

GENDER AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

EDITED BY LAURA SJOBERG

Gender and International Security

Feminist perspectives

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Laura Sjoberg



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Gender and International Security

This book explores the relationship between gender and international security, analyzing and critiquing international security theory and practice from a gendered perspective.

Gender issues have an important place in the international security landscape, but have been neglected both in the theory and practice of international security. The passage and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (on Security Council operations), the integration of gender concerns into peace-keeping, the management of refugees, post-conflict disarmament, and reintegration and protection for non-combatants in times of war show the increasing importance of gender sensitivity for actors on all fronts in global security.

This book aims to improve the quality and quantity of conversations between feminist Security Studies and Security Studies more generally, in order to demonstrate the importance of gender analysis to the study of international security, and to expand the feminist research program in Security Studies. The chapters included in this book not only challenge the assumed irrelevance of gender, they argue that gender is not a subsection of Security Studies to be compartmentalized or briefly considered as a side issue. Rather, the contributors argue that gender is conceptually, empirically, and normatively essential to studying international security. They do so by critiquing and reconstructing key concepts of and theories in international security, by looking for the increasingly complex roles women play as security actors, and by looking at various contemporary security issues through gendered lenses. Together, these chapters make the case that accurate, rigorous, and ethical scholarship of international security cannot be produced without taking account of women's presence in or the gendering of world politics.

Gender and International Security will be of interest to all students of critical Security Studies, gender studies and International Relations in general.

Laura Sjoberg is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida. She has a PhD in International Relations and Gender Studies from the University of Southern California, and a JD from Boston College Law School. She is the author of *Gender, Justice, and the Wars in Iraq* (2006) and, with Caron Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (2007).

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Gender and International Security

Feminist perspectives

Edited by Laura Sjoberg

**In loving memory of Fred Sjoberg, who was one of my first sources
of security**

Contributors

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Susan Wright is Research Scientist in History of Science and International Relations in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan. Over the past thirty years, her research and writing have focused on the history and politics of molecular biology and biotechnology and on the international and national politics of biological warfare and disarmament. Her books include *Molecular Politics: Developing American and British Regulatory Policy for Genetic Engineering, 1972-82* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), *Preventing a Biological Arms Race* (MIT Press, 1990), and *Biological Warfare and Disarmament: New Problems/New Perspectives* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002). Her most recent publication is "Terrorism and Biological Weapons: Forging the Linkage in the Clinton Administration," *Politics and the Life Sciences* 25 (1-2) (2007): 57-115. From 1979 to 1998, she directed the Residential College Science and Society Program at the University of Michigan. From 1998 to 1999, she was a Senior Research Fellow at the UN Institute for Disarmament

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Portions of this book were published as a special issue of the journal *Security Studies* entitled "Security Studies: Feminist Contributions." Those essays in particular and the project in general owe a debt to the journal's editors over the course of the project, Susan Peterson, Michael Desch, and William Wohlforth, as well as two anonymous reviewers who read and commented on all seven essays twice. This book was first discussed as a collection at a workshop held at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, where a number of contributors and other scholars shared ideas that evolved into this project.

My personal inspiration for this project, and my motivation to bring it to fruition at a tough time in my life, comes from Ann Tickner, whose intellectual inspiration, leadership, and tireless work is only matched by her kindness of spirit and personal toughness. I believe in this project because of Ann's work, and I believe in my ability to do it because of her friendship and mentorship. I am inspired to work even when I am exhausted because Ann's tireless dedication serves as a constant reminder of the importance of feminist work in International Relations.

A number of people have been careful readers and advisers over the course of this project. Those include (but certainly are not limited to) the contributors to this volume (Judith Hicks Stiehm, Christine Sylvester, Jonathan D. Wadley, Lauren Wilcox, Nicole A. Detraz, Sandra McEvoy, Megan MacKenzie, Swati Parashar, Susan Wright, Jennifer K. Lobasz, Jennifer Heeg Maruska, and Heidi Hudson). Several colleagues read versions of the

Introduction, including Amy Eckert, Caron Gentry, Ilja Luciak, Janice Bially Mattern, Spike Peterson, and Ann Tickner. Carol Cohn, Annick Wibben, Lene Hansen, and Jacqueline Berman have read and provided comments on substantial parts of this project. Participants in the workshop at ISA 2007 who did not end up writing for the book contributed to its conceptualization and shaping, including Annick Wibben, Gunhild Hoogenson, Runa Das, Laura Shepherd, Cristina Masters, Rebecca Grant, Theresa Lund, Chris Jones, and Brandon Valeriano. Dozens of panel discussants and commentators at meetings of ISA and APSA have also helped shape this project. As an editor, I also owe a debt to conversations with Brooke Ackerly, Francine D'Amico, Sandy Whitworth, and Anne Runyan.

Personally, this book could not have been constructed without the love and support of my family, including my parents, Marie and David Sjoberg, my grandmother Jean, my aunts, Jenny and Debby, and my brother, JD. I am closer to all of those people than I was at the start of this project, and better for it. I've learned a good bit about gender and war from my chihuahuas: Max, the youngest, and April, the oldest, have been engaged in a constant and apparently never-ending fight for dominance/relative power during the compilation of this book; Gizmo, the "middle child", has been an adorable combination of empathy and fear. Co-celebrants at my 30th birthday party in New York have been sources of strength, as friends and colleagues. Overall, I am energized by a network of friendships and support more amazing than I could imagine, and better than I deserve, without which this book would not exist.

Those of you who know me know that my acknowledgments usually conclude with a negative interaction with the discipline that inspired me to do the counter-hegemonic work that I have done. I am sure there will be plenty more of those in books in the future, given the youth of my career and the nature of my work. This time, though, I would like to deviate from that pattern and tell a story of a positive relationship of building mutual trust and understanding in cross-field interaction. As I mentioned above, many of the essays in this book were originally published as a part of a feminist special issue of the journal *Security Studies*. When I approached the journal, I expected the sort of closed-minded reaction to feminist approaches that I have chronicled in other acknowledgment-ending stories. The editor's reaction was exactly the opposite—a willingness to engage and excitement about including feminist work. In the editing process, we encountered a number of ontological, epistemological, and methodological misunderstandings and disagreements (what is constitutive reasoning?, how do you account for variation?, what is gender if not male/female?, what does race have to do with it?), but the journal editors were fair, open-minded, and attuned to bridging divides rather than alienating new ideas. This book exists as a follow-up to the special issue to demonstrate that Feminist Security Studies is both what the journal included, and what it excluded on format, methodological, or epistemological/ontological grounds. Still, my experience with *Security Studies* makes me optimistic (if cautiously) that the future of feminism in International Relations generally

and Security Studies specifically is not doomed to marginality and misunderstanding, even when feminist scholars insist on not compromising the key ideas that make their scholarship not just gender-based, but explicitly feminist.

That said, the point of this as a book project is that gathering the best work by feminist scholars addressing the sub-field that International Relations (IR) labels “Security Studies” or “International Security” cannot be contained within the epistemological, methodological, or ontological boundaries that the “mainstream” in the discipline is flexible enough to accommodate. Something is lost when work that does not talk “to” or “in the language of” a subfield built by men around masculinized concepts and ideal-types is excluded. Much like intellectual communities centered around other IR paradigms, the feminist community in IR is not substantively or methodologically homogenous. In fact, many of the most important insights coming from feminist scholarship in IR come in the form of work considered “incommensurable” or “without a research program” by “the discipline” of IR. It is ironic, then, that the real strength of feminist contributions of Security Studies (and any other part of IR) comes in the intersections and totalities of those diverse approaches. Many of the chapter in this book were excluded (not in theory but in actuality) from the conversation of “*Security Studies: Feminist Contributions*” by (my and others’) editorial decisions about commensurability and disciplinary fit. This book was put together to make/embody the argument that feminist theorizing about global politics/global security should not be bound by those concerns, and makes a stronger contribution to IR narrowly and knowledge writ large without those chains.

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