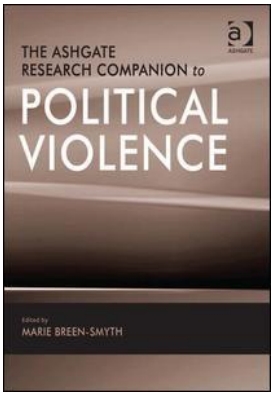
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The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence

Marie Breen-Smyth

Feminist Reflections on Political Violence

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14 ASHGATE RESEARCH COMPANION

Feminist Reflections on Political Violence

Laura Sjoberg

In 1985, Betty Reardon's *Sexism and the War System* made the argument that there are 'interrelationships between sexist oppression and militarization' such that 'the two problems not only are symbiotically related, but twin manifestations of the same underlying cause' (Reardon 1985: 2). The link between these, according to Reardon, is patriarchy – a system of dualism where there are 'aggressors and victims who play through the deadly combative ritual to achieve status' (Reardon 1985: 37). Because she sees political violence and gender subordination as products of the same root problem, Reardon suggests that it is a good idea to take on 'as one goal the two major transformative tasks of our generation: achieving equality for women and complete disarmament' (Reardon 1985: 97).

While over the 25 years since the publication of Reardon's book, a vibrant research programme on gender and political violence has expanded on, critiqued and re-formulated her argument, the fundamental point that political violence cannot be understood without reference to its intrinsic links to gender subordination has remained a mainstay in feminist reflections on political violence. Feminist research on the making and fighting of wars has urged students of security to broaden the definition of 'war' and to explore women's multiple roles in conflict with an eye for the complex relationships between gender, gender-based stereotypes and political violence. In this research, feminists argue from a variety of perspectives that gender is conceptually, empirically and normatively essential to studying international security and that, as such, accurate, rigorous and ethical scholarship on political violence cannot be produced without taking account of the gendered nature of political violence and the violent reproduction of gender in global politics.

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical arguments that lead feminists to this understanding, alongside a number of examples illustrating those points. It begins by chronicling some important components of feminist work on the meaning of political violence, the people who commit political violence and the people who are impacted by political violence. It then argues that political violence is constituted by gender 'all the way down', that is, that political violence is gendered, its actors are gendered and its impacts are gendered. Looking theoretically at women who commit

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terrorist violence, this chapter contends that a broader understanding of both what gender is and what counts as 'political' violence is essential to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter of political violence. The chapter concludes with a proposed feminist reading of political violence as a gendered concept.

Feminism and the Meaning of Political Violence

Feminist scholarship in international relations (IR) is, in Marysia Zalewski's (1996) terms, theory as practice – theorizing that is both research in the traditional sense and a part of a daily life as a political movement to end gender subordination. In feminist terms, gender subordination is the devalued status assigned in social and political life to characteristics and people associated with femininity. In this reading, 'gender' is divisible into *masculinities* and *femininities*, which are 'stereotypes, behavioural norms, and rules' assigned to those people perceived to be men and those people perceived to be women (Sjoberg 2006: 33). In this way, gender categorizations are socially constructed, but are reliant on the male/female dichotomy, which is associated with a number of other dichotomies in social and political life, including rational/emotional, public/private, strong/weak, public/private and aggressive/passive.

Feminists in IR study how gender influences and is influenced by global politics. In this research, they frequently understand gender as 'a system of symbolic meaning that creates social hierarchies' which organizes social and political life, where 'both men and women tend to place a higher value on … masculinity' (Sjoberg 2009: 181). Feminists recognize that there is not just one 'masculinity' and one 'femininity', but hierarchies of masculinities and femininities positioned within the hierarchy between masculinity and femininity. These gender-based hierarchies construct, change and enforce meaning in global social and political life, and political violence. As a result, feminists tend to conceptualize the category of 'political violence' more broadly than traditional notions, questioning the personal/political and public/private divides. They argue that gender matters in political violence in three main ways: it is necessary, conceptually, for understanding what political violence is; it is important in analysing causes and predicting outcomes; and it is essential to thinking about solutions and promoting positive change.

Feminist scholarship, then, looks at the world through 'gender lenses', which 'focus on gender as a particular kind of power relation [and] trace out the ways in which gender is central to understanding international processes' (Steans 1998: 5). Still, there is not one 'women's experience', 'experience of femininity' or 'experience of gendered power' in the world. Instead, gender is lived by different people in different cultures and across time. As a result, there are a number of different ways in which feminists look through gendered lenses – in IR terms, as realists, liberals, constructivists, critical theorists, post-structuralists, postcolonialists and ecofeminists, to name but a few.[1] These 'perspectives yield different, sometimes

1 This typology comes from Tickner and Sjoberg (2010), but others exist (like the one

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contradictory, insights about and predictions for global politics' (Sjoberg 2009: 183). Still, this work shares a normative and empirical interest in the gender-hierarchical nature of the international system.

In research on political violence, feminists have demonstrated the gender bias in the core concepts of international relations, such as the state, violence, war, peace and even security itself, urging re-definition in light of that bias (Peterson 1992; Pettman 1996; Tickner 2001). Feminist scholars have also gained empirical and theoretical insights from analysing the various roles of women and gender in conflict and conflict resolution. Feminists have found gender-based language and assumptions at the foundation of debates about nuclear strategy (Cohn 1987), the non-combatant immunity principle (Kinsella 2005; Sjoberg 2006), peacekeeping (Whitworth 2004) and various aspects of militarization and soldiering (for example, Enloe 2000). In addition to critiquing concepts traditionally employed in the study of security, gender-based perspectives have also uncovered new empirical knowledge about sexual violence in war and gendered participation in armed conflict (Card 1996). For example, feminist scholars have pointed out that rape is more prevalent in times of war than in times of peace (Enloe 1993). In addition to pointing out the serious threat to women's security posed by wartime rape (Hansen 2001), feminists have demonstrated that rape is institutionalized in war as recreational and as a weapon (Peterson and Runyan 2009: 127) (see also Staub on ethnopolitical violence in this volume, Chapter 11).

Still, as some scholars point out, feminist approaches to defining and dealing with political violence differ, and sometimes conflict, offering different research foci through gendered lenses. For example, feminist work from a realist perspective focuses on the role of gender in strategy and power politics between states (see Whitworth 1989). Liberal feminist work (for example, Caprioli 2004; Hudson et al. 2009) focuses on the subordinate position of women in global politics and argues that gender oppression can be remedied by including women in the existing structures of global politics and protecting them from political violence, as traditionally defined. Critical feminism explores the ideational and material manifestations of gendered identity and gendered power in world politics, contributing particularly to understandings of discursive violence as political violence (for example, Chin 1998; Steans 2006). Feminist constructivism focuses on the ways that ideas about gender shape and are shaped by political violence specifically and global politics generally (Locher and Prugl 2001). Feminist post-structuralism focuses on how gendered linguistic manifestations of meaning, particularly strong/weak, rational/emotional and public/private dichotomies, serve to empower the masculine, marginalize the feminine and (violently) constitute global politics (for example, Hooper 2001; Shepherd 2008). Postcolonial feminists, while sharing many of the epistemological assumptions of post-structural feminists, focus on the ways that colonial relations of domination and subordination established under imperialism are reflected in gender relations, and even relations between feminists, in global politics and academic work (Mohanty 2003).

Kimberly Hutchings' work uses, discussed later in this chapter).

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In addition to diverse foci in the study of political violence, feminists have diverse approaches to the ethical questions surrounding political violence. Kimberly Hutchings outlines the parameters of these approaches, characterizing 'enlightenment feminisms' as a school of thought which 'makes the justification of uses of political violence', particularly in 'situations of gross threats to human rights, including rights of women, where no alternative means to address the threat are available' (Hutchings 2007: 95). This approach suggests women contest men's monopolies over the means of political violence and support women's rights to be a part of the persecution of just wars (Carter 1998; Hutchings 2007).

The second categorization that Hutchings uses is that of 'care' feminism. Care feminism argues 'for an ethics that is self-consciously based on the recognition of human inter-dependence and the generalization of the values inherent in women's caring work' (Hutchings 2007: 95). In global politics, then, care feminism guides students and practitioners of global politics to overturn masculine assumptions about the nature of political actors (as rational, unitary and independent) and the nature of politics (as competitive and zero-sum) (Hutchings 2007: 95; Robinson 1999). This feminist lens 'renders the legitimation of the use of violence highly problematic' because any such legitimation would be seen to reflect 'the masculine distortion of enlightenment feminism's model of the human' (Harris and King 1989; Hutchings 2007; Ruddick 1989). 'Care' feminism sees non-violence as a core value.

The third category of feminist approaches to political violence that Hutchings discusses is that of postcolonial feminism. Postcolonial feminism argues that the enlightenment approach is exclusive, lacking context and privileging Western values (Mohanty 2003). As Hutchings explains, 'for postcolonial feminism, the ethical significance of context is twofold: firstly, because it affects the meaning of a particular right, value or principle; secondly, because it affects the way in which the effects of measures promoting particular values and principles are experienced' (Hutchings 2007: 95). Still, in contrast to care feminism, postcolonial feminism does not posit a generic, feminist/feminine framework for ethical decision-making or a generic understanding of the meaning or definition of political violence. As such, postcolonial approaches evaluate political violence situationally.

While each of these approaches looks at and understands political violence through gendered lenses, they come to different conclusions. To illustrate this point, Hutchings uses Jean Elshtain's just warriors/beautiful souls dichotomy (see Elshtain 1987a). In Elshtain's understanding, the 'just warrior' trope links masculinity to protection of women/femininity, while the 'beautiful soul' trope links femininity to non-violence and the need for protection. In Hutchings' understanding, then, enlightenment feminism sees the just warrior as the ideal political actor (and the problem with the tropes is that they are gendered), while care feminism sees the beautiful soul as the ideal political actor (where the problem is the existence of the just warrior trope) and postcolonial feminism problematizes the gendered/hierarchical nature of the protected/protector dichotomy. As such, different feminist approaches (however categorized, and Hutchings' categorization is one of many) to political violence differ on questions as fundamental as whether or not it is ever a justifiable tool to use as a means to political ends.

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Hutchings concludes that 'debates between different accounts of feminist ethics in world politics cannot be definitely resolved' considering that they, in effect, critique each other (2007: 98). Still, John Hoffman provides a framework through which we can see feminism's approaches to political violence and the ethics thereof as diversity within commonality. Hoffman introduces the idea of a 'momentum concept', which can accommodate difference, interpretational gaps, internal conflict and change, while still holding conceptual validity in a way that makes analysis possible (Hoffman 2001: 8). Momentum concepts are concepts which have an egalitarian and anti-hierarchical 'logic' (Hoffman 2001: 23). In other words, an idea is defined by the dialogue about it rather than strictly as one thing or another. Therefore, the boundaries are constantly changing both size and shape to accommodate new interpretations, internal disagreement and change over time. This flexibility, Hoffman contends, means that 'momentum concepts are therefore inherently subversive. They demonstrate an inner movement which transcends the formulations of their creators' (2001: 25). This means that feminisms, though they are diverse, can be seen as a singular research project and theoretical agenda. Hoffman asserts that this flexibility is also commensurate with a feminist concern for reflexivity (Hoffman 2001: 25). He argues that 'if feminism is to be coherently defined, then, in my view, it needs to be conceived as one river with numerous currents rather than as a series of rivers flowing in different and even contradictory directions' (Hoffman 2001: 48).

This chapter views feminist approaches to defining political violence and considering the ethical questions surrounding political violence as a momentum concept, in Hoffman's terms. While the research programme addressing gender and political violence is diverse, it has several common tenets. The first common tenet is a broad understanding of what counts as violence and who or what merits protection from that violence. Feminist approaches to security define security broadly in multi-dimensional and multi-level terms. In this view, violence includes not only war but also domestic violence, rape, poverty, gender subordination and ecological destruction (Tickner 1992). The second common theme in feminist studies of political violence is an understanding of the gendered nature of the values prized in the realm of international security. If 'masculinism is the ideology that justifies and naturalizes gender hierarchy by not questioning the elevation of ways of being and knowing associated with men and masculinity over those associated with women and femininity', then the values socially associated with femininity and masculinity are awarded unequal weight in a competitive social order, violently perpetuating inequality in perceived gender difference (Hooper 1998). A third common theme for the feminist study of political violence is the broad and diverse role that feminist scholars see gender playing in the theory and practice of global politics. These observations lead to a final common theme for the feminist study of political violence: that the omission of gender from work on political violence does not make that work gender-neutral or unproblematic. Instead, feminist work on issues of political violence has served to 'question the supposed nonexistence of and irrelevance of women in international security politics', interrogate 'the extent to which women are secured by state "protection" in times of war and peace', contest 'discourses

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where women are linked unreflectively with peace' and critique 'the assumption that gendered security practices address only women' (Blanchard 2003: 1290).

While most theorists of security think about political violence only on the levels that it is a direct product of or producer of international security, feminists understand physical, structural, ecological and sexual violence as political violence (Tickner 2001). This approach emphasizes individual human safety, especially at the political margins, re-focusing the object of violence from the state towards peoples' lives. Definitions of war as state action omit many of the political concerns about women and femininity that feminism emphasizes (Sylvester 2002: 116). Feminist theory calls attention to the suffering that traditional understandings of security normally ignore, including the impacts of war on individual women's lives and the different manifestations of political violence. It is appropriate to theorize political violence in militaries, on battlefields, with planes and with attention to terrorism. But it is also appropriate to theorize political violence as it relates to 'civilian casualties, power outages, structural violence, food shortages, militarism, and human rights' (Sjoberg 2006: 51, citing Steans 1998). In this interpretation, 'war is best understood as a continuum, or a process, rather than as a discrete event' (Cuomo 1996: 31). Crisis-based understandings of political violence can omit the suffering that leads up to and follows wars and takes attention away from everyday violence. As Chris Cuomo explains, references to 'war as a separate, bounded sphere indicate assumptions that war is a realm of human activity vastly removed from normal life' (1996: 30). Instead, 'war is a process that affects and is affected by daily political life' (Sjoberg 2006: 52).

Feminists' concern for the political margins inspires the insight that states are not monolithic entities, but diverse amalgamations of people and experiences. States claim to be unitary, however, and have become a symbolic substitute for the individual (Steans 1998). Feminisms, by contrast, prioritize women's individual subjectivity as a tool against the power of gender subordination. If individual subjectivity is important, then states are not the only actors in international politics. Instead, gendered lenses reveal that people, with their multiple relationships and multiple experiences, are political actors (Goldstein 2001: 53).

Feminism and Agents of Political Violence

Many traditional theories of political violence, particularly in political science (with the possible exception of terrorism studies), focus on states as the agents of political violence. Feminist approaches, as mentioned above, pay attention to a broader spectrum of political actors and define political action more broadly. The root of this theoretical difference, and of feminist theorizing about agency in political violence, is feminist criticisms of the public/private dichotomy, which were mentioned in the introduction to this chapter.

The gendered basis of the public/private dichotomy is the expectation that men's realm is outside the home (in business and in politics) and women's realm is

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inside the home (as homemakers). The public sphere, and thus men's lives, are of concern to other members of the public sphere, while the private sphere, and thus women's lives, are not of concern to the public sphere. As such, the private sphere is devalued socially, politically and economically. As Hilary Charlesworth, Christine Chinkin and Shelley Wright argue, the 'public realm … where power and authority are exercised, is regarded as the natural province of men; while the private world … is seen as the appropriate domain of women … greater significance is attached to the public, male world' (1991). In other words, 'the things that happen in these private spaces (such as domestic violence or marital rape) have been treated as private matters beyond the control or authority of the state' (Eckert 2008).

While 'the terms of the public/private divide differ from domestic to international society', it has a similar function, calling attention to the public sphere and shielding the private sphere from visibility (Eckert 2008). Though the private sphere in international politics is multi-layered and includes a range of actors from non-state armed groups to civilians, it shares marginalization in war theorizing. In most theorizing about political violence, then, the 'public' sphere of the state has been visible (perhaps even over-visible) while the 'private' sphere in its various iterations (civilians who suffer in war or 'non-state' actors who make war) have been marginal or invisible. Feminist theorizing to denaturalize the public/private dichotomy ranks states as the agents in political violence and ignores the agency of non-state actors (Sjoberg 2006).

Replicating this public/private dichotomy, most theories of individual political violence either explicitly or implicitly exclude women. Those theories that are not explicitly *about men only* or gendered in their appraisal still rely on a male actor (as a man) as a stereotype and masculinized understandings of knowledge, values and actions. Many of the theories of individual violence have been shaped by attention to men and, even when applied to women, are adding women to an analysis, the terms of which have already been set by masculine discourses. Adding women to theories of individual (men's) violence shows *not only* that these theories omitted women, but the ways that they are gendered has made them inadequate to explain *both* men's violence and women's violence. One major point of contention that feminist critics have had with theories of agency in political science is the idea of (state) actors' autonomy.

Most theories of political violence begin with the assumption that actors, through explicit consent or social contract, have accepted some limitations on their decision-making capacity in exchange for the right to live in a society which provides them with protection and easy access to a number of human necessities (Hirschmann 1989: 1228). This understanding of an individual's role in political decision-making, however, comes up short in two important areas: first, consent is not always explicit or voluntary; and, second, the process of consent, even when voluntary, is complicated by a number of mitigating factors.

The contention that consent in the social contract is not always voluntary has been a tenet of feminist theory throughout its history (see MacKinnon 2001). There are many obligations that 'people do not choose, actively or passively' (Sjoberg 2006: 124). Gendered lenses see the incompleteness of choice because they recognize

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gender bias in the structure of political obligation and social agency (Hirschmann 1989: 1228–9). Women often are assigned obligations that they have not agreed to, either implicitly or explicitly. Seeing this as true of women allows for the interrogation of the general assumption that obligation is assumed freely by men or women.

Further, non-voluntary obligation is assigned to human beings on gendered terms. Traditional understandings of political agency and responsibility emphasize freedom (Hirschmann 1989: 1233) while traditional understandings of femininity emphasize control, headed by a laundry list of obligations that women must perform in households (Tickner 2001). In other words, obligatory relationships are always governed by gendered power. These limitations differ based on social group membership, where oppressed social groups have less access to powers and freedoms (and thus to agency) (Hirschmann 2004: 204). Often, in social relationships, women are the obliged and men the obligor, meaning women must recognize men and men need not return the recognition (Hirschmann 1989: 1239). As a result, 'unfair bargaining positions belie the freedom implicit in free choice' (Hirschmann 1989: 1239).

This brings us to the second shortcoming of the idea of consent: the many complexities surrounding it serve as mitigating factors. The first complexity, discussed above, is that people come to the 'consent table' with differential power and thus have different capacities to choose and ignore obligations. The second complexity, as Hirschmann describes, is that consent is mitigated by the fact that in almost all situations in which choice is required, there are limited choices, which narrow the possible gains from this (or any other) choice, giving people less incentive to want to choose some other option. Actor choice, then, is constrained by its (occasional) unavailability, individuals' (gendered) power differentials, limited choice and the social construction of internal will and desire. Yet, within this complex maze of limits on human agency and the freedom of choice, individual identity remains (Sylvester 1992). A feminist approach to the question of agency critiques the idea that all choices are made and responsibilities are assumed fully freely (Hirschmann 1989). Instead, a relational autonomy approach sees responsibility as intersubjective. Responsibility is *responsive* and interactive, based on the social and political interaction. If not all choices are made fully freely and not all obligations are assumed voluntarily, then obligation is relational.

In a world of relational autonomy, decisions can be made within constraints or with fellow constrainees, but are never entirely unavailable and never without any constraint. Accordingly, 'decisions are not made without others, but instead either with or around them' (Sjoberg 2006). Given this interdependence, actors can choose to use their limited autonomy to act against, around or with others. In this interpretation, the existence and identity of the self and other are mutually dependent, mutually vulnerable and mutually socially constructed. This mutual construction is not accomplished by harmony and cooperation, but by the ambivalence and conflict inherent in the environment.

Any move towards a gender-conscious theory of individual violence in global politics would need to at the same time account for political and social motivations, gendered context and individuality. Including previously hidden gender

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inequalities in the analysis of individual violence in global politics 'allows us to see how many of the insecurities affecting us all, women and men alike, are gendered in this historical origins, their conventional definitions, and their contemporary manifestations' (Tickner 1992: 129).

In short, feminist accounts of agency in political violence suggest that theories of political violence should complicate both who they look at as actors in the commission of political violence and how they consider the agency of those actors. I will conclude this section with an application of those ideas to an area of central concern to feminist thinking: women's multiple roles in war.

Women have agency in a number of different aspects of political violence and are victims of a number of different forms of political violence. Feminist theorizing notes this, and looks for women in the planning, making, fighting, supplying, ending and reconstructing of war. One of the trends that feminists note is the gendered nature of the treatment of women both in the policy world and in the study of political violence.

Across women's multiple roles in war, expectations that women are feminine and behave according to traditionally accepted standards of femininity are constant. Women are a crucial *casus belli* (justification) for fighting wars. For example, the US invasion of Afghanistan was justified in part by a claim that it would protect Afghan women from the Taliban government. It was also justified by an interest in protecting the 'way of life' of Americans, which was described in terms of soccer moms and beauty queens or idealized images of femininity.

Women are often abused and raped in war because belligerents see the opponent's women as productive and reproductive of the opponent's nation (see Staub, Chapter 11, this volume). Genocidal rape is seen as a way to corrupt and eliminate an ethnic group, at least in part because women are seen as the bearers of the culture. For example, in advocating ethnic cleansing, it is alleged that former biologist and then-President of the Serb Republic Biljana Plavsic argued that women's purity was the mark of cultural purity; eliminating one could eliminate another.

Women are also often incorporated into peace-building processes because it is perceived that women, because they are expected to be more emotional, sensitive, cooperative and peaceful than men, will be better at ending conflicts than men, who are expected to be more competitive and aggressive. Security Council Resolution 1325 argues that women and gender should be taken into account in peace-building processes *because* women are crucial to international peace and security. The inclusion of gender quotas in post-conflict constitutions and the election of women to public office in states recovering from conflicts have also been attributed to the perception that women are *better at peace* than men are.

Feminist work on the question of agency in political violence, then, broadens the actors considered agents, suggests more complex interpretations of those agents' actions and questions the gendered nature of the analysis of that agency in studies of political violence. Feminists point out that not only are states agents of political violence, but so are individuals, both in mainstream positions of power and at the margins of global politics. These agents are not entirely autonomous of their socio-political environments, but are relationally tied to others. Further, women's agency

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is not and should not be limited to perceived gender-appropriate roles: women commit, participate in, plan and prevent political violence, both in ways traditionally associated with femininity and in ways which defy gender-essentializing stereotypes.

Feminism and the Victims of Political Violence

Feminist theorizing is particularly interested in questions of gender and victimization in political violence. Catherine MacKinnon calls international reactions to gendered political violence 'the double-edged denial of their [women's] humanity – the denial that sex-specific violations are commonly committed and that they are inhuman' (2006: 1). Political violence affects women in different ways – from barely to completely – but most of the ways in which women are affected by political violence are gender-specific. In wartime, women often experience accession to household head with limited resources, which they must manage in addition to other duties in times of financial hardship. Women are often subject to increased medical and social vulnerability in times of conflict, resulting from infrastructural attacks on their homes and communities. Women are confronted with an increased threat of sexual violence in wartime, as rape rates are higher during conflicts than in any other political situation. Sexual violence is exacerbated in conflicts where rape is used as a weapon of ethnic cleansing or genocide. Women are the majority of civilian casualties in most conflicts. Women also comprise the majority of persons displaced by wars and conflicts. Women are oppressed and discriminated against in refugee camps, since camp managers often feed men first to prepare them for fighting and turn a blind eye to sexual abuse. Many women are subjected to war-structured sex work, serving as prostitutes, voluntarily or involuntarily (Giles 2011). Target misestimation and indiscriminate warfare often cause substantial female casualties. While states and international organizations often stop counting civilian casualties when the shooting stops, many women feel the effects of war for years or even decades later. These impacts come in the form of preventable disease, infrastructure damage, job losses, resource shortages and lapses in the rule of law.

For example, in the struggles for power in Afghanistan prior to the US invasion, women bore the brunt of conservative governance. They were forbidden to work, not allowed to leave the house without a male escort and forced to cover themselves from head to toe. During the US invasion, thousands of women died in the crossfire between the US military and the Taliban. While the conservative policies of the Taliban are gone, women today deal with the challenges of an unstable government that is often unable to protect them from men's violence. Even in the new, more liberal, post-conflict regime, only 30 per cent of Afghan girls have access to education, 70–80 per cent of women face forced marriages and one in three Afghan women have experienced sexual or domestic violence related to the conflict (Kandiyoti 2007; Shepherd 2006).

Two messages arise from these brief understandings of the sex differential in victimization in political violence: first, that gender subordination and victimization

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overlap; and, second, that asking the question 'where are the women?' in the impacts of political violence inspires researchers to look in a broader range of places for the commission and impacts of political violence.

In particular, feminist peace researchers have focused on the concepts of 'structural violence' and 'positive peace' (Brock-Utne 1989: 44). 'Structural violence' is a term that originated in the work of Johann Galtung, who describes it as physical, economic, domestic and other forms of violence which stop individuals from living to their potential (Galtung 1975: 110–11). Structural violence manifests itself in gender-unequal ways in the form of the gendering of poverty, the gender-disproportionate long-term impacts of war and conflict, and the gender-unequal structure of social welfare and social justice systems. Many feminist scholars have defined political violence as including structural violence. In this vein, feminist peace researchers have used the term 'positive peace' to describe a desire to eliminate not only war, terrorism and other things traditionally characterized as 'political violence', but also structural violence. Brigit Brock-Utne lays out a number of necessary conditions for the existence of positive peace, specifying the concept. These include: absence of unorganized, personal, physical and direct violence (intimate partner violence); absence of organized, personal, physical and direct violence (war); absence of unorganized, indirect violence which decreases lifespan (unequal working conditions on the basis of gender); absence of organized, indirect violence which decreases lifespan (nuclear dumping); absence of unorganized indirect violence which decreases quality of life (inequality of leisure time and freedom of speech); and absence of organized, indirect violence reducing quality of life (mass-media oligopoly) (Brock-Utne 1989: 44–50).

Political Violence is Constituted by Gender

Feminist research has shown that the meanings of political violence, understandings of agency in political violence and understandings of victimization in political violence are laced with gendered politics and gendered understandings. In this research, the association between masculinity and war has been central to feminist investigations. While the manliness of war is rarely denied, militaries must work hard to turn men into soldiers through misogynist training thought necessary to teach men to fight (see Goldstein 2001). Importantly, such training depends on the denigration of anything that could be considered feminine; to act like a soldier is not to be 'womanly'. 'Military manhood', or a type of heroic masculinity, which goes back to the Greeks, attracts recruits and maintains self-esteem in institutions where subservience and obedience are the norm (Eichler 2006; Enloe 2008). Another image of a soldier is a just warrior, self-sacrificially protecting women, children and other vulnerable people (Elshtain 1987a; Tickner 2001). The notion that young males fight wars to protect vulnerable groups, such as women and children, who cannot be expected to protect themselves has been an important motivator for the recruitment of military forces at both the state and non-state levels.

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As Nancy Huston explains, images of femaleness as a justification for political violence simultaneously enable war and subordinate women. It is men's masculine duty to protect women; this duty fuels men's desire and ability to fight in wars. Huston explains that men will fight for women, even if they have no other reason:

> But there always remains at least *one* good reason to make the supreme sacrifice, at least *one* transcendental value that justified rushing headlong into as insane an undertaking as war; very often it is Woman; the virtue she represents for the warrior, the love she bears him, the tears she will shed when he is slain. (Huston 1983: 279, emphasis in original)

This stereotype initially appears to benefit women; after all, they are to be protected while they are not expected to make or fight wars. However, this appearance is only skin-deep and the image of women as 'the protected' actually subordinates them. As the objects to be fought for, women are without either choice or agency in war-making or war-fighting. Elshtain explains that 'certain social divisions got sealed as historical preliminaries to bourgeois beautiful souldom: between home life and public life; peace and war; family and state; the immediacy of desire and the self-conscious power of universal life' (1987a: 142). Being without choice might be acceptable if women really were protected by the making and fighting of war. The illusion of protection, however, is just that, as women's lives are detrimentally affected by war on almost every level. Not only are women not protected by the gendered immunity norm, but the gender stereotypes affect the meaning of gender outside of wartime (Elshtain 1987b: 4). According to just war narratives, women are a liability to be protected, which decreases the respect they merit during wartime and afterwards.

Yet, it is not only in the question of who is fighting a war that feminists find the gendering of war. Instead, feminists see a number of components of war, conceptually and in practice, as gendered. Definitions of war as state action omit many political concerns that women and other feminized members of the state might prioritize (Sylvester 2002: 116). Feminist security studies calls attention to suffering that security analysts normally ignore, including the gendered nature of war at the state level and the impacts of war on the lives of individual women. While conventional interpretations of security see it as a zero-sum game, feminist work argues that there are other paths to security than the competitive use of force. As a result, there is a relationship between the sort of violence traditionally understood as 'war' and unsafe working conditions, unemployment, foreign debt, structural violence, ethnic violence, poverty, and family violence (Tickner 2001) – they are a continuum (Cuomo 1996).

In a recent book, Laura Shepherd (2008) combines six critiques of the 'national security' literature and six critiques of the international security literature to articulate a feminist critique not only of the making of war but of the very intellectual possibility of separating 'war' and other 'everyday' forms of violence. Shepherd argues that 'national security' discourses are gendered because they hold certain interlocking assumptions: that all human existence is bound by the state;

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that behaviour derives from human nature or the anarchic system; that violence is eternal and external to the state; that security can never be achieved; and that militarization needs to be increased (Shepherd 2006: 68). She contends that the scholarly literature on international security also contains erroneous assumptions, including: the existence of a benign global civil society; that security can be achieved in absolute terms; that security should be conceptualized in terms of emancipation; and that a liberal world is desirable (Shepherd 2008: 71). She proposes that 'the violent reproduction of the international and the violent reproduction of gender … share common elements across conceptualizations of international security and gender violence' (2008: 171). Hers and other feminist work argues that violence in global politics is necessarily both gendered and interlinked. Feminists argue that gender can link together scholarship on the meaning, causes and consequences of war that emphasizes different causal factors, different levels of analysis and different eras in history by showing the continuity of gender as a variable, a constitutive force and an analytic category.

The consistency of gendered discourses of political violence – even as women's roles in war-making and war-fighting resonate with it less – has two possible explanations: first, it could be residue from decades and even centuries of the perception that women were the pure, innocent victims of war in need of protection from it; and, second, it could be that there is something that fundamentally links gender subordination and the justification of modern warfare. While it is likely that the first explanation has some influence, I suggest that it is fruitful to consider the possibility of the second in order to understand both the meaning of war and the meaning of gender in global politics.

Earlier in this chapter, I cited Nancy Huston's (1983) argument that a gendered victorious narrative about a war is key to a belligerent's ability to justify the war and rally the resources and troops needed to fight it. Jean Elshtain (1987b) then contended that each belligerent's victorious narrative about war included a story about brave, just (masculine) citizen-warriors rescuing or protecting pure, innocent (feminine) beautiful souls. If, as Huston argues, a victorious narrative has been key to the practice of all war and, as Elshtain argues, in practice, these victorious narratives have relied on differentiated gender roles to sustain them, then the practice of war itself could be seen to rely on differentiated gender-ideal types. In this understanding, the presence of a feminized other is crucial both to political violence and its justificatory narratives. The feminized other requires protection; the protection of the feminine can then be read as a crucial cause of war. The images of femaleness in the gender-stereotypical beautiful soul narrative, then, simultaneously enable war and provide space for its gender-subordinating justifications and effects.

If this reading of political violence as constituted by gender is correct, the gendered nature of political violence will not disappear as the nature of war changes and women's roles in conflict evolve. Instead, violence and protection are not opposites, but complementary concepts which necessitate each other: protection requires violence; violence requires protection. Without the feminized other to protect, the masculinized politically violent actor has nothing to excuse (his) fighting, and the justificatory narratives behind the making and fighting of

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wars are stalled without their victorious conclusion. There is, then, theoretical and empirical leverage to be gained from considering the mutual constitution of gender stereotypes and war. If the feminization of the other is central to political violence, and political violence is central to the building and maintenance of gender hierarchy, gender is a lynchpin of war-making and the war system is a lynchpin of gender subordination. In the next section of this chapter, I use the example of feminist studies of women's political violence to demonstrate that not only are gender subordination and politically violence intrinsically interlinked, but that they constitute each other.

Feminism and Women who Commit Political Violence

Several scholars of gender and international relations have identified a paradox of women's integration into global politics: women are doing more of the things that were traditionally understood as the exclusive domain of men, but stereotypes about what women should and should not be doing are not disappearing at the same pace (Enloe 2000). Instead, women's integration into global political life has sacrificed as little white male privilege as possible and has paid little attention to the discursive and performative elements of gender subordination (like stereotypical narratives) (for example, Butler 1993).

Women participate in political violence on almost every level (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007) – as soldiers, as insurgents, as terrorists, as protesters, as perpetrators in genocide and genocidal rape, and as war criminals in almost every conflict around the world. The increasing presence of women in arenas of political violence has been heralded by some as proof of the victory of gender equality (Ehrenreich 2004). At first, this appears to be a logical deduction: certainly, political and criminal violence are some of the last domains of male hegemony. This initial perception is rebutted, however, by the continuing differences in the scale of male as compared with female participation in violence, as well as how these women's acts of violence are portrayed. The fact that there are women committing the same crimes as men does not mean they have a gender-equal or gender-neutral role in global politics (Cockburn 1991). First, the relatively small percentage of women who commit war crimes and terrorism received a disproportionate amount of media attention (Enloe 1993). Cynthia Enloe argues that, in the beginning of the First Gulf War (when the percentage of deployed soldiers who were women went up from less than half of one per cent in the Vietnam War to seven per cent in that war), there was an concentration of media attention for female soldiers which was far disproportionate to women's actual representation as members of the fighting force. She attributes this to a rise in the salience of femininity: people were interested in women soldiers not as soldiers but as *women soldiers*, a distinction which, rather than highlighting the gender equalities in an integrated military, demonstrates that even an integrated military can maintain gender stereotypes. Women who commit violence are often told not as terrorists or war criminals, but as *women* terrorists and *women* war criminals.

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The gendered nature of these portrayals stems from the understanding that women's crimes are different from and more deviant than those of men. Studying women's crimes in the USA, Carol Smart recognized that girls with a criminal record are three times more likely to be recommended for institutionalization than boys, because girls' crimes were viewed as sexually deviant (Smart 1995). Smart found that many in the criminal justice system viewed female deviancy as due to a 'much deeper pathology than deviancy by a male' (Smart 1995: 133). It is this perceived gender difference that produces the disproportionate attention that violent women attract. Indeed, Helena Kennedy finds that female terrorists, such as women in the Weather Underground and the Baader-Meinhof Gang, 'have all provoked more interest and speculation than their male comrades' (Kennedy 1992: 261). This interest, however, has little to do with the politics of female terrorists. Instead, it betrays a fascination with women terrorists' 'sexual liberation', which sparks the interest of 'their male voyeur' (Kennedy 1992: 262).

These characterizations of violent women link sexual deviance and engagement in violence. In these stories, women are not terrorists and violent criminals but sexually disturbed or, worse, sexual victims. Instead, an unhealthily strong sexual drive *or* sexual deviance and dependence are seen as the root causes of female violence. Given the link between sex and women's violence, a woman is not responsible for her violent actions because she is compelled to commit them by a combination of sexual instinct and victimization (Morgan 1989). This is where the 'double transgression' of women's political violence becomes clear: a woman who can decide to commit a violent crime defies the stereotype of both female helplessness and female peacefulness (Keitner 2002). Instead of acknowledging the falseness of the underlying stereotype, public and publicized stories emphasize the singularity of violent women through sexual depictions (Keitner 2002; Shapiro 2000).

The reality is that women who commit violence interrupt gender stereotypes. Instead of requiring protection, they are the people from whom others should be protected (Young 2003). These depictions, however, are buried under the language of sex, because stories of women's agency in violence would interrupt dominant discourses about women's roles generally and about women's relationship to violence specifically. A violent woman has committed two crimes: her violence, and her defiance of gender stereotypes that deem her incapable of that violence in the first place (Keitner 2002: 40). As such, acknowledging that women might choose to engage in violence would change both the way we see women and the way we see global politics. Therefore, though women's violence receives a disproportionate amount of media attention, violent women's stories are marginalized by their obfuscation within stylized narratives, couched in terms that deny women's agency. Gender tropes are preserved even in narratives that discuss women who are breaking them – stories of women's violence at once separate violent women from ideal-typical femininity and maintain the feminized other as the victim of and justification for political violence.

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Conclusion

Different feminist perspectives on political violence have different insights about the gendered nature of political violence and the violent reproduction of gender in global politics. Different schools of feminist thought focus on different aspects of the relationship between gender and political violence, and offer contrasting understandings of the ethics of political violence. Still, as John Hoffman suggests, there are two ways to think about gendering political violence: as in conflict or as parts of a whole. This chapter takes the latter approach, considering feminist theorizing to be a 'momentum' concept, where diverse feminist theorizing on political violence contributes to knowledge accumulation through their commonalities and through their differences. Feminist approaches define security in multi-level terms, understand political violence as gendered, see gender playing a broad and diverse role in the theory and practice of political violence, and understand gender as a necessary component of understanding political violence.

Feminist scholars therefore work not only to re-define political violence, but also to revise understandings of agency and victimization in political violence through gendered lenses. Feminists note that it is not only states that are agents of political violence, but individuals and non-governmental organizations too. In addition to expanding the range of people who are considered actors in political violence, feminists questioned what constitutes agency in political violence, critiquing the assumption prevalent in most literature on political violence that actors are rational, unitary and autonomous. Feminist theorists also critique traditional understandings of victimization in political violence, pointing out that not only does political violence disproportionately affect women, but examining political violence's effects on women is instructive in broadening the definition of political violence to include structural violence and gender subordination.

Feminist insights about the nature of political violence also hold that political violence is constituted by gender, and that gender subordination and political violence are intrinsically interrelated concepts. Using the example of women's political violence in global politics, this chapter argues that the depth of the link between gender subordination and political violence is just beginning to be explored. Feminist scholarship thus far has noted that political violence is gendered and gendering is reproduced violently in global politics, and several feminist research programmes are now exploring the dynamics of that relationship.

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