reaction that this thought (fear) can engender, suggests that military life works with and depends on quite specific understandings about what counts as 'normal' sexual relations or behaviours; one of these being the idea that (heterosexual) men will normally (in many senses) look at/lust after (heterosexual) women. This heteronormative arrangement is not radically disturbed by allowing women in (whatever their sexual orientation), particularly if their femininity can be held to conventional account (straight men will lust after a woman if she is deemed desirable; either ignored or derided if not). This conventional set of practices is seemingly disturbed if (out) gay men are allowed into the military; the sense is that straight men will automatically (and 'naturally') assume gay men will treat straight men 'as if' they were women. The visceral hatred with which (some) straight men seem to react to this possibility, gestures towards the importance of conventional expectations around gender and sexual categories and behaviours are in the military's everyday practices.

By beginning with a question of seemingly little importance to IR – 'where are the women' – feminist scholarship commences an unravelling of conventional boundaries and foundations. As such re-reading conventional narratives of international politics through feminism offers us different ways to think; it offers different ways to think about what is important and what is normal and how much work assumptions about the latter are doing. To offer another example; at the time of writing, the death of the first British female soldier to be killed on active service in Afghanistan is being reported (Weaver 2008). Much is being made of her sex; the idea of women coming back in body bags is clearly politically and popularly unwelcome. But asking feminist questions about the kinds of dangers that military women face tells us something alternatively interesting about the military; notably that female soldiers are more likely to be attacked by their male colleagues than by 'enemy' men (Maley 2006). When a former senior US military commander in Iraq was accused of covering up the causes of the deaths of several female soldiers serving in Iraq, Brigadier General Janis Karpinski testified that 'these women died of dehydration because they refused to drink liquids late in the day, for fear they would have to use the latrines late at night. They were afraid of assault and rape by male soldiers if they had to use the latrine – which was far from the barracks – after dark' (Eisenstein 2007: 36). This kind of knowledge about women (and men) suggests that conventional militarized understandings of who needs protecting, who protects and who is in danger are much more complicated than we usually think.

It is clear that the focus on women does so much more than simply supply better information 'about women' (in/and international politics), though our understanding of the ways wars are waged or alliances built (or destroyed) or how international corporations trade internationally or how nations and citizens are secured (or insecured), is made immensely more complex and intricate when we ask 'where are the women?'. Asking this question impels us to tell the story(ies) of international politics in very different ways. It impels us (if we stay with it) to re-consider how conventional methodologies and epistemologies, rather than facilitating the collection of 'good knowledge', make invisible much of what 'goes on' – or to put it another way – show us how 'discursive power functions by concealing the terms of its fabrication'

(Brown 2001: 122). The placing of women and questions about women centre stage is something feminist work encourages as it begins to open up ways to re-think why activities traditionally associated with women or femininity seem irrelevant or insignificant in the context of international politics. There are two results here we might note; one is that we get new, more complex images of what happens in international politics and thus what international politics is (about). Second, we get a better sense of how important women are in international politics – in so many ways – which really begs the question, how is it so easy to leave them out?

But feminists tend not to linger very long at the conventional centre of international politics. It is important to turn our attention away from the centre and look at some of the work women do which is not typically regarded as political or politically interesting. Cynthia Enloe's scholarship serves as an exemplar in this context, theoretically and empirically illustrating how the 'personal is international' (1989). International politics would not function without the work of diplomatic and loyal wives (indicating there is a politics to love and heterosexual expectations); or nimble fingered and thus poorly paid workers (suggestive of 'natural' female aptitudes as opposed to learned skills); or sex workers serving the military (further reinforcing particular ideas about militarized (heterosexual) masculinity – 'to be quite honest, I would rather tell my peer group that I got a dose of the clap at a whore house than PTSD' (quotation made by a soldier, taken from a special report on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD], cited in Whitworth 2008: 117); or women as markers and symbols of the nation, bearers of the nation's children and ideologies, as tourists, flight attendants, chamber maids, colonized women, film stars and fashion models (think how Nicolas Sarkozy's model wife [in numerous senses] currently buttresses his own particular masculinized brand of international political leadership, even to

#### Where are the women?

- Reminds us that it is a radical act to place women and questions about women centre stage.
- Insists on persistent questioning of the dominance of men and the work of masculinity.
- Impels us to think about how beliefs about femininity and masculinity inform and structure international political practices.
- Shows that women *are* present in the world of international politics – empirically, theoretically, symbolically – as wives, mothers, workers, carriers and reproducers of femininity, makers and supporters of masculinity.
- Leads us to tell different stories about international politics
- Makes us begin to see that asking this question leads to all kinds of epistemological, methodological, ontological and political questions – not least in the realm of gender, sex, sexuality, masculinity and femininity.

Figure 3.3 The work of Cynthia Enloe.



Figure 3.4 Memorial on the Anzac Parade, Canberra, Australia.

Source: Copyright to MZ, 2008.

the point of her wearing flat shoes so as not to draw attention to the fact that he is shorter than her – still something of a heteronormative ‘no-no’). The list of the ways in which women – especially when involved in traditional gendered/feminized activities – are integral to the practices of international politics is endless. If we leave women’s activities unexamined we end up with a devastatingly weak and inadequate understanding of how international politics works.

But how do people *learn* about international politics and the usually hidden work of gender therein? Most people do not learn from academic books – but from more popular ‘ordinary’ sites.

The photograph in Figure 3.4 shows the memorial dedicated to ‘Australian Service Nurses’, one of many memorials on the Anzac Parade in Canberra, Australia. This one depicts very traditional images of nursing not least that nurses are all seemingly female and the soldiers they care for are all seemingly male – though it is quite beautiful, especially in the Australian sunshine; cool, curving and evocative of fluidity. It is formally described by the Australian government as ‘taking the form of the interlocking glass walls represents nurturing hands, symbolic of nursing’. The frontispiece, as shown here, bears the caption ‘Beyond All Praise’. Well no – not really.

Nurses are really not ‘beyond all praise’ (or appropriate remuneration for their work). Yet this caption captures and reproduces a sense of the supposed ‘naturalness’ of women’s capacity to nurture and care; a ‘fictioning of femininity’ (Larcombe 2005: 4). The idea that nurses are ‘beyond’ infers that these nurses who play an integral part in international conflicts were not (simply) trained operatives – as skilled (if differently) as their male soldier counterparts. Rather their ‘beyond’ status marks them as ‘special’, almost literally ‘angelic’ – beyond/above human – and as such outside of the realm of learned skills and hard work (and good money). This is

not to suggest that people *really* think nurses are angels, or that there is a general view that nurses should not be remunerated for their work. But it is to remind us that there are many sites through which we learn about men and women and about appropriate masculinities and femininities and how these work to reproduce the international political landscapes that are then taken so much for granted.

Let me move to the second question that feminist scholars ask about international politics (and gender): what work is masculinity doing?

## WHAT WORK IS MASCULINITY DOING?

How precarious is any particular masculinised norm and any given pyramid of unequally valued masculinities.

(Enloe 2007: 205)

Far from being just about men, the idea of masculinity engages, inflects, and shapes everyone.

(Berger *et al.* 1995: 7)

If we take a quick glance at the contemporary international political scene it still appears to be overwhelmingly populated by men as well as still being highly masculinized. However, thinking about this perception through feminism does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that either men or masculinity are monolithic and all powerful. If we take the feminist opportunity to closely reflect on the varying and contradictory ways that masculinities are weaved through the theories and practices of international politics a more complicated picture, of both gender and international politics, emerges. Indeed keeping a sharp focus on masculinity<sup>17</sup> can help to dispel the idea that masculinity *is* all powerful, or that men are the only people important enough to take notice of; showing up some frailties around masculinity and the accompanying fragility of the boundaries holding gender categories and practices in place. Moreover, concentrating on masculinity signals quite clearly that the whole of international politics is gendered – a point more easily, if wrongly, missed when the gender focus remains on women (Zalewski and Parpart 2008: 1).<sup>18</sup>

In this section I begin by focusing briefly on two examples from popular culture given this is a prime transmitter of cultural values and beliefs (see Chapters 22 and 23). These are Oliver Stone's film *World Trade Center* (2006), starring Nicolas Cage and Michael Peña as New York Port Authority Police Officers; the second is Kiefer Sutherland in his role as the increasingly iconic Jack Bauer in the US television series *24*.<sup>19</sup> Both *24* and *World Trade Center* are primarily concerned with matters of conventional importance in international politics – the latter very obviously given it ostensibly tells the story of two of the cops who were rescued from the rubble of the twin towers in the days after 9/11. *24* is about the fictional Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU) which fights all kinds of 'terrorist evils' that befall (largely) the US.<sup>20</sup> CTU's key agent is Jack Bauer who voraciously performs his role. Jack Bauer is, without doubt, (represented as) a 'real man'; a man fit to protect and serve in a post 9/11 era.



And a 'real' man – a bleeding, emotional, sometimes frightened man – not an other-worldly super-hero. His public popularity is evident; many websites are devoted to the series and to Jack Bauer in particular – including a 'Jack Bauer for President' site and numerous 'Jack Bauer jokes' sites. One such joke is that 'Jack Bauer never charges his cell phone because it is powered by testosterone'. Jack's twenty-first century masculinity is not in doubt.<sup>21</sup>

However, the two central characters in *World Trade Center* demonstrate a different kind of masculinity. They are just 'normal' guys – ordinary family men replete with financial and personal anxieties. The story of their ultimate heroic survival and rescue from the suffocating ruins of the twin towers is splintered with flashback images of their ordinary American lives. One has a wife and children, the other a pregnant girlfriend and small daughter; all shown anxiously waiting with their families, friends and neighbours for the safe return of their men. The men's rescue is made ultimately possible by the arrival of a US Marine – visually and symbolically presenting as the embodiment of contemporary militarized masculinity; strong, single-minded, committed and proactive.

What do these fictional scripts and the accompanying 'real' scripts, all of which have been on something of a 'terror-loop' since 9/11, tell us about gender, specifically in its masculinized manifestations, and its relationship with international politics? Feminist scholars suggest that we have witnessed a quite stark re-assertion of traditional categories particularly around gender in the post 9/11 political environment; one which Zillah Eisenstein describes as a 'manly moment' (2004: 161). In the midst of devastation many heroes emerged – the fire fighters, Jack Bauer, the two New York cops, the stalwart Marine – yet it seemed only men were eligible for hero status. Where were the women? 'The women who died were ignored; those who survived were encouraged to get back to baking and child-rearing' (Faludi 2007).

The intimate connection between (male) heroism and violence is starkly enacted through the character of Jack Bauer. The regularity in which viewers see Jack torturing people (usually 'terrorists') is staggering – but he is the 'hero' and acting to protect his country and to save 'innocent lives' and the torture comes to seem increasingly acceptable, or at least justifiable to viewers (Dershowitz 2008). Similarly, the heroic rescuing Marine in *World Trade Center* infers that violence is a righteous response to the attacks on the twin towers. For a feminist scholar it is important to note how these re-vitalized forms of masculinity (even in their disparate forms) emerge as 'organised around the heroism of violence' (Hooper 2001: 151), a heroism which constantly ripples through the conventional landscape of 'high politics' and power. Think of the following example, one which further demonstrates connections between fiction and reality.

Of all the stories one could choose to tell about the war in Afghanistan, one that gained significant media attention in the spring of 2008 concerned the UK's Prince Harry when his secret stint of 'active service' in Afghanistan had to be cut short as his cover had 'been blown'. The media reporting on this was full of clichés which invoked very clear connections between war, (celebrity) heroism and masculinity. According to reports Harry had become a 'bullet magnet' in a dangerous conflict zone but he was still 'our warrior Prince' (Mayer 2008). These stories about Harry's 'heroism' and the fact that he seemingly felt impelled to ignore the dangers of the

'battle zone' despite him being third in line to the throne help to re-affirm potent ideologies around contemporary (heterosexualized) masculinity – even if fleetingly – particularly given the context of military service being the epitome of (royal) civic duty. These small stories of gender generally go un-noticed in the maelstrom of 'regular' international politics with its conventional focus on 'big questions' and 'big issues'. Asking feminist-inspired questions about masculinity reminds us that it remains vital to monitor the ways in which the categories that shape people's lives (and deaths) re-circulate and re-organize in response to changes in the international environment; and indeed re-shape that environment.

As masculinity and the boundaries keeping gender in place are fragile, much work goes into securing them. For many feminist scholars the re-assertion of particular formations of gender, specifically in relation to men and masculinities remains significant; as such the ubiquitous presence of men on the conventional stage of international politics deserves close attention. Raewyn Connell claims the contemporary international environment is increasingly marked by a range of competing market patriarchies, which are linked antagonistically through the 'arenas of media, commodity and finance markets, diplomacy and war' (2008: xiii). It is not insignificant that the core global power holders in the elites of transnational corporations and major states are overwhelmingly men, or that they viscerally embody variations on a 'technocratic, power-oriented masculinity' (Connell 2008: xiii). One might note that the aggressive (though oftentimes tender and emotional) masculinity of Jack Bauer in the series *24* is argued to have been connected to the enactment of particular forms of violence, specifically torture, in Guantanamo Bay (Sands 2008: 73). This is not to claim a simplistic causal link. But it does illustrate the symbolic and discursive power of television and related media; and indeed the powerful seductions of masculinity.

Cynthia Enloe also argues that masculinities are simultaneously powerful and fragile and thus in 'need of daily propping up' (Enloe 2008: 206); but the cracks sometimes show. Sandra Whitworth very effectively shows this in her work on PTSD. Whitworth argues that PTSD is a profound betrayal of the norms of hyper-masculinity in which militarized men have become indoctrinated as 'male soldiers who experience PTSD discover they have not obliterated the feminine other and indeed risk becoming "women"' (2008: 118). Furthermore, the majority of cases of PTSD in female soldiers result from the harassment and abuse experienced within a military setting (2008: 110). Carol Cohn tells something of a similar story about a 'man becoming a woman' (once again exposing the masquerade of gender as firmly bounded) in her classic essay, 'Wars, Wimps and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War' (1993). She argues that speech, words or concepts associated with femininity (such as 'blurting' or being 'emotional') are not figured as belonging to the realm of ('masculinized') rationality and reason. Concomitantly, standards of 'good thinking' tend to match up to those ways that have evolved as archetypically masculine. In her work with and on defence intellectuals she illustrates that their work is legitimized through claims to 'objectivity born of technical expertise' (2004: 360, see also Chapter 1 and Figure 3.5). Though the surface of their discourse supports this view, if we look below, around, through and to the sides of these discourses, we see that there are deep rivulets of 'homeroetic excitement and

- Illustrates how gender is discursively produced and enacted in everyday practices
- Shows how gender can work as a pre-emptive deterrent to thought
- Demonstrates how gender impacts on and co-constitutes thinking and feelings
- Shows how gender can situate/position people and language in (in)appropriate locations
- Illustrates the intimate connections between gender and sexuality.

Cohn's work demonstrates well Donna Haraway's claim that 'accounts of a "real" world do not ... depend on a logic of "discovery", but on a power-charged social relation of "conversation"' (1991: 198). The metaphor of, and practices of, 'conversation' should not be taken to imply less than rigorous analysis; but is rather to suggest that theorizing is much more complex than we usually assume, but simultaneously that it is much more 'ordinary' and 'daily' than we are led to understand through conventional teaching about international politics. Working with the idea of 'conversation' suggests that much of the work of (re)producing the world occurs at the 'ordinary/everyday' levels which are not necessarily measurable using traditional methodological tools.

Figure 3.5 The work of Carol Cohn.

heterosexual domination' (2004: 360). Not, as she says, 'a paragon of cool-headed objectivity' (ibid.).

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: LITTLE OBVIOUS CONNECTION?

Nothing escapes invention.

(Eisenstein 2004: 43)

In a recent discussion on grading undergraduate dissertations, my IR co-marker suggested the mark I had given one student was a little too high given the student had written something of a 'feminist polemic' on the international organization she had chosen to write on, rather than a 'balanced account'. My colleague argued that the feminist critique offered should have been set against 'IR perspectives'. My response was that the student had not written a feminist *critique*, but a feminist *narrative* and thus was an 'IR perspective' in its own right. The ensuing lively discussion over one piece of work by one student (though similar disagreements are probably commonplace across the [academic] globe)<sup>22</sup> illuminates one way to think about feminism and its role in making sense of international politics. Asking how feminism contributes to, or critiques international politics misses the point. Feminism simply (if not uncontroversially) both *does* and *produces* IR.

By beginning with questions about women, gender, masculinity, femininity – questions not usually at the centre of international political analysis – and by very closely analysing the kinds of stories that emerge – feminism is an important theoretical resource in studying and creating knowledge about international politics. The important question is not how to choose the 'best' theory or narrative, rather it

is a case of making visible the functions and workings of gender in their varied manifestation – minimally as masculinity and femininity. We do not tend to ‘see’ gender and we certainly radically underestimate the work it does.<sup>23</sup> Investigating how gender functions through the figure of woman and the activities of women begins to illustrate the staggering significance of gender in the construction and daily enactment of international politics.

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### Seminar exercise

Take a trip into the town or city centre (or the centre of campus) and ask people what they think about women’s role, or what women do in international politics. Consider any difficulties people might have in giving an answer. Consider the assumptions made about women and about international politics. Think how answers make you think about feminism, about women, about international politics.

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### Questions for further debate

1. Is feminism just about women? (And why/how does this question matter?)
2. What is the relationship between gender and feminism? (Can we study gender without feminism?)
3. Why are feminists interested in masculinity? (How is masculinity connected to men?)
4. What does feminism *do* to the study of international politics? (How do we know where to look for the answer to this question?)
5. What would IR look like if it were feminist? (How biased does this feel?)

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### Relevant web-based resources

- Guerilla Girls, Inc., the website of the Guerilla Girls, ‘was established by two founding Guerrilla Girls and other members to continue the use of provocative text, visuals and humour in the service of feminism and social change’. Available HTTP: <<http://www.guerrillagirls.com/>>.
- The F Word is a contemporary UK feminist blog, available HTTP: <<http://www.thefword.org.uk/blog/>>.
- Women in Black (WiB) is a world wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. Available HTTP: <<http://www.womeninblack.org.uk/>>.
- CODEPINK is a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Available HTTP: <<http://www.codepink4peace.org/>>.
- The website of Women Make Movies, films by and about women, available HTTP: <<http://www.wmm.com/>>.

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## Notes

- 1 See Stern and Zalewski (forthcoming, 2009); Zalewski and Parpart (2008); Shaw and Walker (2006); Ackerly *et al.* (2006).
- 2 See also Wiegman (2004) and Weston (2002) in regard to feminism as a complex critical (and contested) theory which necessarily implies that 'feminism' is not to be read as singular.
- 3 See Clare Hemmings on 'feminist stories' (2005).
- 4 A third edition will be published in 2009.
- 5 Though I do not want to typologize feminism too much, the legacy and continuing contested impact of what we can call radical feminism (see Jaggar 1983; Crow 2000) is too important not to mention.
- 6 It is not in the remit of this chapter to resolve this paradox – but readers are reminded that it remains extremely significant. When teaching Peterson and Runyan's work to undergraduates, one student looked at me quizzically and said, 'when I come to this class I put my gender lenses on, but when I go to my other IR class, I take them off again'. My response to him was something on the lines of – well, no, you don't actually take them off at all . . . The visual logic of lenses (as potentially optional or removable) indicates that though the metaphor is methodologically and pedagogically innovative, and perhaps sometimes politically necessary for feminists; if taught too tightly within or through IR's disciplinary epistemological and political parameters, it potentially leaves space for gender to be, once again, discarded from the intellectual landscape of significance.
- 7 For other approaches to the study of feminism and international politics see, for example, Ackerly *et al.*, (2006) Steans (2006), Parpart and Zalewski (2008), Peterson and Runyan (1999), J. Ann Tickner (2001).
- 8 Though definitions are always problematic, see Diane Elam (1994: 4).

- 9 See Janet Halley (2006); Wendy Brown (2005); Mary Hawkesworth (2004), Adam Jones (1996).
- 10 The word 'radical' here can be taken both to infer 'radical feminism' and simultaneously a more generic understanding of 'radical' given that a central and persistent focus on women is still very much out of keeping with traditional and commonplace practice.
- 11 Margaret Thatcher's status as an 'icon' for women and/or feminism is being intriguingly represented currently through British artist Marcus Harvey's portrait of her constituted out of dildoes (see Hattenstone 2009).
- 12 Women's violence is often marked by notoriety particularly women identified as 'lower/working' class. This idea is regularly represented in the sites through which many people garner their knowledge about politics, for example television, newspapers and the Internet as well as through popular culture especially popular movies.
- 13 There are many websites devoted to these photographs and to Lynndie England. These can be accessed by using any Internet search engine.
- 14 See the Youtube clip showing Demi Moore as Jordan O'Neil shaving her hair off to The Pretender's song, 'The Bitch is Dead', online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOhBICuKSBQ>> [accessed 15 April 2009].
- 15 On GI Jane see Carver (2007); Linda Ruth Williams (2004); Youngs *et al.* (1999).
- 16 It is significant that lesbians seem less important – really 'invisible' in this context.
- 17 I do not mean to imply a singularity to masculinity, indeed the opposite is the case as there are many differing masculinities. But, rather than using the double-barrelled masculinity/masculinities throughout, for ease I will use the word 'masculinity'.
- 18 For more discussion of man, men and masculinities see Hooper (2001), Connell (1995, 2002), Wiegman (2001) and Kegan Gardiner (2002).
- 19 The first series of *24* was aired in 2002. Since then there have been six 'seasons'; season 7 is, at the time of writing, being shown on some TV channels in the UK. The first six seasons are available on DVD. 'Jack Bauer for President' T-shirts are available for purchase. The distinctive telephone ring tone of the Counter Terrorism Unit is available to download for mobile/cell phones. And I can testify to regularly hearing this ring tone in cafés and supermarkets!
- 20 Though the US emerges as representing 'the globe' – reflecting a common self-perception of its own international role.
- 21 There are many intriguing enactments of gender in *24* – notably the 'complementary' masculinity of President David Palmer (in seasons 1–5) – whom we are led to believe is the US's first black President. The femininity of Jack's 19-year-old daughter Kim is also intriguing (regularly needing Dad to help her out of a mess). But, for me, the most interesting character viewed through a gender 'lens' is President Palmer's wife Sherry Palmer. Unfortunately limitations on space don't allow me to discuss this further here! My thanks go to my daughter Tessa for introducing me to *24* (though we disagree about Sherry!). For readings of *24* see Peacock (2007) and Minter (2008).
- 22 It remains important to reflect on (theorize about) these daily practices. Small, everyday events, along with their resistances/confirmations make up our lives.
- 23 See Kronsell on the problems of 'studying silences' (2006).

# Postcolonial Theories and Challenges to 'First World-ism'

Anna M. Agathangelou and Heather M. Turcotte

The discipline of International Relations (IR) is often considered to be a site of examination into global power relationships, and a place to develop theories, methods and practices that provide insight to the materiality<sup>1</sup> of global politics. However, the discipline itself has been and continues to be a geopolitical site of intense power struggles and negotiations. Increasingly, since the 1980s, the various theories and methods of IR have produced explicit analyses on the relationships of global power within IR's own frameworks of knowledge production. In particular, the works of critical, feminist and postcolonial theorists have shifted the orientation of IR scholarship to consider the different configurations and effects of international politics when attentive to various objects, subjects and power relations circulating within critical geographies (Sylvester 1994; Walker 1993; Grovogui 2001; Chowdhry and Nair 2002). These interventions heed the exclusions of canonical IR theories and teachings and question its role in shaping global places, scales, networks and spatial relations. What kinds of political strategies and theoretical frameworks are currently being drawn upon to understand world politics and the discipline of IR?

In this chapter we argue that the critiques of postcolonial feminists and critical feminisms have contributed epistemic, knowledge frameworks, and material insights into hegemonic power relations, and in particular global violence. More specifically, such theorizations have raised questions about the 'geopolitical' in order to transform IR's contentious emphasis on geographical and territorial realms of power. Mainstream IR constructions of global violence are explained through static constructions of geography that territorialize where violence is and who are the victims, perpetrators and protectors. Take, for example, the discourses of 'women's rights as

human rights,' which are focused on the abuse of 'women' in the 'Third' and 'Second World' regions of 'Africa,' 'Asia,' 'Latin America,' 'Middle East,' and 'Eastern Europe.' In these discourses, the regions of the 'U.S.,' 'Canada' and 'Western Europe' are territories of protections and rights; the geographical destinations of asylum are Northern states. In short, geographical location conditions one's relationship and access to rights and state protections (for further discussion of human rights see Chapter 6). Such discourses often elide the power relationships and structures of inequality that make rights claims possible through the regulation of national and international 'citizenship.'

Unequal migration patterns of people and labor, often forced, from Second-Third World countries to the First World and from rural areas to urban, a proliferation of borderland territories, an increased number of export free trade zones and refugee camps within and between states have redrawn static boundaries worldwide. Territories marked as the Global North and Global South are built upon histories of struggle and contestation and geographies of segregation. In other words, the mobility of bodies (people and knowledge) troubles perceived geographical immobility. We are arguing that homogeneous and static constructions of geography that contain known subjects and objects of study rely on histories of segregation to reconstruct anew the world (Agathangelou forthcoming). Such histories represent gender, race, sexuality, religion and nation as separate moments and entities, which we argue, amongst others (i.e. Grewal 2005), propagate violent inequalities through the knowledge claims of global power and forms of justice. What are the ways in which First World discourses of women's rights as human rights necessitate the violence and victimization of Others within the Global South? How does geography inform and become informed by international relations and frameworks of justice? Why is geography a crucial concern for feminist theorizations, methods, pedagogies and praxes of global and gender politics?

We argue that the frameworks of geopolitics within the mainstreams of IR, including feminist IR, rely on geographical separations of land, people and knowledge. This process of *geopolitical segregation* is presented as naturalized, even when violence is foundational to its consolidation (Agathangelou 2004, *forthcoming*; Turcotte 2008). This geographical segregation, though foundational to the remaking and reshaping of spatial relations such as global (im)mobility, restriction to accessing resources and justice becomes visible when read through aboriginal, post-colonial and feminist lenses which usually enable us to inquire into the convergences of segregation and also disruptions that are made possible through the many struggles of marginalized people. More concretely, these theorizations have opened the space for us to engage with First World Feminisms and the different projects they articulate to see how such feminisms move across, create possibilities and even collide in creating spaces of violence, such as sustaining the projects of segregation. In reading and articulating the creative and compelling ways feminists contest the violences of segregation and the challenges that emerge from their interventions, we articulate a feminism that draws on historical insights of spatio-temporal relations and reconfigures geography beyond its epistemic and material cartographic role to social relations that disrupt dominant geopolitical asymmetries of power. In this chapter we take geopolitics as a critical geography of multiple engagements of time,



space and place within various sites of world politics, including relations of knowledge production. By pushing the theoretical realms of geopolitics into unconventional sites, such as IR and feminist knowledge production, we engage and critique the knowledge terrains of the personal and systemic within international relations. We also find it necessary to interrogate our presumptions and assumptions of the 'international' and 'feminist' and their power consolidations to examine how and why geopolitics rely upon the theoretical and material segregations of people's lives, land, bodies and knowledge to maintain structures of power. We engage with comparative (Montenegro 1997) and relational (Shohat 2002) feminisms to offer a theorization of *feminisms of critical geographies*<sup>2</sup> that accounts for feminist socio-economic and political locations and positions on intertwined axes of power (e.g. race, nationality, class, sexuality, gender; see Crenshaw 1995). Configuring feminism and feminist lives in a variety of diverse political, social, economic and geographic contexts encourages a questioning of what it means to be accountable to 'theories of the flesh' (Anzaldúa 1987; Moraga and Anzaldúa 2001) without disembodiment of power nor containing it in cordoned off territories of legitimacy; it is an accounting for the disjunctures and connections in dreams and struggles shared across the locations and positions of power that provide the basis for solidarity and praxis without reification.

By centering people as major participants within global politics (Tétreault and Lipschutz 2005), being attentive to the exclusion of gendered analyses of the state (Enloe 1983, 1989; Peterson 1992; Hooper 1999) and considering the varied relationships and positionalities of the 'Other' (Walker 1993; Ling 2002; Inayatullah and Blaney 2004) as systemic moments of power within international relations, we are suggesting that the analytical frames of global power within IR generally, and feminist IR more specifically, require theoretical articulations that embody accountable political interventions in world politics on multiple scales. Such analyses can provide a deeper understanding of problems in our everyday lives within the multiple communities we inhabit, and they can bring our communities in closer proximity to one another to address global inequality. Because power is always circulating within the material and epistemic realms of IR, we address the major logics and intelligibilities within formulations of IR knowledge to argue that processes of geopolitical segregation are constitutive of these formulations. In other words, IR as a coherent field of study, discipline and practice imagines and produces itself through geopolitical segregation. We connect these segregations explicitly by engaging with the ways we, as IR and/or feminist scholars, are conditioned to reproduce global politics and geopolitical sites as if they are separated moments and relations without historical specificities nor connections to the field, its development and its contemporary practices. Our articulation of feminisms of critical geographies works to: (1) describe the critique of First World Feminism(s)<sup>3</sup> and the contingent challenges and disruptions made possible by postcolonial feminists; (2) highlight the contributions of feminisms' various theoretical approaches that could allow us to construct an integrated and relational vision of transnational feminisms and feminist social relations (Mohanty 1991a; Shohat 2002; Kuokkanen 2008); (3) conceptualize varied possibilities for consolidating an open-ended feminist framework attentive to the geopolitical contexts in which feminisms emerge, struggle and engage; and

(4) imagine possible solidarities-praxis for emancipatory, feminist, anti-racist and anti-capitalist international relations.

## FIRST WORLD FEMINISM(S) AND GEOPOLITICAL SEGREGATION

More than a decade ago several theorists called for an end to neglecting imperialism in IR and for recognizing that knowledge and representation is as important form of a power (Darby and Paolini 1994) in understanding world politics. Since then many scholars have critiqued the provincial and Eurocentric aspects of the discipline by drawing on postcolonial thinking and practices (Krishna 1993; Barkawi and Laffey 2001; Ling 2002). This disruption of the discipline's dominant epistemologies by critical theorists and feminist scholars, and particularly Marxist and scholars of the Global South (Chowdhry and Nair 2002) who centralized class-based politics and regionality, prepared the ground for our critique by expanding the theoretical and methodological terrains of IR. These works not only explore the interconnected relevance of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, nationality and regionality but they also engage with the ways in which knowledge production plays a significant role in shaping political praxis and the formation of colonial and imperial projects. These works continue to play an imperative part in constituting, founding and shaping the conditions of possibility within global politics, as well as the representations of postcolonial and Western identities. Postcolonial critiques highlight that our understandings of the international and the relations of identity formations are limited (Rupert 1995; Ling 2002; Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). Postcolonial theorizations have highlighted the significance of international geographies by suggesting that the constitution of geographical sites as social relations depends on violence (Mudimbe 1994; Mama 1995; Mamdani 1996; Mbembe 2001). More specifically some IR scholars argue that colonial globalities' formations (Muppidi 2004) and constitutions, one of which is the discipline of international relations, depend on violently segregating the world as a fundamental process (Agathangelou 2006, forthcoming; Smith 2006; Rai 2007).

Geopolitical segregation is a substantive set of imperial strategies that produce distinct divisions and locales of world politics, including the discipline and practice of IR (realist, neoliberalism, critical, feminist, postcolonial). Often times it pits intellectual communities against one another and locates them asymmetrically to each other within 'their own' cordoned off territory because of a scramble for resources, claims to expertise and/or to merely legitimize positions of power within an asymmetrical IR World Order.<sup>4</sup> We consider such segregation frameworks – though useful maybe on a short-term basis – as turning into strategies that become complicit with the desires and even violent fantasies of imperialism (see also, Agathangelou and Ling 2009). Such frameworks feed imperial projects that consolidate global space, feminist theory and subject formation 'anew' within the borders of IR, which make capital's crossings and violations possible. Segregation is a logic and practice that regulates, elides and spectacularizes bodies (people, land, knowledge) through gender, racial, ethnic, sexual, national and global orders within the frameworks of IR, albeit with many tensions and myriad contradictions.

### Materiality

- The concept of materiality is a contested one and its genealogy bears a much longer discussion.
- We define materiality in this chapter as the practices of the 'social' (i.e., international, global, corporeal, transnational, etc.) as 'practices' that breathe life and meaning into gendered, sexualized, racialized, classed being and relations, rather than assertions of specific sorts of practices (i.e., economic, systemic, structural, etc.) that are accorded causal priority in shaping social relations (i.e., gendered, racialized, classed, sexualized, etc.). In addition, materiality here refers also to the production, including epistemological articulations toward the formation of a shifting and dynamic change of socio-ontologies of gender, sexuality, race, class that disrupt the dominant formations of property relations including its dominant being.

### Geopolitical segregation

- The concept of geopolitical segregation builds on theoretical and experiential understandings of different kinds of people, land and knowledge that are seemingly disconnected or in relationship to one another, but only through the power dynamics of hierarchical comparison.
- Geopolitical suggests political geographies that can be mapped onto certain spaces and bodies of the world. Segregation suggests separate, not imbricated or co-constituted. Put together, we argue, the concept suggests a substantive set of imperial strategies that produce distinct divisions and locales of world politics, including the people, discipline and practice of IR (e.g., realist, neoliberalism, critical, feminist, postcolonial as separate knowledge sites of IR).

Figure 4.1

Geopolitical segregation, then, is a means to solidify the conditions of power that regulate, control and exploit bodies as central to imperial reformations of political practice and knowledge formations. The subjects of IR and IR subjects themselves are negotiated through their divided geographies of power within the discipline in the name of projects that centralize profit and fear as their goals (Agathangelou and Ling 2009).

The segregation and division of different sites within IR mystifies their co-constitutive histories, unequal divisions of labor and makes difficult the raising of questions about its political praxes through the naturalization – the canonization – of IR, feminist theory and postcolonial world politics. Therefore, we suggest that it is crucial to consider geopolitical bodies (the state, the physical bodies of individuals, regions, knowledges) generally, and the geopolitical bodies of IR (scholars, researchers, policy makers) more specifically, as constantly forming through their struggles, flows, movements, migrations and 'transnational connectivities' (Grewal 2005). Through the description of the multiple worlds that we occupy, the articulation of critical spatial and temporal frames that make it possible for us to 'see' that the knowledge and practice of 'global' politics are historically entangled within an imperial project of geopolitical segregation is crucial. It allows us to recognize that some are called to be complicit (i.e. appropriating their struggle for justice to the struggle for more profits and capital formation) and others to actively participate in protecting the interests of First World-ism and its contingent identified interests even with

*Cyprus Roars*

I am Cyprus and I am in deep pain  
 My womb is in shambles  
 My head and shoulders ache all my body cells, one by one, are injured  
 Male doctors unceasingly excavate my pain  
 I cannot speak of my dead sisters/their beatings all the rapes,  
 My anguish  
 I cannot speak of my colonizers and all my struggles for justice  
 At times, I can hardly remember all the stories I had to tell  
 When I was an active witness to myself to a world of abject poverty  
 all the sexual violence  
 When my memories overflow/wanting me to tell  
 I am Cyprus/and I can be silent no longer

Cited in Agathangelou, Anna M. "Nationalist narratives and (dis)appearing women: state- sanctioned sexual violence." *Canadian Woman Studies* 19 (2000): 12-21.

Figure 4.2

a high cost, privileged subjects consequently impeding possibilities of transformative 'transnational' and 'global' analyses and practices for a just feminist world.

Much debate and contestations of the approaches of hegemonic Anglo-American feminist theorizations on the issues of sexual differentiation as substantive factors of feminist experience, method, knowledge and practice brought to the fore the significance of theorists' location as well as the effect of this location on framing and articulating a politics of disruption against imperial and colonizing practices.<sup>5</sup> The Anglo-American feminist response to such theorizations and critiques manifested in 'new' modes of global feminism with claims of attentiveness to different needs of feminism and feminist subjects around the globe. However, Global Feminists' practices often redraw the political boundaries of academic knowledge to secure whiteness and First Worldism as structures of privilege within feminist *and* IR frameworks; these feminist subjects were, in fact, feminist objects. Such theories and practices continue to deepen the polarizations between different modes and people who embody feminist work; it further generates imperial feminist praxes that foreclose possibilities of solidarity.<sup>6</sup> The theories and methods of some First World Feminisms, women of color feminisms, Third World feminisms, feminisms of the Global South and transnational feminisms from varied geopolitical constituencies articulate their opposition to gender essentialisms and the racial, class and heteronormative privileging within international relations through their own locations and oppositional histories to colonization's and imperial knowledge formations and practice (see, for example, Spivak 1988; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Imam 1997; Nnaemeka 2005). Yet, many of these scholars and the knowledges produced with these critical frameworks – both from the Global South and the Global North<sup>7</sup> – are relegated to the margins and asymmetrically located on the varied knowledge matrices of the

academy (see also Agathangelou and Ling 2002). Disrupting segregation as a process and productive strategy of violence that is fundamental to the formation of the international is thus, crucial.

Underlying much of world politics has been the violent division of the world into domestic and international, the centre and the periphery, the developed and the underdeveloped worlds, the masculine from the feminine, the state territorial space from the anarchic and violent world. Many of these segregations and divisions of the places that people live and relate with on a daily basis have been detrimental to our lives. Segregation has extensively contributed to experiences with violation, and many times death, even when the international discourses have been about change, development, and peace and world order. Numerous scholars from the Global South have questioned the relevance of Anglo-Saxon feminist ideas for women in the Third World arguing that such theories presume a unified category of a 'poor woman of the Third World' (Mohanty *et al.* 1991; Okeke 1996; Chang 2000; Rowley 2003) and argue that feminism itself is a bourgeois ideology of the First World that privileges gender oppression and struggles against patriarchy at the expense of many other structural struggles (Shohat 1998; Narayan and Harding 2000; Waller and Rycenga 2000).

However, as feminists from the First and Third World have engaged one another and tensions have emerged, a move by some to understand gender, racial, national and class-based violences and oppressions in specific, local and historical contexts also has emerged in productive and contested ways. As Mohanty (1991b) explains understanding feminism in only gendered terms assumes that definitions and practices of identities of 'womanhood' are not connected to racial, class, nation or sexuality; rather it is precisely these imbrications of identity that form the ideologies of womanhood. Third World Feminism(s)'s critiques of First World Feminism(s) embody within them two simultaneous deconstruction projects: (1) First World feminism(s), while not a unified project, has been built upon systemic underpinnings of imperialism; (2) Third World Feminism(s), while not a unified project, has been built upon anti-imperial connections. Drawing on these contradictions and tensions in the formations of First and 'Other' Feminisms necessitates an articulation of feminist projects grounded in the histories, cultures and experiences of women from different spatial formations. It is not enough to merely focus on 'gender relations' but for us to understand how the 'dominant' notions of 'womanhood' and 'manhood' are also intertwined with multiple scales such as constructions and geographies of power along racial, ethnic, class, sexual, regional and international dimensions.

Explicit attention to spatially racialized and class critiques of white First World feminisms by Black feminists, women of color and African (a) diasporic scholars and feminisms offer invaluable theoretical insights because such theorizations reveal the naturalization of spatial whiteness within hegemonic feminisms, as well as the investments that many feminists have in this neo-imperial project (Nnaemeka 1998; Magubane 2001). Such theorizations are not a move to occupy whiteness or First World privileges, nor are they simple inversions of power (Spivak 1988); rather, they problematize the trajectories of violence produced through the geographical assumptions of First World feminisms.<sup>8</sup> Such work raises questions about the representations

of localized and globalized geographies through the attention to global structures of slavery, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism that challenge First World Feminists' hierarchical and segregated representations of feminism, gender violence and feminist justice (Busia 1993; Chukukere 1995; Magubane 2004; Mama 2007). Bringing together the insights of feminists who are attentive to the complexity of geopolitics reveals how the consolidation of Western Identity formation depends on the division of the world into spaces that seem to be disconnected from each other. This makes possible other violent processes of ontological disengagement with the 'Other' by focusing on an ontic (i.e. a universalized and unified individual) that is supposedly insulated and its production independent from social relations. Feminisms of critical geographies question these processes of geopolitical segregation by suggesting that feminists: (1) recognize how significant segregation is of an imperial practice and technology in the formation and constitution of social relations of power; (2) form relations (i.e. bringing supposedly dissimilar phenomena of feminism next to each other); and (3) draw and build upon the histories of work put forth by women of color, Third World, postcolonial, transnational, global and First World feminisms to highlight the complexities and complicities of feminist engagements. Feminisms of critical geographies can draw out connectivities, tensions and productive possibilities of contested-collaborative feminist spatial praxis.

## FORCED INCAPACITATIONS AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF FEMINISMS

The divisions of the world outlined above became intensified beginning in the 1970s and the early 1980s. Much of the world, and especially under stringent conditions (e.g. militarizations, forced mobilities, imprisonments, theft of their lands and labor), has been forced to restructure on multiple scales its socio-economic, political relations, ecologies and their own bodies. What many have come to articulate as 'globalization' is really the dramatic demands made by newer neo-imperial and capitalist regimes desiring the shifts of capital in the hands of very few in the world by forcing personal, local, national, regional and transnational restructurings (see Chapters 15–19). Out of these contestations and restructurings, dominant institutions like the UN and feminists have carved out space to critique the privileges and violences of 'globalization' by accounting for the ways familiar colonial intelligibilities and practices continue to work (Agathangelou 2004; Conway 2008). Feminist interventions into the frameworks of globalization also disrupt new articulations of imperialism that have been consolidated into a (neo) liberal 'global' order (Aguilar and Lacsamana 2004). Within these dramatic restructurings and geopolitical changes much feminist work has focused on assessing and understanding 'globalization' and its effects on many peoples and women in particular. Critics of globalization focus on the devastating effects of neoliberalism, its contingent projects such as structural adjustment, the privatization of basic resources, decreased wages, decreased social resources to support social welfare and the poor, the militarization of everyday life and the effects of these policies on the most impoverished populations in the Global South (see for example, Gibson-Graham 1996; Naples and Desai 2002; Kuokkanen 2008). However, globalization has also generated the possibility of 'unintended

consequences' such as the transnational feminist networks (Alvarez 2000; Moghadam 2005; see also Chapter 22). Organizing in contexts outside the Global North has enabled feminists in various spaces to critique the 'imperial march' and the 'Europology' of Western feminisms and articulate it as 'an elaboration of what is a distinctly European phenomenon into a human universal' (Oyewumi 2003: 1–3). The 'Europology' critique in Africa and Latin America (see for instance, Lavrin 1998), emerged out of the experience of women's revolutionary challenges to colonialism, capitalism, imperialism and the counter-revolutionary insurgencies that took place from the 1960s to the 1980s and within post-revolutionary transitions to neo-liberalism (Mama 1997, 2007; Alvarez 2000).

The spatially gendered, sexualized, classed, racialized and nationalized divisions of the domestic and international were challenged through feminists' own participation in revolutionary organizations of social justice, which allowed engagement with other women and men in a collective space to share their experiences. Many of the spaces that such collective solidarities formed and shaped were ridden with contradictions: societies were decolonized but their workers were exploited in the social reproduction of their peoples and their societies. Recognizing contradictions and multiple forms of gender violence that various communities experienced daily has pushed more and more intellectual and activist communities to bring a specifically gendered analysis of women's and feminized labor exploitation into the revolutionary organizations of different countries. Women's groups rearticulated existent groups and created new organizations in civil society during the post-revolutionary periods that promote explicitly feminist structures, goals and agendas, albeit contradictorily (Mama 1997; Nagar 2002, 2008; Agathangelou and Spira 2007; Sarker 2007).

It is imperative to highlight how the academy is not separate from these histories of movements and systemic restructurings. As Black and postcolonial scholars (McKittrick 2006) with substantial histories of their own enter the metropolitan academy, they too are marked by their geopolitical origins both in the three-world schema (Wallerstein 1979) and in their negotiated feminist-Black-postcolonial epistemic structure within feminism and IR. Postcolonial scholars arrive in the metropolitan academy and are expected to enter as 'outsiders' to its institutional politics as if the organization of the academy is not already part of a global structure formed through the imbricate power relationships of the Global North and Global South. Such processes foster IR and feminism's appropriations of the geopolitical intellectual labors of postcolonial scholars and spaces of the Global South. Postcolonial scholars are often left to negotiate between the colonial erasures of the academy and the politics of survival within an 'insider-outsider' epistemic structure (for example, see Kincaid 1988; Lorde 2001; Alexander 2005). Many Black and postcolonial feminists are supposed to be represented through the academy but always as 'contained units' of social relations and called upon to perform Otherness. In this sense, the academy mystifies violence through the conditioning of scholars as embodiments of their geopolitical 'homes,' (Grewal 2001; Mohanty 2003) and demarcating which type of body produces what type of knowledge. In other words, academic geopolitics defines and legitimizes academic citizenry. The simultaneous homogenization and segregation of scholars and scholarship within academia – either as a feminist of color who is often immediately marginalized into one universal category of the

Third World and/or as a feminist who embodies a personal experience from Other global territories considered 'out there' and separate from U.S. political arrangements – is a systemic relationship that divides feminists (of color, postcolonial, white, transnational, global) through multiple hegemonically defined geopolitical divisions of the international system. Many times these divisions do not allow for a reading of the tensions that exist spatially, and consequently compromise feminist projects of solidarity.

We propose that this asymmetrical racial, class and national relation between First Worldism(s) and postcolonial feminisms must always be located in such a way that takes account of the intimate connections between those spaces of living (e.g. physical and affective) and the processes of geopolitical relationality within and between global inequality. These sets of entangled social power relations are global, systemic, collective and personal, and their connections are often elided within IR, which sustains segregated and hegemonic geopolitical agendas that compete for legitimacy within IR frameworks. For example, feminist IR focuses on making women 'visible' and 'equal' within a masculinist geopolitical Order, while postcolonial IR focuses on the explicit connections of historical and contemporary racisms and classisms resulting from imperial and colonial projects. Considering postcolonial and feminist knowledges in a conjunctive space of feminisms of critical geographies provides 'new' grammars for political claims that refuse individualized readings of global politics and offers nuanced frameworks for addressing international, transnational and global questions. Indeed, the meanings of local, national, transnational, international and global feminisms are put into question. Does the signifier 'transnational feminism' denote, implicitly or explicitly, a specific cluster of practices and discourses with particular political content, carried by particular agents, reproduced through particular cultures of politics, and rooted in particular histories? Does it project itself as universal, a revived global sisterhood project carried by the high politics of a new, now multicultural, highly mobile, well-resourced and globally visible feminist vanguard? We suggest that it is not enough to argue for this transnational feminist vanguard without putting pressure on its constitution, formation and indeed the conditions of possibility of a spatial praxis that is anti-colonial, anti-imperial and just for the majority of peoples in the world. The homogenous and segregated representations of global inequality through geopolitical hierarchies necessitate a mobilization of gender and transnational feminism as a methodological and theoretical framework that is attentive to the types of geographies we have been discussing here.

## FEMINISMS OF CRITICAL GEOGRAPHIES: SOLIDARITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

A postcolonial gendered framework of global politics explores global relations of power transnationally to complicate and desegregate existing taxonomies of thought within larger structures of historical, political, economic and social relations; it requires explicit attentiveness to transnational formulations of race, gender, class and sexuality that can complicate the 'discursive colonizations' (Mohanty 1991b) of



The Homeland, *Aztlán / El otro México*  
 By Gloria Anzaldúa (1987)

...1,950 mile-long open wound  
 dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,  
 running down the length of my body,  
 staking fence rods in my flesh,  
 splits me splits me  
*me raja me raja*

This is my home  
 This thin edge of  
 barbwire.

But this skin of the earth is seamless.  
 The se cannot be fenced,  
*el mar* does not stop at borders.  
 To show the white man what she thought of his  
 arrogance,  
*Yemaya* blew that wire fence down...

Anzaldúa, Gloria. (1987) Excerpt from "The Homeland, *Aztlán / El otro México*."  
*Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books. Pages 2-3.

Figure 4.3

geopolitical bodies and dismantle segregated frameworks of 'technologies of Empire' (Agathangelou *et al.* 2007). In particular, postcolonial gendered frameworks reveal how complicities and segregations within feminism and postcolonial theories continue to deterritorialize and reterritorialize global bodies within an imperial geopolitical logic (Grewal 2005). It is our aim here to push the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of gender and the postcolonial transnationally, while also attending to the problematic appropriations of these signifiers of geopolitics. A framework of feminisms of critical geographies makes two important interventions within hegemonic feminist and postcolonial approaches within IR. First, it problematizes the politics of 'gender mainstreaming' within academia, activist and policy arenas by asking what are the ways in which it regulates bodies through discourses of development, security and rights that often elide how the logics and practices of mainstreaming reproduce colonial, racist and gender asymmetrical relations. Second, it challenges masculinist objectives within postcolonial frameworks that too often center nationalist narratives, which are 'premised on a rescued masculinity' (Morrison 1992 cited in Alexander 1994: 14) that polices gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity for national interests (Alexander 1994, 2005). As we have discussed previously, the challenge of feminisms of critical geographies is to further open up global questions of violence and justice. What does it mean to think about feminist justice – a world where women, queer communities, people of color and the working class are not

marginalized, exploited and killed in the name of a Feminist Global Order? How do we frame projects of solidarity among feminists in an imperial context that thrives on segregation? How do we transform the politics of geopolitical containment that dictates (im)possibility through racist heteronormative patriarchies of representation? What are the ways in which we can concretize feminisms of critical geographies?

Considering the above questions requires an engagement with geopolitical questions about feminist epistemologies of spatiality in which the knowledges of Black-postcolonial-Third World feminisms are already in relationship to First World feminisms due to the organization and social structures of the interstate system,<sup>9</sup> or what we call here worldism. If spaces of IR and feminisms continue to take this interrelationship as mystified and/or rendered invisible through mainstream epistemologies, then dominant technologies of imperialism will continue to prevail. However, if feminisms and IR draw out the bodily movements (people, land, knowledge) of postcolonial feminisms and Third World historically situated subjects and expose these segregations as part and parcel of larger hegemonic histories and practices of the political economy of social relations and knowledge, then multiple modes of solidarity become possible. Feminisms of critical geographies signal worldism and geopolitical segregation as a way to disrupt dominant theorizations and methods to world problems and issues elided within hegemonic interdisciplinary studies and to 'renovate our engagements' (Alexander 2005) with who we are as subjects and movements 'international,' 'transnational' and 'feminist.' It is our hope that such renovations work to dismantle structures of apartheidism within global knowledge movements and relations and create the space for deeper theorizations of gender justice.

Praxis is crucially shaped and is shaped by spatialities and the relations peoples have with it. Engaging the questions of geographies through multiple feminist engagements can open up the possibilities of how people resist, live and survive in multiple contexts, and in particular contexts of global violence. Through the insights of feminisms of critical geographies, which build explicitly on Third World and transnational feminist works, we argue that this segregation is more than just a mere level of interpretation. It is as much about the global divisions of labor as it is about the global struggles to co-constitute the world in less violent and less segregationist manners. Engaging explicitly with the approaches of Third World and postcolonial feminisms shifts the ways in which a transnational feminism comes into being and is able to transform and build feminist solidarities. It is in these varied and complicated spaces of feminisms (thought and practice), which are attentive to the historic specificities and systemic connectivities of geopolitics, that justice and feminist solidarities become a possibility. The task of feminisms of critical geographies is not to be responsible for 'solving' the problems of global inequality and gender violence; rather, it is to open up the theoretical and material frames of justice that support and build multiple epistemic and ontological communities of survival and transformation. It is through the opening up of commitments to one another and negotiations of our complicities that we can continue to intervene in geopolitical foreclosures that pit us against one another in the various power struggles of global politics.

## Seminar exercise

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INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR: Please ask the students to work together to answer the following prompts:

1. How do the segregations of the world into bodies, personal, national, international, global affect the ways feminism(s) articulate their struggles and in relation to each other?
2. What solidarities are made possible through contested feminist thought, practice and experience? How are different kinds of gender analysis providing crucial moments of intervention and collaboration?
3. How would you write a 'new' cartography of feminism that is attentive to multiple histories of geopolitics and people's experience? What are the ways this cartography creates new possibilities for feminist solidarities and feminist sensibilities?

## Questions for further debate

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1. Some critical feminists and postcolonial theorists have argued that geography shapes feminisms and informs the ways feminists (i.e. depending on the location one occupies) understand the world and, within it, global power. Do you agree and/or disagree? Why?
2. According to feminist, aboriginal, and postcolonial feminist scholarship segregation is foundational to asymmetries, inequalities and racisms in global politics. Do you agree and/or disagree? Why?
3. What are the ways in which segregation continues to shape the formation of global politics?
4. How has critical feminist and postcolonial scholarship intervened in segregated logics and practices? How has such scholarship been complicit in strategies of global segregation?
5. Through the framework of desegregation that feminisms of critical geographies offer, can you think of examples of how you experience global segregation, how you participate in it and ways that you have intervened in disrupting it?

## Relevant web-based resources

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- An annotated bibliography on feminism and postcolonialism, available HTTP: <<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/poc.html>>.
- The Imperial Archive provides information on key concepts in Postcolonial Studies, available HTTP: <<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/imperial/key-concepts/feminism-and-postcolonialism.htm>>.
- Postcolonial Literature Bibliographies. Available HTTPs: <<http://www.ripon.edu/library/support/postcolonial.htm>> and <<http://www.literaryhistory.com/20thC/Groups/postcolonial.htm>>.

- Incite!: Women of Color Against Violence, available HTTP: <<http://incite-national.org/>>.
- *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. Available HTTP: <<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/0966369X.html>>.

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## Notes

- 1 The concept of materiality is a contested one and its genealogy bears a much longer discussion. In this chapter materiality refers to the practices of the 'social' (i.e. international,

global, corporeal, transnational, etc.) as 'practices' that breathe life and meaning into gendered, sexualized, racialized, classed being and relations, rather than assertions of specific sorts of practices (i.e. economic, systemic, structural, etc.) that are accorded causal priority in shaping social relations (i.e. gendered, racialized, classed, sexualized, etc.). In addition, materiality here refers also to the production, including epistemological articulations toward the formation of a shifting and dynamic change of socio-ontologies of gender, sexuality, race, class that disrupt the dominant formations of property relations including its dominant being.

- 2 Hyndman (2004) argues for feminist geopolitics. We differ from her conceptualization in the sense that Hyndman focuses on 'geopolitics becom[ing] a more gendered and racialized project, one that is epistemologically situated and embodied in its conception of security' (2004). We argue that the international is already geographically gendered, racialized, classed, nationalized and sexualized and instead unpack the epistemologies and processes through which the international becomes formed and consolidated this way to highlight the investments/interests of such processes.
- 3 First World Feminism(s) is not a unified project even when several feminists within it assume and articulate a universal set of epistemological assumptions (e.g. West, free, secular, white) against which everything else is measured and described.
- 4 It should be noted here that IR as a discipline, site of knowledge production, and a social relation is not unified. However, there are dominant relations that inform the ways the discipline comes to be constituted.
- 5 This literature is vast and what's listed here is a small selection: Grewal and Kaplan (1994); Alexander and Mohanty (1997); Hurtado (1996); Narayan (1997); Lorde (2001); Rowley (2003); Alexander (2005); Smith (2005).
- 6 For further examples of such critiques see Carney (2003); DeFrancisco *et al.* (2003); Mohanty (2003), (2006); Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (2006); Arat-Koç (2007).
- 7 For instance, Black peoples from all over the world including many who are the descendants of slaves and many who are now migrating through the colonial pathways of geopolitical economic possibility are interpolated as people of color, even when their class location in their nations of origin could mitigate against their being located within an axis of power that relegates them to the margins of First Worldism.
- 8 As Imam explains, Western theories 'should be criticized not *because* they are Western, but to *the extent* that, having developed in cultural, historical, class, racial and gender realities in the West, they misrepresent African realities and obscure analysis of Africa' (1997: 17). Imam suggests there is a significant relationship *and* disconnect between the epistemic and material formulations and experiences of geography, which needs further feminist examination and conversation (see also Turcotte 2008).
- 9 Please note that part of the problematic emerges out of the ways the global structure of production and power relations becomes described and articulated as an interstate system.

## **SECTION TWO ETHICS AND THE HUMAN SUBJECT**

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# Ethics

Kimberly Hutchings

The word ‘ethics’ has two related meanings, both of which are important for this chapter. The first is the familiar meaning of ethics as a set of substantive moral values, beliefs and practices. In this sense, ethics is about the distinctions we make, on an everyday basis, between right and wrong, asking ourselves questions such as: is it ethical to buy fruit originating from an oppressive regime? Or, is it ethical to have a gas-guzzling car in the context of global warming? The second meaning of ethics is more specialised, and refers to the philosophical study of the ways in which we justify our claims about right and wrong, asking questions such as: how do I know buying the fruit is or isn’t ethical? How do I know having the car is or isn’t ethical? The purpose of this chapter is to explore how substantive international ethical issues *and* questions about the basis of ethical claims in an international context are affected by bringing in a gender perspective to their consideration. We will begin by examining some of the dominant strands of international ethical theory and how they have been criticised by feminists. We will then move on to examine some examples of feminist international ethical theory. We will conclude by looking at how a gender perspective changes our perception of the moral stakes in relation to war, human rights and distributive justice.

## KNOWING RIGHT FROM WRONG

Michael Walzer, one of the best known contributors to contemporary international ethical theory made a distinction in his work between ‘Thick’ and ‘Thin’ morality



in the international sphere (Walzer 1994). ‘Thick’ morality referred to moral values, beliefs and practices that were firmly located in the traditions of particular political communities, and which derived their legitimacy from community history and identity. ‘Thin’ morality referred to moral values, beliefs and practices that had resonance for all humanity regardless of community or culture, and derived their legitimacy from universally valid moral principles. Thick morality is, by definition, relative to context, thin morality, by definition, transcends context. If one examines the debates within international ethics over the past twenty years, then one finds that different approaches all fall into one or other of the ‘thick’ or ‘thin’ categories. They are either making moral claims that are legitimated in relation to particular historical contexts, or they are making claims that are held to be universally true across boundaries of culture and power. Another way in which this distinction is labelled is as the distinction between *communitarian* and *cosmopolitan* versions of international ethics (Brown 1992; Dower 2007: 53–119).

Let’s look more closely at the kinds of claims being made by ‘thick’ and ‘thin’ arguments about moral issues in the context of international politics. For instance, what do they have to say about questions of the responsibility of rich states to redistribute their wealth to poor states (the question of international distributive justice)? Or about the obligation to intervene in countries where there are mass violations of human rights (the question of humanitarian intervention)? For example, a ‘thick’ response to the first question might argue that the kinds of obligations of justice we have to our fellow nationals are much stronger than those we owe to strangers, in other words, our moral obligations are relative to our national identity, therefore we are not required, as a matter of justice, to redistribute our wealth to poorer states, although we may wish to do so on grounds of charity or benevolence. A ‘thick’ response to the second question might be that the whole notion of ‘human rights’ is a western construction that doesn’t reflect the moral values inherent in other cultures and communities, that nations have a right to self-determination and that there should therefore be a strong presumption against intervention. In contrast, a ‘thin’ response to the question of international distributive justice might argue that because the welfare of all human beings matters equally, regardless of nationality, then there is an obligation on the rich to give to the poor until the point at which they become globally disadvantaged by doing so. Similarly, ‘thin’ responses to the second question typically argue that there are certain human rights that are universally fundamental, and that the obligation to protect those rights ought not to stop at state borders.<sup>1</sup>

What is striking about these traditions, whether they take ‘culture’ or ‘humanity’ as the key ethical reference point, is that none of them explicitly refer to gender as being relevant either to moral issues of justice and rights or to the grounds and nature of moral judgement. However, if we examine these supposedly gender-free theories a little more closely it isn’t difficult to identify gendered logics at work. For example, concepts such as ‘nationality’ and ‘culture’ are central to ‘thick’ accounts of morality. In both cases, the meaning of the concepts, theoretically and practically, is profoundly gendered (see Chapters 19 and 20). ‘Nationality’ in the sense of citizenship, has a gendered history in which those identified as ‘feminine’ (e.g. women and homosexual men) have been incorporated on different terms to those identified

### Communitarianism and cosmopolitanism

Both of these approaches to thinking about international ethics have their roots in western philosophical traditions (Brown 2002: 38-56). Communitarianism is grounded in the ethical valuation of community that can be traced back to thinkers such as Hegel and Herder. It involves giving priority to the national/cultural or state community as both moral agent and object of moral concern in international ethics.

Cosmopolitanism can be traced back to the enlightenment thinking of philosophers such as Kant and Bentham. Strands of cosmopolitanism have set the agenda for contemporary international ethics because of their explicit universalism, and there are many debates within cosmopolitanism itself. In particular between 'deontological' and 'utilitarian' versions of moral universalism. Simply put, deontological theories regard certain principles or values as having an absolute moral status (lying is *always* wrong), whereas utilitarians assess principles and values on the basis of their consequences in particular circumstances, so that the same moral principle might have a different moral status if circumstances change (lying might be justified if it increases overall utility in a particular context). What both deontological and utilitarian theories have in common is that they both give moral priority to individuals rather than collectives, and that they have an essentially liberal concept of the rational and disembodied moral agent. See Robinson, 'Traditions of International Ethics: a critical reappraisal' for a useful feminist critique of communitarianism and cosmopolitanism (Robinson 1999).

Figure 5.1

as masculine. In the case of women, their incorporation into the modern nation-state was simultaneous with their relegation to a private sphere of reproductive labour (family). In this context women were not afforded equality of rights as citizens in terms of either distributive justice or security, and in many states it is still the case that what it means to be a citizen in terms of entitlements and protections differs between men and women. Similarly, if we examine predominant cultural norms as the source of morality, in many societies these norms embody assumptions about the significance of sexual difference that work to the disadvantage of the feminised. From a gendered perspective, to locate morality in culture is to run the risk of embracing a whole range of values that significantly oppress women and homosexual men and that perpetuate a patriarchal world. Once one starts to think about this then it becomes difficult to see how feminist analysis could be satisfied with the 'thick' communitarian response to how to deal with international ethical issues.

On the face of it, 'thin' responses to questions about ethical judgement seem more promising from a feminist point of view, since they appear to avoid the trap of embracing patriarchal values as a given. However, feminist analysis has shown that the apparently gender-neutral constructions of deontological or utilitarian moral theory are in practice based on a model of what it means to be human that takes male bodies and masculine characteristics (obviously not the same thing) as norm. For instance, both Kant and Bentham assume that human beings are physically discrete individuals and privilege the ideal of humans as autonomous, rational actors. For them the human is never captured, empirically or ideally, in the pregnant or emotional human being. To the extent that in the western tradition of thought women are peculiarly associated with pregnancy or emotion, they are identified as less than human. For these reasons, the way in which moral problems and solutions

are formulated by 'thin' universalist moral theories tend to marginalise what is regarded as feminine. For instance, the most famous moral theory addressing the question of distributive justice of the last thirty years, John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* did not include any consideration of justice within the family, he associated justice entirely with the masculine-dominated public sphere (Rawls 1971; Okin 1989). If we examine ways in which his ideas have been taken forward to address issues of international or global distributive justice, we find the same kind of neglect of the realms of unpaid reproductive labour dominated by women and other feminised actors (Beitz 1979).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, theories of human rights have traditionally focused on ways in which individuals are vulnerable to abuse by the state (for example, being tortured or persecuted), but paid much less attention (at least until recently) to the ways in which individuals are vulnerable to abuses located in the private realm (for example, domestic violence including sexual violence) (Donnelly 1993).

Feminist analysis has not confined itself simply to the critique of mainstream 'thick' and 'thin' ethics, but has sought to show how bringing a gendered perspective into moral theorising can change what we privilege as being of moral significance and how we ground and justify our moral claims. The most prominent development of feminist ethical theory was prompted by the work of Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* and has been labelled the 'ethic of care' in contrast to 'thin' morality's 'ethic of justice' (Gilligan 1982). Gilligan was a social psychologist investigating theories about what we should count as appropriate mature moral reasoning in response to moral dilemmas. At the time she was writing, the predominant view was that the height of moral maturity was signified by a capacity for the moral agent to detach him or herself from the context of the specific moral dilemma, and make a judgement in terms of what general moral rules ought to apply to any similar situation. In empirical work, social psychologists had found that men were more likely to exhibit these kinds of characteristics. Women, in contrast, were more likely to make contextual judgements relating to the specific patterns of responsibility and obligation in which they were caught. Gilligan pointed out that the rational, detached, autonomous characteristics supposedly significant of moral maturity clearly reflected the priorities of the 'thin' tradition of moral theory and the privileging of masculine over feminine. She then argued that the supposedly inferior modes of moral reasoning more typical of women (ethic of care) were in fact equally reflective and sophisticated to those of an ethic of justice and should be taken as equally significant of moral maturity. For her the ethic of care and the ethic of justice were both essential to adequate moral reasoning.

Gilligan's work inspired a whole literature on the idea of a feminist ethic of care (Card 1991; Browning-Cole and Coultrap-McQuin 1992; Held 1995, 2006). In broad terms, those feminists trying to take forward the idea of an ethic of care have sought to ground ethical value in the relations and responsibilities associated with caring practices, often exemplified by the relation between mother and child (Noddings 1984; Ruddick 1989; Held 1993). The feminist critics of the ethic of care, in contrast, tend to come from two different kinds of perspective, which in some ways (though not in all) echo the 'thin' and 'thick' positions in mainstream ethics described above. Some feminists have argued that care ethics risks reproducing gender stereotypes

and undermining the grounds for the critique of the relegation of women to the private sphere, and have therefore sought to re-work an ethic of justice along feminist lines (Benhabib 1992; Nussbaum 2000). Others have argued that care ethics is as universalising as the ethic of justice and effectively excludes the ethical significance of the experiences of different women in different social, cultural and political contexts. These critics return to the question of difference (though not simply cultural difference) as foundational to ethics (Larrabee 1993; Hekman 1995). These debates are reproduced, as we shall see below, in the specific context of feminist international ethics.

## GENDERING INTERNATIONAL ETHICS

In this section, I will go on to explore the development of feminist international ethics in terms of three trajectories. For the sake of convenience I will label these trajectories under the headings of 'care ethics', 'justice ethics' and 'postmodern ethics' (Hutchings 2000, 2007a). As with any categorisation, this is a radical oversimplification of a complex range of arguments, but it should help to identify the faultlines of debates within feminist international ethics in both of the senses outlined at the beginning of the chapter: that is, ethics as substantive claims about key moral values and principles; and ethics as the theory of how we account for our substantive ethical claims.

### International feminist ethics of care

In her book, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, Ruddick draws on the idea of an ethic of care as a central part of her argument for a feminist moral orientation in the context of international politics (Gilligan 1982; Ruddick 1989). The book involves a rejection of realist arguments as to the tragic inevitability or structural necessity of war and communitarian claims to the special ethical status of the collective group or nation. In addition it develops a critique of traditional moral justifications for war – in both utilitarian and deontological variants – as well as a positive characterisation of how a different kind of moral judgement and political practice is possible in relation to war. There are essentially two stages to Ruddick's argument. In the first stage she develops a feminist approach to moral judgement through the idea of 'maternal thinking', in the second stage she explores the implications of 'maternal thinking' for making moral judgements about war.

'Maternal thinking', according to Ruddick, 'is a discipline in attentive love', a discipline which is rooted in the demands of a particular relation of care, that between mother and child, and which reflects a particular range of metaphysical attitudes, cognitive capacities and virtues (Ruddick 1989: 123). Ruddick claims that the implication of maternal thinking is not just the rejection of the possible moral justifications for war, but also the active embracing of peace politics (Ruddick 1989: 141–59).

### Just war theory

Contemporary discussions of the ethics of war tend to be carried out in relation to the framework of just war theory, which has its origins in Christian thinking about war and peace during the Roman Empire. In the twentieth century, just war theory was secularised and incorporated into international law. Below is an account of some of the key criteria that just war theory uses to decide on whether a war is just *ad bellum* (in terms of the reasons for going to war in the first place) and *in bello* (in terms of the ways war is conducted once it has started). See Peach (1994) and Sjoberg (2006) for feminist re-workings of traditional just war theory.

#### *Justice ad bellum*

1. Just cause – e.g. self-defence by a state in response to unprovoked aggression (the only uncontested just cause in international law); protecting the innocent (the reason given for recent humanitarian interventions).
2. Legitimate authority – war must be carried out by an actor that has the legitimate right to use violence. States (e.g. UK) or state-based organisations (e.g. UN) are the only legitimate authorities recognised in international law. However, many national groups have argued that they have the legitimate authority to pursue a project of self-determination through violence.
3. Last resort – all reasonable alternatives to the use of war should have been exhausted.

#### *Justice in bello*

1. Proportionality – the violent means used in war should not outweigh in their effects the good that their use is supposed to bring about.
2. Discrimination – only combatants may be targeted not civilians.

Figure 5.2

The analytic fictions of just war theory require a closure of moral issues final enough to justify killing and “enemies” abstract enough to be killable. In learning to welcome their own and their children’s changes, mothers become accustomed to open-ended, concrete reflection on intricate and unpredictable spirits. Maternal attentive love, restrained and clear sighted, is ill adapted to intrusive, let alone murderous judgments of others’ lives.

(Ruddick 1989: 150)

From the standpoint of maternal thinking, the appropriate stance to take in ethical judgement is to attempt to build on particular experiences of the practice of care to help to identify with and take responsibility for the needs and suffering of others. Ruddick frequently cites the example of the Argentinian Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (see Chapter 1, p. 8–11), whose movement gradually grew to embrace concerns with children across the world who had suffered harm: ‘This is not transcendent impartiality but a sympathetic apprehension of another grounded in one’s own particular suffering’ (Ruddick 1993: 123). This is not just a matter of ‘feeling for’ another’s pain, but assuming an attitude of responsibility for it and therefore trying to do something about it. In addition, however, maternal thinking is sensitive to the specific contexts in which ethical dilemmas are embedded and the importance of appreciating the ethical weight of the perspectives of all parties to any dispute or conflict.

For Ruddick, ethical judgement has to be on a case-by-case basis, but without ready-made principles of adjudication.

In her book, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations* (1999), Robinson follows Ruddick in arguing for an approach to international ethics derived from 'care'. Her 'critical' care approach develops an international ethics that encompasses not only questions about the morality of war but also about international human rights and global distributive justice. Unlike Ruddick, Robinson does not rely on a concept of 'maternal thinking' but more generally on the idea of care as an everyday practice and moral orientation, embedded in a number of actual contexts. Moreover, Robinson places more emphasis than Ruddick on the significance for care ethics of the broader political, social and economic context of the international sphere and the ways in which particular patterns of advantage and disadvantage, power and oppression, sameness and difference are institutionalised within it. Nevertheless, although Robinson's work is broader in focus and elaborates a more flexible account and defence of care ethics than Ruddick's, what is morally 'wrong' is defined similarly to Ruddick as that which serves 'to undermine the ability of moral agents to identify and understand others as "real" individuals – with real, special, unique lives' (Robinson 1999: 47).

An ethics of care is not about the application of a universal principle ('We all must care about all others') nor is it about a sentimental ideal ('A more caring world will be a better world'). Rather it is a starting point for transforming the values and practices of international society; thus it requires an examination of the contexts in which caring does or does not take place, and a commitment to the creation of more humanly responsive institutions which can be shaped to embody expressive and communicative possibilities between actors on a global scale.

(Robinson 1999: 47–48)

Feminist critiques of an international ethics of care typically come from two perspectives: there is the 'justice' critique which identifies problems for feminism with care ethics's abandonment of reliance on universal principle; then there is the 'post-modern' critique which argues, contrary to the justice critics, that the ethic of care remains too close to the logic of traditional ethical paradigms in the context of international politics, because it treats the feminist standpoint for judgement in an overly universalised way. Both critiques worry about the incapacity of an ethics based on an idea of care to further the goals of feminism, goals broadly conceived as those of redressing gendered inequalities of power across the international arena. Nevertheless, the arguments of justice and postmodern critics against care ethics are distinct. This will become clearer as we look at these alternative approaches in more detail.

## Feminist international justice

As mentioned above, there is a longstanding feminist critique of the masculine bias of 'thin' accounts of morality in the western tradition. Most feminist theorists take this critique seriously, but they respond to it constructively in different ways. In the

case of feminist justice ethics, the response is not to abandon the universal terms of traditional moral theory, but to make them genuinely inclusive and universal. On this view, the problem with, for example, Rawls's theory of justice, is not that he thinks about justice in the wrong way but that he fails to include women's work within his thinking. The way to put this right, it is argued, is to extend the scope of his analysis and add women and the family in, but this doesn't involve abandoning the universal pertinence of his principles of justice. Underlying this kind of move is the concern, shared by many feminists, that to abandon the universal status of certain moral principles of justice and rights is to fall into the trap of 'thick' ethics, which will undermine the possibility of criticism of 'cultures' with moral norms that devalue women and the feminine (Benhabib 1992, 2002). But if feminists are to articulate justice ethics in a way that also does not discriminate against women and the feminine, then they clearly need to find a way of grounding moral claims in terms of justice and rights which doesn't rely on masculine-biased accounts of moral reasoning as well as being able to be valid universally, across boundaries of culture and power.

One example of a feminist moral theory that develops this kind of universal account of ethics is the argument put forward by Martha Nussbaum in her book *Women and Human Development* (2000). In this book, Nussbaum finds the grounds for certain (limited) universal ethical values and claims in a set of human 'capabilities' that she argues are foundational for the flourishing of any human life. She then uses the example of the lives of women in developing countries as a way to exemplify how the capabilities approach can be used as a kind of yardstick to critique existing practice in different national contexts and to provide fundamental principles for progress, in particular progress for women. In her argument, Nussbaum puts forward a robust defence of feminist moral universalism, but she also argues that her specific form of feminist justice ethics allows considerable space for the importance of the virtues of care and empathy and for cultural sensitivity and difference (Nussbaum 2000: 7, 70–71).

At the heart of Nussbaum's feminist justice ethics is a commitment to the intrinsic value of humanity and the right of every individual to be enabled to live 'humanly', that is in such a way that they are not simply subordinated to the ends of others but are enabled to exercise choices in the way that they live their lives. At present, according to Nussbaum, women in developing countries are particularly likely to experience their lives as subordinated to others, including the demands of patriarchal cultures and of exploitative conditions of work. For this reason, she argues against both a wholesale 'ethic of care' approach and against 'thick' approaches to morality that base themselves in cultural difference. She objects to both of these on feminist grounds. A focus on 'care' she argues is dangerous unless it is framed by an ethic of justice which limits the kinds and degrees of responsibility that carers (usually women) should be obliged to carry. The flip side of caring virtues, she suggests, is the exploitation of women in the private sphere. 'Thick' approaches to morality, she argues, allow local norms that subordinate and harm women. Moreover, she critiques the way such theories treat 'culture' as monolithic and argues for the internal incoherence of moral relativism. Nevertheless, her particular version of moral universalism is, she argues, less prone to problems associated with other kinds of justice ethics because it does not so much elaborate a substantive set of moral principles that all must follow, but rather

specifies ‘human capabilities’ that are inherently enabling rather than prescriptive, and that can be the ongoing subject of debate. This still allows room for both care and culture to play an important ethical role. The capabilities that Nussbaum outlines as of universal ethical significance are as follows and each of them suggests a range of requirements that need to be in place in terms of cultural assumptions and social and political institutions if they are to be realisable (Nussbaum 2000: 78–81).

1. Life – ability to live out a natural lifespan;
2. Bodily health – ability to have good health including reproductive health, adequate nourishment, shelter;
3. Bodily integrity – freedom of movement, security from physical violation, sexual and reproductive autonomy;
4. Senses, imagination, thought – ability to use all of these fully in an educated way;
5. Emotions – ability to be attached to others, to have a capacity for love and affection;
6. Practical reason – to be able to reflect rationally, identify one’s own conception of the good life and plan for it;
7. Affiliation – ability to live with others in personal relationships and social communities;
8. Other species – ability to live in relation to nature;
9. Play – ability to enjoy recreation;
10. Control over one’s material and political environment – ability to participate in political choices, ability to hold property, to work on equal terms with others.

Nussbaum uses the above list as a reference point for making judgements about the actual lives and conditions of women in developing countries, using India as her specific example. In the light of this list she examines issues to do with property, work, the family, religion and so on and shows how capabilities are either sustained or undercut by these social institutions in practice, examining examples of how social institutions might be challenged or reformulated in order to provide better support for women’s flourishing. It becomes clear very quickly that the capabilities approach is ethically very demanding, in that it requires the institutionalisation of equality across a range of domains even to live up to threshold conditions. For example, the capability to live in affiliation with others is, in Nussbaum’s view, fatally undermined by status-based discrimination on grounds of ‘race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin’ (Nussbaum 2000: 79). Critics of Nussbaum have argued that her capabilities approach ends up being closer to traditional universalist moral theories than she herself admits. Although her argument claims to make room for ‘care’ and ‘culture’, it is clear that the universalisation of certain fundamental rights trumps either of these as a source of value in Nussbaum’s account. From the point of view of care feminism, Nussbaum doesn’t pay enough attention to the distinctive virtues of care and ends up subsuming women under the more general category of humanity in a way that emphasises the masculinised norms of the western public sphere. For postmodern feminists, Nussbaum’s arguments have been accused of reifying the figure of the ‘third world woman’, and thus replaying a



colonial move in which the situation of women is used as a means of setting up other (non-western) cultures as backward and inferior (Mohanty *et al.* 1991; Mohanty 2003).

## Feminist postmodern ethics

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Postmodern feminists insist on the ethical significance of the fact that all women are not the same, either in virtue of being *women* or in virtue of being *human*. As has already been noted, they are suspicious of both care and justice ethics precisely because those approaches are grounded on the universalisation of either 'feminine' or 'human' qualities and attributes. This is not simply a theoretical dispute. For postmodern feminists the prescriptive implications of care in relation to peace and of justice in relation to human rights and development have been shown to be ethically problematic for women who don't fit with standard western liberal assumptions about either women or humans. Many feminists from the developing world have supported wars in the pursuit of struggles for decolonisation and national liberation and deny that there is a necessary connection between feminist ethics and pacifism. Similarly, many feminists in the developing worlds are wary of the liberal language of global human rights and economic development and argue that it reflects the moral priorities of an earlier western history and is insufficiently sensitive to context. It seems, therefore, as if postmodern feminist ethics may take us back to Walzer's 'thick' morality, and the cultural specificity of both the ways we defend our moral judgements and the judgements that we make. However, this is not the case. For postmodern feminists, 'context' is not equivalent to a monolithic account of 'culture'. For postmodernists, culture and identity, like all other facets of social and political life, are sites of power relations and struggles, there is therefore always a *political* dimension to ethics, and this, according to postmodernists, is the dimension that care and justice feminists, in different ways, neglect.

For postmodern ethics it is ethical principles of respect for difference and radical democracy that are fundamental to feminism. Although they share with care and justice feminisms a commitment to challenging gendered relations of power, for postmodernists specific questions about what moral values should guide human conduct at a global level could not be satisfactorily answered until the world has changed in such a way that the voices of those currently most excluded from moral debate can be heard (Spivak 1999; Jabri 1999; Mohanty 2003; Hutchings 2004). In the meantime, moral priority must be given to those ethical values that do most to support struggles to change the world to include the excluded, and that do least to further repress the voices of the least powerful actors in current world politics. The problem with this ethical project is that, as postmodernists themselves point out, any explicitly articulated universal ethical claim in international ethics always carries its own exclusions with it, intended or unintended. This is typified by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, for example, in speaking of all human beings' fundamental right to marriage and family life, necessarily excludes those human beings who do not fit with heterosexual norms, or with the assumption of a humanity split into two genders (Butler 2004a: 102–30).

One of the feminist ethical theorists who has attempted to address what post-modern ethics implies in an international context is Judith Butler. Focusing on the concept of universal human rights, Butler has shown how the concept of the human in human rights, by setting up a norm of what it means to be human, consistently operates so as to situate certain categories of people as 'less than' human, rendering their lives in crucial respects 'unliveable' and 'ungrievable' (Butler 2004a: 225–27; 2004b: 18–49). Thus she directly challenges Nussbaum's claim that it is through an inclusive account of what it means to be human that a genuinely universal international ethics can be articulated as a yardstick for the judgement of practice. At the same time, Butler does not advocate the abandonment of the idea of universal rights, but rather argues that the meaning of 'universal' should always be open to challenge and re-negotiation, and that we should never assume that our claims to universality actually live up to their promise (2004a: 33).

There are no obituaries for the war casualties that the United State inflicts, and there cannot be. If there were to be an obituary, there would have to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition.

(Butler 2004b: 34)

The above quotation, in which Butler reflects on the 2003 war following the US and allied invasion of Iraq, recalls Ruddick's argument about the ease with which militarist and just war theorists dismiss the value of enemy lives and suggests some overlap between postmodern and care ethics in the emphasis on the problems of exclusion inherent in both 'thin' and 'thick' moralities. Unlike Ruddick, however, it isn't clear that postmodern ethics could ever endorse pacifism as such, or the idea that there is a defineable set of virtues that are morally superior. Somewhat paradoxically, postmodern ethics is universalist in its orientation towards giving moral priority to the excluded in general, but sees this universalism as always failing. For postmodern ethics, ethical priorities will differ depending on context, so that there is (and ought to be) no feminist consensus on the ethics of war or the nature of fundamental human rights.

## CONCLUSION

It's clear from the above discussion that feminist ethical theories give different accounts of how we justify our moral views and also have different implications for questions of moral right and wrong in international politics. Nevertheless, all of the theories have in common dissatisfaction with standard moral theories of a 'thin' or 'thick' kind. In addition, whatever their differences, feminist ethical theories share the view that taking account of gender shifts our ethical horizons when we try to think about issues to do with the ethics of war, human rights or distributive justice. There are feminists that believe war can never be just from a feminist perspective and feminists that believe that it can. But if you examine the arguments feminists make for and against the morality of war then you find a *different* set of reference points than you find in traditional debates over just war theory. Typically these reference points take the gendered underpinnings and effects of war as relevant to our

judgement of it, and draw on specifically feminist values to make their case one way or the other (Peach 1994; Sjoberg 2006). In the case of human rights, whether feminists end up endorsing the notion of ethical universals or not, the lens of gender opens up the limitations of mainstream accounts of the 'human', criticising false claims to the universality of certain types of vulnerability, and thereby pushing for ideas of human rights to be re-worked in ways that accommodate the lives of those gendered feminine in the international sphere (Peterson 1990; Mackinnon 1993; Robinson 2003). In relation to distributive justice, whether feminists are for or against international development discourses, they transform mainstream ethical debates by foregrounding the way that divisions of productive and reproductive labour, and the remuneration, or lack of it, of different kinds of labour, is fundamentally gendered. This can lead not only to the broadening of theories of distributive justice to include recognition of unpaid caring labour, but also draws attention to the ethical value in the virtues and practices inherent in what is often dismissed as 'women's work' (Robinson 1999, 2006).

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### Seminar exercise

You will need to read the following to prepare for your discussion: Ruddick (1993); Peach (1994); Alloo *et al.* (2002); Sjoberg (2006: Chapters 5 and 6); Hutchings (2007b).

1. Examine the criteria for just war in traditional just war theory (see Figure 5.2).
2. Thinking from a feminist perspective, how (if at all) would you:
  - a. re-write the *ad bellum* criteria of 'just cause'; 'legitimate authority'; 'last resort';
  - b. re-write the *in bello* criteria of 'proportionality' and 'discrimination'?
3. Do you think a feminist just war theory is possible?

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### Questions for further debate

1. Is the issue of abortion morally equivalent in the UK and in India?
2. In what ways is communitarianism gendered?
3. Is Nussbaum's account of human capabilities genuinely universal?
4. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the feminist ethic of care.
5. Are postmodernists just ethical relativists?

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### Relevant web-based resources

- The BBC website includes a range of articles and information about the ethics of war, available HTTP: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/ethics/war>>.
- Website for the Carnegie Council for Ethics and International Affairs, which also published the key international ethics journal: *Ethics and International Affairs*. Available HTTP: <<http://www.cceia.org/index.html>>.

- A range of bibliographies on different areas of feminist ethics and profiles of prominent feminist ethical theorists, available HTTP: <<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/eth.html>>.
- Noticeboard of conferences and events relating to feminist ethics, available HTTP: <<http://www.feministethics.com>>.
- Website of the Human Development and Capability Association, which pursues research inspired by the ethical approach used by Nussbaum in *Women and Human Development*, available HTTP: <<http://www.capabilityapproach.com>>.

## Sources for further reading and research

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## Notes

- 1 All of these examples do actually occur in the literature. For an overview of the debates in which we find these 'thick' and 'thin' arguments, see Brown (2002: 115–211).
- 2 It's worth noting that Rawls himself did not see his theory of justice as directly translatable to the international sphere. In his theory of international justice, *Law of the Peoples*, Rawls concedes some ground to 'thick' arguments and the rights of peoples to collective autonomy, although arguing for certain universal human rights (Martin and Reidy 2006).

# Body Politics: Human Rights in International Relations

Jill Steans

The principal aim of the contributions to this book is to interrogate various conceptions of the body in global politics through an analysis of gendered narratives in International Relations (the academic discipline) and international relations (concrete policies and practices in world politics). In this chapter, I will explore the theme of the body in international politics; addressing the politics of the body in relation to human rights discourse and practice.

The chapter is organised into three sections. In the first section I explain what is meant by 'body politics' in the usage employed in this chapter. The second section then focuses on contestation and struggles between groups who make claims in the name of specific cultural, ethnic, religious or national communities and claims articulated in the liberal language of autonomous subjects, in respect to issues of sexuality and reproductive rights. Drawing upon the example of contemporary China, the third section concentrates on how processes of economic liberalisation and political change have impacted on women's rights in the workplace with regard to issues of social reproduction.

## BODY POLITICS

The 'body' might refer to a physical, corporeal body. In contemporary social and political theory, the notion that the body is a site of politics – of intervention, discipline, regulation and resistance – has become popular largely because of the current interest in the work of Michel Foucault. While the appropriation of Foucault's ideas

by feminism is not uncontroversial, many contemporary feminist theorists believe that Foucault's conception of the body and sexuality as a cultural construct and his treatment of the relations between power, sexuality and the body, is helpful in developing a critique of essentialist conceptions of sex and gender (Diamond and Quinby 1988; McNay 1992; Butler 2004a). Thus as Laura Shepherd argues in Chapter 1, the body has conventionally been understood as natural, but is actually interwoven with and constitutive of systems of meaning, signification and representation. That is, the body is social or (and) political and, moreover, is a plural and culturally mediated form.

The 'body' might also be employed in analogy to describe the 'people' of a politically organised, territorial entity – a nation-state – or more specifically the relationship between the 'sovereign' authority (government) and the citizens of a defined political/territory entity, or in a less precise sense to describe any collective founded on seemingly common understandings of how social relations between its constitutive members should be organised; as in the term 'Body Politic'.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of 'body politics' is employed in this chapter because it is useful in both describing the various ways in which the tension between different conceptions and meanings of 'women' and women's bodies – as for example integral, autonomous or sovereign bodies, as in liberal feminism and some strands of critical feminist thought, and as a depository of group or collective cultural identity (as, for example, in nationalist discourses) – are played out in human rights discourse and practice.

The approach to gender adopted here is broadly sympathetic to Shepherd's understanding of gender as articulated in Chapter 1, with particular emphasis placed on the inherently political nature of gender. While not all feminists regard themselves as poststructuralist, the majority would agree that gender is not 'natural', but is rather a system of meaning that is 'performed' within particular cultural and historical boundaries or is constituted through social relations. If gender is constructed, then it follows that there can be no 'essence' to gender. Gender is an ideology or discourse that serves as a means of justifying or legitimising certain forms of social organisation. Gender relations are as much subject to interventions and regulation by the state, as they are 'private' or consensual. These same social relations and principles of social organisation are also contested. Since gender is not a natural or essential but a social phenomenon, gender relations and the meanings attached to gender difference are necessarily fluid and changing. In contemporary feminist theory, a major point of disagreement concerns the degree to which gender is 'fixed' within the broader framework of social structures and the repertoire of social practices.

Women's groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in varied contexts, all over the world continue to contest the demands of culture, religion and identity where they can be seen to justify and reproduce gender inequalities and, moreover, are increasingly utilising the language of rights in gender struggles. Gender politics deals with the realm of the contested, with regard to how social relations should be organised and regulated. Gender is also politicised in relation to the 'micro-politics' of personal life: sexuality, the family, reproduction, social care and so on. In so far as gender is constructed, gender is also politicised with respect to the import of language and meaning.

The domain of human rights is a particularly interesting context in which to explore the tension between claims made in the name of corporeal bodies – which

might be constituted as autonomous, ostensibly gender-neutral, 'universal' subjects or as particular, gendered bodies – and claims made in the name of broader principles of social organisation, in the name of the 'common good' or 'social order and harmony', for example.

Seyla Benhabib has noted that our fate as late-modern individuals is to live caught in a permanent tug of war between the vision of the universal and the attachments of the particular (2004). With respect to women's human rights, this tug of war might play out in two distinctive ways. First, as a struggle between the liberal impulse to constitute women as autonomous subjects (just like men) and an impulse to speak to women's specific needs within certain gendered determined lifestyles (women as different from men). Second, women's bodies might serve as a repository of group identity, so the 'tug of war' might play out as a struggle between claims made in the name of 'woman' as a universal category and claims made in the name of specific cultural, ethnic and national groups (see Okin in further reading).

Today, recourse to human rights discourse in order to make claims on behalf of individual people or specific social groups is so widespread in international politics that it might be described as 'hegemonic'. Even in countries where human rights discourse is not securely embedded in day-to-day political life, or which lack an autonomous legal system and independent judiciary, regimes can nevertheless be held to account in respect to their public utterances and commitments and, thus, human rights discourse can serve as a useful political tool for NGOs engaged in efforts to challenge discriminatory or other harmful practices by states or other actors such as multinational corporations. Increasingly NGOs are not only framing their demands in their advocacy work in the language of human rights, but are also involved in monitoring and – sometimes – implementing human rights conventions in specific countries (see, for example, Afsharipour 1999).

And yet, even as human rights appear to be gaining near universal acceptance, it is important to recognise that human rights are not transcendent, nor 'natural', nor 'God given', and thus not 'universal' by their very nature. Questions regarding whether or not people are bearers of rights, and if so, which rights, along with questions regarding the proper relationship between the individual and the state and the proper relationship between international law and the sovereign, integral, bounded 'bodies' of states cannot be answered with reference to common criteria or consensual understanding, but have been and continue to be the site of political contestation and struggle.

## THE BODY, SEXUALITY AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

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The issues of women's autonomy in relation to the family, sexuality and reproductive functions is a particularly interesting area in which to examine some of the questions raised in the introduction to this book. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a detailed history of the development of the women's human rights agenda; the processes, the institutional machinery and the actual conventions. It is sufficient to note that since the Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1946, the United Nations has been active in promoting women's rights

The notion that human rights are universal (are the possession of all people regardless of age, class, race, religion, culture or gender) is sometimes rejected on the grounds that 'human rights' are a historically and culturally specific construct. Some feminists have claimed that the language of human rights is inappropriate and unhelpful when making claims on behalf of women, because the so-called 'universal' subject in rights discourse is actually implicitly male/masculine (see, for example, Palmer and Bottomley 1996). Thus, since human rights cannot accommodate gender difference conceptually and on a practical level, human rights are an inadequate tool to address the needs of women within certain gender-determined lifestyles. Others claim that, on the contrary, while human rights might have evolved in a particular historic and cultural context, human rights has proved to be a dynamic and flexible discourse and instrument that might be used effectively in feminist struggles (see Figure 6.2).

Cultural relativists argue that there are no transcendent, or universal, standards from which to make moral claims and the liberal human rights agenda is actually a Western project. Since the late 1970s, feminist theorists have become much more attentive to the import of cultural differences among women and this has led some to argue that we cannot speak of 'women' as a single, or universal, category. The critique of universal doctrines, like liberalism for example, has been powerful. Yet, the doctrine of cultural relativism is not unproblematic, since it rather glosses over key questions concerning who speaks for culture and why one should privilege differences between cultures over values that cultures share in common, for example (Pollis 1996).

Rather than representing culture as comprised of fixed and authentic sets of values, dispositions and behaviours that give people their 'way of life', culture might be conceived as discursively constructed, unstable and changing. Cultural differences can thus potentially be 'negotiated' in the interests of creating a world in which all people are free to deliberate and develop values to help them live more equitable lives. This process of negotiation is sometimes presented as an attempt to rescue human rights as an inter-subjectively negotiated universal project (Benhabib 1992). Alternatively, negotiation can be presented as having the aim of achieving social change at the local level, by forging locally appropriate strategies to promote women's human rights in diverse contexts (Ackerly 2001). From this perspective, the embrace of human rights discourse among activists represents an attempt to move beyond the dichotomies of universal and particular by focusing on how rights provide universal aspirations and standards, while rights claims remain embedded in highly specific local contexts (Stivens 2000).

Figure 6.1 Are human rights 'universal'?

(see Reanda in further reading). While it is an over-simplification to describe the women's human rights agenda as a wholly Western project (see Figure 6.1 above), it is fair to say that Western countries, and most particularly European countries have been major players in this effort and that the language of 'rights' has embedded a liberal vision of women as autonomous subjects.

In the first two decades of the Commission's life, the Commission had no ambitions to draw up special conventions or gain recognition for specific categories of rights for women, but concentrated instead on extending rights that were commonly enjoyed by men to women, including the right to vote, the right to own property, equal rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance. This was a significant moment in international politics in so far as this was the first time that the issues of gender discrimination and institutionalised gender inequality were politicised and internationalised.<sup>2</sup> The Commission also addressed discrimination in relation to citizenship and nationality laws, thus exalting women's equal status as citizens of specific states. Previously women had been regarded as, if not possessions of men,



subject to male authority and so women's citizenship was mediated through men – as fathers and husbands – and so might be gained or lost upon marriage. This is not to say that the principle of equality was readily accepted; indeed one can still point to notable examples of institutionalised gender discrimination today.

The end of the 1970s also saw the culmination of many years of work by the Commission in the form of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1979).<sup>3</sup> CEDAW went some way beyond focusing solely on women by demanding changes in traditional gender roles, where conventional understandings of gender and gender roles were deemed to perpetuate inequality and discrimination. However, while CEDAW was lauded as an important convention, it actually provided only a few specific rights based upon life experiences of women. Moreover, states retained considerable discretion on what constituted 'appropriate measures' to eliminate discrimination. Consequently, while CEDAW sets out broad principles, there was no blueprint for how these broad principles might be subsequently translated into concrete legislation in specific societies (Engle 2006). It is because CEDAW is open to varying interpretations that it remains a significant site of political struggle between states and different organised activist groupings; struggles which take place in both international forums and domestic/local settings (Joachim 2003).

At certain historical junctures (notably the 1980s), the UN women's agenda has faced the prospect of derailment, but has never been completely knocked off course (for a summary, see Steans 2006: 93–105). The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women<sup>4</sup> was another significant moment in the development of women's human rights, since previously the family had been considered sacrosanct in both international and domestic systems of law. In recognising that violence within the home, most often – though not always – perpetuated by men against women constituted a violation of human rights, what had previously been regarded as a 'private matter' was transformed into a matter of international concern.

The next significant milestone in the development of women's human rights occurred at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.<sup>5</sup>

### The work of Charlotte Bunch

The American academic and political activist Charlotte Bunch is a strong advocate of the women's human rights agenda. She is the author of a number of books, articles and pamphlets on the subject, including most recently the 2002 co-edited collection *Women at the Intersection: Indivisible Rights, Identities and Oppressions* (see further reading). Bunch argues that while human rights must be seen as but one – albeit very important – strand of a strategy to combat gender inequality, human rights discourse is useful because it is an effective way of making visible and affording gravitas to the various oppressions that women are subjected to in societies across the world. Moreover, human rights are dynamic and flexible, providing a useful language in which to frame issues and a powerful political tool to advance feminist objectives. Through struggle, activists have expanded the concept of rights to include issues previously regarded as non-political/private and are able to use legal rights as a platform to build upon in order to mount further challenges to political, social and economic disadvantage.

Figure 6.2

Perhaps the most notable ‘achievement’ of the Beijing conference was the evident degree of consensus and support for women’s human rights agenda among both states and NGOs. That said, there is an important distinction to be drawn between words and actions and, post-Beijing, the gap between the public commitment to women’s human rights from states around the world and the implementation of concrete and effective measures to institutionalise women’s human rights in domestic systems of law has been striking (Steans and Ahmadi 2002). The gap between the rhetoric and the reality will not be elaborated here, but might be pursued in your further reading.

It would be misleading to suggest it is only conservative states and organisations that have contested key planks of the women’s human rights agenda. However, reclaiming the family as a site of male power and dominance is a common thread found in all brands of religious fundamentalism and some states and religious groups continue to oppose specific categories of women’s rights, in the name of the greater good of the family (see Buss and Herman 2003). This widespread public commitment notwithstanding, a ‘Holy alliance’ comprised of some states and religious organisations focused on the language of the Platform of Action, championing the language of ‘equity’ and complementarities (in gender roles) over the language of autonomy and equality. The US, for example, refused to ratify CEDAW, along with the convention on the Rights of Child, for a very long time because it allegedly ‘interfered’ with family privacy. At Beijing, US neo-conservatives supported the Holy See and those Islamic states that were actively seeking to roll back key planks of the international women’s rights agenda, in the interest of rescuing the traditional – read patriarchal – American family.

Initially some 40 per cent of the entire text of the Beijing Platform of Action was bracketed (contested); the so-called ‘Holy Brackets’. The Holy See objected to the emphasis given to what it characterised as ‘homosexual rights’ (rights relating to sexual orientation), appealing to the urgent need to protect the traditional family model against demands from homosexuals for equal rights in marriage. At the conference, this potential impasse was overcome, when a deal was struck that strengthened prohibitions concerning the outlawing of violence against women, but only at the expense of lesbian women (and more broadly people in relationships and living in family forms that did not conform to the heterosexual ‘norm’). At the Beijing plus 5 review, the dispute was eventually settled in favour of the ‘Cairo language’ and hence the outcome was hailed by human rights organisations as a ‘victory’ for women’s human rights. However, the controversy over both the language embedded in such conventions, and specific categories of rights, rumbles on. Trans-national advocacy networks continue to be vigilant for signs of a potential or actual ‘roll-back’ and where opportunities arise, to drive the women’s human rights project forward.

## **SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS WORKERS**

This section of the chapter moves away from the international context and focuses instead on the discourse and practice of human rights in one specific country,

although, as elaborated on p. 84, here too there is an international/transnational dimension to the politics of women's human rights. When the topic of women's human rights issues in China is broached, the attention of states, human rights NGOs and media (particularly in the West) tends to be focused on practices such as forced abortion, forced sterilisation and female infanticide (Finnane 2000). While these are matters of concern, and are clearly crucial to discussions of the body and body politics, this section focuses instead on women's rights as workers. Workers' bodies are also gendered bodies, as issues relating to discrimination against pregnant women and sexual harassment in the workplace clearly evidence. Moreover, insofar as gendered discourses assign special responsibility to women for social care as well as social reproduction, women often experience a double or triple burden of labour as both paid and unpaid workers.

I have chosen to focus on China for several reasons. First, China is a signatory to most major international human rights conventions, including CEDAW. Second, China has been involved in an ongoing process of economic reform and restructuring since the late 1970s and, as is the case in many other 'transition' economies, this has had differentiated impacts on the economic opportunities and working conditions of different groups of people. Third, while the notion that the Chinese regime (the Chinese Communist Party) is embracing human rights is apt to be met with scepticism among some commentators on the international political scene (see, for example, Alston 1990), in recent years human rights have emerged as a part of political discourse amongst a variety of groups from governing elites to grassroots activists in China.<sup>6</sup> This combination of circumstances, along with China's particular history as a socialist state, provides an interesting context in which to explore the dynamics of struggles around women's human rights; specifically the tensions between economic liberalisation (often seen as the harbinger of human rights) and women's rights in the workplace.

In China, historically, gender has tended to be subordinated to other categories such as class and nation. The emphasis on class as the principal social contradiction in Marxist-Leninist analysis, combined with the privileging of the 'national' good in Maoist ideology, led to the marginalisation of gender issues in communist China. Thus, even as Mao exalted the contribution of women to the socialist cause – 'women hold up half the sky' – the party was not successful in tackling inequities in the distribution of household labour and child-care between men and women. Women also continued to suffer from the 'cultural hangover' of Confucian influences that cast women as inferior to men (Christiansen and Rai 1996; De Bary and Weiming 1998; Weatherly 1999).<sup>7</sup>

These limitations notwithstanding, the Communist government did make some progress in improving the status of women, notably by outlawing discrimination at work, in the case of pregnancy, for example, and taking action on issues of sexual harassment. Moreover, the state also acknowledged women's 'special responsibilities' by providing benefits such as maternity pay and providing state funded child-care facilities. In April 1992 the 5th Annual Session of the Seventh National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China adopted 'The People's Republic of China Law Protecting Women's Rights and Interests'. This legislation was adopted in the run up to the Fourth UN Conference on Women (hosted by China in 1995) and was

designed to fulfil China's obligation to implement CEDAW in national/domestic legislation.<sup>8</sup> The All China Women's Federation (ACWF) was charged with overseeing the implementation of CEDAW in China (Brown 1994).

Since the late 1970s, when economic reforms were first initiated, China has been moving away from a state-regulated economic model towards a market economy and has gradually integrated into the global economy. Women have and continue to make a huge contribution to China's current 'economic miracle'. At the same time, the impact of economic reform has been far reaching. While these changes have not all been entirely detrimental to women, there is a good deal of empirical evidence to suggest that women are concentrated in less preferred and less well paid areas of the economy (Worden 1991; White *et al.* 1996; Friedmann 2005; Judd 2002).

Graduate women have tended to fare better, since higher levels of education are generally equated with higher pay and status among women in China. However, even among graduate women, there is a perception that they now face discrimination in the workplace. This perception would appear to be well founded since there is evidence that private enterprises particularly are displaying a preference for men over women in their employment policies since employers are unwilling to bear the burden of maternity leave and other 'external' costs. These trends are particularly evident in Special Economic Zones where women workers are easily dismissed if they fall pregnant and 'have no recourse to labour unions or public authorities' which in any case 'nearly always back employers' (Friedmann 2005: 67; see also Worden 1991: 131).

In the countryside, reform has affected every facet of rural social life and reshaped gender relations profoundly (Judd 2002: 1). The rapid growth of rural industries has increased employment opportunities and, in some cases, significantly increased wages for women workers. These changes have, in turn, undermined to some degree the traditional view of gender relations and traditional understandings of the public/private division (White *et al.* 1996: 70). However, overall, women are being 'left behind' in the countryside during the move to market (Worden 1991).

Since 1989, there have been a number of highly visible and publicised conferences on human rights in China; numerous books and articles have been published on human rights; the Chinese government has sponsored collaborative research projects with Western academics; and there are now a respectable number of academics in major Chinese universities that teach and research in the field (Loh 1995; Weatherly 1999). There is some scepticism among Western commentators about how meaningful these developments really are in terms of the experience of day-to-day life in China, but there is now a space – however constrained – for discourses on human rights to emerge and shape, to some degree, the parameters of political debate in China. Moreover, there is a small group of intellectuals in China who are engaging with the ideas of Western feminism.<sup>9</sup>

In China, social movement and NGO activity is 'embedded'. That is to say, social movements and other autonomous organisations rely heavily on the state for their legitimacy and consequently tend to adopt non-confrontational strategies (Ho and Edmonds 2008: 2–3). Nevertheless, 'through a web of informal ties, social structures can develop that are capable of effectively mobilising resources, appealing to

citizens' newly perceived or desired identities and building up a modest level of counter-expertise against state dominated information on social cleavages and problems' (ibid. 3). Thus, embedded social actors might provide the basis for incremental political change in China.

In such circumstances, it is unsurprising that women's rights have become a site of contestation and struggle in recent years. As noted above, the ACWF plays a key role in protecting women's rights in the workplace. ACWF is also charged with the task of protecting the interests of specific groups of women, such as migrant workers and women in rural communities. With respect to the latter, the official response to the problems of rural women has been twofold: first, to improve the 'quality' of women (by improving literacy rates for example) so that women can better compete in the market place and, second, to extend the reach of the official women's movement so that it is better able to meet the needs of rural women (by providing education and training programmes for example).

The official women's movement has not, however, undertaken a sustained analysis of the gendered impacts of the move to the market. Rather, the ACWF has exalted women to 'ceaselessly reform modes of thought and activity unsuited to the market economy' (Zhao Yulan 1994: 11, cited in Judd 2002). Judd argues that the official women's movement effectively adopts a GAD (gender and development) approach, assuming that market-oriented development is (potentially) beneficial to women. The strategic objective of the women's movement is to advance women's development and the advancement of women's interests within a pro-market development process (Judd 2002). Economic reforms have been based on a political economy model designed to generate competition and growth, but policies based on this model have been gender blind (Christiansen and Rai 1996: 284; White *et al.* 1996; Judd 2002: 1).

Whereas previously the position of the ACWF as the legitimate representative of women's interests was unchallenged, today the organisation is under pressure to respond to complaints from grassroots women. Most recently 2007 legislation, ostensibly designed to protect women from discrimination, has explicitly listed types of employment which are 'unsuitable' for women. Women's organisations and NGOs have expressed concerns that this legislation violates women's rights to freely choose their occupation. Since the 1980s there has been a resurgence of a women's movement in China both within and beyond the established framework of the official Women's Federation. To some degree the ACWF has sponsored the development of more autonomous women's organisations (White *et al.* 1996).

The impact of transnational NGOs in China is indirect, but not entirely insignificant (Nathan 1994: 11). While China does not respond publicly to criticism from transnational human rights organisations, there is little doubt that China's changing attitude and approach to human rights has been influenced by external pressures, including that exerted by NGOs (Foot 2000). Amnesty International; the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch; and China Labor Watch and Human Rights in China have all publicised women's rights issues in China, and in some cases have produced shadow reports on the implementation of CEDAW.<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese case is interesting for what it reveals about both the potentialities, but also the limitation of rights discourse as a tool for achieving the empowerment of

women. China is not a democracy and the possibilities for specific groups – especially those on the outside of the formal political system – to have a voice in political debate and/or exert influence in the political process are severely limited. Nevertheless, the emergence of a debate about human rights within China, combined with the dynamics of economic change and external pressures from state and non-state actors, has created some space for women’s human rights issues to be aired and for activists to organise around a rights agenda. However, these developments notwithstanding, women’s human rights continue to be marginalised in political discourse in contemporary China (Loh 1995). Women’s rights are not regarded as central to the democratic project, but only something to be ‘added’ once human rights have been gained for all (Worden 1991: 134). In regard to work specifically, it is ironic that the limited range of gender-specific rights that were recognised and protected in Communist China are now seemingly being rolled back in the interests of advancing ‘economic liberty’.

### Seminar exercise

This exercise will require group work and some preparation.

**PREPARATION:** Each seminar class should be divided into smaller groups (four groups maximum). In preparation for the class, each member of the class should read Ackerly (2001) and Joachim (2003). The group should then identify a NGO

Since the end of the UN Decade for Women in 1985, there has been a proliferation of NGOs organised around the promotion and protection of women’s human rights. Post-Beijing networks to promote the implementation of CEDAW have grown exponentially, aided by advances in information and global communications technologies. Moreover, gender ‘mainstreaming’ efforts have institutionalised the link between (selected) NGOs, relevant UN bodies and individual governments/states (Bunch 1995; Chinkin 1999; Assharipour 1999; Joachim 2003). These institutionalised linkages have potentially strengthened the capacity of NGOs to have an impact on policy formulation, law-making and the implementation and monitoring of women’s human rights at both international and national/local levels.

Outside of these formalised or institutionalised relationships, increasingly NGOs have embraced the human rights agenda since it can be a useful political tool for activists. In so far as governments make public commitments to rights at the UN and elsewhere, NGOs can subsequently hold governments to account for their actions – or failure to act – with respect to human rights violations.

NGOs are sometimes portrayed as representatives of grassroots women or as conduits of civil society (particularly in the liberal literature), but the role of NGOs is not uncontroversial. There are a number of issues that arise concerning the legitimacy of NGO claims to represent or speak for civil society. For example, there is an accreditation process for NGO participation at the UN and while there must necessarily be some limits on numbers, the criteria and decisions on who to include and exclude can be politically motivated, as was the case at the Beijing women’s conference. Some so-called NGOs are actually so closely connected with government that they are scarcely independent entities. Moreover, as noted above, if not entirely excluded women and women’s groups – particularly from countries outside the affluent West – are marginalised in international forums, often simply lacking the resources to participate.

Figure 6.3 NGOs and women’s human rights.

that currently uses the language of women's human rights in its advocacy and/or political campaigning work and should research the history and main goals/objectives of the group (mission statement) and identify a high profile campaign that the NGO is currently engaged in. After conducting this preliminary research, the group should meet outside of class and collectively draft an outline of an effective campaign strategy for their NGO. It might be a good idea to decide upon a division of labour between the group members and allocate specific tasks to each person. For example, if you require money, you will need a fund raiser; if you intend to use the media to publicise your cause, you will need a press officer, etc.

IN CLASS: Each group should present their campaign to the entire class (10 minutes each), explaining: a) their goal; b) their strategy; c) where and how the group felt that they could best exploit the opportunities that existed to make a political impact; and d) what they perceived to be the major constraints and obstacles.

The class as a whole should then:

1. Compare the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each campaign.
2. Compare the potential opportunities and constraints faced by NGOs in waging effective campaigns.
3. Relate the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints involved in each campaign to the specific context in which their campaign was conducted.
4. Reach some general conclusions about the degree to which human rights are an effective, or ineffective, political tool for activists.

## CONCLUSION

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This chapter has provided specific illustrations of how women's human rights are relevant to international politics. A number of key points emerge from the above discussion. First, with respect to the questions posed in the introduction to this book, women's human rights is a pertinent example of how social and political relationships conceived as being to do with the body are relevant in the study of international politics. While conventionally constructed as 'private matters', the state routinely intervenes in the interest of regulating social relations in the private realm. Moreover, women's human rights demonstrates how the boundaries between what is considered 'public' and 'private' and 'domestic' and 'international' have shifted over time. Rights in relation to the family, sexuality and reproduction particularly also provide germane examples of how struggles around language and meaning are central to global politics.

It is clear that the women's human rights agenda is not solely a Western project. Human rights discourse has been evoked in a number of countries, with different political regimes and diverse ideological, religious and cultural sensibilities, to bring pressure to bear on governments to act in specific cases of human rights violations. However, women's bodies are central to 'boundary drawing' and 'identity fixing' practices and so claims made in the name of women's human rights can never be

fully disentangled from claims made in the name of specific cultural, ethnic, religious or national groups. Moreover, where women's human rights have been evoked to justify interventionist political projects and military campaigns, there is no evidence that these have proved beneficial to women. It seems that the commitment to 'women's human rights' in such campaigns is more rhetorical than real. Women's rights are still apt to be subordinated to other categories such as class and nation. Women's rights are also likely to be regarded as being of second order importance to achieving broader goals such as economic liberalisation or, paradoxically, even democratisation.

The women's human rights agenda bears testimony to the continuing strategic and political necessity of speaking 'as woman' and provides a universal idiom in which to speak about injustices and make claims in the name of 'women'. In some contexts, human rights discourse and instruments also furnish activists with useful tools for advancing their goals. However, it is equally evident that human rights is not a 'gift' to be conferred on women by benevolent elites, but an outcome of tough battles fought over time, in which there are advances and setbacks and in which the specific character of the struggles is shaped by both international, national and local contexts. At a time when human rights talk is seemingly everywhere and the widespread acceptance of human rights notwithstanding, human rights continue to be violated and specific categories of rights continue to be disputed and women's human rights remain among the most contested and among the most violated.

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### Questions for further debate

1. Can a case be made for gender-specific rights (such as maternity pay for women)? Can such provisions be reconciled with the principle of equality under the law?
2. Should feminists support political or military interventions, if there is a commitment to put an end to human rights violations?
3. Susan Okin has argued that multiculturalism is potentially or actually incompatible with women's human rights. Is she right?
4. Are UN forums such as the Beijing conference merely 'theatre', as Gayatri Spivak (below) has claimed?
5. Do you agree that the language of human rights and human rights convention provide a useful tool for activists seeking to 'empower' women?

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### Relevant web-based resources

- Women's Human Rights Net (WHRNET), available HTTP: <<http://www.whrnet.org/>>.
- Women's Human Rights Resources Database, available HTTP: <<http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/diana/whrr/index.cfm?sister=utl&CFID=612265&CFTOKEN=63700714>>.
- UN Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW), available HTTP: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/daw/index.html>>.



- Centre for Women's Global Leadership, which provides a range of women's human rights resources. Available HTTP: <<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/additional.html>>.
- Women Watch, an information and resource gateway to the UN system, available HTTP: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/about/index.html>>.

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### Notes

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- 1 Political philosophers from Aristotle to Thomas Carlyle have represented the Body Politic as an organic or natural entity. Carlyle, for example, regarded government as the 'skin' of the body that protected the health of the 'body' from attacks or invasions from pernicious maladies. Today, the notion that politically constituted bodies are 'natural' or 'organic' is apt to be regarded as rather old-fashioned, but the term is still occasionally employed in the looser sense described above.
- 2 Before the development and adoption of human rights conventions (from the 1960s onwards) individuals – male or female – had no standing in international law; since international law recognised only states – and arguably some corporate bodies – as entities with legal personality. Human rights conventions do not give individuals the right to petition regional or international courts (unless states sign up to protocols that grant individuals such rights), but require states to revise their current laws and/or set up legal machinery to allow for the effective implementation on international conventions and protocols that they have signed up to and ratified.

- 3 CEDAW demanded the abolition of discriminatory customs and practices and inequities in marriage and divorce; articulated an international standard for what was meant by 'equality' between men and women, granted formal rights to women, and also promoted equality of access and opportunity and in so doing recognised that rights could be meaningless unless attention was paid to the economic, social and cultural context in which they were claimed.
- 4 The Draft Convention addressed 'gender-based violence' as a 'form of discrimination that seriously inhibited women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on the basis of equality with men' and prohibited any act of gender-based violence which was 'likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'.
- 5 The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) affirmed the liberal principles of 'freedom of choice for individual women' and proclaimed that it was 'the duty of governments to promote and protect human rights of women, by building on previous agreements and ratifying and implementing relevant human rights treaties'. The BPfA also imposed on states 'regardless of their political, economic, and cultural systems' an obligation 'to promote and protect all human rights' and 'to address the violation of women's human rights' in varied contexts.
- 6 China's increasing openness to global economic forces has meant that China has also become more open to global political and cultural influences. Since the rise of the democracy movement and the violent protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989, a split has opened up in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) between conservative (traditionalists) and a more pragmatic, reformist wing who recognise that the regime cannot continue to rule without the support of key sections of the urban population and that as Chinese society grows more differentiated, the social and political implications of reform cannot be circumvented over the longer term (Saich 1991: 34).
- 7 Ideology aside, there were also rather more instrumental reasons why the CCP sidelined issues of gender inequality and discrimination against women. While the position of women in rural China improved significantly during the Maoist period, the CCP was reluctant to implement radical policies that would transform the traditional division of labour because the Party feared alienating its grassroots support among the peasantry.
- 8 CEDAW has to be viewed in the context of other legal documents in China which take precedence over international obligations. For example, the 1983 Chinese constitution specifies a wide array of rights, yet this is in the context of the all encompassing Article 51 which privileges the collective interest over individual rights. Similarly the 1991 China's White Paper on Human Rights in China continues to counter-pose subsistence rights and economic rights to civil and political rights and maintains that human rights have to be judged in the context of a country's historical and national condition (Weatherly 1999; Kent 1995). Moreover, the retention of sovereign jurisdiction and non-intervention remain key objectives in Chinese international diplomacy (Kent 1999; see also Jacobson and Bruun 2000: 201).
- 9 By the mid-1990s, China had a dozen or so centres for women's studies that explored alternative (to Marxist-Leninist) frameworks for analysing gender inequalities, including the first non-government institute of women's studies set up in 1985 at Zhengzhou University in Henan Province by Li Xiaojiang (Weatherly 1999: 77).
- 10 Amnesty International has produced a number of reports on working conditions in China, including 'China – Internal Migrants: Discrimination and Abuse' and 'The Human Cost of an Economic "Miracle"'. China Labor Watch (CLW) is a New York-based NGO that campaigns on behalf of women migrant workers and child migrant workers. CLW has produced a number of relevant press releases and more in-depth reports on a wide range of topics, including issues facing women employees. Similarly, Human Rights in

China (HRIC) is an NGO based in Hong Kong that has produced a number of documents on women's rights in China including 'Institutionalized Exclusion – The tenuous legal status of internal migrants in China's major cities', 'HRIC Welcomes UN Recommendations on Women's Rights in China', 'Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in the PRC' and 'Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the People's Republic of China'. HRIC claimed that there were actually 'serious problems of discrimination' faced by many Chinese women and girls, who suffered disproportionately from government policies, and that the Chinese government's official submission to the UN was 'seriously inadequate' (HRIC 1998).

# Trafficking in Human Beings

Barbara Sullivan

Human trafficking emerged as an important issue in world politics in the 1990s. A wide range of feminist and human rights organizations argued that sex trafficking – the forced migration and labour of women and girls in prostitution – was a growing international problem, a form of ‘modern day slavery’ that needed urgent international attention. In 2000, after many years of lobbying and debate, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new anti-trafficking protocol – the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. Many countries and regions around the world have since developed extensive regimes designed to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers and protect victims.

There has also been increasing recognition over this period that trafficking is not confined to *sex* trafficking. Women and girls are not only subjected to forced sexual labour; they may be trafficked for other purposes, for example, domestic or agricultural work. There has also been increasing recognition that men and boys may be victims of trafficking. Consequently, the language used to discuss trafficking has undergone a shift – from ‘sex trafficking’ to the more gender-neutral formulation of ‘people trafficking’ or ‘trafficking in human beings’. However, it is clear that *gender matters* in the trafficking arena particularly in terms of how the problem of trafficking – and the ‘solutions’ to this problem – have been constructed in recent times. It is still women and *sex* trafficking that tends to be the primary object of concern, especially for the media, police and law and policy makers. Also, anti-trafficking campaigns may have particularly gendered consequences. While anti-trafficking campaigns have clearly led to the rescue of some women trapped in dire circumstances,

they can also have a serious and negative impact on the human rights of migrant women workers and women who engage in sex work.

In this chapter, I look first at how trafficking has been constructed as a problem in world politics and in international law. I then look at research which attempts to ascertain the incidence of trafficking and its causes. Finally, I explore some significant and gendered issues of concern in contemporary debates about the trafficking problem.

## WHAT IS TRAFFICKING?

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Most of us are now familiar with the horrifying accounts that many victims of trafficking tell (see UN.GIFT 2008). In particular, the stories of women who have been trafficked into prostitution are likely to be reported by researchers, non-government organizations and mainstream media around the world. However, the current international concern with trafficking did not really begin until the 1980s and 1990s. The issue was initially raised in the feminist movement in the USA and was part of a broader concern about violence against women – including rape, domestic violence, pornography and prostitution. It was argued that women of all races and classes shared a common oppression as victims of men's violence. Some feminists focused on the particular concern with prostitution and 'sex slavery' or sex trafficking. They argued that prostitution was always an inherently violent and non-consensual activity, a form of rape; thus sex trafficking was an abuse of women's human rights (Barry 1979).

This radical feminist construction of the trafficking problem owed a considerable debt to feminist and abolitionist positions first elaborated more than a hundred years ago (Weitzer 2007: 467). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries feminists represented prostitutes as victims of men's lust and, therefore, in need of rescue. Abolitionists sought to abolish prostitution although then, as today, there were a variety of reasons for this stance. Some abolitionists today argue that prostitution is contrary to the will of God and moral/religious codes; others (like feminist abolitionists) argue that prostitution is rape and violence against women. All abolitionists oppose any form of legal or tolerated prostitution; they argue that there is a direct and causal relationship between legal prostitution and trafficking.

Between 1901 and 1949 a number of international agreements were addressed to the trafficking issue (see Doezema 2002). Initially, the main problem was seen in terms of 'white slavery' and the fear that European women were being abducted and transported around the world where they were forced to prostitute themselves with non-white men. So, from the beginning, the debate about trafficking was a debate about prostitution, the endangerment of women in (non-marital) sexual relations, and racial concerns about 'other' cultures.

The focus on white women in the trafficking debate was eventually set aside and the language used came to reflect a general concern about 'sex slavery' and the forced prostitution of women and girls. From 1933 onwards, the international agreements

on trafficking also had an explicitly abolitionist agenda (Doezema 2002). They condemned all recruitment for prostitution and required states to punish ‘any person who, in order to gratify the passions of another person, procures, entices or leads away, *even with her consent*, a woman or girl of full age for immoral purposes to be carried out in another country’ (1933 *International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women* cited in Doezema 2002: 23, emphasis added).

What this brief history suggests is that the problem of trafficking was constructed in a particularly gendered and raced way in the first half of the twentieth century. Kempadoo says that the trafficking debate emerged from a ‘racialized social panic’ (Kempadoo 2005: x). Women were seen to have a ‘vulnerable sexuality’ that was readily exploited by men; trafficking always involved prostitution and women’s consent was irrelevant. Thus international law did not envisage trafficking occurring outside of prostitution – for example, in agriculture, manufacturing or domestic labour. It also erased the possibility of women being active agents in their own lives, for example by migrating to undertake lucrative paid work in the sex trade.

In the 1980s and 1990s radical feminists began to renew the earlier abolitionist campaign against prostitution and trafficking (see CATW website; also Jeffreys 1997). They called for a new international agreement as part of their opposition to prostitution and trafficking (see Sullivan 2003). At this time, gender issues – and women’s human rights – were assuming a new importance in the work of international and development organizations. So concerns about trafficking also began to re-appear in mainstream international debate. Some new contestations also opened up in this period as sex worker advocates and their allies – including feminists who opposed abolitionism – argued that prostitution should be regarded as a form of labour, as ‘sex work’. From this latter perspective, there was an important distinction to be drawn between trafficking and sex work; trafficking always involved forced labour but sex work could be undertaken voluntarily (as a rational decision about how best to earn a living). Not all migration for sex work involves violence, coercion and trafficking (Saunders 2005).

Fundamental disagreements about the nature of trafficking and sex work were also reflected in debates about the form of a new international anti-trafficking agreement in the 1990s. The definition of trafficking that was finally agreed on and incorporated in the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (2000) was said to represent a ‘compromise’ between these opposing positions. Trafficking is defined as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of Persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery or servitude or the removal of organs.

(UN Protocol, Article 3(a))

For those who do not have legal training (and even for those with!) this is not a very clear definition. It has some abolitionist elements but does not define trafficking wholly in terms of prostitution or negate the consent of sex workers who have migrated (but who have not been forced into sex work).

The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which is the UN body with responsibility for the *Protocol*, says that three distinct elements must be present for an activity to be seen as trafficking under the *Protocol*:

1. Actions which involve recruiting or moving someone (recruitment, transportation, transfer, etc.)
2. Means by which those actions are carried out (threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, abuse of power, etc.).
3. Purpose (forced labour, exploitation including sexual exploitation, removal of organs).

If these three elements are present then trafficking has occurred (and any 'consent' offered by victims is invalidated).<sup>1</sup>

This suggests that trafficking is a distinct crime which can be separated from other crimes such as 'people smuggling' where migrants pay a third party to transport them into another country ('People Smuggling' is the object of a separate UN Protocol). UNODC, for example, says there are three features of trafficking which distinguish it from migrant smuggling. First, the smuggling of migrants involves people who have consented to the smuggling process; trafficking victims have either never consented or their consent has been nullified by the coercive, deceptive or violent actions of the trafficker. Second, the process of migrant smuggling ends with the arrival of the migrants at their destination; for trafficking victims arrival at the destination begins a new phase of exploitation. Third, smuggling is always transnational whereas trafficking may not be; it can occur across national boundaries or between regions within a country (see the UNODC website). In many respects, then, the crime of trafficking has been constructed in international law as feminine – with a 'gendered emphasis on passivity, ignorance and force' (Agustín 2005: 98). Smuggling, on the other hand, has all the agency and freedoms often associated with masculinity.

The literature suggests that, in practice, it may be hard to distinguish between people trafficking and migrant smuggling. Citing Liz Kelly's work, Maggy Lee claims:

there are both overlaps and transitions from smuggling to trafficking, and . . . trafficking is best understood as a 'continuum' which involves varying degrees of force, exploitation and positions of vulnerability. All this suggests that a discrete categorisation of 'trafficking' and 'smuggling' may be artificial and unhelpful, and may draw attention away from the broader context of exploitation and complex causes of irregular migration.

(Lee 2007: 11)

Laura Agustín has recently argued that a major problem with the trafficking debate – and with most attempts to define the crime of trafficking – is that it ignores

the voices of migrant women themselves (Agustín 2005: 96). From fieldwork with migrant women working in the sex industry in Europe, she concludes that:

women migrants are actively engaged in using social networks to travel, often aware of the sexual nature of the work, and, like other migrant workers, variably able to resist the economic, social and physical forms of compulsion they face. Their status as 'illegal' migrants, without permission to work in Europe, is, for them, the single overarching problem to solve, and their irregular status, not sex, is the heart of the issue.

(Agustín 2005: 98)

This statement calls attention to another important aspect of how the trafficking problem has recently been constructed in international debate. It is notable that the trafficking *Protocol* (2000) was attached to the *Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime*. So trafficking was seen to be a problem generated by the activities of transnational criminal networks. This means that trafficking can be represented as a direct threat to the peace and security of nation-states, legitimizing both increased surveillance of borders and tighter immigration controls (Lee 2007: 6).

## WHAT IS THE INCIDENCE AND WHO ARE THE MAIN VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING?

There are widely varying – and often contradictory – estimates of the number of trafficked human beings around the world. One of the main problems here is the use of varying definitions of trafficking and/or of estimation methods which rely on conjecture rather than evidence. As suggested above, some researchers regard all transportation and migration for sex work as trafficking – even if the women concerned have actively sought out third parties to facilitate their migration and employment (including in sex work). So there is a tendency to conflate trafficking with sex trafficking (that is, to not 'count' other forms of trafficking involving forced labour) and to regard all migration for sex work as forced trafficking. There has also been a tendency to construct, rely on and/or repeat often wild 'guesstimates' of the incidence of trafficking. Many of the claims made in this area are 'unsubstantiated and undocumented, and are based on sensationalist reports, hyperbole and conceptual confusion' (Kempadoo 2005: xiv). This means that debates about trafficking often take on the appearance of a 'moral panic' rather than an evidence-based, exploration of the issues involved (see Weitzer 2007).

In its most recent annual report, the USA Department of State has claimed that 800,000 people are trafficked annually around the world; that 80 per cent of victims are women and girls, most of whom are 'trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation' (US Department of State 2008: 7). However, figures like these have been called into question by other branches of the USA government (US Government Accountability Office 2006) and have been subjected to critical scrutiny by academic researchers. Di Nicola (2007), for example, suggests that the USA figures are problematic because no information has been released about how they were obtained;



he warns against accepting research that fails to specify ‘the estimation criteria used’ (Di Nicola 2007: 60–61). There is some research on the incidence of trafficking which Di Nicola regards as ‘well grounded’ and ‘clear on the limitations of the approach taken’ (2007: 64). One of the studies he mentions was conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO 2005) and reviews the whole issue of forced labour (rather than just trafficking). The ILO estimates that:

- 12.3 million people are in forced labour around the world. They suggest that ‘forced labour is a truly global problem, affecting substantial numbers of people in both developed and developing countries and in all regions of the world’ (ILO 2005: 12);
- 40–50 per cent of the victims of forced labour are children (ILO 2005: 15);
- The majority of victims (64 per cent) are in forced labour involving economic exploitation – for example, in agriculture, manufacturing or other economic activities;
- 11 per cent of victims (1,390,000) are in forced labour involving commercial sexual exploitation (ILO 2005: 12);
- A majority (56 per cent) of the victims in forced labour involving economic exploitation are women and girls; 98 per cent of the victims in forced labour involving commercial sexual exploitation are women and girls;
- 20 per cent (2.45 million) of all victims of forced labour were trafficked; 43 per cent of these were in forced labour involving commercial sexual exploitation (ILO 2005: 10–14).

So this study suggests that forced labour is a significant problem in the world today and, while trafficking is part of this problem, it is clearly not the largest part. The study also indicates that more human beings are subjected to forced labour for economic exploitation than for sexual exploitation although – in both categories – women and children are most vulnerable.

## WHAT CAUSES TRAFFICKING?

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There has been much recent debate about the causes of trafficking particularly as a way of developing better means for addressing and preventing trafficking. In their overview of trafficking around the world, the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT 2008: 19) has listed the following as ‘root causes’ of trafficking:

- Gender-based violence
- Discriminatory labour practices
- Patriarchal social structures
- Breakdown of family networks
- Ethnic, racial and religious marginalization
- Failed and corrupt Governments
- Lack of status (as citizens or legal residents entitled to work)

- Women's role in the family
- Power hierarchy and social order
- Children's roles and responsibilities
- Historical precedents of bonded labour<sup>2</sup>
- Early and forced marriage
- High rates of divorces and social stigma (attached to divorce)
- Disruption of personal development
- Limited educational achievement
- Limited economic opportunity.

Many authors call attention to *poverty* as an important factor affecting the vulnerability of individuals to trafficking. Poor people clearly have fewer income and migration options and are less able to negotiate or challenge oppressive work conditions. They may be 'pushed' into moving away from their home communities (or sending their children away) in order to survive and/or in search of better economic opportunities. So, it is perhaps not surprising that the main 'trafficking flows' in the world today follow general migration paths – between poorer and wealthier regions of the world, and between developing and wealthier countries (see Chapter 18). UNODC (2006: 17–20) says that the main countries of *origin* for trafficking victims include those in Eastern Europe, West Africa, Central and South-East Asia. The main *destination* countries for trafficking include those in Western Europe, North America, Japan and the Middle East (Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates).

However, the link between poverty and human trafficking is complex (UN.GIFT 2008: 18). When the countries reported most frequently as countries of origin and destination for trafficking are compared against the United Nations Human Development index, the main countries of origin are in the middle of this scale. So it is not the poorest people in the world who are most likely to be targeted as victims of trafficking; trafficking victims (like migrants generally) are individuals with at least some resources. But this still calls attention to the role of global inequalities – and processes of globalization – in the causes of trafficking. Migration is encouraged by the widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in the world, the demand for unskilled or semi-skilled labour in industrialized countries (especially to do jobs that are 'dirty' and low paid), and the increasing possibilities of travel (see Chapter 18). For some migrants this process will result in the extreme coercion and exploitation of trafficking.

Gender is also clearly an important factor in trafficking vulnerability. As Kempadoo (2005: ix) reminds us 'women are disproportionately represented among the poor, the undocumented, the debt-bonded, and the international migrant workforce'. Right around the world, discrimination and misogyny deeply affects women's lives and limits their economic opportunities. One way that women negotiate a 'highly gendered and racialized world order' (Kempadoo 2005: xi) is to migrate in search of better paid work. However, 'most legal migration channels are strongly biased toward work that is traditionally done by men, while two very common areas of migration for women, domestic and entertainment work, have very little protection under labor laws' (Marshall and Thatun 2005: 52). So, in processes of migration women tend to be more vulnerable to traffickers. Some women will also make rational

choices to work in the sex industry and others will be coerced into it; as Penttinen has recently argued both sex work and forced trafficking are enabled by the forces of globalization. In her research on trafficking in Eastern Europe she argues:

the body in demand in the current globalized world is the body of an eroticized exotic woman who adapts to the rugged landscape and fitness tests posed by globalization processes, by travelling or being trafficked to the West for the purposes of sex work. She adapts to globalization by subjecting to sex work and by appropriating and enacting the position of the exotic erotic Eastern girl.

(Penttinen 2008: xv)

However, as many authors remind us, the situation of migrant women working in the sex industry is similar in many ways to the situations faced by other migrant women (Kempadoo 2005: xi) especially those who have to negotiate a lack of legal work status or who end up employed in underground, unregulated and/or informal economies within industrialized countries. It is the demand for cheap, flexible, wage labour in these countries – together with restrictive immigration laws and policies – that are probably the main ‘causes’ of people trafficking in the world today. Empirical evidence indicates that attempts to restrict immigration assist trafficking rather than hindering it (Marshall and Thatun 2005: 50). This means that much of what is currently being done by governments and international organizations in the name of combating trafficking may actually be contributing to the problem.

## ONGOING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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There are currently a number of very important gendered issues and concerns in relation to trafficking:

### **The weakness of human rights protections for trafficking victims and migrant workers generally**

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The protections offered to trafficking victims are often minimal. The trafficking *Protocol* (2000) requires countries to introduce law enforcement measures designed to prosecute and punish traffickers. However, many of the measures designed to protect trafficking victims and uphold their human rights are not obligatory for countries that sign the Protocol (see GAATW 2007: 5). Trafficking victims are often immediately deported (as illegal migrants) or are confined within shelters and detention centres. In many wealthy countries, such as the USA, UK and Australia, protection and assistance for trafficking victims is conditional on cooperation with law enforcement officials; so there is no clear right to protection and assistance and involuntary repatriations can occur at any time, back to the country of origin. The interlinking of trafficking and migrant labour suggests the need for strong human

rights protections for migrant workers in general. There is a specific UN convention addressed to upholding the rights of migrant workers generally (the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*) but this has not been ratified by a single industrialized country receiving large numbers of migrants (GAATW 2007: 8). As Dottridge (in GAATW 2007: 12) has recently argued:

While efforts are nominally made to protect people from being trafficked, the main emphasis of most governments when it comes to migrants is to ‘control’ and limit immigration and does not involve assisting or protecting migrants. Indeed, the narrow focus on trafficking seems in many countries to act as a justification for not taking action to end *all* the abuse to which migrant workers in the informal sectors of the economy are subjected.

### **The ongoing focus on sex trafficking and the tendency to conflate sex trafficking with migration for sex work**

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Most anti-trafficking efforts continue to focus on sex trafficking and to ignore the other ways that human beings are trafficked and subject to forced labour. Far less attention is paid to the situation of women and girls trafficked for forced labour outside prostitution (for example, domestic labour) or to the trafficking of men and boys. This means that sex trafficking is often the only sort of trafficking that gets ‘noticed’, policed and counted. As discussed above, there is also an ongoing tendency to discuss all migration for sex work in terms of trafficking, ignoring the important differences between forced labour in the sex trade and other forms of relatively un-coerced labour (which arguably, are the normal lot of workers in many occupations). In some countries, most notably the USA, the campaign against trafficking has become the platform for a renewed abolitionism and opposition to all prostitution. This is evident in law, public policy and education material produced by the USA government in recent years. In 2003 the USA government began to require non-government organizations applying for funds for anti-trafficking or HIV/AIDS prevention work to sign an ‘anti-prostitution pledge’ which meant they could not also support the legalization or decriminalization of prostitution. This has had a significant and negative impact particularly on groups that organize within sex worker communities (see GAATW 2007: 18). The conflation of trafficking and prostitution is also evident in photographs commissioned by the US Department of State, to illustrate their annual report on trafficking around the world. These are also published on the Web, as ‘Images of Human Trafficking’ (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking 2009). Many of these photographs show sex industry establishments or sex workers (who we are told are ‘sex slaves’) engaged in their occupation. There is no overt evidence of violence, coercion or trafficking but we are encouraged to assume this is what we are seeing: prostitution and trafficking are conflated.



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Figure 7.1

*Source:* Image in the public domain, copyright to Kay Chernush for the U.S. State Department.

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### The problematic representation of women and gender difference in anti-trafficking campaigns

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Despite the complexity of trafficking scenarios, and the many factors which cause human beings to be trapped in forced labour, anti-trafficking campaigns often focus on sex trafficking telling powerful and emotional stories about female victims. These are stories which construct – and re-construct – women as innocent and powerless, as ‘naturally’ vulnerable and endangered by the world (see Hesford 2005 and Andrijasevic 2007). Anti-trafficking campaigns focused in this way are often sexually charged but



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Figure 7.2

*Source:* Image in the public domain, copyright to Kay Chernush for the U.S. State Department.

are unlikely to enhance the power and agency of real women. They may, for example, lead the viewer to the conclusion that women who are not powerless (for example, migrant sex workers) cannot be trafficking victims; or that trafficking can be prevented by encouraging women to stay home and not seek work abroad!

### **The impact of anti-trafficking campaigns on women's human rights**

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There are various ways that anti-trafficking campaigns impact negatively on women's human rights. In the first place, they may have the effect of limiting women's mobility – for example by forcing them to stay home or denying the right to emigrate (Marshall and Thatun 2005: 51). Immigration officers in industrialized countries have 'stereotyped young women travellers from certain countries, such as Brazil and Nigeria, as potential sex workers or victims of trafficking and used this as an excuse to impede their entry' (GAATW 2007: 17). Of course, the effects of measures like these impact most heavily on women who are poor than on women who are better off and better educated (GAATW 2007: 13). Sex worker organizations have also documented the impact of anti-trafficking campaigns – the 'violence and terror' – on the human rights of women who support themselves via sex work (Kempadoo 2005: 149; see also Murphy and Ringheim 2002). This particularly pertains to police raids on brothels and the public shaming of sex workers by officials in some countries (see Scarlet Alliance 2008).

### **Anti-trafficking agendas have become attached to the interests of states in their own sovereignty and security**

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With the recent construction of trafficking as a problem about organized crime (see above), and particularly in the wake of increasing security concerns post-9/11, anti-trafficking programmes have been absorbed into state security agendas which tend to prioritize surveillance, immigration controls and border security over human rights (see Kempadoo 2007). It is notable that the United States government, while pursuing both 'homeland security' and a 'war on terror', is also 'committed to rallying the world to defeat human trafficking' (Condoleezza Rice in the US *Trafficking in Persons Report* 2008). The United States government has brought a range of pressures and sanctions to bear to ensure that countries around the world enact and enforce strong anti-trafficking laws (see US *Trafficking in Persons Report* 2008). As suggested above, these have some gendered consequences and may not always operate to advance the human rights of women, especially poor and migrant women.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The forced labour of human beings remains an issue of significant magnitude right around the world today. The recent concern with human trafficking calls our attention to this bigger problem and to the way that women, men and children may be

subjected to forced labour. There are gendered patterns in human trafficking and forced labour; there are also key vulnerabilities related to race, age, economic inequality and globalization. It is important to keep this bigger picture in mind and to recognize some of the dangers associated with simplistic 'solutions' to the problems of trafficking and forced labour.

### Seminar exercise

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Watch the 60-second Public Service Announcement produced by UNODC called 'Go Work Abroad'. How is trafficking represented in this video? (Who are the victims and perpetrators? What genders and races do you see? What types of trafficking are/are not represented? What 'solutions' are suggested – or implied – for stopping trafficking?)

INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR: This video could either be shown in class or assigned for students to look at before the seminar discussion. The video is readily accessed at a number of sites on the Web including:

- a. Via the UN.GIFT website, available HTTP: <<http://www.ungift.org/ungift/en/multimedia/video.html>>.
- b. Via the UNODC website available HTTP: <<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/multimedia/work-abroad-public-service-announcement.html>>.
- c. Via YouTube, available HTTP: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjIOcQMAQVA>>.

### Questions for further debate

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1. Does forced labour occur in the community where you live?
2. Imagine you are a young woman who lives in a developing country; why would you be tempted to migrate and what factors would make you more or less vulnerable to being trafficked?
3. In your view, what are the best ways to prevent trafficking?
4. In media representations of trafficking that you have already seen (in newspaper reports, on television, in magazines and on the Internet) how is trafficking understood? Who are the main victims and perpetrators (what races and genders stand out)? How does the media represent the causes of trafficking and solutions to this problem?
5. Can anti-trafficking campaigns have a negative impact on some women?

### Relevant web-based resources

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- The report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2005) *A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour*, which includes a chapter on human trafficking

and 'estimating the profits', available HTTP: <[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed\\_norm/-declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_081882.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_norm/-declaration/documents/publication/wcms_081882.pdf)>.

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), available HTTP: <<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html>>.
- UN.GIFT (United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking) (2008) *Human Trafficking: An Overview* (New York: United Nations). Online, available HTTP: <<http://www.ungift.org/docs/ungift/pdf/knowledge/ebook.pdf>>.
- Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), an international alliance of NGOs combating trafficking, available HTTP: <<http://www.gaatw.org/>>.
- Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), the US-based NGO that was awarded consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council in 1989. Available HTTP: <<http://www.catwinternational.org/>>.

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## Notes

- 1 For those under the age of 18, the second element does not need to be established; the case will be regarded as trafficking if there has been recruitment (or transportation, etc.) and any forced labour or 'exploitation'.
- 2 Debt bondage is one of the commonest forms of forced labour in the world today; it involves an 'exchange' of labour in return for a loan. The value of this labour is invariably much greater than the original loan amount and debt bonded workers will often be subject to confinement, surveillance and threats if they attempt to leave.





## **SECTION THREE VIOLENCE AND SECURITY**

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# Militarism and War

Cynthia Cockburn

The relationship between gender and war can be described in at least two contrasting ways. It is often represented as a somewhat casual, contingent, kind of relationship, in which ‘men and women’ stand in for ‘gender’, and significance is accorded to ‘who does what’ in war. Alternatively the gender/war relation may be given much more explanatory importance, to the extent of positing a two-way causality. War may be seen as actually shaping the gender relations of a given society, while in turn a certain gender order may be seen as predisposing a society to war (Reardon 1996; Goldstein 2001; Cockburn 2007).

## THE ‘SEXUAL DIVISION OF WAR’: INTERESTING BUT INSUFFICIENT

Statistically speaking, there is a ‘sexual division of war’, just as there is a sexual division of labour, in which men and women characteristically play different roles. In all armies men are the majority of combatants. They undergo a brutalizing training regime and are expected to kill. More men than women die in combat, while women are more commonly numbered among civilian casualties, dying of disease, malnutrition, sexual violence and accident. Then again, among refugees, UN statistics consistently show women to comprise a significantly higher proportion of adult refugees displaced by armed conflict, so that a characteristic role for women in war is looking after the young, elderly and sick in extreme conditions. Although figures are impossible to verify, it is also clear that large numbers of women are raped and subjected to other kinds of sexual torture during war (see Chapter 11). Some of the

reports of human rights organizations (such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) are descriptive of this gender-specificity in various features of war, laying down a valuable groundwork for a gender analysis.

Sex-disaggregated statistics do reveal something interesting about probable divergences and contrasts in the experiences and attitudes of women and men in relation to armed conflict. For example, commercial opinion polls often confirm the belief that women are, in general, in some societies, less favourably disposed to war than men. Polls in the UK for instance found that throughout the run-up to the US and British invasion of Iraq in early 2003 one clear-cut demographic pattern was that women were much more hostile to the war, a difference that at its greatest saw almost twice as many men as women approving the government's plans. Yet such statistics, if we read them with attention, also tell us that some women, even if it is a minority, are as much or more inclined to support war as are some men. And indeed, qualitative knowledge reveals many women actually supporting masculine war projects. In England as the First World War broke out some women engaged in a 'white feather' campaign. If they saw an able-bodied man of draft age on the streets not wearing a soldier's uniform they shamed him by giving him a white feather to signify cowardice. Today, in the profoundly patriarchal culture of India's Hindu extremist organizations, women are cast as the selfless wife and mother. But during the massacre of Muslims in Gujerat in 2002 these right-wing women were out on the streets chiding the men for 'wearing bangles' – in other words not being man enough to kill and rape Muslim women. They thus acted in defiance of the stereotype 'women are inclined to be peaceful' yet remained within the bounds of patriarchal relations. Women antiwar activists, it may be noted, by contrast conform to that stereotype while defying patriarchal power and especially its affinity to militarism and nationalism. Jean Bethke Elshtain's *Women and War* helpfully invalidates such stereotypes (1987).

Statistics seldom reveal a 100-to-zero per cent difference between the positioning of men and women in the sexual division of labour, life or war. There are always those 5 per cent, 10 per cent or 15 per cent of one sex or the other that are 'exceptions'. A useful example is the minority of women among the masculine ranks of military personnel (Carreiras 2006). The proportion of women in Western militaries has shown a marked upward trend in recent years. Women climbed from around 2 per cent to

The relationship between gender and war may be conceptualized in different ways. It may be seen as involving a certain gender-specificity of location, experience and role in militarized societies and in armed conflict. From this perspective, quantitative information will be relevant, although the distinctive differences between men and women thus revealed will never be complete and the exceptions will be informative. A more profound understanding of 'gender and war' may be achieved through, first, conceptualizing gender as an enduring relation of power, closely intersected with ethno-national and economic power relations, and, second, visualizing war as social, systemic and as a phased continuum. Within a sociological framework of this kind a study of institutions, processes and cultures reveals patriarchal gender relations to be both cause and consequence of war.

Figure 8.1

around 20 per cent of the US Army between 1973 and 2008, while in political and ethnic insurgencies in the last few decades, for example in Nicaragua, Chiapas (Mexico) and Sri Lanka, rebel militias have included a significant proportion of women among combatants.

Such figures, at one reading, indicate that women can be similarly positioned to men. But when some men or some women show up like this as a minority statistic, defying a gender stereotype, it does not mean that gender counts for nothing in explaining war. On the contrary, the situation of the minority sex in any of these roles and situations is seldom equivalent to that of the majority, and the qualitative difference throws light on both gender and war. For instance, women may have the right to join the military, but when they choose to do so their experience is very different from that of men. For one thing, women soldiers characteristically experience sexual harassment and rape by their male comrades and superiors. See Figure 8.2 for an autobiographical account by a young woman soldier of her service in Iraq, evidence that being a woman soldier does not yield the same experience as being a male soldier.

Instances such as the above suggest that to fully understand the relationship of gender and war we need to know more than the statistical distributions of war-time roles between men and women. Much more meaningful is the expression of the gender *relation* in war, the qualitative relation between masculinity and femininity, as sets of ideals and values, qualities, motivations and vectors, mapped onto the bodies and behaviours of men and women respectively in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. When we see things this way, the minority experiences revealed in the statistics, instead of negating the significance of gender and stating 'one sex can do whatever the other can do', turn out to be hiding a profound qualitative difference. Gender relations are much more than 'who does what' and they permeate militarization and war, through and through.

#### The experience of being a woman soldier is different from that of being a man soldier

Kayla Williams was promoted to sergeant during her tour of duty with the US Army in Iraq. She thought of herself as a capable and well-adapted soldier like any other. '...I do fifty-five push-ups in under a minute. Tough, and proud to be tough. I love my M-4, the smell of it, of cleaning fluid, of gunpowder: the smell of strength. Gun in your hands, and you're in a special place' (p. 15). 91% of all Army career fields were open to Williams, and like the male soldiers in her unit, she had encounters with a dangerous and violent enemy in the war zone of Iraq. But it was encounters with her male colleagues that stuck fast in her memory so that six months after her return she was still having difficulty convincing herself, as she put it 'I am not a slut'. She wrote, 'A woman soldier has to toughen herself up. Not just for the enemy, for battle, or for death. I mean toughen herself to spend months awash in a sea of nervy, hyped-up guys who, when they're not thinking about getting killed, are thinking about getting laid. Their eyes on you all the time, your breasts, your ass – like there is nothing else to watch... It was like a separate bloodless war within the larger deadly one' (pp.13, 22).

From Kayla Williams (2005) *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the US Army*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Figure 8.2

## PATRIARCHAL GENDER RELATIONS AND A SOCIOLOGICAL TAKE ON WAR

Perceiving gender as a relation reveals it to be consistently a relation of power, that is to say, of asymmetry, inequality and domination. It calls for the notion of a sex/gender system with continuity over time and expression in institutions and cultures. In the contemporary world and far back in the past those societies of which we know have all, to differing degrees and in different ways, been characterized by the supremacy of men and masculinity, the subordination of women and femininity. The term commonly used to describe such a gender order is 'patriarchy', its meaning now extended beyond 'rule of the father' to rule by men more generally, both in the public and private realm. Patriarchy's persistence over at least 5,000 years and its variations from region to region have been widely mapped and discussed, and are mentioned elsewhere in this volume (see also Lerner 1986). Social structures and their institutions are adaptively reproduced from one generation to the next in the main by cultural means – most importantly in the case of patriarchy by the cultural shaping, in continually changing circumstances, of hegemonic masculinity in a form adequate to power, and particularly to the deployment of coercive power. It must have authority over subordinate (and sometimes rebellious) masculinities, while femininity too must be appropriately shaped, taking a form that assures female compliance and cooperation with the patriarchal project. Thus women sign up to the 'patriarchal bargain', while men, to different degrees in different social classes and ethnic groups, benefit from the 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell 1987). From this perspective we can see that the hierarchical and complementary gender relations of a patriarchal order, in which men and masculinity are authoritative, combative and prone to coercion, while women and femininity are submissive, supportive and nurturing, are particularly fitted to the needs of militarist and nationalist societies and cultures.

The cultural processes through which patriarchal gender relations are generated – upbringing and schooling, recreation, media, employment – in most societies include immersion in militarization and war, either fictively or in reality. War – the experience of war, remembering war, fearing war and preparing for war – shapes masculinities and femininities. To see the influence on each other of gender and war it helps to study war with a sociologist's lens. While the hegemonic international relations analysis of war focuses on the macro-level concerns of statehood, sovereignty, security and the balance of power, sociologists stress that war, despite its deadliness, involves human relationships. As Brian E. Fogarty puts it, 'warfare is a distinctly social enterprise' (Fogarty 2000: 21). People participate in war as groups. They do so in the understanding that they are willing if necessary to kill and die for some social purpose. In these circumstances it is implicitly agreed that war is not murder. And (whether they are observed or not) there are 'rules' of warfare – such as the Geneva Conventions. Many feminist sociologists by now have added a gender perspective to this sociological understanding of war.

War, besides, is systemic. It may be imagined as a set of interacting or interdependent entities (government ministries, arms manufacturing firms, training academies, fighting units), functionally related, with inputs and outputs, and information flows within and across its open borders. The system has products (bombs, battleships,

bullets), and influential ideologies (expressed in values, attitudes and cultures). War seen systemically in this way readily opens up to a gender analysis. Its institutions can be seen as loci of several dimensions of power, among which is that of gender. A military training academy, for instance, is likely to be, simultaneously, a site of economic power and its class relations, of ethno-national, racialized, relations, and of patriarchal gender relations. These and other dimensions of power are interwoven, they are intersectional, each working with, in and through the others. We can see overlaps and information flows between the war system and other social systems – education, the arts, sport for instance – and the significance in all of them of gender, as of other, power relations.

So, war as relational, war as systemic – and a third qualifier also is important here: the idea that actual wars are only phases in a sequence of conditions linked together as a *continuum*. This is particularly clear to the organizations and networks of the movement that opposes war, which now span the globe and are linked by electronic communications. Some of them, rather than seeking to end or prevent particular wars, address militarist thinking and the build up of nuclear arsenals. They seek to prevent wars breaking out, and strive for demobilization after war. Thus they inevitably see ‘war’ as part of a continuum. The spiralling cycle leads from militarism (as a persisting mindset, expressed in philosophy, newspaper editorials, church sermons), through militarization (processes in economy and society that signify preparation for war), to episodes of ‘hot’ war, and thence to ceasefire and stand-off, followed perhaps by an unsteady peace with sustained military investment, beset by sporadic verbal and physical violence, prefiguring a further twist to the spiral (Cockburn 2004).

Many mainstream commentaries reflect this perception of a phased cycle or continuum of war. They show, for example, how high military expenditure in the West was maintained despite the end of the Cold War. They suggest that in contemporary civil wars some participants have a vested interest not in winning war but rather in continued conflict and in the long-term institutionalization of violence. Some have pointed out that the age of industrial warfare has ended, and the new paradigm of war fought among civilians has increased the continuum effect. Seeing war as processual in this way assists a gender perspective, allowing for the various cultures and subcultures of militarization and war to come to light, and the part of masculinity and femininity in them. International relations theory approaches war very differently from feminist sociology. It reveals other aspects of war that are certainly important to know, but it does not readily reveal gender at work.

## SEEING GENDER AND WAR AS MUTUALLY PRODUCTIVE

Just as, at first sight, it seems counter-intuitive to think of war as social, so it seems counter-intuitive to see violence as productive. But the violence of war does indeed produce social relations in certain forms that endure long after a given episode of fighting has ended. For example, the wars involved in the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s are commonly held to have been ‘caused by’ ethnic enmities among and between Serb, Croat and Bosnian Muslim segments of the population of Yugoslavia. Yet the ethnic distinctiveness of Serb, Croat and Bosnian Muslims may



just as easily be seen as produced, and intentionally produced, *through* the violence (Zarkov 2007). The productiveness in the case of the gender/war relation was likewise mutual, working in both directions simultaneously. Prior to war, the social order of Yugoslavia, though in other ways considerably modified by the ideology and administrative measures of the League of Communists, had continued to be a male-dominated gender order and heavily militarized. It had been producing masculinity and femininity in a form conducive to war. During the 1990s the convulsion of armed conflict then deepened gender divisions in such a way that in this present period, dubiously deemed 'post-war', feminists find themselves obliged to struggle for women's rights (and simultaneously for a restoration of inclusion, unity and peace) in a gender order that is more hierarchical, undemocratic and divisive than it was before the wars began.

### Maintaining preparedness for war

Masculinities in many societies, even in times that appear to be 'peaceful', are socially constructed through activities such as competitive sports and computer games in a form that is readily adaptable to serve well in war conditions. James McBride suggests that in the USA football is an allegory or metaphor for war, sharing its pursuit of male territorial gains. 'Football, like war,' he writes, 'is a form of male aggression, consciously played out in a variety of cultural practices' (McBride 1995: 4). He notes that domestic violence by men against women surges during significant football events and at the onset of wars. With its male bonding rituals, McBride writes, 'the game of football reinscribes war and the concomitant values of the warrior as a template for the identity of football enthusiasts – the vast majority of men in America' (McBride 1995: 86).

An elite group of men continually engaged in readying the USA for war are the defence intellectuals who debate and plan the country's nuclear weapons policy. Carol Cohn, a feminist social scientist, was shocked to find, during participant observation among such a group, that these articulate, charming, humorous and decent men routinely discussed the most horrific possibilities of vaporized cities and mangled

In the patriarchal gender orders that prevail in our societies, gender is a relation of power. It intersects with other significant dimensions of power such as those of economic class and that of ethno-national relations. They shape each other and often achieve their effects, including militarization and war, through the self-same institutions and cultural processes. Patriarchal gender relations, in which men and masculinity are constituted as sharply contrasted to women and femininity, and as both superior and complementary to them, are highly favourable to militarist and nationalist interests. This is particularly the case where hegemonic masculinity is shaped as authoritative, competitive and aggressive, and where women value, or tolerate, these qualities in men. Such gender relations predispose societies to war, while militarization and war violence in turn produce them. In such an analysis, the transformation of gender relations is necessary if peace is to be achieved and sustained.

Figure 8.3

bodies in light-hearted, abstract and euphemistic terms, revealing an 'astounding chasm between image and reality' in their techno-strategic language (Cohn 1990: 34, see also Chapter 1). The linking thread in the discourse of this nuclear 'priesthood', as she terms them, was sexism. It was their masculinity that enabled them to distance themselves from the actual death and destruction implied in their work, inescapable to anyone engaged with everyday human care and concern.

It is not only masculinity, however, that keeps a society trapped on the continuum of war. Femininity plays its part too. Painful examples of women, deeply embedded in conventional patriarchal gender relations, urging their men to fight, and even to rape enemy women, were given above. Many less dramatic but quietly pervasive processes have been observed in which civilian women are induced to play an unquestioning part in support of societal militarization.

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### Taking a country into war

The moment of entry into war can be specially revealing of the causal effect of gender. Italian fascism and German National Socialism were able to draw on a radicalized masculinity emerging from the First World War, to reconstruct a sense of national community and prepare for the Second World War. More recently, it has been suggested that patriarchal masculinity was at the root of the erroneous political decision to take the USA into war against the Communist regime in Vietnam. Robert Dean found the policy makers of the time to have been 'a small and strikingly homogenous group', strongly formed by their shared class and gender belonging. He shows how those foreign policy decision makers 'incarnated an imperial masculinity tied to patterns of class and education'. They shared a background in exclusive male-only institutions, such as boarding schools, Ivy League fraternities and secret societies, elite military service and metropolitan men's clubs, 'where imperial traditions of "service" and "sacrifice" were invented and bequeathed to those that followed'. They served to imbue men with a particular kind of manhood, indoctrinate them in an 'ideology of masculinity', ritually creating 'a fictive brotherhood of privilege and power' (Dean 2001: 4–5). These were the patriarchal gender relations that, intertwined with those of economic class and nationalism/imperialism, disposed a group of men to lead their country into a doomed war.

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### Training men to fight

In certain widespread and influential male subcultures, the masculinity fostered and rewarded is aggressive and violent. We see this in computer games, in certain forms of music, in popular film and in the fascination knives and guns hold for men and boys. These cultures predispose young males to see themselves as potential fighters and to consider armed conflict normal, even a fulfilment of their manhood. John Horne made a study of masculinity in war and politics over the hundred years from 1850. He proposes that to fully understand war we need to explore 'the dense associative life of men' (Horne 2004: 27). It is through hard cultural *work*, the shaping and

manipulation of that sociality, that military managers create their armies. Those destined to be leaders are educated in an authoritative masculinity in officer training courses, while those destined to be the rank-and-file are subjected to acquisition of a different masculinity in the disciplinary torture of 'boot camp', where drill sergeants prepare their recruits for war by reinforcing their racism, misogyny and homophobia, annihilating any vestige of the feminine in them.

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## War fighting

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A feature of many, if not most, wars is mass sexual violence inflicted by men on women – and on some men (see Chapters 10 and 11 for fuller discussions of this issue). It occurs in phases of fighting that afford particular opportunity for it, such as invasions, occupations and the imposition of state terror on political insurgencies. Many authors have explored the relationship of so-called 'peacetime' rape and war rape. Rape in both circumstances may be opportunistic and 'recreational', a product of the deep misogyny among men (and unfortunately among many women) characteristic of societies in both conditions. However, we are now more alert to situations where military commanders make deliberate use of mass rape by their soldiers to demoralize enemy communities, a strategy that is the more effective the more these are known to value female chastity as a property of masculine honour (Seifert 1995).

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## Negotiating peace

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Declarations of peace usually involve a victorious and a defeated side. While this provokes a crisis for the defeated, it can also be a demanding moment for the victor, for he must ensure that the defeated enemy is not totally reduced. Patriarchy as a generalized system of masculine authority demands at least a partial restitution of the defeated male's masculine dignity. This imperative is apparent in the fact that in contemporary armed conflicts there is a clear reluctance to remove responsibility for the negotiation of peace from the hands of the men who made war, even though they may, due to their part in the conflict and by experience and training, be inappropriate for the task. The passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000, on *Women, Peace and Security*, which among other things calls for women to be included in peace negotiations, recognizes this problem. The Resolution can be seen as an interestingly anti-patriarchal measure introduced, under organized pressure by women, by the most masculine and authoritative body (the Security Council) in the United Nations system (see also Chapters 12 and 14).

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## Recovery from defeat

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After the ignominious withdrawal from Saigon in 1975, the shock to the US psyche of the defeat of its massive military power by a small guerrilla force brought about a

### The feminist project of transforming patriarchal gender relations is a strategy for peace

R.W. Connell writes 'So men predominate across the spectrum of violence. A strategy for demilitarization and peace must concern itself with this fact, with the reasons for it, and with its implications for work to reduce violence' (p. 34). And he goes on to say, 'There are many causes of violence, including dispossession, poverty, greed, nationalism, racism, and other forms of inequality, bigotry and desire. Gender dynamics are by no means the whole story. Yet given the concentration of weapons and the practices of violence among men, gender patterns appear to be strategic. Masculinities are the forms in which many dynamics of violence take shape... Evidently, then, a strategy for demilitarization and peace must include a strategy of change in masculinities' (p. 38).

From R.W. Connell (2002) 'Masculinities, the reduction of violence and the pursuit of peace' in C. Cockburn and D. Zarkov (eds) *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 33-40.

Figure 8.4

kind of national trauma, felt as a collapse of manly pride and self-respect. This post-war period has interested several gender researchers. James Gibson and Susan Jeffords for example analyse novels and films of the period, and dwell in particular on the characteristic 'lone hero' of post-war culture. Rambo and others like him are hyper-masculine warriors with a vicious and insatiable appetite for destruction, 'the epitome of masculine power and self-development, and combat as the only life worth living' (Gibson 1994: 32). These authors see such cultural productions as part of a strategy of remasculinization, invoking a masculine bond across class and colour, excluding women from the masculine realm, and taking revenge on the state and the anti-war movement, both despised as effeminate and effeminizing. Jeffords is emphatic that we should not perceive and respond to war as merely the antithesis of peace. Rather, we should see the discourse of warfare as the primary vehicle for the stiffening of masculine resolve in American society (Jeffords 1989).

### Constituting citizenship as masculine and military

In some cultures the link between masculinity and war is highly explicit and is not dependent on an imminent war. Since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk brought the modern Turkish state into being in 1923, Turkey has seen itself as not merely a nation but a 'military-nation'. The Turkish man has been visualized before all else as a soldier. Ayşe Gul Altınay shows the two-way productiveness of gender and militarization in Turkey through analysing the militarizing role given to schools and the educating role given to the military. She suggests 'that the practice of compulsory military service has created a major gender difference administered by the state, and that the decision-makers were well aware of the gender implications of this practice from the very beginning' (Altınay 2004: 7).

Others have suggested that the modern national armies of nineteenth-century Europe both were made by and were makers of gender relations. One study has

pointed to a connection between male suffrage and conscript armies in the making of citizenship. When working-class men got the vote it enabled them to enter for the first time into relations of notional equality with men of other classes, while simultaneously male citizenship was being constructed crucially around military service in the new conscript armies. Increasingly, these authors say, masculinity was 'virilized', differentiated ever more emphatically from femininity (Dudink and Hagemann 2004: 11). Modern armies were 'established through strongly gendered discourses' and were at the same time 'co-producers of a universalising discourse of sexual difference'. As such they became 'the pillars of social and political order' (Dudink and Hagemann 2004: 17).

## CONCLUSION

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In the above instances, and many more from different periods and different places, gender relations may be seen as both cause and consequence of war. War shapes gender relations in a particular mode, while in turn those gender relations act as a motor of war. A logical implication is that the strategies of movements that seek to end militarization and war must include a transformation of gender relations.

### Seminar exercise

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You are members of a small local activist organization set up to oppose your country's war policies, which include (a) maintenance of a nuclear arsenal, (b) male conscription into a period of national military service at age 18, and (c) support for a European Union military force. Your group comprises both women and men. Through small group work, followed by a session in which you bring your ideas together, evolve a campaigning strategy that makes constructive use of your understanding that patriarchal gender relations and war are mutually constitutive.

### Questions for further debate

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1. In what ways might the gender relations of more and less militarized societies be expected to differ?
2. Women may achieve a greater degree of agency through the demands made of them in wartime. Can this shift post-war gender relations in a direction that does not predispose to further war?
3. The great majority of conscientious objectors are male. Is this an effect only of the gendered conscription policy of most nation states?
4. When women encourage their menfolk and nation to engage in war does this contradict patriarchal gender relations?
5. Must an effective movement against militarism, nationalism and patriarchy necessarily be anti-homophobic?

## Relevant web-based resources

- An unofficial lighthearted guide to the US military, including military humour, available HTTP: <<http://usmilitary.about.com>>. Taking a feminist lens to this site reveals a great deal about gender and sexism in the military.
- Zene u Crnom (Women in Black) are a thoughtful, analytical, brave and super-active women's organization in Belgrade, their slogan 'Always disobedient to patriarchy, war, nationalism and militarism'. See their articles, photos, posters online, available HTTP: <[www.zeneucrnomo.org](http://www.zeneucrnomo.org)>.
- Amnesty International, available HTTP: <[www.amnestyinternational.org](http://www.amnestyinternational.org)>. Click on 'library' and search by keywords and country to access hundreds of reports by this human rights organization detailing in painful detail the experiences of women in war and post-war conditions.
- Peacewomen website, available HTTP: <[www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)>. Set up after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, in 2000, this is an ultra informative website on the Resolution, accompanying texts and progress on implementation.
- UNIFEM's portal on gender and war, available HTTP: <[www.womenwarpeace.org](http://www.womenwarpeace.org)>. Through this portal, UNIFEM strives to provide, and to encourage researchers, policy makers, analysts and NGOs to contribute, all the information and analysis that is currently available on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building.

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# The ‘War on Terrorism’

Krista Hunt

Although the ‘malestream’ discipline of international relations continues to examine the war on terror as if gender does not matter, when we look at it using gendered lenses (Peterson and Runyan 1999), we see that gender figures prominently in this conflict. Yet in order to examine gender, we must also look through the lenses of race, class, nationality, sexuality, and religion. In ‘making feminist sense’ (Enloe 1989) of the war on terror, this chapter will examine some of the gendered war stories that have been constructed and deconstructed since 9/11, the ways that gender has been reinforced and refigured in the ensuing war on terror, and how gender is used to camouflage the patriarchal and imperialist politics of war. As you will see, feminists who study the war on terror detail the centrality of gender to this conflict and argue that we cannot separate our understanding of the war from an understanding of how it is gendered. Through the seminar exercises, you will actively investigate the significance of gender to the way you understand this war, as well as have the opportunity to challenge official war stories by crafting ‘letters to the editor’ and deconstructing images of war.

## GENDERED WAR STORIES

War stories are the narratives told about war – why we go to war, who our enemies are, what we are fighting for, and how wars will be won (Hunt and Rygiel 2006: 4; Cooke 1996). Following Miriam Cooke (1996), Hunt and Rygiel argue that war on terror stories are always gendered – typified by hyper-masculine war heroes and

commanders in chief, grieving mothers, dutiful military wives, and barbaric (and eventually emasculated) enemies. In almost all cases, official war stories – the ones told by those in positions of power (state leaders, elites, mainstream media) – are based on a gendered logic of protection (Young 2003). According to Young, the logic of protection is characterized by a ‘gallantly masculine man [who] faces the world’s difficulties and dangers in order to shield women from harm. . . .[who] can only appear in their goodness if we assume that lurking outside the warm familial walls are aggressors, the “bad” men, who wish to attack them’ (2003: 224). In the war on terror, this logic of protection is typified by the post-9/11 war story that ‘the fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women’ (L. Bush 2001). According to U.S. President George W. Bush, ‘[t]he central goal of the terrorists is the brutal oppression of women – and not only the women of Afghanistan. . . . that is the reason this great nation, with our friends and allies, will not rest until we bring them all to justice’ (G. W. Bush 2001). The Bush administration’s rallying cry to save Afghan women from the arch-evil Taliban/Al Qaeda exemplifies the time-honoured war story of good men and nations fighting bad men in order to protect racialized women. This war story serves to reinforce patriarchal power and justify violence abroad to a frightened and uncritical public ‘at home’.

If looking at the war on terror through gender lenses means ‘pay[ing] attention to the stories that are told about men and women as well as attending to the positioning and marking of bodies’ (see Chapter 1), then examining the gendered dimensions of the war on terror also requires paying attention to the ways that those gendered stories and gendered bodies are also positioned and marked by race, class, sexuality, nationality, religion and so on. Many feminists analysed the Bush administration’s war story about saving Afghan women as being reminiscent of colonial stories about ‘saving brown women from brown men’ (Spivak 1988: 297; see Abu-Lughod 2002; Enloe 2004; Hunt 2002; Thobani 2001). Without recognizing the ways that gender, race, nationality, and religion intersect with each other, we would not be able to understand the imperial power dynamics that produce white, western men and women as saviours of brown Afghan women from the Taliban regime.

#### George W. Bush’s war story

The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children.... In Afghanistan, we see al Qaeda's vision for the world. Afghanistan's people have been brutalized – many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough.... Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.... This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

(G. W. Bush 2001a)

Figure 9.1 George W. Bush’s war story.



And it's really interesting to hear all this talk about Afghani women. Those of us who have been colonized know what this saving means. For a long time now, Afghani women, and the struggles they were engaged in, were known here in the West. Afghani women became almost the poster child for women's oppression in the Third World. And, rightfully so, many of us were in solidarity. Afghani women of that time were fighting against and struggling against the Taliban. They were condemning their particular interpretation of Islam. Afghani women, Afghanistan women's organizations were on the front line of this. But what (did) they become in the West? In the West they became nothing but poor victims of this bad, bad religion, and of (these) backward, backward men. The same old colonial construction. They were in the frontline, we did not take the lead from them then, where we could see them more as victims, only worthy of our pity and today, even in the United States, people are ready to bomb those women, seeing them as nothing more than collateral damage. You see how quickly the world can change. And I say that we take the lead from Afghani women. They fought back against the Taliban, and when they were fighting back they said that it is the United States putting this regime in power. That's what they were saying. They were saying, look at U.S. foreign policy!

(Thobani 2001)

Figure 9.2 Sunera Thobani on colonial war stories.

If we simplify our perspective and only focus on gender, we might read Bush's war story as one that calls on American women to help rescue their 'sisters' in Afghanistan and/or powerful men trying to protect 'victimized' women in another part of the world from misogynist men. What we would ignore is the way that this war has constructed different kinds of men and women based on race, religion, and nationality. Specifically, we would not see the way that this:

- 1 positions white western women as liberated compared to their oppressed Afghan sisters;
- 2 provides an historical, colonial justification for conquest and invasion that is all too familiar to previously colonized people;
- 3 reinforces resistance to women's rights and feminism by some Afghan women and men who see it as a western imposition;
- 4 obscures the reality that white western women are still being oppressed by the very same patriarchal powers that purport to be liberating Afghan women;
- 5 serves to divide and conquer women and inhibit transnational dialogue and solidarity.

In other words, when we examine how race, class, nationality, religion, and sexuality intersect with gendered war stories, we become aware of how gendered stories are used to forward problematic political agendas while simultaneously silencing other key issues.

## REINFORCING AND REFIGURING STORIES ABOUT GENDER

While many war stories reinforce traditional gender dynamics – such as hyper-masculine firefighters rushing into the World Trade Center to save helpless victims; defiant politicians like President Bush and New York City Mayor Guiliani declaring



Figure 9.3

Source: Copyright to *The New Yorker*.

that they would 'smoke out of their holes' the terrorists (G.W. Bush 2001a); the overwhelmingly male military forces being deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq; and depictions of barbaric, ruthless, suicidal terrorists that could be hiding anywhere in our multicultural midst – when we look through a gendered lens at war on terror stories, we also see that gender is reconfigured.

Remember this picture? In May 2003, this was one in a series of photos released by western media outlets depicting the torture and humiliation of male prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Although there were photos of men abusing both male and female prisoners, the pictures of Private Lynndie England abusing male prisoners were most widely circulated (Brittain 2006: 86). Pictures depicting women abusing 'the enemy' resonated most deeply. When the media released these pictures, many commentators predicted a serious blow to the Bush administration and public perception about the war on terror. Pictures of American 'liberators' torturing defenceless Iraqi prisoners for kicks certainly challenged the official war story about who the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys' were. Instead, however, these abuses were individualized as a case of 'a few bad apples' rather than dealing with the systemic problems of violence and abuse by and against military personnel.

These pictures also challenged conventional assumptions about gender, which served to obscure dominant power relations. As Zillah Eisenstein argues, the representation of a female soldier acting as the torturer serves as a 'gender decoy' for imperial war: 'As decoys they create confusion by participating in the very sexual humiliation that their gender is usually victim to. This supposed gender swapping and switching leaves masculinist/racialized gender in place' (Eisenstein 2007: 37). Such images

challenge conventional assumptions about who is fit to fight wars; female soldiers torturing ‘the enemy’ (and enjoying it!) challenge essentialist ideas that women are less violent than men. In this way, such pictures reinforce the story that American women are fully liberated since a few of them have made it into the masculinized ranks of the military. However, the focus on England’s gender and working-class background also provides an explanation that the abuses at Abu Ghraib were in no way representative of the U.S. military, but rather a case of ‘an improper woman, doing improper things’ (Brittain 2006: 88). As gender decoy, Lynndie England can be seen as one of a few bad apples deflecting attention away from the ways that the war on terror was also a ‘war of terror’ (Shepherd 2008: 220; Eisenstein 2007: 37).

Gender is also confused when American women feminize Iraqi men. According to Eisenstein (2007: 34),

Men who are tortured and sexually degraded are ‘humiliated’ *because* they are treated like women; they are forced to be women – sexually dominated and degraded. Men who are naked and exposed remind us of the vulnerability usually associated with being a woman. The brown men at Abu Ghraib are then constructed as effeminate and narrate a subtext of homosexuality. They were made to feel like and be like women or fags while being tortured by females. The brown men at Abu Ghraib remained male, but not men; and the white women guards were female but not women. The trick is that there is no clear demarcation between being female and being a woman. The two are connected but not determinant.

While challenging assumptions about gender, these pictures play into assumptions and fantasies about racialized enemies. Historically and currently, the imperial war story that western powers are embarking on a mission to liberate brown women depends on fighting (and killing) brown men. As Brittain argues, ‘images of Arab men being broken, subdued, shamed and disciplined by a white woman allow for the realization of the “American dream” of the total demasculation and humiliation of Arab men’; a demasculation that has been connected by more than one commentator to the lynching of black men in U.S. history (Brittain 2006: 89). The feminization of the racialized enemy in war symbolizes defeat, which is further reinforced when that defeat comes at the hands of a ‘liberated’ white woman. Here, gender is refigured by the female soldier, but also reinforced because she is the exception.

Finally, these pictures serve to silence the abuse of different groups of women by ‘the good guys’, thereby maintaining the official war story that the war on terror will liberate Afghan and Iraqi women, as well as protect the rights of ‘liberated’ women back home. While our attention is focused on female soldiers abusing male prisoners, the abuse of female Iraqi prisoners by male soldiers at Abu Ghraib (Eisenstein 2007: 40; Shumway 2004) is rendered out of sight. Further, it deflects attention from reports that Pentagon officials were aware of 112 sexual assaults against female soldiers by their fellow soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq over an 18-month period (Weiser 2004; Brittain 2006: 90; Eisenstein 2007: 40). And beyond the theatre of war, these pictures serve to obscure the fact that the so-called women’s liberators – the Bush administration – continue to wage a war on women’s reproductive rights at home and abroad (Eisenstein 2007: 119–20).

### War on women's rights

The U.S. administration's hard-line agenda to limit women's reproductive rights is visible domestically and internationally. To begin, the U.S. continues to stall efforts to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is considered 'the most comprehensive and detailed international agreement which seeks the advancement of women' (Feminist Majority Foundation). The irony that the United States is the only industrialized nation that has not ratified CEDAW cannot be overstated, especially when they are the self-proclaimed arbiters of democracy and human rights. It also cannot be ignored that the U.S. currently shares its opposition to the convention with the governments of Iran (a member of the 'axis of evil') and Sudan. Next, on his first day in office, Bush reinstated the 'Global Gag Rule', making U.S. foreign aid only available to family planning clinics that abstain from providing abortions or counselling women about abortion. At the Asia Pacific conference on regional population control in December 2002, the U.S. argued that the global consensus on reproductive rights 'promoted abortion and underage sex' and tried to convince other states to 'dismantle sex education, undermine condom use in HIV/AIDS prevention, and water down policies intended to prevent and treat unsafe abortion' (Planned Parenthood 2003). Showing his desire to reinstate conservative values regarding sexuality, Bush continues to promote abstinence as the Christian way to prevent pregnancy and the transmission of STDs. Domestically, Bush forwards this agenda by banning 'partial birth abortion' and supporting anti-choice attempts to dismantle *Roe v. Wade*. With respect to Afghan women, Bush has done little to ensure women receive proper health care, much less reproductive rights. In August 2002, Bush withdrew \$2.5 million dollars in emergency funds for programmes supporting women in Afghanistan, arguing that upon further study, there is no real emergency (Planned Parenthood). However, UNICEF and the U.S. Center for Disease Control report that 'Afghan women suffer from one of the highest levels of maternal mortality in the world, with almost half of all deaths among women aged 15 to 49 coming as a result of pregnancy and childbirth' (UNICEF 2002). Instead of funding family planning clinics that would help prevent these unnecessary deaths, the U.S. State Department has decided to fund 'non-family planning programs' in Afghanistan (Marshall 2003). The Bush administration's antifeminist position on reproductive rights has led the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) to characterize the White House as 'conducting a stealth war against women' with devastating effects being felt 'by women and girls worldwide' (Marshall 2003).

Figure 9.4

## CHALLENGING OFFICIAL WAR STORIES

Telling official war stories depends on silencing and/or delegitimizing those that challenge dominant versions, and by virtue of that, the war itself. In the U.S. and elsewhere, critics were being separated from the post-9/11 patriotic herd with the charge of 'You are either with us or you are with the terrorists'. In the media, feminist journalists remarked that 'virtually the only female faces in the media at the moment are the victims; women are cast as passive' (Bunting in Hunt 2002: 117). When images and voices of women did not support the very narrow roles allocated by the official war story – mother of U.S. soldier killed in Iraq now an outspoken anti-war activist; 9/11 widows and families opposing the war; Afghan women's rights activists challenging both fundamentalism and orientalism – dominant powers attempted to silence them.

In Canada, the case of Sunera Thobani provided an early example of how dissent would be handled. On 1 October 2001, Professor Thobani gave a speech to a group of Canadian feminists (see Figure 9.2). In the speech, Thobani critiques the framing of the conflict as one of unprovoked terrorism, stating that the 'path of US foreign

policy is soaked in blood' and that the impending war on terror would not lead the world towards peace, democracy or justice (Thobani 2001). She argues that 'there will be no emancipation for women anywhere on this planet until the Western domination of this planet is ended' (Thobani 2001). The reaction to her critiques of the impending war on terror was swift, with politicians and media publicly attacking her; she received hate mail, was told she should be fired from her academic post, and was even subject to a hate-crimes investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) (Thobani 2003: 403). Significantly, the response was racially motivated with detractors calling for her to go back to where she came from. As Thobani argues, 'by repeatedly reconstructing my status as a non-White, immigrant woman, the media reiterated – in a highly intensified manner – the historically racialized discourse of who “belongs” to the Canadian nation, and hence has a right to “speak” to it' (ibid.: 401). What Thobani's case highlights is the reality that 'elite ideas are widely disseminated and popularized through the media, and during times of war, being able to hold onto the allegiances of populations can be crucial to the success of the global ambitions of national elites' (ibid.: 404). Thus, the media response to Thobani sent 'a very direct and clear message to others about the costs of challenging elite “truth” claims and of the dangers of voicing dissent' (ibid.: 401). Ironically, while the symbol of women became the justification for war in Afghanistan and Iraq, women's voices that challenged official war stories were silenced and accused of supporting the terrorists.

The silencing of dissent went far beyond attempts to discredit Thobani. Numerous academics, activists, and public figures were challenged for asking 'unpatriotic' questions (Thobani 2003; Hunt 2005). Even the American public was put on notice, with White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer issuing the following statement after TV personality Bill Maher criticized the government's handling of the war: 'There are reminders to all Americans that they need to watch what they say, watch what they do, and this is not a time for remarks like that; there never is' (Hunt 2005: 157). Though there was little space in the mainstream media for dissent, critics found other spaces to challenge the official war story, including alternative and online forums. Silenced war stories included ones about the U.S. role in empowering the Taliban during the Cold War and their oil interests in Afghanistan (Hawthorne and Winter 2003); Afghan women's rights organizations that argue that war on terror will not liberate them (RAWA); the anti-women policies of the Bush administration (Eisenstein 2007); the situation of Afghan and Iraqi women during the war on terror (Enloe 2004); and the abuses of Muslim men in western countries (Rygiel 2006; Sharma 2006). What became clear from feminist analyses is that stories about women are acceptable when they serve the patriotic mission and reinforce dominant ideas about other people; when they don't, there is an attempt by different actors to silence women's stories.

By looking through a gender lens, we begin to see how gender is both reinforced and refigured in the service of patriarchal and imperial power. In the case of the Bush administration, official war stories served to justify imperial war by appealing to racist and colonialist fantasies about liberating Muslim women, as well as to avoid responsibility for the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. In the case of Sunera Thobani, we see how those who dare to challenge official war stories are denounced

and discredited as traitors and enemies. What this tells us is that while war stories are powerful enough to gain consent for war, they are also fragile enough that critics must be silenced. If we are to think critically about the war on terror (or any war for that matter), we must begin to ask questions about the war stories we are told and why they have been so easy for so many people to believe. In the following exercise, you will practise this by deconstructing media images of war.

## VISUAL WAR STORIES

Stories about the war on terror have not only been told through the written word, but often, and perhaps more powerfully, through visual representations of this war. Think of the images of planes crashing into the Twin Towers, played over and over and over. Think of the images of tortured and humiliated prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and their female captors. Think of the images of blue burqa-clad Afghan women that continue to circulate in the western media. One could argue that these photos have left more of a lasting impression on their target audience than any given story in the news. In part, this is because people often uncritically perceive pictures as being a transparent reflection of reality. You know the cliché – ‘pictures don’t lie’. Another cliché is that ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’. Implicit in this statement is that you don’t need the words, because the picture says it all. It is also because many official war stories have been exposed as fabrications.

### Embedded media

Since most people know about wars through the media, it is essential to examine the media and the stories they tell through a critical lens. Embedded media were instituted in Iraq based on the U.S. Department of Defense recognition that the media ‘shape public perception of the national security environment... which can affect the durability of our coalition’ (US Department of Defense 2003). This is especially important given that the US Department of Defense has a policy of ‘embedding’ media with its troops. Embedded media were instituted in Iraq, according to the DOD, in order to ‘tell the factual story’, journalists must ‘live, work, and travel as part of the units with which they are embedded to facilitate maximum, in-depth coverage’ (2003). As I have argued elsewhere, ‘this use of the media was a clear attempt to manufacture consent for the war’ (Hunt 2006: 52). In other words, the policy of embedding journalists in conflict zones is an attempt to control the message and to tell particular stories from a particular lens (the war story that military officials decide to tell) in order to gain popular support for the war. However, that is not to say that if journalists were not embedded that their stories would be any more objective; rather, they would produce another particular story from another particular lens (the war story that they and the particular media outlet decides to tell). Therefore, it is necessary for us to look critically at the media not because they are often embedded, but because they – like everything – are always embedded in some political position. This acknowledgement of inevitable subjectivity requires us to see said stories as arguments, ones that try to shape our own perspectives. War stories are never simply information that transparently reflects what is reported to have happened. As such, we need to start asking critical questions of the stories we are told. Beyond a doubt, the most important question to ask is invariably the one that no one else seems to be asking.

Figure 9.5

It is, however, dangerous to assume that pictures are straightforward reflections of ‘what happened’, since pictures always come from a particular lens. For instance, imagine a picture taken of a group of U.S. soldiers storming into a building. The perspective we see is what the photographer shows us: the soldiers rushing into a building. What we don’t know from the picture is what kind of building it is; whether or not there are people inside; if there are people, whether they are civilians or combatants; what happens after the soldiers go inside; etc. In other words, we are only able to see part of what is going on, from the perspective of the photographer, who only made the soldiers visible. What we are limited from seeing is the context for the raid – did someone fire on the soldiers? Do they suspect insurgents are hiding there? Is this a routine operation? Is this a drill? Did they make a mistake and raid the home of a civilian family? Did the soldiers follow the Geneva Convention in their treatment of the people in that building? In other words, the decision to take that picture limits us from seeing what else is going on, as well as the context for that situation. By virtue of taking a picture of A, this means W, X, Y and Z are necessarily out of focus. Further, that photographer likely had instructions about what to photograph from editors back home (‘get shots of soldiers in action rooting out the terrorists and those that harbour them’). And once those photographs were submitted, editors then made decisions about which pictures were going to be published, what stories they would accompany, and what descriptive text would be written to explain the photos (*Soldiers Storm Taliban Stronghold*, for example). As you can see, there are layers of different people’s and organization’s perspectives shaping each and every photo you see in the news. Undoubtedly, then, these pictures do political work. The picture of U.S. soldiers storming a Taliban stronghold (whether or not it was a Taliban stronghold, whether it was a combat situation or a drill) is sold by the photo agency and then sold to us by the news agency in order to confirm the official war story that Coalition forces are ‘rooting out the terrorists and those that harbour them’.

However, if editors choose to use that picture alongside a story about how civilians in combat zones are being mistreated by such raids, that picture would do different political work, and may confirm or challenge the official war story and our own opinion about the war. Add to that all the perspective(s) you bring to the news you see, hear and read, and you have many partial perspectives constructing how you see the war and thereby what you think about it. For example, a war veteran might see a fellow soldier risking his life; an exiled Afghan woman might see a group of colonial invaders; and a feminist scholar might see a display of militarized masculinity. Therefore, pictures are not reflections of what happened; they are pieces of what happened that then go through a process that shapes the way they are seen. And these pictures – like all war stories – can both reinforce and/or challenge official, state-sanctioned war stories.

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### Seminar exercise

In this activity, you are being asked to work from a new standard – that a picture deserves a thousand words. You will examine war on terror photos and think critically

about the political power of images to tell different war stories, in particular, gendered war stories. In groups, you will examine images from a news photo agency (like Getty Images, available HTTP: <[www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com)>, or Reuters Pictures, available HTTP: <<http://www.pictures.reuters.com>>). Discuss the following questions: How are the images gendered, raced, etc.? Who is the subject and who is the object in these images? What is missing from these images? What do these images tell us about the war? What engendered war stories are supported by these images? How do these images reinforce inequalities, stereotypes and dominant understandings of the war? What is the significance of these images – politically, socially, and historically? What do they tell us about 'us' vs. 'them'? After you have had a chance to discuss the image, your group must come up with a short paragraph to accompany the image. First, construct a narrative about the picture that supports a dominant war story. Next, construct a narrative for the same picture that challenges the dominant war story from a feminist perspective. Instructors should have the groups present their competing narratives and then facilitate a discussion about media literacy and how students can challenge their own and others' assumptions about media images.

### Questions for further debate

1. How does U.S. President George W. Bush's speech (see Figure 9.1) construct a war story about 'good guys and bad guys'? Why do you think this story was so widely accepted as justification for the ongoing war on terror?
2. Although the abuses of male prisoners at Abu Ghraib jail by female soldiers circulated widely in the media, why didn't the reports of male soldiers raping female prisoners or female soldiers get nearly as much coverage?
3. Are there sources that people can go to to get the 'truth' about the war on terror? If so, how do we decide on the validity/reliability of sources?
4. How can people challenge war stories in their daily lives?
5. Through an analysis of the relevant web-based resources (below), compare and contrast the organizations' campaigns in response to the war on terror. How do they define the problem? What sort of political action are they campaigning for? How could you get involved in, interact with, protest and/or challenge these campaigns?

### Relevant web-based resources

- The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), available HTTP: <<http://www.rawa.org/index.php>>.
- Code Pink for Peace, available HTTP: <<http://www.codepink4peace.org/>>.
- Women Living Under Muslim Laws, available HTTP: <<http://www.wluml.org/english/index.shtml>>.
- The U.S. State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues, available HTTP: <<http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/>>.
- The Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq, available HTTP: <<http://www.equalityiniraq.com/>>.



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# Genocide and Mass Violence

Adam Jones

A man mobilizes his neighbours to assassinate their ‘enemies’; other men, and some women, answer his call eagerly or reluctantly. Younger men, deemed ‘subversive’ as a group, are the first targeted for murder; females, especially younger women, are sexually attacked and abused. Against this backdrop of violent upheaval, in an isolated rural region a peasant woman bleeds to death in childbirth, as her mother had before her. And on the other side of the world, in a silo deep underground, two men stand ready to turn keys that, in combination, will launch a nuclear missile capable of obliterating entire populations.

What do these fragmentary scenarios have to do with gender in mass conflict – and with the concept of ‘genocide’, developed by Raphael Lemkin in the 1940s to denote the destruction of human groups? This chapter introduces readers to genocide as a theoretical tool and social-historical phenomenon. It explores the complex interweaving of genocide with gendered roles, expectations, and behaviours. It draws in particular on the literatures of comparative genocide studies and feminist international relations. In ‘gender’ and ‘genocide’, we confront two essentially contested concepts, and one should be careful to define one’s terms. I discuss definitional issues surrounding ‘genocide’ below, including my preferred usage. Throughout, I adopt Joshua Goldstein’s use of gender ‘to cover masculine and feminine roles and bodies alike, in all their aspects, including the (biological and cultural) structures, dynamics, roles, and scripts associated with each gender group’ (Goldstein 2001: 2).

## FEMINIST IR AND COMPARATIVE GENOCIDE STUDIES: SOME PARALLELS

Most feminisms have an ‘epistemological foundation in the realm of women’s experiences’, use this to demonstrate ‘that women and the feminine constitute historically underprivileged, under-represented, and under-recognized social groups and “standpoints”’, and make the explicitly *normative* claim that ‘this should change in the direction of greater equality’ (Jones 1996: 406). (Poststructural feminisms claim to transcend these claims and distinctions, though not always persuasively, in my view.) In similar fashion, genocide scholars seek not just to understand genocide, but to suppress it and if possible banish it from human affairs, as Atlantic slavery was cancelled as a legal and widespread institution in the nineteenth century. In this respect, they share a core commonality with feminist IR, melding both an analytical and an activist/normative dimension.

Both genocide studies and feminist IR therefore seek to establish normatively grounded *prohibition regimes* in the domestic and international practice of states and peoples. A stimulating line of IR analysis focuses on the role of norms and regimes in shaping and constraining behaviour by states and nonstate actors (Nadelmann 1990).<sup>1</sup> The international legal ban on genocide, generally ineffectual though it has been to this point, is an example of a nascent prohibition regime. Many feminist-inspired regimes have advanced much further. Although numerous chasms still yawn, attempts to confront the legacy of discrimination against females throughout history, in the spheres of political, social, and economic rights, have enjoyed greater success – thanks to the efforts of generations of feminists and their supporters – than the slapdash and perfunctory attempts to confront the scourge of genocide. Feminism and feminist IR (including, for present purposes, the related field of development studies) may offer significant guidance to scholars and activists working to entrench an anti-genocide regime.

The concept of genocide was the brainchild of a Polish-Jewish jurist named Raphael Lemkin, who in the 1920s and 1930s sought a language to convey the vulnerability of social minorities (especially ethnoreligious collectivities) to destruction at the hands of their own rulers. The plight of such groups had been the subject of considerable discussion and debate in the later nineteenth century, particularly in the context of Ottoman depredations, both real and imagined, against Christian populations of the empire. This had even produced occasional interventionist actions, as with the brief flurry of trials of alleged mass murderers of Armenians after the First World War had ended and the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. But none of this had been codified in international law: domestic constraints on homicide, the killing of individuals, were unmatched by a general prohibition of states’ violence against entire groups, including (especially) their ‘own’ populations. Lemkin experimented in the 1930s with terms like ‘vandalism’ and ‘barbarity’, before settling – in US exile; he had fled Poland when the Nazis invaded in 1939 – on the word *genocide*. The neologism combined the Greek *genos* (race, tribe) with the Latin-derived suffix *-cide* (killing). Although subsequent discussion of genocide has heavily emphasized the mass-killing dimension, Lemkin referred to the ‘destruction’ of a collectivity in a wider, social-civilizational context (for a recent exploration,

see Shaw 2007). Not only murdering members of groups, but also destroying their cultural foundations and scattering their populations far and wide, could qualify as genocide.

Lemkin's relentless lobbying of the new United Nations resulted in one of the most rapid adoptions of a new norm and prohibition regime in the history of international relations. Lemkin first published the term 'genocide' in his otherwise obscure 1944 volume *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Lemkin 1944), which for most of its length analysed Nazi occupation policies and their pseudo-legal buttressing in the German-conquered territories. Just four years later, in December 1948, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (hereafter, the Genocide Convention) was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly. By 1951, the required number of states had signed on and ratified it into domestic legislation – though a key player, the United States, would hold out until 1984. Genocide became a crime under international law.

The 1948 Genocide Convention remains the foundational legal definition of genocide – it was integrated word-for-word into the Rome Statute of the new International Criminal Court (1998), for example. It is a fascinating and vexing document. At its heart is the following interpretation and injunction:

The Contracting Parties,

Having considered the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations [. . .] that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world,

Recognizing that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and

Being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required,

Hereby agree as hereinafter provided:

*Article I:* The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

*Article II:* In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III of the Convention declares punishable not just the act of genocide, but also 'conspiracy to commit genocide', 'direct and public incitement to commit genocide', attempted genocide, and 'complicity in genocide'.

A number of problems arise with the Convention's text. Among those most relevant to the study of gender and genocide are: why does the Convention protect only national, ethnic, racial, and religious groups? (And how meaningful are these concepts in a world where easy concepts of 'race', 'nation', and 'ethnicity' have been challenged by critical scholarship, including feminist scholarship?) How does one ascertain an 'intent to destroy [a group], in whole or in part', and what 'part' is sufficient to constitute genocidal destruction? What is the threshold for 'serious bodily or mental harm' as a genocidal strategy? Article II(d) – 'prevent[ing] births within the group' – seems the aspect of the Convention that is most directly gendered but what are its implications for women and men? And – pushing at the outer limits of the Convention's language – how might the emphasis on crimes committed 'in time of peace' as well as 'in time of war', and by indirect means ('deliberately inflicting . . . conditions of life calculated' to destroy the group), be adapted to an analysis of structural and institutional forms of violence, and their specifically gendered dimension?

## GENOCIDE AND GENDER: THE HISTORICAL RECORD AND CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

A chapter of this nature offers no space to provide a systematic overview of the connections between gender and genocide, and the diverse implications of those connections. I want to suggest, however, that the subject can be approached from both a *historical* and a *humanitarian* direction, reflecting the twin underpinnings – empirical and normative – of both genocide studies and feminist international relations. (For present purposes, I subsume the international-legal component under the 'humanitarian' rubric.)

### 'The definition should ... include a sexual group'

The lack of clarity about which groups are, and are not, protected has made the Convention less effective and popularly understood, than should be the case. The 1948 Convention enumerates groups protected as 'a national, ethnical, racial or religious group', without defining such terms. Differing views have been expressed as to what extent the terms 'national' or 'ethnical' groups include minorities. The Nazi policy was also to exterminate the sexual minority group of homosexuals. *It is recommended that the definition [of genocide] should be extended to include a sexual group such as women, men, or homosexuals.*

Benjamin Whitaker, *Revised and Updated Report on the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (Whitaker 1985, emphasis added)

Whitaker's was the only substantial UN attempt to rethink the Genocide Convention of 1948, in particular its controversial limiting of protected groups to 'national, ethnical, racial, and religious' ones alone. Strikingly, Whitaker recommended the addition of gender/sexual groups, among others. He recognized not only that homosexuals constituted a vulnerable minority, but that males as well as females could be targeted for genocidal violence on the basis of their gender or sex.

Figure 10.1

Until relatively recently, explorations of gender and mass conflict, including genocide, focused overwhelmingly on the component of anti-female victimization and discrimination. Within these parameters, a heavy emphasis was placed on sexual violence against women and girls, including trafficking for the purposes of sexual enslavement. The prominence of this approach reflects a number of factors. Rape and sexual assault were foundational themes of second-wave feminism: the benchmark work, Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will*, appearing in the mid-1970s (Brownmiller 1975). In parallel with the anti-pornography and 'Take Back the Night' movements of the 1980s, feminist analysis and activism alike were particularly sensitive to sexual atrocity, and thus well prepared to highlight the mass sexual atrocities inflicted in the first half of the 1990s – the large-scale rapes in Bosnia (1992–95), and the truly horrific sexual attacks against Tutsi women during the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

When war and genocide broke out in the Balkans and East Africa in the 1990s, the ancient and enduring character of sexual attacks on women was immediately recognized and widely discussed in media and policy circles. Feminist analyses – as well as cultural traditions – had primed the public, and analysts across a broad spectrum, to view rape as a longstanding 'weapon of war' and of male terrorism against women (see Chapter 11). Violation of women's physical and psychological integrity, feminists noted, had been classed for millennia as the legitimate or tacitly tolerated 'spoils' of war. In the twentieth century alone, the Balkans and Rwandan examples were preceded by rape on a huge scale in the infamous 'Rape of Nanjing' by Japanese forces (1937–38); by the depredations of Soviet soldiers on German territory at the end of the Second World War (1945); and by the Bangladesh war and genocide of 1971, which Brownmiller details in *Against Our Will*.

Feminist critiques aimed to crystallize another conceptualization of sexual violence: as *a crime against the female victim*. While this may seem self-evident, international law in particular approached sexual violence only circuitously. It deployed euphemisms like 'family honour and rights' (as in the 1907 Hague Convention) to displace the primary victim and diffuse her victimization through the patriarchal family and wider social collectivity. Spearheaded by the legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon, feminist academic and legal framings of sexual assault gradually percolated into domestic and international legislation and case-law alike. Feminist mobilizations, including substantial street demonstrations in the Americas and Europe, produced a sea change in the understanding of sexual violence, and the sanctions devised to confront it. Of greatest significance were verdicts of the *ad hoc* tribunals for Yugoslavia and especially the ICTR in Rwanda, which declared that the mass rape of Tutsi women *constituted* genocide under Article II(b) of the Genocide Convention. (This lists 'serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group' as a genocidal strategy.)<sup>2</sup>

While the ancient practice of rape and sexual enslavement of females established itself as the paradigm for studies of gender and conflict, it was not the only female-focused debate in academia and the policy sphere. The high representation of females in many populations of refugees and the 'ethnically cleansed' generated substantial attention among UN bodies and nongovernmental organizations. The transformations of women's roles in wartime, and the additional burdens placed upon them,

were searchingly examined. Women's agency in post-conflict peacebuilding grew in importance as the genocidal outbreaks of the first few years of the 1990s gave way to humanitarian interventions and reconstruction initiatives.

Implicit in much of this analysis, however, was an 'absent subject' (Jones 1994): the males also swept up in these conflicts, and their universe of gendered experience. The male as 'soldier-rapist' was a well-established motif – the necessary counterpart to the highlighted female rape victim.<sup>3</sup> The male was rarely considered, however, as gendered victim of conflict. Some notice was paid to the men who were often the indirect targets of the rape of women – their inability to protect 'their' women a devastating demonstration of their emasculation. A more literal emasculation of males also figured, as it had throughout history. Sexual atrocities against men and boys, including rape, castration, and mutilation, ran rampant in the Balkans conflict and in Rwanda (Sivakumaran 2007).

These atrocities were underpinned by a practice that, like rape, extends back to the dawn of the historical record, yet remarkably had received no sustained attention whatever until the 2000s: the gender-selective ('gendercidal') killing of males, especially men of a perceived 'battle age,' between roughly 15 and 55 years old. Ancient sources from the Hebrew bible to Homer and Thucydides describe the imposition of ruthlessly gendered strategies on conquered populations. First, and worst, was usually the wholesale massacre of community males; there followed the kidnapping, enslavement, and forced sexual concubinage of children and women. The phenomenon has also been standard (though not ubiquitous) in the wars and genocides of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. All the so-called 'classic' genocides – by Ottoman Turks against Armenians and other minority Christians during and after the First World War (1914–23); by Nazis against European Jews between 1941 and 1945; and against Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda in 1994 – to a significant degree followed the pattern of an initial targeting of community men, followed by the 'root-and-branch' extermination of remaining members of the population (Jones 2000).

The gendercidal targeting of males thus regularly serves as a harbinger and trigger of the subsequent, generalized slaughter. In many other cases, the selective massacre of males largely *bounded* and *delimited* the strictly murderous dimension of the military/genocidal enterprise. Genocides such as those in the Belgian Congo's 'Rubber Terror' against native African populations from 1890 to 1910; under Joseph Stalin in the communist USSR in the 1930s; in Bangladesh in 1971; and in the Balkans in the 1990s all evinced this trend. By the best available estimate, men constituted over 90 per cent of those killed, and striking gender disparities were often evident in post-genocide population surveys (e.g., Hochschild 1998: 232; Conquest 1968: 711–12).

These practices of gender-selective massacre and atrocities against males – no less prevalent and institutionalized in the historical record than the rape and sexual exploitation of women – help to account for phenomena that feminist scholars and activists discerned in the 1990s: the refugee and 'cleansed' populations heavily weighted towards women (and children, and the elderly); the disproportionate burden of post-conflict peacebuilding. Men not detained, incarcerated, or murdered very likely had fled, perhaps into protracted exile. Indeed, one empirical challenge in the aftermath of war and genocide is to establish the demographic impact of gendercidal massacres of males, because males may be still alive, but dislocated in isolated regions



Figure 10.2 In a photo taken by Danish missionary Marie Jacobsen in mid-1915, Armenian men from the town of Harput are led away by Turkish gendarmes for detention and execution.



Figure 10.3 A group of Armenian refugees in 1916, in which the gendercidal culling of the 'battle-age' male population is evident.

Source: Reproduced courtesy of Karekin Dickran's Danish-Armenian archive collection.

or foreign countries. Approaching the question of gendered victimization in genocide in an inclusive way thus enables us to understand not only a wider range of gendered experience, but points of connection among experiential realms. To delve deeper, however, we must move beyond the political-military crises that are the familiar stuff of international relations and of comparative genocide studies, to examine underlying institutions and the *structural* forms of violence that often sustain them. These rarely enter into mainstream analyses of international relations, but have been central to feminist critiques; the inquiry is relevant to little-appreciated male vulnerabilities as well.



## GENDERCIDAL INSTITUTIONS

The concept of ‘structural’ violence – effected indirectly, and usually mediated by the institutions that buttress day-to-day life in a society – is associated with the peace studies school of Johan Galtung and others. Feminists, however, have made a distinctive contribution by emphasizing the gendered vulnerabilities of females, not only adult women, but also young and even infant girls. The mass slaughter of innocent females or ‘gynocide’, as Mary Daly originally labelled it (Daly 1990), extends as far as the womb, with female fetuses overwhelmingly more likely to be aborted than males. Indeed, this was the main subject of Mary Anne Warren’s 1985 text *Gendercide*, which offered a more gender-inclusive term than Daly’s ‘gynocide’ (see Warren 1985). This was the language I selected in exploring the gender-selective massacre of civilian males. But I have also examined the operations of ‘gendercidal institutions’ including female infanticide/neonaticide/foeticide (see also Hudson and den Boer 2004), girls’ nutritional and educational deficit, maternal mortality, ‘honour’ killings, and witchhunts such as those in early modern Europe (Jones 2005). In none of these cases did gender alone determine outcomes – most obviously, variables of age and class/caste were prominent in the mix. It is vital to recognize that such variables *always* operate in tandem with gender to produce outcomes; but gender remains central to the equation.

### A gendercidal institution? Maternal mortality

They die, these hundreds of thousands of women whose lives come to an end in their teens and twenties and thirties, in ways that set them apart from the normal run of human experience. Over 200,000 die of haemorrhaging, violently pumping blood onto the floor of bus or bullock cart or blood-soaked stretcher as their families and friends search in vain for help. About 75,000 more die from attempting to abort their pregnancy themselves. Some will take drugs or submit to violent massage. Alone or assisted, many choose to insert a sharp object – a straightened coat-hanger, a knitting-needle, or a sharpened stick – through the vagina into the uterus. Some 50,000 women and girls attempt such procedures every day. Most survive, though often with crippling discomfort, pelvic inflammatory disease, and a continuing foul discharge. And some do not survive: with punctured uterus and infected wound, they die in pain and alone, bleeding and frightened and ashamed.

Perhaps 75,000 more die with brain and kidney damage in the convulsions of eclampsia, a dangerous condition that can arise in late pregnancy and has been described by a survivor as ‘the worst feeling in the world that can possibly be imagined’. Another 100,000 die of sepsis, the bloodstream poisoned by a rising infection from an unhealed uterus or from retained pieces of placenta, bringing fever and hallucinations and appalling pain. Smaller but still significant numbers die of an anaemia so severe that the muscles of the heart fail. And as many as 40,000 a year die of obstructed labour – days of futile contractions repeatedly grinding down the skull of an already asphyxiated baby onto the soft tissues of a pelvis that is just too small. In the 1990s so far, three million young women have died in one or more of these ways. And they continue to die at the rate of 1,600 every day, yesterday and today and tomorrow. For the most part, these are the deaths not of the ill or of the very old or of the very young, but of healthy women in the prime of their lives upon whom both young and old may depend.

(Adamson 1997)

Figure 10.4

The framing of gendercidal institutions may also be extended to men and masculinities. Military conscription/impressment, capital punishment, and above all forced/*corvée* labour – perhaps the most destructive of all human institutions – have disproportionately targeted males, sometimes to the point of exclusivity, with casualty counts that likewise may dwarf those inflicted by more traditional forms of violence and conflict.<sup>4</sup>

These observations bear upon the reconfiguration of concepts of ‘security’ currently underway in international relations. As feminists have stressed, a highly militarized and masculinized ‘realist’ conception of security has prevailed in both academic and policy circles (Enloe 2007: 47). It is questionable whether a great deal has changed at the policy level, but academic and public debate is increasingly dominated by exponents of ‘human security,’ which emphasizes the vulnerabilities of ordinary individuals and points out the paradox that a highly ‘secure’ state may in fact drastically undermine the security of its own population. At certain points, human *insecurity* may be so large scale and systematic that it merits the ‘genocide’ designation, and should activate humanitarian intervention based on the principle of ‘a responsibility to protect’ (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty [ICISS] 2001). There is no reason that structural and institutional vulnerabilities should not be factored into this mix, though the recipe for ‘intervention’ may differ from that of a militarized and time-bound crisis. I return to this subject in the conclusion.

## GENDERING PERPETRATORS

Recent feminist contributions, dating roughly from the late 1990s, have significantly transformed the schematic early image of male perpetrators and female victims, at least in academic discussions. Among these contributions is a reworked understanding of gender and the *perpetration* of violence, including mass violence. This touches upon one of the central preoccupations of comparative genocide studies over the past two decades: *who are* the perpetrators? What motivates and mobilizes them? And what role does gender play in the process?

Like so much in genocide studies, the debate over genocidal perpetrators revolves around the case study of the Jewish Holocaust. The centrality of the Holocaust has lessened in recent years, in part because of the primacy of the Rwandan genocide for a new generation of scholars and students. It nonetheless underpins the field historically and, for most ordinary individuals, the Holocaust remains the iconic genocide. How was it possible for a modern European state to impose industrialized death upon millions of innocent civilians? And how could such extraordinary atrocities be inflicted by otherwise ‘ordinary’ individuals?

The debate crystallized with the publication of two works derived from the same set of archives – Christopher Browning’s *Ordinary Men* (Browning 1993) and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executions* (Goldhagen 1997). The archives in question recorded in meticulous detail the actions of Reserve Police Battalion 101, an adjunct killing-squad deployed as the Holocaust exploded on the Eastern Front in summer 1941. The members of the battalion were not the fanatical Nazis of

SS ranks, but mostly older reservists, ‘the “dregs” of the manpower pool available’ (Browning 1998: 165). Mobilized for behind-the-lines service as Nazi forces raced across Poland and the western reaches of the USSR, they were promptly drafted to serve as executioners of Jewish civilians. At first, in the typical pattern, overwhelmingly younger able-bodied men were targeted for massacre by close-up rifle fire. Then, rapidly, the genocide expanded to include Jewish children, women, the elderly, the incapacitated. There was little official consequence to absenting oneself from the killing operations, though the fear of losing the solidarity of one’s peers in conditions of mortal risk does seem to have been a factor.<sup>5</sup> A few members excused themselves from the mass killing; others were traumatized by the close-up intimacy of the killing, emerging from the murder sites splattered with blood and brains and seeking oblivion in alcoholic binges. The horror was immeasurably greater for the victims, of course – some two million Jews died in this ‘Holocaust of bullets’ – but it was the prospect of undermining the psychological well-being of these ‘ordinary men’ that led the Germans to develop gas vans as a more hands-off method of mass murder, and finally to construct the network of industrial death camps, gas chambers, and crematoria on Polish soil.

What can one say of the gendering of these perpetrators’ actions? First, that it was largely absent from Browning’s and Goldhagen’s accounts. Goldhagen did offer, in passing, one of the most trenchant summaries of the genocidal character of gender-selective executions of males, and an unusually nuanced depiction of the incremental (though rapid) escalation of the killing campaign, from gendercidal to root-and-branch variants.<sup>6</sup> Implicit in this was a gendered understanding of ‘legitimate’ victims in war, versus other population groups traditionally deemed ‘harmless’ and meriting special protection; and how a brutal targeting of the former category may acclimatize perpetrators to broader ‘root-and-branch’ genocides against traditionally



Figure 10.5 Member of a German mobile killing squad (*Einsatzgruppen*) murders Jewish civilians, near Ivangorod, Ukraine, 1942. Some 1.5 million Jews were killed in mass executions of this type on the Eastern Front during 1941–42, before the machinery of the death camps and gas chambers was established. Who were the ‘ordinary men’ who participated in such sickening atrocities, and how were they mobilized to commit genocide?

Source: Images in the public domain, courtesy of Wikipedia Commons.

'defenseless' groups, notably children, women, and the elderly/disabled. Without an understanding of how gender contributed to these imputed identifications, we cannot understand the special measure of anxiety and outright trauma apparently experienced by German troops commanded to kill not only massively but indiscriminately. Browning, for his part, hinted at the male bonding that underpinned the solidarity of Reserve Police Battalion 101's members, including the drinking binges (alcohol commonly serves both as a spur to masculine solidarity and a salve for its violent excesses). But strikingly for someone who titled his book *Ordinary Men*, Browning accorded no meaningful role to the gender variable as such.<sup>7</sup> Instead, he relied heavily on the famous psychological experiments of Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo *et al.* (Milgram 1974; Zimbardo 2007), along with the ideological and racist-propagandistic influences to which Goldhagen ascribed primacy in explaining the conduct of his 'ordinary Germans'. Goldhagen's and Browning's fundamental indifference to gender was typical of the large majority of genocide scholars, though a substantial literature did develop on the theme of women and the Jewish Holocaust (surveyed in Pine 2004).

Feminist comparative analyses of mass violence, by contrast, have placed special emphasis on gendered constructions of masculinity to explain atrocious behaviour. (While essentialist concepts of males' greater biological/psychological disposition to violence figured in some early treatments, this line of argument has mostly been left to sociobiologists. See, for example, Peterson and Wrangham 1997.) The most influential psychoanalytical treatment is Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* (Theweleit 1987a, b) which offered an extraordinarily detailed account of one set of predecessors of Reserve Police Battalion 101 – the right-wing Freikorps paramilitaries who terrorized alleged 'communists' after the First World War. As the Police Battalion forces waged war on 'world Jewry,' the Freikorps had battled inundation by a 'Red Tide' (at once communist and essentially female/feminine) seeking to preserve a militarized imperviousness to the enveloping female body, and the realm of sentiment and emotion that it symbolized.

The interplay of plural masculinities (Connell 2002) with a psychologically distanced, emotionally neutered stance toward violent atrocity has remained a touchstone in feminist analyses. Carol Cohn's study of 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals' (1987) remains perhaps the signal North American contribution of the era. Based on up-close observations of the US defence establishment, Cohn signalled its obsessions with paternalistic (implicitly patriarchal) claim-staking, masculine potency, and emotional disengagement. Touring a nuclear weapons facility, for example, Cohn was invited to 'pat the missile':

What is all this patting? Patting is an assertion of the intimacy, sexual possession, affectionate domination. The thrill and pleasure of 'patting the missile' is the proximity of all that phallic power, the possibility of vicariously appropriating it as one's own. But patting is not only an act of sexual intimacy. It is also what one does to babies, small children, the pet dog. The creatures one pats are small, cute, harmless – not terrifyingly destructive. Pat it, and its lethality disappears.

(Cohn 1987: 695–96)

Cohn conceded her *own* liability to seduction by this apparatus of euphemistic language wedded to absolute destructive power. Thus, even this relatively early stage of feminist thinking about international relations and mass violence destabilized some of the essentialist conceptions advanced, for example, by Sara Ruddick in *Maternal Thinking* (Ruddick 1989). Such treatments went some distance to destabilize the ‘Beautiful Soul’ concept of femininity that operated in tandem with the ‘Just Warrior’ image of men and masculinity. These terms are drawn from Jean Bethke Elshtain’s classic *Women and War* (Elshtain 1987). Elshtain pointed instead to evidence, and constructed identities, that disrupted easy gender distinctions: pacifist males, for example, were contrasted with bellicose females, such as those in England during the First World War who handed out white feathers (symbolizing cowardice) to men not wearing military uniforms in public.



Figure 10.6 Masculinities are plural and mercurial. Along with a licence to kill and inculcation with pervasive homophobia, the state grants militarized males the right – even the obligation – to express love, compassion, and tenderness in ways that might otherwise be viewed as effeminate. Here, in a Pietà-like sculpture commemorating the battles on the Turkish peninsula of Gallipoli, a Turkish soldier is depicted cradling a wounded British soldier, and returning him to his front lines. It is based on an apparently factual incident from the trenches in 1915.

Source: Copyright to AJ.

## Seminar exercise

INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR: You will either need to give students notice to bring news articles to class themselves, or provide a quantity of articles for analysis.

A simple web-search for ‘genocide Darfur’ produces millions of results. Find some news media reportage of the conflict and, in pairs, analyse the coverage with a gendered lens. How does the report represent violence? How does it represent gender? What are the multiple forms of masculinity and femininity (differentiated by class, race, age and so on) that are represented in the story. Is there an accompanying image? What are the implications of the visual representation? Produce a short presentation about your article for the rest of the group.

As the genocide and ethnic conflict of the 1990s captured the attention of scholars and mass publics, feminist-inspired accounts paid increasing attention to women as perpetrators and supporters of violent and genocidal enterprises. The exemplary works in the Zed Books ‘Women and Violence’ series (especially Cockburn 1998; Jacobs *et al.* 2000; and Moser and Clark 2001) highlighted cases such as the Hindu extremist movement in India, in which women were prominent as leaders and followers (Mukhta 2000; see also Sen 2006). The dramatic impact of the events in Rwanda in 1994 should also not be overlooked here. For the first time in recorded history, women played an active role at every level of the genocidal enterprise, from the leaders planning and administering the killing, to nuns supervising mass executions and ordinary female villagers wading through piles of victims to strip the dead of their valuables (see African Rights 1995). After Rwanda, it seemed reasonable to argue that ‘if women anywhere can participate in genocide on such a scale, and with such evident enthusiasm and savagery, then . . . they are capable of such participation everywhere’ (Jones 2004: 127; see also Sjoberg and Gentry 2008). Nonetheless, males – many of them eager aggressors, many others coerced and conscripted – still constituted an overwhelming majority of the direct murderers in Rwanda, and one should be cautious about drawing excessive parallels between male and female perpetrators.

An intriguing question to guide comparative research in the future is *how* men and women are mobilized to participate in genocide and mass killing. Feminist analyses of militarized and masculinized concepts of ‘security’ and insecurity are highly relevant here (see, for example, Weber 1999). My own research on the Rwandan and other cases suggests how contextual features such as economic crisis and widespread unemployment served to magnify the existential vulnerabilities of Hutu males, and to increase the appeal of genocidal killing of Tutsis. The gendered nature of genocidal propaganda offers some fascinating insights into the mobilization process. Out-group males (typified by the ‘Eternal Jew’ of Nazi imagery) are generally depicted as dirty, dangerous, subversive, and sexually predatory – thus ‘priming’ populations for the gendercidal extermination of males in the early stages of a genocidal campaign. Propaganda campaigns against out-group women are much smaller in scale and narrower in their range of gendered motifs; but in Rwanda, for instance, Hutu propaganda depicted Tutsi women as a sexually seductive ‘fifth

column' in league with the Hutus' enemies, including foreign peacekeepers (see Taylor 1999). The extraordinary savagery of the sexual violence against Tutsi women during the genocide, and the eager complicity of many Hutu women in it, suggested that the propaganda had effectively exploited gendered desires and vulnerabilities to mobilize male and female perpetrators alike.

## HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

In our approach to gender and genocide, if it is advisable to move beyond analysis and on to engagement with the public and policy spheres, then it remains to sketch some of the ways in which a gender lens may assist in forging effective strategies of humanitarian intervention, including legal interventions and postwar peacebuilding.



Figure 10.7 Populations being primed for genocide are often assailed with intensely gendered depictions of the 'enemy.' The iconic Nazi image of the Jew: a dishevelled, skulking male, obsessed with money (the coins in his hand), in league with Communism to annihilate German civilization (the map of Germany with the hammer-and-sickle crooked under his arm).



Figure 10.8 Propaganda from pre-genocidal hate media in Rwanda. Women from the Tutsi minority are shown as spies for the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR, see the badge and tattoo) and seducing Canadian General Roméo Dallaire, leader of a multinational peacekeeping force. The sexualized image of Tutsi women as a traitorous 'fifth column' contributed to unprecedented levels of rape, rape-murder, and other sexual violence in the 1994 genocide.

### Gender and demonization

An intriguing aspect of gender and genocide is the use of gendered propaganda to shape destructive outcomes. Women and men alike are demonized and marginalized by the purveyors of genocidal hatred. A wide range of apparently gender-neutral demonization strategies in fact are tightly focused on targeting dissident and 'subversive' masculinities. Consider terms like:

evil • monster • demon • parasite • shyster/swindler • vermin • subhuman • enemy • terrorist/subversive • rebel • spy • predator • bandit • criminal • rapist/abuser • corrupt • dirty • vagabond

Now attach, in your own mind, a human face to each of these designations. With the possible exception of 'spy', is it a male or a female face that tends to appear?

For women, genocidal stereotypes include:

Seducer • prostitute/whore • baby factory • witch • child-killer

The available range of genocidal stereotypes is much narrower in the case of females, and is generally focused on their sexual/reproductive capacities. Gendered propaganda in a pre-genocidal period is more likely to be focused on male 'enemies', paving the way for their early targeting for concentration, detention, and destruction in outbreaks of mass violence and genocide.

Figure 10.9



The influence of gender frameworks on the drafting of international law, and the crafting of legal institutions at both international and domestic levels, has grown exponentially in the past two decades. Though the gap between theory and practice remains large, the gendered vulnerabilities of females – in armed conflicts and otherwise – are now generally recognized. An issue which a couple of generations ago would hardly have registered in international discourse, such as the mass and frequently mutilative rapes of Congolese women, are now front and centre in the humanitarian equation (though with no effective halt to the crisis). The gamut of daily human rights abuses that women confront in most parts of the world has been meticulously dissected by feminist scholars and activists, and ideas of ‘women’s rights’ have moved from a derided marginalization to a recognition as essential elements of any coherent human-rights framework (see Chapter 6). The quest to realize the promise of these new understandings will engage us for decades if not centuries hence, but all prohibition regimes that eventually achieve a high degree of acceptance and obedience must begin as ‘catalysing ideas’ and nascent campaigns. It can at least be said that rights-based and violence-focused initiatives by feminists and their allies have enjoyed greater success than most such campaigns. The rapidity with which they have entrenched themselves is remarkable.

No-one confronting the enduring and pervasive phenomenon of male violence against women can overlook men as agents whose actions cause and explain female victimization, or the hecatombs of casualties thus inflicted. It is increasingly recognized, however, that this depiction has left a great deal of males’ gendered experience out of the equation – not least, from both analytical and humanitarian perspectives, the gender-selective victimization of males in war and genocide. Guided both by normative concern for ‘absent subjects’, and assisted by a newly plural conception of ‘masculinities’ (Connell 2002), some ground has been broken in extending feminism’s nuanced and empathetic stance on gender and victimization to the civilian males who often constitute a majority of victims of the most extreme and annihilatory violence.

This has been central to my own work on the gender-selective killing of men of imputed ‘military age’, and attendant atrocities such as selective detention/incarceration and torture. I have explored the humanitarian implications of this framework in detail elsewhere (Jones 2001), but consider one example only. In a 1994 article for *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, I noted the gender-selective evacuation policies of the United Nations at the town of Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina (underway at the time I wrote in May 1993). Serb forces besieging Srebrenica had refused to allow ‘battle-age’ males to leave on evacuation convoys. Remarkably, UN field workers ‘accommodate[d] themselves to the blatantly discriminatory rules laid down by Serb occupiers and the UN . . . accepted the strictures . . . leaving behind large numbers of trapped, desperate, and wounded males who feared execution or incarceration when Srebrenica fell to the Serbs’ (Jones 1994: 131). The year after the article was published, Srebrenica *did* fall, with notorious results – namely, the slaughter of 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Europe’s worst massacre since the Second World War, often in mass executions reminiscent of the Nazi ‘Holocaust of bullets’ against Jews on the Eastern Front in 1941–42.

**Men: 'simply not an option'**

'Evacuation was ... simply not an option for the men, tragic though that was ...'

'Frankly, in the case of Bosnia, most men were at least potentially fighters, so every man had to be accounted for ...'

'The Serbs felt they had to detain or interrogate all the men, and quite justifiably so, I think.'

'When you start prioritizing, any way you go, there are certain categories that are easy to deal with. There's the vulnerable, but then there are the vulnerable who are politically easy. Elderly people, young children who need an operation, pregnant women, that's easy. ... There is not a good understanding of how vulnerable men are. ... Most of us on the ground there understood men were vulnerable, but we lived with it. I think it was unfortunately the reality and we knew we could get women and children out, so why not get them out.'

Testimony by protection workers in the former Yugoslavia, interviewed by Carpenter (2003). She adds (p. 686): 'Many respondents expressed a sense that their mandate did not include advocacy for adult men to the same extent as to the women and children. The denial of adult civilian men's and boys' right to flee in Bosnia was taken for granted by many protection workers as an unfortunate but understandable aspect of the situation.'

Figure 10.10

Would a more forceful intervention in 1993 have staved off the massacres of 1995? Did a form of tunnel-vision prevent humanitarian workers from perceiving the needs of Bosnian Muslim men? In a series of articles for leading IR journals, and subsequently in an important book (Carpenter 2006), Carpenter found extensive empirical support for the idea of a one-sided framing of gender and humanitarian intervention. If such interventions are indeed guided by broad humanitarian concern, and seek to avoid arbitrarily excluding substantial categories of victims, Carpenter's kind of critical and cautionary investigation will be of considerable relevance.

The study of gender-selective killing and other mass violence can be usefully extended, as noted, to the structural and institutional realm – and concepts of 'humanitarian intervention' extended thereby. We are still too readily guided by a fixation on time-bounded 'crises' that spawn debates over large-scale but usually short-term military intervention. This mindset underpinned the best-known attempt to entrench a 'responsibility to protect' civilian populations afflicted by conflict and state repression worldwide. But it is worth reading the report issued by the Canadian-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS 2001) through a lens of gendered structural violence. The commission discerned 'two broad sets of circumstances' which it felt could justify military interventions. One was 'large scale "ethnic cleansing," actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape' (ICISS 2001: 32). The mention

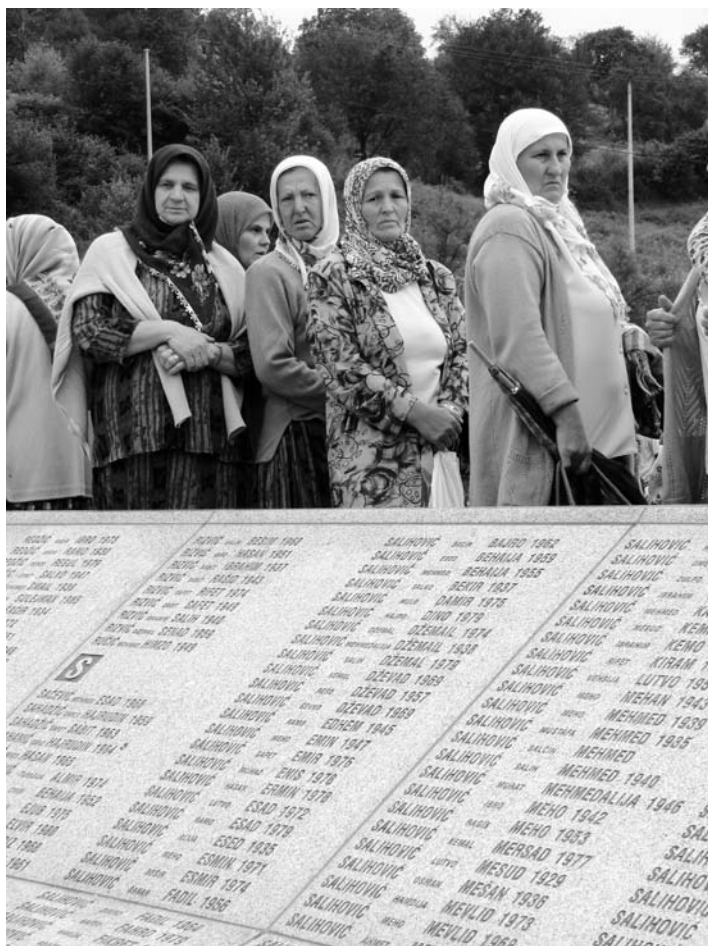


Figure 10.11 Bosnian Muslim women participate in the annual memorial ceremony for victims of the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995, held at the cemetery and memorial site in the village of Potocari, where Bosnian Serb forces separated males from females to be killed. About 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys died in and around Srebrenica in days of wanton slaughter not seen in Europe since the *Einsatzgruppen* atrocities of the Second World War.

Source: Copyright to AJ, July 2007.

of rape is significant in the gender equation, of course; but from another angle, perhaps more interesting still was the other set of specified circumstances: one characterized by *‘large scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, [inflicted] with genocidal intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation . . .’* (emphasis added).

Consider the widespread scourge of maternal mortality (see Figure 10.4). This kills some 600,000 women annually, frequently in an agony that parallels the worst human-devised tortures. This is a death toll comparable to some estimates of the Rwandan genocide’s, and it is repeated *every year*. Even in poor countries, regimes have the capacity to reduce or virtually eliminate the threat. Revolutionary Cuba, for example, brought maternal care to women in rural areas and poor urban neighbourhoods; today its maternal mortality rate is lower than that of the US. Most regimes, however, prefer to spend scarce resources on mansions and Mercedes limousines than on primary health care, especially for women. Now let us revisit the ICISS

justifications for military intervention. 'Large scale loss of life,' for example, certainly obtains. Is it 'the product . . . of deliberate state action'? In the sense just specified, it clearly is; but note that the ICISS does not require evidence of intentional action; cases of 'state neglect' also qualify. Therefore, according to ICISS requirements, the crisis of maternal mortality would appear to justify large-scale military intervention.

I am not, of course, suggesting that military interventions should be mounted in such cases. Rather, I seek to highlight the guiding and rather narrow assumptions of the 'humanitarian intervention' debate, and how a gender perspective attuned to a structural as well as an event-driven perspective might help to destabilize these assumptions. Surely, a good deal of our nonmilitary humanitarian resources (aid, suasion, etc.) should be directed towards addressing institutional expressions of violence that inflict more casualties than all but the worst political-military genocides. Though some may consider this at the outer limits of 'responsible' thinking on policy issues, interpretations of gender and mass violence – notably the core feminist contributions – have always been driven to push against boundaries and upset traditional mindsets. The struggle continues.

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### Questions for further debate

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1. What is genocide, and what are the difficulties and ambiguities of the United Nations Genocide Convention?
2. What is 'gendercide,' and what is the role of gendercidal institutions?
3. Why is there debate over the concept of genocidal rape?
4. How have males generally been depicted in gendered analyses of mass conflict? What, if anything, has been absent from standard formulations?
5. How are women and men mobilized to participate in genocide and other forms of mass violence? Additionally, how do distinctions of class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation destabilize easy generalizations about these gendered experiences?

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### Relevant web-based resources

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- Gendercide Watch website, with a wealth of resources and academic works. Available HTTP: <[www.gendercide.org](http://www.gendercide.org)>.
- A global advocacy network, PreventGenocide.org, available HTTP: <[www.preventgenocide.org](http://www.preventgenocide.org)>.
- A report sponsored by the United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights, 'Revised and Updated Report on the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' (The Whitaker Report), 2 July 1985, online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.preventgenocide.org/prevent/UNdocs/whitaker>>.
- A Human Rights Watch report from 1996, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwanda Genocide and Its Aftermath*, online. Available HTTP: <<http://hrw.org/reports/1996/Rwanda.htm>>.

- The author's 2001 article 'Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention: Incorporating the Gender Variable', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.jha.ac/articles/a080.htm>> (please note that the contact information is no longer valid).

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## Notes

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- 1 Prohibition regimes can also be conceptualized as *promotional* regimes, i.e. as campaigns to instil positive norms, as opposed to merely banning an abusive or atrocious practice.
- 2 Also relevant is Article II(d), 'preventing births within the group'. Not only are raped women often too traumatized to resume normal sexual relations, but if they are impregnated or infected with disease as a result of the rape (which is often gang rape), births deemed to be 'within the group' may be prevented for the duration of the pregnancy or ailment. When the infection is the HIV virus, rape is a death sentence (Article II(a)). These themes are prominent in the current highly incisive feminist commentary, and widespread activism, surrounding the atrocious mass rapes in Congo. This builds on earlier analyses of the Balkans and Rwandan conflicts, as the widespread coverage in mainstream media reflects prior feminist mobilizations.
- 3 'The paradigmatic war-criminal is a young Serbian male, Borislav Herak, whose chilling testimony of rape and mass murder before a tribunal in Sarajevo received wide publicity in western media' (Jones 1994: 131).
- 4 All of these institutions receive case-study treatment on the Gendercide Watch website, online. Available HTTP: <[www.gendercide.org](http://www.gendercide.org)>.

- 5 'Quite simply, in the past forty-five years no defense attorney or defendant in any of the hundreds of postwar trials [of accused Nazi war criminals] has been able to document a single case in which refusal to obey an order to kill unarmed civilians resulted in the allegedly inevitable dire punishment' (Browning 1993: 170).
- 6 'Even if . . . the initial order was to kill "only" teenage and adult Jewish males – the order was still genocidal and clearly was understood by the perpetrators as such . . . The killing of the adult males of a community is nothing less than the destruction of that community' (Goldhagen 1997: 153). On the step-by-step escalation of the killing: 'First, by shooting primarily teenage and adult Jewish males, they would be able to acclimate themselves to mass executions without the shock of killing women, young children, and the infirm. . . . By generally keeping units' initial massacres to smallish numbers (by German standards) of a few hundred or even a thousand or so, instead of many thousands, the perpetrators would be less likely to become overwhelmed by the enormity of the gargantuan blood-baths that were to follow. They also could believe that they were selectively killing the most dangerous Jews, which was a measure that they could conceive to be reasonable for this apocalyptic war. Once the men became used to slaughtering Jews on this sex-selective and smaller scale, the officers could more easily expand the scope and size of the killing operations' (Goldhagen 1997: 150).
- 7 The one meaningful passage focuses on masculine role-expectations in shaping concepts of soldierly strength and weakness – in an intriguing way: 'Most of those who did not shoot [Jewish civilians] only reaffirmed the "macho" values of the majority – according to which it was a positive quality to be "tough" enough to kill unarmed, noncombatant men, women, and children – and tried not to rupture the bonds of comradeship that constituted their social world' (Browning 1993: 185).

# Sexual Violence in War

Donna Pankhurst

## GENDERED DEATH AND VIOLENCE IN WAR

In most textbooks, the key defining feature of war is the absolute (and occasionally relative) number of casualties. This is a challenging criterion because data are almost always hard to establish, let alone verify, and are generally highly contested, as recently demonstrated in international disputes about deaths in the Iraq war (Davies 2006).

In recent wars, there has been a tendency for civilian deaths to exceed military casualties, and women and children have become the major casualties in war where once they were the minority (Giles and Hyndman 2004: 3, 4–5; Cockburn 2001: 21). Many authors cite a figure of 90 per cent of today's war casualties being civilians in support of this claim (although the original source is rarely acknowledged). Such a conclusion has sometimes led to the elision that women are victimised by war to a greater extent than men, because the majority of adult civilians are women, and when the populations of civilian women and children are added together, they outnumber male combatants. Furthermore in the post-war context women survivors generally outnumber men and so it is also often said that women as a group bear a greater burden for post-war recovery (see, for example, Turshen 2001a: 58), and that is before we begin to assess the effects of those acts of sexual violence from which women survive.

Actually it is evident that more men than women die directly from violence across the world in general, as well as directly from war (Pearce 2006), although when

serious disease is included in the effects of war (as, for example, in Stewart *et al.* 2001: 93; Beaumont 2006) the gender differential does emphasise greater suffering on the part of women. We may come to the rather more sophisticated conclusion that,

over the entire conflict period interstate wars, civil wars and internationalised civil wars on average affect women more adversely than men . . . we also find that ethnic wars and wars in 'failed' states are much more damaging to women than other civil wars.

(Plümper and Neumayer 2003: 3)

Thus some texts appear to over-emphasise the relative burdens, or costs of war paid by women as a gender compared with men, perhaps out of concern for women as 'innocent' victims, and in attempts to redress a historic neglect of their plight. Women's deaths, and their multiple roles in war, are no longer ignored in the way they once were, but controversy remains when assessing the relative burdens of women and men in war, where the focus is on death and disease (Human Security Commission [HSC] 2005: 11; Pankhurst 2007a: 2–3).

Feminists have identified other features of war that appear to be commonplace besides death and disease. A political and social backlash against women is common in the aftermath period, as is widespread sexual violence against women both during and in the aftermath (always on a much larger scale than that against men, and almost always perpetrated by men). For some authors sexual violence against women is presumed to be ubiquitous in war, and almost self-explanatory; it is wartime and therefore men will behave in this way.<sup>1</sup> For others there is a further explanation besides men's bestial nature that gives such acts of violence political meaning. Militarised cultures and military and political leaders encourage, orchestrate and even command such acts in order to achieve two broad political outcomes. First is that of undermining the morale of the enemy communities, particularly the male fighters who find themselves unable to protect their women. This is the 'rape as a weapon of war' thesis which can be found in commentaries and analyses of wars in all parts of the world and throughout history. Second is that of boosting the morale of combatants who are also said to regard rape as a reward, and also tend to bond more closely as fighters, when such violent acts against women have a collective element (see Chapter 10).

In addition, less orchestrated rape occurs during wars where there are no clear front lines or endings. Perpetrators act on their own initiative, but this may still be described as 'mass rape'. Examples are found in Sierra Leone, Peru, and East Timor. Such violent acts are conducted in a political atmosphere of impunity, and where there is an expectation that such an act broadly serves a political cause.

Rape in refugee camps is also often very high. Some of the violence is committed by enemy forces (such as in Darfur at the time of writing), but sometimes rape is committed by men who are employed to provide protection to camp members, such as UN peacekeepers and even humanitarian workers, who still on the whole remain unprosecuted even when vulnerable women and girls provide evidence to and seek



redress from the relevant authorities (see Nordstrum 1998: 83; Higate 2007; Rice and Sturcke 2008). So there seems to be something about the nature of war itself that leads to sexual violence against women and children.

It is also common for assaults on women to increase in the aftermath of war (sometimes to an even higher level than during it). This may be from 'enemy' men on retreat, with two infamous examples often quoted as Berlin in 1945 and Nanking in 1937 (Seifert 1999: 147; Anonymous 2002). To complicate matters further, sexual violence against women by men on the same side in the conflict tends to increase during and certainly in the aftermath of war, including violence from intimate partners who have returned from a front line and even sometimes from those who never left. In this chapter we review the different explanations given for, and consequences of, this sexual violence.

## RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: DEFINITIONS AND STATISTICS

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In recent years, mass rape in war has been documented in various countries, including Cambodia, Liberia, Peru, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Uganda. A European Community fact-finding team estimated that more than 20,000 Muslim women were raped during the war in Bosnia. At least 250,000, perhaps as many as 500,000 women were systematically raped during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, according to reports from the World Bank and UNIFEM. Most recently in Darfur, Western Sudan, displaced people have described a pattern of systematic and unlawful attacks against civilians by a government-sponsored Arab militia and the Sudanese military forces.

(IRIN 2008a)

Rape and sexual violence in different contexts are defined differently. In international law, rape need not include penile penetration, but is defined as

The invasion of any part of the body of the victim or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body by force, coercion, taking advantage of a coercive environment, or against a person incapable of giving genuine consent.

(International Criminal Court cited in IRIN 2008b)

In recent times, international law has changed to recognise rape as a form of torture, and as a war crime – initially through the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, but subsequently in other ad hoc post-conflict tribunals and the International Criminal Court (Walsh 2007). However, just as data about deaths caused by war are difficult to obtain and verify, and are often contested, so too are those on the incidence of rape and sexual violence. Where public displays of mass rape such as those in Bosnia and Rwanda occur, eye-witness accounts can help but estimates still vary widely. For other types of rape which are less public, even such estimates are very difficult to make. Women often choose not to seek redress even where an appropriate legal framework exists which perhaps reinforces a tendency to under-estimate the frequency.

The consequences of rape and sexual violence in these contexts other than death, are often extreme and very long term. Disease is a common outcome and in post-conflict societies medical facilities, particularly those dealing with trauma, are usually scarce and tend not to be geared to the needs of women. In addition, women who were raped by ‘enemy’ men, particularly those who bore children as a result, often find themselves excluded from aid and other support (Turshen 1998: 9), and are commonly abandoned or divorced by husbands, family, and even their community. In recent wars, it is not uncommon for children to be both ‘perpetrators’ and ‘victims’ of sexual violence, with boy conscripts (and a smaller number of girls) being forced to commit acts of sexual violence (sometimes on relatives) and young girls (and some boys) being victims of sexual violence. The long-term effects of such experiences rarely receive attention, in spite of having been known about for a long time (Plunkett and Southall 1998; Nordstrum 1997; Watson 2007).

### Not the same everywhere

Not all wars have all these features. Some do not appear to have much rape at all, but they are in the minority, and it is difficult to explain the variation. It may be that strict military discipline, and an ideology which inhibits such behaviour contribute where the most extreme forms of organised rape are absent. For instance Nazis did not rape Jewish women in this kind of public, organised way; and neither have Israeli forces in occupied territories, nor did Pol Pot’s forces in (at least parts of) Kampuchea.

Even in the most infamous and dramatic examples it seems that not all men behaved in the same way. There are variations in the extent and type of violence; the degrees of sanction and direction by political and military leaders, and in the degree to which men engage in such acts with determination or reluctance. We have evidence in a few examples where research was undertaken with men. For instance, Enloe examines an interview with a man who had been involved in an attack on women in Bosnia. The account describes how a group of soldiers were instructed to commit gang rape on a woman and then kill her. One of the participants shares his ambivalence – even bewilderment – about the experience, and evidently did not experience the feelings of pleasure, bonding or triumph that were expected, and did not consider that his co-perpetrators did either (Enloe 2004: 114–17).

If we read with care some narratives of war whose key intention is to illustrate the prevalence of extreme violence committed by men against women, it is also possible to see counter-narratives in the comments by male witnesses and reluctant participants. This may be seen in accounts given to the Peers Inquiry into the My Lai atrocities committed on Vietnamese civilians by US military forces. For instance,

Most people in our company didn’t consider the Vietnamese human. . . . A guy would just grab one of the girls there and . . . they shot the girls when they got done.

(from Peers Inquiry tapes, highlighted in BBC 2008)

Note that this soldier says that ‘most’, not all, behaved in this way. He was giving evidence against his fellow soldiers.

## EXPLANATIONS FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN WAR

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### Rape as a weapon of war

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The type of rape most commonly associated with war is that of mass rape, committed in public by many men. It has a long history (perhaps as long as that of human warfare) in all regions of the world (Copelon 1998: 63) and does not seem to be on the decline. In many of these dramatic moments the women were killed or died of wounds shortly after being raped many times. In recent wars the presence of HIV/AIDS increases the likelihood that women die as a result. Such acts may be part of a military and/or political strategy in advance or retreat. The perpetrators may be soldiers or citizens.

Rape, when used as a weapon of war, is systematically employed for a variety of purposes, including intimidation, humiliation, political terror, extracting information, rewarding soldiers, and ‘ethnic cleansing.’

(Amnesty International USA 2005a)

This common ‘explanation’ suggests that there is a planned, intended outcome of sexual violence and rape. It is found in commentaries of many other wars pre-dating feminist analysis, with a particular emphasis on punishment and terrorisation of ‘the enemy’. As such it is cast as being part of combatants’ armoury and therefore an important part of the study of warfare. Such ‘purposes’ are not thought to be about sex per se (other than that of ‘rewarding’ soldiers), although there is still the vexed question, in the case of penile rape, of the connection between the violent act and sexual arousal (Turshen 1998: 12).

### Rewarding soldiers

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Collective acts of sexual violence are sometimes intended to ‘galvanise the troops’. It is said to make them feel positive, bonded as a group, and to constitute an effective outlet for their ‘natural’ urges which dissipates ‘inappropriate’ frustration and aggression when it is deemed unsuitable for military conduct. This persuasive analysis is seen as a key part of a broader strategy of ‘militarism’, which has been identified and researched most notably by Cynthia Enloe (1989, 1993, 1998, 2000, 2004) and picked up by many other writers (for example, De Abreu 1998: 92–93; Elshtain 1987; Seifert 1995: 58; Cockburn 2001: 22; Turshen 1998: 12). Through a methodological approach that asks the question, ‘Where are the women?’ in many different sites of interest to analysts of war and international relations, Enloe has helped to reveal the ways in which military, security and governmental structures rely on specific types of relationships between, and behaviour patterns of, both men and women.

A further type of reward for soldiers is to be found in the material gain to be had through threatening or extending sexual violence against women (Turshen 2001a: 55, 60). In Africa at least, Turshen suggests that '[s]ystematic rape and sexual abuse are among the strategies men use to wrest personal assets from women' (Turshen 2001a: 55). Such material gain may include women's labour (Pillay 2001: 38; Turshen 2001a: 61; De Abreu 1998: 92–94); or land (Turshen 2001a: 62–63) or other property (Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998: 109) where women feel they have no choice but to give men whatever they request when faced with rape and other forms of assault and threat of further violence. She suggests that this motivation might be restricted to societies where gender relations are so unequal that women are not legally autonomous individuals (that is, where colonial and customary legal codes have combined) (Turshen 2001a: 65). Perhaps an additional context is one of poverty, where relatively small amounts of property have great significance, or contexts where access to property is highly transferable.

The incidence of rape tends to be higher with irregular, undisciplined armies, in wars where there is not a sharp division between military and civilian personnel (Turshen 1998: 12). In some general sense, men having 'licence' to act violently and in a sexual way towards women itself is thought to constitute a 'reward' or right without any expected political outcome or indeed encouragement. This kind of 'explanation' still begs the question of why it would be an activity chosen by men, particularly when it is committed against women from their own community, rather than 'enemy' women.

### The absence of social constraints

A more general and highly pervasive assumption made by journalists and academics about men's violence against women during wars is that sexual violence is an inevitability if social constraints on men's behaviour are removed (Goldstein 2001; HSC 2005; Turshen 2001b: 59), and has no other real 'purpose'. The assumption is that men will behave like this simply because their social dominance means they can. This 'constraints removed' thesis is also said to explain partner-violence both at 'the front' and at home. Men's sexually violent urges are seen as being biologically and socially driven to such an extent that men have no control over them, almost having the tag 'natural' (Goldstein 2001: 365). This bio-social connection between violence and sex also has resonance with some explanations for rape in non-war settings, where men are assumed to be violent against women when they are not socially restrained or believe they will not be 'caught' (Cowburn 2005: 226–27; Gavey 2005: 42; Pankhurst 2007b). This thinking harks back to an old feminist school of thought that 'all men are potential rapists' (Brownmiller 1975). It is exemplified here:

even without official encouragement most wars involve a dramatic erosion in the norms that restrain anti-social behaviour in times of peace . . . there is often little to deter *individuals* from acting out their *violent desires*.

(HSC 2005: 109, emphasis added)

This approach ignores, or at least downplays, the testimonies of men who claim to commit such acts only under duress (Enloe 2004: 117), and does not allow for the variety in men's attitudes and behaviour.

### **Masculinity as a root cause**

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In contrast to a bio-social explanation, an increasing number of writers use the term 'masculinity' to describe patterns of male behaviour, and assume that this changes along with major social and political change. Several writers have argued that at times of socio-political tension prior to conflict, as well as during conflict itself, some types of masculinity come to be celebrated and actively promoted to a greater degree than others (El Bushra 2000: 76, 80; Cockburn 1998: 207; 2001: 20). In some conflict situations, the more violent aspects of masculinity are played out in all aspects of men's lives to an extreme degree, in what Hague calls a 'hetero-national masculinity', with reference to the Serb and Bosnian Serb military (Hague 1997: 55).

Rather than changes in masculinity somehow being inevitable with war, some writers emphasise that this change is consciously sought and promoted by political leaders as part of the purposeful strategy of rape as a weapon of war. Encouraging men to be more aggressive with the rise of nationalist or ethnic consciousness is here intended both to gain political support for the cause and to undermine 'the other'. Egotistical, aggressive, dominant behaviours are common features of such cultural definitions of masculinity, as is men's dominance over women (Byrne 1996: 33). This manipulation of masculinity is often asserted in the literature but is rarely accompanied by analysis of how it happens. Women play key roles in affirming and encouraging all aspects of masculinities, and one of the main institutions for promoting one or other set of behaviours and values is that of the family, where women play a leading role in educating young people and indeed in encouraging adults to favour one or other set of attributes. In some cases this leads women to put great pressure on male relatives, including sons, to embrace violence, to 'be brave', fight, stand up for the honour of your family/nation, etc. – in effect 'be a real man' (Pillay 2001: 41; Munn 2008).<sup>2</sup>

The type of behaviour such processes encourage or engender are described as 'hyper-masculinity' by some (Boesten 2007); aggression and uncontrolled virility being key features, but also accompanied by some rejection of modernity embodied in a sense of a 'return to the warrior' or to the 'essence' of a key group. Such ideology is also often accompanied with an undermining of women's rights by the state (Turshen 2001b). Masculinity here is explicitly not seen as being in crisis, as is sometimes suggested, but in the ascendancy and in a primary dominant phase. Used in this way the concept does not allow us to see easily or understand what happens to individual men (why they change) or the variety of men's responses. Segal (1990: 121–22) highlights interesting examples of men who seem to personify a particularly violent form of hyper-masculinity, and yet who do not fit the corresponding stereotype in all their behaviour. She highlights Nazi camp supervisors in Auschwitz,

Treblinka and Dachau who were gentle to their wives and a British army veteran of the Falklands war who was ‘completely without bravado’ (ibid.).

### Frustration-aggression and men’s trauma

Other commentators squarely attribute precisely the same violent behaviour to the psychological damage experienced by men (Krog 2001: 212; Sideris 2001a: 57, 59–60). Whilst many people take the view that emotional and psychological factors affect men’s war and post-war behaviour (IRIN 2004), it is surprisingly difficult to draw strong conclusions from actual research in this area (Jones *et al.* 2002) and research suggests that no society in the world responds adequately to support men thought to be suffering in this way (Gabriel and Neal 2002). When one considers the findings from non-war contexts about the importance of childhood trauma in causing violent behaviour later in life, and the high numbers of soldiers in today’s wars who start their combat lives as children, the problem seems enormous. Yet the psychological effects of war (or childhood poverty, trauma or other experiences) on men do not appear in many people’s explanations for why men commit violence against women, or as a priority in post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of ‘Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder’ is still debated in the medical literature and profound questions remain about what would constitute a ‘cure’, although there is increasing research in this area (Gabriel and Neal 2002; Jones *et al.* 2002). Richards’s work (1995) on Sierra Leonean ‘warboys’ highlights child abuse through several generations as a major cause of their extremely violent behaviour. In the analysis of some post-conflict settings, the psychological dimension does appear, but with reference to the whole community, rather than to men in particular. Hamber comments:

In South Africa, the entire discourse of nation building was imbued with the pseudo-psychological construction on national healing, incorrectly implying that nations have

The effects of conflict-related poverty and economic change have left men in Northern Uganda feeling no longer able to ‘be a man’ in the same way as in the past. Dolan usefully distinguishes between the lived experience of men, which may be highly varied in peacetime, but which in wartime often becomes closer to being uniform, and the lived expectations of men, that is, what they hope to be, which could always be the same. Such an example may be seen to exemplify a situation where a hegemonic masculinity, as a set of idealised identities, behaviours and roles, is imagined and aspired to, but which is not achieved by most men. Men commit new forms of violence against women because their masculinity (that is, their ‘proper’ role in society) has been thwarted, and men are failing to achieve what they want or need to (Dolan 2000: 77-9): that which others might describe as the ideals of a hegemonic masculinity.

Figure 11.1

collective psyches. The problematic results were that individual needs such as long-term healing and the desire for justice were, to a degree, subordinated to the collective drive to 'reconcile.'

(Hamber 2003: 14)

Ignatieff (1998) also warns against assuming there is a national psyche, and Arendt's warnings about conceptualising a 'sick society', rather than sick people, are also pertinent here; she sees this as being more likely to make people see violence as natural (and inevitable) rather than being politicised (Arendt 1970: 75). In any case, research in non-war settings into how men's attitudes to rape can change suggests that the social context (and social attitudes towards rape in particular) has to change as well as individual men's proclivity (Gavey 2005: 45). Perhaps it is not just the fact of war that causes men to behave in this way. This analysis does not lead to very optimistic or feasible strategies for future change. On the positive side, it does reinforce the view that such behaviour is not in any simple way biologically determined, and therefore the 'constraints removed' thesis is less compelling, if one considers it to be founded on a biological or bio-social argument. Furthermore the fact that not all men behave in the same way, even when they have been through similar experiences, brings further into doubt that the correlation between participation in war, and violence against women, signifies a simple causal relationship.

## PROSECUTION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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Until relatively recently, women's rights in the post-war context seem to have been breached almost with complete impunity. In contexts where transitional systems of justice are used as part of a process to rebuild the rule of law, women's human rights are not given priority. For instance, police forces tend to operate with a strong gender bias, even where post-war reform and political change means that men are no longer subject to arbitrary arrest and torture (Kandiyoti 2007). It is not uncommon for there to be immense post-war social pressures on women not to report abuse by men, particularly if the men are members of key political movements, the government, or where there is a shortage of men available for marriage. Where rape was widespread during war, and is not effectively prosecuted afterwards, it is extremely difficult to bring prosecutions for rape in the post-war setting, an issue that remains as much of a problem as when it was highlighted over a decade ago in the UN. Children's rights have been taken more seriously over the last decade, with the plight of former child soldiers receiving a great deal more attention and increasing international support, although there is still a long way to go and the focus still remains on boys' war experience rather than girls'. Many experiences of girls, such as sexual abuse by peace-keeping forces in Mozambique (Nordstrum 1997: 15–19), remain hidden.

Nonetheless the definition and prosecution of gender-based violence in conflict have moved ahead enormously over the last decade.

The legal advances made in the *ad hoc* tribunals have intersected with decisions in national and regional jurisdictions to produce a consistent body of international

jurisprudence that has established and re-affirmed rape as a war crime, a crime against humanity and an element of genocide.

(Walsh 2007)

Much has also been learned about the actual processes required for women to access such justice frameworks in the post-war context, and Walsh particularly highlights the lessons learned from the International Criminal Court for Yugoslavia. The International Criminal Court now has a sophisticated framework which recognises lessons from the difficulties experienced by women in the past and she suggests that it is important to acknowledge this great, and largely unexpected, success but also to keep in mind that for many women the ability to access such justice requires support from their nation state and the 'legal literacy' and knowledge of processes available to them.

For instance in over a decade of work by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda we can see the attempts and failures to prosecute gender-based violence which was such a key part of the genocidal violence. Women survivors were treated very poorly in the justice processes, and a low priority was given by the court to the prosecution of such crimes. The ways in which some were asked to give evidence resulted in personal and material suffering on their return home, although it seems that some positive lessons have been learned about this in establishing the Sierra Leone post-conflict legal framework (Nowrojee 2007).

## CONCLUSION

So what does all this mean for the study of international relations? First, it remains an important challenge to international relations to identify the circumstances under which mass rape is sometimes taken very seriously at the international level and sometimes downplayed and ignored.

Second, in the study of warfare, there are significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the political effectiveness of a common military strategy; that of organised sexual violence against women. Such gaps spill over into our understanding of what it takes to recover from conflict and build lasting peace, when one considers the experience of ex-combatants (men, women and children) and of civilians (men, women and children).

Third, seeking explanations for wartime sexual violence against women reveals how clumsy an explanatory tool is 'masculinity'. As described here, it is alternately said to be in the ascendancy or in crisis to explain the same phenomena. These phenomena may include men's behaviour (for example, increased sexual violence against women), people's beliefs (what is acceptable and desirable in terms of behaviour) and ideology (whether consciously promoted by agents or not), but authors often do not specify or indeed switch between these without making it clear. Furthermore, assertions about such phenomena are themselves rarely based on empirical research. Nonetheless 'masculinity' seems to many authors still to hold considerable explanatory potential in explaining the likelihood of states, movements and other non-state actors becoming engaged in organised violence, although a debate is growing about



its deficiencies, and it is certainly becoming rather more common to refer to *masculinities* (see Pankhurst 2007b).

Fourth, asking questions about men's specific sexual violences facilitates a greater insight into children's experiences of violence at the hands of adult men during wars, and the ways in which these tend to be eclipsed. Such an analysis presents challenges for how international relations might be forced to change its scope if children are to be seen as actors rather than simply victims (Watson 2006: 248).

To sum up, sexual violence committed by military and civilian men against women and girls is a common feature of war and its aftermath across the world. In many places it is openly seen as part of a military and political strategy, and should therefore be taken very seriously by students of international relations. Explanations for its variety, causes and implications remain contested and complex, however, with much potential for further theoretical, conceptual and (perhaps of most significance) empirical work remaining.

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### Seminar exercise

Analysing an army culture and comparing it to the USA

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**INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR:** This project may be undertaken by a whole class or small group (by dividing tasks, sharing information and presenting findings over a period of time), or by individual students.

Draw up a table of the characteristics of the US military as analysed by Enloe that reinforce the likelihood of US forces committing rape. Pick another army elsewhere in the world which is not as well resourced, and consider the extent to which the same characteristics exist.

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### Questions for further debate

1. What does a gender analysis of violence in wartime reveal?
2. How useful is the term masculinity in explaining why men do and do not commit rape and other forms of sexual violence during wars and in their aftermath?
3. Why is rape and sexual violence more prevalent in some wars than others?
4. How do the explanations for rape in non-war settings compare with the explanations for that which takes place in war?
5. What are the key international instruments available to reduce wartime rape and what are the key inhibitors that restrict their effectiveness?

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### Relevant web-based resources

- Major reports on war-related violence against women with current news stories, available HTTP: <<http://www.irinnews.org>>.

- Overall report on the new campaign on violence against women and much related material, available HTTP: <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/>>.
- A useful UN site containing information relevant to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, available HTTP: <<http://www.womenwarpeace.org>>.
- You can access many personal narratives of rape and violence through the search function on the website of the Bosnian Institute, available HTTP: <<http://www.bosnia.org.uk>>.
- Human Rights Watch report on sexualised violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/drc/>>.

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## Notes

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- 1 This is perhaps one of the 'stories about men' to which Shepherd alludes in Chapter 1.
- 2 Some writers are keen to avoid blaming women entirely for this phenomenon, stressing that this role has to be weighed against the role of other key institutions such as political parties, nationalist movements and age groups (El Bushra 2000).
- 3 In the case of South Africa some action research has led to a re-thinking about the nature of post-traumatic stress disorder and the ways in which it might be treated (Hamber *et al.* 2000: 35) but these findings have not been widely taken up.

# Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Post-conflict Reconstruction

Nadine Puechguirbal

The first UN peacekeeping operations deployed during the Cold War era were mainly composed of military personnel in charge of observing compliance with ceasefires agreed between former warring States. In the 1990s, the concept of peacekeeping evolved to encompass larger missions, including a civilian component, with a mandate to implement peace accords between intra-States stakeholders. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations in post-conflict situations are involved in a wide range of activities such as restoring peace in a volatile security environment, organizing elections, disarming and reintegrating former combatants, monitoring human rights, consolidating the rule of law, working on good governance and so on.

Although conflict is a profoundly gendered experience, gender issues have not been part of mandates of peacekeeping missions throughout the world until recently. Actually, the situation started to change only after Resolution 1325 on 'Women, peace and security' was adopted by the UN Security Council on 31 October 2000; among other very important points, the resolution acknowledges the contribution of women in peace and security, reaffirms their roles in conflict prevention and resolution and calls for the inclusion of a gender entity in peacekeeping operations. However, in spite of progresses achieved towards the inclusion of a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, structural obstacles remain within the UN system that prevents a gender-informed approach on peace and security issues. 'Although the existence of SCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming guidelines for post-conflict contexts provide useful frameworks, it is not clear that anything other tokenism results, and the central problem of bridging security and development

with a gender-sensitive understanding of security is not addressed' (Barnes 2006: 24). In the UN language of most official documents and instruments, women are mainly portrayed as victims in need of protection and always associated with children, which prevents them from playing a more active role in political processes in post-conflict situations. Despite its groundbreaking approach, Resolution 1325 uses this language of victimization too, thus limiting the scope of its implementation. As a result, peace and security issues are defined within the framework of a hyper-masculine environment that participates in the remilitarization of the post-conflict society and prevents the development of a sustainable peace.

## GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES

Pay attention to the language in UN documents, resolutions and peace agreements. Language sets the framework that defines how women are seen and treated in post-conflict environments; it explains why stereotypes – about what men and women are expected to do, what space they should occupy, who legitimately can claim access to and control over resources, who should hold power – are so easily perpetuated and replicated from decision making to grassroots levels within peacekeeping missions. Indeed, most of the resolutions that the UN Security Council and the General Assembly have adopted on different subjects related to peace and security mainly define women as helpless individuals who bear the brunt of war. As victims, women are part of the vulnerable groups, together with the children, the handicapped and the elderly. As the French anthropologist Françoise Héritier explains, we should stop considering that women belong to a minority sociological category like those categories based on age, color, religion, handicap and ethnicity. She writes, 'to consider sex as a sociological variable similar to the other categories means that we tacitly acknowledge the masculine norm of reference' (Héritier 2002: 191).

Furthermore, women are always associated with children in need of protection. This approach clearly removes the agency of women who are not seen as actors in charge of their own life, but are apprehended through their vulnerabilities, defined as victims, as 'women-and-children' disempowered and dependent on the male members of the community that will provide for them. As Paula Donovan from the Office of the UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, explains:

Unlike children and the frail elderly, women aren't naturally in need of protection. But like subjugated groups throughout history, women have been overpowered. Women need protection from the *unnatural* order imposed on our universe – the manmade laws, customs, practices and indulgences that rule modern 'civilization'. They have the aptitude, but are denied the wherewithal to devise and construct their own protections.

(Donovan 2006: 4)

As a result, the victimization of women is reinforced through the rhetoric of the 'protected' versus the 'protectors' which is clearly understood by peacekeepers as being part of their mission of bringing back security and stability in the host country.

They were briefed about all the atrocities that had been committed by armed groups against the civilian population, especially against the most vulnerable persons in need of protection, namely the ‘women-and-children’. The hyper-masculine environment of a peacekeeping operation fosters this kind of definition of security that prevents women from being seen as key stakeholders in peace processes, raising their voice at the negotiation table and fully participating in the reconstruction of their post-conflict society.

For the protectors to wield this public superiority, there must be a certain constructed ‘protected’. The protected is the person who is not at ease in the public sphere. The protected’s natural habitat is the domestic sphere – that is, the sphere of life where caring matters more than strategizing. Consequently, the protected is feminized insofar as the protected needs somebody who can think strategically and act in her (the protected’s) best interests.

(Enloe 2007: 61)

Thus, the first difficulty in integrating a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations lies in overcoming the language barrier for a better understanding of peace and security issues that would not victimize women but would consider them as actors and citizens with rights. Security has always been defined according to the masculine norm of reference that makes women’s interests, needs and expectations irrelevant. As Cynthia Enloe observes, ‘Militarized masculinity is a model of masculinity that is especially likely to be imagined as requiring a feminine complement that excludes women from full and assertive participation in postwar public life’ (Enloe 2002: 23). Indeed, the concept of militarized masculinity is embedded in peacekeeping insofar as uniformed personnel are mainly composed of men who are visible and bound by the manly culture of the organization with its own norms, codes and preconceived ideas about local men and women; they feel powerful as well as rightfully involved in a mission to establish a precarious peace in a country that is recovering from warfare.

In male-dominated peacekeeping operations, security revolves around the cessation of hostilities between warring factions, arrest of (male) gang leaders or disarmament of the main rebel groups who are mainly men. There is a belief among peacekeepers that once men with weapons have been overpowered, a general atmosphere of security will prevail for the whole population, including women. There is little understanding of the differential impact of conflict on women and men, boys and girls and the long-term consequences of sexual violence against women that continues to prevail long after war is over because of gender roles entrenched in culture and tradition. As Ann Tickner emphasizes, ‘[t]he achievement of peace, economic justice, and ecological sustainability is inseparable from overcoming social relations of domination and subordination; genuine security requires not only the absence of war but also the elimination of unjust social relations, including unequal gender relations’ (Tickner 1992: 128). Militarized organizations tend to define security as a halt to the fighting whereas ordinary women tend to define it as being safe in their own house or in a refugee camp, feeling safe enough to walk in the streets



Figure 12.1 Gender roles in peace time: what do women, men, boys and girls do? Group work with students at the UN University for Peace, 2006. NB. 'My wife . . . a child with big feet' is adapted from a Somali saying 'A woman is a child with big feet'. Source: Picture by NP.

without fearing of being sexually assaulted. Again according to Ann Tickner, 'women have defined security as the absence of violence, whether it be military, economic or sexual' (Tickner 1992: 66).

In the same vein, women's needs are overlooked in the UN Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs (DDR) because they are seen as not representing an immediate threat to security. Actually, even when women have



Figure 12.2 Gender roles in a post-conflict environment: what is the situation for women, men, boys and girls? Group work with students at the UN University for Peace, 2006. Source: Picture by NP.

fought as combatants, there is no room for them in DDR programs that are defined according to the simple motto, 'One man, one weapon'. Vanessa Farr, specialist in gender and DDR issues, confirms that: 'If women do not feel safe or welcomed in a DDR process, they are likely to "self-demobilize" – in other words, to disappear from view without taking advantage of any of the opportunities of demobilization, such as job re-training, healthcare and the like' (Farr 2003: 32). Women ex-combatants will be compelled to demobilize rapidly to reintegrate into the civilian society after a war that has been apprehended as a temporary upheaval, an exceptional moment that allowed women to take up non-traditional roles and use violence. There is pressure from the post-conflict society to come back to a so-called pre-war order, synonymous of peace and order, with narrowly defined gender roles. If the participation of women in war is seen as an incongruity, then little attention will be paid to them in DDR and they won't benefit from all DDR programs that mainly target male ex-combatants. The same situation happens for women who were not soldiers but who played multiples roles in conflict, either as supplier, spy, cook or sexual slave and had very often to take care of children and the elderly during the fighting. They are not seen as a relevant 'caseload' that could be targeted for assistance in DDR processes because they were not directly associated with guns, although they were victims of the violence produced by those guns.

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Interestingly enough, there was no gender perspective in the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations that was commissioned by the Secretary-General in 2000 to review peacekeeping missions and provide recommendations to improve their efficiency. This document, called the Brahimi Report after the former Foreign Minister of Algeria who led the review process, referred only to gender as in gender balance and gender sensitivity for the UN personnel when on mission, thus lacking the post-conflict gender perspective that would enable the mission to better understand issues at stake in the host country. Felicity Hill and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya, at that time representing Women's International League for Peace and Security and Freedom, remember that:

The lack of an integrated gender perspective in this review [the Brahimi Report] fueled NGOs to unite and strategize for greater inclusion and participation of women. The coalition of women's organizations contributed recommendations for engendering the Brahimi Report to concerned actors. These include: posting gender advisors at all levels and gender units in peacekeeping operations; requiring gender sensitivity training for all participants in peacekeeping operations; creating a code of conduct for peacekeepers that includes gender issues.

(Hill and Poehlman-Doumbouya 2001: 31)

The wide mobilization of NGOs and other key actors led to the adoption of what has been called the 'historic' Resolution 1325 on 'Women, peace and security' on 31 October 2000. Although the resolution mainly stresses the vulnerabilities of women



The term '**gender mainstreaming**' was endorsed by the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995 as the strategy that would allow the achievement of the goals under each of the Platform twelve Critical Areas, such as: '...governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively'.

*(Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995, paras. 57, 79, 105, 123, 141, 164, 189, 202, 229, 238, 252, 273)*

The Agreed Conclusions of the UN Economic and Social Council of 17 September 1997 defines gender mainstreaming as follows:

**'Mainstreaming a gender perspective** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.'

*(E.1997.L.O. Para.4. Adopted by ECOSOC 17/7/97)*

Figure 12.3 Gender mainstreaming: Part 1.

and girls as victims of war instead of emphasizing their agency, it makes visible the key role that women play in conflict resolution as well as in the promotion of peace and security. This visibility would give some leverage to women's organizations in their battle to have their voices heard in peace processes. At the same time, the resolution requests the inclusion of a gender component in peacekeeping missions. Since the adoption of Resolution 1325, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has taken a few initiatives to integrate a gender perspective into its policies, programs and activities, both at the headquarters in New York and in field missions. In addition, whereas a gendered language has been non-existent in the past, there is today a systematic reference to Resolution 1325 in the mandates of peacekeeping missions. For instance, the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) states: '[The Security Council], reaffirming the importance of appropriate expertise on issues relating to gender in peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peace-building in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000)' (Security Council Resolution 1702, MINUSTAH 2006).

Following a request by the Security Council that all UN entities develop a strategy for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000), DPKO designed a Global Action Plan on Resolution 1325 in 2006.

The Global Action Plan incorporates the individual work plans of each Office/ Division and is framed around three broad goals: policy guidance for peacekeeping missions to ensure that post-conflict transitions advance gender equality; operational support to guide gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions; and increasing the numbers of women serving in peacekeeping missions.

(DPKO 2006)

This strategy raises one key question: how can DPKO make senior managers accountable on gender issues in a system that does not take into account gendered indicators to measure the work of each staff member? Without the commitment of senior officials to take gender mainstreaming seriously, it is questionable that the integration of a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations will make a difference. In addition, now that Gender Units have been established in peacekeeping missions, the burden of mainstreaming falls on the shoulders of the Senior Gender Advisor. This setting participates in the marginalization of gender issues that are treated separately from peace and security issues defined according to a male perspective.

Indeed, as Sandra Whitworth writes: '[a] separate gender unit tends to result in local women's NGO liaising with the unit, while other local political actors – the majority of whom will likely be men – deal with UN officials in mainline departments and offices, the majority of whom are also men who often enjoy more direct access to the chief of mission' (Whitworth 2004: 131). There is in fact a common belief in peacekeeping missions that gender issues are the sole responsibility of the Senior Gender Advisor and that s/he will take care of all gender-related matters in the mission area, thus preventing senior management getting involved in promoting a gender mainstreaming approach that would concern all sections and units, irrespective of their activities. It is interesting to observe, for instance, that mission staff members working for the Political Affairs Division will organize meetings with representatives of male-dominated political parties but will omit to invite women. The perception is that the Senior Gender Advisor will convene separate meetings with women only. The same situation prevails with the Electoral Division that will promote a generic participation of all citizens in the post-conflict electoral process, but will not make special efforts to trigger the participation of women as voters and candidates. In countries where women won't be able to enjoy their rights as citizens if some mechanisms are not put in place to encourage their participation in electoral and political processes, this lack of gender perspective may further marginalize them. Sandra Whitworth also explains that

One of the reasons gender has become a safe idea is that the manner in which it has been used within UN understandings of peace and security issues has transformed it from a critical to a problem-solving tool, which does not challenge prevailing practices in response to armed conflict, peace and security.

(Whitworth 2004: 139)

Turning gender into a problem-solving instrument prevents the UN from adopting a critical view of how peacekeeping operations are conducted and from even questioning the whole concept of operation as well as important issues like militarized masculinities and the long-term impact of peacekeeping on local women and men, boys and girls. Integrating a gender perspective into peacekeeping makes the goals of the mission look more acceptable because it helps to 'repackage' its militaristic approach.

A lot of effort has been made in designing and implementing gender training for peacekeepers, military, police and civilian staff. Although gender training could certainly improve the way security sector personnel conduct their mission in the host

country and help to build their own capacity in their daily work, very often training falls short of what is expected in terms of behavioral change. Gender training is compulsory in peacekeeping missions for all newcomers but it is only part of an induction course that includes all other activities of the mission. Lack of time and resources prevent Gender Units in mission to provide a more in-depth training that could make a difference in the lives of peacekeepers. In April 2007, the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) launched a virtual discussion among experts from different fields linked to the security sector, NGOs, international organizations and civil society on good and bad practices of gender training for security sector personnel. One can highlight the following four main recommendations that resulted from this discussion:

1. Addressing traditional male roles and norms in the gender training (to discuss issues of masculinities in an overwhelmingly male-dominated security sector);
2. Engaging men as trainers (to improve the impact of gender training on other men);
3. Prioritizing training for senior managers and officials (gender-responsiveness among top managers is key for an efficient gender mainstreaming process in mission) and
4. Organizing pre-deployment gender training for peacekeeping personnel (to better prepare peacekeepers in understanding their country of assignment).

## **FROM PEACEKEEPING TO PEACE BUILDING AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION**

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A lack of gender perspective in peacekeeping operations will reinforce the visibility and legitimacy of men as the main stakeholders in peace building processes and, at the same time, will contribute to the invisibility of women who will remain confined to the traditional roles as caretaker and caregivers. Since most of the peacemakers or special peace envoys appointed by the UN and the international community at large are men, they will fail to take into consideration the needs, perspectives and expectations of women. Donald Steinberg, formerly a member of the Luanda-based Joint Commission charged with implementing the peace accords in Angola, explains:

Addressing an audience of African scholars on the Lusaka Protocol in late 1994, I was asked about the role of women in its negotiating and implementation. I responded that there was not a single provision in the agreement that discriminated against women. ‘The agreement is gender-neutral,’ I proclaimed, somewhat proudly.

(Steinberg 2007)

He later realized that the exclusion of women in the Lusaka peace process contributed to the inability of the international community to successfully develop and maintain a sustainable peace. As he writes: ‘It took me only a few weeks after my arrival in Luanda to realize that a peace agreement that is “gender-neutral” is, by definition, discriminatory against women and thus far less likely to be successful’

(Steinberg 2007). Only men were sitting around the negotiations table from the UN, the Angolan Government, the main supporting countries and the rebel UNITA movement. The consequences were clearly stated: ‘Not only did this silence women’s voices on the hard issues of war and peace, but it also meant that issues as internal displacement, sexual violence, abuses by government and rebel security forces, and the rebuilding of social services such as maternal health care and girls’ education were given short shrift – or no shrift at all’ (Steinberg 2007).

Seven years after the adoption of Resolution 1325 (2000), women are still struggling to get access to the peace negotiation table. The so-called peacemakers are the same men who used to fight, the same men in different clothes. Since women are not seen as being associated with fighting, they are not considered as legitimate actors of peace processes; they have no place in the public sphere where all important decisions about priorities of the post-conflict society will be taken by some powerful men who

In multidimensional peacekeeping operations, DPKO has a twofold responsibility for gender mainstreaming: ‘(a) incorporating gender perspectives into its own work in all phases of peacekeeping operations; and (b) assisting the efforts of the affected population in post-conflict situations to incorporate gender perspectives into work on reconstructing administrative structures, institution-building, combating organized crime, enforcing the rule of law and implementing other post-conflict activities, including nation-building.’

With the aim of better targeting the peacekeeping mission’s policies, programs and activities, it is highly important to understand the issues at stake in a post-conflict environment based on a shift in gender roles during war. Peacekeepers have to understand **the differential impact of war** on women, men, boys and girls, such as:

- a) **Impact linked to gender roles:** during conflict, pre-existing social inequalities are magnified, making women and girls more vulnerable to certain forms of violence like sexual violence (rape used as a weapon of war);
- b) **Sources of vulnerability for women and girls:** besides its obvious psychological impact, sexual violence against women and girls during conflict has important health and social ramifications;
- c) **Women and girls as active agents and participants in conflict:** women and girls are not only victims in armed conflict; they are also active agents. In many conflict and post-conflict situations, they have been instrumental in promoting peace. However, women continue to be largely absent from formal peace processes.

Therefore, before developing a program to mainstream gender issues, it is necessary to understand the situation in the host country and to identify areas of possible intervention that are in line with the mission mandate. This is done through **a gender analysis** that looks at the different roles and activities that women, men, girls and boys have in a particular society and the societal relationships between them. It means asking ‘Who does what?’, ‘Who makes decisions?’, ‘Who derives the benefits?’, ‘Who uses resources such as land or credit?’, ‘Who controls these resources?’ and ‘What other factors influence relationships?’ (such as laws about property rights and inheritance). Examining these aspects of a society reveals the differences in the experiences of women, men, girls and boys and the differences in their needs.

Adapted from DPKO (2004), *Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations*, Best Practices Unit, New York.

Figure 12.4 Gender mainstreaming: Part 2.

are also representing women and other men. Women are very active in promoting peace at the grassroots level but their efforts are hardly noticed when the peace negotiations begin. Those efforts are seen as the extension of their domestic responsibilities from the household to the community. As Sanam Anderlini, formerly with Women Waging Peace, writes: 'Since women's peace activism has been largely confined to grassroots and civic organizing, women often face an uphill struggle to reach official political structures, partly because they lack resources or experience in developing effective strategies for empowerment' (Anderlini 2000: 20). In addition, women use modes of expression, such as prayers, marches, peaceful demonstrations, which are seen as the emanation of the feminine realm and that can't be translated into the political language spoken by the men sitting at the negotiation table.

After a conflict, there is an urge to settle an agreement based on a so-called pre-war order that represents a certain kind of stability, even if this order was very often discriminatory towards women. 'Concepts of reconstruction and rehabilitation may be misnomers in the case of women. Both concepts assume an element of going back, restoring to a position of capacity that previously existed. But this is not necessarily what women seek' (Chinkin 2004: 32). Women, who have been empowered during a conflict by stepping out of traditional roles, thus taking more responsibilities outside the private realm, may not want to lose new opportunities of societal changes. Although it is difficult for those women to acknowledge the power shift in gender roles since they are so busy surviving and taking care of extended families and, at the same time, fighting against patterns of violence. As Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen have observed: 'The reason why women regress in the aftermath [of war] are various. It seems likely that many do not consciously internalise or conceptualise the changes in their roles; without a conscious translation, there can be no concerted efforts to defend women's opportunities and gains in peacetime' (Meintjes *et al.* 2001: 9). For most women the end of war very often means getting access to a temporary space where violence does not prevail and where they can find solace, irrespective of their wartime gains and their new autonomy. One may wonder indeed: 'How should one theorize about the post war disappearance of women's apparent new independence and confidence? Do independence and confidence, in fact, disappear? Or is it a matter of relief from wartime burdens?' (Puechguirbal 2003: 1278).

As we have seen previously, war is always defined as a temporary disturbing event that will end one day and reverse into the pre-war order. As a result, if women's experiences of war are not documented nor fed into peace settlements, the post-conflict society will look like the society in time of peace and perpetuate discriminations against women. Therefore, women's new responsibilities, opportunities and gains won't be translated into a new power that could challenge traditionally defined gender roles. This is especially true in civil wars when men and women fight for a cause and/or to liberate their people from the grip of an oppressive regime. As the anthropologist Sondra Hale writes in the context of the 1961–91 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia:

In a way, we could say that civilian Eritrean society was frozen during the war. That is, while combatants and other fighters in the liberated zones envisioned and carried out

transformations in economic, political, class, ethnic and gender relations, the rest of society held on to an unchanged concept of being Eritrean, preserving extant cultural practices and behavior.

(Hale 2001: 126)

There will be tremendous pressure on female former combatants to revert to traditional roles after being demobilized, thus jeopardizing their gains and years of independence from the patriarchal order of society.

On 5 May 2006, the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed between the Government of Sudan and a breakaway faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). Darfur women were invited to participate only at the seventh round of discussion thanks to the support of the international community. The participation of women from the beginning could have facilitated the promotion of a more inclusive peace process: 'Women were able to achieve some progress at least in the wording of the agreement on specifically gender-related issues in the mere three weeks that they were permitted to take part in the negotiations. Had they been included from the beginning, they might well have been able to do much more, including on the core security and political issues' (International Crisis Group 2006: 7). However, one might wonder whether the inclusion of gender-sensitive language in the peace accord that would take into consideration women's needs would be enough to advance women's rights in post-conflict. As we have seen in previous peace negotiation processes in Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo or Côte d'Ivoire, the participation of women has hardly been sustained in the different stages of the rehabilitation of their society.

Beyond bringing more women to the peace negotiation table, the difficulty is to ensure that they will stay involved in the political life of their country once the peace process has been launched and that they will not be shunted aside by male actors. Women have to remain mobilized after the negotiations and take an active part in the political life of their society.

(Puechguirbal 2004: 61)

Once they have left the peace process, women would experience difficulties in returning to the different stages of the reconstruction of their own society because all responsibilities would have already been shared among the male stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

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The multidimensional nature of today's peacekeeping operations puts peacekeepers directly in contact with the lives of the population in the host country. As a result, it is extremely important that peacekeepers deployed in a post-conflict society understand the differential impact of war on women and men, boys and girls so as to not further marginalize the most vulnerable groups of the population. As it is written in the Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations developed by DPKO in 2004 to provide guidance on gender issues to mission staff: 'Having an

in-depth understanding of the different needs, priorities and potentials of women and men, and girls and boys, in a particular country should ultimately lead to better-informed decisions and more effective implementation of the mission mandate' (DPKO 2004). Peacekeepers should not only avoid reinforcing the vulnerabilities of the local people, but also should use the capacities of local men and women to empower them and not undermine their peace building efforts.

However, the very composition of a peacekeeping operation poses a problem insofar as it is still structured around male-dominated military and police contingents with their hyper-masculine culture and norms. Their conception of peace and security issues revolves around the cessation of hostilities and disarmament of men with guns, whereas members of the local civil society, women in particular, promote a broader approach on security. One can observe the following:

Interestingly enough, there is a widely shared view that after we have tackled the main issue of insecurity, e.g. disarming male gang leaders, militia, rebels, military groups, we will at the same time solve women's problems of insecurity. That is why, with the support of the international community, men allow themselves the right to represent women at the official peace negotiations because they are the voices of the mainstream.

(Puechguirbal 2005: 9)

A gender-sensitive approach in peacekeeping would enable its members to better understand the context of mission, slightly change their own perceptions about the host community and consider women as active agents of change for peace, instead of hopeless victims in need of protection. But there is a trap. Indeed, using gender as a problem-solving mechanism to make the work of peacekeepers more effective and more inclusive prevents us from questioning the very definition, goal and mandate of a peacekeeping operation. Is the peacekeeping model the best solution to today's theater of operations where uniformed personnel interact with local men, women, boys and girls on a daily basis?

Finally, the militaristic approach of peacekeeping excludes women from the transition to peace building and reconstruction efforts. Women are not consulted in peace processes based on the rationale that they were not exposed to direct fighting in war, although they were in charge of keeping together whole communities and extended families. Armed conflicts are being apprehended as a temporary breakdown of law and order that will soon return to the status quo *ante bellum* as defined by the men in power; in this context, it seems extremely difficult to challenge traditional gender roles and build up a new society on the remnants of the patriarchal order shattered by the war.

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### Seminar exercise: the cost of ignoring gender

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You have been the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for the UN Pacification Mission in Gaviotaland (UNPAG) for one year. UNPAG is a multidimensional peacekeeping mission whose mandate revolves around

establishing a stable and secure environment so that presidential and legislative elections can take place as well as facilitating an important Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process. There are currently 7,000 military deployed in UNPAG as well as 2,000 police officers and 800 international civilian staff. Your mandate makes specific mention of Resolution 1325 (2000) as well as the importance of gender mainstreaming throughout the mission's policies, programs and activities.

Gaviotaland has come out of a five-year brutal civil war that has left the country completely ruined and dysfunctional. The main gangs in the capital city were fighting against the government forces, which had left the population destitute and exposed to violence. Infrastructures like hospitals, schools and roads as well as electricity, water supplies and sanitation have been partly destroyed by the war. Rural areas are the most affected. Because of the degradation of the economy, there has been massive displacement of populations from the countryside to the capital city, with the threat of an outbreak of cholera as men and women continue to arrive in already overcrowded shanty towns. Law and order don't prevail any more and the prevalence of weapons within the society is still high. Gaviotaland is a patriarchal society where men and women have specific tasks and responsibilities and where men have the visible and formal power at all levels of public functions. Although women represent 52 percent of the population, they have always been marginalized in the political sphere and only 2 percent of them occupy positions of responsibility in the Government and Parliament. Discriminatory laws against women continue to prevail and women have little recourse in case of violence that is still, in some instances like domestic violence, culturally accepted.

After the first year of mission, you are quite satisfied of the results: security has improved thanks to the military operations that UNPAG has conducted in the main slums of the capital city where gangs were hiding and the UN military managed to take over some areas of the slums; political parties can enjoy a certain freedom of speech in preparation for the elections and you have met with their main leaders to reassure them about security issues; voters have registered in great number; the DDR program seems to work well since members of the main gangs have started to hand over their weapons in exchange for reintegration packages and access to skills training.

However, in the past few days, you have been confronted with growing problems that jeopardize the mandate of your mission. First of all, you received a report from your Senior Gender Advisor of an increase in cases of sexual violence against women in the capital city mainly. Women have stopped going out of their homes to collect wood and water, for fear of being sexually assaulted on the paths and roads. There are no shelters in town for women who would like to seek refuge, nor any medical assistance provided to them. You don't really understand why this is happening since your military have secured parts of the main slums where you have seen local men walking around; if it's safe again for the men, why are women still fearing for their life?

There has been a gathering of women in politics in front of the UN compound requesting assistance from the mission in gaining visibility in the electoral process; you don't really understand what they want since you have met with all political



parties and their male leaders told you that women were not interested in politics. Your mission has organized capacity building training for members of political parties that were open to men and women alike. It was up to the political parties to designate the participants in the training and few women were in attendance. You are convinced that you could not impose the participation of women to the political parties because it would be outside the bounds of your mandate.

The latest figures of voter registration show that only 20 percent of women have registered for the next elections. This is highly surprising since the mission has really encouraged all voters to go to vote, using one excellent motto: 'Citizen, assert your rights and cast your vote'. In addition, every day after 5pm, the mission has organized dissemination sessions about the importance of the registration process and women were free to attend. Here again, it seems that women are not really motivated to get their voting card and go to vote. If they don't show up at the registration centers, there is nothing you can do, really. You know that you have to keep a 'gender-neutral' approach and that promoting the registration of women would be obviously discriminatory to men.

Your DDR Officer has reported that there were groups of women hanging around the DDR Center at the outskirts of the capital; they were carrying guns and wanted to demobilize but were turned down. According to your DDR officer indeed, it could not be true that women had participated in the fighting since we know for sure that women can't commit acts of violence. He thinks that those women stole the guns belonging to the men to benefit from the reintegration package. There is nothing we can do because those women are not part of our caseload. In any case, you don't think that those women represent a major security risk and you can just ignore their request.

- Identify the assumptions of the SRSG about gender issues in the field of security, politics, elections and DDR;
- What measures should the SRSG take now to address the identified problems and fill the gaps of the mission's programs and activities with a gender perspective?

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## Questions for future debate

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1. What are the limitations of Resolution 1325 (2000) in empowering women in post-conflict situations?
2. What could be an all-inclusive definition of security in a post-conflict environment?
3. Why would the concept of 'militarized masculinity' be a hindrance to the integration of a gender perspective into a peacekeeping mission?
4. What are the critical elements of a successful gender mainstreaming approach in peacekeeping operations?
5. What are the elements that could explain why women's gains can't be sustained in a post-conflict society?

## Relevant web-based resources

- The BRIDGE Project, promoting gender advocacy and mainstreaming through bridging the gaps between theory and practice, available HTTP: <<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/>>.
- The website of International Alert, which seeks to integrate a gender perspective into conflict prevention and peace building, available HTTP: <<http://www.international-alert.org/gender>>.
- A portal that consolidates data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, available HTTP: <<http://www.womenwarpeace.org>>.
- UN information and resources on women's empowerment and gender equality, available HTTP: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>>.
- Country and thematic information on the full implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000), available HTTP: <<http://www.peacewomen.org>>.

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# Cyborg Soldiers and Militarised Masculinities

Cristina Masters

What, if any, are the connections between gender and technology? What can feminism(s) tell us about these connections? Is technology gender neutral, or is it productive of particular representational politics? What are the effects of bringing together technology, militarism, and masculinity? What does this mean for practices of international politics? Through the figure of the cyborg soldier, the chapter explores these questions.

## FEMINISMS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE MILITARY

Feminists, as much as militarists, have pointed to the virtues of advanced technology in addressing some of the pressing issues of our day, whether explicitly those of identity politics or that of war. With regards to the latter, nowhere is this more apparent than in the US military wherein technology has been lauded as the answer to the question of security and terrorism. With regard to the former, feminists such as Jean Bethke Elshtain (2003), one of the most cited feminists in international politics, have linked advanced military technology to just war practices, and a number of feminists have advanced arguments in favour of technology's transgressive potential both in terms of challenging the strictures of gendered regimes of power and in support of women's participation in institutions such as the military.

Donna Haraway (1990, 1991), one of the most well-known feminist advocates of the transgressive potential of technology, has critically engaged the possibilities of technology in enabling the subversion of binary structures of gendered knowledge.

Captured in the figure of the cyborg, she contends that the human/machine interface can fundamentally challenge traditional dualistic Western discourses by making apparent the social construction of unitary and exclusionary identity. The cyborg, she argues, can reveal the multiplicity, contextuality, and contingency of gendered subjectivity by blurring distinctions between, for instance, mind/body, self/other, and man/woman. At the same time, however, Haraway (1991: 151) recognises that '[t]he main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism . . . . But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential.'

It appears, however, that the problem persists (and in contrast to Haraway's hopeful observation): the figure of the cyborg remains rather *faithful* to its origins. Thus, while the figure of the cyborg may provide new grounds upon which to reveal gender representations as contingent and historically grounded social constructs, we need also attend to the ways in which the figure of the cyborg may continue to represent a desire for total masculinist control and domination.

While there are a number of critical issues at stake in thinking through advanced technology and war such as questions of legitimacy and indiscriminacy, the central concerns of this chapter are driven by a feminist curiosity around questions of gendered subjectivity and the representative practices at work in the interface between man and machine in the military, and the ethico-political implications therein. It does so by tracing the constitution of the cyborg soldier in the US military through both techno-scientific and masculinist discourses of power. Considering that feminists are fundamentally asking after power, critically engaging the constitution of the cyborg is therefore essential.

The chapter explores the dangerous possibilities represented in the interface of masculinity and technology. One such notable danger is the heightened and hyperdisembodiment and disembeddedness from the materiality of war where human bodies appear as little more than blips on radar screens, infrared heat-sensor images, precision-guided targets, numbers and codes on computer screens, and enemy targets in virtual reality military training simulations. While the discursive dehumanisation of the enemy-other is not a new phenomenon, as this chapter will argue, the cyborg further embeds these processes by leaving very little evidence of the enemy, or for that matter, any evidence of the Other in the desired subject self.

This also calls for critical inquiry into the militarisation of masculinity and the discursive inscription of masculinity onto advanced military technologies, provoking a critical feminist inquiry into questions of subjectivity. The grafting of gendered subjectivity on/into military technologies within the American military, as this chapter will argue, fundamentally delimits the terrain of alternative political possibilities, ones that are less violent and less exclusionary.

## WHAT IS A CYBORG?

A cyborg is . . . a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction.

(Donna Haraway 1991: 149)

At present, advanced technologies constitute an integral component of the American military apparatus and necessarily shape, inform, and (re)produce military techno-scientific discourses. As such, American soldiers have had to be (re)made to fit into, operate, and function in this ostensibly new technological age – new times seem to require new soldiers for the ‘job’ of defending the nation. Conversely, military discourses have given birth to what we have virtually only witnessed in sci-fi novels, Hollywood productions, and *Star Trek* episodes – the cyborg soldier. Neither old nor new, neither worldly nor out-of-this-world, neither entirely man nor machine, the cyborg soldier represents the ‘juncture of ideals, metals, chemicals, and people that makes weapons of computers and computers of weapons and soldiers’ (Gray 1997: 8).

The making of humans into machines, however, is not a new phenomenon. By the eighteenth century, for instance, Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1977: 138) argued that the human body was already becoming a primary site of technological inscription. In his words:

The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born, it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines.

This machinery of power signalled a profound shift from the coercive power of old to a new form of power as a productive force; a power that was not negative but rather positive in its constitutive strength. As disciplinary, power no longer operated as a simple external force on the body, but rather was taken up by the body to produce a particular subject – for example, in the prison, the model prisoner; and in the asylum, the insane, abnormal, and deviant. As Foucault detailed, the military has been exemplar in this constitutive process where through its disciplinary techniques it came to produce the subject desired – the soldier. In approaching the human body as machine, boot camp training exercises, drill sergeants, and the barracks became the processes, figures, and architecture by which the mechanical could be inserted into the biological to construct the practised and performative ‘killing machine’.

In our contemporary context, the human body continues to be a key site of technological grafting in the American military wherein ‘[t]oday the basic currency of war, the human body is the site of these modifications, whether it is of the “wetware” (the mind and hormones), the “software” (habits, skills, disciplines), or the “hardware” (the physical body)’ (Gray 1997: 195–96). These arguments however, I would argue, do not fully capture the reconfiguration of the twenty-first century cyborg soldier. A few modifications are necessary to follow, complicate, and contextualise contemporary reconfigurations of subjectivity within the American military. Whilst historically humans could be and have been disciplined into fine-tuned fighting machines they no longer seem able to meet the demands of advanced technology. Instead, humans have implicitly been constituted through contemporary military techno-scientific discourses, and evident in the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), as having hit a developmental wall that seemingly cannot be surpassed (US Department

of Defense 2003, 2005; Alberts and Hayes 2003; Ullman and Wade 1996). 'Be all that you can be', the well-known motto of the US Army, is seemingly insufficient and no matter how much the mechanical is inserted into the biological, humans still need to respond to the 'mundane' tasks of the flesh.

This is evident in the ways human soldiers are more and more being cast as problems (frequently vulnerable and sometimes troublesome) in need of solutions. The growing number of soldiers living with post-traumatic stress disorder, which the military works hard to hide and deny, for instance, are narrated as part of the problem and implicitly technology appears as the perfect solution – computers, it seems, do not get 'stressed out' (Whitworth 2008). In the context of cyborg desires, perhaps what is most significant is the reality that human soldiers meet death on the battlefield; deaths no longer acceptable in the eyes of the public.

Cast as unreliable and unruly, the human body in the age of technology is less and less the primary site/cite of military representational practices, with the triad more appropriately understood as such: the *hardware* has come to represent a whole range of advanced high-tech weapons; the *software* represents information and communication technologies; and the *wetware* represents the embodied human soldier, and significantly, the weakest link in the triad (see Der Derian 2003; Kundnani 2004; Harris 2003). Thus what constituted the cyborg in its earlier manifestations, and as explored and detailed by Foucault, no longer fully captures the shifts motivated by the current fetishisation of advanced technology in the military. Alternatively what we are witnessing, and indeed participating in, with the constitution of the cyborg soldier is a radical rearticulation of subjectivity. Contemporary military techno-scientific discourses have profoundly altered the subject of discursive power productions, with the fleshy body of the soldier no longer standing in as the agent of politics by other means, or in this case, war by other means. With the discursive positioning of military technologies as superior to the human soldier, machines are now the subjects of the text.

In response to the failure of human soldiers, twenty-first century military techno-scientific discourses have reconstituted the soldier in such a way as to dispel the susceptibility of the human body through the discursive construction of technology, not the male body, as the subject capable of the discursive transcendence of embodiment. High-tech weapons systems, state-of-the-art computer systems and information technology, artificial intelligence, complex virtual reality simulated training exercises, digitised battlefields, and so on, animate the current debate surrounding the RMA and form integral components of existing US military war doctrine. Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, information, and interoperability – certainly a stretch from the Cold War days of C<sup>3</sup>I – inform, shape, and constitute contemporary techno-scientific military discourses (Gray 1997; Harris 2003).

Advanced military technologies have now been constituted as superior in almost every way to the human male body. They are superior at information and intelligence gathering, superior at remote sensing, they are stronger, faster, more agile, and have much more staying power. The apparent effect has been the circumvention of the emotional and biological limitations of bio-bodies through the interface. Wherein the insertion of the biological into the mechanical has ensured that techno-scientific discourses can discriminately pick and choose what does and does not get

inserted into the mechanical. For instance, the twenty-first century cyborg land soldier will be outfitted with technologies that in essence replace his 'senses' through technological prostheses that replicate biological senses while circumventing human biological limitations: poor eyesight, hearing, and discernment. 'His helmet will be fitted with microphones and earphones for communication, night-vision goggles and thermal imaging sensors to see in the dark, along with a heads-up display in front of his eyes to show him where he is on the ground and give him constant intelligence updates' (Waller 1995: 38). The US Defense and Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is also developing technology that can 'regulate' emotions: 'By linking directly into the sense and remotely monitoring a soldier's performance, feelings of fear, shame or exhaustion could be removed. What was once achieved by issuing soldiers with amphetamines could now be done remotely with greater precision' (Kundnani 2004: 123). With such developments, the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the military would no longer be susceptible to human error and emotion, not least of which because computers are not at the mercy of bodily functions even while they do not function without the presence of humans. The computer programmers who 'man' computers can always be replaced with relative ease, and without disrupting 'their' capabilities: 'The computer recommends the targets he should attack and even keeps watch on the skies when he's away from his screen' (Waller 1995: 38).

As such, the human/machine interface represents the privileging of technology over biology and therefore locates power and knowledge in the cyborg. This relationship between knowledge and masculinity is articulated in techno-scientific epistemological commitments to rationality, objectivity, and abstract disembodiment, effectively separating the 'knowers' from the 'known' through hierarchal dualisms of masculinity and femininity. The inscription of technology with masculinity fundamentally constitutes technology as rational, objective, and the source of moral knowledge claims. Artificial intelligence (AI) scientists within the American military apparatus 'explicitly are working for exactly unsituated, disembodied intelligence through research on pure AI and in "downloading", putting a specific human's consciousness into an artificial brain' (Gray 1997: 72). In effect, these attempts to master knowledge are slowly closing critical spaces in which to contest how knowledge is discursively and exclusively constituted, and closing the spaces for alternative understandings of knowledge which are situated, contextual, subjective, and open to interpretation and contestation. Indeed, the cyborg soldier signifies the desire to acquire maximum, if not total, control precisely by escaping the imperfections of the human body. As Sara Cohen Shabot (2006: 226) argues, '[s]uch a figure represents no less than the omnipotence of the *more-than-human*. It is a body which overcomes the *failures* and the *problems* of the *old* and the *obsolete* organic body.'

Abstract disembodiment has 'virtually' disembedded cyborg soldiers from the very material realities inscribed in the interface, where the Gulf War became

the ultimate voyeurism: to see the target hit from the vantage point of the weapon. An inhuman perspective . . . Seeing was split off from feeling; the visible was separated from the sense of pain and death. Through the long lens the enemy remained a faceless alien, his/her bodily existence derealized . . . Perversely, war appeared as it really was.

(Robins and Levidow 1995: 121)

The distinctions between simulation and reality, training and battle, have been breached to the point that there is *virtually* no distinction, where the critical distinction should be that people are killed in the *real* world of war (see Der Derian 2003, 2009; Harris 2003; Kundnani 2004). Corporeality has been obliterated in the cyborg through the metamorphing, and apparent interchangeability, of reality and simulation. A telling example is the description of the Combat and Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, by an American Colonel: ‘Once a unit goes into the Box, with the exception that they’re shooting laser bullets, and that a guy, instead of falling down with a gunshot wound, will read from a card he’s carrying in his pocket how badly hurt he is, virtually everything we do is real. There’s nothing simulated in the Box’ (Der Derian 1997: 121). The discursive collapsing of reality and simulation has deadly ramifications for the bodies violently inscribed by cyborg soldiers in *real* wars. The disciplining of soldiers to believe that simulations are reality, and conversely, that reality is a simulation ‘produces “a kind of isolation” from the violence of war that allows for its unrestrained prosecution . . . removed from the bloody results of their decisions’ (Gray 1997: 200). Simultaneously, it rationalises and mystifies the disappearance of the body from war, and the denial of the ‘sentient physicality of human embodiment’ (Gusterson 1998: 124).

The denial and suppression of embodiment is indicative of the inscription of military technology as the subject of techno-scientific masculinity and of human bodies, both soldier and civilian, as objects of power and knowledge. The discursive positioning of military technologies as superior to the human soldier has constituted machines as the subject of the text. Technology has become the surface upon which power has been inscribed – inscribed with the power to ‘write the world’ through violent inscriptions and domination (Haraway 1991: 175). The transference of subjectivity onto technology has fundamentally grafted military technology with agency and power through the discursive reinscription of hegemonic techno-militarised masculinity as representative of machine. The cyborg soldier now plays a central role in constructing meaning, in effect constituting the other. The language of the cyborg is the language of violence, a language that has the power to generate meaning and knowledge about the bodies upon which it acts. The *other* – gendered, racialised, and sexualised – is constituted as less human, as object, as different, as a ‘code problem’ in need of techno-scientific solutions, as bodies-of-danger. The language of the cyborg necessitates the denial of the body of the self so that it can act upon the body of the other, effecting a distance and disassociation from the other so that it can engage in practices of domination, subordination, and subjugation. Necessarily, this has required the naturalisation of the machine-man interface through techno-scientific discursive practices in order to legitimate practices of dominance, and thus the ethicality of the interface.

At the same time the constitution and production of the cyborg soldier is rearticulating the ever-present relationship between techno-scientific discourses and masculinist discourses. Hierarchical dualisms which have traditionally distinguished between masculinity and femininity – culture and nature, mind and body, superior and inferior, subject and object, objectivity and subjectivity, disembodied and embodied, strength and weakness, active and passive, rational and irrational – have come to represent the distinction between cyborg and humanoid. The characteristics



traditionally inscribed on male bodies have been rearticulated by military techno-scientific discourses and remapped onto military technologies. So while the cyborg soldier has blurred particular distinctions between machine and man, where *technology* embodies *masculinity*, the distinctions between the cyborg soldier and the traditional soldier have become discursively formalised along the lines of masculinity and femininity. The effect is that military technologies have been *techno-masculinised*, while human soldiers apart from technology have been feminised and reconstituted within the realm of those needing protection.

As such, techno-militarised masculinity has come to symbolise the *model* American soldier represented in the machine-man interface where technology constitutes soldiers and militarised masculinity constitutes technology. While the machine-man interface is, in so many ways, literal in the American military where everyday experience is characterised by constant interaction with advanced technology from weapons to computers, surveillance, reconnaissance, delivery systems, and from training simulations to real battle, it is also significantly metaphorical, in that clearly it is not only *male* soldiers that interface with technology. Rather, the interface represents the discursive *unbinging* of male subjectivity from the physical male body and the reinscription of male subjectivity on/into military technologies. Put differently, masculinity does not necessarily coincide with the bio-male body. 'It is not that the soldier is influenced by the weapons used; now he or she is (re)constructed and (re)programmed to fit integrally into the weapon *systems*' (Gray 1997: 195). The significant effect is that advanced technologies are now the subjects of discursive constructions, and thus one of the key signifiers that perform and represent American identity.

In many ways the inscription of technology with masculine subjectivity is easily recognised in military techno-scientific discourses: phallic-shaped missiles, precision-guided missiles that easily find the target, and aerial bombings that leave one with the impression of an 'orgasmic ejaculation' impregnating targets with death and destruction rather than life. These are only a few of the more obvious representations of the discursive inscription of masculine subjectivity on/into military technology. What is less obvious, but fundamentally crucial, is the transference of masculine intelligence (knowledge) on/into military technologies, particularly military technologies that are not overtly gendered in shape, size, and overall appearance, but gendered in capabilities, for instance computer and information technologies. 'At the heart of most dreams for absolute information there is the ideal of pure intelligence. It is a peculiar version of rationality that is masculine, mathematical, emotionless and instrumentalist' (Gray 1997: 195). While masculine subjectivity has historically represented the mastery of mind over body, rationality over irrationality, and intellect over emotion inscribed on the white, heterosexual male body, the human male body has proven to be a serious liability to achieving if not absolute at least superior intelligence.

Considering this, the cyborg can be read as fundamentally post-human, and significantly represents a profound rearticulation of the political; in other words, the constitution of the cyborg soldier can be read as a radical rearticulation of human subjectivity (see Springer 1998; Hoogland 2002; Shabot 2006). This post-human subjectivity is represented through the cyborg in the very processes of transferring

human reasoning and thinking from human subjects onto technology. The infusion of technology with the ability to reason and think, without being interrupted by emotions such as guilt or bodily limitations such as fatigue, is indicative of the constitution of the fleshy body as no longer capable of producing and projecting desired representations of the American self.

Significantly, the constitution of the soldier as cyborg has also altered *who* is constituted as a soldier. Traditionally, the signifier *soldier* was confined to combatants, in other words, men who actually engaged in physical battle. The fusion of technology and masculinity has significantly blurred this traditional distinction where now civilians can be considered soldiers, and more specifically, *cyborg* soldiers (Armitage 2003). Military personnel who will likely never be in physical battle and who literally sit in front of computer screens have now been constituted as soldiers through the interface, effectively enlarging and reconfiguring the representations of soldiers. In the words of US military Colonel Ehrhard: 'It is the software engineer who kills now' (Beal 2000). Cyborg soldiers, almost by definition, may never have to lay *human eyes* on their enemy again – the gaze will be that of the gun sight, the computer screen, and global positioning satellite targeting systems. On the continuum of traditional discursive depersonalisation and dehumanisation the cyborg soldier represents the extreme of abstract disembodiment in that the discipline traditionally required to remove oneself from the reality of war (if even possible) is no longer necessary. Indeed, high-tech weapons of the cyborg, whether computers or stealth bombers, deepen and remystify the discursive processes of disembodiment. A mental image of an air fighter's 'bomb's eye view' during NATO's humanitarian intervention in Kosovo, frighteningly captures this: 'Killing people does not go through your mind . . . From the air, the human factor doesn't mean what it would in an army guy. When you're a fighter pilot, you don't see eyes. You see things – a building, a truck, a bridge, a dam. It's all so technological. I had no Serbian in mind . . . I was shooting at a radar pulse' (Wallace 2000).

With this in mind, what then are the ethico-political implications of this masculine desire to transcend the organic body by constructing the perfect technological subject? In the words of Claudia Springer (1998: 484):

by escaping from its close identification with the male body, masculine subjectivity has been rearticulated, suggesting that there is an essential masculinity that transcends bodily presence. . . . What this reconfiguration of masculinity indicates is that patriarchy is more willing to dispense with human life than with [masculine] superiority.

To put it bluntly, it is *life* that is at stake when abstract disembodiment – made possible through masculine desires to transcend the body – has all but erased the very material realities inscribed in the interface. The effect, as argued above is the rationalisation of the disappearance of the body from war.

The affinity between machine and masculinity within the American military apparatus has been made to appear as a natural process deepening and reinforcing the split between mind and body 'which effectively disembodies ethical deliberation' (Haraway 1991: 175). In so doing, questions of responsibility to the other – the

constitutive outside to the cyborg – are all but ignored and denied. As Chris Gray (1997: 103) argues: ‘Technology not only becomes a shield for humans but in many ways it seems headed toward “literally replacing human responsibility”.’ Or in the words of Arun Kundnani (2004: 125): ‘What has gone is any restraint of humanity towards the subjugated.’ In so doing, the cyborg is fundamentally a masculinist project in that it represents a masculine desire to overcome death by making obsolete a body that must die. Indeed, the cyborg represents the ultimate masculine fantasy: the cyborg as the colonisation of the last vestige of feminine power – *the power of giving life* – wherein the fetishisation of technology signifies this very possibility. Constituted through the omnipotent masculine gaze of dominance, the cyborg can seemingly live forever. The question that lingers is what exactly is the cyborg giving life to? What politics, if any, does the cyborg signify?

## THE PAIN OF THE INTERFACE

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Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert.

(Donna Haraway 1991: 152)

To answer the question of whether or not the cyborg represents a transgressive political subjectivity in an increasingly biopolitical architecture of power, the answer is no, it cannot. Not only has the constitution of the cyborg soldier discursively flattened difference, multiplicity, contextuality, and contingency, it has also rearticulated a masculine aesthetic of war that is even more violent. The enduring problem, however, is that we cannot even see this; violence has been rendered invisible in the interface. We are not witness to complex realities and experiences instead we are witness to a *virtual* reality that, more often than not, has very little association with lived fleshy realities. Did we see, for instance, the complex, multidimensional realities of the people of Iraq in the Gulf Wars? More specifically did we see anything at all through the masculine gaze of American military technology that indicated any life, any *other* bodies?

While the construction of the cyborg soldier has blurred some distinctions, those distinctions have been extremely particular – primarily between masculinity and machine – not, however, between masculine/feminine, self/other, and mind/body. More importantly, the constitution of the cyborg has reconstituted and resolidified distinctions between masculinity and femininity, mind and body, and self and other. The cyborg soldier has not blurred the hierarchical binaries of dominance and control that inform American sovereign power, but rather has served to reinforce them. So while the cyborg has been read as a possibility for resolving and/or dissolving of gender and difference, this chapter has argued that the cyborg in fact is reworking, replaying, and rewriting gender in significant and dangerous ways. As Sara Shabot (2006: 226) argues:

By now, the danger that the hyper-sexualized cyborgs present to postmodern-feminist conceptualizations of subjectivity might be seen as obvious: reinforced stereotypes of masculinity and femininity leave the essentialist myths of *manhood* and *womanhood*

untouched, and with them, they also leave unquestioned the roles that men and women *are due* to play in society (mostly technological domination and military control versus reproduction, respectively).

There is little transgressive potential to be found in the figure of the cyborg as it leaves intact and further embeds gender as a regime of power.

We can read cyborg desires as dominated by anxieties around threatened masculinity, indicating a deep crisis in American representations of self in its attempt to construct an invulnerable subject position by ridding itself of the fleshy body. This desperate, anxious, fearful, and violent attempt to make possible what can never be – the mastery of an American self – however, has had profoundly violent effects on the fleshy bodies upon which American representations of self have been articulated and inscribed (see Lingis 2006). In signalling a desire for, and figure of, total control, the cyborg soldier is eviscerating and erasing the messiness and excess that makes embodied experience potentially subversive. This chapter is an attempt to bring forth experience and embodiment through a challenge to the very figure that is replacing the fleshy body as the subject of politics. As Vivienne Jabri (2006: 823) argues, ‘When war is spectacle, experience and its materiality in the body are somehow occluded for discourses that merely see the aesthetic in its technological rendition. Any discourse that brings forth experience and its embodiment comes to constitute a moment of resistance.’ This chapter thus calls for a reengagement with the fleshy body – a call to take up the body as a critical site of ‘embodiment in all its complexity and irreducibility’ (Hoogland 2002: 214).

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### Seminar exercise

Play the video game *America's Army* (<http://www.americasarmy.com/>) and think about how this makes you feel in connection to militarism, violence, and war. What identity are you producing by playing a soldier at war? Are there connections between gender, soldiering and war? Does it feel masculine or feminine? Why? Do you feel powerful? Are you enjoying it? Does it make you uncomfortable? Why or why not? What do you feel about the enemy/people you are killing? What connection do you feel to the realities of war? What can you *not* think about while playing the game? Are there certain possibilities that are precluded by the parameters of the game? What are they? Do you feel a connection between the game and real practice of war? Why or why not?

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### Questions for further debate

1. What does the cyborg have to do with gender and feminism?
2. From what qualities does the effectiveness of the cyborg derive?
3. What are the implications of using a cyborg as a figure or paradigm for all people?
4. How does the cyborg soldier change our vision of war?

### Relevant web-based resources

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- The Cyborg, a range of resources and writings on the politics of cyborgs, available HTTP: <<http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/cpace/cyborg/cyborgov.html>>.
- Information Technology, War, and Peace Project, led by James Der Derian, available HTTP: <<http://www.watsoninstitute.org/infopeace/index2.cfm>>.
- Global Security Matrix, providing knowledge, tools and media resources 'to enable informed debate and expand policy options on the most pressing security issues', available HTTP: <<http://www.watsoninstitute.org/globalsecuritymatrix/>>.
- America's Army, the recruitment tool, available HTTP: <<http://www.americasarmy.com/>>.
- Defense and Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), available HTTP: <<http://www.darpa.mil/>>.

### Sources for further reading and research

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# SECTION FOUR POLITICAL ECONOMY

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# Mainstreaming Gender in International Institutions

Jacqui True

Gender mainstreaming is increasingly the dominant language through which policymakers worldwide understand women and men. It is one of the contemporary logics through which international institutions, governments and non-government organizations engage with the politics of the global – be it global security, development, poverty, or trade. Assessing and understanding mainstreaming is thus the task of feminist scholars, especially in the international relations field, where global power is the core subject of analysis. Feminist International Relations scholars use a critical lens to analyse gender mainstreaming and its effects. It is not our role to be proponents or critics of mainstreaming per se. Rather, the point is to examine institutional practices and how they augur with theoretical expectations and official policies at the international level. What are the implications of gender mainstreaming in international institutions for feminist theories of power and global governance? Further, what are the implications of mainstreaming policies for the strategies of women's movements worldwide?

There are different ways to study gender mainstreaming in international institutions. Some feminist scholars approach mainstreaming from an *institutional* perspective asking how mainstreaming policies and procedures were adopted and implemented in particular organizational contexts. They explore the gendered national politics and their intersection with global norms purported by international institutions such as the United Nations. Alternatively they examine the relationship between feminist movements and gender mainstreamed bureaucracies at the global level. Other feminist scholars approach mainstreaming from a *discursive* perspective asking how mainstreaming produces new forms of power through the



diffusion of strategic language and framing processes that change the meaning of women, men and gender equality in myriad contexts. These approaches – institutional and discursive – are complementary (Cohn 2008: 194). They can be seen as part of a collective feminist effort to critically scrutinize the political transformations that gender mainstreaming enacts or intends to enact.

This chapter is in three parts. The first part discusses the origins of gender mainstreaming as a gender equality strategy and its contested definitions within states, international institutions and advocacy networks. The second part explores gendered power in policy and bureaucratic structures and how international relations feminists interpret the meaning of mainstreaming politics in particular international institutions. The third part considers the voice of women, women's movements and feminist advocates in gender mainstreaming. How far and in what ways have mainstreaming processes opened up opportunities for greater political participation and visibility of women or feminist actors on the international stage? Has the mainstreaming of gender equality objectives silenced or made issues of gendered power and domination more or less salient in international relations?

## **INSTITUTION: WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?**

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The United Nations, the international institution with the broadest global scope defines mainstreaming as applying 'a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively' (United Nations 1995: 116). The implication of this definition is that gender equality cannot be achieved without considering the gendered consequences of all policies, global and local. The Beijing Platform for Action ratified by all state parties present at the 1995 Fourth UN World Conference on Women advocated a new policy-making approach that involves working to 'promote a gender perspective in all legislation and policies' (Beijing Platform for Action [BPfA], para. 207(d), aided by the generation and dissemination of gender-disaggregated statistics, in order to 'eliminate obstacles to the exercise of women's rights and eradicate all forms of discrimination against women' (para. 207(c)). Consequently during the 1990s the remit of many existing international and national agencies was expanded to include gender mainstreaming, replacing or supplementing their earlier focus on women's issues and gender equality policy (True 2003; Squires 2005).

Mainstreaming emerged as a concept first in the politics of global development in the 1980s. Feminist advocates challenged the women in international development (WID) paradigm developed and institutionalized in the 1970s during the UN Decade for Women and subsequent UN world conferences on women. The main policy documents of the period, such as the country reports of the International Labour Organization (ILO), did not consider the role or impact of women's productive labor in paid and unpaid economies on mainstream development projects (Razavi and Miller 1995a: 6–8). Instead international donor support was given for small-scale income-generating women-only projects. These projects often reinforced women's economic marginalization and relegated them to secondary roles.

Critics argued that the WID approach focused on what development could get from women rather than on women's needs or how development policies should be altered to advance gender equality (Goetz 1995; see also Moser 1993). They argued that integrating social justice and equity for women with mainstream development concerns privileged economic efficiency arguments and existing male-centred agendas focused on the formal market economy and neglected underlying gendered social relations (Palmer 1992). However, the WID approach did bring analysis of women's situation into the realm of macro-economic and international policy making (Razavi and Miller 1995a: 18).

As a result of this critical analysis by feminist development scholars and activists especially from the South, and a new gender and development (GAD) paradigm analysing the impact of gender relations on policies developed. Drawing from socialist feminist theories of women's subordination, GAD advocates argued that no amount of formal, public power would help to eliminate the gender imbalance of power in the family household or informal economy. They sought 'to develop a theory of gender which was integrated into and informed by gender analysis of the world economy' and that took into account women's unpaid reproductive labour (Razavi and Miller 1995a: 15). Rather than the efficiency gains to be had from utilizing women's labour for economic development, GAD analysis focused on gender power relations and bottom-up development involving women's NGOs and participatory planning. As Razavi and Miller state, 'the policy implications of social relations analysis . . . involve the political project of women's self-empowerment' (1995a: 32; see also Kabeer 1994).

The concept of 'gender mainstreaming' represented a further development – and more institutionally palatable version – of this GAD paradigm that emerged in the late 1980s. Gender mainstreaming in international institutions such as the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, the International Criminal Court, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the European Union signalled the spread of gender analysis beyond international development policy and Southern, developing countries to developed regions and a wider range of policy domains.<sup>1</sup> The diffusion of mainstreaming policies reflected the global consensus about the limitations of women's agencies and gender equality objectives viewed in isolation from women's relationship to men, men's roles and the gendered structures of the macro economy. The Beijing Platform for Action consolidated the shift to gender mainstreaming as a global gender equality strategy (Krook and True 2008; Geisler *et al.* 1999; True and Mintrom 2001).

Gender mainstreaming conceptualizes change in processes as a critical step towards changes in outcomes. For instance, changes in the activities of an organization – its projects, programmes and policies – should ultimately lead to improvements in the situation of the subjects of policy intervention, that is, in women's material lives. However, many international institutions and development agencies have adopted gender mainstreaming or the term 'gender' without changing their previous 'add women and stir' focus. Razavi and Miller (1995a) discuss the common confusion over the meaning of gender and the policy implications of the discursive shift from 'women' to 'gender' among state and global institutions (also Baden and Goetz 1997). Depending on their institutional mandates, gender has been deployed in

### Mainstreaming or marginalization?

Gender mainstreaming was intended to rectify the slow pace of progress in women's status in developing countries and at the global level. It was proposed as an alternative to the marginalization of women-specific projects and agencies in international development. Acknowledging the potential for marginalization in all initiatives that seek to redress gender inequality and injustice, the Beijing Platform for Action states that: 'Women/gender units are important for effective mainstreaming, but strategies must be further developed to prevent inadvertent marginalization as opposed to mainstreaming of the gender dimension throughout all operations' (paragraph 308).

The alliance between insiders (gender sensitive lawyers and government officials) and outsiders (women's movements and human rights advocacy groups) in the the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (WCGJ), facilitated the mainstreaming as opposed to the marginalization of gender justice concerns in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Statute covers administration of the ICC, including the gender-balanced recruitment of judges and other personnel, and gender-sensitive court procedures, especially for the protection of victims and witnesses, as well as substantive legal provisions that make gender-specific, crimes of sexual violence, war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide. In addition, the Rome Statute provides mandates for the Court appointment of gender experts and legal expertise on violence against women and children (Article 36 [8] b and Article 44 [2]) (Spees 2005). Senior prosecutors and judges in the ICTY and ICTR have taken up demands for gender justice in their arguments and decisions. Gender experts holding new specialist positions within the ICC encourage the input of women's organizations in their ongoing work to make the Statute an effective human rights instrument.

However, despite the high level attention given to mainstreaming policies, issues of gendered power, inequality and injustice continue to be marginalized in some international institutions. For example, in the European Union (EU) gender mainstreaming has become a form of rationalization in disguise, an argument for getting rid of budget lines devoted to gender expertise and budgets for women's or gender-specific projects (Stratigaki 2005). This rationalization of resources undermines the EU's priority on meaningfully addressing gender inequalities and injustices in international development. In their report on 'gender equality and women's empowerment in EU development cooperation' the European Parliament (2008) observed that despite the 1995 Communication on integrating gender in all development cooperation and the 2007 gender equality strategy, gender issues are now largely absent in the plans for the 17 billion Euros in development assistance to countries in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and South Africa.

Figure 14.1

various ways by different international institutions (Staudt 2003): as a synonym for women in the UN human rights commission (Radmani 2005); as a policy focus on equity and justice in the private and public spheres in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Chappell 2008); as an acknowledgement of the labour market policy implications of differences between women and men in the European Union (True 2008a), and as a business case for minimizing these differences and their impacts in the World Bank and in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Bedford 2008; Bergeron 2003; True 2008b).

Approaches to gender mainstreaming reflect different feminist theories and/or the synthesis of these theories (see Dietz 2003). In particular, mainstreaming invokes *liberal feminism* and its demands for the inclusion or representation of women and perspectives on women's as well as men's lived realities in policymaking. It is informed by *difference feminism* and its stress on the significance of material and culturally sanctioned differences between women and men and the importance of taking these

differences into account in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies in order to empower women in particular. Moreover, *poststructuralist feminism* can be seen in some approaches to gender mainstreaming that understand the subjects of policy as diverse and incorporate this diversity in the policymaking process by taking into account gender difference but displacing it as the sole axis of difference (Verloo 2005; Squires 2005).

Theories of gender mainstreaming suggest that as a policy strategy it has both status-quo oriented and transformative implications. Roanaq Jahan (1995) sees mainstreaming as either an integrationist, liberal feminist strategy or an agenda-setting approach that has the potential to radically alter organizational goals and outcomes. In their study for the Beijing Prepcoms, Razavi and Miller (1995b) argue that a liberal, integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming was adopted by UNDP, the World Bank and the ILO. This approach involved two main components: (1) integrating gender issues into all of the activities funded and executed by an organization, and (2) diffusing responsibility for gender mainstreaming beyond the WID/gender units – through mechanisms such as gender training and guidelines – thus making it a routine concern of every bureaucratic unit (1995b: ii).

Beveridge and Scott (2002) also disaggregate gender mainstreaming into two types of approaches, either technocratic or participatory. Compared with Jahan's distinction, they focus more on the actors involved in mainstreaming than the intention of the policy approach but the technocratic approach is akin to a liberal feminist, integrationist strategy modified by difference feminisms' attention to gender. Technocratic gender mainstreaming relies on gender specialists or line bureaucrats within international institutions to drive the process of gendering policies and programmes (True 2008b). For example, the globally influential Council of Europe definition of gender mainstreaming was conceived by a group of specialists with no input from grassroots feminist activists or women's movements. From its very inception in international institutions therefore, mainstreaming was seen as a part of the normal policymaking process with little room anticipated for dialogue with civil society or activists (Verloo 2005). In the United Nations, the role of gender specialists is intended to be catalytic and to shift responsibility for gender mainstreaming to management and operation units within its agencies (Hannan-Andersson 1995). Yet the evidence certainly within the United Nations suggests that this technocratic approach has not been able to deliver on the promises of mainstreaming. A recent progress report on gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping operations (2005: 3), for example, states: 'the notions that gender advisors are catalysts in gender mainstreaming efforts and that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all staff have [also] failed to be universally accepted'.

By contrast to the technocratic approach reflecting liberal and difference feminisms, feminist scholars advocate a participatory approach to mainstreaming gender issues in global policies. The participatory approach to gender mainstreaming takes seriously difference feminism's attention to salient gender differences and poststructuralist feminism's concern with displacing gender – especially as it is treated as a synonym for women – and fixed meanings of gender equality. Feminists stress the substantive representation of women's interests in policy discussion or require experts to consult with, and be accountable to, women's movements. Involving women's

movements in the policymaking process is expected to decrease the chances that women will be instrumentalized by policies – as objects or means to organizational ends – or treated as a homogenous group (Lombardo and Maier 2006; Ackerly 2009). It is hard to see how gender mainstreaming could work as a policy strategy inside organizations without the support and scrutiny of diverse social movements outside. Indeed mainstreaming gender issues in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security involved the persistent lobbying of a transnational advocacy network both inside international institutions and outside them in the nascent realm of global civil society (True 2008c).

Since the Beijing conference and the launch of gender mainstreaming onto the global stage, mainstreaming has taken on a life of its own in the international institutions where it has been implemented. The next section analyses the politics of gender mainstreaming in international institutions.

## POWER: HOW DOES GENDER MAINSTREAMING WORK?

Feminist IR scholars analyse the discursive and the institutional politics of mainstreaming gender in international institutions. *Institutional politics* refers to the political and material relationships, the bureaucratic and organizational dynamics that have shaped the adoption and implementation of mainstreaming as policy strategy. *Discursive politics* refers to the language and meaning of gender equality and difference reflected in institutionalized norms, policy procedures, organizational identities and material structures. Let us consider each type of politics and how feminist scholars analyse them.

From an institutional perspective, we are interested in how gender mainstreaming is adopted and implemented in international institutions and whether it becomes co-opted by existing norms and bureaucratic politics or brings about political transformation. Feminist research to date suggests that the impact of gender mainstreaming depends greatly on 1) the characteristics of the policy issue or regime area, 2) the nature of governance in the international institution, and 3) the networks among gender specialists or officials (insiders) and women's movements or advocates (outsiders).

That these three criteria are important to the successful mainstreaming of gender can be illustrated by the case of gender mainstreaming in the International Criminal Court discussed in Figure 14.1. First, the criminal justice policy area concerned issues of direct violence and bodily harm in which gender-specificity of the issues (e.g. rape and sexual violence) is clearly apparent. Second, the nature of governance in the International Criminal Court involves (hard) law and legal precedent and reasoning rather than (soft) bureaucratic procedures or strategic bargaining making the implementation of mainstreaming more transparent and amenable to monitoring. Third, the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice built significant relationships between judges, lawyers and officials with gender expertise inside the ICC and women advocates in the broader global civil society outside the institution. These advocates were able to mobilize local publics to participate in the global policy debate about international justice.

Gender mainstreaming in European Union development policy also discussed in Figure 14.1 presents a less transformative case. Here the non-urgent character of the issue area, the complex bureaucratic governance regime, and relatively weak transnational networks all contrive to marginalize gender issues even though mainstreaming is official policy and supported by a variety of institutional mechanisms and technical tools. First, development policy raises issues of structural rather than direct violence, and responds to enduring poverty and inequality in foreign countries as opposed to pivotal crises which typically mobilize publics and institutional actors. Second, the European institutions tasked with development policymaking are complex and multiple at national and regional levels and involving the financing of development aid as well as the designing of development policy and projects and gender experts have mainly been employed as temporary consultants rather than permanent officials. In this context, gender mainstreaming presents itself as a radical and a conservative strategy in the interests of activist bureaucrats who want to transform policy outcomes and career bureaucrats who want to address a gap without altering existing norms and standard operating procedure practices. But the organizational conflict among these divergent interests has sidelined the focus on gender inequalities. Third, although European development institutions encourage some participation from civil society the transnational pro-gender equal development network is still relatively weak. The network is at an early stage of building solidarity among European and developing country NGOs and civil societies, and translating gender and development issues to political leaders and global publics.

An understanding of bureaucratic pathologies and, even more importantly, of gendered power in bureaucracies, however, is crucial to interpreting and explaining the resistance to gender mainstreaming and its failure to change practices in many international institutions (see Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Locher and Prugl 2001). Goetz and Sandler in Figure 14.2 reflect on the international political and bureaucratic contexts of gender mainstreaming and how these contexts have led to unintended and often perverse consequences that diverge greatly from the original intentions of mainstreaming.

There are significant gender biases in the way international institutions operate on the ground despite their political commitments to gender mainstreaming on the international stage. Why, for instance, did the UN encourage the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in post-conflict contexts in Security Council Resolution 1325 yet simultaneously contradict this stance in the stonewalling of gender quotas in Timor by the Electoral Affairs Division (Hall and True 2008; see the discussion in Figure 14.3)? International institutions, including the UN, often promote the inclusion of gender perspectives but see gender equality strategies primarily as a problem-solving device; as a way of increasing the legitimacy of international norms such as liberal democracy, humanitarian intervention, free trade, regional integration and so on (Whitworth 2004). Implementing gender mainstreaming has rarely led to serious questioning of liberal institutionalist norms and how they may privilege masculine agency and reinforce gendered inequalities in power and resources in the market, state and civil society.

Institutional politics and analysis are important for understanding why gender mainstreaming takes the forms it does in particular institutional settings and why it

**Anne-Marie Goetz and Joanne Sandler:  
Gender mainstreaming versus a global bureaucracy for women?**

Some feminists argue that making gender mainstreaming everyone's job effectively means that it becomes no one's job (Tiessen 2007; Painter and Ulmer 2002). UNIFEM gender specialists Anne-Marie Goetz and Joanne Sandler put it bluntly 'gender mainstreaming is everywhere – there are 1300 gender focal points in the United Nations system – and yet nowhere'. Everyone does it or is expected to, so no one needs to be employed to specifically focus on gender issues. Since 11 September 2001 the focus on security politics and UN reform has diminished the political urgency and space for promoting women's rights that existed in the 1990s (Sen 2005). In this global context the strength of gender mainstreaming in extending a gender perspective across all policy areas and jurisdictions is also precisely its weakness. Goetz and Sandler argue it serves to dissipate the expertise on women and divert resources away from specialist knowledge to training non-gender specialist staff and producing bureaucratic tools like checklists, action plans, scorecards, implications statements and so on that can be used by anyone.

These tools facilitate gender analysis but staff are not dedicated gender specialists or fully accountable for the outcomes of gender mainstreaming. Goetz and Sandler argue that only a single, powerful global agency for women could marshal the expertise and the resources needed to make significant progress in global gender equality outcomes and be accountable for that progress.

Figure 14.2

**Mainstreaming in UN peacebuilding: championed at the top; resisted on the ground**

The United Nations Transitional Administration Mission in East Timor (UNTAET) governed the new independent state between 2000 and 2002. UNTAET followed the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security mandating women's rights to equally participate in all peace-building processes. In 2000, the East Timorese Women's Congress Platform For Action, influenced by the 1995 Beijing women's conference, set a goal of at least 30 per cent women in all decision-making bodies to ensure women's representation in the new state. *Rede Feto*, the women's umbrella organization, made the campaign for gender quotas its first priority for the constitutional assembly elections in 2001.

However, the UN was internally divided over quotas. The quota debate became 'very fiery' and international in scope. Quotas were supported by CEDAW, UNSC 1325, and the UN special advisor to the Secretary-General on gender, and within UNIFEM and UNDP missions. But senior UN officials in the Electoral Affairs Division (EAD) charged with administering Timor's national elections were strongly opposed to quotas. The EAD outlawed gender quotas as not constituting 'free and fair elections' and threatened to pull out of running Timor-Leste's first elections if they had quotas. This use of coercion influenced the Timorese political elite, who changed their minds, and supported the UNTAET's opposition to gender quotas.

The decision to oppose quotas illustrates the complex politics of the UN bureaucracy in its efforts to mainstream gender issues. Gender equality strategies may be championed at the top of the bureaucracy and at the grassroots but resisted on the ground by the officials tasked with implementing them. But Timor's quota campaign was not completely lost. Local women advocates convinced senior UN officials that affirmative actions to support and train women candidates were necessary. Without a quota, women candidates were successful in winning 25 percent of the seats in the new parliament (see Hall and True 2008).

Figure 14.3

is often resisted and its potential to transform power relations compromised. But institutional analysis does not tell us how gender mainstreaming makes meaning in specific organizational processes and policies. Discursive analysis informed by post-structuralist feminism, however, reveals the changes and continuities in gendered meanings and norms in international institutions. It judges the success of mainstreaming as a policy strategy for integrating awareness of gender by whether or not languages and foundational concepts change (Woodward 2003; Cohn 2008: 194). From a discursive perspective, gender inequalities are located in systems of signification and meaning that produce power, not merely in material structures such as the international gendered division of labour. Gender hegemonies are controlled not by specific actors but by socially produced meanings that affect actors' self-understanding and perceived interests (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 20).

International institutions are deeply implicated in the construction and reproduction of hegemonic gender identities and differences through their discursive practices. By making analysis of gender differences a core part of policymaking, gender mainstreaming potentially destabilizes existing gendered meanings and masculine hegemonies (True 2003; Lombardo 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006). For example, mainstreaming in the World Bank has forced a focus in development policy and programming on men's role in the family and their equal responsibility with women for unpaid social reproduction activities (see Chapter 16). Such a policy shift undermines masculine hegemony in public and private spheres. But at the same time, the treatment of gender equality as means to reducing poverty and expanding markets in developing countries produces new heterosexist norms of gender and family (Bedford 2008; Bergeron 2003). The differential gendered impacts of economic restructuring are addressed not through institutional or structural changes but by individualizing the problem as one of appropriate gender relations in the private sphere. The underlying gendered structure of the global market and its dependence on informal household economies – and women's work – goes unquestioned.

Like all discourses, gender mainstreaming challenges some power relations and reproduces others. For example, gender mainstreaming in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, a regional trade organization, empowers agents such as (potential) women entrepreneurs, women exporters, and women leaders but does not address the situation of many working women in an increasingly precarious and feminized labour force in the region. Similarly, in the European Union gender mainstreaming normalizes women's and men's identities as economic subjects. Mainstreaming policies are discursively framed primarily in terms of their benefits for economic growth, employment and development and women and men are viewed in terms of their 'productive potential', or as 'human resources' to be maximized (True 2008a). Gender equality is treated as a policy input rather than a normative ideal and ironically, because budgets have already been 'gender mainstreamed', there is meager financial support to implement and monitor the strategy. (Debusscher and True 2008). Gender mainstreaming is not so much an advance on previous global and state strategies for achieving gender equality; it merely deploys different forms of power (see Figure 14.4).

Mainstreaming has made small achievements toward breaking down masculine hegemonies and their organizational and policy norms. But the focus on specific



**Elisabeth Prugl, the discursive power of gender mainstreaming**

Prugl (2009) illustrates four types of power mechanisms in feminist engagements with the state in her study of German Agricultural Policy (including the EU Common Agricultural Policy). Crucially, the type of power differs depending on the state strategy (equal rights or gender mainstreaming) and the discursive rules at work (of entitlement and identity).

	<b>Rules of Entitlement</b>	<b>Rules of Identity</b>
<b>Equal Rights</b>	<i>Compromise</i>	<i>Silencing Difference</i>
<b>Gender Mainstreaming</b>	<i>Refusal/Cooptation</i>	<i>Normalization</i>

In terms of the *rules of entitlement*, equal rights politics typically results in *compromise* with feminist movements since their demands are recognized. By contrast, feminist movements are more likely to be refused a role in gender mainstreaming politics since mainstreaming locates change inside the bureaucracy and in areas beyond gender politics and lobbying. (The gender mainstreaming institution is not an advocate for women but an adviser to government.) When feminist movements are involved in specific mainstreaming policies their concerns are pragmatically addressed but do not modify agendas or broader politics that may be at odds with gender justice.

In terms of the *rules of identity*, equal rights politics advances claims on behalf of (all) women and thus risks silencing differences among women. Gender mainstreaming may be able to recognize difference and the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, indigeneity, class, sexuality and so on, but it may also fix (and therein limit) the meanings of women’s difference through governmental practices, simultaneously producing empowerment and *normalization*.

Figure 14.4

institutional policies and procedures for mainstreaming gender equality, that is the gender training, the focal points, checklists, toolkits, gender-balanced decision-making and the like, has often missed much of the big picture of how gendered power operates discursively to reinforce gender injustices.

**VOICE: HAVE WOMEN AND FEMINISM BEEN MAINSTREAMED?**

Gender mainstreaming involves a process of institutionalization and thus raises the issue of voice – whose voice is present and which agents are silent in the policymaking process? Both discursive and institutionalist feminist approaches are concerned with the voice and participation of women, women’s and feminist movements in gender mainstreaming. Women have taken advantage of the new opportunities for visibility and voice that have been created by globalization and changes in governance structures of states and international institutions (Waylen 2004: 569–70).

Women’s movements and transnational networks of feminist advocates have actively and visibly sought to mainstream gender issues in international institutions. In the cases of the UNSC and APEC high level gender mainstreaming mandates were adopted as a result of pressure from women’s movements: UNSC Resolution 1325 giving women the right to participate in peace and conflict decision-making

and the APEC Framework for the Integration of Women respectively. UNSC Resolution 1325 is unique, Carol Cohn (2004: 8) argues, because it was 'both the product of and the armature for a massive mobilisation of women's political energies'. 'Feminist insiders and outsiders at the UN have put tremendous, creative thought and energy into making [1325] a living document – an ongoing commitment for the Security Council rather than a one-time rhetorical gesture' (Cohn 2004: 8). Collaboration between feminist advocates and UN officials has helped to widely disseminate and raise awareness about the resolution's mandate making it meaningful on the ground, in local and international decision-making.

From an institutionalist perspective, feminist engagement is a crucial factor in the success of the gender mainstreaming strategy. Where the impetus for mainstreaming comes from women's movements as opposed to institutional diffusion and isomorphism, the implementation process is more likely to be closely monitored and the international institution held accountable for its commitments. Both the UNSC and APEC have benefited from transnational advocacy networks established to monitor the implementation of 1325 and the APEC Framework that stresses the rights of women to participate in trade policymaking as well the need for gender analysis of trade policy at global and national levels. The APEC Women Leaders Network, for instance, advocated formal, measurable accountability mechanisms in APEC such as the use of gender criteria<sup>2</sup> in the selection and approval for funding of APEC projects, adopted by APEC in 2002 (True 2008a). Thus, gender mainstreaming mandates can provide an ongoing political opportunity structure for making international institutions accountable to women and for building alliances inside and outside institutional power.

From a discursive perspective, the speaking position of women and how they are constructed in gender mainstreaming processes is most important (Cohn 2008: 194). Carol Cohn (2008) and Laura Shepherd (2008a) both analyse the framing of gender mainstreaming in United Nations Security Resolution 1325. Cohn and Shepherd argue that the conceptual framing of 1325 both contests and conforms to the conventional rules and discursive practices of the UNSC. On the one hand, the mainstreaming of gender in the Resolution is a radical departure making women central to national and international security and mandating their right to participate in decision-making. As Shepherd (2008a: 389) states: 'the significance of asking that the "actions and operations" of the UNSC be undertaken with gendered sensitivity is great' given the historic male dominance of international peace and security policy. On the other hand, however, gender mainstreaming is represented in Resolution 1325 as the mere inclusion of women's issues: 'women's role in peacebuilding', 'the protection of women', 'women and girls affected by armed conflict' (Shepherd 2008a: 390; see also Radmani 2005 for a discourse analysis of gender mainstreaming in the UN human rights regime). Women are never perpetrators of violence but 'objects of protective action' occupying civilian space. Moreover, men are explicitly the power holders in the UNSC rules of procedure (Shepherd 2008a: 395). This gendered construction denies women the agency extended by Resolution 1325 while perpetuating the feminization of peace, and pacification of women, that is detrimental to both.

As well as treating women as objects rather than subjects of decision-making, Resolution 1325 is silent about 'the gender constructs that underwrite war-making'

and ‘the gendered inequalities that underlie women’s vulnerability in war and post-conflict settings’ (Cohn 2008: 198). Shepherd (2008a) argues that the NGO Working Group and the United Nations Security Council’s narratives of gender, violence and security in the production of Resolution 1325 both conceive conflict zones as failed states and the international community as the peacemaker. As such, they reinforce dominant neoliberal discourses of development and ‘sovereignty as the key organizing logic of the international system’, both of which have served to structurally marginalize women’s voices and participation in the past (2008a: 400).

## CONCLUSION

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This chapter began with the question, has the mainstreaming of gender equality objectives silenced or made issues of gendered power and domination more or less salient in international relations? I can now answer that question. Gender mainstreaming has not brought the revolution in gender relations or global governance that feminists hoped for. Yet it is naïve to expect bureaucratic structures with all their pathologies and power relationships to deliver anything more than incremental change that precipitates an ongoing process of reform and contestation. Institutional and discursive perspectives on gender mainstreaming agree on this point.

Feminist analyses give us crucial insights into the limitations of mainstreaming and its potential as a strategy for political transformation when harnessed by feminist advocates and deployed in specific institutions and local contexts. In some international institutions, such as the European Union and the World Bank, gender mainstreaming has conformed to a technocratic model where bureaucrats are the main actors relatively disconnected from women’s activism in civil society (Daly 2005: 447). But gender mainstreaming at the international level has also involved significant feminist engagement as in the cases of UNSC 1325 and APEC. Women and men’s participation and advocacy is critical to the success of gender mainstreaming at the global level. International institutions are places of masculine dominance and bureaucratic myopia with no electoral and little democratic accountability to broader publics. Ultimately therefore, the capacity of these institutions to progress awareness of gender inequalities and differences in their work and contribute to transformation in gender relations rests on the political knowledge and pressure of movements for gender justice.

### Seminar exercise

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Groups should have 5–7 members.

1. Choose one international institution from the list below. Identify the characteristics of this institution and the nature of governance in it.
  - UNSC
  - UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO)
  - ASEAN – Association of South East Asian Nations
  - APEC – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

- EU – European Union
  - World Trade Organization
  - Pacific Islands Forum
  - United Nations Development Programme
  - World Bank
  - International Labour Organization
  - ICC – International Criminal Court.
2. Which of the following gender issues is most likely to be mainstreamed and confront the least resistance to mainstreaming in this international institution?
    - Norms of masculinity supporting the use of small arms by men in a conflict zone
    - The lack of political representation of women relative to men in a newly independent, ethnically diverse state
    - Illegal and forced trafficking of predominantly girls and women across international borders for sex, domestic or other labour
    - Women's unemployment and loss of livelihood for families due to trade liberalization in the garment and textile industry in a developing region
    - The disproportionate number of women relative to men in situations of poverty worldwide.
  3. Give a single most compelling reason for your specific choice.
  4. Challenge the compelling reason for other groups' choices.

### Questions for further debate

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1. Does gender mainstreaming mean more than adding women to existing policies and programmes?
2. How does change in organizational processes [toward recognition of gender differences] lead to change in policy outcomes [greater gender equality]?
3. What does it mean to be successful in mainstreaming gender? What criteria or indicators would you use to measure the impact (positive or negative) of gender mainstreaming in an international institution or issue area?
4. Consider one case of an international institution that has adopted gender mainstreaming, for instance the World Bank, the ICC or APEC. What has been the impact of working for gender mainstreaming inside the organization on political practices of the NGOs/activists outside who initiated it?
5. Which is more likely to bring about transformation in global gender inequality – gender mainstreaming as a policy strategy, an equal rights approach or a global bureaucracy for women? Why?

### Relevant web-based resources

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- A gender and development website containing good resources and literature review on a range of topics for practitioners and researchers alike. Available HTTP: <<http://www.siyanda.org>>.

- A German website for professional gender advocates and scholars, available HTTP: <<http://www.genderkompetenz.info/eng/gendermainstreaming/>>.
- The website of the United Nations Agency focused on generating statistics and research studies on women that offers a guide for learning and innovation in gender mainstreaming practices. Available HTTP: <<http://www.un-instraw.org/en/community-of-practice/general/gender-training-community-of-practice-gt.html>>.
- The one-stop shop for global gender issues in the United Nations, including gender mainstreaming policies and practices, available HTTP: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>>.
- The one-stop shop for gender issues and gender mainstreaming in the European Union institutions. Available HTTP: <[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/index_en.html)>.

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**Notes**

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- 1 The first studies of mainstreaming were of gender integration in international development organizations. Razavi and Miller (1995b) examined UNDP, the ILO and the World Bank. Jahan (1995) analysed gender integration strategies in government, NGO development agencies and donor countries; Kardam (1991) examined international development organizations; and Anderson (1993) investigated UNIFEM's development work.
- 2 These criteria include whether or not a project will have an impact on gender equality, and whether or not it includes women and men as project participants.

# International/Global Political Economy

V. Spike Peterson

## INTRODUCING OUR TOPIC AND TERMS

Globalisation is understood in many ways, but in this chapter the objective is to describe the *political economy* of globalisation. This means that we will not simply describe ‘political’ decision-making or ‘economic’ phenomena at the global level, but consider how political *and* economic dimensions of globalisation interact and are co-determined. For example, we typically think of government officials and policy-makers as ‘political’ agents, and think of bankers and business owners as ‘economic’ agents. But the government cannot maintain power and implement policies without economic resources, and businesses require the legal and physical infrastructure that governmental power makes possible. Through a political economy lens, we examine how states and markets – or politics and economics – are never categorically separate but continuously interactive and mutually determining.

Some scholars use international political economy (IPE) and global political economy (GPE) interchangeably. Palan observes that IPE is preferred by those who see it as a subfield of IR, and GPE by those ‘who view it as a transdisciplinary effort’ (Palan 2000: 1). I prefer GPE and will use it throughout this chapter. While I do not emphasise a distinction between IPE and GPE, I do draw attention to the distinction between gender as empirical and gender as analytical.

When gender is used empirically it typically refers to embodied male-female sex difference (the dimorphism discussed in Chapter 1). In this sense we examine how women and men differently shape, and are differently affected by, globalisation processes. For example, women appear to be entering the paid workforce in ever

increasing numbers, while men are in many places facing un- or under-employment as a result of neoliberal globalisation. As we will see throughout this chapter, research based on empirical gender provides important data for analysing GPE; especially in terms of revealing who does what kind of work, under what conditions, and with what compensation and status. But we will also see the importance, and pervasive influence, of gender understood analytically. This refers to how gender operates as a governing code that *conceptualises* gender as differentiating hierarchically between masculinised and feminised identities, qualities or characteristics (the gender ‘logic’ discussed in Chapter 1).

The claim here is that gender pervades language and meaning systems, ‘ordering’ how we think (and hence shaping how we act) by privileging that which is associated with masculinity (not all men or only men) over that which is associated with femininity. Research based on analytical gender reveals how important gender coding is systemically, and in GPE in particular it reveals how gendering constitutes valuing. As we will see throughout this chapter, ideas, skills, work and activities that are masculinised are more likely to be valued than those that are feminised: they are more likely to be seen as ‘real’ work and be taken seriously in terms of both symbolic status *and* material compensation.

## GENDER MATTERS IN ECONOMIC THEORY

Feminist research exposes how gendered bodies and gendered codes shape how we think about and practise ‘economics’; how women’s domestic, reproductive, and caring labour is deemed marginal to ‘production’ and analyses of it; and how orthodox models and methods presuppose male-dominated activities (paid work, the formal economy) and masculinised characteristics (autonomous, objective, rational, instrumental, competitive). As a corollary, ‘women’s work’ and feminised qualities are devalued: deemed economically irrelevant, characterised as subjective, ‘voluntary’, ‘natural’ and ‘unskilled’, and either poorly paid or not paid at all (Waring 1999). At the same time, most economists assume that social reproduction occurs through heteronormative families and non-conflictual intra-household dynamics; alternative household forms and the rising percentage of female-headed and otherwise ‘unconventional’ households are rendered deviant or invisible.<sup>1</sup>

Feminist research addresses and attempts to ‘correct’ these biases and omissions in several ways. A familiar starting point is to ‘add women’. This may seem methodologically simple but often produces surprising results. In the early 1970s, for example, Esther Boserup (1970) studied the effects of modernisation policies on women in non-industrialised countries. Paying attention to women’s experiences exposed the often deleterious effects of modernisation and undercut orthodox claims that development benefitted everyone. Subsequent ‘women in development’ (WID) studies documented both how policies and practices marginalised women *and* how women’s exclusion jeopardised development objectives (see Chapters 16 and 17).

Numerous later and ongoing studies demonstrate how a focus on women and gender *improves* our knowledge of economics more generally. For example, feminists produce more accurate accounts of intra-household labour and resource allocation;



move beyond quantitative indicators to enhance measurements of human well-being; and document the centrality of 'women's work' to development, long-term production of social capital, and more accurate national accounting. They investigate gendered patterns in wages, migration, informalisation, subcontracted 'home-working', and foreign remittances.<sup>2</sup> And women in the global south especially demonstrate the importance of local, indigenous and colonised people's agency in identifying problems and negotiating remedies.<sup>3</sup>

With its focus on empirical gender, WID scholarship initially sought more effective *inclusion* of women in the practices and presumed benefits of development. This orientation was reconsidered as feminists asked how analytical gender was also shaping underlying assumptions (Elson 1991). The liberal, modernist inclinations of WID approaches were gradually displaced by the more constructivist, critical starting points of gender and development (GAD) orientations. Empirical research revealed that simply 'adding women' did not address significant problems: the devaluation of feminised labour, the structural privileging of men and masculinity, the depoliticisation of women's subordination in the family and workplace, or the increasing pressure on women to work a triple shift (in familial, informal, and formal activities). Understanding gender analytically enabled GAD scholars to problematise the meaning and desirability of 'development', interrogate the definition of work and how to 'count it', examine gender ideologies to explain unemployed men's reluctance to 'help' in the household, challenge constructions of feminism imposed by western elites, and criticise narratives of victimisation for denying agency and resistance. These studies indicate an opening up of questions, an expansion of research foci, and a complication of analyses.<sup>4</sup>

In the past decade feminists have continued to expose masculinist bias and its effects on the theory/practice of political economy, and have expanded the evidence corroborating (and complicating) early feminist critiques. They have extended their research from more obviously gender-differentiated effects of microeconomic phenomena to the less direct effects of macroeconomic policies, including how gender operates even in the abstracted realm of financial markets.<sup>5</sup> Feminists are also engaged in examining alternatives (Bennholdt-Thomsen *et al.* 2001) and generating economic visions that include ethical, more humane concerns. Hence, many feminists abandon neoclassical models of abstract rationality and 'choice' in favour of a more relevant and responsible model of 'social provisioning' (Power 2004). The remainder of the chapter draws on this and additional research to provide a 'big picture' analysis of GPE that takes both empirical and analytical gender seriously.

## **GENDER MATTERS IN GPE<sup>6</sup>**

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Since approximately the 1970s, economic restructuring has been propelled by neo-liberal policies favoured by geopolitical elites (see Chapter 16 for a further discussion of development institutions). Deregulation has permitted the hyper-mobility of ('foot-loose') capital, induced phenomenal growth in crisis-prone financial markets, and increased the power of private capital interests. Liberalisation is selectively implemented: powerful states continue to foster their interests while developing

countries have limited control over protecting domestic industries, goods produced, and jobs provided. Privatisation has entailed the loss of nationalised industries in developing economies and a decrease in public sector employment and provision of social services worldwide. The results of restructuring are complex, uneven, and controversial. While economic growth is the objective and has been realised in some areas and sectors, evidence increasingly suggests expanding inequalities, indeed a *polarisation*, of resources within and between countries (Wade 2004; Basu 2006).

Globalisation is a gendered process that reflects both continuity and change. Men, especially those who are economically, ethnically, racially and geopolitically privileged, continue to dominate institutions of authority and power worldwide. Masculinist assumptions and objectives continue to dominate economic and geopolitical thinking. One effect is policy-making that tends to be top-down, formulaic, and over-reliant on growth and quantifiable indicators – rather than focused on provisioning, human well-being and sustainability. But globalisation is also *disrupting* gendered patterns by altering conventional beliefs, roles, livelihoods, and political

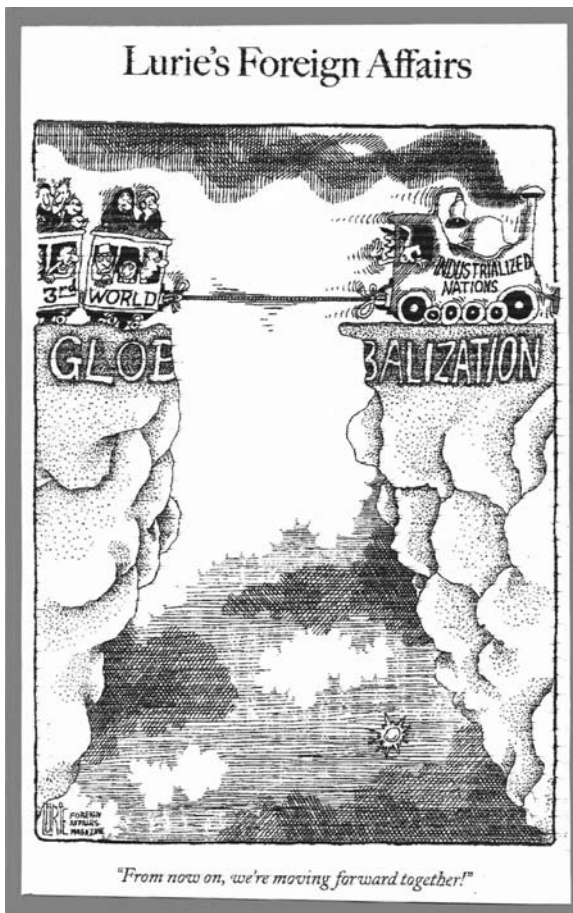


Figure 15.1 © Ranan Lurie for *Foreign Affairs*.

practices worldwide. While some changes are small and incremental, others challenge our deepest assumptions (e.g. male breadwinner roles) and most established institutions (e.g. patriarchal families). Feminists argue that not only are the benefits and costs of globalisation unevenly distributed between men and women, but that masculinist bias in theory/practice exacerbates inequalities manifested in differently constructed but intersecting hierarchies of race/ethnicity, class, and nation.<sup>7</sup>

To illuminate one way in which hierarchies *intersect*, I argue that devalorisation of feminised qualities – constituted by the governing code, or logic, of gender – systemically affects how we ‘take for granted’ (normalise and depoliticise) the devalorisation of feminised bodies, identities, and activities. This has obvious relevance for analysing GPE, where assessments of ‘value’ are key. In effect, casting subordinated individuals as feminine devalorises not only the (empirical gender) category of ‘women’ but also sexually, racially, culturally, and economically marginalised ‘men’ (e.g. ‘lazy migrants’, ‘incompetent natives’, ‘effeminate gays’). That is, while structural hierarchies *vary* by reference to the ‘difference’ emphasised and modalities of power involved, they typically *share* a common feature: the denigration of feminised qualities attributed to those who are subordinated (lacking reason, agency, control, skills, etc.). Moreover, when we understand gender analytically not only the gendered bodies of women and marginalised/feminised men, but also concepts, styles, ‘ways of knowing’, music, hobbies, skills, jobs, nature and so on can be feminised – with the effect of reducing their legitimacy, status, and value. This devalorisation is simultaneously ideological (discursive, cultural) and material (structural, economic). Consider again how ‘women’s work’ – whether done by women *or* marginalised men – is poorly paid, or frequently not paid at all; and we hardly notice, in part because the depreciation of feminised activities is so taken for granted.

Oppressions differ, as do attempts to explain and/or justify them. Hence, feminisation is not the only ‘normalising’ ideology in operation. I argue, however, that what distinguishes feminisation and renders it so *ideologically* powerful is the unique extent to which it invokes a deeply internalised and naturalised binary – the dimorphism of ‘sex difference’ – which is then ‘available’ to naturalise diverse forms of structural oppression. To clarify, even as sex and gender are increasingly ambiguous to some, most people most of the time take a categorical, essentialised distinction between male and female completely for granted: as biologically ‘given’, reproductively necessary, and psycho-socially ‘obvious’. Yet history indicates not only that sex difference itself is *produced* – through contingent, socially constructed practices and institutionalisations – but that it is inextricable from masculinism as a system of asymmetrical power. That is, the deeply sedimented *concept* of sex difference and historically institutionalised *practices* of gender hierarchy are mutually constituted. As one effect, the ‘naturalness’ of sex difference is generalised to the ‘naturalness’ of masculinist (not necessarily *male*) privilege, so that both aspects come to be taken-for-granted ‘givens’ of social life.

The point of arguing that feminisation devalorises is neither to explain how different inequalities are historically produced, nor to claim that gender hierarchy is the ‘primary’ oppression overshadowing race or class or sexuality. The point is rather to suggest how gender operates *across* hierarchies: if the sex binary normalises gender hierarchy such that feminised qualities are deemed ‘naturally’ inferior, then those

who are attributed such qualities can be rendered ‘naturally’ inferior as well. This does the political work of making the limited options and precarious lives of subordinated groups seem somehow inevitable rather than unconscionable.

## A FEMINIST GPE FRAMEWORK – REPRODUCTIVE, PRODUCTIVE AND VIRTUAL ECONOMIES

To provide a ‘big picture’ analysis that genders GPE, I move beyond a narrow definition of economics and develop an alternative analytical framing of reproductive, productive, and virtual economies, abbreviated as ‘RPV’. This refers not to conventional but Foucauldian economies: mutually constituted (therefore coexisting and interactive) systemic sites through and across which power operates. These sites involve conceptual and cultural dimensions that are inextricable from – are indeed mutually constituted by – material effects, social practices, and institutional structures. Here I review only major trends in each economy, emphasising how they are gendered but also how gendered inequalities intersect with other hierarchies.

### The productive economy

I begin with what is most familiar: the ‘productive economy’ understood as ‘formal’ – regularised and regulated – economic activities identified with primary, secondary and tertiary production. Restructuring variously complicates these sectoral distinctions, especially as information and communication technologies (ICTs) alter what is produced and how.

The first trend is a dramatic decline in world prices of and demand for (non-oil) primary products. This has been devastating to ‘third world’ economies where primary production dominates: unemployment problems are exacerbated, ability to attract foreign investment is reduced, and debt dependency may be increased. In response, countries may encourage foreign investment by advertising the availability of ‘cheap’ labour and unregulated, non-unionised worksites. Or they might experience people migrating elsewhere in search of work.

Second, ‘de-industrialisation’ is most prominent in advanced economies and major cities. It involves two shifts: first, from traditional material-based manufacturing (refrigerators) to informational and knowledge-based manufacturing (computer games), and second, a decline in previously well-paying (masculinised) jobs, manifested variously through outsourcing, downsizing, loss of skilled and often unionised positions, growth in low-wage, semi- and un-skilled jobs, and relocation of production to lower wage areas. Like agricultural production in the past, manufacturing remains important but declines in value relative to the higher status and earnings of ICT-based work.

In overlapping ways, job security is additionally eroded for all but elite workers due to a third trend, ‘flexibilisation’. This characterises how production processes shift: to spatially dispersed networks (the global assembly line, subcontracting), to increasingly casualised (non-permanent, part-time) and informalised (unregulated,

non-contractual) jobs, to small batch, 'just in time' (short-term rather than long-term) production planning, and to avoidance or prohibition of organised labour. These changes tend to increase un- and under-employment (especially of men) and coupled with erosion of union power translate into a decline in 'real' incomes and household resources.

Fourth, the most significant job growth is in services, which accounts for 50–70 per cent of the workforce in advanced economies and is increasing rapidly in developing countries. This growth is due in part to the shift from material- and labour-intensive to ICT-based production. For instance, the material and labour costs of producing microchips are only a fraction of the knowledge-based (research and development) costs. Polarisation of incomes is exacerbated insofar as service jobs tend to be either skilled and high-waged (professional-managerial jobs; read 'masculinised') or semi-, un-skilled and poorly paid (personal, cleaning, retail, and clerical services; read: 'feminised'). Hence, this shift also favours countries with developed technology infrastructures and relatively skilled workers.

The fifth trend is *feminisation* of employment, understood simultaneously as a material, embodied transformation of labour markets (increasing proportion of women in paid work) and a conceptual characterisation of deteriorated and devalourised labour conditions (less desirable, meaningful, safe, or secure). As jobs require few skills, and flexibilisation becomes the norm, employers seek workers who are perceived to be undemanding (unorganised), docile but reliable, available for part-time and temporary work, and willing to accept low wages. Gender stereotypes depict women as especially suitable for these jobs and gender inequalities render women especially desperate for access to income. In short, as more jobs are casual, irregular, flexible and precarious (read: feminised), more women – *and* devalourised men – are doing them.

In general, elite, educated and highly skilled women benefit from the 'feminisation of employment' and employment in any capacity arguably benefits women in terms of access to income and the personal and economic empowerment this affords. Women, however, continue to earn 30–50 per cent less than men worldwide, and the majority of women are entering the workforce under adverse structural conditions. The work they do is often tedious, physically demanding, and sometimes hazardous, with negative effects on women's health and long-term working capacity.

Sixth, globalisation increases flows of people: to urban areas, export processing zones, seasonal agricultural sites, and tourism locales. Migrations are not random. They are shaped by colonial histories, geopolitics, capital flows, state policies, labour markets, cultural stereotypes, skill attributions, kinship networks, and identity markers. Consistent with structural vulnerabilities and the nature of 'unskilled', poorly valued jobs most frequently available (cleaning, harvesting, domestic service, sex work), migrant worker populations are especially marked by gender, class and race/ethnicity. Moreover, being on the move – for work, recreation, or escape – affects personal and collective identities and cultural reproduction. Not least, traditional family forms and divisions of labour are disrupted, destabilising men's and women's identities and gender relations more generally. Shifting identities have complex effects on imagined communities, whether expressed in anti-immigrant racism, nationalist state building, ethno-cultural diasporas, ethnic cleansing, or patriarchal religious fundamentalisms.<sup>8</sup>

The uneven and gendered effects of these trends are most visible in relation to production processes and working conditions. For the majority of families worldwide, one-third of which are female-headed, restructuring has meant declining household income, reduced access to safe and secure employment, and decreased provision of publicly funded social services. These trends not only differentially affect women, men, and feminised 'others', but are also shaped by masculinist ways of thinking in regard to how 'work' is defined, who should do what kinds of work, and how different activities are *valued*. The effects are especially stark when we consider the reproductive economy.

## The reproductive economy

Conventional – and continuing – neglect of the reproductive economy *exemplifies* masculinist and modernist bias in studies of GPE. This neglect reflects habitual thinking that values the (masculinised) public sphere of power and formal (paid) work, at the expense of the marginalised (feminised) family/private sphere of emotional, domestic and caring (unpaid) labour. There are, however, important reasons for taking the RE seriously; I note especially the politics of socialisation and informalisation in GPE.

*Socialisation* teaches us how to behave according to the codes of our particular culture; it is literally indispensable for the survival of individuals and groups. Subject formation begins in the context of family life and the coding we learn early on is especially influential. This is where we first observe and internalise sex/gender differences, their respective identities, and divisions of labour. Moreover, gender acculturation is inextricable from beliefs about race/ethnicity, age, class, religion, nationality, and other axis of 'difference'.

Effective socialisation matters *structurally* for economic relations. It produces individuals who are then able to 'work' and this unpaid reproductive labour (done primarily by women) saves capital the costs of producing key inputs. Socialisation also instils attitudes, identities and belief systems that enable societies to function. Capitalism, for instance, requires not only that 'workers' accept and perform their role in 'production', but also that individuals more generally accept hierarchical divisions of labour and their corollary: differential valorisation of who does what kind of work. And most people internalise the ideology of masculinist states, religions, and nuclear families that insists 'real' men are self-confident successful breadwinners while 'real' women are devoted service providers, disproportionately responsible for the emotional and physical health of family members.

In spite of romanticised motherhood and a great deal of pro-family rhetoric, neo-liberal globalisation in fact reduces the emotional, cultural, and material resources necessary for the well-being of most women and families. Privatisation reduces public spending; when social services are cut, women are disproportionately affected because they are more likely to depend on secure government jobs and on public resources in support of reproductive labour. When economic conditions deteriorate, women are culturally expected to fill the gap, in spite of fewer available resources, more demands on their time, and minimal increases in men's caring labour.<sup>9</sup> Effects include more

women working a 'triple shift' (in familial, informal and formal activities), the feminisation of poverty worldwide, and both short- and long-term deterioration in female health and human capital development (Ciscel and Heath 2001). The effects are not limited to women because the increased burdens they bear are inevitably translated into costs to their families, and hence to societies more generally.<sup>10</sup> As a survival strategy, women especially rely on informal work to ensure their own and their family's well-being (Sassen 2000).

*Informal activities* fall outside of 'formal' (contractual, regulated) work arrangements; they vary from caring and domestic work in the household, to street vending, under-the-counter payments, and black market transactions on a global scale. They demand our attention because of their explosive growth worldwide (constituting perhaps one-half of all economic output), and how they blur licit/illicit, paid/unpaid, and public/private boundaries.<sup>11</sup> In general, informal work is polarised between a small, highly skilled group able to take advantage of and prosper from deregulation and flexibilisation, and the majority of the world's (feminised) workers who participate less out of choice than necessity.

Corresponding to this polarisation, studies show that women, migrants, and the poor constitute the vast majority of informalised workers. They also do the informal work that is least valued and often the most precarious. This is due in part to stereotypes

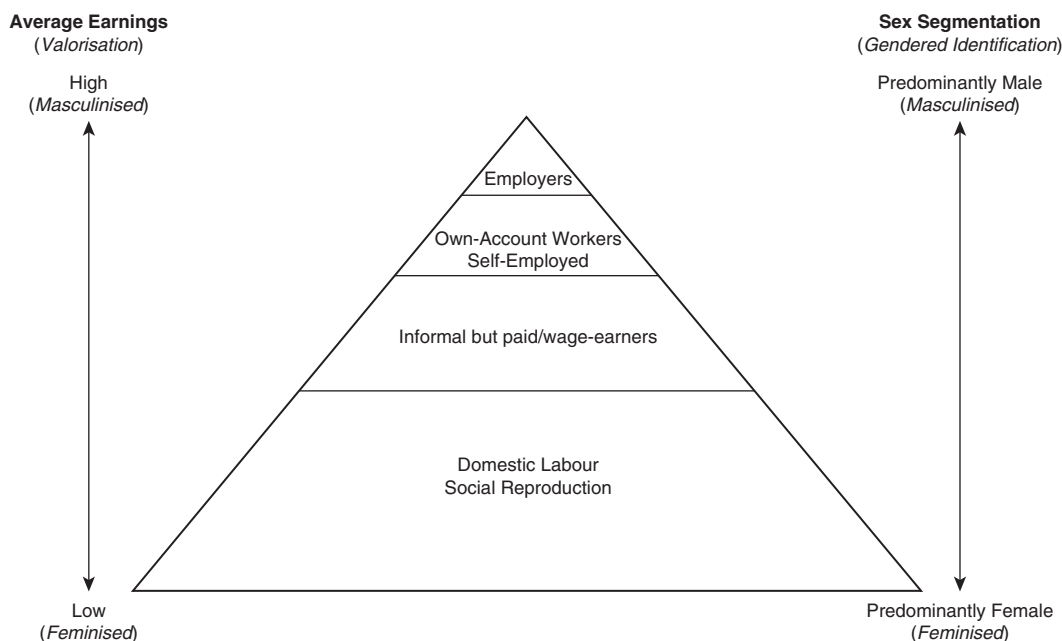


Figure 15.2 The gendered 'iceberg' of (licit) informal economic activities

Source: Adapted from Martha Chen, 2005, 'Rethinking the informal economy' in *Rethinking Informalization*, ed. Neema Kudva and Lourdes Beneria. Cornell University Open Access Repository; <http://hdl.handle.net.1813/3716> (accessed 11 November 2007).

of feminised work and the extent of informal activities that are situated in the home. There are also race/ethnicity, class, and national patterns in terms of which households engage in which forms of informal labour (e.g. childcare, domestic labour, food vending, petty trade). The salience of structural hierarchies is also due to patterns regarding what types of work are available (e.g. cleaning, care-taking, maintenance, food provisioning, personal services), where informalisation is concentrated (e.g. poor and working-class families worldwide; migrant labour in rural agriculture and global cities), and simply, in who is most likely to be available for and willing to undertake informal activities (i.e. women, migrants, and economically marginalised populations).<sup>12</sup>

Interpreting informalisation is controversial. On one hand, some individuals prosper in a less regulated environment. This is especially evident in micro-enterprises (favoured by neoliberals) where innovation may breed success and multiplying effects; in tax evasion and international pricing schemes that favour larger operations; in developing countries where informal activities are crucial for income generation; and in criminal activities that are 'big business' worldwide. On the other hand, critics argue that informalisation favours capital over labour and, more generally, that avoidance of regulations is directly and indirectly bad for wages, workers, the environment, and long-term prospects for societal and global well-being. Feminists expose both the role of informalisation in devaluing women's labour and its increasing salience as a household survival strategy. Whether viewed positively or negatively, informal activities must be taken seriously. Their scale alone warrants our attention. But it is the unregulated and often semi- or illegal nature of informalisation, as well as its feminisation and effects on conditions of labour, that render it a problematic dimension of today's GPE.

## The virtual economy

The virtual economy has grown in significance as ICTs have compressed time-space, enabled the shift from material-intensive to knowledge-intensive industries, facilitated the expansion of services and the exchange of intangibles, and fuelled tremendous growth in financial market transactions. My reference to 'virtual' is not intended to *separate* the virtual from the material but to probe the *relationship* between materiality and the increasing dimension of non-materiality in the global economy: the exchange of symbolic money, the centrality of information and communication, and the role of signs and 'virtual reality' in aesthetics and consumption. I focus here on the virtual economy of global finance.

Since the 1970s floating exchange rates, reduced capital controls, offshore transactions, new financial instruments, and the rise of institutional investors have interacted to amplify the speed, scale and complexity of *global financial transactions*. In general, the allure of financial trading exacerbates the devalorisation of manufacturing and encourages short-term over long-term investments in industry, infrastructure, and human capital. The expansion, complexity, and non-transparency of global financial transactions make money laundering easier, which enhances opportunities for illicit financial trading as well as organised crime, and decreases tax contributions



that underpin public welfare. Access to credit becomes decisive for individuals and states, and is deeply structured by familiar hierarchies. Increasing urgency in regard to ‘managing money’ and investment strategies shifts status and decision-making power within households, businesses, governments, and global institutions. These changes disrupt conventional identities, functions, and sites of authority, especially as pursuit of profits displaces provisioning needs, and governments compete for private capital at the expense of public welfare.

Moreover, the instability of financial markets increases risks that are socialised (hurting public welfare) and when crises ensue, the costs are gendered: loss of secure jobs and earning capacity due to women’s concentration in precarious forms of employment; lengthened work hours for women as they ‘cushion’ the impact of reduced household income; decreased participation of girls in education and worsened health conditions for women; expanded child labour and women’s licit and illicit informal activities; and even increased acts of violence against women.<sup>13</sup>

These costs also have important long-term effects. Girls and women are less able to participate as full members of society, have fewer skills required for safe and secure income-generation, and the intensification of women’s work with fewer resources imperils social reproduction more generally. Boys and men have fewer and less favourable ‘formal’ work opportunities, less likelihood of skilled, long-term employment, and the disruption of masculine breadwinner roles deepens personal insecurities, with often devastating effects. Finally, entire societies are affected as deteriorating conditions of social reproduction, health, and education have long-term consequences for collective well-being and national competitiveness in the new world economy.

## CONCLUSION

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This chapter offered a wide-ranging survey of how gender matters in GPE. For reasons of space, it has neglected many important issues, not least the agency and resistance of women and other feminised groups (although certain of these are discussed in Chapter 21). While these certainly ‘matter’ for analysing global politics, I have focused instead on an overview of global power relations as these structure the political economy of neoliberal globalisation. A brief survey indicated how feminists deploy gender empirically and analytically to examine restructuring through a variety of theoretical orientations. The RPV analytics of three interacting ‘economies’ revealed how major trends tend toward a polarisation of income and status between a small set of masculinised elites and the vast majority of feminised ‘others’. This ‘big picture’ analysis also exposed how the *cultural code* of feminisation naturalises the economic (material) devaluation of feminised work, whether that work is done by women or men who are culturally, racially and/or economically marginalised. In this crucial sense, the chapter not only describes how ‘gender matters’. It also argues that gender is not only about women and men, but about who and what is devalued by being feminised. These are key points for understanding the political work that ‘gender’ does, how feminisation links and ‘naturalises’ multiple hierarchies, and how gender ‘matters’ for sustaining and obscuring global inequalities.

## Seminar exercise: 'bringing the global home'

Mike Douglass (2006) argues that 'the household is a basic unit of every society and the foundation of the world economy' (2006: 421). He identifies the following typical elements of 'householding' and argues that the key is how these *inter-connect* (2006: 423):

1. marriage/partnering; 2. bearing children; 3. raising and educating children (and adults); 4. maintaining the household on a daily basis; 5. dividing labour and pooling income from livelihood activities; and 6. caring for elderly and other non-working household members.

In the context of today's GPE, householding is increasingly a matter of *global* dynamics, as evidenced by trans-national marriages, international adoptions, educating children abroad, employing foreign domestic workers, seeking medical procedures abroad, and migrating to lower-income economies for retirement.

Work first as individuals to list the ways in which your own family participates in 'global householding'. Consider the examples above but go beyond them to explore how globalisation shapes our access to food, personal services, healthcare and employment. Second, collectively discuss your individual lists in relation to the major trends of today's GPE. In terms of family locations, divisions of labour, patterns of employment, housekeeping methods, emotional care-taking, and manifesting 'group' solidarity (ethnic, linguistic, cultural, racial, national, etc.), how have conditions changed since your grandparents' generation? How are these changes related to neoliberal economic restructuring (e.g. in terms of major trends in the RPV economies)? How does gender operate in these patterns and with what effects on householding? How might the continued expansion of global householding affect national identities and governance issues?

## Questions for further debate

1. How is gender both an empirical and analytical category? How has the distinction shaped analyses of GPE? Which understanding of gender do you think is more important for understanding global politics, and why?
2. What is meant in this chapter by 'intersectionality'? How does understanding 'feminisation as devalorisation' advance intersectional analysis?
3. How are neoliberal policies of deregulation and privatisation related to the major trends of the productive economy? Who are the winners and losers in today's global political economy?
4. What does 'crisis of social reproduction' refer to? Can you identify features of such crisis in your own family, community, and nation?
5. How are the three (productive, reproductive, and virtual) economies interconnected (how do they influence each other)? How do hegemonic stereotypes of gender operate in all three economies?

## Relevant web-based resources

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- University of California Atlas of Inequality combines GIS and database technology with Internet multi-media components to provide online resources that enable users to examine global change. Available HTTP: <<http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/index.php>>.
- The UN's global development network is an organisation advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. Available HTTP: <<http://www.undp.org/>>.
- The women's fund at the United Nations provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Available HTTP: <<http://www.unifem.org/>>.
- War on Want fights poverty in developing countries in partnership with people affected by globalisation. Available HTTP: <<http://www.waronwant.org/>>.
- The International Labour Organisation is the UN agency that brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states in common action to promote decent work throughout the world. Available HTTP: <<http://www.ilo.org/>>.

## Sources for further reading and research

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**Notes**


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- 1 For general feminist critiques see Bakker (1994), Cook *et al.* (2000), Marchand and Runyan (2000), Bergeron (2001), Peterson (2003), Ferber and Nelson (2003), Barker and Feiner (2004).
- 2 Migration and remittances are gendered processes and increasingly important for analyzing global politics. Consider that Ratha *et al.* (2007) estimate that foreign remittances may total USD\$318 billion in 2008; see also World Bank (2006b) and seminar exercise on global householding.
- 3 For example, Prugl (1999), Parrenas (2001), Mohanty (2003), Moghadam (2005).
- 4 For recent examples see Jackson (2001), Rai (2002), Beneria (2003a), Bergeron (2004).
- 5 See, for example, Cagatay *et al.* (1995), Truong (1999), Floro and Dymski (2000), Grown *et al.* (2000), Gutierrez (2003).
- 6 For reasons of space, in the remainder of the chapter I cite only key references not already identified; for elaboration of argumentation and extensive citations see Peterson (2003) and (2005).
- 7 For recent work on intersectionality see Brah and Phoenix (2004), McCall (2005), Knapp (2005), Phoenix and Pattynama (2006), Peterson (2007), Peterson and Runyan (forthcoming).
- 8 On migration issues see Note 2 above, Chapter 18 and, for example, Sassen (1998; 2000), Donato *et al.* (2006), Levitt and Jaworsky (2007).
- 9 As conditions deteriorate, some men engage in heroic efforts to contribute to family welfare by whatever means possible. But extensive studies indicate that, no matter how desperately needed and presumably due to gender role investments, many men *refuse* to engage in reproductive or domestic labour.
- 10 For the most comprehensive analysis of the crisis of social reproduction see Bakker and Gills (2003).
- 11 The 'shadow' or underground economy was conservatively estimated to be \$9 trillion in 1999, or approximately one-fourth of the world's gross global product for that year (*Economist* 1999: 59). And these figures do not include domestic/socially necessary labour which was estimated to be \$11 trillion in 1995 (UNDP 1995).
- 12 On gendered informalisation see, for example, Sassen (1998), Chen *et al.* (2004, 2005), Kudva and Beneria (2005), Chant and Pedwell (2008).
- 13 These claims are variously documented in Grown *et al.* (2000), Truong (1999), Floro and Dymski (2000), Van Staveren (2002).

# Development Institutions and Neoliberal Globalisation

Penny Griffin

Although it often goes unacknowledged, sexuality both underpins and undermines a variety of processes and institutions in both local and global systems. Sexuality supports gendered, classed, raced and aged power relations and privileges, and lubricates their smooth operation and reproduction . . . The international movement of bodies, business and the global spread of consumer culture extend beyond popular culture performance spaces or postindustrial production sites and reach into people's daily lives, interpersonal relationships and their images of themselves and Others. As globalisation links populations in denser, faster and more complex ways, the political economy of desire will continue to complement and complicate the constantly unfolding global order.

(Nagel 2006: 546–47)

The question of who and what is considered real and true is apparently a question of knowledge. But it is also, as Foucault makes plain, a question of power. Having or bearing 'truth' and 'reality' is an enormously powerful prerogative within the social world [ . . . ]. Knowledge and power are not finally separable but work together to establish a set of subtle and explicit criteria for thinking the world.

(Butler 2004: 215)

Today, we still have slave traders. They no longer find it necessary to march into the forests of Africa looking for prime specimens who will bring top dollar on the auction blocks in Charleston, Cartagena, and Havana. They simply recruit desperate people and build a factory to produce the jackets, blue jeans, tennis shoes, automobile parts, computer components, and thousands of other items they can sell in the markets of their choosing . . . [assuring themselves] that the desperate people are better off earning

one dollar a day than no dollars at all, and that they are receiving the opportunity to become integrated into the larger world community.

(Perkins 2005: 180–81)

This chapter examines the gendered underpinnings of neoliberal development strategy as embodied in development institutions, a key modus operandi of which is the ‘neoliberal globalisation’ thesis. By ‘development institution’, I am referring to those inter-governmental organisations that operate explicitly in reference to the so-called ‘developing world’ (see Figure 16.1). Development institutions are prominent (but by no means uncomplicated) examples of global governance, which take shape in a variety of forms. They are worth examining in some detail, however, not least for an association with the developing world riddled with narratives of imperialism and inequality, but also the possibility of resistance and future change.

Although conventional (mainstream) approaches to International Relations (IR), International Political Economy (IPE) and Development Studies tend to avoid thinking about bodies, gender matters to/in the politics of neoliberal development precisely because the global political economy is peopled by bodies (bodies that are, contrary to conventional wisdom, important, diverse and everywhere). Gender matters because its study concerns the analysis of norms and standards in the global political economy that many hold to be true, essential and universal but a committed critique of which reveals to be power-laden, regulatory and highly restrictive. Exposing the sexism and racism of dominant disciplines, discourses and practices is an immensely destabilising enterprise and also a highly emotive one, liable to incite bafflement, defensiveness and, sometimes, outright hostility. Bodies are meant, in IR and IPE, to be fixed, given and congruent to being taken for granted. To posit the ‘international’ as gendered is to threaten many of the apparently stable foundations that have allowed conventional analysis to simplify, model and explain the actions of the global political economy’s key actors.<sup>1</sup>

- *The United Nations*: in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Millennium Project, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Food Programme.
- The ‘*Development Banks*’: the World Bank Group; the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the African Development Bank; the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Islamic Development Bank; the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). (NB There are other development banks, including the Development Bank of Singapore, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the Brazilian Development Bank, the Korea Development Bank, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank, to name but a few.)
- The *International Monetary Fund* (IMF)
- The *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD)
- The *World Trade Organisation* (WTO)

Figure 16.1 Key development institutions.

## NEOLIBERALISM, GLOBALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Neoliberal development strategy

As espoused by the leading development institutions, neoliberal development strategy is based on four central tenets:

1. A confidence in the market (**marketisation**) as the mechanism by which societies should be made to distribute their resources (although market imperfections may hamper distributive patterns, remove these and the 'allocative efficiency' of the market is restored);
2. The use of private finance (in place of public spending) in public projects (**privatisation**);
3. **Deregulation**, such that the removal of tariff barriers and subsidies ensures that the market is freed from the potential tyranny of nation state intervention and capital is granted optimal mobility;
4. A commitment to **flexibilisation**, which refers to the ways in which production is organised in mass consumption society (that is, dynamically and flexibly).

The neoliberal orthodoxy that emerged during the late 1970s (often referred to as the 'Washington Consensus' and predominant internationally until the early 1990s) was primarily focused on market liberalism, the primacy of foreign direct investment (FDI), the outward-orientation of economies and the contraction of the state and its machinery. Development policy-making has, since the early 1990s, undergone some significant changes and is now far less reliant on crude, hastily assembled and short-term structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). It would be a mistake, however, to assume that this orthodoxy has failed or disappeared.

Although Washington Consensus development policy-making was heavily criticised for failing to integrate the social and economic dimensions of development and, in many cases, exacerbating social inequalities, its successor, the 'Post-Washington Consensus', is, in methodology and formulation, less of a radical departure than some have claimed (see, for example, World Health Organisation [WHO] 2009; Stiglitz 2003). The Post-Washington Consensus 'second generation' policy reforms of development institutions are no less market-centred than their predecessors. They are, however, more concerned to acknowledge and remedy 'market imperfections' (see, for example, Fine 2001).

### Neoliberal globalisation and globalism

It is arguably now the case that 'globalisation', once *the* explanatory term for contemporary forms of economic restructuring, has been usurped. Or, at least, it has been usurped by a slightly more specific term, *neoliberal* globalisation (Larner 2003: 509). A global regime of 'free' trade has its roots in ancient civilisations, but it is the peculiarly twentieth-century processes of interchange that capture the contemporary imagination, led in large part by Western popular culture references to technological

wizardry and cyberculture. The neoliberal globalisation thesis, applicable to a cultural form of late capitalism whereby ‘every society is now industrialized or embarked on industrialization’ (Gray 2002: 55), advocates the process of ‘opening up’ national economies to increased monetary flows and global actors. Less a consequence of ‘a conscious decision of political leadership’, globalisation is perhaps more fruitfully read as the result of ‘structural changes in capitalism’ and ‘in the actions of many people, corporate bodies, and states, that cumulatively produce new relationships and patterns of behaviour’ (Cox 1992: 26).

Involving very little agreement on definition and process, ‘globalisation’ is approached in various ways by those engaged in its study. Beyond academia (particularly within the policy-making community) the globalisation debate remains polarised between two (nominally ‘economic’) choices: economic ‘globalisation’ as the key means of reducing world poverty, or as an uneven process of capital transfer, exacerbating and entrenching the division between rich and poor. According to pro-globalisation ideology (globalism), globalisation represents a progressive and modernising increase in global connectivity, reproducing the ‘intensification of world-wide social relations which link distinct localities’ (Giddens 1990: 64). Humanity is modernised, integrated and advanced through a ‘borderless world’, within which the world market is advocated over structures of local production and emphasis placed on the prevalence of Western-type consumerism (see, for example, Friedman 1999; Ohmae 2002). For its critics, globalisation signifies human sacrifice, suffering, inequality and segregation, remaining the rather vague and figurative ‘force’ behind the liberal capitalist agenda and certain capitalist processes (see Bøås and McNeill 2003: 139). In either case, whether the consequences of globalisation are seen as ‘catastrophic’ or as ‘the ultimate unification of the world’, globalisation itself is often used in a rather loose and ideological sense (see, for example, Hettne *et al.* 1999; Kay 1997).

The point that I want to emphasise here is that, in simply debating globalisation’s consequences according to this either/or division of attention, we make only of globalisation an abstract liberal capitalist projection devoid of political intent. Thus we also (unfortunately) avoid questioning the ways in which this ‘thing’ called globalisation exists and what, therefore, globalisation means, discursively and practically. Unnuanced and ‘bulldozer’ readings of globalisation elide globalisation with trade liberalisation, modernisation and Westernisation (see, for example, Friedman 1999; Lapeyre 2004), such that it becomes inexorable and inevitable: a conceptual substitute for the internationalisation of the Western ‘free market’, measurable in terms of the intensity and velocity of worldwide economic exchange.

The etymological roots of ‘free trade’ are to be found in the expression ‘trade freed from imperial preferences’, the result of a period in history when European ‘empires’ dominated and reconfigured (for their own purposes) large parts of the non-European world. Whereas any benign and passive view (as often proffered by leading international institutions, particularly the IMF, the World Bank, other development banks and the WTO) loses the relationship between imperialism and the market economy, it is crucial that a more attentive reading holds onto the heavily sexualised and racialised genealogy of contemporary globalisation.



As a singular and monolithic term, then, globalisation tells us very little about the world, its political discourses and relations of power. We might assume, for example, that globalisation is the 'natural' successor of the post-Berlin Wall 'Cold War system', with the world 'an increasingly interwoven place' (Friedman 1999: 7). This tells us little about the complex social and economic systems that structure our relationships, and the products, practices, institutions and norms (and their effects) that these reproduce. Such a statement, and its recourse to natural determinism and structural inevitability, does, however, reproduce the 'myth' of globalisation, a myth that replaces the messy, contradictory and disjointed processes of global interaction with a simplified, clean and seductive agenda.

Centred on the achievability of economic 'development' through the social embedding of the market, neoliberal discourses have rather effectively communicated certain culturally constructed facts and knowledges on a global scale as simple 'common sense', dominating both globalisation discourse and contemporary development policy-making (see, for example, Griffin 2007). Deploying vivid images, clever metaphors and persuasive but highly manipulative narratives, the dominant rhetoric of globalisation, neoliberal globalism, distorts our understanding of the globalisation 'syndrome' in order to sell Western global finance (Veseth 2005: 3). The neoliberal globalisation thesis fails to tell us how, for example, globalisation might not constitute an unstoppable universal force but a fragile and socially contingent political project, or how one-dimensional 'big pictures' of global capitalism distort and misrepresent the gendered and racist underpinnings of global restructuring projects, with all their unevenness and developmental disjunctures.

Descendent of a tradition of Western classical and neo-classical economic discourses,<sup>2</sup> neoliberalism displays the racist and sexist underpinnings of a highly culturally specific discourse predicated on the expansion of Western capitalism through a colonising imperative. Yet, although there is a lot of talk about globalisation, for globalism's advocates, race, sex and gender do not feature much at all. Pro-neoliberal globalisation's loudest voices (particularly the World Bank, the OECD, the WTO, the IMF and the UN under Kofi Annan) have steadily saturated the agenda with the 'inevitability' and 'fact' of neoliberal globalisation, presenting the 'liberalisation and integration of global markets as "natural" phenomena that advance individual liberty and material progress in the world' (Steger 2004: 5). In particular, the liberalisation of trade and the opening of development economies to global finance have been advocated as emancipatory, particularly with regards to the opportunities presented for poor women.

Developing countries, the primary recipients of Western policy-making, tend to feature in the neoliberal globalisation thesis as 'cultures of shortage or scarcity', ripe for transformation into 'markets of overabundance' (Wichterich 2000: vii–viii). Defining the relationship between 'globalisation' and development as progressive and essentially of benefit to developing countries, development institutions cite the 'impressive technological progress' that has 'spurred productivity gains around the world' as resulting in an increasing number of countries 'contributing today to world growth', which 'makes for a much more deeply integrated and vibrant world' (IMF Director of European Offices, Saleh Nsouli 2007). Likewise, former UN Secretary-General (and key UN reformer) Kofi Annan has argued that the relationship between

development, security and human rights 'has only been strengthened in our era of rapid technological advances, increasing economic interdependence, globalization and dramatic geopolitical change' (2005: 5).

Globalisation, claims the World Bank, 'has helped reduce poverty in a large number of developing countries' but must be harnessed 'better to help the world's poorest, most marginalised countries improve the lives of their citizens' (2002). Although, as former Bank Chief Economist Nicholas Stern argues, some 'anxieties' about globalisation are well founded, 'reversing globalisation' could only come at 'an intolerably high price' for poor people, destroying the 'prospects of prosperity' for many millions (Stern 2001).

Such statements, of course, do not challenge the basic neoliberal assumption that integration into a global, liberal market is the key determinant of a country's 'development'. The 'triumph of the market' has already been built into the neoliberal globalisation story (Cameron and Palan 2004: 77), so effectively in fact that it is made to seem the 'natural' result of efficient economic practice.

## THE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTION IN GENDERED PERSPECTIVE

### Gender and the Post-Washington Consensus

A Post-Washington Consensus concern to acknowledge and remedy 'market imperfections' has taken form in broad policy incursions into the social constitution of economic inequalities. According to the World Bank's Social Development Sector, the Bank works to make 'policies and programs in developing and transitioning economies more equitable and sustainable' (World Bank 2008a), since 'social development' is 'a natural complement to economic development' with 'both intrinsic and instrumental value' (World Bank 2008b). Official development policy remains resoundingly centred on embedding the market, private capital and a deregulated economy in developing countries, and although country governments now play a more visible role in drafting policy documents (the World Bank and IMF's 'poverty

**Neoliberalism:** a pervasive discourse in development economics and policy-making, based on the assumed centrality of marketisation, privatisation, deregulation and flexibilisation.

**Neoliberal globalisation:** a type of globalisation discourse and also a way of seeing the world based on the assumed centrality of the 'opening up' (through marketisation, liberalisation and industrialisation) of national economies to world monetary flows.

**Neoliberal globalism:** the dominant ideology of neoliberal globalisation discourse, invariably presenting globalisation's 'triumphs' (the liberalisation and integration of world markets) as 'natural' and progressive phenomena.

reduction strategy papers', or PRSPs, are 'country-led'), the macro and microeconomic criteria they must meet are strict and orthodox (based on, for example, removing import quotas, improving export incentives, reforming the fiscal system, improving the financial performance of public enterprises, revising agricultural pricing, shifting public investment, revising industrial incentives, increasing public enterprise efficiency, and so on).

Of particular concern, at least since the late 1990s, has been the concept of making globalisation 'work' for all, particularly the poor, with special attention paid to the social and economic costs and benefits of global integration. Development institutions sit at a particularly crucial juncture between interstate and global networks of economic, political and cultural relations, since they are at once composed of but different to the nation-states that constitute them (not least since larger institutions now work directly with the non-governmental and civil society sectors). Although not always decisive in the politics of development, they are certainly pervasive. Despite gender, sex and sexuality have been widely acknowledged to play a not inconsiderable role in the practices, processes and structures of development (see, *inter alia*, Elson 1996; Kabeer 2001; Benería 2003a and 2003b; Bedford 2005), descriptions of 'development institutions' as themselves gendered (and therefore gender-specific in their policy articulations) are rare. If everyone has a theory of gender (see Chapter 1), then, by extension, development institutions have a (or multiple) theory(ies) of gender. Such theories are neither overt nor avowed, but development institutions can, and do, distinguish between 'types of people' and bodies, and these distinctions impact significantly on the formation, implementation and effects of policy.

Neoliberal development strategy is, I argue, gendered in two ways, both of which are connected but (for the sake of analytical clarity) worth distinguishing:

- Neoliberal development is gendered in terms of *input*, which comes from the foundational economic rationality from which neoliberal strategy is formed.
- Neoliberal development is gendered in terms of *outcome*: in the practical experiences of the poor people these strategies target, and in terms of the future continuance of the neoliberal policies in question.

As Parpart argues, a (Post-Washington Consensus) concern for 'good governance' in international development has largely ignored both gender and power (2007: 207). Although the quality of governance is certainly an issue for development institutions, and good governance increasingly proffered and imposed as a conditionality for the granting or renewal of multilateral loans, assessment of the specific 'quality' of good governance assumes that it is good where it is 'clean' and therefore value-neutral.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the assumption that an efficient market society is inherently more equitable, neoliberal globalisation's advocates rarely comment on the profound changes in human behaviour that economic restructuring has instigated. Although social concerns that might impact on market efficiency have aroused the interest of development institutions (which operate social departments much larger and broader in scope than twenty years ago), social concerns nevertheless remain policy-relevant only as long as they can be quantified as tools for promoting market efficiency.

Correspondingly, 'gender equity' relates entirely to women's empowerment as measured according to their level of market access to 'assets' and 'opportunities'. This is a restrictive categorisation that excludes not only any labour supplied by those not identifiable as women, but also the 'informal' labour that women contribute to keep the 'formal' economy sustainable. As Hoskyns and Rai argue, the neglect of women's unpaid work in official statistics (such as the UN System of National Accounts) only contributes to 'a widespread and growing depletion of the capacities and resources for social reproduction', that is, 'the glue that keeps households and societies together and active' (2007: 298). This is an issue that demands the urgent attention of statisticians, economists and policy makers, since '[w]ithout unpaid services and their depletion being measured and valued, predictions are likely to be faulty, models inaccurate and development policies flawed' (ibid.).

Many development institutions (such as the ADB, the AfDB, the IDB and the World Bank) do operate 'gender policies' designed to streamline gender analysis into the lending, analytical and advisory 'products' that they offer. Operationally, however, 'gender' in official development discourse remains an analytical 'variable' that can be added to or removed from the fundamentals of economic growth and market access at will, and which therefore exists as an externality to 'good governance' conditionality. As such, it remains easy for these institutions to overlook how the very basic elements of global governance today (the processes, practices, structures and value-laden assumptions on which global economic and development policy-making are based) might not be 'value-neutral'. Bound by the strictures of the macroeconomic frameworks of the institutions they work in to formulate 'effective' policy, many development staff struggle to combine advanced theoretical conceptualisations of gender and sex with the restrictive and binary definitions that operate in institutional practice. Thus the idea that, regardless of situation, there is only one 'normal' way to be a woman or a man and that heterosexuality alone is 'normal' (despite modern science's 'discovery' of numerous types of bodies, mixing together conventionally 'male' or 'female' anatomical components) proliferates.

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## Examining the 'facts' of neoliberal development

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To take the neoliberal globalisation thesis at face value means ignoring how the transcendental liberal 'market', based on 'the social stereotype of the manufacturer of goods as an entrepreneurial inventor trying to create a new world', has not always been so, but was created in the late nineteenth century to displace traditional modes of manufacture and production, usurping the social stereotype 'of the maker of goods as an artisan practicing an ancient craft in the received ways' (Rosenberg and Birdzell 1986: 183). The recourse to 'natural' evolution and techno-determinism in neoliberal discourse conceals the many multifaceted processes of social engineering that have led to the creation of 'market society'. As Wichterich makes plain, the tendencies of neoliberal globalisation discourses are to 'take hold of and change social systems', eroding and revolutionising forms of work, strategies of social protection, lifestyles and value-orientations everywhere, North and South (2000: vii). Importantly, where neoliberal development policy-making interacts with external

social systems, it apports value to those parts with which it can work, and devalues, marginalises and excludes that which it conceives of as backward, inappropriate or unworkable (in practice, anything alien to the assumptions and modelling techniques of mainstream Western Economics).

Instead of ‘something’ (or a sequence of ‘things’, like global trade, communications or foreign direct investment) in the world, and/or a rather unambiguous process grinding on seemingly in spite of us, neoliberal globalisation might more fruitfully be read in terms of historical, social and cultural relations of *power*. As much as anything, globalisation can be considered a selection of knowledges relating, as Kofman and Youngs argue, ‘as much to a way of thinking about the world as it does to a description of the dynamics of political and economic relations within it’ (1996: 1).

We do not simply ‘know’ that globalisation is real and true: careful examination of the ‘facts’ should lead us to question how we know what we know and what effects this production of knowledge has. The kinds of ‘truths’ and ‘realities’ that have been produced about and for the neoliberal globalisation thesis have resulted in a variety of outcomes. Above all, a tremendous amount of power goes into knowing what ‘globalisation’ is: selectively deployed information; ideologically driven decision-making; *a priori* assumption about the world and its truths; the availability and accessibility of these truths. By rejecting any understanding of neoliberalism that posits it as the natural and inevitable unleashing of (value-neutral) market forces, we might instead give priority to analysis of neoliberal globalisation as a political project, generating new forms of domination while interacting with old ones. Thus might we better understand the processes and practices of global governance more broadly. Some examples:

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#### Fact 1: Neoliberal economics is value-neutral

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‘Economic man’, the market-able individual, fundamental to neoliberalism’s economic assumptions and models is the result of a highly specific Western economic agenda. Like orthodox economic theory more generally, neoliberalism depends on and upholds as universal a view of a culturally specific but ‘universal’ self that, as descendent of the historical association between White, middle-class and ‘entrepreneurial’ (once read as colonial) men’s bodies, is masculinised and highly ethnocentric (see, for example, Griffin 2007: 220–25).

As feminists have frequently noted, the neoliberal thesis fails utterly to recognise the prevalence of Economic Man in the policy prescriptions it promotes (see, for example, Benería 2003a: 117). Maximising Economic Man is intended in economic discourse as a good approximation, or model, of humankind across time and space. For economic theory, the point of models is that they are meant to be used as a standard against which the real world is measured, rather than as the real world itself. In practice, however, the application of economic theory (the assumption, for example, that individuals behave as autonomous and individuated atoms maximising their utility in the market economy) has sought to distort reality to fit the model.

'Rational economic woman' is a relatively recent concept in development policy-making, deployed to 'include' women in policies designed to achieve economic growth and efficiency, but also political freedom and 'social justice' (Rankin 2001: 19). In poor agrarian economies reliant on smallholder production and petty trade, women have, as Rankin articulates, increasingly been targeted as the desired beneficiaries and agents of microcredit-based progress (*ibid.*). 'Rational economic woman' is not, however, designed to challenge the (tacitly held) naturalised and dehistoricised associations between White men's bodies and their (superior) market capacity. No matter how market-productive microcredit makes women in developing countries, the specific targeting of women in microcredit schemes is troubling: since the hours of 'informal economy' work that women do to sustain households are unrecognised in official measurements of domestic product (GDP) and economic growth, women's microcredit activities take place in addition to their average daily burden, while being the only means by which these women are measured effective or successful.

Consequently, rural women are targeted in these schemes not because they are considered universally capable market actors as per *homo economicus* (Economic Man), but because they are considered 'essentially' reproductive, care-giving and domestically situated and, therefore, more responsible, reliable and trustworthy, since, as nurturers and carers of the household, women are considered less likely to display men's 'risk-taking' behaviour (see, for example, World Bank 2001). In no way does any of this challenge the fundamental predication of neoliberalism on a signifying economy of manliness.

#### Fact 2: Globalisation is reducing poverty

One neoliberal globalist claim of recent years has been that the distribution of income between the world's people has become more equal over the past two decades, with the number of people living in extreme poverty continuing to fall. IMF Director of European Offices, Saleh Nsouli, claims, for example, that, in the last five years, 'the world has experienced a strong and stable average real per capita growth', in the range of between 4 to 5 per cent annually, 'accompanied by low inflation' (Nsouli 2007). Such progressive trends, neoliberal globalism suggests, are due in large part to the rising density of economic integration between countries (Wade 2004: 567).

What this truth conceals is the enormously subjective quality of the statistics used by those measuring global poverty, particularly the World Bank, which has become the principal decider of international poverty levels. Other evidence might suggest that world inequality is probably rising, not least if China's and India's preternaturally fast economic growth rates are removed from the equation. The point is, as Wade describes, that 'there is no single best measure of world income inequality' (2004: 8). Yet the argument that world poverty has dropped, while world inequality has lessened, continues unabashed: the World Bank claims progress in reducing extreme income poverty 'in many countries'; the United Nations continues to assert that they are on target for a reduction of global poverty levels, by half, by 2015.

## Fact 3: Gender equality is essential to reducing poverty

Intuitively a sound argument, this thesis derives from a variety of sources, particularly from the earliest days of the Women-In-Development (WID) movement (which was particularly focused on achieving social justice and equity for women in international development). The neoliberal argument is that 'gender equality' leads to improved living standards, sustainable economic growth, and effective and accountable governance (see, *inter alia*, ADB 2003). This is because women's improved educational and employment opportunities, equality in political and social participation and increased health and welfare services allows women to be both more productive in the formal economy, while more able to nurture effectively in the informal.

The mathematics of development institutions' claims is, however, misleading. If, as Wade claims, falling income inequality 'is not a general feature of the world economy, even using the most favourable measures' (2004: 10), but the rates of women's participation in economies across the world continue to rise, the link between gender equality, women's presence in the 'formal' economy and poverty reduction is nothing more than conjectural. The World Bank, for example, proposes that Vietnam (with 'one of the highest rates of economic participation of women in the world') is 'one of the more advanced countries with respect to gender equality' (World Bank 2006a). Assuming a causal connection between women's economic participation and their gender equality, the Bank's Vietnam Assessment fails, however, to provide any evidence to show how exactly this is so, nor how this conclusion has been reached. We might reasonably surmise, given the Bank's reluctance to share its sources, that no such evidence exists.

In reference to 'gender equality', then, the issue is not one of debating whether gender equality is *per se* a good or bad thing, since the absurdity of arguing against equality is self-evident. A more useful approach might be to question whether women's equality can be measured at all in reference to their contribution only to the formal, productive economy (thereby imposing an arbitrary but heavily value-laden distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' economy contributions). How practically and theoretically viable it is to use 'gender' as a synonym for 'women' (and 'gender inequalities' as tantamount to women's exclusion from development) certainly, then, remains questionable, not least since a woman-centred description of 'gender' fails to inform us of the gender inequalities experienced by all those who are not women: not only men, but also children, adolescents and those who are unable or unwilling to define themselves as easily belonging to one of two sexes.

It would also be worth considering the imposed distinction, evident in a number of development institutions, between the so-called 'economic' and 'social' sectors. The World Bank, for example, has (it claims) 'made significant progress in mainstreaming gender issues in the social sectors of health and education', but has generally failed to integrate gender 'in the non-social sectors', such as 'the energy, finance, transport and agriculture sectors' (World Bank 2007). This is a worrying sign that the formation of economic policy-making in developing countries (predicated on an

understanding of 'development' symbolised by 'economic growth' alone) remains almost entirely devoid of social considerations.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTESTING NEOLIBERAL 'DEVELOPMENT'

Neoliberalist assumptions in contemporary world politics constitute such powerful models for human interaction and behaviour because they are based on the assumption that people everywhere adhere to the rule of the market. To do this, and to therefore hope and dream of success, wealth and 'development', people must universally embrace the rules of an economic *modus operandi* dictated largely by Anglo-American neoliberal capitalism. They must identify themselves with certain cultural models of humanity and internalise the key principles of neoliberal economic doctrine. In so doing, they reproduce centuries of liberal ideology and rhetoric that have naturalised the essentiality of trade, the accumulation of capital and the centrality of economic growth through the liberal 'free market'. Thus people tailor their identities, their sense of self and their ambitions to fit with the global mantra of more trade equals more capital equals good for everyone.

The potential for Western models of economic activity to interact with, affect and reconfigure existing social hierarchies and distributions of power and resources is enormous, yet official discourse continues to describe globalisation primarily in positive and progressive terms. Whether viewed as the saviour of modernity or the nemesis of social development, a misleading and superficial portrait of globalisation has dominated, depicting a subject 'North' (bearer of capitalist doctrine) and an object 'South' (a permanently malleable resource responsive to and dependent upon the workings of the North). The assumption that the market is and should be the key distributor of precious and fragile social resources remains, however (at least in globalist narration), uncontested.

It is important to consider at all times the positive and negative effects of certain policies and developmental interactions. Concerns about the loci, mechanisms and processes of delivery of developmental action and power may well make international development a more participatory and inclusive process, but understanding the contradictory and complex effects of global restructuring and assessing the contradictions of neoliberal rationality itself require challenging more than just cause and effect as conventionally conceived of. An abiding contradiction of Post-Washington Consensus international development policy-making is the shift to an official discourse of empowerment within an international institutional context clearly hierarchical in form and effect. The World Bank takes pains to advertise itself as an 'agency' of development, not a commander, but how much room poor people have within the dictates of Bank-approved but state-led economic management programmes is certainly not clear. Empowering the poor, women included, such that they have control over their own life strategies, is certainly worth struggling for: a time when the 'poor' are so 'empowered' that they might reject the governance dictates of Western institutions will be a fascinating one to live through, not least for the responses of the institutions they reject.



**Value-neutrality:** the assumption that theories (such as those of economic action) are objective in their freedom from assumptions of value and/or human worth and that interests and desires do not, therefore, influence theoretical outcomes.

**Economic Man:** or *homo economicus*, the de facto approximation and model of the human individual in economic theory.

**Gender mainstreaming policies:** designed to operationalise the inclusion of gender in *all* policies of the institution in question. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is, according to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), ‘the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action’ (2004).

Figure 16.3

### Seminar exercise

Small group discussions and presentations: students, in small groups of two to four, should discuss the following quotes/extracts (one per group) and prepare a brief presentation for the rest of the group detailing:

1. What the quote/extract under review says about the institution in question.
2. Whether what is said in the quote/extract is congruent with or disruptive of conventional conceptualisations of sex and gender.
3. How what is said might impact on the formulation of institutional policy.
4. How what is said might impact on the countries for which such policy is designed.

Quotes to discuss:

- ‘What is gender? The term “gender” refers to the socially-constructed differences between men and women, as distinct from “sex”, which refers to their biological differences. In all societies, men and women play different roles, have different needs, and face different constraints. Gender roles differ from the biological roles of men and women, although they may overlap. For example, women’s biological roles in child bearing may extend their gender roles to child rearing, food preparation, and household maintenance’ (The World Bank, ‘Defining Gender’).
- The Democratic Governance Group (DGG) of the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy states that some particular challenges for the DGG have been: ‘Bringing gender sensitivity into “technical” discussions’; ‘Understanding the issue as supporting equality of representation *and* ensuring that the institutions of government provide equitable services and opportunities’; ‘Clarifying terms & UNDP’s dual commitment to women’s empowerment *and* gender equality’; and ‘Recognising the role of men in gender equality’ (UNDP 2006, emphasis in original).

- ‘To reach key development objectives by 2015, women’s equality and fragile states need to receive concerted attention and the international community must scale up strategies for reaching the eight Millennium Development Goals. While progress on the first goal of halving poverty is on track everywhere except in Sub-Saharan Africa, efforts to attain goals related to child mortality, disease reduction, and environmental sustainability are falling short’ (IMF 2007).
- ‘While progress in women’s participation [in ‘the increasing contributions of women in the private sector and in social, cultural and other initiatives’] has been remarkable, persistent challenges remain, especially in the case of those women that confront exclusion due to their socioeconomic situation or their ethnic and racial origin. Their full inclusion is not only critical to strengthening the quality and depth of democratic governance, but also to promoting economic growth and accelerating the reduction of poverty and inequality’ (IDB 2006).
- ‘Women in small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), as workers and entrepreneurs, are important contributors to world trade; women are, at the same time, profoundly affected by trade liberalisation and WTO rules while often not benefiting from concomitant market access and employment opportunities; the impact of trade liberalisation and WTO rules could be better understood through the collection of sex-desegregated data; assessing the impact of trade policies on women could assist in policy formation and planning – the potential impact of the winding up of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing on 2 million women workers in Bangladesh was cited as an example; women should play a more active role in the formulation, implementation and assessment of national as well as international trade policy. For these reasons, WTO Members should initiate consideration of gender and trade issues in the multi-lateral trading system’ (WTO 2004).
- ‘Sustainable development can only be achieved through long-term investments in economic, human and environmental capital. At present, the female half of the world’s human capital is undervalued and underutilised the world over. As a group, women – and their potential contributions to economic advances, social progress and environmental protection – have been marginalised. Better use of the world’s female population could increase economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance societal well-being, and help ensure sustainable development in all countries. Closing the gender gap depends on enlightened government policies which take gender dimensions into account’ (OECD 2008).

### Questions for further debate

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1. What can consideration of gender tell us in relation to neoliberal globalisation and development policy-making?
2. How might consideration of gendered relations of power and dominance lead us to rethink global governance?
3. Is neoliberal globalisation more ‘myth’ than reality? How and where in the politics of development do the myth and reality of neoliberal globalisation collide?

4. Is gender a synonym for women? Why has the inclusion of gender considerations in official development policy-making remained only minimal?
5. What are gender inequalities? Are they being reduced by neoliberal globalisation?

### Relevant web-based resources

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- Asian Development Bank, 'Policy on Gender and Development', available HTTP: <<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Gender/default.asp?p = genpgad>>.
- Inter-American Development Bank 'Gender' homepage, available HTTP: <<http://www.iadb.org/topics/topic.cfm?id = WOME&lang = en>>.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 'Development Co-operation Directorate' available HTTP: <[http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en\\_2649\\_33721\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)>.
- World Bank 'Gender and Development' homepage available HTTP: <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,menuPK:336874~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336868,00.html>>.

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**Notes**

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- 1 I am of course rather deliberately overlooking important governmental and non-governmental organisations that operate in the global development space that are not included in the above (the UK's Department for International Development, the United States Agency for International Development, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and so on). Mechanisms of *national* government do have a role to play in and effects on global governance, as do NGOs and other not-for-profit organisations. I use the 'development institution' here to refer essentially to the inter-governmental type of organisation that arose out of the, or in response to, the United Nations Bretton Woods meeting (1942), and the subsequent rise both of the 'United Nations System' (which includes not only the UN and its associated institutions, but also the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation). I only refer to these because, unlike NGOs and national governments, they are multi-member and multilateral organisational structures of legitimate and feasible governance over their members' affairs. This is *not* to say that these organisations actually have or embody any legitimate case for intervening directly in the politics of their members (the Articles of the World Bank and IMF, for example, clearly prohibit intrusive practices), but that they have established for themselves a space in development where they are considered to be sources of development expertise and management excellence.
- 2 I appreciate that 'Western' is not a particularly enlightening way of capturing the ethnocentricity of mainstream economic science and discourse. I employ 'Western' in as broad a sense as possible here, encompassing Anglo-American and Australasian economism, plus aspects of Northern European and Japanese economic theorising.
- 3 As an example of the often automatic association between 'clean' and 'good' governance, World Bank Lead Economist Kazi Matin states (in a commentary published in the *Bangkok Post*), that 'a clean government and the rule of law must increasingly become the norm, with corruption and the rule of personalities, increasingly the exception'. He goes on to say that 'recent experience also suggests that without such improvements, growth can also stall' (World Bank 2007b).

# Production, Employment and Consumption

Juanita Elias and Lucy Ferguson

Global relations of production – how goods and services are produced, by whom and where – are the focus of much research in the social sciences, particularly in the discipline of International Political Economy (IPE). However, mainstream and ‘critical’ variants of IPE have consistently failed to engage with the feminist critique of production in any meaningful way (Waylen 2006). This chapter aims to demonstrate how and why gender matters in the analysis of global production. A focus on the female worker (in particular the female factory worker) has long been central to feminist approaches to international politics – enabling scholars to examine how processes associated with globalization are embedded in global hierarchies of gender, class and ethnicity (Pettman 1996; Peterson and Runyan 1999). Furthermore, feminist scholars remind us to be aware of the conflicting and complex nature of employment and the changes it brings to the lives of women (Elson and Pearson 1981). In common with earlier scholarship, the primary focus of this chapter is on women workers. However, this is not to suggest that we are employing gender as a straightforward synonym for women. Indeed, many of the recent studies of women workers in the global economy have also raised important analyses of the construction of men and masculinities within global systems of production (Elias 2008).

Another reason for focusing on women workers is that it enables us to reflect on how the kinds of gendered development discourses within international organizations (see Chapter 16) have tended to have a specific concern with women’s workforce participation. Employment as the key route to ‘empowerment for women’ has been implicit to World Bank development policy since the 1970s (Bedford 2003). Feminist analyses of global production highlight the need to question the benefits of women’s increased

employment, exposing the gender biases inherent in the promotion of employment as a development tool. As Sylvia Chant (2002: 550) argues, ‘the emancipatory prospects of female labour force participation are constrained by the prejudicial terms under which women enter the workforce’.

There is no necessary correlation between an increase in economic resources through women’s labour force participation and the redress of power relations. The drawing of more and more areas of the world into the global market economy has done little to alleviate gendered inequalities. Although the proportion of women in paid employment grew from 42.9 per cent in 1996 to 47.9 per cent in 2006, this share remains smaller for women than men, especially in poorer countries. Since 2005, the agricultural sector (often associated with subsistence production and high levels of rural poverty) has been surpassed by services as the main sector of employment for women, employing 40.4 per cent and 42.4 per cent of women respectively (ILO 2007: 7). And yet, within the service sector, women tend to be concentrated in areas ‘traditionally associated with their gender roles’, in contrast to the better paid jobs in financial and business services which are dominated by men (ILO 2007: 8). Wage gaps are another feature of gender inequality in global production statistics. In six key occupations analysed by the ILO women still earn on average 10 per cent less than their male colleagues (ILO 2007: 11).

This chapter argues that the goal of ‘incorporating women into the global workforce’ fails to appreciate how social and economic hierarchies permeate relations of production. In addition, dominant accounts of global production do not account for differences *between* women in terms of class, ethnicity and nationality. In order to explore the production of gendered hierarchies within the global political economy, we focus our analysis on two key areas of ‘feminized’ employment in the global economy – export manufacturing and the tourism industry. The analysis initially outlines the key characteristics of work in these two sectors, then charts how gendered divisions and inequalities are produced and maintained within these sectors.

The final part of the chapter moves to look at the issue of consumption – both in terms of the consumption practices of workers in the export manufacturing and tourism sectors as well as the role that so-called ‘ethical’ consumption practices could play in undermining global workplace gender inequalities. A focus on the social relations of consumption is important for gendered analyses of global production, as it allows for a more wide-ranging view of what counts as ‘economic’ activity. In particular, it moves the focus away from the traditionally ‘masculinized’ sphere of production to the traditionally ‘feminized’ sphere of consumption, prompting us to explore a broader range of socioeconomic practices in IPE (Ferguson 2007).

## **WOMEN WORKERS AND EXPORT MANUFACTURING: ‘WORLD MARKET FACTORIES’**

Although overall women’s share of industrial employment is fairly low compared to men, an important exception is in ‘light’ export-oriented manufacturing industries such as electronic component assembly and garments. From the late 1960s onwards, a number of post-independence states across some of the less developed regions of

the world undertook industrialization strategies based upon the expansion of export-industries, manufacturing products for the 'world market'. The growth of these world market factories is usually associated with the adoption of export-oriented industrialization (EOI) strategies through the establishment of export processing zones (EPZs) that provided tax and other concessions to export sector firms (both local and multinational). Today, the EOI model has attained something of the status of development orthodoxy – part of a globalized consensus of ideas concerning how 'best' economic development should be pursued. The successes that countries like Taiwan and South Korea had with EOI from the 1960s onwards were rapidly emulated across other developing regions of the world economy. In 1975 there were 79 EPZs worldwide across 25 countries and by 2006 there were over 3,500 EPZs worldwide in 130 countries – employing a total estimated workforce of 66 million (of which 40 million are in China alone) (Engman *et al.* 2007: 8).

Export sector firms are often part of complex global chains of industrial production that link them into the global market economy. For example, a firm producing Levi brand jeans in Guangdong Province in China might have had that particular line of clothing subcontracted to it by another, larger, Chinese firm which in turn won the contact from an agent based in Hong Kong who secured the initial contract from the Levi's clothing brand. Indeed, such is the level of subcontracting that takes place within the garment industry that most of the major retailers have little idea about where these products are made (and indeed the working conditions in the factories that made them). What makes these global commodity chains even more complex is the fact that networks of home workers or 'outworkers' working from domestic residences often constitute an important part of labour-intensive manufacturing industries.

Gender matters in understanding these shifts in global production. Statistical surveys have revealed the extent to which employment in export manufacturing is overwhelmingly feminized (Wood 1991). Standing (1999) has labelled these developments 'global feminization through flexible labour' – the emergence of 'feminized' jobs such as assembly line production in which there is little protection for the worker. Furthermore, Mehra and Gammage (1999) suggest that male-to-female wage differentials are greatest in countries where there has been an increase in female employment due to an expansion in export manufacturing. At the same time, in many countries that are currently moving out of light manufacturing industries and into more high-tech forms of production, there has been a significant re-masculinization of the manufacturing sector, pushing women out of the formal labour market.

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## Women as tourism workers

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Studies of women's factory employment are a key focus of much of the feminist literature on work and globalization. However, as Otis (2008) argues, this focus represents a bias towards an industrial-paradigm around work and employment. The services industry has been a growing area for women's employment in the global economy of the twenty-first century. Tourism is one of the world's largest services industries, providing around 3 per cent of global employment – or 192 million jobs.

As well as this formal employment, over half the tourism labour force globally is employed in small and medium enterprises. Features of labour conditions in the tourism industry include high staff turnover, long working hours, subcontracting, 'flexible' working conditions, the prevalence of 'casual workers' and seasonal variations in employment (ILO 2001: 56–63).

As might be expected, gender matters in understanding the services industry as much as export industries. The ILO reports that women account for 46 per cent of workers in wage employment in tourism globally. However, expanding the definition to include catering and accommodation brings the proportion of female labour up to 90 per cent. Just like female export-manufacturing workers, women tend to be grouped in the lowest paying, lowest status forms of tourism employment and are most likely to lose their jobs during periods of labour retrenchment (ILO 2001: 74). High levels of subcontracting, temporary and part-time employment amongst women workers again demonstrate how women are constructed as a 'flexible' low-paid workforce by the tourism industry and by employers.

Whilst many service sector jobs (for example domestic service or call centre work) also exhibit these gendered features there are dimensions of work in tourism that are specific to the industry. M. Thea Sinclair (1997a), for example, argues that work in tourism needs to be understood as a reflection of wider inequalities in the tourism industry. She points to the fact that the fun and escapism enjoyed by tourists depends on the labour provided by workers in the tourism industry. However, these power relations need to be analysed carefully, as there are not only divisions between tourists and workers in terms of income and wealth, but also *between* workers, primarily along gender but also race lines. Such inequalities between workers result in a clear segmentation of men's and women's work in tourism, the majority of women's work being concentrated in seasonal, part-time and low-paid activities such as retail, hospitality and cleaning.

Work in tourism undoubtedly tends to broaden women's social horizons and often encourages confidence, self-esteem and international friendships. The income women earn in the industry can also increase their bargaining power and challenge traditional household gender relations. However, it does little to redress inequalities of gender, class and ethnicity in the global economy. Rather, tourism production should be understood as an arena in which these global hierarchies are played out. As such, tourism – like employment in export manufacturing – offers an interesting case for studying the contentious relationship between women's employment and 'empowerment' in the global economy.

## PRODUCING, PERFORMING AND RESISTING GENDER IN THE WORKPLACE

As should be clear from the data presented so far in this chapter, there have been huge rises in women's employment in some of the most 'globalized' sectors of the world economy. However, understanding production as 'gendered' is about more than a straightforward counting of the numbers of male and female bodies found in particular industries and jobs. Understanding production as gendered requires that





Figure 17.1 Women selling food in the tourist town of Copán, Honduras.

Source: Copyright to LF.

we focus on how both gender *relations* and gender *identities* are fashioned and re-fashioned through engagement with the productive economy (see also Chapter 15). For example, as was highlighted in the discussion of tourism, women entering formal paid work may experience greater levels of autonomy and power (for example, because of their ability to contribute to household finances), but at the same time they may experience new forms of patriarchal power relations within the workplace. Thus Elson and Pearson employ the notion of a “*decomposition*” “*recomposition*” and “*intensification*” of gender relations as women enter formal employment, drawing our attention to the intersecting forms of gendered power relations in society that women workers are confronted with’ (Elson and Pearson 1981: 31, emphasis added).

Of course, understanding the interconnections between gender relations and relations of production also requires that we focus on forms of social reproduction – those activities usually performed within the private sphere of the household that are essential to the functioning of the productive economy. These everyday caring activities (things like child rearing, cooking, etc.) are overwhelmingly devalued within capitalist economies (Hoskyns and Rai 2007). And yet, employers are often able to

perpetuate ideas about women as mere 'secondary' income earners whose primary responsibilities lie with the household in order to justify lower rates of pay. For example, Lee's research into female factory workers in China notes the persistence of ideas held amongst managers concerning young female factory workers as 'girls who worked while waiting to be married off' and thus not deserving of training, promotion or better rates of pay. By contrast, 'men's plans for marriage and family meant that they would be dedicated to climb the company ladder because of their imminent family burdens' (Lee 1998: 128). Such gendered assumptions are often backed by state gender ideology. Moon's research into South Korea's industrial transformation in the 1970s demonstrates how the effective 'secondary' status of women workers was backed up by repressive anti-labour policies in the export sector and the provision of domestic training for women workers due to the expectation that they would leave the industrial labour force on marriage (Moon 2005: 75–78).

Salzinger (2003) notes in her research into factory employment in Mexico that managers' understandings of 'feminine' employment and female characteristics were integral to the perpetuation of powerful discourses concerning the 'docile' and 'dexterous' ('nimble fingered') female worker. These assumptions concerning women's secondary status as well as their supposed 'natural' suitability to monotonous work can also be understood as a powerful set of ideas that play a role in shaping workplace gender identities. It has been noted that these 'gendered discourses of work' have come to play an even more important part in gendering the workplaces of global factories than the ability to pay women workers low wages (Caraway 2006). As a recent study by Villareal and Yu (2007) has shown, women workers employed in multinational export-sector firms are often paid above average wages – women are not recruited into these industries simply because they are a source of low cost labour. Rather, the evidence seems to suggest that it is the overwhelming influence of ideas concerning the natural suitability of women to assembly line production that accounts for the decision to recruit women. However, as Wright (2006) has shown drawing upon research in both Mexico and China, one of the most powerful 'myths' concerning the female factory worker is her 'disposability'. Employers recruit women workers into assembly line jobs that inevitably have high labour turnover because of the repetitive, mundane and potentially debilitating nature of the work.

Such discourses of 'productive femininity' are a key mechanism for maintaining control and discipline over feminized groups of workers (Elias 2005). Thus we see in Pun's study of export sector employment in China that managers enforced workplace discipline by explicitly identifying female bodies as 'docile' labour (2005: 143–45). But workplace control is not simply enforced through these discursive mechanisms, high levels of control and surveillance are also part of the everyday experience of women workers on assembly lines, striving to meet ambitious production targets and finding that their performance is subject to constant observation by supervisors. Another element of the gendered forms of labour control that characterize export production is the way in which these globalized discourses of productive femininity effectively combine with localized gender ideologies. For example, Zhang (2001) observes how localized forms of worker control operate in the migrant worker compounds attached to Chinese global factories. Here, we are introduced to groups of male workers known as 'migrant-leaders' and 'yard-bosses' whose power and authority rests upon a gendered

discourse of 'prowess'. This localized, yet thoroughly masculine, form of control is a mechanism through which multinational firms and their subsidiaries can ensure both worker discipline and a supply of migrant (largely female) workers.

Resistances to these forms of labour control are themselves often based upon localized forms of gender identity. Work on Malaysian factory women, for example, has demonstrated how acts of labour resistance (often taking the form of so-called 'spirit possession' incidents) draw upon localized ideas concerning the vulnerability of young women outside of the family home (Ong 1987). But the problem is that these acts of agency and resistance often feed into the construction of gendered discourses concerning the unsuitability of women workers to better paying and more autonomous forms of work within the workplace (Elias 2005). More organized forms of resistance in the form of trade union activism have been somewhat limited within export sector industries. In part, this is because states keen to attract much needed foreign direct investment have often sought to limit labour rights in these sectors. Thus the overwhelming majority of export sector workers in the developing world remain unorganized.

These themes of control and resistance can also be explored in the tourism industry. In general, research has found that an important distinction should be made in terms of whether women are employed in 'mass' tourism (for example multinational hotel chains) or 'alternative' tourism (small-scale businesses located in rural communities). Women's work in mass tourism in developing countries has tended to follow similar patterns of control outlined above in relation to factory workers, where employment has tended to be segregated by traditional gender roles, and women overwhelmingly are employed in roles reflecting this such as cooks, cleaners and waitresses (Chant 1997; Sinclair 1997b). However, more nuanced research carried out with women tourism workers – particularly within the discipline of anthropology – has revealed patterns of contestation and resistance emerging.

Women in tourism communities in Belize, for example, have used stereotypes about 'women's work' to their advantage, enabling them to set up hotels and restaurants without appearing to threaten gendered power relations (McKenzie Gentry 2007: 491). Similarly, research into Mayan women working in Guatemala's informal tourism industry has demonstrated how women 'play around' with the expectations of tourists to construct different identities from their traditional gender roles (Cone 1995). Particularly interesting is Walter Little's concept of 'tourism as performance', through which he argues that Mayan women 'pattern their lives in ways that exploit tourists' perceptions of Maya women', allowing them to 'use performance and humor to make sales, protect themselves from police intimidation, and critique tourism development practices' (Little 2004: 532). This kind of research reminds us that despite the seemingly rigid structures of inequality in global production, many women find ways of using these opportunities to their advantage.

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## GENDERING CONSUMPTION

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Having looked at the issues that feminist scholars have raised in relation to the issues of employment and production in the global economy, we now turn to examine the



Figure 17.2 Women-owned businesses in the tourist town of Placencia, Belize.

Source: Copyright to LF.

issue of consumption. Consumption as a socioeconomic phenomenon is being increasingly studied by political economists, particularly in relation to the growth of the 'trade justice' and Fair Trade movements. However, such research tends to focus on the consumption habits of consumers in post-industrial societies (Watson 2006) rather than exploring how transformations in global relations of production affect the consumption habits of those living in the less-developed countries. In part, this reflects an overwhelming assumption that workers in these countries are 'excluded from the world of modern consumerism' (Weinstein 2006: 161). And yet, consumption practices are so central to the ways in which economies function. Clearly, gender matters in our analysis of consumption, and its role in global production. Consumption practices can also be a source of change in the global political economy and this may or may not have positive benefits for women as workers. In what follows we overview two key areas of research into consumption – first, women's consumption practices in developing countries and secondly on the changing consumption practices embedded in initiatives aimed at promoting 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) and the impact of such initiatives.

## Development and gendered consumption

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Peterson (2003: 144) argues, 'while affluent consumption is the privilege of only a small percentage of the population, it shapes the choices (and valorization) of those without affluence'. As such, it is interesting to explore the ways in which gendered changes in production contribute to the rise of consumerism and materialism amongst local communities in developing countries. Studies such as those undertaken by Freeman (2000) have incorporated an analysis of women's consumption practices into a wider analysis of the impact of working in the 'informatics' (data-entry) industry in Barbados. In particular, she highlights how workers' purchase of clothing and cosmetics acted to build a sense of self-esteem and identity as they were able to identify themselves as 'different' from factory workers. Wolf's research in Java (Indonesia) from the 1980s also revealed similar forms of consumption practices among female factory workers (Wolf 1998). These case studies show how consumption can be understood as a performance of identity – an identity as an autonomous feminized consumer rather than a 'mere' worker. However, these gendered consumer identities may not be especially liberating. Women in Freeman's study could barely afford the clothes that they were pressured to buy in order to 'look the part' in the informatics firms. Thus consumption practices actually fed into workplace cultures of control and surveillance that operated on the shopfloor.

Research from Asia reveals the ways in which the rise of consumer lifestyles have accompanied economic transition and development. What this literature highlights is the ways in which the rise of consumer cultures is often tied to the promotion of middle-class ideals of feminine domesticity (Stivens 1998; Hooper 1998). Thus, the implications of changes in consumption patterns for gender relations have been complex and uneven. In particular, the increasing individualization of economic and social life brought about by marketized consumption is often referred to as empowering for women, as family and community responsibilities are said to be lessened by the valorization of women as individual consumers. In fact, many of the changes to cultures of consumption have offered greater freedom and choice to certain kinds of women. In some ways women have gained a certain economic power through becoming consumers in their own right. In the words of Irene Tinker, such changes can be interpreted as 'empowerment just happened' – the suggestion that the socioeconomic transformations of the last twenty years have led to shifts in gender relations that serve to cause 'cracks in the foundations of patriarchal control' (Tinker 2006: 270). However, any assessment of the ways in which consumption contributes to greater equality needs to be placed in a context of the accompanying pressures and stresses of consumer society. Arguably such changes in consumption habits have not contributed greatly to women's broader social empowerment.

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## Ethical consumption and gender

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We can also think about the issue of consumption from the point of view of the roles that we play as consumers of goods and services in our everyday lives. Over the last

two decades there has been a growing awareness of the potentially unethical impacts of our consumption practices. These concerns have led to the establishment of 'fair trade' products that are designed to give producers a better share of the profits from a product, ethical/eco tourism and the establishment of corporate 'codes of conduct' – commitments by firms to ensure that minimum levels of employment standards and human rights are met. Codes of conduct are viewed as being particularly important in fragmented and complex production supply chains dominated by large buyers such as the big clothing brands and supermarket chains. Furthermore, the increased levels of competition between countries seeking to develop export manufacturing industries have been viewed as generating a 'race to the bottom' in labour standards in which the state can no longer be relied upon to properly regulate labour abuses in these key sectors of the economy.

#### FROM HIGH FASHION TO HIGH STREET – THE CASE OF PRIMARK

##### **Factory workers making clothes destined for fashion chain Primark work up to 12 hours a day for £3.50 an hour, an undercover BBC investigation has found.**

Supplier TNS Knitwear was also found to be employing illegal workers in poor conditions at its Manchester factory. Primark is best known for its cheap fashion clothing and bucked the trend on Britain's high street last year to make a £233m profit.

##### **Under pressure**

TNS Knitwear Ltd, based in a former Victorian mill in Manchester, supplies clothing to several high street fashion chains. It is one of Primark's biggest UK suppliers of knitwear, handling hundreds of thousands of garments for the company a year. A BBC reporter, who is a non-UK national, applied for a job with the company and was not asked about her right to work.

While working, she discovered an intense work culture where employees admitted to being under pressure to meet orders, two-thirds of them for Primark. Many in her section were putting in 12-hour days, seven days a week, for just over half the minimum wage. By law, workers should be paid £5.73 an hour and Primark's own code of conduct promises workers a living wage. Our reporter also found there was no heating in that area, and staff worked in their coats in bitterly cold temperatures. At the end of a week's work, our undercover reporter received her wages cash in hand, without any paperwork. In a statement, TNS Knitwear insisted all the allegations were untrue and said some were fabricated.

Neil Kearney, of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, said the investigation findings were a 'total scandal'. 'This is the importation of third world working conditions into Europe and in this case into the UK,' he added. 'There's no such thing as cheap clothing; somebody has to pay and in this case it's the workers in Manchester who pay.' Of the latest claims, Primark said it was 'extremely concerned about the very serious allegations' and is conducting its own investigation.

(Summarized version of BBC News article, Monday 12 January 2009: to read the full story please visit <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7824291.stm>)

Figure 17.3

Consumer campaigns for corporate social responsibility (CSR) have targeted export sector industries – in particular the garment and electronics sectors and commercial agricultural production. Because of the high levels of female employment in these sectors, a considerable amount of feminist research has sought to evaluate the impact of CSR and corporate codes of conduct for women workers. Frequently, codes of conduct fail to address the underlying problems that women workers experience in export sector work – problems that stem from their perceived ‘secondary’ status in the labour market. These include: low wages and wage inequality, a lack of protection and respect for pregnant workers or homeworkers, inadequate occupational health and safety, a lack of trade union rights, enforced overtime and over-long working days and the intensity of work. Furthermore, workers may not even be aware that codes exist or the codes may not be adequately enforced and monitored (Pearson and Seyfang 2002).

Pearson (2007) suggests that one of the major problems with notions of CSR is that it is based on too narrow a definition of corporate responsibility – one that doesn’t take account of workers’ roles outside of the workplace. Pearson argues that because firms directly benefit from those social relations of reproduction that sustain and maintain their workforces, they have responsibilities to workers that extend beyond the factory or plantation walls. To illustrate this claim she points to the example of the *maquiladora* factories of the Mexican border town of Ciudad Juarez – a town in which there has been both a massive influx of migrants and exceptionally high levels of female murders. Most of these women were employees of the *maquiladoras*, but more significant is the fact that almost all were part of the population cohort from which the *maquiladoras* have drawn their labour force since the 1970s. As the *maquiladora* industry has expanded, the city’s infrastructure has continued to deteriorate and many of the workers live in poor areas without police services or adequate public transport. Nevertheless, the factory owners absolved themselves of responsibility. The question needs to be raised therefore, whether a more holistic definition of corporate social responsibility might better serve the needs of this group of female workers.

In spite of these criticisms, CSR is often also seen as having the potential to bring about change for women workers. Banana plantation workers in Nicaragua were able to push employers to improve working conditions once they became aware that the country’s only buyer of bananas (Chiquita) had adopted CSR principles (Prieto-Carrón 2006). In this sense, despite the flaws of many codes of conduct, they are frequently recognized as a starting point from which workers and labour activists can seek to push corporations to improve working conditions.

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## CONCLUSION

When we look at everyday practices of employment and consumption and how these processes are deeply gendered, we are able to see how gender matters fundamentally to globalization of production, the key focus of IPE scholarship. Thus by developing an analysis of women’s work experiences (including a discussion of

agency and empowerment) within both the export manufacturing and tourism sectors, we have sought to provide the kind of fine-grain detail that shows how wider processes associated with globalization touch-down and impact upon the lives of ordinary people around the world. Women's work, their experiences, the opportunities that work brings and also the problems that women workers encounter are mediated by numerous different factors. In this chapter we have highlighted just some of them. These have included the tensions between work and empowerment, the complex relationship between resistance and women's agency, and the issues involved in analysing consumption practices and corporate social responsibility.

What the extensive literature of women and employment in the global economy (of which we have overviewed just a small amount) demonstrates is the complex and contradictory processes at work when women enter the market economy. Employment does offer women opportunities, brings a level of independence and autonomy not previously available, and may break down traditional gender relations within families and households. But, at the same time, one of the major themes explored in this chapter was how women – especially women in the global south – are constructed as a source of exploitable labour. Indeed, ideas of 'productive' and 'flexible' femininity were shown to underpin the practices of globalized business. Thus we need to understand the relationships between these everyday patterns of work, production, reproduction and consumption to those broader structures of economic governance (see Chapters 15 and 16) that foster such gendered systems of exploitation.

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## Seminar exercise

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Linking local consumption to global production:

- Individually, make a list of the last three things you bought. Think about your motivations for buying them – satisfy need, something to eat, wear, etc.
- Now in small groups, discuss your list. Select some items you have in common – i.e. a pair of jeans, a bunch of flowers. Try to think about the different processes involved in getting the item into the shop you bought it from.
- Using what you have read in the chapter, try and trace back the politics of the production line until you arrive at the workers. What are the gender dimensions of labour at each level of this process? Remember, gender politics are not just something that happens 'out there' but also 'in here'. Discuss the potential conditions of women workers at all stages in the production line – from the person who picked the cotton, to the one who assembled the garment, to the designer, to the person who sold it to you in your local shop. Also think about the gender politics of how this product was marketed to you, and how this affected your decision to buy it.
- Think about how your own consumption practices are embedded in the global politics of gender inequality, and understand how this links you to the global political economy of production and consumption.



## Questions for further debate

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1. In the chapter we use Elson and Pearson's analysis of *decomposition*, *recomposition* and *intensification* of gender relations as women enter employment. What does this mean and how can you relate this to your own understandings of women's work in the global economy?
2. Is empowerment through work in the global economy the best way of promoting greater gender equality? What are the problems with this concept?
3. What is the link between the political economy of production and the political economy of consumption? How does this allow us to think about differences *between* women?
4. What are the biggest injustices in the global political economy of production? Are global gender inequalities – i.e. those between men and women – more significant than inequalities related to class, ethnicity and nationality?
5. What could be changed in order to make global production and consumption more likely to promote greater gender equality?

## Relevant web-based resources

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- Website of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations – good for information on women's labour rights issues and contemporary campaigns. Available HTTP: <<http://www.affcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/women/global/>>.
- Website of Women Working Worldwide based in Manchester, UK. Useful collection of contemporary research engaged with activist movement, available HTTP: <<http://www.poptel.org.uk/women-ww/>>.
- Activist website with information on campaigns and resources. Available HTTP: <<http://www.nosweat.org.uk/>>.
- Another activist website campaigning for labour rights, available HTTP: <<http://www.behindthelabel.org/>>.
- UK NGO fighting for fair trade in tourism, available HTTP: <<http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/>>.

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## **SECTION FIVE IDENTITIES, ORDERS, BORDERS**

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# Migration

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Gender matters in migration, and in the study of migration. Migration studies have largely assumed the migrant to be a man, with the woman left behind, or following after (Kelson and De Laet 1999). Now, half of all those moving across international borders each year are women, and some particular migrant flows are women-dominated. Women experience migration – the decision to go, the process of moving, the consequences of displacement or resettlement – differently from men. This is partly because women are positioned differently in relation to many of the aspects or sites of migration, from family politics, through the mix of opportunities and constraints experienced at the border or in the new state, to wars which trigger large-scale flight, and the global political economy with its increasingly globalised division of labour.

This chapter asks how and why gender matters in international migration. It begins by asking how IR has treated migration, and then traces a brief history of migration, with particular attention to its connections with international politics and globalisation processes. Gendering migration provides a deeper interrogation of the kinds of migration flows and their particular patterns, and of the different stages in migration, including in post-migration identity politics. It raises questions regarding how different kinds of boundaries function, and why ‘immigration’ is so often racialised. Along the way, the chapter asks why some (migrant, female) bodies are more visible, and more troublesome, than others.

Gender travels along with bodies. Gender meanings are re-negotiated, resisted and re-claimed along the way, including through transnational women’s organising around migration and identity rights and wrongs. New and emerging post-migration

and transnational gendered identities and affiliations further unsettle the presumed nation-state, territory-people nexus.

## **GENDER, MIGRATION AND IR**

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IR has not shown much interest in gender, including its own. It has shown even less interest in migration, even though crossing state borders *is* international (Pettman 1996). People frequently cross borders in response to events in international politics, especially during or after wars. People moved with the collapse of the old Soviet Union or the former Yugoslavia, for example. Most people cross state borders in flows that reflect global or regional structural relations of power and wealth, mainly from poorer to richer states. All these macro level aspects of migration are the stuff of IR and GPE. So too is that central player in IR, the nation-state, with its territorially based membership and sovereignty. States determine (more or less effectively) who can leave their territory, and who can enter, reside, work, and possibly become citizens of the state. While states are changing, and giving up on some kinds of sovereign power, especially in relation to corporate capital and neo-liberal restructuring, they retain and exercise their power to secure their own borders.<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case in the post 9/11 world, where the ‘securitization of immigration’ (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006: 3) and ‘homeland defence’ are shorthands to indicate the ways in which migration is seen to challenge the state and its national community. In the process, migration can become a foreign policy issue, a security issue, and a national political issue touching on identity politics, citizenship, labour, and human rights. It is an international agenda item including through the lobbying for and eventual adoption in 2003 of the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Gender infuses these migration politics, even when not specifically articulated or utilised as an analytical framework in academic studies or policy documents (UNDESA 2006).

### **A (his)story of migration**

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The controversial and highly regulated nature of migration currently is of relatively recent origin. Huge numbers of people have migrated over the centuries, and many of us occupy our residence and citizenship (not necessarily in the same state) because of our own, our parents’ or our ancestors’ migration. People often flow along tracks laid down in conquest and colonisation. Settler states like the US, Australia, and Israel are built on a history of colonisation and migration (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995). For example, 22 per cent of Australians were born overseas, the largest source countries being the UK (19.4 per cent), New Zealand (8.8 per cent), China (4.7 per cent), Italy (4.5 per cent) and Vietnam (3.6 per cent) (Commonwealth of Australia 2007). Between 1846 and 1940, 55–58 million people left Europe for the Americas, 48–52 million left India and Southern China for Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean rim and the South Pacific, and another 46–51 million left Northeast Asia and Russia

for Manchuria, Siberia, Central Asia and Japan (Moses 2006: 46). Today, many move along former colonial webs, between the ex-British Caribbean to the UK and to Canada for example.

Other aspects of geopolitical power affect migration flows. Tracking refugee flows provides another way of mapping wars and violent political conflicts. After the Second World War there were an estimated 30 million displaced people, 11 million of whom were outside their country of citizenship. There are large numbers of refugees who flee from violence and live on the other side of their state border. In 2008, for example, an estimated 4.2 million Iraqis were displaced, with over 2 million outside Iraq, the majority in neighbouring Syria (1.4 million) and Jordan (half a million) (Amnesty International 2008).

Now there are an estimated 175 million international migrants, an increase from 76 million international migrants in 1960, 99 million in 1980, and 154 million in 1990 (2006). Currently, the US is the largest recipient of international migrants, with 35 million in 2000, followed by the Russian Federation, with 13 million (many of whom would have been classified as internal migrants before the break up of the Soviet Union), and Germany with 7 million. The countries with the highest percentage of international migrants in their population are the United Arab Emirates (74 per cent), Kuwait (58 per cent), Jordan (40 per cent), Israel (37 per cent) and Singapore (34 per cent), each telling a very different story of migration flows, pushes and pulls (UNDESA 2006: 8).

Some states lost populations over centuries, including for example Ireland and Italy, but are now immigrant-receiving countries. Some states make it hard for their citizens to leave; others (or sometimes the same ones) make it hard to get in. Nowadays, states do not welcome immigrants with open arms. Immigration regulations and state borders have hardened. There is increasing political resistance to migration, usually meaning migration from particular states or regions, for example from North Africa to France or from Bulgaria and Romania to Western European states. We need then to look at individual state immigration policies, and practices, including at the numbers and sources of illegal or undocumented migrants within the state, and their rights, or more likely vulnerabilities, as people are increasingly 'prisoners of territory' (Moses 2006: 12), or seen as out of place.

The hardening of state borders and migration restrictions in turn encourages illegal migration and resort to trafficking (Milly 2007, see also Chapter 7). The border functions as both barrier and transit zone. An estimated 200,000–300,000 Mexicans cross the Mexican-US border illegally each year. The border functions to create different categories and statuses, including refugee, alien, undocumented worker, even terrorist. These ways of naming travelling experiences homogenise very mixed categories and freeze the dynamics and mobility between categories, as well as between states. Migrants may enter a country legally and then overstay their visa, or enter illegally and then take advantage of a state-offered amnesty. Refugees may flee across the border, and stay near it, hoping to return soon, or be reunited with others left behind; these camps often become permanent townships and home for generations. Some make it out, merging into the local population, while a few more may be 'processed' and moved perhaps half a world away. Some may embrace their new home and be reluctant to return even when it becomes safe to do so.



'Migration' may call up pictures of a unidirectional move from state A to state B, with resettlement and new citizenship to follow. This classic picture is now a minority view, though some who thought they were temporary migrants got stuck or decided to stay. Others move back and forward along circuits of migration or engage in multiple migrations. It makes a difference which bodies we imagine when we call up people moving. For example, if we see 'migrant women', do we see professional women or domestic workers? Other categories include marriage migration (usually female, though in very different circumstances), sex trafficking (why, again, largely women, and girls?), international students (some of whom will marry, or find employment and/or citizenship in the new state, and may then bring family members along too); and international adoptions.<sup>2</sup> And, while international tourists also queue at migration counters and negotiate borders, we don't usually include them in migration stories, though some of their travels may lead to migration or transnational relationships.

In any particular state or region, some migrants are more welcome than others. Who is not welcome, or not allowed? Who are suspect even where they are citizens or were born there? Some migrants are more migrant than others. Migrant bodies are racialised as well as classed and gendered, which renders some for ever migrant, even after generations. Here are associations of (some) migrant bodies with flood, contamination, danger; or with disloyalty, incompatibility, criminality or worse.<sup>3</sup> These representations of migrantness contrast with mobilisations around the right of free movement (Moses 2006), of human rights for migrants, too (Brysk and Shafir 2004), and of multiculturalism (Ong 2004); politics of identity and belonging that imagine very different affiliations and entitlements.

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### Seminar exercise

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INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR: If you are planning to run this exercise in your class, you will need either to ensure that the students are told to bring materials with them to class or to provide sufficient images for analysis, quantity dependent on the size of the group.

Do a newspaper/Internet search for images of people out of place, or on the move:

1. Which bodies/whose bodies are visible in these representations?
2. What do these images tell us about the gendered politics of migration?
3. Why are some bodies (which bodies?) more welcome than others?
4. How do borders figure in these images? And in the international politics of migration? Are borders gendered?

We must ask which bodies move and why? Where do they move to and how do they experience the move, and its consequences? And why do some bodies, and some forms of migration, become especially visible, and subject to debate within the media or politics of any particular state? There is a danger here, too: if we focus on poorer, racialised women's bodies, and on more vulnerable or sexualised work, do we

contribute to the exoticising, or stigmatising, that makes some women especially vulnerable when they are seen to be 'out of place'? (Pettman 2008). Do we compound gender stereotyping by implying that women are only unskilled or deskilled migrants, when many women move as knowledge workers or move to nursing or welfare positions in the new state? (Kofman 2004).

## Her story/ies of migration

The 2004 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development focused on Women and International Migration (2006). It argued 'As a fundamental organizing principle of society, gender is central in any discussion of the causes of international migration – the decision-making involved and the mechanisms associated with enacting migrating decisions – as well as the consequences of migration' (2006: 11). It deplored the 'dearth of data' on women and migration (2006: 11), noting that statistics for international migration are very uneven and unreliable, and are rarely disaggregated in terms of age or gender (note that the statistics in Figure 18.1 are 'estimated'). However, feminists have been curious about women on the move for some time, especially since Mirjana Morokvasic's ground-breaking intervention 'Birds of Passage Are Also Women' (1984). Feminists have since generated excellent theoretical and specific site studies. As well, many migrant women have written their stories or given testimony to researchers or NGOs, and of course many migrant women are feminist scholars too.

In 2003, of 175 million people identified as international migrants, 85 million were women: 56 million of those women migrants were in the developed world, nearly 29 million in the less developed and less than 5 million in the least developed countries. However, some poorer countries have large numbers of refugees, who may or may not be counted in the migration figures. North America and Western Europe have the largest numbers of women migrants; though Europe had the highest proportion of women migrants and Western Asia and Southern Africa had the lowest. In 2002, 54 per cent of legal migrants to the US were women.

The proportion of women migrants in emigrating countries varies widely, with many more men than women migrating from Mexico, while more women than men migrated from the Philippines. In Thailand, many male Burmese migrants are in the construction industry, while Burmese women and girls are directed into various kinds of hospitality work, including sex work, and some are subject to further migration, including through trafficking (see Chapter 7). Fiji exports citizens for work in gendered flows, with (male) soldiers, and (female) nurses going to very different destinations.

Whether men or women leave (and the decision to leave may or may not be their own), the whole process is already gendered, in terms of different roles and relationships in the home, the kinds of work available locally or through migration in a gendered labour force, and the ways mobility and the borders are experienced. Forms of exploitation, violence or discrimination facing migrants in the new state are also gendered, and mediated through other body differences, including race, class and nationality. And it is not only 'the migrant' that is affected by migration; so too are

Major area, region, country or area	Estimated number of female migrants at midyear				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
<b>World</b>	<b>35 469 362</b>	<b>38 507 161</b>	<b>47 158 135</b>	<b>73 817 887</b>	<b>85 080 716</b>
More developed regions	15 629 174	18 742 613	23 882 284	45 347 826	56 228 897
More developed regions without the USSR (former)	14 203 958	17 259 476	22 306 792	29 860 914	40 896 880
Less developed regions	19 840 187	19 764 548	23 273 851	28 470 062	28 851 819
Least developed countries	2 896 736	3 323 332	4 129 540	5 102 639	4 929 009
<b>Africa</b>	<b>3 794 583</b>	<b>4 208 331</b>	<b>6 216 156</b>	<b>7 441 517</b>	<b>7 595 140</b>
Eastern Africa	1 293 119	1 475 861	2 301 832	2 875 736	2 172 969
Middle Africa	590 194	826 174	885 992	678 235	688 812
Northern Africa	736 578	463 260	705 274	1 047 756	832 620
Southern Africa	295 111	315 178	391 477	559 760	652 419
Western Africa	879 580	1 127 858	1 931 582	2 280 030	3 248 320
<b>Asia</b>	<b>13 572 729</b>	<b>13 096 395</b>	<b>14 340 682</b>	<b>17 862 959</b>	<b>18 936 075</b>
Eastern Asia	1 278 511	1 420 383	1 785 838	2 102 777	2 960 174
South-central Asia	8 522 472	7 910 730	7 626 765	8 679 779	6 607 013
South-eastern Asia	1 996 622	1 650 835	1 386 772	1 444 668	1 994 868
Western Asia	1 775 123	2 114 447	3 541 309	5 635 735	7 374 020
<b>Europe</b>	<b>6 799 126</b>	<b>8 981 401</b>	<b>10 752 040</b>	<b>13 120 718</b>	<b>16 736 713</b>
Eastern Europe	1 839 170	1 564 127	1 396 956	1 289 489	1 547 640
Northern Europe	1 146 007	1 971 053	2 397 504	2 741 426	3 223 267
Southern Europe	746 303	966 136	1 211 280	1 853 954	2 763 125
Western Europe	3 067 646	4 480 085	5 746 300	7 235 852	9 229 682
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>	<b>2 702 258</b>	<b>2 690 034</b>	<b>2 957 603</b>	<b>3 497 251</b>	<b>2 983 844</b>
Caribbean	204 522	288 102	362 570	433 491	523 755
Central America	226 661	200 950	276 194	940 403	531 621
South America	2 271 075	2 200 983	2 318 839	2 123 357	1 928 467
<b>Northern America</b>	<b>6 227 246</b>	<b>6 638 354</b>	<b>9 516 257</b>	<b>14 074 660</b>	<b>20 543 473</b>
<b>Oceania</b>	<b>947 643</b>	<b>1 408 956</b>	<b>1 797 350</b>	<b>2 333 426</b>	<b>2 945 035</b>
Australia/New Zealand	910 724	1 354 625	1 713 969	2 228 821	2 818 208
Melanesia	20 306	36 923	39 807	39 724	37 536
Micronesia	11 493	8 275	25 776	38 030	53 275
Polynesia	5 120	9 133	17 798	26 851	36 016
<b>USSR (former)</b>	<b>1 425 777</b>	<b>1 483 690</b>	<b>1 576 046</b>	<b>15 487 356</b>	<b>15 340 437</b>

*Source:* Population Division of the United Nations, Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2003 Revision, diskette (New York, United Nations, 2003).

Figure 18.1 Female migration: 2000

*Source:* Reproduced from UNDESA 2006.

those who stay behind, and consequently find family forms, kinds of work and responsibility, and other markers of gender, change too. Some women remaining must take up work traditionally done by men, and may find the adjustments difficult if the men return.

Given the extraordinary diversity, and dynamism, of migration, and the ways it affects home and new state, and those touched by the moving, it is very difficult to generalise. Of some 23 million refugees,<sup>4</sup> 80 per cent are identified as 'women and children'. This assertion constructs bodies – woman refugee as victim, fearful, passive – and bundles 'women' in with 'children' in ways that deny agency and resilience which may be present, even in the most dire circumstances. It obscures bodies – do we see boy or girl children? It disguises the very different, gendered experiences of political violence which drives refugees: girl children's experiences of violence and flight are often different from boys of the same state (Brocklehurst 2006), as are refugee women's experiences (Indra 1999; Nolin 2006).<sup>5</sup>

## THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MIGRATION

There is a global political economy of migration, which reflects the changing hierarchy of states and regions, the increasingly globalised division of labour, and shifting gender relations. Almost one in every 10 persons in developed countries is a migrant, while only one in every 70 persons in developing countries is a migrant. These flows are likely to intensify under the threat of climate change, including through the switch from food production to bio-fuels.

Gender matters at all levels and stages of labour migration. Gender structures the wider labour market, too (Peterson 2003). Migrant workers contribute to economic development in the new state, and to the state they left. Remittances are one aspect of this latter contribution. Women are especially significant in remittance flows, for men often remit to their wives at home, and women remit to female relatives especially those caring for their children. In this way, women are expected to contribute to family, community and national development (INSTRAW 2007b).<sup>6</sup>

The global labour market is increasingly bipolarised (Chang and Ling 2000). Professionals, market managers, and techno-skilled workers may be in demand, and move relatively freely. Those who are unskilled, deskilled and casualised are also increasingly feminised – more likely to be women, and/or in conditions of work traditionally associated with women. These workers are not a residual or incidental effect of globalisation; rather they are intrinsic, underpinning and servicing global capital and its elites. Sassen remarks on the 'feminization of survival, because it is increasingly on the backs of women' that family support, business profits and government revenue are secured (2000: 506). These service workers are increasingly likely to be migrant workers, whose conditional or illegal status compounds the vulnerabilities they already experience as poorer, less protected workers, and often as women.

Millions of women are now on the move across state borders and often over vast distances (Pettman 2008). Many move to various forms of care work. This increasingly transnational labour market is compounded by other operations of gender,

including through global restructuring (Marchand and Runyan 2000). In richer countries, more women are going 'out' to work even as welfare state and public provision is wound back. In poorer states, neo-liberal reforms and increasing health and education costs in particular increase the need to find new forms of work and pay, even while reducing employment in those same areas, in which women predominated. Richer states and families are importing women workers from poorer states and communities in a new transnational division of reproductive labour (Parrenas 2001). Thanh-Dam Truong describes such transnational care as a 'massive transfer of reproductive labour from one class, ethnic group, nation or region to another' (1996: 33). I have described this form of labour as 'international sex and service' (2008), referring especially to the kinds of women's work – domestic work, care of children, the sick and elderly, and sex work – which is increasingly transnationalised.

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### Transnational reproductive labour

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Women moving internationally for care work are, like women everywhere, caught between the public and private, and between productive and reproductive work, where the latter is seen as women's work, or as not really work at all. This makes for a triple burden of vulnerability, as women, as migrants, and in forms and places of work that are largely unregulated or hard to monitor, or organise. This work takes place, often, in households, complicating relations among women, between the employer and the worker, usually from a different class, ethnic and increasingly national background.

Transnational care sustains different forms of employment and consumption in more developed countries or richer families, enabling women more public participation and independence, even as it deprives families in poorer states of labour and emotional care. There may be a roll-on effect, so that the migrating woman's family may be cared for by female kin, or pay for a poorer woman to do her work (see Figure 18.2 below). So while the international division of labour changes, the gendered division of labour does not. 'Rather than challenging the gendered division of labor or making demands upon the government to take more responsibility for developing comprehensive child care and elderly care programs, the hiring of foreign domestic workers has tended to maintain the tradition of domestic labour as women's work – simply shifting the burden from one set of women to another' (Maher 2004: 135). Which leads us to ask: Why is it everywhere women who are overwhelmingly responsible for 'domestic' work?

Transnational care work is gendered. It is also (as gender always is) raced, and culturalised as well. In Singapore, for example, there are some 100,000 international domestic workers (IDWs), mostly from the Philippines, some from Indonesia, and from Sri Lanka. A racialisation and nationalisation hierarchy of IDWs is reflected in recruitment agencies' advertisements and in media stereotyping of particular nationalities (Yeoh and Huang 2000). While Filipinas are more in demand and better paid, and valued as good English speakers, they are also seen as more worldly and political.

### Transnational social reproduction

'When women migrate internationally for social reproductive jobs, they enhance the quality of care in the receiving states at the same time as their own families and children suffer the loss of their attention. ... the children of female migrants and those who care for them indirectly absorb some of the cost of first-world social reproduction. The transfer of female labor from less developed to more developed states initiates a transnational "chain of care" that exacerbates international inequalities' (Maher 2004: 132).

An example:

'A professional woman in Los Angeles who earns a salary of \$4000 a month in the formal market hires a migrant woman from Guanajuato, Mexico for \$800 a month to care for her children and elderly father and to perform some housekeeping. The migrant woman hires a woman living in Guanajuato to care for her own children remaining there, paying her \$100 per month. This Mexican woman might then depend upon the unpaid labor of a female relative to care for her elderly parents' (Mayer 2004: 146).

Figure 18.2

Indonesians are seen as hardworking and obedient, while Sri Lankans are infantilised (Pettman 2008). In Canada, Caribbean caregivers were seen as more reliable and less risky than Filipinas. In turn, these racialised gendered images feed into national stereotypes, of a 'nation of servants', or of sexualised promise or danger, in the case of the Philippines for example, which is popularly identified as a source of sex workers and mail-order brides (Rafael 1997; Tadir 1999). These images in turn affect the reception of women in their new states and workplaces, making them vulnerable to further sexualisation and stigmatisation.

This is not to say that all migrant women in transnational care chains are exploited, though many are, and some are subject to abuse and violence. Nor is it to say that all are passive or reactive, responding only to family pressures or structural demands. Many women move to sustain their households, some move to escape abusive or dangerous homes, and others move for adventure and independence. All make their way in circumstances that demand constant negotiation. Some women are politicised before they move or through the move, and join local groups and NGOs to struggle for their rights as women, migrants, or workers (Law 2002).

Gender is performative. Gender identities are constantly being reproduced and recreated along the migration pathways. Many women tell stories of their travels that are rewarding, even heroic, giving meaning to the challenges, losses and gains along the way. These stories may not accord with academic studies of migration, especially those that either do not see women or see them primarily as victims or dependants. Feminist scholars who take women's experiences seriously and regard them as knowledge-makers, theorising complex personal, social, cultural and international relations along migration chains, generate better, more inclusive records of these exchanges (Hilsdon 1998; Aguilar 1999). These in turn deepen our understanding of gendered dynamics of globalisation<sup>7</sup> and the links between migration, development and gender.

## GENDER/POST-MIGRATION

The previous section focused on transnational care workers, who may move as strictly controlled temporary workers, or as workers who settle in the new state and may be able to sponsor family reunion there. Women move along different tracks, and into very diverse situations. Much will depend on whether they expect to resettle or return, whether the choices are theirs, whether they were escaping or forced to leave, whether they move alone or have family or community with them, and whether they find such attachments supportive or constraining, exploitative or violent. And what is their reception in the new state? What are their rights, as women, as workers, as migrants – and how accessible are those rights? Are there women's organisations and movements to support them as women? Or do they identify primarily with 'the community' or religion, rather than as women? Is there a possibility of acquiring citizenship?

The first chapter invited us to think carefully 'about how the body manifests in our understandings of IR' (see Chapter 1). In this case, in terms of migration, we need to ask which bodies? These are never only sexed bodies – bodies are raced, classed, 'read' for age, ability and sexuality or sexualised. Some migrant women's bodies can merge into the dominant or local community, while others become visible in ways that may endanger them, or attract unwanted attention. Gender relations and gender scripts indicate what might be seen as right, or wrong, or 'punish those who fail to do their gender right' (see Chapter 1). When we look at bodies out of place, the possibility for transgression and offence are multiplied. Some performances of femininity may be beyond the limits of intelligibility because of the new cultural context. Forms of dress, mobility and exchange from home may not be welcome in the new place. But gender performance also changes over time and place; for example, in France and in Malaysia, more Muslim daughters than their mothers might wear the veil, not as tradition but as part of a modern identity politics. Women are especially visible, not only as bearers of sex, but as bearers of culture, and identity. They may find themselves subject to intense border patrols, from the inside or outside of their supposed identity group. In the face of migration or besieged minority status, women themselves can become the territory (Bloul 1993), expected to honour their gendered role, as symbols and reproducers of the community (Yuval-Davis 1997).

### Gender/migration/citizenship

Migration produces difference. The visible presence of 'others' can trigger debates about who 'we' are, who belongs here, and who cannot belong. That strange word 'naturalisation', meaning to acquire citizenship, hints that there is something alien about the stranger, the guest worker, the migrant.

The pre-eminent nation-state which IR favours assumes a coincidence of authority, territory and identity, such that it is possible to call up 'the national interest' or 'national identity', despite the obvious fact that no state is culturally homogenous, and states' boundaries, of territory and belonging, shift (Steans 2006). Here again is

### Questions about citizenship

- What is your citizenship? What does (your) citizenship mean to you? Are your experiences of citizenship gendered?
- Who can become a citizen in your country of residence, or origin? Do these criteria have gendered effects?
- What rights and responsibilities should only citizens have? Why?
- Why, in an age of globalisation and with increasing international attention to human rights, should there not be free movement of people?

Figure 18.3

the paradox of an age of globalisation in which state surveillance and political panics about people moving have hardened the borders, producing images such as ‘fortress Europe’ and the fence between Mexico and the US. In the context of globalisation, what does citizenship mean, now, with so many people on the move, resident outside their countries of birth, and with transnational families and links even for those who stay at home?

State sovereignty is under attack from above through the market and new technologies; from below, with the resurgence of religious and cultural identities; and from without, through more sustained attention to and international action for human rights (Falk 2004: 178). The state has given up some of its welfare and other provisions which were designed to underpin the lives and livelihoods of their citizens. Crucial decisions about our economy or well-being are made in boardrooms or international financial institutions far beyond state and citizen reach, causing ‘deflated citizenship’ (Seidmann 2004). Sassen argues that market globalisation amounts to ‘a savage attack on the principles of citizenship’ (2004: 195). She points to the emergence of new political subjects and new transnational affiliations and claims. Why then should citizenship remain a territorially based, often exclusive, identity and status?

Feminists are divided over the uses and dangers of citizenship claims, especially given the close association of full citizenship with military service, and the long historical struggles to include women as formal, let alone full, citizens (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999). However, regarding citizenship as ‘practice and process’ (Tatsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006: 11) recognises the claims to extend membership and develop the kinds of rights which citizenship entails. It enables us to ask ‘how citizenship reproduces and affects insiders and outsiders; how it engages the included as well as the excluded; and how it can work towards a society that respects and accommodates people of all origins’ (Tatsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006: 15). How a state treats its non-citizens is as important for democracy, gender equality and human rights, as how it treats its citizens (Pettman 1999). This is especially so in times of heightened security alerts and an increasing propensity of states to see some of their citizens as undesirables or as potential terrorists. Inclusive national and transnational



### Citizenship and gender

[H]aving identified the gendered character of citizenship, feminists have developed a number of different approaches towards what we might call the 're-gendering' of citizenship. These can be characterised in terms of three, inevitably over-simplified normative images of the 'gender neutral' citizen, the 'gender differentiated citizen' and the 'gender pluralist' citizen (Lister 2001). The first works with a model of women as equal with men; the second with a model of women as different from men, thereby reflecting the long-standing 'equality vs. difference' debate. In the third model, both women and men are members of multiple groups and/or holders of multiple identities. [This model] represents an attempt to articulate the idea of a politics that... reaches across and through the web of group differences, but without suppressing them. Gender-pluralist approaches... help to diffuse the gender binary at the heart of the equality vs. difference dichotomy. They acknowledge that gender does not stand alone in shaping the contours of citizenship... However, this must not be at the expense of undermining progress towards gender equality. What is needed is a synthesis... a 'woman-friendly, gender inclusive' model.

Ruth Lister (2003) 'Feminist Theory & Practice of Citizenship', paper presented at the annual conference of the DVPW (German Political Science Association), Mainz, 4-8.

Figure 18.4

feminisms must thus attend to how different women experience the borders of state, citizenship and belonging, especially where these do not coincide.

Chandra Mohanty reflects on becoming a US citizen at a time of intense militarisation and masculinisation of US foreign policy and empire building, seeking 'to examine this "new" status, to ask what it means for an immigrant woman of color turned US citizen to engage in transnational feminist politics at a time when some of "my" peoples are seen as non-citizens and threats to the US nation' (2006: 8). She argues:

If the racialised, gendered, heterosexual figure of the citizen patriot, the risky immigrant, the sexualized and de-masculinized, external enemy and potential domestic terrorist are all narratives and state practices mobilized in the service of [US] empire, an appropriate question to ask is whether and how the academy, and academic disciplines . . . are involved in contesting or buttressing these practices.

(Mohanty 2006: 14)

This remains a critical question for feminist citizenship and migration studies more broadly.

### Travelling gender

'It's not just tangible things and people, but also ideas and images such as democracy, modernity and gender relations, that travel' (Davids and van Driel 2005: 10). So too does feminism, in its various and increasingly transnational forms. Feminisms migrate, along with and independent of women moving across state borders.

Feminist language and perspectives are picked up and adapted, modified and developed by women theorising and organising at local and national levels, often using internationally generated or validated claims for their own purposes (Ackerley 2001; Davis 2005). So notions of women's rights as human rights, or supporting reproductive rights and choices, are picked up and reworked; campaigns are mobilised trans-nationally using the Internet, solidarities are built using new global technologies and travelling connections (see Chapter 22). There is an international politics of feminism, too (Pettman 2004), and diasporic webs and migrating ideas and stories all play a part in building and contesting these politics.

### Questions for further debate

1. Why, in an age of globalisation, with reputedly free movement of goods, services, technology and finance, are proposals for the free movement of people usually met with such alarm and resistance?
2. Are you a migrant? Is anyone in your family a migrant? If so, where from, why did they leave, why did they come here? (How) does gender matter in these experiences?
3. Where is home? Can we have more than one home?
4. When does a migrant cease to be a migrant? Or can it be an inheritable condition?
5. What might a study of gender and migration tell us about how borders function in global politics today?

### Relevant web-based resources

- International Organisation for Migration (IOM): Gender and Migration Network, available HTTP: <<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/iom-gender/cache/offonce>>.
- UN INSTRAW: Gender and Migration. Available HTTP: <<http://www.un-instraw.org/en/md/md-homepage/migration-and-development.html>>.
- Asian Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, available HTTP: <<http://www.apwld.org/aboutus.htm>>.
- Global Commission on International Migration, Global Migration and Gender Network, available HTTP: <<http://gender.gcim.org/en/>>.
- Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, available HTTP: <<http://www.cgrr.uchastings.edu>>.

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## Notes

- 1 Some states are tightening citizenship provisions including a 'citizenship test' in terms of language, political knowledge and 'values'. See, for example, Kymlicka (2003) comparing North American and UK reception to such citizenship tests.
- 2 The only form of migration that almost always carries with it the right of citizenship in the new state (Brysk 2004).
- 3 CIA Director General Michael Hayden suggested on 'Meet the Press' on 30 March 2008 that Al Qaeda was recruiting people of 'western' appearance to get past border security (*Newsweek* 2008).
- 4 These figures are also unreliable. Far more people are displaced within their own state by conflict and identity violence; and many of those labelled as 'economic migrants' might also be fleeing from violence, discrimination, or for survival.
- 5 There are some moves towards recognising the gendered experiences of refugees, including for example through protection for gender-related persecution (Indra 1999).
- 6 See INSTRAW (2007b). The current focus on remittances as a link between migration and development constructs migrant women workers in an instrumental way, familiar in the 'efficiency' approach to 'women in development'.
- 7 So Sassen remarks that global care chains are a strategic instantiation: 'a strategic site where the gender dynamics of the current processes of globalization can be detected, studied, and theorised' (quoted in INSTRAW 2007a: 1).

# Religion

Suruchi Thapar-Björkert and Laura J. Shepherd

Let us analyse three important, though seemingly disparate, events spread across the globe: the USA, India and the United Kingdom:

On 11 September 2001, four airliners were hijacked by suicide bombers and targeted at major US buildings. Two demolished the twin towers at the World Trade Center in New York, the third destroyed part of the Pentagon in Washington and the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania. These attacks were identified with Al-Qaida international terrorist network and Osama bin Laden famously stated that he was conducting an 'Islamic *jihad*' [holy war].

On 27 February 2002, 58 Hindus were burnt alive aboard the Ahmedabad-bound Sabarmati Express. The train was carrying back from Faizabad (Uttar Pradesh) nationalist Hindu activists, who were returning home to Gujarat. At the district of Godhra (eastern Gujarat), the train was torched, following an altercation between local Muslims and activists of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (*Kar Sevaks*). The Gujarat BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1998–2004) chief minister Narendra Modi, and the Vishva Hindu Parishad leader, Giriraj Kishore, conferred that it was a 'pre-planned violent act of terrorism' with involvement of Inter Services Intelligence Unit of Pakistan (cited in *Communalism Combat* 2002: 12).

On 7 February 2008, a controversial public debate ensued after a lecture delivered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, the spiritual head of the Church of England at the Royal Courts of Justice in London. The speech was entitled, 'Civil and Religious Law in England: A religious perspective'.

In these three events it is evident that religion frames the over-arching narrative in which Muslim communities, globally, are represented. In relation to the events in Gujarat, Christophe Jaffrelot (2003) argues that the BJP campaign was rife with anti-Muslim references but 'it was also based on an obvious equation between Islam and terrorism' (Jaffrelot 2003: 11). It also comes as no surprise that Hindu nationalist propaganda in the USA emphasised Hindu vulnerability vis-à-vis pan-Islamism, both in the context of post-September 11 and the communal violence in Gujarat. As Veena Das (1998) argues, 'in the social production and circulation of hate', the 'images of the perpetrator and the victim are frequently reversed, depending upon the perspective from which the memories of traumatic events and of everyday violence are seen and re-lived' (Das 1998: 109). In the phenomenology of panic, aggressors can experience themselves as if they were victims and the fear of the other is transformed into the notion that the other is fearsome (Das 1998: 117). Furthermore, a lack of any public acknowledgement by members of religious communities (Hindus, in this case) of their culpability for violence towards others has meant that the phenomenon of violence has been discursively externalised and imputed to the Muslim 'other'. Thus the Godhra carnage was described solely as a 'Muslim conspiracy'.

Similarly, though the Archbishop of Canterbury was suggesting how the current work of *sharia* councils could be extended and though he emphasised gender equality, his statements were misunderstood as promoting Muslim extremism and the 'Talibanisation of British Law' (Modood 2008). The public debates following his speech exposed the fear of Muslims as the 'enemy within' and led to further demonisation of Muslim communities in Britain. The Archbishop argued not for separate or parallel legal systems for Muslims but for public and legal recognition of the work conducted by existing *sharia* councils (who adjudicate on personal and civil matters). However, interpretations of his speech placed the *sharia* and secular legal principles in opposition to each other, thus evoking the worst fears of 'consolidating (Muslim) patriarchal power' and condoning violence against women (Smith 2008: 38). Razack (2008) argues that

in white societies the smallest reference to cultural differences between the European majority and Third World peoples (Muslims in particular) triggers an instant chain of associations (the veil, female genital mutilation, arranged marriages) that ends with the declared superiority of the European culture . . . including a unique commitment to human rights of women in particular.

(Razack 2008: 89)

Joan Smith (2008) writing in *The Independent* sums it up when she suggests that, 'the European Court of Human Rights ruled . . . that *sharia* is incompatible with the fundamental principles of democracy and European values. Secular law protects people's rights to practice religion but it also protects them from aspects of their faith which are unjust and oppressive' (Smith 2008: 38). Such articulations support normative constructions of what Razack (2008) describes as the 'civilised European', the 'imperilled Muslim Woman' and the 'dangerous Muslim man'.

The 'fear' of Islam, which inadvertently forms the master narrative in all the three events, it can be argued, is a discursive replay of the Orientalist representations. Edward Said (1997: 5) argued that the West has always portrayed Islam as a 'demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy and obscurity'. Islam (unlike Hinduism and Christianity associated with India and China) was viewed with additional hostility and fear because for thousands of years 'Islamic armies and navies threatened Europe, destroyed its outposts and colonised its domains . . . Islam seemed never to have submitted to the West' (Said 1997: 4–5). Historically, racialised discourses emphasised the superior and civilised Christianity of the West, justifying, simultaneously, its 'humanitarian impulse' for white colonial conquest of the 'heathen (non-Christian) lands' (Singh 1996: 21). Theological and racial differences could not be untangled and 'to hate the religion then, (was), to hate the race' (Turley 2004: 179). Coupled with this was another historic hostility between Christianity and Islam, which had been ingrained in the mind of the western world since the crusades in medieval Europe. It was this historic hostility and antagonism that led Europe and the West to exile Islam into an irretrievable state of 'otherness' (Kabani 1994). More specifically, in relation to post-colonial India, Orientalist stereotypes (see Prakash 1995) enjoy renewed vigour in the construction of nationalist, communalist, and gendered identities, where the rhetoric of 'Hinduism in danger' has necessitated the need for a 'new' politics of community, based on the creation of a Muslim 'Other'.<sup>1</sup>

We would like to draw three broad observations from these events. First, religion can be used as a political catalyst by certain 'elites' to realise their ideological objectives and to express their religious sentiments in the public domain (for example the Godhra carnage). Violence becomes authorised and inherits a specific legitimacy. In fact, the impunity with which violence is conducted renders invisible not only the 'humanity' of its victims (see Bauman 1991) but signals a complete breakdown of social norms between communities. Second, the state can be an aggressor in various ways: even within the context of secularism, certain states (such as the Indian state) can lean towards a specific religion and identify certain ethno-religious groups as threats to national (state) and human security (for example Muslims in Gujarat)<sup>2</sup> which can lead to a steady communalisation of polity (Basu 1995, also see Roberts 2007). Or the state can marginalise minorities (structural oppression) by following a policy of apathy (where apathy means connivance) and thus sow the seeds of insecurity between different religious communities. Moreover, the state's abdication of authority can send a signal to civilians that they can take law and order in their own hands. In such a situation, every lawless act is seen as law enforcing by these people. Third, that gender matters in/to understanding these issues. Gendered bodies become sites of ideological battlegrounds and are used as a means to justify specific political agendas. The idea of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' (see Razack 2008) becomes a means to an end; that is, to silence political debates which are projected as promoting extreme forms of violence against women (such as Rowan William's speech), or, used as a means of surveillance, critique and justification of military intervention in Muslim countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq (Hussain 2005; Stabile and Kumar 2005). We will now turn to some intersections between religion and culture and what implications it has in facilitating and harbouring forms of oppression and violence.

## RELIGION, CULTURE AND CULTURAL VIOLENCE

Any discussion on religion cannot disassociate religion from culture. As Bhikhu Parekh (2000) argues, 'since culture is concerned with the meaning and significance of human activities and relations and since this is also a matter of central concern to religion, the two tend to be closely connected' (Parekh 2000: 146–47). There is hardly a culture, Parekh argues, 'in whose creation, constitution and continuation, religion has not played an important part' (Parekh 2000: 146–47). However, Valentine Moghadam (1994) argues, 'culture masks more than it reveals, making claims on people (especially women) as much as for them' (Moghadam 1994:7). 'Ordinary' aspects of culture (such as going to a bar, shopping or watching a movie) can create and perpetuate feelings of fear and hatred for specific communities which festers under a veneer of normality which Rustom Bharucha describes as 'the volatile complexity of everyday culture in which the banality of evil is domesticated' (Bharucha 2000: 70, also see Williams 1958).

Let us draw on caste politics in India, which have created complex 'cultures of violence' (see Thapar-Björkert 2006a). Kancha Ilaiah, a Dalitbahujan activist and a scholar, places his own childhood experiences in relation to a creation of a culture of denigration of caste groups, which are placed lower down the hierarchy. He highlights that at school, 'textbook Telegu was Brahmin Telegu [and] our alienation from the Telegu Textbook was more or less the same as it was from the English textbook' (Ilaiah 1996: 13). Further, it could be argued that caste violence is sanctioned by Hindu religious scriptures such as the Veda, Puranas, *Bhagvad Gita* and the Dharamshastras, which prescribe the rigidity of the caste system. Take, for example, the infamous case of Bhukli Devi who was paraded naked by Bhumihar Brahmins on the charge of stealing four potatoes from a field in Samastipur district (central northern state of Bihar) in 1994. She was then raped and killed after her sari was inserted into her vagina. The insertion of a piece of cloth in her vagina can be understood as symbolic of the 'impurity' of the womb of the Dalit women and condemnation by the upper castes of the birth of any further progeny.

## RELIGION AND IDENTITY

Though religion could be an organising feature, it may not be directly a cause of strife or violence. Thus it is important to understand not only how religion is reproduced through cultural practices (Rouse 1996) as we analysed through the example of caste politics but also how religion frames individual and collective identities, which are used as ideological tools, for different ends. Collective identities mobilise 'culture, tradition, religion and notions of history and place to evoke a sense of unity' (Cockburn 1998: 10) and enable individuals, as Benedict Anderson states, 'to belong to a solid definable community' (Anderson 1991: 3). Thus 'large-scale' identities such as Latino, Serb, Muslim or Scheduled Caste, 'become significant imagined affiliations for large number of persons, many of whom reside across large social, spatial and political divides' (Appadurai 1998: 906; see also Duijzings 2000: 32). Religion strengthens this sense of belonging and religious identity incorporates

the 'whole historical process by which a cohesive community of believers comes to be produced, consolidated and reproduced through a cultural fusion of texts, myths, symbols and rituals with human bodies and sentiments, often under the aegis of religious personnel' (Oberoi 1994: 4).

We will discuss two examples that highlight two different ways in which identity is framed and where it leans away from having positive connotations. First, individuals negotiate (gendered) identity, establishing it in relation to a series of differences that become socially recognised and which are essential to its being. 'If they do not co-exist as differences, it [identity] would not exist in its distinctiveness and solidity' (Connolly 1991: 64). There can be two consequences of this: either there is a willingness to engage with the 'voice of difference' or 'difference' can be seen as a form of inferiority and evil(ness) which should be removed or 'othered' (Connolly 1991: 64). Here, one is often likely to disown the hated or feared parts of oneself and project them onto the unknown 'other'. Prior to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, social identities were constructed and manipulated to sever the social bonds of solidarity that Hutus and Tutsis once shared within families, neighbourhoods or other institutions such as schools, hospitals, churches and workplaces (Hintjens 2001). The Tutsis were likened to wild beasts, as demons and mythical images were borrowed from Christianity to support these claims and to justify abominable physical atrocities (Hintjens 2001; Appadurai 1998).

Second, the state defines and negotiates (gendered) identity. After partition<sup>3</sup> of India, for example, the homeland for abducted women was defined in 'religious terms' (either as a Hindu or Muslim homeland) by the post-colonial Indian state that professed to be secular (Butalia 1993; Butalia 2000). Questions of religion and nationality dictated the rescuing enterprise where the 'women (who) were Hindus and Muslims . . . had to be brought back to their Hindu and Muslim nations' (Butalia 1993: 18). The Indian state, through its programme of 'recovering' abducted women, restored its own legitimacy as the 'new patriarch' and, for its own self-legitimation, the question of gender became crucial. By referring to categories like 'other' and 'own' (communities), the state identified women in purely communal terms irrespective of their own religious convictions and thus reconstructed a specific moral order. Women might see themselves differently, 'as members of a community, as a Sikh, or Hindu or Muslim, as mothers, as women – and [have] act upon these different identities at different times' (also see Hasan 1989: 44). Thus, though religion may constitute only a part of their identity it has profound implications for women's agency and their gendered experience of violence.

In this discussion we see how individual identities get transformed as collective identities, particularly in a situation of communal conflict. In some political contexts, this has been referred to as communalism or fundamentalism. Let us now look at this issue more closely.

## UNHOLY ALLIANCES: COMMUNALISM AND NATIONALISM

Romila Thapar (1990) argues that to support a particular religion and to articulate one's personal beliefs and practices is not 'communal'. Communalism is the



### Gendered symbolism – ‘mothers of the nation’

Women’s gendered identities are constructed through the discourses of religion and nationalism. Women have historically politicised their symbolic representation as ‘mothers of the nation’ for specific political projects. Anne McClintock argues that women are constructed symbolically as ‘bearers of the nation’ where the nations are frequently referred to through the ‘iconography of familial and domestic space’ (McClintock 1993: 62, also see Bracewell 1996). Let’s draw on two examples from India and Argentina.

In India, women used the gendered symbolism as ‘mothers of the nation’ to carve a political niche within the domestic sphere. In the specific context of colonial India, the ‘new woman’ was the embodiment of the nationalist culture of the ‘spiritual’ domain. The spiritual domain represented by home (*ghar*) and family, was the ‘sovereign territory’ where no colonial intrusions would be accepted (see Chatterjee 1989). As Bagchi (1990) argues, ‘motherhood...bridg(ed) the social, political and religious domain of colonial society’ (Bagchi 1990: 66). This symbolism was supported by religious metaphors which were drawn largely from Hindu religion such as role-models of *Sati* (creator and nurturer of progeny), *Kali* (the defender of civilisation) and *Shakti or Durga* (upholder of moral strength). In highlighting women’s roles as mothers, wives and nurturers, women were exalted to the status of *devis*, i.e. as goddesses. *Purdah*-bound ordinary middle class women in North India used the symbolic repertoire to contribute to nationalist politics. Domesticity shaped women’s political subjectivities and political consciousness (Thapar-Björkert 2006a).

In Argentina, women used their roles as mothers (as embodied in the construction of the *marianismo*) to claim political justice. *Marianismo* is rooted in a combination of the primitive awe (Mesopotamian culture) that adores the reproductive ability of a woman and in the values in Catholicism that worships Virgin Mary. Virgin Mary represents the values of spiritual and moral strength of women (Stevens 1973: 94). As ‘mothers of the disappeared’, the *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (LMPDM) claimed justice from the repressive junta in 1976-1983. In defiance of a regime that operated in secrecy, mothers demonstrated in Buenos Aires before the presidential palace in Plaza de Mayo, carrying pictures of their disappeared children and demanding their return (Bouvard 1994). Contrary to the conservative ideologies espoused by most Latin American militaries, which saw women’s roles as primarily in the domestic sphere, the *Madres* used their traditional roles as a linchpin of the protests.

This made it harder for a government that elevated motherhood to persecute women who argued that they were fulfilling their maternal role by searching for their missing children (*desaparecidos*). Most of these women were housewives, few had received an education beyond high school and none of them had any previous political experience but they challenged state power which disfavoured any public expression of dissent and protest. Through their demonstrations, these women politicised public spaces which were governed largely by conservative male-dominated politics (Alvarez 1990). These case studies demonstrate that women were not always co-opted or used by nationalist projects. Instead, women strategically used ‘motherhood’ to conduct political activities and achieved a sense of self-fulfilment. Second, to be ‘political’ is not always about association with formal political machinery.

Figure 19.1

manipulation of religious identities for the purpose of political mobilisation, based primarily on violence and aggression (as evident in the 2002 Gujarat riots or partition of India). In a similar vein, Connolly argues that fundamentalism is the ‘mobilisation of religious affiliation for political ends’ (Connolly 1991: 69; see also Yuval-Davis 1997). Moreover, communalist/fundamentalist movements tend to emphasise cultural issues, religion, language and ethnicity, but also gender, the family and ‘the position of women’ (Moghadam 1994: 6). Here two kinds of gendered

dynamics can be observed. First, in the process of rediscovery of the fundamentals of religious-nationalist belonging, women and children are treated as communal property, who need to be protected from 'unholy outsiders' (also see Connolly 1991). In particular, women's bodies become the markers of national purity. Second, in specific contexts women can exercise agency on behalf of their communities which might entail using violence.

The unholy alliance between religion and nationalism is being used to justify gendered violence and ethnic cleansing which can be the result of the organised programme with the approval of the state. However, it is important to problematise the dominant view that women and children are primarily the victims of this gendered violence and further investigate how women and children are increasingly acting as agents in communalist-fundamentalist movements. Hindu women, according to Sucheta Majumdar have played an important role in promoting the rise of rightwing mobilisation (Majumdar 1995). Upper middle class and upper caste women of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), have participated in rallies and demonstrations and their complicity also involved 'an informed assent to such brutalities against Muslim women as gang rapes and the tearing open of pregnant wombs in Bhopal and Surat in December, 1992 and January, 1993' (Sarkar and Butalia 1995: 190; Majumdar 1995; Menon 2003).<sup>4</sup> The representation of women's bodies as the nation's 'social and biological womb' (Mayer 2000: 10) is illustrated with these examples. Thus an act of cutting open the womb signifies, first, the desire to control the reproduction of the polluted progeny of the enemy, second, it exposes the vulnerability of the men in protecting the 'bearers' of their community's honour (i.e. the woman's honour must be destroyed to destroy the honour of the community) and, third, it vilifies and shames the 'other'. It is worth noting that the question of honour, in some contexts, is inextricably linked with an anxiety about the hypersexuality of the 'other' men and their over-fertile female counter-parts. The inexhaustible violence on Muslim women in Gujarat bears testimony to this. Genital torture, including the insertion of large metal objects into the vagina of Muslim women and cutting off the breasts of young women highlighted a hidden anxiety about Muslim female sexuality.

In these contexts, the struggle against gendered inequalities is mediated by other inequalities such as caste, religion and class, which puts gender on the back-burner. Women forsake patriarchal concerns for caste-community concerns and what binds women together is not necessarily their interests as women. Thus some women's empowerment comes at the cost of disempowerment of others, whether, Muslims (as in Hindutva movement) or Dalit women (anti-Mandal or massacres in rural Bihar) or working class women.

## RELIGION AND GENDERED SYMBOLISM

From the above discussion, we can see that religious symbolism intersects with issues of gender and race (and other markers of identity) to produce culturally intelligible subjects. In this section we explore a range of gendered religious symbols and

### Honour violence in the UK and Sweden

The difficulties associated with culturalist-essentialist explanations and the inherent danger of vilifying specific ethnic groups are increasingly being debated within the British multi-cultural context. In the current climate of growing Islamophobia, media debates on honour killings tend to heighten the sense of insecurity and fear of the 'other' (Majid and Hanif 2003). A wide coverage was provided by broadsheet and tabloid press in the UK (*Daily Mail* 2003, *The Sun* 2003), following the death of Rukhsana Naz from Derby in 1998 and Heshu Yones in 2002. The media forwarded a problematic understanding of the killing as a feature specific to the 'other' ethnic minorities in Britain, evident in phrases such as a 'clash of cultures', 'fanaticism in other faiths', and 'barbarism' (*The Mirror* 2003). For example, the UK judge, Neil Denison, QC, in Yones's murder trial stated: 'In my view, the case was a tragic story of irreconcilable *cultural differences* (my emphasis) between traditional Kurdish values and the values of Western society' (*The Observer* November 21 2004).

In Sweden, discussions on oppression and violence against 'women of foreign origin' or 'immigrant women' were foregrounded after January 2002, following the murder of 26-year-old Fadime Sahindal, a Kurdish-Swedish woman. When Fadime Sahindal was murdered, a discourse of 'modernity' was juxtaposed to a discourse of archaic 'tradition' adopted by the Kurdish community. An article in *The New York Times* (July, 2002), 'Lost in Sweden: A Kurdish Daughter is Sacrificed' portrays Fadime as 'a symbol of second generation immigrant success' but whose 'very desire for independence...provoked her father into a rage so great...turning her into the tragic emblem of a European society's failure to bridge the gap in attitudes between its own culture and those of its newer arrivals'.

Some common themes emerge in these discursive representations. First, the cultures are presented as neatly, prediscursively individuated from each other, in which the insistence of 'difference' that accompanies the 'production' of distinct 'cultures' appears unproblematic; and the central or constitutive components of a 'culture' are assumed to be 'unchanging givens'. This then re-enforces 'essential differences' between Western cultures and non-Western cultures (Narayan 2000: 95; Rosenberg 2005). Moreover, over-emphasis on cultural differences, reifies and essentialises ethnic communities, a process referred to as 'ethnic fundamentalism' (Yuval-Davis 1997). Second, feminists have pointed towards the prevalence of gendered and sexualised violence in the white Swedish and British population but which is not approached/discussed in a cultural and essentialist manner (Mulinari 2004; Apkinar 2003). Third, incidents of domestic and sexual violence in the West are frequently thought to 'reflect the behaviour of a few deviants – rather than as part of our culture'. In contrast violence in immigrant communities 'are thought to characterise the culture of entire nations' (Volpp 2001; 1186). However, anthropologists such as Mikael Kurkiala warn us that 'acknowledging the cultural dimensions of human acts and motives, need not imply that all members of a community are pre-programmed to react in the same manner... (and) pointing to the culturally specific elements of honour killings need not mean belittling other forms of abuse against women, including those taking place in the West' (Kurkiala 2003: 7).

Figure 19.2

imaginings to illuminate the ways in which assumptions about these identity-markers inform and are informed by contemporary global politics. The characteristics of these assumptions vary across time and space and it is of course overly simplistic to assume, for example, that all women choose to wear *hijab* [modest dress for women] or not for the same reasons (and, similarly, that all women *choose* to veil or not with the same degree of autonomy); veiling in contemporary Iran, for example, is qualitatively different from veiling in contemporary France. The latter is a particularly interesting example, as in March 2004 the French government passed a

law relevant to all public schools banning the wearing of clothes or symbols that denote a particular religious affiliation.<sup>5</sup> While similar laws are in place in secular Islamic states such as Tunisia and Turkey, the French *Loi No. 2004–228* quickly became a contentious issue and the topic of much heated political debate and demonstration (see Abu-Rabia 2006; Walter 2004; Satrapi 2003); the *affaire du foulard* (issue of the scarf), as it became known (Lyon and Spini 2004), situates the issues of gender, religion and politics squarely at the forefront of public consciousness. Of course, the *Loi* also prohibits the wearing of a Christian cross or Sikh turban, but it is the issue of veiling that has been most discussed, and as scholars with a feminist curiosity about global politics, we must ask ourselves why this should be the case.

There is no simple answer or short explanation that can summarise why the public imagination was fired by the legislative prohibition on veiling in schools. It is the significance of the veil, and the intersections of gender, race and religion that make this such a contested and contentious issue. Notably, in feminist discussions about *hijab* there is a range of opinions on how the complex negotiation of gender identity and religious identity can and should occur. This is a global political issue not only because these negotiations take place in a range of international contexts but also because they produce and are produced by international policy: as discussed in Chapter 9, for example, ideas about what it means to wear *hijab* were central to the Bush administration's legitimisation of military action in Afghanistan. There are all kinds of assumptions about freedom and equality that inhere in broadly Western ideas about what it means to wear *hijab* and these ideas are overtly challenged by women who choose to veil and fight for their right to do so. As Walter (2004) argues,

the whole trajectory of feminism in the west has been tied up with the freedom to uncover ourselves. . . . Taking off . . . covering clothes, gloves and hats . . . was tied up with a larger struggle to come out of their houses, to speak in public, to travel alone, to go into education and into work and into politics.

However, the liberal assumptions about equality of the men and women (rather than the complementarity of discrete biological sexes)<sup>6</sup> underpinning such arguments are contested by some Islamic feminists who put 'an emphasis on communal solidarity rather than individualism . . . [and] point to the security the Islamic family and community grants women' (cited in Lyon and Spini 2004: 343). It is naïve – and offensive – to assume that all veiling is a form of 'false consciousness' or to assume that choosing not to veil is a matter of individual will. However, it is also naïve to assume that the wearing of *hijab* is simply a matter of personal politics, somehow outside of the domain of the international, as religious matters are thoroughly implicated in our understanding of what culture means, what forms of social organisation are acceptable, which structures of government are legitimate and, ultimately, what kind of human subject is valued as human. The significance of the veil (literally, that which it signifies) is bound up with our own, often unconscious, ideas and ideals about gender (read: equality), religion (read: anti-progressive) and race (read: potentially dangerous 'Other') and these ideas must be opened to critical scrutiny.

The female body is often a site of contestation over cultural meanings and messages, as discussed above, and this is often translated in the public political consciousness

into a fascination with the performance of the female body and its coverings. To put it bluntly, what women wear when in the public gaze is deemed worthy of political attention. A female Conservative MP in the UK ‘caused a sensation’ (Brogan 2002) ‘when she delivered a conference speech as party chairman in leopard print kitten heels’ (BBC News 2007). Then-US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made headlines in the global media when she

boldly eschewed the typical fare chosen by powerful American women on the world stage. She was not wearing a bland suit with a loose-fitting skirt and short boxy jacket with a pair of sensible pumps. She did not cloak her power in photogenic hues, a feminine brooch and a non-threatening aesthetic. Rice looked as though she was prepared to talk tough [and] knock heads.

(Givhan 2005)

Media coverage of the inauguration of US President Barack Obama in January 2009 mentioned his commitment to meeting the challenge of war and economic crisis – and his wife’s choice of outfit (BBC News 2009).

These stories are indicative that/of gender matters in global politics. However, the imbrication of religious symbolism offers a further layer of complexity: take, for example, the coverage of Indian politician Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, granddaughter of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, whose decision to wear Western-style clothing to work featured in the ‘World News’ section of the UK-based *Observer* newspaper. Vadra’s sartorial choice was framed as divisive and distracting, in an article published under the headline ‘India is split as Gandhi daughter shuns the sari’ (Chamberlain 2008) that reported that ‘though the debate [at the parliamentary session] centred on whether India should sign a major agreement with the US on its nuclear future, it was 36-year-old Vadra’s outfit that stole the show’ (ibid.). Underpinning the article are implicit assumptions about gender, religion and class that organise – indeed, render coherent – the claim that Vadra’s choice of costume was controversial. The sari, a traditional form of female dress in the Indian subcontinent, was traditionally associated with Hinduism, in contrast to the shalwar (or *salwar*) kameez that was associated with Islam: ‘to wear a sari was to see oneself as part of a wider subcontinental culture, while to don a *salwar* was to place oneself in an Islamic world alone’ (Guha 2004). Vadra’s ‘white blouse and smart black trousers’ (Chamberlain 2008) represent neither of these affiliations; instead the outfit is interpreted as a valorisation of Western secular politics and political performance: ‘she [Vadra] represents a new India . . . women are more modern and more independent’ (Surily Goel cited in Chamberlain 2008). The linking of Western clothes with modernity and emancipation is not only problematic in that it implicitly assumes that those choosing non-Western dress are therefore ‘unmodern’/traditional and ‘unemancipated’/oppressed but also that religious faith in and of itself, demonstrated through the marker of non-Western dress, is traditional, oppressive and therefore devalued.

A partial function of this implicit assumption is an explicit, and often negative, media interest in those political figures that do publicly perform their religious faith.

The juxtaposition of religion and reason can be used to discredit the decisions backed by politicians and policymakers, and there is of course a gendered logic to this process. Following an interview on national television during which Tony Blair, then-UK Prime Minister, ‘told how he prayed to God when deciding whether or not to send UK troops to Iraq’ (BBC News 2006), Blair was sanctioned for allowing his faith to influence his foreign policy decision-making. Underpinning the advice to avoid ‘making “references to deity” in public life’ (ibid.) is the belief that intrinsic to progressive modernity is a separation of religion and politics (Biswas 2002: 193). The logics that organise such a belief ally the gender dualism of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ with a system of binary oppositions that privileges those characteristics associated with masculinity over those associated with femininity: masculine/modern/reason/public versus feminine traditional/emotion/private. Therefore the invocation of God’s judgement by Tony Blair in his television appearance has the potential not only to alienate secular UK communities but also to alienate communities that believe – consciously or unconsciously – that religious faith is not rational or progressive and therefore not ‘manly’. When espoused by a female political figure, religious faith performs a similar function, and can be used to reaffirm the conservative belief that women do not belong in the public sphere as they are guided by emotion rather than reason and are thus susceptible to manipulation. The media coverage of Sarah Palin’s faith is evidence of this: during the Republican campaign for the White House that was ultimately defeated, Palin’s involvement with a Pentecostal church in Alaska was ‘downplayed’ and her imputed inability to separate private belief from public policy critiqued across the global media (Kaye 2008; see also Democracy Now! 2008; A. Sullivan 2008a, 2008b).

In addition to the problematic associations made between femininity, irrationality and religiosity, the gendered implications of Palin’s faith regarding its potential impact on US domestic and foreign policy are also worthy of exploration. An Alaskan journalist reports that Palin’s

positions on social issues emerged slowly during the campaign: on abortion (should be banned for anything other than saving the life of the mother), stem cell research (opposed), physician-assisted suicide (opposed), creationism (should be discussed in schools), state health benefits for same-sex partners (opposed, and supports a constitutional amendment to bar them).

(Kizzia 2006)

In contrast to Western Europe, where the conflation of modernity and secularism is particularly strong,<sup>7</sup> politics in the United States has been more overtly – and perhaps more unashamedly – influenced by religion, particularly since 2001. ‘Since the 1980s, the NCR [New Christian Right] has been a significant domestic political lobby group’ with ideological reach far beyond the domestic political sphere (Haynes 2005: 405; see also Bacevich and Prodromou 2003/4); the influence of the Church regarding ‘pro-religion’ policies and political candidates has had an impact on military engagements and development aid abroad as well as on reproductive health care provision in the USA. During his first month in office as President of the United

States, George W. Bush issued an executive order that forbade any non-government organisation that receives funds from the US Agency for International Development to either provide safe abortion or to advocate it and in October 2002 funding of US\$3 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO) was frozen pending investigation of the WHO's Human Reproduction Programme (Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2006). Whether you are convinced that these decisions simply reflect a secular neoconservative agenda, or whether you think they are representative of a belief system heavily influenced by the 'genuine religious conviction' of the then-President (Bacevich and Prodromou 2003/4: 43), the Bush administration engaged in 'a steady campaign against reproductive freedom both [in the USA] and around the globe' (Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2006) that was produced by and productive of particular assumptions about gender, religion and global politics.

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### Seminar exercise

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**INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR:** You will need to assign this exercise one week in advance of the class, or be prepared to devote time and research resources (perhaps including letting students have access to computers and books) to the exercise in class. You will probably need to divide the class into smaller groups, although the exercise can be performed individually.

Prepare a short presentation (10–15 minutes) on one of the following topics:

- The so-called 'holy brackets' and the negotiations over the Beijing Platform for Action;
- The influence of the 'New Christian Right' over Bush administration foreign policy;
- Narratives of gender and religion in the 'war on terror';
- Representations of gender, religion and global politics in an artefact of popular culture (a film, a video-game, a TV series, etc.);
- Pope Benedict XVI's 2008 end-of-year address to Vatican staff (the full text is widely available online).

In this chapter, we have explored several of the ways in which religion, culture and gender are framed through – and frame – our understandings of (global) politics. Thapar (1990) argues that 'religious communities are imagined communities' (Thapar 1990: 365). The dominant 'imagined' religious communities see themselves as constituting the 'nation' (discussed further in Chapter 20) and those who don't belong to that religious community as 'unholy outsiders' – who should either be pushed out or eliminated (also see Anderson 1991; Hastings 1997). The sense of belonging is a homogenising and unifying force which defines the boundaries and this 'homogeneity of a single high culture condemns those not masters of the said culture or unacceptable within it, to a humiliating, painful second-class status' (Gellner 1998: 103). Thus, in this sense, religion can be both a powerful unifying and divisive force.

Martha Craven Nussbaum is a political philosopher who engages with theories of social and global justice. In her work, *Sex and Social Injustice* (1999), Nussbaum addresses the 'dilemma between cultural autonomy and sexual equality'. She argues that to neglect the challenges posed by gender inequality, by cultural diversity, and by the relation between the two is to ignore some of the central issues of social justice. The problem of, and solutions to distributive inequality are viewed as intimately bound with matters of cultural and sexual inequality. Importantly, she argues that liberal feminism is not philosophically wedded to the culturally specific values of Western societies and can address issues relevant to non-Western women (such as basic rights to nutrition and education). Her most recent work (2007), *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence and India's Future*, is on the impact of religious nationalism on democratic values. She departs from Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisation' theses of a clash between Western democratic values and an antidemocratic Islam. Instead, Nussbaum argues that it is a struggle between two 'civilizations' but 'within the nation'. One civilisation adheres to a form of unity which incorporates diversity and the other views unity as allegiance and conformity to a single religious/ethnic culture.

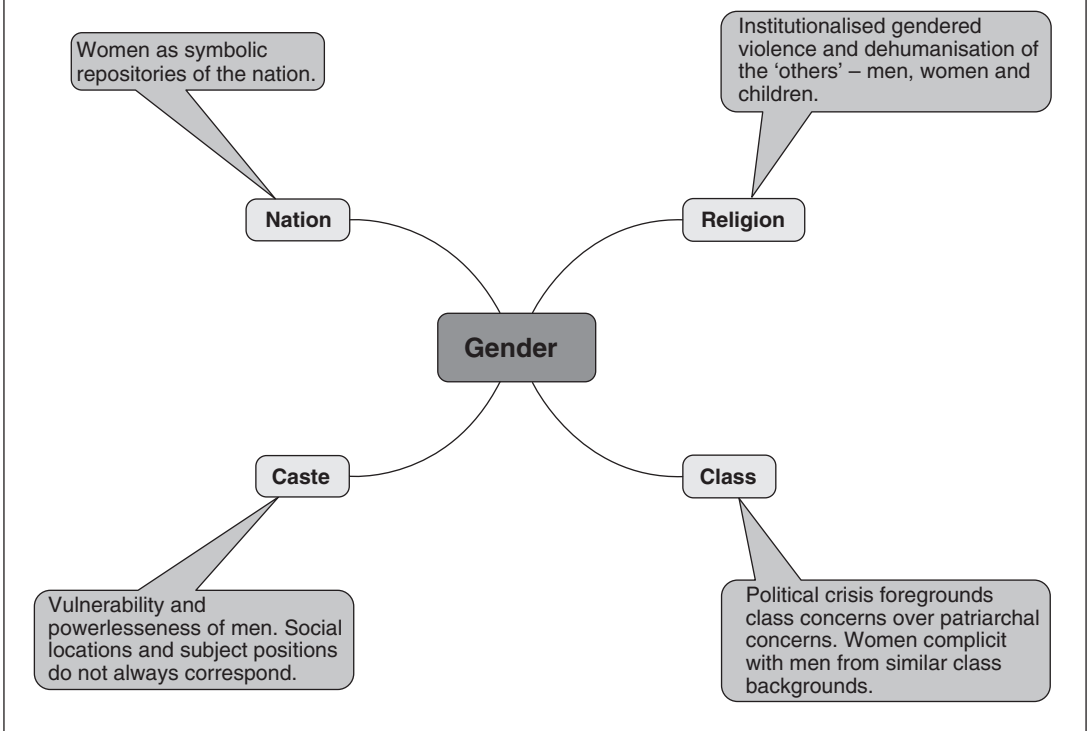


Figure 19.3

### Questions for further debate

1. Why are gendered relations so central to understanding national-ethnic movements that are driven through a religious ideology?
2. Why is gender and religion so central to nationalist symbolism?
3. In what ways can religion be used to justify ethnic cleansing by fundamentalist movements?



4. In what ways have recent debates on the *hijab* and honour violence re-opened discussions on the oppression of religion for ethnic minority women in Europe?
5. In what ways has the rhetoric of the 'imperilled Muslim woman' been used to justify the 'War on Terror'?

### Relevant web-based resources

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- A study companion site and resource centre for sociologists and social scientists, which hosts a range of resources on religion, available HTTP: <<http://www.sociosite.net/topics/religion.php>>.
- The UN Development Programme on women's empowerment, available HTTP: <<http://www.undp.org/women/>>.
- The Center for Global Development, which works to reduce global poverty and inequality by encouraging policy change. Available HTTP: <<http://www.cgdev.org/>>.
- An article from the UK newspaper *The Guardian*, quoting Cherie Booth (a human rights lawyer and wife of former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair) on the positive potential of faith-based social organisation. Online, available HTTP: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2007/oct/31/immigrationpolicy.gender>>.

### Sources for further reading and research

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**Notes**


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- 1 Gyanendra Pandey (1990) argues that during colonial rule in India there was an essentialised construction of Hindu-Muslim as oppositional entities and the colonial regime saw communal strife between Hindus and Muslims as one of the 'distinctive' features of the Indian society.
- 2 In such circumstances, 'Indian' reads as Hindu sovereignty.
- 3 The partition was a specific historical juncture which was marked by the division of the Indian sub-continent in August 1947 into two new sovereign and separate states of India and Pakistan. It led to unanticipated brutal massacres of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, who were caught in the process of mass migration between the newly created states of India and West Pakistan.
- 4 There are other examples globally. In the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Hutu women not only identified Tutsi women but also handed the children left in their care to the Hutu militia (Interahamwe) (Sharlach 1999). Amnesty International in 2004 pointed out that while African women in Darfur were being raped by the Janjaweed militiamen, Arab women stood nearby and sang for joy. Amnesty International collected several testimonies mentioning the presence of Hakama (Janjaweed women) while women were raped by the Janjaweed. According to an African chief quoted in the report, the singers said: 'The blood of the blacks runs like water, we take their goods and we chase them from our area and our cattle will be in their land' (cited in Amnesty International 2004).
- 5 The relevant section of the original text is as follows: 'Dans les écoles, les collèges et les lycées publics, le port de signes ou tenues par lesquels les élèves manifestent ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse est interdit' (Article L. 141-5-1 of Law No. 2004-2228 of the national Code d'Éducation, see also Lyon and Spini 2004).
- 6 Equality is theoretically counterposed with complementarity, where the latter affords value to the different roles and responsibilities, performed by men and women, which derive from their biological sex. Complementarity suggests that men and women complete or complement each other rather than being equal, and this is the conceptualisation of gender that informs many readings of religious texts including the Bible and the Qur'an.
- 7 It has been suggested that this derives from the thesis that 'secularization was a product of the specific historical circumstances obtaining in the battle between the Church and Enlightenment in Europe' (Martin cited in Biswas 2002: 194); thus non-European contexts may be influenced by the values inherent to secular societies they are not determined by them (ibid.). The conventional narrative of sovereignty that organises much International Relations theory documents this culturally located secularization, dating from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the right to religious freedom.

# Nationalism

Dibyesh Anand

Who are you? Who am I? The answers to such questions will depend on the context as well as on the person being questioned. But individuals have only a limited say in shaping the collective to which they are deemed to belong. For example, you may think of yourself as a non-believer in national boundaries, but the state will remind you again and again about your nationality. Our rights and access to resources will often depend on our nationality in a particular country. You may not agree with ethnic classification, but during a civil strife who you are seen as may determine whether you live or die. For more than a century national identity has been the primary form in which collective aspirations have been expressed throughout the world. Religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, race – all these have usually taken a backseat to the dominance of national identity. One has only to look at the willingness of millions to sacrifice their lives and many more to take the lives of others in the name of their nation.

If one studies the twentieth century closely, it is clear that the most pervasive ideology was neither communism nor capitalism but nationalism. Wars took place, murders were celebrated and mourned, people were encouraged to look beyond their immediate family and identify with a collective and at the same time the locus of empathy was particularised – all in the name of nationalism. A careful analysis of the nationalised lives people have lived in the contemporary times shows that, though the ideal norm is of a nation with its own state, in reality, states are mostly multinational and it is states that often seek to create a sense of nationhood amongst its people to ensure stability. Nationalism is the primary ideology through which the state seeks to gain internal sovereignty. The exact form of dominant nationalism

within a state depends on many factors. The state may be successful in fostering an inclusive nationalism or it may come up with a majoritarian nationalism that excludes minorities within. The latter then may lead to minority nationalisms and sometimes violent resistance to the existing state and demand for a new state. What I have said so far about nationalism as an ideology captures many events of the last century – inter-state wars as well as civil wars. There is no doubt that nationalism matters in global politics.

But, how does gender matter in/to nationalism? The literature on the subject has largely ignored gender as an analytical category. In recent years when gender and nationalism has been studied, mostly by feminist scholars, it highlights the central role of women in nationalism and nationalist movements and debates whether nationalism as an ideology domesticates or emancipates women. ‘Understanding nationalism as gendered means recognizing its varied impact on women and men of different social groupings’ (Puri 2004: 110). A more sophisticated approach does not focus on women but on ways in which the discourse of nationalism intersects with those of masculinity and femininity. We can investigate not how pre-given women or men act, but how their identity as men or women gets shaped through a nationalist discourse and that in turn (re)produces a national identity. In this chapter, I will outline the main debates around nationalism and then analyse the different ways in which gender is central to, but does not exhaust, nationalism.

## THEORISING NATIONALISM

Primordialists argue that nations have an essence that is historical, natural and almost unchanging. Most proponents of nationalism claim that their nation has ancient historical roots. For instance, Zionists claim all Jews for more than 2,500 years to be part of a single nation, while the Palestinian nationalism also traces itself back to more than a thousand years of continuity. Contrary to the claims of primordialists, I argue that national identity is not an essence, but a performance, a construction, an articulation, a discourse (see Chapter 1 on ‘performativity’). It is as much a process as it is a product – it is a productive process. The performance of any national identity does not take place in a vacuum, but in a power-laden international political and cultural context. This international context, in turn, is marked by asymmetries of structural and representational power in which the West (more as a source of ideas and less as a political actor) remains dominant. The rhetoric of nationalism often ignores that the need to present one’s own community as a nation is a modern phenomenon. As Mayall (1990) points out, nationalism has become structurally embedded as the basis of the modern state everywhere only in recent times. Nationalism is on the one hand an ideological movement toward the construction of a nation. On the other hand it is a product of heightened consciousness of national identity among a people.

[T]he appeals to nationalism are always politically important – nationalism is still regarded as a (if not ‘the’) prime driver of and legitimator for political, government and state policy and action, both internal and external. Moreover, in that the distribution

of power within political, social and economic structures, including global structures, tends to ensure that these structures are reproduced, political legitimacy and loyalty (i.e. nationalism) has a fundamental role in this process.

(Tooze 1996: xvii)

Let us explore different ways in which nationalism and national identity have been perceived. Please note the difference between nation, nationalism, national identity and national culture. The term 'nation' implies shared commonality that is recognisable and can be mobilised politically – culture, common language, history, heritage, ethnicity, religion, race, etc. A sense of 'shared history' is crucial to the concept of nation. Nationalism is the ideology that a nation should have a state of its own or at the very least have a right to self-determination. National identity refers to those aspects of culture that are seen as central to what brings people together as a nation. Similarly, national culture indicates a strong overlap between a nation and a culture. A multicultural nation or a multinational culture (the United States can be seen as a good example of the former while China can be seen as an example of the latter) tend to complicate the simplistic notion of national culture. This discussion still leaves out states or nation-states, although the political entity that claims to represent the nation or that nations seek to achieve is the state. In fact, international relations is in practice inter-state relations. States are the predominant political actors in contemporary international relations while nationalism remains a powerful ideology, often used to bolster the legitimacy of the state (if the state claims to represent a nation, it is seen as legitimate) or to challenge the legitimacy of the state (separatist nationalism would claim that the existing state does not represent their will). If international relations were only about abstract states, we would be talking about culture here. Culture becomes significant because of the central role played by nationalism and national identity in propping up states or shaping states.

The concept of culture has become crucial to the formulation of distinctive identities especially, but not exclusively, in relation to the issue of who belongs and who does not belong in or to specific political communities. This is where the culture concept and the idea of 'nation' intersect, for the latter is often defined not simply as a political community characterised by a particular culture, but as a political community by virtue of its possession of a particular culture . . . To the extent that nations are assumed to be cultural units encompassing 'a people' it follows that each nation is entitled, via a democratic principle of self-determination, that is, a sovereign state that is co-equal with all other such entities in an international system of states.

(Lawson 2006: 4)

Primordialists argue that there is an ethnic/nationalist 'essence' underlying many contemporary nationalisms. It is an umbrella term to describe scholars who hold that nationality is a 'natural' part of human beings and that nations have existed since time immemorial (perennialist). Most Primordialists would acknowledge that the concept of nationalism is a new phenomenon (arising in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) but would claim that the nation and the national culture has ancient roots. They would talk of a 'golden age' in the distant past, the decline since

### Culture

The dominant understanding of culture is that it is something that a social group shares, that defines the we and us, and allows for recognising the boundaries between us and them, Self and the Other. A definition of culture in terms of a shared sense of belonging has an important impact. It can be mobilised differently by different actors. Nationalism is one such ideology which claims to speak on the behalf of an existing national culture while at the same time shaping one. For instance, right-wing nationalists may insist that any dissent from their version of national culture is unpatriotic and a treason, while critical dissidents may argue that their national culture is accommodative and allows for plurality of views. Culture is as much about contestation within it about what are the main features of it. The view of an Iranian feminist or a Revolutionary Guard about what is the core of Iranian-Islamic culture would be very different. In this sense, cultures are always in process. They are not the end product which can be easily identified.

Figure 20.1

and then a will to resurgence. Can you think of possible problems with a Primordialist view of nationalism? The main criticism is that the assumption that primordial attachments and the cultural sources that generate them are 'given' does not square with facts – they are evidently invented/constructed. National cultures have evolved and are often 'invented traditions' (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

The Instrumentalist/Modernist position in contrast has a belief in the modernity of nations and nationalism. In this view, political elites play an important part in shaping national identities. It argues that nationalism appears in a crisis period of transition between tradition and modernity when old ties are no longer relevant. It thus provides identity in a time of rapid change. This crisis could be due to economic or political or cultural transformation. It could be seen in terms of massive movement of people from rural to urban areas (thus lessening the disciplining of people through church or community) due to industrial revolution (with its new demands for workers) and then need for an ideology to ensure workers devote themselves to their work/do not get distracted by radical ideas. Nationalism, which asserted that the interest of a British worker lies with her/his capitalist master and not with a German or a French worker, was a useful tool of social order and discipline.

The most famous thesis within Instrumentalist position is of nation as imagined community provided by Benedict Anderson. His argument is that the nation is a modern social construction, it is an 'imagined political community – and imagined as both limited and sovereign' (1991: 5-7) that emerged significantly due to 'print capitalism' and the spread of vernacular language and literacy. The nation is 'imagined' because its members neither meet nor interact with each other yet 'in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. Nations are imagined as a community because regardless of the actual inequality, the nation is conceived as a fraternity.

Figure 20.2

A nation therefore is constructed as a coherent and bounded political collective that has supremacy over itself and people believe in this construction. Therefore, the role of the state is crucial here. The modern state does not follow from nation but precedes it.

There are then Ethnosymbolist positions taken by scholars like Anthony Smith (1991) which claim to occupy a middle-way position in the instrumentalist-primordialist debate. They criticise that in their determination to reveal the invented character of nationalism, modernists systematically overlooked the persistence of earlier myths, symbols, values and memories in many parts of the world and their continuing significance for large numbers of people. These scholars aim to uncover the symbolic legacy of pre-modern ethnic ties for today's nations. But in my view these positions do not work. They are conceptually confused, they underestimate the differences between modern nations and earlier ethnic communities, they underestimate the fluidity and malleability of ethnic identities. The relationship between modern national identities and the cultural material of the past is at best problematic.

Where does this leave us? You can decide for yourself whether nations are ancient or modern or a product of both. My view leans toward seeing nations as a modern construction but not merely a product of modern socio-economic forces but also a discourse in itself: a discourse that is also connected to (and product and productive of) gender and race. And importantly, there are different types of nationalism and theories that might fit in one region of the world (say Europe) should not be seen as the model on the basis of which nations in other regions ought to be judged.

## WOMEN AND NATIONALISM

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Nationalism has at its core notions of camaraderie and sacrifice. Both are gendered. It is often a homosocial bonding between men that strengthens the nation; nationalist myths are replete with stories of such men. The sacrifices involve both men and women – in a typical nationalist drama, the men prove their loyalty by their willingness to give up life to protect their nation, the women do so by ensuring that they perform their primary duty of taking care of the home front as well as supporting their menfolks. Most of the literature on nationalism tends to ignore the gendered aspect of the phenomenon. One can read Gellner (1983), Anderson (1991), Smith (1991) and other doyens of the theory of nationalism without even realising that women exist as actors in political societies. Men act, but their masculinity is left unremarked. This lack of awareness of gender as a crucial dynamic in nationalism is telling of the gender-blind (masculinist writing passing off as ungendered) character of mainstream theorising of nationalism. They underestimate the role of women in nationalism movements and ignore the gendered nature of nationalist discourses. As Nira Yuval-Davis points out, the *Oxford University Press Reader on Nationalism* introduces the only extract on national and gender relations in the last section on 'Beyond nationalism' (1997: 3). Feminist writers in recent times have highlighted the role of women and gender in the phenomenon under discussion here. Note that I mention women and gender both.

Gender is central to understanding how nationalisms operate.

Despite nationalisms' ideological investment in the idea of popular unity, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalisation of gender difference. 'No nation in the world gives women and men the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state.

(McClintock 1993: 61)

Nationalism projects a sense of community demanding occasional sacrifices of the individuality in the greater service of the collective, but it is a community with clearly distinct expectations of men and women. It is not so much that women are absent in nationalist thinking, but that while symbolically very important, their role as agents is at best supportive of men as primary actors. The nation is often represented in terms of a family and 'women are the symbol of the nation, men its agents, regardless of the role women actually play in the nation' (*Feminist Review* 1993: 1). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) point out that there are five major ways in which women have participated in ethnic and national process:

- As biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities
- As reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups
- As participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture
- As signifiers of ethnic/national differences
- As active participants in national struggles.

The primary role of women in all nationalist movements is one of mother. Nation gets produced and reproduced through their biological ability to bear children, the future carriers of national identity. This biological 'ability' may give a certain respect and dignity to women as mothers, but it also domesticates their body. Nationalism often reduces women to their womb. But the nationalist expectation of women as mother is dependent on the context. In China, it is the national duty of most women (except some minority nationality women) to restrict to one child. In Singapore and some European countries the government may encourage at the very least one child from its majority ethnic women (the unstated fear being that minority women have more children and may thus overtake the local population). In societies facing severe stress, having more children could be the greatest duty toward the nation. For some Palestinians in Israel, as the following poem reminds, having more children is seen as a resistance to the might of the Israeli state:

'Write down, I am an Arab!  
Fifty thousand is my [ID] number  
Eight children, the ninth will come next summer  
Angry? Write down, I am an Arab!'

(from Lustick, in Kanaaneh 2002: 65)

A child is supposed to inherit a lot of his values and beliefs from his upbringing within his family (the use of 'his' is deliberate for in the discourse of nationalism the child as a future citizen of the nation is mostly male). It is the private realm of the



family that will train him to be a good citizen in the public and hence it is the responsibility of the mother to ensure that her child is aware and proud of his nation. A good mother performs her duty by instilling a sense of national pride, an awareness of national and ethnic difference within a child ('make friends with him but not him'). Women are also seen as prime representations of their culture and nation, as vessels of their national culture. How they dress, how they behave, what their aspirations are – all these questions are markers of difference between national cultures and women are seen as having the primary responsibility in ensuring the perpetuation of their culture. The debate over veiling of Muslim women is an excellent example of this (see Chapter 19).

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### Seminar exercise

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**INFORMATION FOR TUTORS:** Please give at least two weeks' notice to the students to collect the images. You may divide the students into at least two groups and ask them to do a presentation. At the very least, during the seminar, the students should be able to identify common themes that emerge from the images.

Consider the contemporary conflict in Israel-Palestine. What different roles do women play in Israeli as well as Palestinian nationalism? Collect images from the Internet on women and the conflict in Israel-Palestine and do a short group presentation on the role of women in the conflict.

Are women victims or actors when it comes to nationalism? Does nationalism domesticate them by valorising their roles as mothers? Or does it liberate them by offering opportunities to participate publicly in struggles? Palestinian and Israeli women crying and wailing over their dead husbands and sons; pregnant Palestinian women suffering humiliating delays at the checkpoints; women as protestors, soldiers, suicide bombers, and politicians; women as symbols of national honour and shame – these are some of the contradictory and diverse images that come to my mind. Thus, in nationalist movements women are victims, active agents, soldiers, mothers, perpetrators of violence, resistance against violence, and so on. McClintock argues that:

A feminist theory of nationalism might be strategically fourfold: investigating the gendered formation of sanctioned male theories; bringing into historical visibility women's active cultural and political participation in national formations; bringing nationalist institutions into critical relation with other social structures and institutions, while at the same time paying scrupulous attention to the structures of racial, ethnic and class power that continue to bedevil privileged forms of feminism.

(McClintock 1993: 63)

To rectify the gender-blind discussions on nationalism, feminist writers initially highlighted women as actors in nationalist movements. Almost all nationalist movements, most conspicuously anti-colonial ones (Jayawardena 1986), had a significant

number of women participating in nationalist struggles. Anti-colonial nationalists used the private-public divide, with its strong gendered connotation, in the European thinking (state having little jurisdiction over the private) to assert a national difference (by reforming and buttressing the private and then using this to gain confidence to launch a wider political movement; Chatterjee 1993) but at the same time in a more advanced stage of the movement, allowed/encouraged women as public actors. It was often the case that women had more freedom during advanced stages of nationalist struggle than in the immediate aftermath of a period of initial national consolidation of the new postcolonial state. Algeria is a good example where women were very active in the struggle against French colonialists but after independence the expectation was for them to go back to their 'natural' role in the private sphere. In this sense, nationalism affords freedom and agency to women but essentially as a strategic move. The normative picture remains one of man as actor and protector, woman as supportive and protected.

## GENDER, NATIONALISM AND THE NON-NATIONALIST OTHER

A feminist investigation that focuses only on identifying and highlighting the contribution and the role of women in nationalism and nationalist movements has its own limitations, for it adopts a simplistic notion of male and female bodies. A more sophisticated feminist take on gender matters in nationalism will also recognise that one needs to investigate politics of gender within nationalism. Is the normative nationalist actor any male? Or are they males of certain kind (the attitude toward queer people in most nationalisms is a case in point)? Does the biological identity of a being as a male automatically make him an agent of nationalism or does he have to prove his credentials as a man and as a nationalist man? Clearly nationalism (and wars and militarisation around it) offers a good opportunity to nationalised men to prove their masculinity and their nationalism.

'Nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope' (Enloe 1989: 44). Enloe's insight on nationalism challenges a simplistic equation of the gender question in nationalism with the role of women. Elsewhere (Anand 2008, 2007), I have argued that a close study of contemporary nationalisms (especially, but not exclusively, those that are associated with identification of the enemies of the nation and violence against them) shows that nationalism should be conceptualised as a political move to create, awaken, and strengthen a masculinist-nationalist body which is always already vulnerable to the exposure of the masculine as non-masculine. As expressions of collective politics, the international and the national cannot function without individual corporeal bodies that perform. The body is crucial to the nationalist project and performative and performing bodies in the nation-politics are predominantly, though not exclusively, male identified bodies, especially when conjured up as active agents. A focus on masculine bodies does not imply that feminine bodies are secondary for no conception of masculine can exist without a constitutive mirror-opposite feminine. Peterson is right when she argues that 'it is women's bodies, activities, and knowing that must be included if we are to accurately understand human life and social relations'

(1992: 11). But it is equally important that we reconceptualise political movements of dominance (such as nationalism) for what they first and foremost are – construction/ expression of masculinised bodies. We cannot understand nationalism unless we see it as constituted primarily through, to modify Peterson, men’s bodies, activities and knowing even while recognising that categories of men and women are not biologically but socially constructed. In an excellent article on nationalism, sexuality and masculinity, Nagel says:

My point here is that the ‘microculture’ of masculinity in everyday life articulates very well with the demands of nationalism, particularly its militaristic side. When, over the years I have asked my undergraduate students to write down on a piece of paper their answer to the question: ‘What is the worst name you can be called?’ the gender difference in their responses is striking. The vast majority of women respond: ‘slut’ (or its equivalent, with ‘bitch’ a rather distant second); the vaster majority of men respond: ‘wimp’ or ‘coward’ or ‘pussy’. Only cowards shirk the call to duty; real men are not cowards. Patriotism is a siren call that few men can resist, particularly in the midst of a political ‘crisis’; and if they do, they risk the disdain or worse of their communities and families, sometimes including their mothers.

(Nagel 1998: 252)

Gender and sexuality are not epiphenomenal (of secondary importance) but rather constitutive of national identity and conflicts based on these identities. For instance, masculinity, war and American national identity were intimately linked, during the wars in the Philippines in the 1890s, Vietnam in the 1960s and the War on Terror from 2001 onwards. The interventionists often portrayed wars as a trial by fire for American masculinity and opportunity to consolidate American national identity. In the eyes of the interventionists, there was a worry that ‘the United States had become too soft in its battle against a supposedly determined and single-minded foe . . . the nation was hamstrung by too “civilized” a code of conduct and by a volatile democratic public opinion, a “disadvantage” that totalitarian countries did not have to contend with’ (Hilfrich 2003: 65). An example of crude display of sexuality was in a not much reported action of Lyndon B. Johnson as narrated by a reporter:

Soon LBJ was waving his arms and fulminating about his war. Who the hell was Ho Chi Minh, anyway, that he thought he could push America around? Then the President did an astonishing thing: he unzipped his trousers, dangled a given appendage, and asked his shocked associates: “Has Ho Chi Minh got anything like that?”

(quoted in Darby 1987, in Hilfrich 2003: 60)

This hierarchisation of the Self and the Other where the Self’s national identity is better can be seen especially during times of stress and conflict. For example, freedom loving, god-fearing, family-oriented consumerist American national identity versus repressive, godless, ruthlessly egalitarian communist Soviet Union (from the American perspective). Gender played an interesting role in Cold War propaganda. Belmonte analyses documents and articles disseminated by the US Information Agency between 1945–60 and shows how Soviet gender equality was presented as

going against family values which in turn defined American female identity (primarily as a home maker). An interesting cartoon with the caption 'Even if we are super-women, I still wish we had fun like Americans' reflected criticisms of the Soviet notion of gender equality in favour of American femininity (Belmonte 2003). Of course, the Soviets had their own ways of constructing a superior social national identity – egalitarian, socialist patriotic Soviet identity against fascistic, capitalist, unequal American society. Images changed rapidly in the post-Cold War. In the so-called war on terror, the image of Islam as bad for women and the West as defender of women's rights is one of the defining motifs (see Chapter 9). Of course, gender and sexuality are not the only or main dynamic in the creation of national identity. Race and/or religion may play an equal or more important role. But without doubt nationalism relies on inclusion and exclusion, remembering and forgetting, identity and difference.

## CONCLUSION

You will have noticed how the language of the so-called 'War on Terror' is based on an 'Us-Them' distinction: 'Us' is strong, brave, democratic, just, humane and pitted against 'Them' who are cowardly, weak, illegal, authoritarian, extremist, radical, dangerous and inhumane (see also Chapter 9). Therefore those who fight against terrorism (as categorised by the USA) are on the side of the good, the terrorists and their 'rogue state' backers are of course evil, and those who refuse to participate are weaklings (such as the French during the Iraq invasion). National identity gets more rigid and acutely defined especially in situations of war and conflict. We witnessed that in the USA in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on World Trade Center.

Thus, we see how national identity, nationalism, and hence national culture get constructed and renewed every day through the activities and lives of supposed subjects/carriers. Gender plays an important role in this process and so do other markers of identity we have not looked at (such as class, religion, race, sexuality, etc.).

What you need to take away from this chapter is that national identity, and hence national culture, is always in the process of flux and change. It is not fixed. It is constructed. It is therefore always contested. For instance, Israeli Jewish women protesting against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories through activist organisations such as 'Women in Black' have a different notion of what a good Israeli Jewish national culture ought to be in comparison to those who deny the very existence of Palestinians as a people. Similarly those Palestinians who recognise Israel and want to live with it peacefully either as part of one single secular democratic state or two separate states side by side and those Palestinians who see not only Israel but all Jews as enemy would have very different notions of what a Palestinian national culture should be. Nationalism therefore is an internal contestation over what the features and boundaries of the nation are. It is also about creating/asserting the identity of the nation by distinguishing itself from the Others of the nation. Gender plays a central role in this process of national identification, bodies that matter in nationalism are gendered bodies, the demarcation of the national Self from the non-National

Other is achieved through specific representations of masculinity and femininity, and nationalist violence are legitimised in gendered terms (defending the honour of 'our' women against the enemy men). The durability of the concept of nation makes it an important subject of investigation for international relations. The fact of constructedness of nationalism is less interesting than the gendered and racialised process of construction. It is not enough to say that a nation is a fabricated entity but how it is fabricated, why the fabrication successfully sells itself as natural, how it scavenges upon already existing gender relations while at the same time reinscribing and maybe even challenging it.

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### Questions for further debate

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1. If nationalism is a social construction, why does it have an almost universal appeal?
2. How would you analyse the relationship between nation, culture, and gender?
3. How does representation of the Other play an important part in constituting the national Self?
4. Choose two examples of nationalism – one European and one non-European – and compare and contrast the role of women in it.
5. How is masculinity relevant for understanding discourse of nationalism?

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### Relevant web-based resources

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- Debate between Gellner and Smith, available HTTP: <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/gellner/index.htm>>.
- A collection of resources on issues concerning nationalism, available HTTP: <<http://www.nationalismproject.org/>>.
- Articles on different aspects of feminism, available HTTP: <[http://www.zmag.org/znet/places/Feminism\\_Gender](http://www.zmag.org/znet/places/Feminism_Gender)>.
- An online simulation game that can be utilised to explore different aspects of nation states, available HTTP: <<http://www.nationstates.net/>>.
- A good example of a multimedia report on the modern construction of nation states (in the Middle East). Available HTTP: <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/questions/nations/index.html>>.

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- Enloe, C. (2001) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, rev. edn, London and Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (especially the chapter titled 'Nationalism and masculinity').
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# Transnational Activism

Valentine M. Moghadam

Transnational activism has been the focus of a growing body of literature since the 1990s. It is defined as cross-border collective action, involving people from two or more countries around specific campaigns or longer-term movements. Transnational activism takes different forms, from lobbying and advocacy to protests and direct action. It is carried out by small groups, networks, organizations, or mass movements. This chapter examines the origins of transnational feminist activism by situating it in the larger contexts of globalization and the emergence of transnational social movement activism. It describes several types of transnational feminist networks and draws attention to the different strategies deployed.

The 1990s saw the emergence of many studies analyzing the growth of what was variously called non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), global civil society, transnational advocacy networks (TANs), global social movements (GSMs), and transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs).<sup>1</sup> Little attention, however, was paid to the women's movement or to women's transnational organizing and activism. Exceptions included the pioneering volume by Keck and Sikkink (1998), which examined TANs organized around human rights, the environment, and violence against women. O'Brien *et al.* (2000) studied the ways in which global unions, women's movements, and environmental organizations engaged with multilateral economic institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Finally, a collection by Cohen and Rai (2000) on global social movements included essays on feminist networking for conflict-resolution and to advance women's human rights. With the growth of Islamist movements, a parallel body of work examined

various forms of Islamist activism. Studies focused first on Islamist movements within single societies and later – especially after September 11, 2001 – on the transnational linkages (Wictorowicz 2004; Moghadam 2009).

The ‘Battle of Seattle’ in late 1999 gave rise to yet another body of literature, or rather, a new direction for research on INGOs, TANs, and GSMs. With the dramatic appearance of a seemingly international movement of activists opposed to the new global economic order – and especially its trade agenda as controlled by the World Trade Organization – it became clear to analysts that a new global movement was in the making (Smith and Johnston 2002; Broad 2002). This came to be called the Global Justice Movement (GJM), and the new movement focused its transnational activist energies against neoliberal capitalism, institutions of global governance, and the powerful capitalist countries, banks, and corporations behind the new world order. For several years after the Seattle protests, a wave of protests engulfed most of the world, and especially European countries, as highly organized networks of activists launched protests in their own countries or traveled abroad to take part in others (della Porta 2007). In Brazil, the growing influence of the left-wing Workers Party and the election of one of its leading members, Lula, to the presidency in 2002 gave the GJM a new institutional base – the annual World Social Forum (WSF), first held in Porto Alegre in 2001. Launched as an alternative to the World Economic Forum – an annual gathering in Davos, Switzerland, of the world’s leading politicians and businessmen – the WSF brings together national and transnational activists (Santos 2006).

Feminist scholars studying these new global developments noticed a paucity of attention to the gender dynamics of the new transnational activism, including the role of women in movement leadership, the place of feminist issues on movement or network agendas, and the impact of the less salutary forms of transnational organizing (such as religious fundamentalism and extremist groups) on women’s rights. One group of feminist scholars had begun studying Islamist movements in the 1980s. Notable among them were Iranian feminists, who had experienced the adverse effects of Islamization in Iran following the revolution of 1979. Another group of scholar-activists went on to form an international solidarity network called Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML), and they carried out their own studies of Islamist movements. As early as 1990, WLUML warned of an ‘Islamist international’ that would do more harm than good (Moghadam 2005).

Transnational feminist organizing and advocacy had appeared in the 1980s but it was not until the mid-1990s that it came to the attention of feminist scholars. Preparations for the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women, to take place in Beijing in September 1995, gave resources to existing women’s groups and provided the impetus for the formation of new ones. Studies appeared that examined feminist transnational organizing and activism (Lycklama *et al.* 1998; Berkovitch 1999; Steinstra 2000; Sperling *et al.* 2001; Naples and Desai 2002). They connected women’s movements and organizations to international or global processes such as the role of international organizations or United Nations Decade on Women, and they examined the ways that women’s organizations engaged with the world of public policy. Moghadam (2005) explained the worldwide social movement of women in terms of globalization processes such as the feminization of labor, growing social



inequalities, and increased access to the new information and computer technologies (ICTs) by educated and politically active women (see Chapter 23 for further discussion of ICTs).

## GLOBAL FEMINISM?

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While not all feminists agree on the matter, many assert that ‘the women’s movement’ is a global phenomenon, and that despite cultural differences, country specificities, and organizational priorities, there are observed similarities in the ways that women’s rights activists frame their grievances and demands, form networks and organizations, and engage with state and intergovernmental institutions. Some of these similarities include adoption of discourses of women’s human rights and gender equality; references to international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); campaigns for legal and policy reforms to ensure women’s civil, political, and social rights; solidarity and networking across borders; and coalitions with other civil society groups. Another observation is that women’s rights activists – whether in South Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, or North Africa – are opposed to ‘fundamentalist’ discourses and agendas and espouse feminist discourses and goals, whether explicitly or implicitly. Sperling *et al.* (2001) have rightly asserted that *feminist action* is an appropriate term to define that in which the participants explicitly place value on challenging gender hierarchy and changing women’s social status, whether or not they adopt the feminist label.

Like other transnational social movements, the global women’s movement is heterogeneous and internally differentiated. This was especially evident during the Fourth World Conference on Women, which took place in Beijing, China, in September 1995. For three weeks, women’s groups from across the world came to China to take part in the massive non-governmental forum that preceded but also overlapped with the official, intergovernmental conference. At the latter, those women’s groups with UN accreditation were able to enter conference halls, lobby delegates, disseminate their literature, and hold rallies. This was hardly a movement with a center or a bureaucracy or a hierarchy. It was a *movement of movements*, albeit highly networked. And, although the women’s groups at Beijing had something to say about an array of issues, with different priorities emphasized, they also had common grievances concerning war, peace, fundamentalisms, and the new economic order.

In previous work (Moghadam 2005), I have defined transnational feminist activism as entailing the mobilization of women from three or more countries around a specific set of grievances and goals. In this chapter, I discuss two strategies of contemporary transnational feminist activism. The first strategy is organized and sustained mobilization, and takes the form of what I have called the *transnational feminist network*. In the previous work, I examined three types of transnational feminist networks (TFNs) that emerged in the 1980s and continue to be active to this day: networks that target the neoliberal economic policy agenda; those that focus on the danger of fundamentalisms and insist on women’s human rights, especially in the Muslim world; and women’s peace groups that target conflict, war, and empire.

In this essay I elaborate on the transnational feminist peace and anti-imperialist groups.

The second strategy of transnational activism to be described in this essay is what I call *feminist humanitarianism and international solidarity*. Here, groups of women come together in new or established networks to engage in humanitarian and solidaristic work across borders. This second type includes episodic campaigns in which diverse groups come together to support a women's rights cause in one or another country. An example is the ongoing international solidarity campaign, since 2006, to support feminist activism in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Transnational feminist activism is deeply connected to globalization processes. I have defined globalization as a multi-dimensional process – entailing economic, political, cultural, and geographic aspects – in which capital, peoples, organizations, and discourses take on an increasingly transnational or global character within the capitalist world-system (Moghadam 2005). In this connection, transnational activism is both a response to the downside of globalization ('globalization-from-above', including neoliberal capitalism, the increasing power of institutions of global governance, growing inequalities, and persistent poverty) and a contributor to a more people-oriented globalization ('globalization-from-below', including the institutionalization of economic justice, peace, and human rights). Transnational feminist activism has arisen in the same structural context, uniting women across the globe around common grievances and goals. But because the world-system is unequal and hierarchical, and because globalization's impacts are differentiated across regions and social groups, there are also points of contention among transnational feminist activists.

## THE ROAD TO TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM

Women have worked together across borders for women's rights since at least the era of first-wave feminism. The struggle for political and social rights, as well as peace and anti-militarism, united women in the early decades of the twentieth century. In mid-century the women's movement began to diverge, grouping itself within national boundaries or economic zones, emphasizing different priorities, and aligning with divergent ideological currents.

Feminist groups encompassed liberal, radical, Marxist, and socialist ideologies, and these political differences constituted one form of division within feminism. The Cold War cast a shadow on feminist solidarity, in the form of the East-West divide. Another division took the form of North-South, or First World-Third World differences in terms of priority feminist issues; many First World feminists saw legal equality and reproductive rights as key feminist demands and goals, while many Third World feminists emphasized underdevelopment, colonialism, and imperialism as obstacles to women's advancement. Disagreements came to the fore at the beginning of the United Nations' Decade for Women, and especially at its first and second world conferences on women, which took place in Mexico City in 1975 and in Copenhagen in 1980, respectively.

A shift in the nature and orientation of international feminism began to take place in the mid-1980s, during preparations for the third UN world conference on

women, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985. The shift took the form of bridge building and consensus making across regional and ideological divides, and the emergence of a women's organization of a new type, the TFN. What enabled this were three critical economic and political developments within states and regions, and at the level of the world-system:

- The transition from Keynesian economics (with its emphasis on government intervention for full employment and citizen welfare) to neoliberal economics (with its emphasis on free markets, privatization, and trade and financial liberalization), along with a new international division of labor that relied heavily on (cheap) female labor;
- The decline of the welfare state in the core countries and the developmental state in the Third World; both changes in political economy placed a heavy burden on women's reproductive or domestic roles; and
- The emergence of various forms of fundamentalist and right-wing religious movements, which threatened women's autonomy and human rights.

These global changes led to new ways of thinking and forms of organizing. The new economic and political realities led to a convergence of feminist perspectives: for many First World feminists, economic issues and development policy became increasingly important, and for many Third World feminists, increased attention was now directed to women's legal status, autonomy, and rights. This was accompanied by the formation of a number of transnational feminist networks that brought together women from both developed and developing countries to respond to economic pressures and patriarchal movements. They engaged in policy-oriented research, advocacy, and lobbying around issues pertaining to women and development, and women's human rights. Many of the women who formed or joined the TFNs were scholar-activists who had been, and continued to be, involved in the women and development research community (see Figure 21.1 for details on types of TFNs).

What should be noted is the impact of the computer revolution, for feminist advocacy and solidarity campaigns in the 1990s were spearheaded in part by the new information and computer technologies. These helped women connect and share information, plan and coordinate activities more rapidly, and mobilize more extensively. As TFNs proliferated in the 1990s, they helped bridge the North-South divide among women activists and transcended the earlier political and ideological differences through the adoption of a broader feminist agenda that included a critique of neoliberalism and structural adjustment policies as well as an insistence on women's full citizenship, reproductive rights, bodily integrity, and autonomy no matter what the cultural context. Eventually, that common agenda took the form of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Along the way to Beijing, though, there were other venues where the world's women agreed on issues pertaining to gender justice, notably the UN world conferences of the 1990s – the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in

*Critique of Economic Policy*

<b>Transnational Feminist Network</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Location</b>
Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)	<a href="http://www.dawn.org.fj/">http://www.dawn.org.fj/</a>	Fiji
Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE)	<a href="http://www.eurosur.org/wide/home.htm">http://www.eurosur.org/wide/home.htm</a>	Brussels
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)	<a href="http://www.wedo.org/">http://www.wedo.org/</a>	New York
Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ)	<a href="http://www.wicej.addr.com/">http://www.wicej.addr.com/</a>	U.S.
International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC)	<a href="http://www.iwtc.org/">http://www.iwtc.org/</a>	U.S.

*Peace, Anti-Militarism, Conflict-Resolution*

<b>Transnational Feminist Network</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Location</b>
Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region (AWMR)	<a href="http://digilander.libero.it/awmr/int/">http://digilander.libero.it/awmr/int/</a>	U.S. & Cyprus
Women for Women International (WWI)	<a href="http://www.womenforwomen.org/">http://www.womenforwomen.org/</a>	U.S.
Women in Black	<a href="http://balkansnet.org/wib/">http://balkansnet.org/wib/</a> <a href="http://www.womeninblack.net/">http://www.womeninblack.net/</a>	Various countries
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)	<a href="http://www.wilpf.org/">http://www.wilpf.org/</a>	Switzerland & U.S.
Code Pink	<a href="http://www.codepink4peace.org/">www.codepink4peace.org/</a>	U.S.
Grandmothers for Peace International	<a href="http://www.grandmothersforpeace.org">www.grandmothersforpeace.org</a>	U.S.
MADRE	<a href="http://www.madre.org">www.madre.org</a>	U.S.
Medica Mondiale	<a href="http://www.medicamondiale.org/en/projekte/jugoslawien/">http://www.medicamondiale.org/en/projekte/jugoslawien/</a>	Germany

*Advocacy for Women's Human Rights and Anti-Fundamentalism*

<b>Transnational Feminist Network</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Location</b>
Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA)	<a href="http://www.awsa.net/">http://www.awsa.net/</a>	U.S.
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)	<a href="http://www.awid.org/">http://www.awid.org/</a>	Canada
Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)	<a href="http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/">http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/</a>	U.S.
Equality Now	<a href="http://www.equalitynow.org/">http://www.equalitynow.org/</a>	U.S. & Kenya
MADRE	<a href="http://www.madre.org/index.html">http://www.madre.org/index.html</a>	U.S.
Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)	<a href="http://www.wluml.org/">http://www.wluml.org/</a>	Nigeria, Pakistan, U.K.
Women's Caucus for Gender Justice	<a href="http://www.iccwomen.org/">http://www.iccwomen.org/</a>	U.S.
Women's Human Rights Network (WHRNet)	<a href="http://www.whrnet.org/">http://www.whrnet.org/</a>	N/A
Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)	<a href="http://www.learningpartnership.org">http://www.learningpartnership.org</a>	U.S.
Women for Women International	<a href="http://www.womenforwomen.org">www.womenforwomen.org</a>	U.S.

Figure 21.1

Cairo in 1994, and the World Summit for Social Development (the Social Summit) in Copenhagen in 1995. At these conferences, women declared that environmental issues were women's issues, that women's rights were human rights, that governments were expected to guarantee women's reproductive health and rights, and that women's access to productive employment and social protection needed to be expanded. Slowly, new frames emerged that resonated globally and have come to be adopted by women's groups throughout the world: *women's human rights; gender justice; gender equality; ending the feminization of poverty; ending violence against women.*

Policy successes followed in the 1990s. TFN lobbying led to the insertion of important items in the final Vienna Declaration of the 1993 Conference on Human Rights, such as the assertion that violence against women was an abuse of human rights, and attention to the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudice, and religious extremisms. The Declaration also stated that human rights abuses of women in situations of armed conflict – including systematic rape, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy – were violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Some scholars have distinguished between professionalized women's lobbying groups and 'grassroots' women's groups. The former are said to be elitist while the latter are more movement-oriented. This may be an arbitrary distinction, however, because many of the professionalized TFNs are led and staffed by feminist activists with strong commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment, and social transformation. Moreover, the international women's movement is diffuse and diverse, with different types of mobilizing structures, discourses, and action repertoires. The overarching frame is that of achieving gender equality and human rights for women and girls. How that is achieved varies – through direct action, grassroots organizing, research and analysis, lobbying efforts, coalition-building, humanitarian action. All of these strategies, in my view, are movement-oriented (see Figure 21.2).

What are some of the activities that transnational feminist networks carry out in pursuit of their goals? Like other transnational social movements, they create, activate, or join global networks to mobilize pressure outside states. TFNs build or take part in coalitions, such as Jubilee 2000; the Coalition to End the Third World Debt; Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice; the Women and Trade Network; 50 Years is Enough; Women's Eyes on the Bank; United for Peace and Justice. Since the Battle of Seattle, they have become active players in the global justice movement, taking part in the World Social Forum. And while women's groups long have been identified with peace movements, the new conflicts associated with globalization and American militarism have led to the creation of new transnational feminist peace networks. Working alone or in coalitions, transnational feminist networks mobilize pressure outside states via e-petitions, action alerts, and appeals; acts of civil disobedience; other forms of public protest; and sometimes direct action.

Second, TFNs participate in multilateral and inter-governmental political arenas. They observe and address UN departments such as ECOSOC and bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); and they consult UN agencies and regional commissions. By taking part in and submitting documents to IGO meetings, and by preparing background papers, briefing papers and reports, they increase expertise on issues. By lobbying delegates they raise awareness and cultivate

	DAWN	WIDE	WLUML	Marche Mondiale	MADRE	Women for Women Int'l	Code Pink
Grassroots organizing		X		X			X
Research & analysis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lobbying	X	X				X	
Public advocacy & education		X	X	X	X	X	X
Coalition- building	X	X	X	X	X		X
Humanitarian action					X	X	X
International solidarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public protests				X			X

Figure 21.2

supporters. The purpose of such interaction with IGOs is to raise new issues – such as gender and trade, women’s human rights, and violence against women in war zones – with a view toward influencing policy.

Third, TFNs act and agitate within borders and vis-à-vis states to enhance public awareness and participation. They work with labor and progressive religious groups, the media, and human rights groups on social policy, humanitarian, development, and militarization issues. They link with local partners, take part in local coalitions, and provoke or take part in public protests. And fourth, they network with each other, in a sustained process of *inter-networking* and *Internet-working*. In all these ways, their activism spans local, national, regional, and transnational terrains. And the ‘gift’ of the Internet has allowed them to transcend borders, boundaries, and barriers in their collective action against neoliberalism, militarism, and fundamentalisms.

### Seminar exercise

INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR: Students will need a week to prepare for this exercise, and could work in small groups or, if necessary, as individuals to prepare their presentations on the topics listed below.

Divide the class into small groups and assign one of the following topics to each. Pursue the references and on-line sources offered in this chapter.

- What are some insights provided by a gender analysis of transnational activism?
- Describe the relationship between globalization and transnational activism.
- How do gender and transnational feminism figure in the global justice movement?
- What are transnational feminist critiques of Islamist movements?
- Examine transnational feminist activism around Security Council Resolution 1325.

## FEMINISM AGAINST EMPIRE AND WAR

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Feminists and women's groups have been long involved in peace work, with analyses of the causes and consequences of conflict, methods of conflict resolution and peace building, and conditions necessary for human security. One of the oldest transnational feminist networks, and indeed, one of the world's oldest peace organizations, is the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), founded in 1915 by 1,300 women activists from Europe and North America opposed to what became known as the First World War (Enloe 2007: 14). The activities of anti-militarist and human rights groups such as WILPF, Women Strike for Peace (USA), the Women of Greenham Common (UK), and the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo (Argentina) are well known, and their legacy lies in ongoing efforts to 'feminize' or 'engender' peace, nuclear disarmament, and human rights.

The era of globalization and the end of the Cold War were accompanied by a new wave of conflicts – in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Central Africa – along with serious violations of women's human rights. Women's groups responded by underscoring the specific vulnerability of women and girls during wartime, the pervasive nature of sexual abuse, and the need to include women's groups in peace negotiations. New women-led peace, human rights, and humanitarian organizations were formed, as were more professionalized networks; these included Women in Black, Medica Mondiale, Women Waging Peace, and Women for Women International. Advocacy networks and scholar-activists produced research to show that women's groups had been effective in peace-building in Northern Ireland as well as in Bosnia and Central Africa.

In response to such research, lobbying, and advocacy initiatives, the United Nations Security Council issued a resolution that was embraced by women's groups, if not governments themselves. In March 2000, the UN Security Council, in its Proclamation on International Women's Day, recognized that gender equality is an integral component of peace, and in October convened a special session to consider the situation of women in armed conflict. On 31 October it passed Resolution 1325, calling on governments – and the Security Council itself – to include women in negotiations and settlements with respect to conflict-resolution and peace-building.

However, while Security Council Resolution 1325 was widely hailed as a historic achievement in a domain usually considered off-limits to women and the preserve of men, its import was usurped not long afterwards, when new conflicts erupted that would sideline the Resolution in the name of the 'global war on terror'. The aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 galvanized women

across the globe, who rallied to existing peace organizations or built new ones. Women participated in huge numbers in anti-war activities, in India, Pakistan, Turkey, Tunisia, South Africa. In the USA, a new peace group was formed, the now-famous Code Pink: Women for Peace, aptly dubbed by one sympathetic analyst 'the new Mothers of Invention' (Milazzo 2005).

Code Pink was formed in November 2002 by a group of women who had worked with each other as well as in other networks. Medea Benjamin co-founded Global Exchange in 1988 with Kevin Danaher; Jodie Evans had worked for former California governor Jerry Brown; and Gael Murphy was a long-time public health advisor in Africa and the Caribbean. The group's name is a play on the national security color codes established by the Bush Administration in the aftermath of September 11. As they explain on their website: 'While Bush's color-coded alerts are based on fear, the Code Pink alert is based on compassion and is a feisty call for women and men to "wage peace"' (Code Pink 2009). Activists have shown their creativity and innovative style of protest in various ways. One innovation is the issuance of 'pink slips' to political culprits. Activities have included a four-month vigil at the White House to oppose the war in 2003; a march of about 10,000 women on March 8, 2003 in Washington, DC, on the occasion of International Women's Day; several protests around the time of George Bush's second presidential inauguration in January 2004; and a steady stream of protests on Capitol Hill and cities across the United States. Wearing pink costumes and engaging in daring acts of public protest, Code Pink activists have become known for infiltrating Congressional meetings, unfurling anti-war banners, shouting anti-war slogans, and badgering members of Congress on their stand on the war, military spending, healthcare for veterans, and support for Iraqi civilians. In one bold act that received much national and international coverage, a Code Pink activist, her hands painted red, approached Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Capitol Hill and accused her of having the blood of the Iraqi people on her hands.<sup>2</sup>

Code Pink's mission statement identifies itself as 'a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the war in Iraq, stop new wars, and redirect our resources into healthcare, education and other life-affirming activities'. Toward this end, it works with other feminist and social justice networks, including the the National Organization for Women and United for Peace and Justice. Along with MADRE, Women in Black, and Women for Women International, Code Pink engages in operational activities, information exchange and solidarity work, as well as direct action to protest government policies or inaction. It is also active in CARA, the Council for Assisting [Iraqi] Refugee Academics.

In addition to Code Pink, networks such as the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, Women in Conflict Zones Network, PeaceWomen, and Women Waging Peace engage in research, lobbying, and advocacy to ensure that war criminals are brought to justice and that local women's peace groups are recognized. They also advocate for the International Criminal Court (established in 1999 as the first international war crimes court) and for Security Council Resolution 1325. In 2007, the Nobel Women's Initiative was formed by six women Nobel Peace Prize winners – Shirin Ebadi of Iran, Jodie Williams of the USA, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan of Northern Ireland, Wangari Matthei of Kenya, and Rigoberto Menchu of Guatemala. Its first international conference, focusing on women, conflict, peace, and security



in the Middle East, took place in Galway, Ireland, in May 2007, and was attended by about 75 women from across the globe.

## FEMINIST HUMANITARIANISM AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

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While almost all transnational feminist networks may be regarded as internationalist and solidaristic – inasmuch as they are concerned about the plight of ‘sisters’ across borders and boundaries of nationality, religion, and class – not all engage in humanitarian work. I define feminist humanitarianism as operational work, addressing women’s immediate, basic, or practical needs but informed by the strategic goal of achieving women’s human rights and gender equality. It is also typically framed by a critique of international relations and international political economy. (This understanding is very different from the ‘humanitarian intervention’ that was conceptualized in the 1990s to justify bombing Serbia and later invading Iraq.) Feminist networks that engage in this type of humanitarianism include Code Pink, MADRE, Medica Mondiale Kosovo, and Women for Women International. Given space limitations, I elaborate only on MADRE and Code Pink in this section (but see Figure 21.3 for comparative data on four humanitarian feminist networks).

MADRE began its work during the US-sponsored contra war in Nicaragua in 1983 and initially devoted itself to that issue. As a progressive women’s organization, MADRE invariably champions causes and pursues feminist humanitarianism and internationalism in contexts that are challenged by US hegemony. In all countries MADRE partners with sister organizations. It has worked in Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Palestine, and Haiti, providing aid for women and children through women’s groups in the countries. Starting in 2004, MADRE has worked with its Sudanese partner Zeinab for Women in Development to provide emergency aid for displaced women and families in Darfur. In 2005 MADRE sent \$500,000 worth of clothing and bedding to small refugee camps.

MADRE’s work in Iraq dates back to the 1991 Gulf War, when it began collecting an assortment of needed supplies for Iraqi families, including milk and medicine. It continued this work throughout the 1990s, and frequently decried the detrimental effects on women and children of the sanctions regime. After the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq, MADRE partnered with UNICEF/Iraq and provided 25,000 citizens with supplies and emergency aid, including essential drugs and medical supplies to those in need. Working with its local feminist partner, the Organization of Women’s Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), MADRE helped to address the problem of ‘honor killings’ – which spiked after the invasion – and to support the creation of women’s shelters for victims of domestic and community violence in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Erbil, and Nasariyeh. As Yanar Mohammad, an OWFI founder and leader, explained to me in a meeting in Amsterdam in May 2005, the campaign has given rise to a web of shelters and an escape route for Iraqi women, which is known as the Underground Railroad for Iraqi Women and is largely run by OWFI volunteers.

As noted in the previous section, Code Pink has become famous for its bold actions of civil disobedience and public protests. But its action repertoire also includes feminist humanitarianism and international solidarity, as evidenced by

	<b>Year established</b>	<b>Core goals &amp; activities</b>	<b>Country projects</b>	<b>\$ disbursed</b>
<b>MADRE</b>	1983	Gender, economic and environmental justice; programs in peace building; women's health & freedom from violence; mobilizes resources for partner organizations to meet immediate needs of women and their families and develop long-term solutions to the crises they face.	Sudan, Iraq, Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Kenya, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Palestine	\$22 million since 1983
<b>Women for Women International</b>	1993	Addressing the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict environments; helping to effect transition from victims to active citizens; provides microcredits and business services.	Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Iraq, Kosovo, Sudan, Nigeria, Rwanda, DR Congo.	\$33 million as of 2006
<b>Medica Mondiale</b>	1999	Women's human rights and security; "We support traumatised women and girls in war and crisis zones"; medical assistance & counselling; safe houses	Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia, Cambodia, DR Congo, Aceh, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda	n.a.
<b>Code Pink</b>	2002	Against war, militarism; U.S. out of Iraq; solidarity with Iraqi people; support U.S. troops by bringing them home; provided medical supplies for Iraqis	Iraq	n.a.

Figure 21.3

visits to Baghdad to demonstrate opposition to war and solidarity with the Iraqi people. Founders Medea Benjamin and Jodie Evans, along with Sand Brim, traveled to Iraq in February 2003, and another trip was organized in December 2003. In December 2004, Code Pink coordinated the historic 'Families for Peace Delegation' to Amman, Jordan, involving the three Code Pink founders and a member of the anti-war group United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), along with several relatives of fallen American soldiers and families of 9/11 victims. According to one report:

In an inspiring act of humanity and generosity, they brought with them \$650,000 in medical supplies and other aid for the Fallujah refugees who were forced from their homes when the Americans destroyed their city. Although the American press failed to cover this unprecedented visit, the mission garnered enormous attention from

Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiyya, and Dubai and Iranian television, who witnessed first hand the depths of American compassion.

(Milazzo 2005)

Let us end by turning to an ongoing example of feminist internationalism – the extension of solidarity to ‘sisters’ across borders. This is the international campaign to support Iranian women’s rights activists. Feminism in Iran has a long and complicated history, beginning with the Constitutional Revolution in the early twentieth century and including a period of vibrant activism during and immediately after the revolution of 1978–89, until the Islamic regime ended all independent organizing. The post-revolutionary period of quietism came to an end at the start of the new millennium, however, when small networks began meeting and strategizing for change in the country’s legal and policy frameworks, notably the family law, which place women in a subordinate position within the family. The first public protests took place in June 2005, at the end of the presidency of Mohammad Khatami and just before the new and very conservative president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took office. Subsequent protests and rallies were broken up by police and a number of feminist activists arrested. The result of the state’s repression was a decision to change the strategy, and the One Million Signatures Campaign was launched in September 2006. The campaign was adopted from the highly successful campaign of Moroccan feminists, initiated in the early 1990s. Among other things, this is an example of how feminist ideas and strategies ‘travel’, in this case from South to South.

The Campaign is a grassroots, door-to-door initiative to obtain signatures for a change in family laws and other legal instruments unfavorable to women. Activities include collecting signatures on the metro or in parks, shops, and classrooms; participating in rights workshops; and writing articles in support of women’s rights for the Campaign’s website, Change for Equality. Despite its peaceful nature, however, the Campaign has been subject not only to harassment but prosecution. Campaign activists have been charged with security crimes, including acting against the state and spreading propaganda against the state. To date, more than 50 Campaign activists – the majority of whom are in their twenties, women and men alike, living in Tehran and in the provinces – have been threatened, called into court, arrested, or forbidden to travel overseas. At this writing, two activists remain in prison. What is more, in January 2008, the authorities closed down a longstanding women’s magazine, *Zanan*, which was an early exponent of ‘Islamic feminism’.

Women’s rights activists in Iran requested international solidarity to support the Campaign for law reform toward gender equality; and to bring pressure to bear on the government for the release of feminist protestors. Expatriate Iranian feminists played an important role in helping to mobilize support from TFNs and women’s groups everywhere, such as DAWN, WLUML, WLP, and Equality Now, as well as Amnesty International. Feminist international solidarity with Iranian women’s rights activists is also an example of ‘cyberactivism’: this has included the global circulation via the Internet of action alerts and petitions, and the launching of a multi-lingual website – formed in Tehran – that provides extensive information on the Campaign. Both the Iranian feminist campaign and the transnational feminist solidarity campaign continue.

Transnational feminism is characterized by a critique of social and gender inequalities and a set of strategies to enhance women's rights within the family and society; by networks that engage in research, lobbying, and advocacy for women's human rights and gender equality; by bold acts of direct action; and by acts of cross-border humanitarianism and solidarity. Transnational feminist networks are one of the principal organizational forms of global feminism; many of them target discriminatory or oppressive laws, policies, and norms; and they take part in global campaigns to alleviate suffering or show solidarity with nationally based feminism action.

By definition, transnational feminist action occurs across borders and thus entails the recognition of different contexts and priorities. While transnational feminist action exhibits similarities in critiques, goals, strategies, and mobilizing structures, there are identifiable differences. One pertains to disagreements over abortion and gay/lesbian rights. In some cases this is a principled position and in other cases a matter of strategic priority-setting within a movement, network, or coalition. Another difference is discursive. In some regions or countries where the term *feminism* is either associated with the North or strategically inadvisable, advocates talk of *women's rights* or of *law reform*.<sup>3</sup> And in some of these same countries, women's rights groups frame their struggle as one for *civil society*, or for *democracy*, or for *national development* as well as for women's rights.

It also should be noted that many transnational feminist networks, along with other global social movements and networks, are based largely in the North or are resourced, staffed, and funded largely from the North. This is a reflection of the inequalities of the contemporary capitalist world-system, with its asymmetric economic zones of core, periphery, and semi-periphery. While such a discrepancy is unavoidable at present, it should not diminish the intent and results of transnational feminist humanitarianism and international solidarity that emanate from the core. These are, after all, a way of reversing the logic of the capitalist world-system and neoliberal globalization.

### Questions for further debate:

1. How do the local and the global intersect in transnational activism?
2. How do locally based feminists adapt the global women's rights agenda and transnational discourses to local contexts?
3. In what ways does transnational feminism matter in global politics?
4. Why might some feminists be resistant to the idea of a *global feminism*?
5. Does transnational/global feminism attenuate North-South differences among women?

### Relevant web-based sources

- Code Pink is 'a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, stop new wars, and redirect our resources into healthcare, education, green jobs and other life-affirming activities'. Available HTTP: <<http://www.codepink4peace.org>>.

- MADRE, a network of community-based women's organizations. Available HTTP: <<http://www.madre.org/index.php?video = 1>>.
- Women Living under Muslim Laws website, available HTTP: <<http://www.wluml.org>>.
- Nobel Women's Initiative, founded by six Nobel Peace Laureates, available HTTP: <<http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org>>.
- Change for Equality Campaign (Iran), available HTTP: <<http://www.4equality.info/english/>>.

### Sources for further reading and research

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### Notes

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- 1 For full references, see Moghadam (2005). See also Smith *et al.* (1997).
- 2 This occurred October 24, 2007, and was widely reported. Rice had been on Capitol Hill to testify before the House Foreign Relations Committee.
- 3 This is the case in many African countries. In the Middle East, Iranian women's rights activists defiantly call themselves feminists, and *secular* feminists; this is also true of the *Association Tunisienne des femmes democrates* and of several Algerian women's groups. But the term feminist is generally eschewed in Jordan and Egypt.

**SECTION SIX INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION,  
TECHNOLOGY**

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# Popular Culture and the Politics of the Visual

Christina Rowley

In the context of a textbook discussing serious, ‘life and death’ issues – war, human rights, genocide – a chapter on popular culture sounds somewhat trivial, even frivolous. Popular culture is ostensibly everything that world politics *isn't*: fiction, entertainment, amusement, illusion, distraction. It's not that popular culture isn't valued as an object of academic study – there are scholars (and disciplines) of cultural studies, film studies, media and communication studies – but the division of academia into discrete disciplines permits IR scholars to ignore popular culture and claim that it is not relevant to the study of world politics. The (gendered) distinctions that many IR scholars make, explicitly or implicitly, between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’, between domestic and international, between high (politics) and low (culture) underpin this rejection of popular culture as relevant to IR. However, if we are interested in analysing the gendered dynamics of world politics, popular culture is (or should be) of paramount importance to IR scholars as well (Hooper 2001; Weber 2005a; Weldes 2006; Hansen 2006).

Cynthia Enloe (1996) asks us to devote more of our analytical attention to the ‘margins, silences and bottom rungs’ of world politics, in order to reveal the quantity and variety of power that must be exerted to keep the world functioning as it does. Popular culture is one such site (see below for a brief discussion of definitions of popular culture). The ways in which people make sense of world politics is, in large part, via the knowledge and understanding created through interactions with the world in the realm of the popular, the mundane and the everyday: the workplace, holidays, TV shows, advertisements. Popular cultural representations often look similar to, resonate with, or otherwise share structural congruities with, supposedly



‘factual’ (for example, academic) and other apparently ‘common sense’ discourses of world politics, indeed, they are mutually constitutive. As Jutta Weldes has demonstrated, popular cultural texts such as magazines, novels, films and television shows, are important because they are all implicated in the production of common sense, and therefore in the ‘manufacture of consent’ for states’ foreign policies (1999: 119, 2003a). Popular cultural artefacts not only make use of the same background meanings (cultural resources) as do policy-makers, in order to construct a compelling vision of the world, they also create more and new cultural resources on which other cultural and state actors – and people more generally – can draw.

These overlapping and mutually constitutive discourses and representations can be read as an ‘intertext’; one of the logics through which *intertextuality* operates is gender (see, for example, Hooper 2001; Weber 2005b). Since our understandings of gender, like our understandings of world politics, are to such a large extent constituted through our interactions in popular culture and in our everyday lives, it is unsurprising that gender is found in similar configurations in world politics as in popular culture. Furthermore, as what frequently ‘goes without saying’ (Barthes 1973: 11) in both popular culture and world politics, gender is not only a logic of intertextuality, but at the same time also functions to *obscure* this intertextuality. Finally, since gender (and specifically gender as difference) so often manifests itself in and through visual representations, and since so much of contemporary popular culture is played out through visual media, the politics of the visual is particularly important to our discussion. However, popular culture as a discursive terrain is marginalized and neglected by world politics scholars precisely because it appears to be so inconsequential (‘merely’ entertainment). It is this very understanding of popular culture as irrelevant which implicates the terrain as particularly important and the discourses therein as immensely powerful in terms of their constitutive function (their ability to construct realities) in contemporary society.

In this chapter, I explore some of the ways in which we can investigate the diverse interconnections between gender, world politics and popular culture, including the gendered intertextuality of popular culture and world politics (see Figures 22.3 and 22.4). I have chosen to focus almost exclusively on mass culture produced in, by, and primarily for audiences in, the West, and even more narrowly on dominant representations from the US and the UK. This may seem natural. After all, if we are interested in the global political landscape of popular culture, shouldn’t we concentrate on those artefacts that are made in and by the dominant cultures and states within the world system, and which are financially the most profitable and influential? However, Enloe (1996) reminds us of the dangers of disregarding large parts of the world’s population and their activities when we are trying to account for how world politics ‘works’.<sup>1</sup>

## GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF POPULAR AND VISUAL CULTURE

### Popular culture

Popular culture is a somewhat vague notion, partly because the broader concept of ‘culture’ is also hard to define (Williams 1981; Cruz and Guins 2005: 4), but most

people can give examples of types and practices of popular culture, and 'know it when they see it'. It includes texts and practices produced for and about and engaged in by 'the masses' (people), such as film, TV, music, fashion, sport, tourism, clubbing, foodways, news media, hobbies, the Internet. Popular culture is often defined in specific contrast with 'high' culture, i.e., cinema vs. theatre, graffiti/comics vs. fine art, pop music vs. opera, trash fiction vs. classical literature. However, this dichotomy is problematic, and should make us stop and think, in particular, about where else we have seen binaries function to exclude important issues from the agenda. Given the work that feminists have done to expose the ways in which women and gender have been marginalized, in both the practices and theories of International Relations, it may come as no surprise to discover that these categories are historically contingent and are themselves the product of gendered, racialized and class power relations. One example worth noting is that those media forms, genres and texts which are most denigrated as mass-produced culture are typically those most feminized and/or associated with women: e.g., soap operas, romance novels and pop (dance) music.

The study of popular culture requires the study not only of commercial commodities, but, crucially, how these products are actively interpreted and used by people: consumption is not passive. People make their own culture/cultural meanings out of resources and commodities provided by dominant cultural systems (Fiske 1989: 15) through, for example, defacing billboards with anti-corporate slogans and creating YouTube videos. This production is not always explicitly or intentionally fully supportive or critical of mass-produced popular culture, but because texts and discourses express both domination and subversion, power and resistance, they are never exclusively one or the other. Jeans (denim trousers), for example, do not have a single defined meaning; they have been associated with (at least) two 'strands': youth, freedom, and rebellion; and physical labour, ruggedness and the outdoors. Jeans can be a sign of non-conformity but are, paradoxically, one of the most conformist items of clothing available. Unusually, perhaps, jeans can also function to represent masculinity *and* femininity as well as having a particular 'unisex' status in Western society. This semiotic richness<sup>2</sup> – the resource bank of potential meanings that can be generated – is only activated in lived experience (for example, people wearing them), that is, in the specific discursive practices in and through which identities are performatively produced. Popular culture is thus a terrain, a site of struggles over meaning which involves taking account of both texts (representations) and practices (their active consumption and interpretation).

## The politics of the visual

We live in a world highly dependent upon communication through visual images, and we often prioritize the visual over our other senses, yet we are rarely *explicitly* taught how to read visual images (Howells 2003: 2). Reading visual images may appear natural, but interpreting visual information relies on shared cultural understandings just as much as does understanding written texts, which themselves have an indispensable visual component: 'looking is not as straightforward an activity as

might be supposed' (Mirzoeff 1999: 21–22; see also Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 10; Shepherd 2008b: 215). Something as apparently natural as understanding two-dimensional images to represent three dimensions is a culturally specific *learned* practice<sup>3</sup> and looking is an active process of meaning-making. With visual images, we often assume we have gleaned their meaning immediately and without any reflection, because of their apparent resemblance/correspondence to 'reality' and to 'real' referent objects, thus obscuring the interpretive labour that has been performed in our reading. Visual images are in this sense perhaps more powerful than textual representations. Although we may remain unaware that we are doing so, we learn to read images for gendered, racialized and class-based (among other) codes, such that images resonate on many different levels, going 'beyond the purely rational level of awareness' (Hall 1999: 311).

For feminists, the politics of visual representation is particularly important because gender inequality has historically been justified through claims about visible physical differences between men and women. Gender and racial differences 'are made to seem "real" and therefore "true" . . . because the differences we can "see" . . . appear to ground their "truth" beyond history, in what is naturally so' (Hall 1999: 314). Furthermore, there are important (gendered) power relations to be considered between the 'looker' and the 'looked at'. Historically, man has been the subject, the agent 'doing the looking', while woman has been the object of his gaze, the spectacle (think, for example, of the nude female model prevalent in classical art and sculpture, and the ways in which the female body is depicted in much the same ways today). We must therefore recognize that the politics of visual meaning goes beyond merely popular culture.<sup>4</sup>

For those of us in the minority world (the West/global North), electronic (and) visual media<sup>5</sup> now play an unprecedentedly influential role in the ways in which we receive, consume and interpret information about the world, and because of their visual component, we are often unaware of this mediation. For many 'eyewitnesses' of 9/11 (those who were in downtown New York to see the planes crash into the World Trade Center), visual culture was still an important part of their experience, as many 'used the metaphor of cinema to try and verbalize the enormity of what had happened' (Mirzoeff 2002: 8; Dalby 2008: 443). For the majority of United States citizens, and for many others, the mediated, media-tized event *is* 9/11 – that is, people's experience of 9/11 is primarily a filmic/televisual one. These brief examples highlight the centrality of popular, visual, (and) media culture in our daily lives and experiences – and these spaces, practices and representations are always already gendered. In the next section, I explore different approaches to the study of popular culture, paying particular attention to methods developed and deployed by feminists and gender theorists.

## APPROACHING THE ANALYSIS OF POPULAR AND VISUAL CULTURE

Here, I delineate ways in which the gendered analysis of popular cultural texts and practices can be approached with regard to three key themes: *production*, *representation* and *consumption*. The relative importance of these concepts has been the subject of

intense academic debate and disagreement. Whatever methodological approach we favour, we must remain aware that we cannot account for the complex ways in which gender and popular culture matter in global politics without considering all three.

## Production

To paraphrase Cynthia Enloe, where are the women film directors? Women have become gradually more numerous as executives and decision-makers in the big studios (Hass 2005), but how many world-famous female directors can you name? Leni Riefenstahl or Sofia Coppola may come to mind; but, in 2007, just 6 per cent of the top 250 grossing Hollywood films were directed by women – down from 9 per cent in 1998 (Goldstein 2008).<sup>6</sup> Unless we believe that women are somehow by their very nature just bad at making popular films, this should prompt us to ask questions about how the film industry is gendered. How do people gain access to places on film studies courses, and to jobs thereafter? Do women get as much support from their families to go into directing (Hass 2005)? Who makes the decisions about which films will get made and by whom, and on what criteria are these decisions based? What industry support is there for women who want to direct (Friedman 2007)? Crucially, though, we must also ask about the ways in which directing is constructed as a gendered skill as well as (not just about) directors' sex. In a recent article in the *LA Times*, Patrick Goldstein (2008) quoted production designer Polly Platt as speculating that women find some aspects of directing terrifying, while men enjoy the power, and an anonymous female executive in the *New York Times* suspected that women just don't have the requisite ruthless streak in order to be successful (Hass 2005). Directing is constructed as a masculine skill and this in turn is articulated as being derived from 'biological' sex difference to naturalize this construction.

There are other questions we can ask about the gendered production of popular culture, for example, about the intersection between gender and race in global fashion and cosmetics industries: think about the phrase 'skin tone'. What image does this conjure up? Similarly, what colour is a pair of 'natural' tights (panty hose)? Most major US and UK cosmetics producers do not make products specifically targeted at Arabic, African(-American/-Caribbean) or Asian women, or their ranges are very limited in comparison with the choice available for Caucasian women. We should also consider the ways in which production might be gendered in less immediately obvious ways. Enloe (2007) has traced the production of the 'humble sneaker' and found that it is intimately connected with global processes of militarization and the creation of export processing zones in which labour is cheap and feminized; we are encouraged not to ask questions about how this remains so, or whose labour is being exploited.

Returning to the media, in her (2001) book *Hollyworld*, Aida Hozic examines the interplay of 'space, power and fantasy' and the ways in which Hollywood has functioned to reinforce the political and economic status quo and thus the US's position in world affairs. More specifically, David Robb (2004) has examined the relationship between Hollywood and the US military, finding that, in return for assistance to make films and television programmes, often by providing resources such as military bases for filming, equipment such as planes and helicopters, and even

troops as extras, the Pentagon often ‘requests’ script changes. If changes are not made, the US military can prevent films being screened at US and overseas bases, which can have a very negative effect on films’ success. The Pentagon’s primary requirement in return for assistance is that the film “aid in the recruiting and retention of personnel” (US Army quoted in Robb 2004: 26). Robb has documented the ways in which scripts for blockbusters, such as *Goldeneye*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Pearl Harbor* and *Top Gun*, have been altered, sometimes substantially, at the behest of the Pentagon’s film liaison office. That the Pentagon has so much influence over the production of popular culture is of particular importance for feminist scholars of world politics, given the links between militarization and masculinization that feminist scholars have been concerned to expose and theorize.<sup>7</sup>

## Representation I: textual analysis

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The above discussion about the militarization and alteration of texts to suit the US military directly feeds into this section’s focus on representations. In cultural analysis, *text* includes written documents (newspaper articles, books and scripts), visual artefacts (photographs, paintings), audio material (e.g., songs, music, podcasts) and other forms of media (sculpture, adverts, films, websites, music videos). Additionally, the ways in which discourses are conceptualized – as systems of meaning production – implies that pretty much anything can potentially be ‘read’ as a text. Dances, shopping malls, militarized rituals at border crossing points, and the ways in which supermarkets are laid out, all can be analysed through the concept of text.

We might be tempted to analyse popular cultural representations primarily for their ‘truth value’ (historical accuracy) – i.e., what a film from a particular period can tell us about that era, or making judgements about whether individual films present a ‘balanced’ (‘true’) or ‘biased’ (‘propaganda’) view of the world. However, representations should not be viewed as simple reflections of either ‘true’ or ‘distorted’ ‘reality’. Maps are a particularly apposite example of this: maps are neither true nor false: they are representations of the world. As with *all* representations, maps represent a simplified account of the world in order to highlight the information that is particularly important in a specific context.<sup>8</sup> Simplifications, generalizations, abstractions: all are inherently *political* processes (Rowley and Weldes 2008: 193). Representations such as maps, photographs or films are ‘complex structures of linguistic and visual codes organised to produce specific meanings. They are not merely collections of images or stereotypes’ (Thornham 1999: 12). A focus on stereotypes, whether good or bad, positive or negative, leads to simplistic readings that constrain our analysis to characters and bodies (Wiegman 2000: 161) and neglects the ways in which these come together to produce meaning that goes beyond the sum of a text’s constituent elements.

Analysing cultural and media representations for their gendered dynamics has been an important aspect of both feminist scholarship and feminist activism since the ‘second wave’ in the 1960s and 1970s (see Johnston’s quote in Figure 22.1). There is now a massive body of literature on gender and popular culture, analysing, for example, ‘femmes fatales’ (Doane 1991), ‘working girls’ (Tasker 1998), ‘action chicks’ and action cinema (Inness 2004; Tasker 1993) in film and television, as well as on

### Key quotes

From the outset the Women's Movement has assumed without question the importance of film in the women's struggle ... The reason for this interest in the media is not difficult to locate: it has been at the level of the image that the violence of sexism and capitalism has been experienced (Johnston 1973 quoted in Thornham 1999: 11).

although it would appear that simple matters of taste drive the production and consumption of both high and popular culture, it is the case, rather, that, with the exception of some resistant forms, music, theatre, TV weather forecasts, and even cereal box scripts tend to endorse prevailing power structures by helping to reproduce the beliefs and allegiances necessary for their uncontested functioning (Shapiro 1992: 1).

neglecting th[e] realm of 'low politics' in our attempts to come to grips with how the world works would be a mistake. We must interrogate IR theory as a site of cultural practice *wherever* it occurs – in classic IR texts, in classrooms, and in more popular sites of culture like film, literature, art, and television (Weber 2001: 133).

state action is made commonsensical through popular culture. ... Popular culture thus helps to construct the reality of international politics for officials and non-officials alike and, to the extent that it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action. Popular culture is thus implicated in the 'production of consent' (Weldes 1999: 119).

Since war is the most overt illustration of how violence is deployed in the modern nation-state in the name of order and civilization, the framing of such deployment in motion pictures has far-reaching implications for how we understand military events and the people, societies, and nations participating in them (Slocum 2006: 2).

by failing to analyse popular visual language as integral to global communications, disciplinary IR risks misunderstanding contemporary subjectivity, spatiality, and temporality. By failing to grasp who we are, where we are, and when we are, IR cannot possibly comprehend what we say and do, much less what we hear, feel and see (Weber 2008: 138).

There is talk that many Vietnam films are antiwar, that the message is war is inhumane and look what happens when you train young American men to fight and kill, they turn their fighting and killing everywhere, they ignore their targets and desecrate the entire country, shooting fully automatic, forgetting they were trained to aim. But actually, Vietnam War films are all pro-war, no matter what the supposed message, what Kubrick or Coppola or Stone intended. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson in Omaha or San Francisco or Manhattan will watch the films and weep and decide once and for all that war is inhumane and terrible, and they will tell their friends at church and their family this, but Corporal Johnson at Camp Pendleton and Sergeant Johnson at Travis Air Force Base and Seaman Johnson at Coronado Naval Station and Spec 4 Johnson at Fort Bragg and Lance Corporal Swofford at Twentynine Pals Marine Corps Base watch the same films and are excited by them, because the magic brutality of the films celebrates the terrible and despicable beauty of their fighting skills. Fight, rape, war, pillage, burn. Filmic images of death and carnage are pornography for the military man; with film you are stroking his cock, tickling his balls with the pink feather of history, getting him ready for his real First Fuck. It doesn't matter how many Mr. and Mrs. Johnsons are antiwar – the actual killers who know how to use the weapons are not (Swofford 2003: 6-7).

Figure 22.1

the construction of femininisms, femininities and masculinities in a variety of contexts (e.g., Hollows 2000; Hollows and Moseley 2006; Cohan and Hark 1993). *The West Wing* (TWW) is a particularly fruitful site for analysing (gendered) representations of world politics, since it is overtly concerned with issues that are 'central' to world politics, and provides viewers with a behind-the-scenes look at the processes and constraints of domestic and foreign policy decision-making.<sup>9</sup> These representations are discussed in more detail in Figure 22.3. Science fiction (SF) is another genre relevant to (the study of) world politics; its gendered representations and feminist potential are discussed in Figure 22.4.

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## Representation II: visual analysis

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Often, when we analyse the representations in films, novels or television shows, as in Figures 22.3 and 22.4, we are interested in the plot or storyline and therefore focus on the script, on what particular characters say and do. Less frequently do we pay attention to the specifically visual elements that code characters in different ways, or in the visual clues that we may not consciously pick up on but that remain central to the practice of representation. However, we must be aware of the limitations inherent in applying analytical methods designed for written texts to visual images (Evans and Hall 1999: 7). We can learn a lot about the meaning and function of shots by analysing how they are framed and cut together (Monaco 2000). How a shot is composed and framed is its *mise-en-scène*. How the shot is cut together into a sequence or scene is known as *montage* (more commonly called editing).<sup>10</sup> Point-of-view (POV) shots encourage the spectator to identify with the character. Alternating over-the-shoulder shots during a conversation encourage the audience to assume an omniscient (all-knowing) position in relation to the two talking characters. These aspects of a film are important because of the dominance of male protagonists in films and because the omniscient spectatorial position encourages the notion that 'the whole truth' can be (is being) represented from an external and objective standpoint, rather than drawing attention to the partial perspective of the camera (i.e., what is not in the frame/scene).

We can also look at the ways props, costumes, and other symbols are visually represented within shots and scenes to create additional layers of meaning: they provide us with a lot of information about, for example, genre and generic expectations, and the qualities and attributes of characters (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality), oftentimes without our being consciously aware of these meaning-making processes at work. Anneke Smelik reminds us that 'codes in dressing, certain gestures, stylistic décor, or extended looks can at a glance invoke the homosexuality of a character' (2000: 135). Monaco (2000: 161–77) discusses a number of (overlapping) ways in which images function. *Icons* resemble what they represent: an image of a phone-box represents a phone-box. (However, this should not be implied to mean that all visual images can be read straightforwardly, or that they are more 'obvious' or 'true' than text-based representations (see above)). Representational strategies that we interpret also include *symbols*, whereby an abstract image stands in for another concept, e.g., red roses commonly reference love and doves symbolize peace. Some symbols can be connected in some way with the thing they represent.

**'Happy Chopper'**

'Happy Chopper, Shoreditch 2003. Smoke machine effect supplied by deep fat fryer' (Banksy 2006: 40-1).

This image, by British graffiti artist Banksy, was stencilled on a wall in central London. Banksy is known for his provocative, humorous and overtly political artwork, created in a variety of locations, including the Israeli 'security barrier' in Palestine and even on live sheep and cattle (see Brassett 2009 on some of Banksy's works). This graffiti art is entitled 'Happy Chopper', a play on words (Happy Shopper is the name of a chain of convenience stores). The date and the falling snow in the picture make it likely that it was produced in the days/weeks before Operation Shock and Awe (March 2003). The image depicts an AH-64 Apache gunship, the US Air Force's principal attack helicopter (deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and the 1991 Gulf War) perhaps familiar to us from computer games, films and news media footage. The helicopter is armed with 16 Hellfire anti-tank missiles and a 30mm cannon (weaponry capable of inflicting immense damage) and is tilted at an angle that suggests it is bearing down on the viewer, preparing to attack. It is adorned with an incongruously placed pink bow (as though it has been gift-wrapped) and accompanied by the slogan 'HAVE A NICE DAY' (a parting pleasantry commonly heard in shops and restaurants in the US) – both rather out of place in a picture depicting military conflict.

Taken together, the title, the message, the gift-wrapping and the image's location above a fish-and-chip shop all highlight the links between capitalism, consumerism and the 'War on Terror' – specifically, President G. W. Bush's (2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2006) exhortations to US citizens to keep shopping in response to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (see Shepherd 2006; Heller 2005). The juxtaposition of the grey metal and the pink bow function to repackage the helicopter in an unfamiliar and estranging way, in order to challenge its taken-for-granted-ness and make us reflect on the machine's destructive power. The image jars us out of our complacency towards current US and UK foreign policy by drawing attention to the contradictions between Coalition rhetoric about bringing 'freedom', 'peace' and 'democracy' to Afghanistan and Iraq and the violent destruction being perpetrated in these countries. It invites us to confront our fetishization of consumerism and military power as the solutions to all our problems, and to interrogate the unquestioned privileged status of military power in the West, and more specifically, Western militaries as inherently 'masculine' institutions. The colour of the bow, a shade commonly associated with femininity, as well as with childishness and homosexuality, serves to mock the threat that the helicopter and its weapons pose. Without depicting any bodies – there are no men or women in the picture – this image destabilizes some of the gendered associations that military force typically carries in the Western world: the pink bow feminizes the helicopter, and the military in general. (It is worth pointing out that this use of feminization as a method of critique is not an unproblematic strategy, since it reinforces the marginalized status of femininity.)

Figure 22.2



So, a thermometer climbing indicates rising temperature, while muscles may signal physical strength, and an image of the White House (or the use of the term ‘White House’) can signify the office of the US President or, more broadly, the executive branch. Representations function differently depending on context (including montage and *mise-en-scène*): if an image of a cork popping out of a champagne bottle follows a shot of two lovers in a hotel room, it may symbolize male ejaculation, or male potency. If, however, the popping champagne cork comes immediately after the end of a sporting event, it will more likely be taken to connote victory.<sup>11</sup> Figure 22.2 focuses on visual analysis through a discussion of an image created by Banksy, a British ‘graffer’ (graffiti artist).

## Consumption

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From textually derived spectators to actual audiences (Gripsrud 2000: 206): ‘spectators bring diverse identities, histories, cultural competences, and responses – both conscious and unconscious – to the movies’ (White 2000: 121). Consequently, theorizing the interpretations that audiences make of popular culture is one of the most important and the most complex issues facing scholars today. It goes to the heart of our understandings of how popular culture *functions* in contemporary society. We cannot assume that all readers everywhere and for all time read texts or images in the same unified way, nor that they necessarily read artefacts in the way that ‘authors’ intend, be these singers, film studios, directors, PR consultants, spin doctors or advertising executives. Furthermore, we also need to take account of the affective and emotional dimensions of interpretation that are integral to processes of meaning-making. Anthony Swofford (2003: 6–7) highlights some of these issues particularly forcefully with regard to soldiers’ interpretation of Vietnam War films just prior to the 1991 Gulf War (see Figure 22.1).

Over the last twenty-five years, feminist cultural studies scholars have explored a number of aspects of women’s consumption, and the interpretation of feminism and femininities, in a variety of local and global contexts.<sup>12</sup> There is also a burgeoning literature on fan studies, an important focus of which has been on ‘slash’ fiction and the popular cultural texts that fans produce.<sup>13</sup> In the discipline of IR, however, very little research has been conducted on audience interpretations. Mainstream IR has eschewed the local and individual levels of analysis in favour of large *n* quantitative data sets and analyses conducted at the state/supra-state level but even critical IR scholars have tended to focus more on textual analysis than on consumption.

In part, this may be because (in comparison with discursive/visual analysis) the methodological obstacles to accessing audiences’ interpretations are not insignificant. It is not physically possible to invite every one of the several million regular viewers of *24* to a focus group. The design of the research project also has a huge impact on the data and research outcomes themselves, whether we use questionnaires, focus groups, in-depth interviews, participant observation or some combination of these. Additionally, new interactive online spaces such as blogs, YouTube, MySpace and

### Gender and *The West Wing*

Running for seven seasons (1999-2006), US TV show *The West Wing* (TWW) offered a behind-the-scenes portrayal of fictional Democratic President Josiah Bartlet and his team of White House advisors. At its peak, TWW attracted weekly US audiences of around 17-18 million (Philpott and Mutimer 2005: 337). TWW has been praised for its portrayals of independent, powerful women. The over-arching portrayal of women who hold senior positions in the Bartlet Administration is from a liberal feminist perspective. For the most part, women are presented as 'the same' as their male counterparts, equally able to do their jobs, irrespective (rather than because) of their gender. In this sense, women are equal 'precisely because they do not think like women, but like politicians. They make no demands on the part of women' (2005: 350; Ringelberg 2005: 91-2). Articulating the 'gender-blindness' of liberal feminism, Republican lawyer Ainsley Hayes (played by Emily Procter) argues that the Equal Rights Amendment is 'humiliating! A new amendment that we vote on, declaring that I am equal under the law to a man. *I am mortified to discover there's reason to believe I wasn't before.* I am a citizen of this country' (season 2, episode 18, entitled '17 People', emphasis added). It is noteworthy that Hayes chooses to articulate her position (and interpellate herself as a US citizen) in this way, because arguments were historically put forward as to how and why women were not, should not and could not be full citizens, the liberal-democratic connection between citizenship rights and men's (potential) military service being a central justification (Elshtain 1995; Snyder 1999).

Insofar as overtly gendered issues such as abortion, gay rights and gay marriage, forced prostitution and sex trafficking are debated and given coverage, and conceptual links are made between, for example, violence against women and the global arms trade (3.9, 'The Women of Qumar'), TWW clearly demonstrates a commitment to feminism. It 'honors the histories of the second-wave feminist movements (with their struggles against male violence, sexual harassment, and pay inequity) and civil rights movements' (Lane 2003: 40). Female characters such as CJ Cregg (press secretary) and Amy Gardner (lobbyist) frequently articulate feminist positions, some of which are reflected in policy. However, women are not present in the series in equal number to men, and they are also overwhelmingly in lower status positions (secretaries, assistants, interns), peripheral roles which are used as foils and supports for the male characters' storylines, objectified or otherwise deployed to create sexual tension (Garrett 2005: 189). The decision-makers are men and the women who support them are frequently gendered as less expert, and as emotional and nurturing (Ringelberg 2005: 97; Philpott and Mutimer 2005: 349). Furthermore, emotion is usually feminized and typically negatively portrayed as a basis for decision-making, while a sense of fairness and justice is portrayed as a rational rather than emotional attribute and is therefore positively valued.

In a prophetic seventh-season episode, during the presidential election between Republican Arnold Vinick (based on John McCain) and Matthew Santos (based on Barack Obama), Santos's campaign manager, Josh, explains how US presidential elections 'work': 'People think the campaign's about two competing answers to the same question. They're not. They're a fight over the question itself.' Republicans win by focusing on security; Democrats win on domestic issues. This is the 'mommy problem': 'When voters want a national daddy, someone to be tough and strong and defend the country, they vote Republican. When they want a mommy, someone to give them jobs, health care – the policy equivalent of matzo ball soup – they vote Democratic.' The formula is a simple binary: Democratic = domestic sphere = economic = liberal = mommy = feminine; Republican = international sphere = military = realist = daddy = masculine (7.2 'The Mommy Problem').

I have only been able to hint here at the complex interplay between sex, gender and feminism(s) in TWW. What the above thumbnail sketches of episodes, issues and representations show, and what can be seen in TWW more generally when one examines the series through gender(ed) lenses, is the variety of ways in which gender 'goes without saying' (Barthes 1973: 11). It is not only overtly 'feminist' issues that are presented as gendered; gender is always and everywhere present as a narrative function in the storylines and episodes.

### Gender and feminism in science fiction (SF)

The apparent distinctions between the “hard truths” of world politics and the imagined worlds of SF are misleading (Weldes 2003a: 2). SF self-consciously reflects on the ‘stuff’ of world politics (conflict, intervention, espionage, technological advances, globalization, imperialism) and the connections between SF and world politics are ‘intimate, complex, and diverse’ (2003a: 6). SF representations offer us resources with which to critique our own (Rowley 2005, 2007). SF and fantasy worlds are often incredibly detailed (e.g., Middle Earth, Terry Pratchett’s Discworld) and the ‘inter-genre’ of fantasy/SF is therefore a particularly rich site of exploration for world politics researchers (see, *inter alia*, Weldes 1999, 2001, 2003b). Through utopias and dystopias, SF extrapolates the consequences of current social, cultural, political, economic and technological trends and explores “what we might become if and when the present restrictions on our lives vanish, or show[s] us new problems and restrictions that might arise” (Pamela Sargent in Cranny-Francis 1990: 221). Through estrangement, SF offers us ‘stories and characters based in ways of living that defy the categories readers/viewers bring to them’ (Ferguson 2002: 181). Thus, SF’s imagined configurations allow us to recognize that the configurations of our own contemporary societies are culturally and historically constructed, rather than natural or inevitable (Crawford 2003: 198).

More specifically, SF provides us with new ways of thinking about gender. Displacing narratives onto other times and/or places strips contemporary patriarchal society of its naturalizing discourses (Cranny-Francis 1990: 222). There are ‘both centripetal and centrifugal energies within the genre: it is in the play of resistance to and reauthorization of the normative practices of sex, gender, and humanity that science fiction plays out some of its feminist possibilities and limitations’ (Ferguson 2002: 181). Writing almost twenty years ago, Vivien Sobchack (1990) found that both women/femaleness and human sexuality more generally were repressed and/or neglected in many popular SF film narratives. In more recent times, mainstream SF cinema has explicitly engaged with women, feminism and notions of gender equality. For example, director Paul Verhoeven has claimed that the portrayal of sexual equality was an important aim in making the (1997) film *Starship Troopers* (Hansen 2001: 275), a popular film that explores women’s roles in the military. In one sense, the film can be read as feminist, in that it disturbs the traditional notion that women should be constrained to reproduction and the private sphere (279). Dizzy Flores is shown as strong *and* womanly, and ‘there is much which supports a reading of Dizzy as not only equal, but superior to “the guys”’ (278). Carmen Ibanez is also constructed as superior to Jonny Rico, the film’s male hero, in her case for her intellectual capabilities rather than physical strength. Moreover, the film’s representation of violence is clearly ironically deployed. However, *Starship Troopers* ‘does not take this irony into the realm of gender relations’ (281), and the female characters are ultimately deployed mainly as emotional supports for the male protagonists.

One common thread of writer-producer-director Joss Whedon’s texts (*Buffy*, *Angel*) is the subversion of stereotypes: the character of Inara, a prostitute-courtesan in his futuristic television show, *Firefly* (and subsequent film *Serenity*), is perhaps the most powerful and influential member of the spaceship’s crew, holding a highly respectable, legal and prominent social position. *Firefly* also presents a successful, attractive, female soldier existing in a world in which nobody questions her career choices or her physical abilities. The depiction of some worlds and planets as dominated by patriarchal values while others have established liberal feminist egalitarian systems represents feminism ‘as an ongoing political project that is neither inevitable nor passé’ (Rowley 2007: 322). However, representations of gender relations focus on changes in/to femininities while leaving masculine identities unchallenged and unproblematized. Despite the inclusion of a female warrior in *Firefly*, soldiering practices do not appear significantly differently gendered from their twenty-first century equivalents (324). With specific reference to a short-lived TV show, *Space: Above and Beyond*, Nickianne Moody (2002: 51) makes a point that has broader resonance in terms of the feminist potential of many contemporary SF films and TV shows: namely, that, although some may be ‘positive’ in their portrayals of women’s expanded military roles, insofar as they portray gender equality as taken-for-granted, these texts deny the exploration of struggle and the space for us (the audience) to consider how these liberal feminist aims might be achieved in the ‘real’ world.

Figure 22.4

Facebook pose a new challenge to existing frameworks and demand that we consider carefully the validity of our current conceptualizations for how people consume and interpret popular culture. Digital games (also known as computer games or video games) may provide a unique perspective on consumption in this regard, because they are participatory and interactive in a more comprehensive way than films and television shows; and they also offer new ways to think about some of the issues raised by visual analysis, such as identification and affect, in that they both offer and require a more obviously (inter)active and invested role on the part of the player, in terms of identifying with the gamer's avatar (protagonist/main character) and the emotional responses engendered during gameplay.

Machin and Suleiman have used interviews and material from web forums to ask gamers about their experiences of first-person-shooter games such as *Delta Force* and concluded that gamers offered contradictory views, on the one hand seeing 'the representation of war in these games as realistic, as corresponding to the facts. On the other hand they distance themselves from games-as-political-representations' (2006: 19). However, we cannot assume that all people play games in the same ways. When Mary Flanagan investigated what teenage girls do when they play *Grand Theft Auto*, one girl reported that 'she pays no attention to the mission structures in the game, but rather, prefers to "just drive"'. Another 'noted that she "wanted to just help people"' (2006: 500). Little research has engaged in a sustained way with the *gendered* meanings that people make out of the games they play. In a study of young male gamers, Kathy Sanford and Leanna Madill did not see evidence that learners were thinking consciously and reflectively about cultural models of the world, or that

they were consciously reflecting on the values that make up their real or videogame worlds. . . . Resistance to hegemonic hypermasculinity in game play does not necessarily lead the players to challenge gender stereotypes . . . it does not cause them to be more aware of their privileged positions of power.

(Sanford and Madill 2006: 300)

Even this very short discussion of one or two aspects of audience consumption demonstrates that it is essential that we investigate how meaning is made through engagement with popular cultural texts and practices in concrete situations. In terms of our feminist curiosity, we must explore not only how sex/gender differences affect the ways in which people consume, but also how people interpret the images they see and the actions they engage in as gendered – in short, how representations are interpreted as gendered, as well as how gendered beings interpret.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have provided a brief overview of some of the key concepts, debates and methods in the analysis of contemporary popular culture, with a specific focus on the ways in which gender functions in (some) popular cultural representations of world politics. The final point I wish to make is to emphasize the importance of

analysing how representations are interpreted by people in particular contexts, which allows us to move beyond an understanding of gender as defined by ‘innate’, ‘natural’ or ‘biological’ sexual differences between men and women. We are then able to investigate gender as complex matrices of meanings about sex, sexuality, gendered identities, including emotional responses and desires, meanings which are constantly being performed in those particular texts and contexts (for a full discussion of ‘performativity’ see Chapter 1). IR scholars need to do more to investigate these texts, sites and performances of meaning, and need to examine them with gendered lenses in order to gain a deeper understanding of how world politics ‘work’.

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### Seminar exercise

Gather advertisements from different magazines (such as glossy fashion and other women’s magazines, sports and men’s health magazines, newspaper supplements, *The Economist*, *National Geographic*, *Time* . . .). These can be analysed by students individually, in pairs or in small groups, looking for images connected with world politics (e.g., war, globalization, security, tourism) and analysing ways in which gender is deployed in these representations and how gender functions to sell brands and products. For example, a number of adverts have featured Pierce Brosnan and, more recently, Daniel Craig as James Bond to coincide with 007 film releases (e.g., Aston Martin, BMW, Rolex, Sony, Smirnoff Vodka . . .).

**INFORMATION FOR THE TUTOR:** The aim of this exercise is to start thinking about gender in connection with issues of production, visual and textual representations and audience interpretations. Encourage students to present several different readings of the advertisements to the rest of the class and explore the ensuing disagreements within the group about the ‘correct’ interpretation. This leads into discussions about who the target audience might be and how we read this into and out of the images, thus bringing the discussion back around to our own preconceptions and beliefs about gender. The exercise can be expanded to include television commercials, images in student newspapers, university prospectuses, the front covers of books . . . Depending upon the breadth and variety of images and texts chosen for analysis, the discussion should also cover what has been ‘left out’ (e.g., how people other than the intended audience might read particular images; counter-hegemonic publications; foreign language sources and non-Western forms of popular/visual culture).

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### Questions for further debate

1. Think about the popular cultural images, texts and practices you most enjoy engaging in (with): in what ways are these preferences connected with your identity? How are these cultural artefacts and practices connected with processes of global politics? How are they gendered?

2. How are narratives and representations of the 'War on Terror' gendered in the news media? Are there differences between different media formats? Can you find commonalities of representation between 'real' (news) and 'fictional' sources (films and TV shows)?
3. What kinds of masculinities (and femininities) are prevalent in war films from the 1980s, 1990s and the 2000s? How have war films' gendered constructions changed over time?
4. How do TV drama and sitcoms construct gender, sexuality and desire? How might differently positioned audiences read these films differently?
5. How can our understandings of the gendered politics of the visual go beyond an analysis of gender as simply 'bodies'?

### Relevant web-based resources

1. Internet Movie Database (IMDb), available HTTP: <<http://www.imdb.com>>. A catalogue of useful information about films and television shows, including cast lists, crew, soundtracks and reviews.
2. America's Army, available HTTP: <<http://www.americasarmy.com/>>. The official digital game (and recruitment tool) of the US Army: 'Launched in July 2002 the *America's Army* game, which is rated "T" for Teen by the ESRB, has become one of the most popular computer games in the world.'
3. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, available HTTP: <<http://slayageonline.com/>>. A journal dedicated to analysis of the 'Whedonverse' – popular cultural artefacts authored, directed and produced by Joss Whedon – which include the television programmes (and spin-off novels and graphic novels) *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, and *Firefly*, and the film *Serenity*.
4. FlowTV: A Critical Forum on Television and Media Culture, available HTTP: <<http://flowtv.org/>>. 'Flow's mission is to provide a space where researchers, teachers, students, and the public can read about and discuss the changing landscape of contemporary media at the speed that media moves.'
5. Popular Culture – Resources for Critical Analysis, available HTTP: <<http://www.wsu.edu/%7Eamerstu/pop/>>. Specifically the section on gender, available HTTP: <<http://www.wsu.edu/~amerstu/pop/gender.html>>.

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## Notes

- 1 I have written about forms of popular culture with which I am most familiar. I have not dealt with pornography/sex on screen (e.g., Williams 2004, 2008), the gendered configuration of the news media (e.g., Jeffords and Rabinovitz 1994; Carter *et al.* 1998), or of Bollywood (e.g., Mishra 2002; Dudrah 2006) – arguably a more important media institution than Hollywood. Nor have I addressed sport, pop music videos or foodways (the term given to the cultural practices surrounding food preparation and consumption), all of which are also overtly gendered texts and practices. This is not an excuse. I mention these absences and omissions so that as you are reading, you can reflect on what has not been said in this chapter – on the silences, margins and exclusions constructed in this discussion.
- 2 Semiotics is the study of texts and practices for the cultural signs and codes they contain. See Barthes (1973) for some short and accessible examples of semiotic analysis.
- 3 See the discussion accompanying the set of images and optical illusions in Monaco (2000: 152–55, 194).
- 4 Unfortunately, for reasons of space I am unable to begin to address the wealth and importance of feminist scholarship which theorizes, deploys and critiques psychoanalytical frameworks in its analysis of the gendered politics of visual culture. For accessible introductions to these issues, see Sturken and Cartwright (2001: Chapter 3), Stam *et al.* (1992: Part IV), Hayward (2006: 311–29), Storey (2006: Chapter 5), Creed (2000), Lapsley and Westlake (2006: Chapter 3), Thornham (1999), Kaplan (2000) and Jones (2003), among many others.
- 5 In common usage, 'the media' is usually employed as a singular noun, referring to an amorphous collection of texts and institutions such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television, and the Internet. It is sometimes intended more specifically to imply *news* media or *electronic* media and at other times as a broader concept incorporating film, computer games and other forms of popular culture, invoking the more general notion of communication.
- 6 See White (2000: 123–27) for a brief overview of women film-makers.
- 7 For a variety of ways to conceptualize the intersection of militarism and masculinities, see Jeffords (1989), Elshtain (1995), Cooke and Woollacott (1993), Zalewski and Parpart (1998), Higate and Hopton (2004), Enloe (2007), Young (2003), Whitworth (2008).
- 8 See, for example, the differences between Mercator projection and Peters projection maps, or the difference between a political map and a relief map of the same region.
- 9 See, among others, Beavers (2002), Crawley (2006), Fahy (2005), Gans-Boriskin and Tisinger (2005), Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles (2006), Rollins and O'Connor (2003).

- 10 Montage and *mise-en-scène* can also be more directly interconnected – for example, using a split-screen to show two people in different locations having a telephone conversation.
- 11 It is important to note that although the same image may have different meanings in different contexts, the traces of ‘other’ meanings remain present in any reading of that image. That is to say, the ‘ejaculatory’ reading is present in the ‘victory’ interpretation and vice versa (as are, no doubt, a number of other possible interpretations).
- 12 See, *inter alia*, Ang (1985, 1996), Radway (1984), Stacey (1994), Hermes (2005), Newcomb (2006: Part 4) and Brunsdon and Spigel (2008: Part II).
- 13 For example, Jenkins (1992, 2006), Lewis (1992), Penley (1992, 1997), Clerc (2000), Thomas (2002) and Hellekson and Busse (2006).



# Sex, Gender and Cyberspace

M. I. Franklin

If the personal is not only political but also international (Enloe 1989) then, in increasingly Internet-dependent parts of the world at least, the personal, the political, and the international (viz. the 'global') must also be *virtual*. If we are serious about bringing the body into the study of gender and global politics in a twenty-first century context, we also need to delve into those digital, computer-mediated constellations of 'power relations and practices which impact so directly. . . on actual bodies' (Pettman, cited in Shepherd, this volume). Not only sex-gender roles in everyday life but also political institutions, formal, informal, and 'virtual' economies (see Peterson 2003), public and private spheres, and sociocultural relations are increasingly configured by and through *information and communication technologies* (ICTs), the Internet in particular. Bodies are now *virtually* 'performing' gender: a body/politics/global matrix that is comprised of multiple multi-media platforms, computer-mediated imaginaries, and digitally encoded social formations from the ground up and the top down.

Nonetheless, the idea that globalization-from-above comes from ICTs working hand-in-glove with vested interests is too often taken at face value (see Ericksson and Giacomello 2009) by critics of the last century's 'global shifts' (Dicken 1992, Harvey 1989). In this narrative, the Internet is instrumental in increasing sociocultural exclusion, democratic deficits, and the ongoing exploitation of women – in the 'Global South' first and foremost – under *neoliberal* globalization. By the same token, these very technologies are being touted as a technical fix-it in UN-brokered initiatives to alleviate global poverty, advance development, and promote democratization; *ICTs for Development*, *Internet Governance*, and *Millennium Development Goals* are cases in point (Mansell and When 1998, ITU 2006, 2009, United Nations 2009).



Figure 23.1 Cyberpower.

Source: Copyright to Chappatte in L'Hebdo (Lausanne), January 27, 1994.

The short answer to whether either prognosis is backed up by enough evidence is, in both instances, 'yes, but . . .'. The *formative* role attributed to ICTs, along with the Internet and the media, in the neoliberal 'project' (McMichael 2000, McChesney *et al.* 1998, Schiller 1999) or 'globalization' – however defined (Appadurai 1996, Mattelart 1994, 2003) has been well documented; both heartily condemned and triumphantly defended despite solid attempts to hold the middle ground (see, for example, Mansell and Silverstone 1996, Loader 1998).<sup>1</sup> Accumulating evidence of not one but multiple 'digital divides' is the flipside of many a gung-ho narrative of the Internet as socioeconomic leveller on a planetary scale. These divides have, alas, very palpable gender, class, and race inflections to them, running along familiar rifts between rich and poor nations; colonizer and colonized, industrialized and non-industrialized, skilled and unskilled, centre and periphery (Harcourt 1999, Adam and Green 1998, Wyatt *et al.* 2000, 2002). These longstanding inequalities are now overlaid with newer chasms opening up between 'information-rich' and 'information-poor', Internet-savvy and computer-illiterate, software designers, consumers, and unprotected workers in ICT manufacturing and the so-called global culture and service industries (Jensen 2006: 239–40, Miller *et al.* 2004, Holderness 1998). Assessing the sociocultural, political or economic impact of ICTs is not a straightforward cost/benefit analysis at the best of times. Neither is a bird's eye view of their geographies as cut and dried as it first appears. The over-concentration of ICTs in the world's wealthier zones, uneven distribution within and across traditional borders belie complex contours closer up; likewise for today's computer-mediated gender-topographies of marginalization, violence, and oppression, in hyperlinked word, podcasted deed, globally networked media-message. For these reasons alone, they could do with more than passing attention from scholars of (global) gender matters.

Relatively under-theorized and under-researched they may well be. But meanwhile, researchers, teachers, and students alike boot-up PCs, recharge iPhones or BlackBerries, log-in and log-out of web-portals, consult *Wikipedia* (at a rate of 20–45,000 pages

*per second* in 2008, see van Ammelrooy 2008: 13), *Google, skype*, socialize and network on *Facebook, Bebo*, or *Hyve* for instance; *Twittering* or SMS/texting and multimedia-tasking merrily everyday without a second thought. This chapter addresses the ubiquity of these indispensable, taken-for-granted devices on the one hand, and, on the other, the seeming intransigency of their larger architectures, macro-economic significance for politics writ large bearing in mind this 'disconnect' between scholarly critique and everyday ICT use. Without suggesting that readers chuck their mobile phones, MP3 devices or laptop computers out the window, this chapter is concerned with how a closer interrogation of ICTs – their histories, architectures, various uses, and diverse users – can further our inquiries into the (global) gender-dynamics of the changing 'body politic' of the twenty-first century.

Before proceeding though, the next section argues why a more conceptually rounded approach to the study of ICTs is *indispensable* to furthering understandings of gender matters in global politics. This first step is necessary because several, stubborn misconceptions about the interrelationship between technology, society, and politics continue to cloud our thinking. With these assumptions put in their place, we can then look at some illustrative scenarios organized in two broad, distinct albeit intersecting rubrics for theory and research.

## MAKING THE CASE

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### Of sceptics and technophiles: the lay of the land

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Three common assumptions, misconceptions even, influence discussions about the interplay between (any 'new') technology, politics, and society; sceptical (see Rowbotham 1995, Herman and McChesney 1997, May 2002) or more optimistic (see Plant 1996, Turkle 1996, Sampaio and Aragon 1998). First, the assumption that technological changes occur in a vacuum, that they are an 'independent variable' or exogenous to political, economic and sociocultural realms (Shields 1996). Second, the assumption that ICTs are, nonetheless, the preserve of well-educated sectors of society, provenance of the 'most developed' parts of the world. In short, neither ICTs nor the Internet can, or indeed should be top priorities for impoverished regions, non-industrialized economies, or those sectors of society with more pressing needs. Third, the assumption that ICTs are essentially neutral. Namely, that as *technology* they are value-free. In other words, prior to their eventual use or deployment they do not constitute sociocultural, political, or economic gender-power relations in and of themselves.

These underlying assumptions have three implications for theory and research. The first is empirical and analytical: it blocks work into how the 'bigger picture' favoured by the study of global politics is permeated with microelectronic apparatuses, telecommunication networks, harmless and not-so-harmless software applications that monitor, track, and control the behaviour of consumer-citizens at one and the same time, corporate vs. state vs. 'citizen' power on the Web. The second is a conceptual blind spot when considering how once territorially delineated spaces for political power, state agencies, sites for international cooperation are being offset

by emergent 'cyberspatial' practices of everyday life by ordinary people on the one hand and, on the other, burgeoning 'technopower' (see Dahlberg and Siapiera 2007). Real virtual realities like *Second Life*<sup>TM</sup> and the phantasmagoria of reconfigured (hyper-masculine, hyper-feminine, or trans-gendered) bodies now populating the Web are constituent of these dynamics; 'digital assemblages' based on computer animation and the (re)imaging powers of digital photo-montage, all of which have a part to play in computer-mediated practices of (inter)subjectivity, party politics, corporate strategizing, intra and inter-state relations in myriad ways.<sup>2</sup>

Third is a tendency to front-end the temporal dimension in that none of the above emerged yesterday, ready-made. Like the nation-state, the Internet did not fall from the sky, ready-for-use. The Internet has a history even if it is still being written;<sup>3</sup> including the accidents, best-laid and worst-laid plans of corporate players, online activities of non-elite groups and power brokers behind the computer screen. Instead of being the *deus ex machina* of globalization-from-above narratives ICTs emerge as socially and historically constructed. As such their past, present, and future are rendered contestable rather than inevitable. We see how they also feature in 'other-globalization' narratives and mobilization, indispensable to the transnational alliance-building and global campaign strategies of 'new social movements' (Deibert 1999, Salter 2003). Moreover, in non-Western and postcolonial contexts, the World Wide Web generation of ICTs were embraced right from the outset in the early 1990s; facilitating burgeoning *diasporic mediascapes* (Karim 2003), identity-formation and transnational solidarities for postcolonial diasporas (Franklin 2004, 2007b, Miller and Slater 2000), NGO advocacy networks, grassroots activism around media reform and social justice (Franklin 2007a, Kee APC 2005, Jørgensen 2006) as they morphed into the 'Web 2.0' constellations of today.

Given the short and contentious history of the Internet (Abbate 2001, Spiller 2002), its place in longer histories of communications is too easily over-stated or overlooked. All in all, these real, virtual, and imagined developments require a more concerted examination of how 'real life' global politics and political subjects collide, collude, and co-habit with *virtual* ones.

### So, the antidote is . . . ?

The above variations of *technological determinism* – optimist and pessimist alike – also arise from major shortcuts that are taken through the work of past thinkers (see Franklin 2002, Spiller 2002). In varying degrees these misconceptions and blind spots can be offset by 'social constructivist' approaches (Mansell and Silverstone 1996, Woolgar 2002). This rich and multidisciplinary area of theory and research is largely overlooked by scholars of global politics. It can cast light on the above matters, helping us to reformulate our object – and terms of analysis – in constructive ways. These approaches open up the 'black box' of information and communication technologies, rendering them as open-ended, historically constructed, and surprisingly malleable *virtual technologies* (Hayles 1999: 13–14, 290); with less than predictable outcomes and multiple vantage points for analysis than available hitherto. This literature explores the interplay between the 'thinking machinery' of computational

devices and *mortal* physical bodies-in-the-flesh, individual and group psyches, popular imaginaries, and culturally embedded notions of what 'being there' entails for different societies; in geographically bounded, international, and *translocal* settings. What follows is a fuller understanding of the symbolic and material implications of this interplay as it is acted out, or performed in, and as computer-mediated (re)locations; networked and laterally (re)organized sociability, online public-ness or intimacy, emergent knowledge-power resources.

### Conceptual delineations for the perplexed

*Cybernetics*: This term was coined in the 1940s for theory and research into human-machine interactions based on how 'feedback loops' function in social and automated contexts. A discipline, if not a general paradigm, emerged around the Macy Conferences for Cybernetics (1943-1954) which brought key figures from computer science, biology, mathematics, and anthropology together. This line of thinking is integral to the computational logic at the heart of information technology. Hayles (1999: 8) notes, as do many others, the term's etymological origin in the Greek for 'steersman'; now extended to R&D into ways of furthering 'the synthesis between the organic and the mechanical' (ibid.). Three principles are at the heart of the cybernetic paradigm; information, control, and communication. See Haraway (1990), Spiller (2002), Ramage (2009).

*The Internet*: this has become a generic term for the means and medium for all manner of computer-mediated communications; email to computer-dating to gaming; electronic commerce to e-government to political fund-raising. These various functions based in the PC, laptop and increasingly mobile phone connect through servers around the world and are enabled by layers of computer codes and the 'user-friendly' icons on our screens. Put simply, the term denotes 'a network of networks'. Its physical architecture is nothing though without the software that 'drives' it as a whole or in part, for the Internet is more than the sum of its parts (see below).

*The World Wide Web*: this term dates from the 1990s when the Internet first became a popular success, along with the 'Dotcom' boom at the time. Its 'web-browser', 'hyperlink', and 'Internet Protocol' software still govern today's Internet. These are the key linking technologies – software – that permit computers and their networks (the *Internet*) to communicate (see Franklin 2004, Chapter 1; Spiller 2002, Abbate 2001). How they can, and do communicate involve all sorts of technical, legal, and political decisions, or non-decisions that still have consequences today.

*Web 2.0*: to all intents and purposes, circa 2009, commercial 'platforms' like *Facebook*, *MySpace*, *YouTube*, that combine email, images, text, listservs functions into so-called 'social networks' that are wholly dependent on Internet technologies, have replaced the earlier terminology of the Internet/World Wide Web of yesteryear; barely a decade ago. What were once separate sorts of interactions, software products, and Internet portals (access points) are now combined in the one package, accessed by individual 'producers' (producer-users) in order to link up with one another. Circa 2009, *Facebook* is the leader in 'Web 2.0' products and services (180 million signed-up users by its own reckoning), with services like *Twitter* not far behind. Both look set to make email, the bread-and-butter of Internet communications to date, obsolescent; at least for younger generations; time will tell however!

*Cyberspace*: this term has many inflections. It denotes the phenomenological dimensions to the above functionalities. Tim Jordan's 1999 definition still holds good: 'Cyberspace can be called the virtual lands, with virtual lives and virtual societies ...[that] do not exist with the same physical reality that 'real' societies do... The physical exists in cyberspace but it is reinvented' (Jordan 1999: 1). This brings us to the last conceptual delineation, *virtuality*.

*Virtuality*: here too there are many definitions. The 'strategic definition' put forward by Katherine Hayles in her advocacy of 'embodied virtuality' should suffice for now. She, like others, is looking to contest the value hierarchy based on an a priori separation, if not preference for 'materiality' over 'information': '*Virtuality is the cultural perception that material objects are interpenetrated by information patterns.* [This] definition plays off the duality at the heart of the condition of virtuality – materiality on the one hand, information on the other' (Hayles 1999: 12, 13-14, emphasis in original).

Figure 23.2

In these readings, ICTs cannot be understood as socially disembodied artefacts, fancy gizmos, or global communications networks for that matter. Rather as multiplex ‘objects of analysis’, discursive practices, and communications matrices that constitute the past, present, and future of the local, national, and global *cyberscapes*<sup>4</sup> of the world in which millions of people live, love, study, work, and play (Deuber-Mankowsky 2008: 993–94, Hayles 1999, Haraway 1997b); and many other millions of others do not. Feminists have been active in this landscape at all points of this technological and historical compass (see Wyatt 2008, Halbert 2004, Creedon 1993). Gender-sensitive and feminist-inspired treatments now pivot on questions about the ‘interactive and immersive modes of engagement’ (Kennedy 2002: 5/6) and digital – virtual – performativities that characterize particular ICT-induced embodiments,<sup>5</sup> broader political and cultural iconographies,<sup>6</sup> ‘cyber-feminist’ or ‘post-human’ theorizations of the body and subjectivity (see Hayles 1999: 4–5, Sofia 1999, González 2000, Leung 2001, Nguyen 2001). These moves into gravity-defying digital performativities, cyberscapes, and digital assemblages fuel longstanding and new debates in feminist theory and political practice (Kennedy 2002: 5/6, Franklin 2005, Haraway 1997b). Nonetheless, these issues can no longer be treated as sidebars to larger change-narratives. Like it or not, ICTs matter quite a lot for traditional, modern, or postmodern ideas about existence and ways of being in the world (see Chapter 2), albeit in different measures, on differing scales of intensity, and with various sociopolitical implications.

## CONSIDER THIS – TWO SCENARIOS

The two broad scenarios below unravel some of the above claims. The first is the more radical departure for students of global politics. The second is less so in that the issues here, their physically embodied actors and territories offline, resonate with themes covered elsewhere in this volume.

### Scenario (1) Cyborgs and virtual bodies that matter

[S]cience and technology are possible means of great human satisfaction, as well as a matrix of complex dominations. Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. . . . It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationship, spaces, stories.

(Haraway 1990: 223)

The above quote from Donna Haraway’s ‘A Manifesto for Cyborgs’ ([1985] 1990) takes to heart the way ICTs have been pushing the envelope of some cherished dichotomies – ‘leaky separations’ (ibid.: 183, 195) for some time. Her aim is to jettison the zero-sum game of binary thinking right from the start. She does so by introducing the *cyborg* as both metaphor and real-life being. For Haraway this science-fictional figure, cyborg, an abbreviation of ‘cybernetic organism’, is a *postgender*

**Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto and other monsters**

Like Judith Butler (1999, 1993) and Hayles (1999), Donna Haraway is an advocate of anti-essentialist thinking. She is interested in overturning forms of 'gender essentialism' and an over-reliance on 'organicism' notions about the body as a biological entity first and foremost. Her main point is that thinking 'outside the box' of technological determinism entails us accepting that many 'fruitful couplings' (1990: 191) between the human organism and 'thinking machines' already exist. For Haraway these couplings between human and artificial intelligences, biological and computational agencies, are part of everyday life, high-level politics, corporate R&D at one and the same time; embedded in capitalist social relations. With a generous serving of images borrowed from popular culture and feminist science fiction, Haraway's 'ironic myth' of the cyborg, emerges nonetheless from her Marxian critique of neoliberal capitalism; a response to the 'matrix of complex dominations' characterizing its heyday in the 1980s (op. cit.: 203 *passim*). Her argument is that even though ICTs have been instruments of domination and exclusion in many ways this is not the only story. For it is

crucial to remember that what is lost, perhaps especially from women's point of view, is often virulent forms of oppression, nostalgically naturalised in the face of current violation. *Ambivalence toward the disrupted unities mediated by hi-tech culture requires not sorting consciousness into categories ... but subtle understanding of emerging pleasures, experiences, and powers with serious potential for changing the rules of the game.* (Haraway 1990: 214-15, emphasis added)

Instead of throwing the (ICT) baby out with the ('informatics of domination') bathwater, Haraway stresses that there are also new opportunities, agencies, and ways of getting organized that can make use of, re-appropriate, or consciously redesign ICTs for the greater good. Since this landmark essay, feminist theorists/theorists of technology continue to explore these questions. For instance, by accounts of women's everyday 'cyborg lives' (Henwood *et al.* 2001); excavations of emergent and future 'post-human' subjectivities in narratives that neither erase nor foreclose on the materiality of virtual bodies (Hayles 1999); 'Bio Feminist' takes on sex-gender roles in light of genetic engineering techniques, digital media-imaging, and ubiquitous ICTs (see Zylinska 2002).



Source: Copyright to Jim Kohl, www.happyhourcomic.com.

Figure 23.3

trope for agency and empowerment that, instead of suffering in silence, can take charge; intervene in unjustly skewed high-tech presents and work towards more inclusive futures. Her 'blasphemous' declaration, 'I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess' (Haraway 1990: 223) is grounded in her claim that postgendered embodiments based on human-machine intimacies are not flights of fancy. The cyborg is already scientific 'fact' and social reality. So, time to 'get real'. Let's see why.

### Reconfiguring the body biotechnological: Cyborg facts and fantasies

Advances in biotechnology and cybernetics<sup>7</sup> have been steadily challenging and blurring modernist hierarchies that privilege an a priori hierarchy of mind over body (Deuber-Mankowsky 2008) or human agency over artificial and mechanical; material objects over their representation or (physical) presence over (computer) mediated forms; real-life relationships over those encountered in fantasy and computer simulations or on-the-ground social realities over online ones. First, biotechnology, as R&D and commercial enterprise, has been reconstructing, enhancing, and synthesizing organic bodies for some time now. Take, for instance the first successful clone, a sheep called Dolly in 1996, and moves into human cloning techniques since then. From the deepest, microscopic reaches of human DNA up to body-parts (internal organs and external limbs), bioengineering and biogenetics can manufacture and replace, improve and extend the human organism accordingly.

Second, robotics, computing, and advances in artificial intelligence provide digital hearing aids and other implants to malfunctioning eyes and ears. Both are involved in the design of sophisticated, digitally controlled prostheses, the monitors and life-support machines that populate hospitals and medical surgeries, emergency services and disaster-relief systems. Both are central to the development of performance-enhancing drugs used in the (legal) treatment of heart, kidney, and other chronic diseases, and (criminalized) uses of performance-enhancing drugs in top-level sport. From the now cheesy characters in old TV shows to real-existing bionic men and women,<sup>8</sup> from robotic and android prototypes, to biogenetically engineered 'monsters' such as the *Oncomouse*<sup>TM</sup> (see Haraway 1997b, Hayles 1999: 222 *passim*), these processes are no longer just pulp fiction. They mesh with national and corporate R&D strategies that include genetically modified organisms for large-scale agriculture, stem-cell research and pre-natal screening in the treatment and screening of genetic 'abnormalities'. The sociocultural and environmental impacts of these techniques and their ethical implications continue to fuel public and political debate.<sup>9</sup> The organic and the inorganic, and the way in which both are ICT-dependent is a fact of everyday life and life-enhancing dreams; CCTV, mobile telephony with web-access, GPS navigational tools, 'smart homes', biometric passports, finger-printing, iris- and body-scans at national borders, complex surveillance and security systems on earth and in outer-space, surgical (laser and virtual) techniques to heal and make-over physical deficiencies. These 'biotechnologies' are a global business, dominated by transnational conglomerations spanning the pharmaceutical, agro-industrial, 'Big Science' and IT sectors, military-industrial complexes, and national R&D priorities. Hence they are the locus and object of considerable financial and political investments that include power stand-offs



between ICT/media conglomerates, social actors, and government agencies. The trend in 'public-private' (*viz.* state-corporate) partnerships have been targeted by 'anti-globalization' activists and NGO advocates working both from beyond and within UN institutions (see pp. 338–40).

#### Cyber-babes, action heroines, and virtual icons

Scientific R&D and commercial applications, popular sci-fi images and products developed by the global entertainment and media industry are not only political targets, cultural icons, and corporate enterprises. They are also refashioning gender role-models, where people hang out, and everyday vocabulary of ICT-savvy generations, from New York to Tokyo, London to Beijing, Bombay to Honolulu. These are the virtual worlds of fantasy communities, gaming, and even 'serious' Internet discussion forums. The characters, *avatars*, and user-practitioners that populate these worlds are encountered and activated by being 'online' in partially or totally immersed modes of ICT use. The upshot is a relocation of debates about sexual and racial stereotyping in light of computer-generated morphologies. The political economy and gender politics of ICT consumption in hyper-commercialized arcades of online shopping, violence, sex, and other sorts of online 'mayhem' fold into these concerns about individual and social well-being, commodification processes that now target younger generations of Internet users, environmentally unsustainable consumerism, and the politics of racialized, militarized, and eroticized representation that, for many, characterize the underlying ethos of computer gaming and virtual worlds. So, exit Haraway's 'heretical' cyborg vision and enter her more commercial, virtual

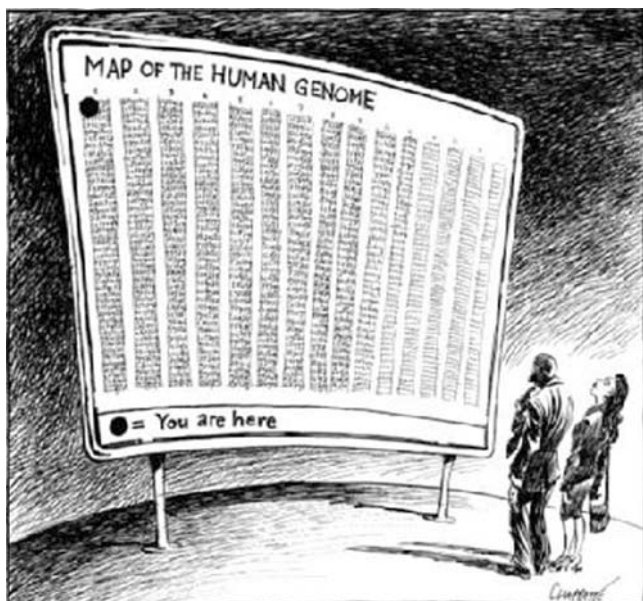


Figure 23.4

Source: Copyright to Chappatte in *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich) June 29, 2000.

compatriot, 'Lara Croft'. Lara Croft is the main actor-character, whose actions are steered and manipulated by the player – in 'first shooter' mode – to a greater or lesser degree of success (points scored in surmounting obstacles of ever-increasing difficulty), of the immensely successful video-game *Tomb Raider*.

#### Unknown cyber-pleasures and big business

[T]he physical exists in cyberspace but is reinvented.

(Jordan 1999: 2, 179, 208)

Although the feminist debates on the gender politics and physical attributes of successive generations of female cultural icons (real and fictional) are not new – Marilyn Monroe, Barbie, Twiggy, and Madonna are precursors – Lara Croft is a *virtual* heroine with a global, transnational reach: a global, cyber-based brand. As such, she embodies a different order of gender performativities, socio-political and techno-economic challenges to existing 'masculinist' frameworks. She also intersects with longstanding political demarcation lines in feminist praxis. For what do Barbie Dolls, the female cast of *Bay Watch*, Seven of Nine (from *Star Trek Voyager*) and Lara Croft have in common? Synthetically enhanced physiology, cross-gender admirers, and a reach into bedrooms the world over. And what do Jane Fonda, Madonna, Pamela Anderson, Posh Spice (a.k.a. Victoria Beckham) and Angelina Jolie have in common?

#### Gaming: facts, figures, and fictions

Gaming is one of the fastest growing segments of the global entertainment industry, projected to grow at a rate of 6.6 per cent per annum by 2010, to US\$1.8 trillion (Metrics 2.0, 2006). The computer and video-game market is a major segment of the global software market, overtaking sales in DVD music and video in the UK and worldwide in 2008 to the tune of US\$32 billion (see Lancaster 2008, van Zelfdon 2009). According to one source, from 2003-2006 the US entertainment software industry alone grew at a rate of 17 per cent, outstripping that of the US economy by 4:1 (Entertainment Software Association 2008) with US sales currently holding 45 per cent of the world market. All major IT and media corporations (e.g. *Sony*, *Microsoft*, *Nintendo*) are involved in this area. Gaming – for young children, young adults, and their parents – is big business. As the visuals become more complex, overheads have spiralled accordingly, which means that only those companies with the resources can afford to design and market these games (see O'Brien 2006). From high-level programmers down to assemblage and distribution, the industry plays a significant role as a source of employment as well (Nelson and Tu 2001, Irwin 2001, Sinclair 2009).

The Chinese and Indian markets show similar trends. Japan's historical lead in Internet penetration, the development of high-tech commodities and culture industries aside, computer-game players and ICT consumers are increasingly made up of populations in mainland China, South Korea, south-east Asia, and the Indian sub-continent. So there goes the idea that ICTs are exclusively a white, Anglo-American preoccupation. The most striking figures are on who buys and plays these computer games. Not only is the average game-player around 35 years old, so the idea of the teenage computer nerd has to be adjusted, but 40 per cent of all game players are now women. Women over 18 in the US are now a greater proportion of game-players than boys aged 17 and under. For teenagers (13-17 years old), girl 'gamers' are fast closing the gap with boys in parts of western Europe. So there goes the idea of the teenage male computer nerd.

Figure 23.5

### Gaming: an unsung virtue or public scourge?



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*Tomb Raider*, along with *Grand Theft Auto*, is a computer game developed in the UK. The former was launched in 1996 and is already in its 'nth' version. *Tomb Raider*, and its main character ('impersonated' by you, the player) Lara Croft, is a global brand, a lucrative (film and software) global franchise that consistently ranks in the world top-ten sales figures. With her trans-gender desirability, 'supernatural agility' and 'preternaturally large breasts whose origins and alteration have their own narrative in the Lara Croft universe' (Deuber-Mankowsky 2008: 992) then transfigured into real-life Hollywood icon, Angelina Jolie, in the 2001 film of the same name. Lara Croft's role as the well-endowed, gun-toting, turbo-charged, and no-nonsense 'super-fem' protagonist in this game has never been far from controversy. Whilst the jury is still out these debates mark her virtual coming of age as, simultaneously, an 'object of sexual desire, ... girl power icon and cover girl, ... [high profile example of] "active or "strong" female characters [that] signify a potential threat to the masculine order' (Kennedy 2002: 1/6, 2/6).

As for ongoing arguments about the social effects of the variety of (war) games termed 'video nasties' in light of teenage gun-massacres (the Columbine High School and Virginia Tech shootings in the USA, the Erfurt and Winnenden school shootings in Germany for instance), the jury is still out. One thing to remember is that games like *Call of Duty* or *World of Warcraft* are not the only game in town; non-combative genres going back to the early years (e.g. *Pong*, *Dungeons and Dragons*) include hugely popular established games such as *Simcity*, *Guitar Hero World Tour*, *Animal Crossing*, and new ones such as *Spore*. Arguably, *Tomb Raider* and *Second Life* (SL) belong to the latter category; that said, is SL a game or is it for real (see Lancaster 2008)? Big profit and loss accounts aside, even in the gaming world the corporate mainstream for all its economic power has its counterpart in alternative, 'indie' and feminist, visions of what is virtually possible (O'Brien 2006).

Figure 23.6

They are global (white, western) celebrities who perform – for better or worse – 'offline' variations of certain, highly time-sensitive idealized embodiments.<sup>10</sup> Like Lara Croft or Barbie, these are bodies that have been 'designed' – nurtured, groomed, and visually enhanced. In 'natural' ways (power yoga, extreme diets), by cosmetic surgery and, when none of these suffice, through the re-visualizing techniques of global advertising.

These real-life and virtual-world (re)embodiments also exemplify the ‘leaky separations’ that figure in Haraway’s cyborg imagery. Their political implications, or moral virtues for that matter, are hotly contested and celebrated; whether as commodities or socialization agents in crisscrossing transnational corporate realms, through local and purportedly global circuits of cultural (re)production, meaning-making, ownership and control of people’s body-image, representations of the body, and psychologies of desire. These circulations and how they ‘frame’ material practices underscore the *polysemic* and multidirectional dimensions to any (global) politics of representation; personal and political, as commercially front-loaded as they are culturally ambiguous. The images that supply global advertising and marketing campaigns, those during crucial points in corporate global restructuring of telecommunications and IT sectors in the 1990s as cases in point, make full use of these ambiguities (see Franklin 2004). Precisely because the knife cuts both ways their ‘politics of representation . . . racist, homophobic as well as sexist modes – is a vital issue which the games industry [nor scholars] should not ignore’ (Kennedy 2002: 5/6).

To sum up, fleshy and pixellated bodies are already being refashioned – enhanced or ‘corrected’ – in both computer-mediated communications, mediated settings, and real-life situations. The gender troubles of classical dimorphism (see Chapter 1) are being superimposed by some interesting troubles of another order when moved online, into cyberspace and back again as bodies are lived and experienced contemporaneously as one’s own physical morphology, ‘digital assemblage’, or ‘second life’ avatar. The main point here is less whether it matters about proving if Lara Croft, along with other computer simulations is really ‘real’ or not. The point is that ‘she’, her actions, the worlds she inhabits and interfaces with (that of the designers and players) are not strictly a male, masculinist, or exclusively online preserve. Like cyborgs, computer-generated actors are a feminist issue. The way they can take leave of the classical confines of private – domestic and intimate – spaces as they operate on and through Internet domains makes them also a global one.



Figure 23.7 Fluff ©Nina Paley.

Source: Used under a Creative Commons licence that allows commercial usage and modifications of the work so long as Nina Paley’s credit is included.

## Scenario (2) Online-to-offline and back again

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Nestled at the interstices of online and offline lives, there is another scenario worth exploring, one in which everyday cyberspaces are entered, navigated, and then co-created by ordinary people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds the world over.<sup>11</sup> Here we take a look at how ICTs link on-the-ground domains (offline lives) and cyberspatial ones in a traditionally embodied sense; physical actors connecting up across variable distances and time-zones. The Internet – its physical and cyberspatial access points and meeting-places – simultaneously operates as (inter)connective space, personal-political platform, information resource, research field, and communication medium pure and simple. Subjects enter and leave as they wish, conforming to formal and informal rules for online behaviour. Whilst traversing the Web these practitioners are reconfigured as nicknames, email addresses, camera-images, or ‘tweets’. As such they are analytically and empirically distinct from total-immersion virtual realities or digitalia of virtual embodiments examined above. Co-existing alongside the latter from the earliest days, however, these computer-mediated ‘online communities’, ‘news-groups’, and ‘discussion forums’ are as old as the Web itself (see Rheingold 1994). The ‘social networks’ – products and services – of this century make use of and dovetail with these earlier forms, intertwining with on-the-ground domains of physical bodies, other degrees of virtual (re)embodiments and power struggles as they do so; here’s how.

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### Postcolonial politics, everyday life, and the Internet

As individuals, communities, and on-the-ground locales get connected across borders and then online, all sorts of things start to happen. This is a computer-mediated domain for ‘cyberspatial practices of everyday life’ (Franklin 2004), which entail translocal, transnational connections between diasporic generations and those in their countries of origin (Karim 2003), identity-formation along unexpected lines, social and political contestation in which women feature strongly (Franklin 2001). Alternatively labelled ‘conservative’ or ‘subversive’ by scholarly or social authorities on the ground, these sorts of online practices evolve their own sorts of ‘moral economies’ or ‘netiquette’, histories, and power hierarchies over time; challenging, sometimes unintentionally, traditional ones on the ground (Laenui 1999, Franklin 2004, 2007b). Then there are the many, more high-profile websites that have explicit – global – political agendas. Neo-nazi and extremist websites (right, left, religious fundamentalists) aside, the well-covered Internet activism of the 1990s Zapatista resistance movement in Mexico, Tibetan activist sites, Chinese dissidents using blogs and offshore Internet connection, all form a largely under-researched terrain for exploring the translocal, transnational, and transcultural dimensions to spontaneous and more self-consciously strategic ICT uses for social or political ‘counter-hegemonic’ projects.

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### Gender, ICTs, and social justice advocacy

Meanwhile and with increasing intensity, UN organs (ITU, UNESCO, UNDP) including the Washington-consensus institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO) have

been targeting ICTs in general, and the Internet in particular in recent multilateral agenda-setting projects and related summits. Whilst these themes are not in themselves new to the UN, or to those organizations promoting the advancement of women, these recent moves to link new technologies directly into the UN's *Millennium Development Goals* bring with them a revival in NGO advocacy and grassroots activism from across the political spectrum. Women's and feminist groups in what is now called 'global civil society' are no strangers to UN summits; the 1995 Beijing Conference on the Status of Women is a case in point. They have been active since the 1960s at least (MacBride *et al.* 1980, Gerbner *et al.* 1993); working to raise awareness of specific issues in media and ICT sectors that are relevant to women as a group and gender-power relations (violence against women, pornography, workplace exploitation, sexist advertising). Thanks to the networking faculties of ICTs, transnational alliances and online lobbying are now a continual feature of web-based activities, in preparatory events, in-between summits, and at academic-activist 'conference hubs'. Like the UN itself, these activities and the *hypertextual* output they generate are increasingly ICT-dependent; online and downloadable to a greater (for well-resourced outfits) or lesser degree (not so well-endowed or digitized). In short, governments, the UN, and other multilateral institutions are also cyber-actors looking to impact and 'steer' what happens in cyberspace.

More recently these concerns have started to be couched in the rights-based language; a 'women's human rights framework in relation to ICTs' (Jørgensen 2006, Jensen 2006). For the most part these 'civil society' mobilizations – lobbying or direct action – have focused on the gloomier disconnects between new technologies, gender, and power hierarchies we looked at earlier. Making a difference from within, in what are technocratic, selective, and protocol-saturated high-level consultations in the UN, calls for new skills and approaches; policy-writing acumen (not as easy as it sounds), increasing degrees of ICT know-how, and want-to, along with a willingness to exchange grassroots, face-to-face organizing for Internet-based and email-dependent ones. The latter also depends on how well kitted out your NGO is, whether you can get a decent mobile or Internet connection in the field or in-conference, afford regular intercontinental travel. In any case, NGOs are also dealing with a new organizational and consciousness-raising task that assumes, if not aims to create, a transnational public (see Gurumurthy 2003, WSIS Civil Society Caucus 2003, Jørgensen 2006, Franklin 2005, 2007a).

All this recent activity around UN programmes for 'ICTs for Development' (ICTD), 'Internet Governance', or 'communication rights' resonate with pre-Internet social mobilization. Whilst these issues, interventions, and controversies now centre on ICTs, indeed unfold in cyberspatial domains, some argue that, again, no new technology is in itself sufficient to create sustainable solidarity beyond providing technical innovations. Meanwhile, these high-level consultations grant 'civil society' delegations fully accredited participations in these *multistakeholder* events. Political differences aside, these advocacy and activist networks have made it a priority to ensure that ICTs for Development initiatives remain socioculturally inclusive. This is a long, uphill battle however given the technical and legal complexities involved anyway let alone how these combine with the organizational and communicative cultures of UN-level negotiations. At time of writing these predominate as



Figure 23.8 Information Superhighway.

Source: Copyright to Chappatte in *L'Hebdo* (Lausanne) March 2, 1995.

corporatized, androcentric, and eurocentric decision-making processes in the emergent 'Global Internet Governance' paradigm and its multilateral institutions; online and on the ground.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS – SEX, GENDER AND CYBERSPACE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Whether we are located in positions that enable direct access to digital communications technology or not, the impact of ICTs in shaping our sense of spatial, temporal, and social relations with each other is undeniable.

(Kee/APC 2005: 3)

To recall, a core premise of this volume is that global politics is practised, 'co-constituted' by gendered bodies and that 'interrogating the political practices through which bodies come to matter at all in global politics' (see Chapter 1) is intrinsic to the practice and study of contemporary politics. ICTs connect the micro with the macro – quite literally, the domestic/private to the public, the local to the would-be global, intimate, face-to-face communications with distant, non-proximate intimacies, given morphologies with (re)designed ones. In so doing they also reconfigure our sense of embodiment, indeed ideas about the mind-body relationship, and social-ness. For some people this means being able to leave cages of flesh and blood, disability, or sex-gender stereotyping 'in-real-life'.

Second, the relationship between women, gender, and technology has been a feminist and a global issue from the get-go. Consider how longstanding contestations around social hierarchies and power relations that swivel on, or attempt to get past abject subjects: racialized, feminized, and now digitally realized subaltern 'others' (Ling 2002, Chowdhry and Nair 2002, Kolko *et al.* 2000, Franklin 2004) are being taken on in cyberspace, acquire computer animations. The 'empire writing

back' in cyberspace are also contending with both 'post-human' and neo-imperial permutations of late. Meanwhile the supraterritorial and, potentially, democratizing connectivity of the Internet is becoming superimposed over actual and imagined intimacies – sometimes wanted and sometimes unwanted – between individuals, groups, and virtual technologies.

Whilst there is a lot of thought and research on how to think 'in more sophisticated ways about virtual technologies' (Hayles 1999: 290) and in ways that do not do violence to, or erase physical embodiment altogether, ICTs are now being positioned as the next silver bullet, a high-tech panacea for the world's structural ills. To this end, twenty-first century multilateral institutions have headlined 'ICTs for Development' as the vanguard narrative of how these new technologies can 'save' the world from itself. But *which* ICTs exactly? On whose terms? And for what ends? These high-level moves trace familiar lines of power and privilege. However, the past and future of ICTs are not yet foreclosed. 'ICTs for Development' and 'Global Internet Governance' paradigms are still very much under construction. Likewise for the more radically virtual embodiments, hopes and fantasies, ordinary and strategic practices of everyday life online discussed here. As actors take them up, revise or discard them they travel along the increasingly complex transmission pathways, *de facto* and *de jure* computer-networks and Internet protocols of the Web; digital pathways that follow the routes taken by early telecommunications, laid down at the height of the colonial era. Even in the large parts of the world in the Global North and Global South where the Internet is not fully in place, where related ICT goods and services – mobile telephony excepted – are patchy if practically non-existent, or where poorly paid young women, and men work on corporate ICT production lines, in call-centres, or computer-programming branches, they matter in both their absence and in the particularities of their presence in the most unexpected of locales. Neither the Internet or ICTs can be analysed as just tools, to be used for the greater good or to harm. They are also issues in themselves. ICTs in general and particularly the Internet now co-constitute global politics.

Finally, a word of caution: as the Internet becomes more and more a signifier of the 'global', scholars need to treat ICTs as more than a footnote to 'real' concerns (see Chapter 22). What is at stake is the survival of alternative visions of communicative futures – and pasts. There is an ongoing struggle about who gets to set the terms of use, frames the debate, let alone tells the story and emerge as victors in the final analysis. The *Internet's* future trajectory – form, substance, organization, and ownership – is currently the object of some intense power struggles, in corporate boardrooms, UN circles, national governments, and ICT-designer communities. To borrow from Sandra Whitworth (2000), inquiries into sex, gender, and cyberspace at the heart of twenty-first century society and politics amount to more than a call to 'add ICTs and stir'.

### Seminar exercise

This seminar exercise is a role-play that simulates the *World Summit on the Information Society* participatory model; government, private sector, and civil



society representatives all taking equal part in the discussions (see Jørgensen 2006, Franklin 2005).

Before the seminar, in the same week students read this chapter have them be already divided into five 'dynamic coalitions' based around the five sets of web resources below. Each group needs to divide itself in turn into government, private (business), and civil society representatives; take on the role of a UN member-state if possible (not your own one though). The aim is to prepare a standpoint to take on their respective coalition's topic and present a draft action plan for inclusion in the plenary declaration. These web-links and their onward links are a good start to get better informed.

During the seminar: Each coalition meets briefly to brainstorm ideas, discuss mutual points and deal with diverging views. The aim is to synthesize the differing views into a coherent statement and then 3–6 point plan. Don't forget to appoint a *rapporteur* and, for the plenary, perhaps your seminar leader can play the role as moderator.

In the second part, all five coalitions convene for the plenary session – the 'summit' where they take turns to present their coalition's statement and draft Action Plan. From there some sort of joint declaration needs to be formulated that represents all parties.

Depending on how long the plenary takes, some time can be spent discussing the exercise. What did students notice about the nature of this style of consensus building? Which interests, or parties managed to get their agenda across? What were the impediments, where were there agreements? How did time-pressure impact in the quality of discussion and nature of the final result (if any?). How would you improve things, organizationally and in communications, a second time around?

Things to bear in mind:

- This style of UN consultation is based on the premise that all parties are ready and willing to participate and jointly responsible for the output. Reaching a Declaration of Principles is the first step; finalizing concrete Action Plans a second; deciding on how all this is to be financed a third, and organizational – governance – structures a fourth. And this is before having these decisions accepted by constituencies back home.
- Try and get into the 'skin' of your designated role as much as possible even if you don't identify with it. If you don't have the exact knowledge (facts and figures) then try and imagine what representatives might be aiming for, and why. What would your interests be about this topic? What could the 'deal-breaker' points consist of? Use your imagination if need be but the more prepared the better the role-play.
- Don't be surprised if time becomes an issue. At these sorts of high-level events it always is! An extended version of this exercise could have the collations meet in 'preparatory' sessions to sort out their position-statement before the class in order to leave more time for the summit
- Note what happens to your coalitions list of priorities when first meeting, and relative to other coalitions during the plenary. Also note what happens as your

coalition discusses what its position-statement and action plan is to be; common ground easy to find or not?

- Be sure to have fairly strict time-keeping in the formal plenary; e.g. delegates to the WSIS in Geneva and Tunis often only had *three* minutes to make their case!

### Questions for further debate

1. Often 'virtual realities' are seen as diametrically opposed to 'real life'; and the latter is seen as intrinsically better and more desirable than the former. Do you agree? If so why? If not, why not?
2. Do you think that thinkers such as Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, or Katherine Hayles succeed in getting us to think in non-dichotomous ways about how bodies and (computer) technology are interrelated? In other words, would you rather be a goddess, a cyborg, an avatar, or a clone?
3. Taking Haraway's cyborg metaphor into the arena of sport would imply that social condemnation of 'doping' (the enhancement of athletic performance by 'unnatural' synthetic means and the impact of e.g. unwitting uses of anabolic steroids on the human organism) need to be reconsidered. Male and female athletes are already postgendered cyborgs so, if these interventions (legal and criminalized) are intrinsic to their success, these practices cannot be considered as cheating. Discuss.
4. What do you think about arguments that computer-generated (virtual) forms of violence (e.g. a recent case in *Second Life* or earlier cases of 'cyber-rape') should not go any more unpunished than in RL (real life)?
5. Should online content (images, texts, email conversations) be monitored by external watchdogs and unacceptable content (from hate-mails, to 'digital piracy', to sexually explicit or politically subversive material) blocked or filtered out of the Web, as is already the case in schools, public libraries, and some countries? Should those who insist on accessing such content be prosecuted? If so, where would you draw the limits in line with principles of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and individual privacy?

### Relevant web-based resources (five clusters)

- **Cyborgs, Robots, and Droids and Other Real-Life Virtualities:** *Cyborg Manifesto* animation, available HTTP: <<http://youtube.com/watch?v=IQiwRrR-LeE>>; *Cyborg Manifesto* Comic, art by James Kohl available HTTP: <<http://www.barclaybarrios.com/courses/cyberlit/media/cyborg1.html>>; Wikipedia: *List of Fictional Robots and Droids* available HTTP: <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_fictional\\_robots\\_and\\_androids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_robots_and_androids)>; Kennedy, Helen, 2002, 'Lara Croft: Feminist Icon or Cyberbimbo? On the Limits of Textual Analysis', *Game Studies: International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 2(2) available HTTP: <<http://>

www.gamestudies.org/0202/kennedy/>; Lalley, Jacqueline, 2008, 'Beyond the Valley of the Geeks: Notes on Gender and Gaming', *Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture* available HTTP: <<http://www.bitchmagazine.org/article/gender-gaming>>; *Tomb Raider* portal available HTTP: <<http://www.tombraider.com/server.php?change=LandingPage>>.

- **Sexual Politics, Gender Representations, and Bodies on the Web:** 'Ballad of Lucy Jordan' sung by Marianne Faithful, Video Clip available HTTP: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KV-PTK0UZA>>; *Border Crossings Portal* available HTTP: <<http://www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/resources/bordercrossings/frontera.html>>; *Exoticize my Fist!* Live Journal available HTTP: <<http://community.livejournal.com/exoticizemyfist>>; *Sexism, Strength and Dominance: Masculinity in Disney Films* by Sanjay Newton available HTTP: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CWMct35oFY>>; *Bodies Incorporated* available HTTP: <<http://www.bodiesinc.ucla.edu/>>.
- **Race, Class, and Gender Crossovers:** Sarai Media Lab, *Cybermohalla Project* available HTTP: <<http://www.sarai.net/practices/cybermohalla>>; *DimSum: The British Chinese Community Website* available HTTP: <<http://www.dimsun.co.uk/>>; *Polynesian Café* available HTTP: <<http://polycafe.com/>>; Chinese Feminists website available HTTP: <<http://www.feminist.cn/>>; *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, by Gil Scott-Heron available HTTP: <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICTP\\_9l-4NM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICTP_9l-4NM)>.
- **Activism and Advocacy:** *Association for Progressive Communications – Women's Network Support Program* (APC WNSP) available HTTP: <<http://www.apcwomen.org/>>; *Cyberspace, Hypertext, and Critical Theory: 'Gender Matters'* available HTTP: <<http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/gender/genderov.html>>; GenderIT.org, *Changing the Way You See IT*, available HTTP: <<http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml>>; *Internet Governance Project*, 'Review of Documents Released Under the Freedom of Information Act in the.XXX Case', May 19, 2006, IGP Paper IGP06–003 available HTTP: <<http://www.internetgovernance.org/pdf/xxx-foia.pdf>>; Jac Kee's 'Women's Human Rights: Violence Against Women, pornography and ICTs', *Women Claiming the Information Society* (WOCTIS), 11 September 2005, Berlin available HTTP: <[http://www.genderit.org/resources/WOCTIS\\_paper\\_jk.pdf](http://www.genderit.org/resources/WOCTIS_paper_jk.pdf)>.
- **Women, Gender and ICTs at the UN:** UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), *WSIS Civil Society Documents and Reports* available HTTP: <[http://www.un-ngls.org/wsis\\_about.htm](http://www.un-ngls.org/wsis_about.htm)>; *UN Millennium Development Goals – 'Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development'* available HTTP: <<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/#>>; *UN Information and Communications Technologies Task Force* available HTTP: <<http://www.unicttaskforce.org/>>; UNESCO, *UNESCO and WSIS: Towards Knowledge Societies* available HTTP: <[http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=1543andURL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPICandURL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1543andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html)>; *ISIS International – Manila* available HTTP: <<http://www.isiswomen.org/>>; *WSIS Gender Caucus Tunis 2005*, and other related links, on *Them's Fightin' Words*, a Blog by Leslie Regan Shade available HTTP: <<http://shade.flinknet.com/archives/000615.html>>.

## Sources for further reading and research

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- Dick, P. K. (1968) *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* New York: Ballantine Books (inspiration for the film *Bladerunner*, 1982, dir. Ridley Scott).
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- Metropolis*, 1927, dir. Fritz Lang.
- Minority Report*, 2002, dir. Steven Spielberg.

## Notes

- 1 Successive generations of 'new' information and communication technologies feature in all narratives of 'global restructuring' or 'globalization'; indispensable for the liberalization of trade and financial regimes, the internationalization (i.e. unprotected and cheapening) of labour and manufacturing; the 'post-Fordist' or 'postmodern' modes of production that characterize the *information*, or *network* society. See Harvey (1989), Dicken (1992), Castells (1996), Hardt and Negri (2000), Peterson (2003) for instance.
- 2 Take, for example, recent cases of government (in China and Tunisia, for example) censorship of the Internet, legal litigations in the ICT sector (Microsoft versus Google), or increasing use of Internet-based fund-raising and influence of the 'blogosphere' in electoral politics; e.g. the 2008 Barack Obama presidential campaign.
- 3 This literature overlaps histories of previous ICTs that are still with us today; the written word, printing press, photography, telegraph and telephone, radio and television, and so on (see Abbate 2001, Thompson 1995).
- 4 Here I borrow from two of the five 'scapes' in Appadurai's topography (1996); technoscapes and mediascapes. Both these merge in Internet-constructed domains.
- 5 The CGI character of Golem in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy is one example; more than just computer-generation animation but neither just an embellished projection of the actor playing this character's body; both 'real' and 'pretend' visualization in this fictional *mediascape* (see Appadurai 1996).

- 6 For example, the Abu-Ghraib images, and other 'media spectacles', all available for downloading.
- 7 See Figure 23.2. See also Hayles (1999) and Spiller (2002) for further discussion.
- 8 The *Six Million Dollar Man* and *Bionic Woman* are American television series from the 1970s and 1980s for example.
- 9 For instance the 'bionic' legs developed for a South African disabled track-athlete, Oscar Pistorius, for the 2008 Para-Olympics in Beijing. Whether 'doping' in top-level sport should or should not be counted here is a discussion bedevilled by complex debates about the rights and wrongs of big money, national sporting prowess vis-à-vis narratives about 'fair' competition and 'being a good sport' (*sic*).
- 10 We could include (debates about) James Dean, GI Joe, Michael Jackson, David Beckham, and (arguably) Barack Obama as comparable male cultural icons.
- 11 For instance, British-born Chinese (e.g. Dimsum), British-based and German-based Turkish communities (e.g. Vaybee!), Internet portals for the Kurdish diaspora (e.g. Viva Kurdistan!), Pacific Island communities based in the islands, USA, New Zealand, and Australia (Polynesian Café), Trinidadians and Jamaican websites (Miller and Slater 2000, Dyrkton 1996), and Dutch-Moroccan cyberspaces. And the list goes on.

# Conclusion

Terrell Carver

## ENGENDERING THE ACADEMY: BRINGIN' IT ALL BACK HOME . . .

But after taking this particular journey through a feminist introduction to International Relations, where exactly is 'home'? Given the ways that feminist curiosity has been deployed in the chapters above to 'make sense' of global politics, what exactly could 'home' mean?

In answering these questions I am tempted to say 'where the heart is' and observe that in all 23 chapters, the heart is with the disempowered, excluded, marginalised and – as we learn – *feminised* 'others' of this world. Home is therefore a metaphor, a signal for transferred meaning: maybe we wouldn't like to invite them ALL in, but we'd view them with respect and acknowledge them as 'like the home folks' in at least some minimal but significant ways. Feminist curiosity – if I have it right – says that it's ok to be curious about people, wherever they are, but not to impose, presume or rush into anything. But it doesn't tell us in advance who or what is important, or even what the 'problem' is – following one's curiosity is about working these things out as you go. Thus these chapters have ranged widely over global politics, freely politicising where curiosity takes the contributors, and presenting someone's 'sense' to the reader.

However, given the status of this book as an introductory text, we need to reflect on how it fits with and functions in an academic setting, where institutions matter. Perhaps we had better acknowledge here that 'home' in this context is 'IR', the discipline that assigns the academic study of global politics to itself. What, then, is IR when it is at home and where it is most 'homely'?

The answer, of course, is IR's home base in 'Realism', the point of departure from which the discipline sets out, the point of origin for this twentieth century social science, the first chapter of standard textbooks (or at least right up front), and lecture one of the 'Introduction to IR' course. Stories are journeys, too, and voyages of discovery, expeditions into the unknown. And Realism is where IR says it all began. Naturally this is located for us in another galaxy, long, long ago and far away, otherwise known as the Peloponnesian War, and in particular in an abstract from Thucydides' remarkable near-contemporary and often eye-witness history, an abstract otherwise known as 'the Melian debate'.

Once upon a time IR textbooks started from the distant security of this homeland and sallied forth in time and space, hitting the high spots of *Realpolitik*, such as Machiavelli, the formation of rival nation-states with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Hobbes's hard-minded *Leviathan*, and the workings of the international system ever since, with further watersheds, waves of debating, centrifugal schools and centripetal professionalisms. By the 1990s it was taking quite a few chapters to guide students through all this material in ascending chronological order and descending order of importance. When feminist IR entered on the scene, it was, in some textbooks, about Chapter 28, give or take a few positions, and down there in the dimness it jostled for position with post-structuralists, green politics, perhaps Marxists, or anyway other small and distant worlds, not quite cold and lifeless, but certainly not hot items, pole position, top seeds or anything else proclaiming visibility and priority. Feminists and allied scholars have worked hard to move this 'approach' up the ladder of success. (Recently I spotted the chapter on feminism at number 8!)

This has been hard work, risking not life but certainly career prospects, and perseverance appears to be winning out. After all, in the academic world, where rigorous evaluation and peer review are harnessed to publication, whether of articles or books, and of course to hiring and promotion, then it will take time for any new approach to prove itself against what is already tried and tested, done and dusted, hosed and home. Feminism might be the latest thing and feminists full of themselves, but they will have to get their 'stuff' into the journals, on the bookshelves, approved as courses, licensed as higher degrees. They will need to get recognition at the conferences and congresses, obtain critical mass and professional visibility, found journals and establish book series, become external examiners and get appointed to PhD committees, win prizes and become association presidents. Then they can expect . . . exactly what?

Well, this has all happened, and here we are. We have set out with feminist curiosity, used the gender lens, incorporated intersectionality and interdisciplinarity: race/ethnicity, religion, language, communicative codes, nationality, identity, subjectivity, bio-power, sexuality, sex, intersex, (dis)ability, culture ('pop' and otherwise), semiotics, visual media, bodies, gender (on several definitions), methodology (whether arguably feminist or allegedly 'non'), post-coloniality, rights, performativity, masculinity, virtual reality, and those perennial IR faves: war, violence, conflict resolution and peace. We have got to Chapter 24. Whose home is this?

I suggest we try the homeland security of IR Realism, where – so we have been told – we really started from. We'll see how homely it is now, and whether we really want to go back there, or indeed if we can ever go home again. This conclusion,

then, is 'the chapter on IR'. Well, what is it and how does it look, here in the conclusion, all cold and lonely? Surely we should be happy to light the hearth and make a home? The terms of debate and tenets of the discipline are very well known – and here we should begin to wonder why. Well, the answer is obvious: all those textbooks, all those great figures of the discipline, all those landmark articles, all that laying on of hands. Despite their differences, they all have something in common to be different about: the nation-state as the defining unit or level of analysis, the anarchy of states in their inter-relationality, the international system, order or society as non-sovereign regulator, war as the consequential, ineradicable and ever-present political 'given', geo-politics as the sum of national interests, and diplomacy as strategy thinly disguised.

Why use this 'lens'? What does it help us see? What gets excluded? Who's looking? And where? I am tempted to say, 'at you, kid', but then it isn't that easy to see how humans are visible at all here. They are simply assumed as some generality, or perhaps level of generality, existing in some way(s), beneath these 'analytical' abstractions. Would it help us to turn back to Hobbes or Machiavelli or Thucydides and consider what they say, or at least seem to presuppose, about 'human nature'? Would it help us to go instead to some 'first principles', whether of the body or the mind, specify how these categories arose and why they are good ones? Perhaps these Realist terms are the categories that humans use when they 'do' international relations as world leaders, diplomats and policy advisers – but in that case IR would not be academic or scientific, and would have no purchase on what happens, and add no value.

Perhaps it's a mistake here to look for humans, and IR is right to look at systems, mechanisms and regularities. After all, these are 'hardwired' items, they operate predictably, and they help us make 'sense' of things. 'Boys and toys' is neither an inaccurate description of IR Realists, nor completely off-base as a description of who runs the world and how. But can IR Realism sustain itself as a discourse of mechanisms, a science of regularities, an analytical practice of prediction? Does it result in useful technologies of inter-governmental control, or strategic fine-tuning in diplomacy, or efficiency savings in national expenditure, or even health and safety at the coalface of global political work? Textbooks will tell you that it might, must or should. But I wonder how many 'international actors' are out there (by which I mean humans) who would swear that their Realist training represents their operational bible, or even that they'd like it to? If there were such satisfied customers, we could find their blurbs on the back cover, and in the chapter headings. I have yet to see one. Isn't that something to be curious about?

Perhaps this discussion is caricatured and overblown, and essentially missing the point. The point is Realism is just that – a starting point. IR is a much larger academic subject, and a much broader church. Successive waves of migrating ideas have been 'brought back in': history, culture, class, possibly even race, religion, literature, art and women! So it's not so mechanistic and coldly inhuman after all. But adding these things in doesn't stir the mix much. They are welcomed into the IR home, provided, of course, that they represent persons and activities that meet the 'international' test. Otherwise they belong somewhere else, most probably sociology or cultural studies, where the disciplinary framing is often, quite conveniently, 'national'. Now we have an eclectic discipline, open to new conceptualisations and problems,



but still with a clear boundary line of demarcation, an ‘international’ border to tell us what international borders really are, an international home exclusively for those people and things that qualify for ‘diplomatic’ privileges and plates, and a clear candidate for peaceable incorporation into the academic system of degrees, majors and departments.

Rather unfortunately, though, this doesn’t satisfy my curiosity. Why, if we had to add all this ‘back in’, did we have to start from such a cold and lifeless little planet in the first place? If Planet IR now looks that way – after 23 chapters of human (all too human) life and death, suffering and destruction, violence and dislocation, instability and transgression – then do we want to go back there? Would all this feminist sense find it a cosy home? It looks like it needs a woman’s touch, but what kind of touch would that be? Perhaps it needs some feminist touchpaper instead.

Feminists of my acquaintance disagree about this, and I invite readers to join in. At one of the workshops from which this volume derives – having travelled a long road of authorial and editorial hard work to reach your eyes – just exactly this issue came up. Several speakers expressed their dissatisfaction with IR Realism, and the practice of starting there in ‘Week 1’ of the courses they did, the ones they teach, the core course that their students are required to take. Surely the week on feminism should move up the weekly roster in ‘Intro’ courses, right up near the front. Perhaps, the discussion continued, ‘we’ should just start there! Oh, um, well . . . other voices said, you really need to learn ‘the basics’ first, and then you can criticise them, but otherwise feminism – presumed to be a critique – would not really make sense. No one would know precisely what it was about. Or in any case, students really need a ‘good grounding’ in the discipline, otherwise they won’t get jobs, and there isn’t much we can do about that.

The woman next to me intervened. ‘I think that’s really dangerous!’ she said. By Week 2, the collective thinking continued, it’s all over, and the damage has been done. Doing IR Realism in Week 1 makes it the origin, the centre, the homeland of security for anyone joining ‘the discipline’, the natural home we’re all (even if unfortunately or restively) comfortable in, because we grew up there. And in that way feminist IR will be doomed to marginality, and feminists in IR to a Sisyphean process of self-exclusion from the ‘mainstream’. How to solve this problem?

Well, readers, I hope that I have aroused your curiosity, and I hope you realise that you are looking at the answer – don’t go home! Take your start from this book, or do the best with your students or friends, so together you traverse the 23 chapters’ worth of raging curiosity, puzzling material and thoughtful judgements that follow from feminist curiosity about global politics. You may have to start over to do it, but that’s no bad thing. Then have a look at IR Realism, if you like – or if you must – and see what you think about it. I think it’s a cold and lonely place claiming that ‘boys and toys’ ‘R’ ‘Us’ whether we like it or not. But you decide, weigh the costs and make the choices. And feel free to disagree!

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