# SELECTED READINGS

# The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State

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## OVERVIEW

*Gender matters in understanding the construction of the security state, which directly reflects masculinist understandings. Young observes how the "protection" role assumed by males—frequently characterized as "loving self-sacrifice"—effectively subordinates "those in the protected position." So it is with the "security state" that assumes the male-protective role and uses this responsibility to impose its will on the citizenry, particularly when faced by threats or dangers:"The logic of masculinist protection positions leaders, along with other officials such as soldiers and firefighters, as protectors and the rest of us in the subordinate position of dependent protected people."*

*The security state thus has two faces—"one facing outward to defend against enemies and the other facing inward to keep those under protection under necessary control." As a practical matter, of course, the world is full of risks and "no state can make any of us completely safe." Following the ideal of "democratic citizenship," she rejects "the hierarchy of protector and protected," opting instead for the "defender" role that both women and men customarily perform. Generalized at a global level, democratic citizenship avoids the authoritarian, masculinist orientation of the security state in favor of "respect and political equality among the world's peoples where none of us think that we stand in the position of paternal authority who knows what is good for the still-developing others."*

### Questions to Keep in Mind

1. Is Young correct when she argues that the cultural position of men as "protectors" of women is really a long-established form of gender subordination?
2. Can we identify among men and with masculinist orientations that are more prone to engage in warfare than if women were in these positions?
3. Does democratic citizenship mean rejecting the hierarchy of protector and protected? If so, what should replace it?

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Much writing about gender and war aims to explain bellicosity or its absence by considering attributes of men and women (Goldstein 2001). Theories adopting this approach attempt to argue that behavioral propensities of men link them to violence and those of women make them more peaceful and that these differences help account for the structure of states and international relations. Such attempts to connect violence structures with attributes or behavioral propensities that men or women supposedly share, however, rely on unsupportable generalizations about men and women and often leap too quickly from an account of the traits of persons to institutional structures and collective action. Here I take a different approach. I take gender not as an element of explanation but rather one of interpretation, a tool of what might be called ideology critique (Cohn 1993). Viewing issues of war and security through a gender lens, I suggest, means seeing how a certain logic of gendered meanings and images helps organize the way people interpret events and circumstances, along with the positions and possibilities for action within them, and sometimes provides some rationale for action.

I argue that an exposition of the gendered logic of the masculine role of protector in relation to women and children illuminates the meaning and effective appeal of a security state that wages war abroad and expects obedience and loyalty at home. In this patriarchal logic, the role of the masculine protector puts those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in a subordinate position of dependence and obedience. To the extent that citizens of a democratic state allow their leaders to adopt a stance of protectors toward them, these citizens come to occupy a subordinate status like that of women in the patriarchal household. We are to accept a more authoritarian and paternalistic state power, which gets its support partly from the unity a threat produces and our gratitude for protection. At the same time that it legitimates authoritarian power over citizens internally, the logic of masculinist protection justifies aggressive war outside. I interpret Thomas Hobbes as a theorist of authoritarian government grounded in fear of threat and the apparent desire for protection such fear generates.

Although some feminist theorists of peace and security have noticed the appeal to protection as justification for war making (Stiehm 1982; Tickner 1992, 2001), they have not elaborated the gendered logic of protection to the extent that I try to do here. These accounts concentrate on international relations, moreover, and do less to carry the analysis to an understanding of the relation of states to citizens internally. My interest in this essay is in this dual face of security forms, those that wage war outside a country and conduct surveillance and detention inside. I notice that democratic values of due process, separation of powers, free assembly, and holding powerful actors accountable come into danger when leaders mobilize fear and present themselves as protectors. . . .

## Masculinism as Protection

Several theorists of gender argue that masculinity and femininity should not be conceptualized with a single logic but rather that ideas and values of masculinity and femininity, and their relation to one another, take several different and sometimes overlapping forms (Brod and Kaufman 1994; Hooper 2001). In this spirit, I propose to single out a particular logic of masculinism that I believe has not received very much attention in recent feminist theory, that associated with the position of male head of household as a protector of the family, and, by extension, with masculine leaders and risk takers as protectors of a population. Twenty years ago Judith Stiehm called attention to the relevance of a logic of masculinist protection to analysis of war and security issues, and I will draw on some of her ideas (Stiehm 1982). Her analysis more presupposes than it defines the meaning of a masculine role as protector, so this is where I will begin.

The logic of masculinist protection contrasts with a model of masculinity assumed by much feminist theory, of masculinity as self-consciously dominative. On the male domination model, masculine men wish to master women sexually for the sake of their own gratification and to have the pleasures of domination. They bond with other men in comradely male settings that give them specific benefits from which they exclude women, and they harass women in order to enforce this exclusion and maintain their superiority (MacKinnon 1987; May 1998, chaps. 4–6).

This image of the selfish, aggressive, dominative man who desires sexual capture of women corresponds to much about male-dominated institutions and the behavior of many men within them. For my purposes in this essay, however, it is important to recall another apparently more benign image of

masculinity, one more associated with ideas of chivalry. In this latter image, real men are neither selfish nor do they seek to enslave or overpower others for the sake of enhancing themselves. Instead, the gallantly masculine man is loving and self-sacrificing, especially in relation to women. He faces the world's difficulties and dangers in order to shield women from harm and allow them to pursue elevating and decorative arts. The role of this courageous, responsible, and virtuous man is that of a protector.

The "good" man is one who keeps vigilant watch over the safety of his family and readily risks himself in the face of threats from the outside in order to protect the subordinate members of his household. The logic of masculinist protection, then, includes the image of the selfish aggressor who wishes to invade the lord's property and sexually conquer his women. These are the bad men. Good men can only appear in their goodness if we assume that lurking outside the warm familial walls are aggressors who wish to attack them. The dominative masculinity in this way constitutes protective masculinity as its other. The world out there is heartless and uncivilized, and the movements and motives of the men in it are unpredictable and difficult to discern. The protector must therefore take all precautions against these threats, remain watchful and suspicious, and be ready to fight and sacrifice for the sake of his loved ones (Elshtain 1987, 1992). Masculine protection is needed to make a home a haven.

Central to the logic of masculinist protection is the subordinate relation of those in the protected position. In return for male protection, the woman concedes critical distance from decision-making autonomy. When the household lives under a threat, there cannot be divided wills and arguments about who will do what, or what is the best course of action. The head of the household should decide what measures are necessary for the security of the people and property, and he gives the orders that they must follow if they and their relations are to remain safe. As Stiehm puts it: "The protector cannot achieve status simply through his accomplishment, then. Because he has dependents he is as socially connected as one who is dependent. He is expected to provide for others. Often a protector tries to get help from and also control the lives of those he protects—in order to 'better protect' them" (1982, 372).

Feminine subordination, in this logic, does not constitute submission to a violent and overbearing bully. The feminine woman, rather, on this construction, adores her protector and happily defers to his judgment in return for the promise of security that he offers. She looks up to him with gratitude for his manliness and admiration for his willingness to face the dangers of the world for her sake. That he finds her worthy of such risks gives substance to her self. It is only fitting that she should minister to his needs and obey his dictates.

Hobbes is the great theorist of political power founded on a need and desire for protection. He depicts a state of nature in which people live in small families where all believe some of the others envy them and desire to enlarge themselves by stealing from or conquering them. As a consequence, everyone in this state of nature must live in a state of fear and insecurity, even when not immediately under attack. Households must live with the knowledge that outsiders might wish to attack them, especially if they appear weak and vulnerable, so each must construct defensive fortresses and be on watch. It is only sensible, moreover, to conduct preemptive strikes against those who might wish to attack and to try to weaken them. But each knows that the others are likely to make defensive raids, which only adds to fear and insecurity. In Hobbes's state of nature some people may be motivated by simple greed and desire for conquest and domination. In this state of nature everyone has reason to feel insecure, however, not because all have these dominative motives but because he or she is uncertain about who does and each person understands his or her own vulnerability.

In her contemporary classic, *The Sexual Contract,* Carole Pateman interprets Hobbes along the lines of contemporary feminist accounts of men as selfish aggressors and sexual predators. In the state of nature, roving men take advantage of women encumbered by children and force them to submit to sexual domination. Sometimes they keep the women around as sexual servants; thus arises marriage. These strong and aggressive men force other men to labor for them at the point of a sword. On Pateman's account, this is how the patriarchal household forms, through overpowering force (1988, chap. 3).

One can just as well read Hobbes's ideas through the lens of the apparently more benign masculinity of protection. Here we can imagine that men and women get together out of attraction and feel love for the children they beget. On this construction,

families have their origin in a desire for companionship and caring. In the state of nature, however, each unit has reason to fear the strangers who might rob or kill its members; each then finds it prudent at times to engage in preemptive strikes and to adopt a threatening stance toward the outsiders. On this alternative account, then, patriarchal right emerges from male specialization in security. The patriarch's will rules because the patriarch faces the dangers outside and needs to organize defenses. Female subordination, on this account, derives from this position of being protected. As I will discuss in the next section, however, Hobbes does not think that it is a good idea to leave this armed power in the hands of individual male heads of household. Instead, the sovereign takes over this function.

Both Pateman's story of male domination and the one I have reconstructed depict patriarchal gender relations as upholding unequal power. It is important to attend to the difference, however, I think, because in one relation the hierarchial power is obvious and in the other it is more masked by virtue and love. Michel Foucault (1988, 1994) argues that power conceived and enacted as repressive power, the desire and ability of an agent to force the other to obey his commands, has receded in importance in modern institutions. Other forms of power that enlist the desire of those over whom it is exercised better describe many power relations both historically and today. One such form of power Foucault calls pastoral power. This is the kind of power that the priest exercises over his parish and, by extension, that many experts in the care of individuals exercise over those cared for. This power often appears gentle and benevolent both to its wielders and to those under its sway, but it is no less powerful for that reason. Masculinist protection is more like pastoral power than dominative power that exploits those it rules for its own aggrandizement.

## The State as Protector and Subordinate Citizenship

The gendered logic of masculinist protection has some relevance to individual family life even in modern urban America. Every time a father warns his daughter of the dangerous men he fears will exploit her and forbids her from "running around" the city, he inhabits the role of the male protector. Nevertheless, in everyday family life and other sites of interaction between men and women, the legitimation of female inequality and subordination by appeal to a need for protection has dwindled. My purpose in articulating a logic of masculinist protection is not to argue that it describes private life today but rather to argue that we learn something about public life, specifically about the relation of a state to its citizens, when state officials successfully mobilize fear. States often justify their expectations of obedience and loyalty, as well as their establishment of surveillance, police, intimidation, detention, and the repression of criticism and dissent, by appeal to their role as protectors of citizens. I find in Hobbes a clever account of authoritarian rule grounded in the assumption of threat and fear as basic to the human condition, and thus a need for protection as the highest good.

Hobbes tells a story about why individuals and families find it necessary to constitute a sovereign, a single power to rule them all. In response to the constant fear under which they live, families may join confederations or protection associations. Such protection associations, however, no matter how large and powerful, do not reduce the reasons for fear and insecurity. As long as the possibility exists that others will form larger and stronger protective associations, the nasty state of war persists. As long as there is a potential for competition among units, and those units hold the means to try to force their desires on one another, they must live in fear. Without submission to a common power to which they yield their separate forces, moreover, members of a protective association are liable to turn on one another during times when they need to rely on one another for protection from others (Hobbes [1668] 1994, chap. 17, 3, 4; cf. Nozick 1974, chap. 2). So Hobbes argues that only a Leviathan can assure safety and quell the fear and uncertainty that generate a spiral of danger. All the petty protectors in the state of nature give up their powers of aggression and defense, which they turn over to the sovereign. They make a covenant with one another to live in peace and constitute civil society under the common rule of an absolute authority who makes, interprets, and enforces the laws of the commonwealth for the sake of peace and security of subjects.

Readers of Hobbes sometimes find in the image of Leviathan a mean and selfish tyrant who sucks up the wealth and loyalty of subjects for his own aggrandizement. Democratic values and freedoms would be much easier to assert and preserve in modern politics if the face of authoritarianism were

so ugly and easy to recognize. Like the benevolent patriarch, however, Leviathan often wears another aspect, that of the selfless and wise protector whose actions aim to foster and maintain security. What I call a security state is one whose rulers subordinate citizens to ad hoc surveillance, search, or detention and repress criticism of such arbitrary power, justifying such measures as within the prerogative of those authorities whose primary duty is to maintain security and protect the people.

The security state has an external and an internal aspect. It constitutes itself in relation to an enemy outside, an unpredictable aggressor against which the state needs vigilant defense. It organizes political and economic capacities around the accumulation of weapons and the mobilization of a military to respond to this outsider threat. The state's identity is militaristic, and it engages in military action but with the point of view of the defendant rather than the aggressor. Even when the security regime makes a first strike, it justifies its move as necessary to preempt the threatening aggressor outside. Security states do not justify their wars by appealing to sentiments of greed or desire for conquest; they appeal to their role as protectors.

Internally, the security state must root out the enemy within. There is always the danger that among us are agents who have an interest in disturbing our peace, violating our persons and property, and allowing outsiders to invade our communities and institutions. To protect the state and its citizens, officials must therefore keep a careful watch on the people within its borders and observe and search them to make sure they do not intend evil actions and do not have the means to perform them. The security state overhears conversations in order to try to discover conspiracies of disaster and disruption, and it prevents people from forming crowds or walking the streets after dark. In a security state there cannot be separation of power or critical accountability of official action to a public. Nor can a security state allow expression of dissent.

Once again, Hobbes explains why not. It is necessary that the sovereign be one. The commonwealth can secure peace only if it unites the plurality of its members into one will. Even if the sovereign consists of an assembly of officials and not only one ruler, it must be united in will and purpose. It is the mutual covenant that each man makes to all the others to give over his right of governing his own affairs to the sovereign, on condition that all others do the same, that gives the sovereign both its power and unity of will (Hobbes [1668] 1994, chap. 17, 13). Sovereign authority, then, must be absolute, and it cannot be divided. The sovereign decides what is necessary to protect the commonwealth and its members. The sovereign decides what actions or opinions constitute a danger to peace and properly suppresses them. "The condition of man in this life shall never be without inconveniences; but there happeneth in no commonwealth any greater inconvenience, but what proceeds from the subject's disobedience and breach of these covenants from which the commonwealth hath its being, and whosoever, thinking sovereign power too great, will seek to make it less, must subject himself to the power that can limit it, that is to say, to a greater" (Hobbes [1668] 1994, chap. 20, li, 135).

Through the logic of protection the state demotes members of a democracy to dependents. State officials adopt the stance of masculine protector, telling us to entrust our lives to them, not to question their decisions about what will keep us safe. Their protector position puts the citizens and residents who depend on state officials' strength and vigilance in the position of women and children under the charge of the male protector (cf. Berlant 1997). Most regimes that suspend certain rights and legal procedures declare a state of emergency. They claim that special measures of unity and obedience are required in order to ensure protection from unusual danger. Because they take the risks and organize the agency of the state, it is their prerogative to determine the objectives of protective action and their means. In a security state there is no room for separate and shared powers, nor for questioning and criticizing the protector's decisions and orders. Good citizenship in a security regime consists of cooperative obedience for the sake of the safety of all.

The authoritarian security paradigm, I have argued, takes a form analogous to that of the masculine protector toward his wife and the other members of his patriarchal household. In this structure, I have suggested, masculine superiority flows not from acts of repressive domination but from the willingness to risk and sacrifice for the sake of the others (Elshtain 1987, 1992). For her part, the subordinate female in this structure neither resents nor resists the man's dominance, but rather she admires it and is grateful for its promise of protection.

Patriotism has an analogous emotive function in the constitution of the security state. Under threat from outside, all of us, authorities and citizens, imagine ourselves a single body enclosed on and loving itself. We affirm our oneness with our fellow citizens and together affirm our single will behind the will of the leaders who have vowed to protect us. It is not merely that dissent is dangerous; worse yet, it is ungrateful. Subordinate citizenship does not merely acquiesce to limitations on freedom in exchange for a promise of security; the consent is active, as solidarity with the others uniting behind and in grateful love of country. . . .

## Is It a Good Deal?

I discussed earlier how the logic of masculinist protection constitutes the "good" men who protect their women and children by relation to other "bad" men liable to attack. In this logic, virtuous masculinity depends on its constitutive relation to the presumption of evil others. Feminists have much analyzed a correlate dichotomy between the "good" woman and the "bad" woman. Simply put, a "good" woman stands under the male protection of a father or husband, submits to his judgment about what is necessary for her protection, and remains loyal to him. A "bad" woman is one who is unlucky enough not to have a man willing to protect her, or who refuses such protection by claiming the right to run her own life. In either case, the woman without a male protector is fair game for any man to dominate. There is a bargain implicit in the masculinity protector role: either submit to my governance or all the bad men out there are liable to approach you, and I will not try to stop them.

I have argued so far that the position of citizens and residents under a security state entails a similar bargain. There are bad people out there who might want to attack us. The state pledges to protect us but tells us that we should submit to its rule and decisions without questioning, criticizing, or demanding independent review of the decisions. Some of the measures in place to protect us entail limitation on our freedom and especially limitation of the freedom of particular classes of people. The deal is this: you must trade some liberty and autonomy for the sake of the protection we offer. Is it a good deal?

Some years ago, Susan Rae Peterson likened the state's relation to women under a system of male domination to a protection racket. The gangland crowd offers protection from other gangs to individuals, their families, and businesses, for a fee. If some people decline their services, the gangsters teach them a brutal lesson and by example teach a lesson to others who might wish to go their own way. Thus those who wish to break free of the racketeer's protection discover that they are most in danger from him. Insofar as state laws and policies assume or reinforce the view that a "good" woman should move under the guidance of a man, Peterson argued, the state functions as a protection racket. It threatens or allows men to threaten those women who wish to be independent of the individualized protection of husbands or boyfriends. Not only do the protectors withhold protection from the women who claim autonomy, but they may become attackers (Peterson 1977; cf. Card 1996).

The security state functions as a similar protection racket for those who live under it. As long as we accept the state's protection and pay the price it exacts not only in taxpayer dollars but also in reduction of our freedom and submission to possible surveillance, we are relatively safe. If we try to decline these services and seek freedom from the position of dependence and obedience in which they put us, we become suspect and thereby threatened by the very organization that claims to protect us. . . .

The logic of masculinist protection positions leaders, along with some other officials such as soldiers and firefighters, as protectors and the rest of us in the subordinate position of dependent protected people. Justifications for the suspension of due process or partial abrogation of privacy rights and civil liberties, as well as condemnation of dissent, rest on an implicit deal: that these are necessary trade-offs for effective protection. The legitimacy of this deal is questionable, however, not only because it may not be effective in protecting us but also because it cheapens and endangers democracy. Subordinate citizenship is not compatible with democracy. The relation of leaders to citizens under democratic norms ought to be one of equality, not in the sense of equal power but in the sense that citizens have an equal right and responsibility with leaders to make policy judgments, and thus that leaders entrusted with special powers should be held accountable to citizens. Institutions of due process, public procedure and record, organized opposition and criticism, and public review both enact and recognize such equal citizenship. Trading them for protection puts us at the mercy of the protectors.

## War and Feminism

The logic of masculinist protection, I have argued, helps account for the rationale leaders give for deepening a security state and its acceptance by those living under their rule. There are two faces to the security state, one facing outward to defend against enemies and the other facing inward to keep those under protection under necessary control. . . .

The stance of the male protector, I have argued, is one of loving self-sacrifice, with those in the feminine position as the objects of love and guardianship. Chivalrous forms of masculinism express and enact concern for the well-being of women, but they do so within a structure of superiority and subordination. The male protector confronts evil aggressors in the name of the right and the good, while those under his protection submit to his order and serve as handmaids to his efforts. Colonialist ideologies have often expressed a similar logic. The knights of civilization aim to bring enlightened understanding to the further regions of the world still living in cruel and irrational traditions that keep them from developing the economic and political structures that will bring them a good life. The suppression of women in these societies is a symptom of such backwardness. Troops will be needed to bring order and guard fledgling institutions, and foreign aid workers to feed, cure, and educate, but all this is only a period of tutelage that will end when the subject people demonstrate their ability to gain their own livelihood and run their own affairs. Many people living in Asian, African, and Latin American societies believe that not only U.S. military hegemony but also international trade and financial institutions, as well as many Western-based nongovernmental development agencies, position them in this way as feminized or infantilized women and children under the protection and guidance of the wise and active father.

In its rhetoric and practice, according to some scholars, the British feminist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries aligned itself with the universal humanitarian civilizing mission invoked as the justification for the British Empire. Feminists endorsed male imperial leaders' assessment of the status of women in other nations as a measure of their level of moral development. Such interest in the status of women was useful to feminists in pointing out the hypocrisy of denying women's rights in the center as one fought for them in the periphery. Providing services for Indian women and other oppressed women in the empire also offered opportunities for the employment of middle-class professional women (Burton 1994).

Some contemporary feminists have worried that Western feminists today have had some tendency to express and act in similar ways in relation to non-Western women. In a well-known essay, Chandra Mohanty, for example, claims that Western feminists too often use an objectified general category of third-world women, who are represented as passive and victimized by their unenlightened cultures and political regimes (1991). Uma Narayan claims that much feminist discussion of the situation of women in Asian and African societies, or women in Asian immigrant communities in Western societies, "replicates problematic aspects of Western representations of Third World nations and communities, aspects that have their roots in the history of colonization" (1997, 43).

Assuming that these criticisms of some of the discourse, attitudes, and actions of Western feminists have some validity, the stance they identify helps account for the ease with which feminist rhetoric can be taken up by today's imperialist power and used for its own ends. It also helps account for the support of some feminists for the war against Afghanistan. Sometimes feminists may identify with the stance of the masculine protector in relation to vulnerable and victimized women. The protector-protected relation is no more egalitarian, however, when between women than between men and women. . . .

Democratic citizenship should first involve admitting that no state can make any of us completely safe and that leaders who promise that are themselves suspect. The world is full of risks. Prudence dictates that we assess risks, get information about their sources, and try to minimize them, and we rightly expect our government to do much of this for us. In a democracy citizens should not have to trade this public responsibility for submission to surveillance, arbitrary decisions, and the stifling of criticism.

In making this claim I am extending recent feminist arguments against a model of citizenship that requires each citizen to be independent and self-sufficient in order to be equal and fully autonomous. Feminist theorists of care and welfare have argued that the rights and dignity of individuals should not be diminished just because they need help and support in order to carry out their chosen

projects (Tronto 1994; Kittay 1999). Persons who need care or other forms of social support ought not to be forced into a position of subordination and obedience in relation to those who provide care and support; not only should they retain the rights of full citizens to choose their own way of life and hold authorities accountable but also they ought to be able to criticize the way in which support comes to them (Sevenhuijsen 1998; Hirschmann 2002, chap. 5; Young 2003). This feminist argument rejects the assumption behind a notion of self-sufficient citizenship that a need for social support or care is more exceptional than normal. On the contrary, the well-being of all persons can be enhanced by the care and support of others, and in modern societies some of this generalized care and support ought to be organized and guaranteed through state institutions. The organization of reasonable measures to protect people from harm and to make people confident that they can move and act relatively safely is another form of social support. Citizens should not have to trade their liberty of movement or right to protest and hold leaders accountable in return for such security.

Democratic citizenship thus means ultimately rejecting the hierarchy of protector and protected. In the article I cited above, Stiehm argues that rejection of this hierarchy implies installing a position of defender in place of both that of the protector and the protected. A society of defenders is "a society composed of citizens equally liable to experience violence and equally responsible for exercising society's violence" (1982, 374). Modern democracies, including U.S. democracy, are founded partly on the principle that citizens should be able to defend themselves if they are also to defend the republic from tyranny. In the twenty-first century, in a world of organized and less organized military institutions and weapons capable of unimaginable destruction, it is hard to know what it might mean for world citizens to exercise collective self-defense. It certainly does not mean that every individual should amass his or her own weapons cache. Nor does it mean whole groups and nations engaging in arms races. The distinction between defender and protector invokes an ideal of equality in the work of defense, and today this may have at least as much to do with political processes that limit weapons and their use as with wielding arms.

The United States claims to use its arms to do this, much as a policeman does in domestic life. In a democratic relationship, however, the policeman protector comes under the collective authority of the people whose neighborhood he patrols. Democratic citizenship at a global level, then, would constitute a relationship of respect and political equality among the world's peoples where none of us think that we stand in the position of the paternal authority who knows what is good for the still-developing others. To the extent that global law enforcement is necessary, it is only legitimate if the world's peoples together have formulated the rules and actions of such enforcement (cf. Archibugi and Young 2002).

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# Why Women Can't Rule the World: International Politics According to Francis Fukuyama

J. Ann Tickner

## OVERVIEW

*A prominent feminist scholar and former president of the International Studies Association, the author takes on what she sees as Francis Fukuyama's misrepresentations about feminism and the feminist standpoint. In the process she provides feminist understandings about how and why gender matters not only to theorizing about IR, but also about the challenges women face globally. "IR feminists" want to rid the field of "idealistic associations of women with peace, idealism, and impracticality," particularly since such characterizations effectively "disempower women and keep them in their place, which is out of the 'real world' of international politics." What feminists want is for "women and men [to] participate in reducing damaging and unequal hierarchical structures, such as gender and race," indeed, "constructed gender hierarchies" that not only "result in the devaluation of women's lives and their economic and social contributions to society," but also "contribute to conflict, inequality and oppression."*

### Questions to Keep in Mind

1. To what extent do feminist perspectives also reflect understandings on gender held by constructivists, critical theorists, and postmodernists?
2. Is Tickner's assault on Francis Fukuyama's claims legitimate? Does she effectively refute his position as she represents it?
3. How and where do we draw the line between gender as an interpretive lens that highlights differences between masculinist and feminist understandings and gender-based stereotypes that create more confusion than clarity?

Feminist perspectives on international relations have proliferated in the last ten years, yet they remain marginal to the discipline as a whole, and there has been little engagement between feminists and international relations (IR) scholars. As I have suggested elsewhere, I believe this is largely due to misunderstandings about feminist IR scholarship that are reflected in questions that feminists frequently

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are asked when presenting their work to IR audiences.[1] Many of these misunderstandings reflect considerable ontological and epistemological differences, which are particularly acute with respect to mainstream IR approaches. In other words, feminists and IR scholars frequently talk about different worlds and use different methodologies to understand them.[2]

A different kind of misunderstanding, also prevalent, arises from the fact that talking about gender involves issues of personal identity that can be very threatening, even in academic discourse. Feminists are frequently challenged by their critics for seeming to imply (even if it is not their intention) that women are somehow "better" than men. In IR, this often comes down to accusations that feminists are implying that women are more peaceful than men or that a world run by women would be less violent and morally superior. Critics will support their challenges by reference to female policymakers, such as Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir, or Indira Gandhi, who, they claim, behaved exactly like men.[3]

Most IR feminists would deny the assertion that women are morally superior to men. Indeed, many of them have claimed that the association of women with peace and moral superiority has a long history of keeping women out of power, going back to the debates about the merits of female suffrage in the early part of the century. The association of women with peace can play into unfortunate gender stereotypes that characterize men as active, women as passive; men as agents, women as victims; men as rational, women as emotional. Not only are these stereotypes damaging to women, particularly to their credibility as actors in matters of international politics and national security, but they are also damaging to peace.

As a concept, peace will remain a "soft" issue, utopian and unrealistic, as long as it is associated with femininity and passivity.[4] This entire debate about aggressive men and peaceful women frequently comes up when issues about women and world politics are on the table. Moreover, it detracts from what feminists consider to be more pressing agendas, such as striving to uncover and understand the disadvantaged socioeconomic position of many of the world's women and why women are so poorly represented among the world's policymakers.

A current version using the claim that women are more peaceful than men to women's disadvantage, and the types of agenda-deflecting debates it may engender, can be found in Francis Fukuyama's recent article, "Women and the Evolution of World Politics," in *Foreign Affairs,* as well as in the commentaries on it in the subsequent issue.[5] Unlike the type of criticism mentioned above that, often mistakenly, accuses feminists of claiming the morally superior high ground for women, Fukuyama boldly asserts that indeed women *are* more peaceful than men. But, as has so often been the case, Fukuyama deploys his argument to mount a strong defense for keeping men in charge. Not only does this type of reasoning feed into more strident forms of backlash against women in international politics, but it also moves our attention further away from more important issues. Hypothesizing about the merits or disadvantages of women in charge, or debating the relative aggressiveness of men and women, does little to address the realities of a variety of oppressions faced by women worldwide. Fukuyama's views not only deflect from important feminist agendas, but they also support some disturbing trends in IR more generally, which are reinforcing polarized views of the world in terms of civilization clashes and zones of peace versus zones of turmoil.[6]

*Foreign Affairs* chose to publish Fukuyama's article under the cover title (in red) "What If Women Ran the World?" This title was surely designed to provoke (and perhaps frighten) its readers, most of whom are probably unfamiliar with IR feminist scholarship. More problematically, it is likely that this will be the only article that mentions feminist IR scholarship to which readers of *Foreign Affairs* will be exposed.[7] Responses in the subsequent issue of *Foreign Affairs* were, for the most part, quite hostile to Fukuyama's position, and asked what was wrong with his argument. Katha Pollitt asserts, "just about everything."[8] Nevertheless, by focusing on the need to rebut Fukuyama's sociobiological and over-generalized portrayal of warlike men and peaceful women, these responses, like the article itself, refocus conversations in unproductive ways that do little to clarify many of the issues with which IR feminists are concerned.

Fukuyama's article is not overtly antifeminist. Indeed, he cites what he calls "a vigorous feminist subdiscipline within the field of international relations" (p. 32) quite favorably, albeit chastising postmodernism for its commitment to social constructionism and radical feminism for its misguided utopianism (p. 40).[9] Curiously, in light of his misgivings about utopianism, Fukuyama offers

a seemingly optimistic, even radical vision of a different, relatively peaceful, "feminized" world (in the West at least), where men's aggressive animal instincts have been tamed and channeled into productive activities associated with liberal democracy and capitalism. Fukuyama supports his central claim—that men have "naturally" aggressive instincts—by comparing their behavior to the aggressive and even Machiavellian behavior of male chimpanzees in Gombe National Park in Tanzania. This type of aggression, which, Fukuyama argues, is atypical of most intraspecies behavior, is as true of male humans as it is of their nearest evolutionary relatives, male chimpanzees.

Fukuyama notes that, as with chimps, violence in all types of human societies has been perpetrated largely by men. He develops this claim by documenting recent discoveries in the life sciences and evolutionary psychology that find profound differences between the sexes, especially in areas of violence and aggression. Whereas he is careful to say that culture also shapes human behavior, Fukuyama believes that this line of thinking will replace social constructionist views of gender differences that came about as a reaction to the misuse of Darwinism to reinforce racial superiority and class stratification. In other words, these findings have profound implications for all the social sciences.

Fukuyama also notes that feminists prefer to see such behavior as a product of patriarchal culture rather than rooted in human biology because biologically rooted behavior is harder to change; therefore, they will not be happy with his claims. Fukuyama goes on to hypothesize about a feminized world that would follow different rules. He sees the realization of such a world as a distinct possibility, at least in the West, as women gain more political power. What he calls the "feminization" of world politics has been taking place gradually as women have won the right to vote. The right to vote, along with a relative increase in numbers of elderly women, has resulted in a gender gap with respect to voting on issues of foreign policy and national security, with women being less supportive of national defense spending and involvement in war than men. In spite of these trends, Fukuyama predicts that men will continue to play an important role, particularly in international politics where toughness and aggression are still required.

Given the difficulties of changing genetically programmed behavior and presuming that this new world would have to include socially constructed feminized men, this hypothetical picture seems like a considerable leap from reality. Even though Fukuyama's portrait of this feminized world is seemingly sympathetic, I believe that his message is, in fact, deeply conservative—offering one more iteration of the well-established argument that a "realistic" view of international politics demands that "real" men remain in charge. Accepting its premises actually silences, rather than promotes, feminist agendas and women's equality. Although many of his claims can be successfully challenged on empirical grounds, as his critics demonstrated by their rebuttals in *Foreign Affairs,* his views feed into a conservative agenda that serves not to put women in control, but to keep them out of positions of power.

Why is this the case? Because Fukuyama tells us that no matter how attractive it may seem, we should not move further toward this feminized world; instead, we must keep things the way they are—with strong men at the helm. He argues that women are not able to deal with today's threats that come from violent leaders, such as Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, and Mobutu Sese Seko. On the horizon are threats from states in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, led by aggressive younger men unsocialized in the ways of mature democracies. Fukuyama claims that people in agricultural societies, presumably outside the zone of peace, with their surpluses of young, hotheaded men, are less concerned with military casualties and therefore more prone to pick fights (p. 38), an assertion that appears to have disturbingly racist overtones.

Closer to home, citing the necessity for combat readiness in the face of these dangers, Fukuyama, by advocating separation of men and women in single-sex military units, effectively advises against women in combat positions. Although he does not deny that women could do as well in combat as men (which was indeed demonstrated in the Gulf War), he claims that their presence destroys combat units' cohesion, which he believes is built on male bonding (p. 37). This "false necessity," together with the need to channel what he calls the biologically rooted male desire to dominate into successful competition in universities, corporations, and political arenas, seems to imply fewer rather than more opportunities for women in both military and civilian life.[10]

And what of men's biological or naturally aggressive tendencies?[11] As feminists have pointed out,

one of the main reasons why today's military is recruiting women is because not enough "aggressive" men are joining up. Much of basic training involves overcoming men's reluctance to kill. Advances in military technology have depersonalized warfare so that the problems associated with the long-standing reluctance of men in combat to fire their weapons have been lessened.[12] Violence inside states, which is more prevalent in the United States than in many states outside the western democratic "zone of peace," about which Fukuyama speaks so favorably, stems at least as much from lack of economic opportunities as it does from innate male aggression.[13] Tenure in universities and corporate success are not just about satisfying the need for social recognition of alpha males; they are much-needed guarantees of income and job security, important to both men *and* women.

If we were to accept that men do have aggressive tendencies, the leap from aggressive men to aggressive states is problematic, as many international relations scholars have pointed out.[14] Do men's aggressive tendencies really get channeled into international war, thus leading to the possibility of domestic peace between wars? The high homicide rate in the United States makes one skeptical of this possibility, whereas Switzerland, a country with one of the lowest homicide rates in the world, is rarely an international aggressor. If most men, particularly young men, have violent tendencies, as Fukuyama claims, why is it that some states are so much more peaceful than others? Statesmen do not choose war lightly. Nor is war generally decided at the ballot box where, according to Fukuyama, significant numbers of women are voting for peace. It has often been older men who send young men off to war to fight for what they see as legitimate national interests. Would American policymakers in the 1960s or today's Vietnam veterans be satisfied with the explanation that America fought in Vietnam as an outlet for the aggressive tendencies of its young men?

Now to turn to some of the real feminist agendas for international politics—agendas that are completely silenced by Fukuyama's article. I know of no international relations feminists who hypothesize about or advocate women running the world, as the cover title of Fukuyama's article and the turn-of-the-century illustration depicting a woman in boxing gloves "flooring her beau" (p. 29) suggest. Although Fukuyama includes socially feminized men (who must have overcome their aggressive genes) in the ruling coalitions of his feminized world, such a world is unappealing and sure to threaten, or perhaps amuse, those presently in charge, as well as reinforce culturally defined gender stereotypes about international politics and women.

What IR feminists *have* argued for is getting rid of idealistic associations of women with peace. Associations of women with peace, idealism, and impracticality have long served to disempower women and keep them in their place, which is out of the "real world" of international politics.

When Fukuyama claims that sociobiology was misused at the turn of the century, with respect to race and ethnicity, he, too, is misusing it. He does this under the guise of evidence about profound genetically rooted differences between the sexes by inferring that these differences predetermine men's and women's different (and unequal) roles with respect to contemporary international politics.[15] Of course, feminists want women to participate more fully in global politics and contribute to making the world a less dangerous place. But, rather than killing each other, haven't many men been working toward this goal also?

Wherever men's genes may have pointed, they founded the discipline of international relations by trying to understand why states go to war and trying to devise institutions to diminish its likelihood in the future. Preferred futures are not feminized, but ones in which women *and* men participate in reducing damaging and unequal hierarchical social structures, such as gender and race.

Many feminists would agree that biology may indeed be a contributing factor to certain aggressive behaviors. Yet understanding and working to lessen various insecurities that women face can only be achieved if we acknowledge a need for diminishing socially constructed gender hierarchies that result in the devaluation of women's lives and their economic and social contributions to society. In spite of Fukuyama's assertion that social constructionism is being effectively challenged by new findings in evolutionary biology, the fact that the majority of subsistence farmers in Africa are women, while men are more frequently found in the more prosperous cash crop sector, can hardly be explained by biology alone. Culturally assigned roles, which have little to do with biology, diminish women's socioeconomic position in most societies. Speculating about women in charge, whether their boxing gloves are

on or off, seems far removed from the lived reality of the vast majority of the world's women. Katha Pollitt states that even in the United States, where Fukuyama claims that women are fast gaining political power, women constitute only 12 percent of Congress and, after eighty years of female suffrage, have not even won the right to paid maternity leave or affordable day care.[16] Running foreign policy, she concludes, seems like a fantasy.[17] Nevertheless, by focusing on these unlikely futures, Fukuyama effectively silences more pressing agendas and deflects investigations away from trying to understand why the world's women are so often disempowered and even oppressed.

Of course, IR feminists are concerned with issues of war and peace. But rather than debating whether men are aggressive and women peaceful, they are asking new questions about conflict, as well as trying to expand conventional agendas. Feminist agendas include human rights issues such as rape in war, military prostitution, refugees (the majority of whom are women and children), and more generally issues about civilian casualties.[18] Even though civilians now account for well over 80 percent of wartime casualties, understanding the reasons for and consequences of these disturbing trends has not been at the center of international relations investigations. Feminists have also joined the debate about whether security should be defined more broadly to include issues of structural and ecological violence. With this question in mind, feminists are investigating the often negative effects of structural adjustment and economic globalization on women, as well as problems associated with the degradation of the environment.[19] All of these issues seem closer to women's lived realities than debates about their likelihood of running the world.

By asserting that developed democracies tend to be more feminized than authoritarian states, and by linking this to the popular claim about the relative peacefulness of democracies, Fukuyama obscures deeper truths and hides more progressive practical possibilities.

Kal Holsti has suggested that a better explanation for "zones of peace," which actually extend well beyond Western democracies, is the diminished likelihood of war between strong states with governments seen as legitimate by their populations.[20] There are very few states where women have reached a critical mass in political decisionmaking, which makes any link between the democratic peace and the political participation of women tenuous at best. A more fruitful line of investigation is one that is illustrated by a study outlining the results of survey data collected in several Middle Eastern countries, democratic and otherwise. The data show that in the case of the Arab-Israeli dispute, women are not less militaristic than men, but both women and men who are more supportive of gender equality are also more favorably disposed to compromise.[21] A cluster of such attitudes could be the building blocks not for a more feminized world, whatever that may mean, but for a more just and peaceful world in which gender and other social hierarchies of domination, which have resulted in the subordination of women, are diminished.

The debate surrounding Fukuyama's article appears to have stimulated a race to demonstrate who can be more aggressive than whom. Marshaling evidence of women's participation in wars, with pictures of female soldiers on parade and documenting women's violence in matters of abuse of children and servants, Ehrenreich and Pollitt assure us that women can be every bit as aggressive as men.[22]

Are these the debates we should be having? Surely they deflect from the real issues with which international relations scholars are struggling—namely to try to understand the roots of war and what can be done to prevent it. Investigating the enormous variations in levels of conflict across history and societies is surely a more promising place to begin than in deterministic, biologically rooted theories about the aggressive nature of men. International relations feminists have added a new and important dimension to these investigations.

Rather than joining debates about aggressive men and peaceful women, IR feminists are striving to better understand unequal social hierarchies, including gender hierarchies, which contribute to conflict, inequality, and oppression. Evidence suggests that war is more likely in societies with greater gender inequality. Intentionally or not, Fukuyama's musings about women running the world deflect attention away from this more pressing agenda of working toward a world with increased gender equality. Such a world could, I believe, be a less conflictual one for both women and men. Let us turn our attention to more productive conversations between feminist and international relations scholars about the evolution of world politics, conversations that strive to better understand how such a world could be realized.