

Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms? Or: why women and gender are essential to understanding the world 'we' live in *

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The deliberately blunt and provocative nature of the title of this article is intended to get us right to the heart of the matter: the gulf that continues to exist between what might be called mainstream ('malestream' is a term frequently used in feminist critiques) International Relations and feminist International Relations. Feminist International Relations has tended to flourish as a subfield of the main field of International Relations, without much impact on the field as a whole. While it is positive and productive that feminist analysis in the subject thrives—a fact to which the development and growth of a journal like *IFjP* bears witness¹—it is also problematic that the impact of this activity in

* This article is part of a collaborative effort between the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* (IFjP) and *International Affairs*. The aim is to stimulate productive debate about the nature and contribution of feminist approaches to International Relations. It was decided that we should begin with an overview of the field of feminist International Relations and a series of commentaries on that overview. The plan is then to follow this with articles on specific topic areas in future volumes of *International Affairs*. What follows in this issue is the beginning of this endeavour: namely, a summary discussion of key issues and trajectories for analysis raised by work in feminist International Relations, and three diverse comments on that summary. The article needs to be read as 'a' summary: in other words, it is one perspective and does not make any claims to being 'the' definitive or grand narrative assessment of feminist International Relations, which is as rich in its diversity of approaches and subjects as any area of the field. This piece can do no more than signal this diversity to be explored further in the continuation of the collaboration. It would, indeed, be quite counterproductive to the intentions of the collaboration to suggest that feminist International Relations could be summed up in a few articles, no matter how comprehensive or far-reaching their remit.

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¹ Other international specialist journals covering feminist International Relations topics, broadly defined, include *Women's Studies International Forum*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Feminist Review*, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* and *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*. Many regional journals exist, including *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, *Australian Feminist Studies*, *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *Asian Women*, *Agenda* (www.agenda.org.za) and *Feminist Africa* (www.feministafrica.org). There are also many disciplinary/specialist journals of relevance within the field, such as *Women and Politics*, *Feminist Economics*, *Feminist Studies*, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, *Gender, Place and Culture*, *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, *Gender, Technology and Development*. A useful general resource on feminist theory and research is Cheri Kramarae and Dale Spender, eds, *Routledge international encyclopedia of women* (London: Routledge, 2000).

the field as a whole remains at best limited and at worst non-existent.

It seems clear from feminist work to date that these knowledge gaps have many dimensions, and perspectives on them differ starkly depending on which side of the feminist versus mainstream International Relations divide the researcher stands.² The divide itself is complex, weaving together threads of history, of academic, political and gender identity, of power and resistance. This complexity is bound up with changing world views and their implications, and thus with the dynamic relationship of the field of International Relations to its diverse subject-matter. As the title of this article indicates, we need to consider women *and* gender in order to examine the fundamental contributions that feminist International Relations makes to the realms of theory and practice.

In broad terms, feminist International Relations has expanded, and built on, the work of feminist political and economic theory to examine the masculinist framing of politics and economics and associated institutions, including notably the state and its key military and governmental components, as well as the discourses through which these institutions operate and are reproduced over time. In the course of this work, feminist analysis has highlighted three major related phenomena:

- The state and market, in theory and practice, are gendered by masculinist assumptions and structures.
- The dominant conceptualization of political and economic agency in male-dominated terms ignores both women's realities and their active contributions to political and economic life.
- Lack of attention to the analytical category of gender obscures the inter-related social construction of male and female identities and roles.

Feminist International Relations has identified malestream International Relations theory as one of the discourses that help perpetuate a distorted and partial world view that reflects the disproportionate power of control and influence that men hold, rather than the full social reality of the lives of women, children and men. Thus this theory is more reflective and expressive of historically established male power than it is an open and comprehensive exploration of the political and economic processes in which all members of societies are engaged. It is more a discourse of and about the powerful than one that seeks to examine deeply how power works, including its gendered, racialized and socio-economic dimensions, or to situate individuals and groups differently in terms of contrasting levels of capacity, control, influence and freedom.

Central tasks for feminist International Relations and International Political Economy have therefore been both deconstructive and reconstructive: focusing

² Ann Tickner has termed this 'a gendered estrangement' but has made clear that it is not one that pits men against women. 'A majority of IR women scholars do not work with feminist approaches, and some men do use gender as a category of analysis.' See her influential article on this area, J. Ann Tickner, 'You just don't understand: troubled engagements between feminists and IR theorists', *International Studies Quarterly* 4: 4 pp. 611-32.

on revealing through critique the masculinist limitations of mainstream approaches, but also, crucially, going beyond those limitations and investigating political and economic processes in which women and men are engaged. Women and gender are both important, for separate but related reasons. Where women have been largely absent from mainstream International Relations, it has been essential to develop increasing bodies of theoretical and substantive research related to them. This has been a major focus of feminist International Relations, as is illustrated further below. The concept of gender keeps to the fore the relational nature of categorizations of male and female, and signals the importance of not taking either as given or necessarily natural. Both women and gender have therefore been identified by feminist analyses as problematically absent from mainstream approaches and essential to understanding international relations.

In exploring why the gulf on these points continues to exist between malestream and feminist International Relations, it is helpful to think through some of the obstacles to bridging it. I do this in the next section of this article by considering the problem of the ontological revisionism required of malestream analysis if it is to share the same ground as feminist perspectives that count women and gender as fundamental to understanding international relations. In arguing that women and gender are essential to the field of International Relations, feminist scholars have had to address the *core* concepts and issues of the field: war, militarism and security; sovereignty and the state; and globalization. In the remainder of the article, I discuss how feminist work has followed this trajectory, illustrating how an emphasis on gender has generated an increasing focus on masculinity and its multidimensionality and complexity; on the diversity of women's lives, identities and strategies; and on the power differentiations among women, as well as between them and men, and among men.

Ontological revisionism

This discussion will demonstrate, in the ways outlined above, the depth and range of feminist perspectives on power—a prime concern of International Relations and indeed of the whole study of politics. It will illustrate the varied ways in which scholars using these perspectives study power in relation to gender, a nexus largely disregarded in mainstream approaches. From feminist positions, this lacuna marks out mainstream analyses as trapped in a narrow and superficial ontological and epistemological framework. A major part of the problem is the way in which the mainstream takes the *appearance* of a predominantly male-constructed reality as a given, and thus as the beginning and end of investigation and knowledge-building. Feminism requires an ontological revisionism: a recognition that it is necessary to go behind the appearance and examine how differentiated and gendered power constructs the social relations that form that reality.

While it may be empirically accurate to observe that historically and contemporaneously men have dominated the realms of international politics and

economics, feminists argue that a full understanding of the nature of those realms must include understanding the intricate patterns of (gendered) inequalities that shape them. Mainstream International Relations, in accepting that because these realms *appear* to be predominantly man-made, there is no reason to ask how or why that is the case, stop short of taking account of gender. As long as those who adhere to this position continue to accept the sufficiency of the appearances and probe no further, then the ontological and epistemological limitations will continue to be reproduced.

Early work in feminist International Relations in the 1980s had to address this problem directly by peeling back the masculinist surface of world politics to reveal its more complex gendered (and racialized) dynamics. Key scholars such as Cynthia Enloe focused on core International Relations issues of war, militarism and security, highlighting the dependence of these concepts on gender structures—e.g. dominant forms of the masculine (warrior) subject as protector/conqueror/exploiter of the feminine/feminized object/other—and thus the fundamental importance of subjecting them to gender analysis. In a series of works, including the early *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics* (1989), Enloe has addressed different aspects of the most overtly masculine realms of international relations, conflict and defence, to reveal their deeper gendered realities.³ This body of work has launched a powerful critique of the taboo that made women and gender most invisible, in theory and practice, where masculinity had its most extreme, defining (and violent) expression. Enloe's research has provided one of the most comprehensive bodies of evidence for the ontological revisionism required of mainstream International Relations, especially in relation to its core concerns.

When Enloe claimed that 'gender makes the world go round',⁴ she was in fact turning the *abstract* logic of malestream International Relations inside out. This abstract logic saw little need to take theoretical and analytical account of gender as a social force because in practical terms only one gender, the male, appeared to define International Relations. Ann Tickner has recently offered the reminder that this situation persists: 'During the 1990s, women were admitted to most combat positions in the U.S. military, and the U.S. president appointed

³ Cynthia Enloe, *Does khaki become you? The militarization of women's lives* (London: Pandora, 1988; first publ. 1983); *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics* (London: Pandora, 1989); *The morning after: sexual politics at the end of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); *Maneuvers: the international politics of militarizing women's lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Judith Stiehm's work in this area includes *Women's and men's wars* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1983) and *Arms and the enlisted woman* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989). On gender and war, see also Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and gender: how gender shapes the war system and vice versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁴ Enloe, *Bananas, beaches and bases*, p. 1. On debates in feminist theory and international theory see e.g. Christine Sylvester, *Feminist theory and International Relations in a postmodern era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Jill Steans, *Gender and International Relations: an introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997); Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations: an unfinished journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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the first female secretary of state, but occupations in foreign and military policy-making in most states remain overwhelmingly male, and usually elite male.’⁵

Nearly a decade earlier, in her groundbreaking work *Gender in International Relations: feminist perspectives on achieving global security*,⁶ she had asked the kinds of questions that were foundational to early feminist International Relations: ‘Why is the subject matter of my discipline so distant from women’s lived experiences? Why have women been conspicuous only by their absence in the worlds of diplomacy and military and foreign policy-making?’ Tickner, like Enloe, has interrogated core issues in mainstream International Relations, such as security and peace, providing feminist bases for gendered understanding of issues that have defined it. Her reflection on what has happened since *Gender in International Relations* was published indicates the prominence of tensions between theory and practice. ‘We may have provided some answers to my questions as to why IR and foreign policymaking remain male-dominated; but breaking down the unequal gender hierarchies that perpetuate these androcentric biases remains a challenge.’⁷

The persistence of the overriding maleness of international relations in practice is part of the reason for the continued resistance and lack of responsiveness to the analytical relevance feminist International Relations claims. In other words, it is to some extent not surprising that feminist International Relations stands largely outside mainstream International Relations, because the concerns of the former, gender and women, continue to appear to be subsidiary to high politics and diplomacy. One has only to recall the limited attention to gender and women in the recent Afghanistan and Iraq crises to illustrate this point.⁸ So how have feminists tackled this problem? Necessarily, but problematically, by calling for a deeper level of ontological revisionism. I say problematically because, bearing in mind the limited success of the first kind discussed above, it can be anticipated that this deeper kind is likely to be even more challenging for those in the mainstream camp.

The second level of ontological revisionism required relates to critical understanding of *why* the appearance of international relations as predominantly a sphere of male influence and action continues to seem unproblematic from mainstream perspectives. This entails investigating masculinity itself: the nature of its subject position—including as reflected in the collective realm of politics—and the frameworks and hierarchies that structure its social relations, not only in relation to women but also in relation to men configured as (feminized) ‘others’

⁵ J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering world politics: issues and approaches in the post-Cold War era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 1–2.

⁶ J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: feminist perspectives on achieving global security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

⁷ Tickner, *Gendering world politics*, pp. ix–x.

⁸ See e.g. Natasha Walter, ‘Where are the women? Men dominated Saddam’s Iraq. Worryingly, they are also taking control of its future’, *Guardian*, 25 April 2003 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,943175,00.html>). See also Simona Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: the politics of women’s resistance* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995); ‘Forum: the events of 11 September 2001 and beyond’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 4: 1, 2002, pp. 95–113.

because of racial, colonial and other factors, including sexuality. Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart directly captured such an approach as ‘the “man” question in international relations’.⁹ I would like to suggest that for those sceptical about feminist International Relations, Zalewski’s introductory chapter, ‘From the “woman” question to the “man” question in International Relations’, offers an impressively transparent way in to its substantive terrain.¹⁰ Reflecting critically on the editors’ learning process in preparing the volume and working with its contributors, both men and women, Zalewski discusses the various modifications through which the title of the work had moved. These included at different stages the terms ‘women’, ‘masculinity’ and ‘feminism’, finally ending with ‘the “man” question’—signalling once again, I suggest, tensions between theory and practice, the difficulty of escaping the concrete dominance of the male subject position in the realm of international relations.

The project’s starting point revealed a faith in the modernist commitment to the political importance of bringing women into the position of subjecthood. We implicitly accepted that women’s subjecthood could be exposed and revealed in the study and practice of international relations, hoping that this would also reveal the nature of male dominance and power. Posing the ‘man’ question instead reflects our diminishing belief that the exclusion of women can be remedied by converting them into subjects.¹¹

Adding women appeared to have failed to ‘destabilize’ the field; so perhaps critically addressing its prime subject ‘man’ head-on could help to do so. ‘This leads us to ask questions about the roles of masculinity in the conduct of international relations and to question the *accepted naturalness* of the abundance of men in the theory and practice of international relations’ (emphasis added).¹²

The deeper level of ontological revisionism called for by feminist International Relations in this regard is as follows. Not only does it press beyond the appearance of international relations as a predominantly masculine terrain by including women in its analysis, it goes further to question the predominant masculinity itself and the *accepted naturalness* of its power and influence in collective (most significantly state) and individual forms.

‘Manly states’

The title of Charlotte Hooper’s influential book *Manly states: masculinities, international relations and gender politics* can usefully be read as a play on words that reflects the two levels of ontological revisionism.¹³ ‘Manly states’ is a description

⁹ Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart, eds, *The ‘man’ question in International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998).

¹⁰ Marysia Zalewski, ‘From the “woman” question to the “man” question in International Relations’, in Zalewski and Parpart, *The ‘man’ question in International Relations*, pp. 1–13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³ Charlotte Hooper, *Manly states: masculinities, international relations and gender politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

both of the masculinist nature of states, traditionally the central actors in international relations, and of the general conditions (states) of manliness, otherwise the problem (as feminist International Relations would term it) of masculinity and masculine subjectivity. Critique of the masculinist nature of states has inevitably been one of the richest and most important threads of feminist International Relations, building, to some extent on, and certainly in close relationship to, the insights of feminist political theory.¹⁴

Let us for simplicity's sake take the masculinist nature of states as referring to the historical problem of politics as male-defined and male-dominated,¹⁵ and the problem of masculine subjectivity as a constrained and particularistic articulation of political agency at the individual level. While mainstream International Relations has tended to treat the state largely as a coherent (male-controlled) unit, feminist International Relations has assessed at length the implications of its gendered realities,¹⁶ expressed through the 'public over private' hierarchy (sexual contract) that has traditionally framed politics (and economics) as predominantly public spheres of male influence and identification, and the home, family and social reproduction as predominantly private spheres of female influence and identification.

The history of state formation and identity is therefore one of gendered (and other forms of) oppression. 'As a historical matter, early state formation marked the effective centralization of political authority and accumulation processes, institutionalization of gender and class exploitation, and ideological legitimation of these transformations. At least since Aristotle, the codification of man as "master" [subject] and woman as "matter" [object] has powerfully naturalized/de-politicized man's exploitation of women, other men, and nature.'¹⁷ In its range of critical work on the state, feminist International Relations has, directly and indirectly, accused mainstream International Relations of depoliticizing exploitation by ignoring the relational gender dynamics integral to the political power of states as (masculinist) actors. This work makes it clear that male power can and should be explained, not just taken as given; that the state as a paramount expression of collective and historically and socially constructed male power can and should be explained in dynamic gender terms, not taken as given.

¹⁴ There are far too many works in feminist political theory to cite here. Examples would include Vicky Randall, *Women and politics* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Diana H. Coole, *Women in political theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988); Carole Pateman, *The sexual contract* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988); Anne Phillips, *Engendering democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991); Christine Di Stefano, *Configurations of masculinity: a feminist perspective on modern political theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Kathleen B. Jones, *Compassionate authority: democracy and the representation of women* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁵ One of the earliest feminist works which continues to be relevant is Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the rights of woman* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985; first publ. 1792).

¹⁶ See Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland, eds, *Gender and International Relations* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991); V. Spike Peterson, ed., *Gendered states: (re)visions of International Relations theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992); Gillian Youngs, *International Relations in a global age: a conceptual challenge* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); also Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and nation* (London: Sage, 1997).

¹⁷ Peterson, *Gendered states*, p. 14. See also V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan, *Global gender issues*, 2nd edn (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999).

The implication of such work is that the appearance of coherent masculinist power as evidenced at the collective (state) or individual level is a surface or superficial perspective. Beneath it lies the complex of gendered and other power relations that sustain it and, importantly, *explain* it. Thus, feminist International Relations could be characterized as seeking to explain the fuller dynamics of political and economic power that lie beneath the masculinist surface. A reflection by Steve Smith emphasizes, in this context, the importance of gender as a relational concept: 'The most productive focus is on gender, not women or feminism, because only this focus allows the examination of precisely the construction of identities in IR that shape what happens to actual women and men in IR.'¹⁸ It is essential to add to this that, historically, feminist theory and analysis have been the spheres of critique and knowledge-building that have led the way in championing, explaining and validating attention to gender as a category.

As Charlotte Hooper has usefully summarized: 'One of the achievements of feminist contributions to international relations has been to reveal the extent to which the whole field is gendered. The range of subjects studied, the boundaries of the discipline, its central concerns and motifs, the content of empirical research, the assumptions of theoretical models, and the corresponding lack of female practitioners both in academic and elite political and economic circles all combine and reinforce each other to marginalize and often make invisible women's roles and women's concerns in the international arena.'¹⁹ Hooper highlights here the intimate interconnections between theory and practice in reproducing gendered realities, and thus the role of mainstream International Relations in maintaining what might be viewed as superficial rather than deep assessments of the nature of both states and political agency.

Sovereignty, security and militarism

To elaborate on these points further I want to take three concrete themes in feminist International Relations: sovereignty, security and militarism. All three analytically explore the masculinist interconnections between collective politics (states) and individual political identity/agency.

Sovereignty is a core concept in International Relations because it defines the pre-eminent role of states as political actors, and by implication also defines political identity (citizenship) in state-centred terms, binding 'authentic politics exclusively within territorially-bound communities'.²⁰ For feminist International Relations there are ways in which sovereignty can be regarded as a foundational

¹⁸ Steve Smith, "Unacceptable conclusions" and the "man" question: masculinity, gender and International Relations', in Zalewski and Parpart, *The 'man' question in International Relations*, pp. 54–72 at p. 62.

¹⁹ Hooper, *Manly states*, p. 1.

²⁰ V. Spike Peterson, 'Reframing the politics of identity: democracy, globalisation and gender', *Political Expressions* 1: 1, 1995, pp. 1–16 at p. 4. See also R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/outside: International Relations as political theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Youngs, *International Relations in a global age*; John Hoffman, *Beyond the state: an introductory critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995); Laura Brace and John Hoffman, eds, *Reclaiming sovereignty* (London: Pinter, 1997); John Hoffman, *Gender and sovereignty: feminism, the state and International Relations* (London: Palgrave, 2001).

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problem in the masculinist distortions of the nature of politics and political agency.

Masculinist dominance is institutionalised by the 'sovereignty contract' and the 'sexual contract' of modern European state-making, which is simultaneously—and not coincidentally—the making of rational man, the sovereign subject and political agency. In this historical context, politics—as concept and action—is rendered definitely masculine and political identity is gendered both conceptually (in terms of how we think about political agency, subjectivity and subject-ive relations) and empirically (in terms of how we organise political activities, structures and object-ive relations).²¹

The public over private (male over female) social hierarchy leads to the gendering of political agency and influence in profound ways. This is a problem when we think of internal state politics but it is amplified in international relations, the so-called realm of high politics, where women have had least presence and direct impact. Radical thinkers such as John Hoffman argue for the reconstruction of the political concept of sovereignty as emancipatory, for 'a sovereignty beyond the state'.²² States are an expression of patriarchal power. 'Empirically, states are (mostly) run by men, defended by men and advance the interests of men ... Logically, state sovereignty is gendered by its assertion that leadership is monolithic, hierarchical and violent. These principles are all "masculinist" in character since the idea of concentrating power so that the few rule by force over the many is associated with the domination of men.'²³ Hoffman explores the problematics and complexities of the characteristic of the state as the sole legitimate user of force in the interests of maintaining internal and external order, a legitimacy deriving in the liberal tradition from the social contract.²⁴

This characteristic of the state and issues of violence associated with it is central to the concept of security in International Relations. Feminists have examined extensively the degree to which mainstream concepts of security in the field have been traditionally constrained by masculinist blinkers, failing to take account of security issues women confront daily that are associated with their unequal or oppressed conditions of existence in relation to men, for example domestic violence. They also largely fail to take account of the specific ways in which women and children are affected by war, military occupation, militarization, (forced) migration, human trafficking, sexual and other forms of slavery and (forced) prostitution.²⁵ Carolyn Nordstrum has forcefully explained:

It took years of studying war firsthand for me to learn that children constituted a major percentage of war deaths in the contemporary world. Behind the rhetoric of soldiers

²¹ Peterson, 'Reframing the politics of identity', p. 3.

²² Hoffman, *Gender and sovereignty*, p. 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 83–90.

²⁵ See note 3 above; also Jan Jindy Pettman, *Worlding women: a feminist international politics* (London: Routledge, 1996); Tickner, *Gendering world politics; International Feminist Journal of Politics*, themed issue on 'Gender in conflict and post-conflict societies', 3: 1, 2001.

fighting soldiers that fuels military propaganda and popular accounts of war around the world, children are maimed, tortured, starved, forced to fight, and killed in numbers that rival adult civilian casualties, and *outnumber* those of soldiers ... As a society in general we are taught to 'not-see' many issues surrounding violence and war, especially when it comes to children. If silence is political, not-knowing is at the core of power and its abuses.²⁶

The implication of feminist analysis of such areas is that the mainstream tendency to ignore them is a form of political not-knowing. One of the most powerful, and perhaps controversial, aims of different kinds of feminist analysis in these areas is the opening up of consideration that different kinds of oppression, including in extreme forms as violence, may be interconnected. As Ann Tickner has explained:

Whereas conventional security studies has tended to look at causes and consequences of wars from a top-down, or structural, perspective, feminists have generally taken a bottom-up approach, analyzing the impact of war at the microlevel. By so doing, as well as adopting gender as a category of analysis, feminists believe they can tell us something new about the causes of war that is missing from both conventional and critical perspectives. By crossing what many feminists believe to be mutually constitutive levels of analysis, we get a better understanding of the interrelationship between all forms of violence and the extent to which unjust social relations, including gender hierarchies, contribute to insecurity, broadly defined.²⁷

Feminist International Relations has broadened the definition of security, and gone deep inside state boundaries as well as across them, to get behind the masculinist warrior/protector mythology that tends to depict war and conflict in archetypal (gendered) and frequently nationalistic terms, and to reveal the increasing suffering that women and children have endured through death and injury, rape, displacement and deprivation, as well as the many roles women have forged in peace- and community-building.²⁸ Few have travelled in their analysis as far as Cynthia Enloe, who has assessed such diverse areas as sex tourism, women in the military, military wives, militarized prostitution, domestic service and export processing zones, and always with the multi-level, bottom-up approach that distinguishes feminist work in international politics.²⁹ Enloe has explained how, through her research, she came to learn how deeply women are connected to military systems, even though this may not be readily recognized. The following reflections seem all the more pertinent in the wake of the recent Gulf war and its aftermath.

²⁶ Carolyn Nordstrum, 'Visible wars and invisible girls, shadow industries, and the politics of not-knowing', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1: 1, 1999, pp. 14-33 at pp. 14-15.

²⁷ Tickner, *Gendering world politics*, pp. 48-9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51. See also Cynthia Cockburn and Dubravka Zarkov, eds, *The postwar moment: militarism, masculinities and international peacekeeping* (London: Zed, 2002); Carol Cohn, Helen Kinsella and Sheri Gibbings, 'Women, peace and security: Resolution 1325', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6: 1, 2003.

²⁹ See note 3 above; also Katharine Moon, *Sex among allies: military prostitution in US-Korea relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

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We know how a woman friend struggles with the idea that her son joining the army might get him off drugs or equip him with a marketable skill. Some of us have taken care of men whose minds and bodies have been damaged by military service. A lot of us have lived in towns dependent on a nearby military base or a defense contractor. Some of us have had jobs there. Some of us have been tempted to join the military ourselves in order to delay marriage, to work with other women or to get the kind of job training that is so hard for women to acquire in the civilian sector. Each of these experiences is as valuable for understanding how and why militaries work the way they do as being able to distinguish between a Cruise and Pershing missile. Maybe we can redefine what it means to do 'military research'. Perhaps our new definition will prompt us to listen to more women from more countries tell *their* 'war stories'.³⁰

Enloe has probably done more than most to present an accessible account of gendered militarism and to unpack different facets of the military system at home and abroad, illustrating 'the myth of the dichotomy between "home-front" and "battlefront"'.³¹ It is also clear from the passage just quoted that there are complex approaches in play to men and women, masculine and feminine. There is a depiction of highly varied forms of agency among women as well as detailed explanation of the processes of sexualized and racialized oppression affecting them. Enloe is also among those who have explicitly addressed the ways in which militarism and masculinity are intertwined, linking the collective patriarchal system to individual masculine identities. 'The military plays a special role in the ideological structure of patriarchy because the notion of "combat" plays such a central role in the construction of concepts of "manhood" and justifications of the superiority of maleness in the social order.'³²

Recent debates have also focused on 'hegemonic masculinity', conveying the sense of dominant forms of masculinity among other, contested forms.³³ This is an important development because it facilitates exploration of power dynamics among men as well as between men and women. It allows for socio-economic, racial and other inequalities among men, recognizing overtly that 'men' are not a homogenous group but a highly diversified collection of different identities and power positions. Charlotte Hooper explains that the 'bourgeois-rationalist' model of masculinity tends to be 'less aggressive, more egalitarian and democratic' than the 'heroic warrior-citizen' model, which is oriented towards conquest of women, and the 'patriarchal' model, which 'ignores women'. The bourgeois-rationalist model, as the rational-actor model, appears as 'the most ubiquitous characterization of human action in contemporary IR'.³⁴ Hooper's assessment of *The Economist* is fascinating reading for sensing some

³⁰ Enloe, *Does khaki become you?*, pp. xxxix–xl.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13. See also 'Carol Cohn discusses *Saving Private Ryan* with Cynthia Weber', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1: 3, 1999, pp. 460–75.

³³ See R. W. Connell, *Gender and power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) and *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995); Hooper, *Manly states*; L. H. M. Ling, *Postcolonial international relations: conquest and desire between Asia and the West* (London: Palgrave, 2001).

³⁴ Hooper, *Manly states*, p. 98.

degree of fluidity across these different models. ‘The house style of *The Economist* ... manages to embody several forms of hegemonic masculinity in a powerful, if incongruent synthesis; bold, brash and aggressive, on the one hand, and measured, rational, and logical on the other, with imperial overtones thrown in for good measure, suggesting superior brawn, brain and class combined.’³⁵

Globalization and gender

Bourgeois-rational masculinity has apparently come into its own in the age of runaway capitalist globalization, with its intensifying financial and communications hypermedia linkages; but, as Hooper points out, ‘Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity’ is a ‘shifting’ hybrid of elements of the three ‘ideal types’ of masculinity.³⁶ Masculinity is no more monolithic than femininity. Both have myriad facets and many different combinations of characteristics, and manifest differently across individuals, structures and situations. The study of globalization and gender has highlighted diverse ways in which global restructuring impacts on inequalities among men and among women, as well as between men and women, in developed as well as developing economies. Key areas covered include the transnationalization of production; the feminization of labour; restructuring in postsocialist societies; growth in services, including domestic and sexualized work; migration, including that of qualified workers to take strategic jobs (e.g. in the medical profession) or more menial work that is nevertheless more highly paid than what they can do at home; human trafficking, including enforced prostitution; women and development; the decline of the welfare state and its impact on women; and women’s rights as human rights.³⁷

One of the most powerful thematic strands in a significant proportion of this analysis of globalization is the agency of women, whatever their circumstances: their leadership roles and participation in different aspects of activism and social movements, including global women’s movements; their innovative use of information and communications technologies to build more powerful and

³⁵ Ibid., p. 136.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 221. See also Kimberly A. Chang and L. H. M. Ling, ‘Globalization and its intimate other: Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong’, in Marianne Marchand and Anne Sisson Runyan, eds, *Gender and global restructuring: sightings, sites and resistances* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 27–43.

³⁷ There is a long list of works that could be cited here. They include Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper, eds, *Women’s rights, human rights: international feminist perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1995); Pettman, *Worlding women*; Marchand and Runyan, *Gender and global restructuring*; Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti, eds, *Thinking differently: a reader in European women’s studies* (London: Zed, 2002); Susanne Thorbek and Bandana Pattanaik, eds, *Transnational prostitution: changing patterns in a global context* (London: Zed, 2002); Shirin M. Rai, *Gender and the political economy of development: from nationalism to globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Kum-Kum Bhavnani, John Foran and Priya Kurian, eds, *Feminist futures: re-imagining women, culture and development* (London: Zed, 2003); Eleonore Kofman and Gillian Youngs, eds, *Globalization: theory and practice*, 2nd edn (London: Continuum, 2003); V. Spike Peterson, *A critical rewriting of global political economy: integrating reproductive, productive and virtual economies* (London: Routledge, 2003); Jacqui True, *Gender, globalization and postsocialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). See also *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, anniversary special issue on ‘Gendering “the international”’, 27: 4, 1998; *Feminist Economics*, special issue on globalization, 6: 3, 2000; *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, special issue on globalization, 26: 4, 2001; *Feminist Review*, special issue on globalization, 70: 1, 2002.

effective political networks; their work in democratization and in reconciliation and peacebuilding processes.³⁸ Feminist work on globalization focuses strongly on local/global dynamics and connections and, importantly, on the diverse and engaged roles and agency of women in negotiating them. In so doing it fulfils three major functions, offering fresh insights into the theory of globalization, putting on record the gender dynamics of globalization (including different processes that empower and marginalize women) and emphasizing the variety of women's lives, identities and strategies.³⁹

Thoughts to take 'us' forward

In closing it is usually necessary to go back to the beginning. I want to focus on the questions posed in my title: 'Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms? Or: why women and gender are essential to understanding the world "we" live in'. My discussion has been intended to illustrate both reasons why feminist International Relations, from mainstream perspectives, tends to be viewed as a contradiction in terms, and reasons why this is an ontologically and epistemologically narrow and superficial judgement. I have stressed that International Relations as a field of study focuses on power, and that mainstream perspectives, in failing to take detailed account of gender, offer a partial account of power that remains largely on the surface of an assumed, rather than fully interrogated, predominantly male-constructed reality.

I have argued that feminist International Relations calls for ontological revisionism. This brings into view the deeper gendered reality of international politics and economics, and explores the complex of inequalities operating within and across genders. It concerns the relationships between power, identities, institutions and discourses (in the theoretical and practical realms). I have illustrated how feminist International Relations argues that women and gender are essential to understanding the world 'we' live in. I have illustrated how feminist and mainstream International Relations are working with many similar core concepts and issues. This could be a basis for much more collaboration and exchange between them. We need to think of ways in which diverse fora, such as policy and academic meetings, conferences and research initiatives, can be constructed to *enable* such collaboration and exchange. It will not just happen, and clearly it will require new kinds of shared commitment, imagination and energy. Shared understandings are clearly missing at this point and will have to be worked for on both sides.

³⁸ See e.g. Cynthia Cockburn, *The space between us: negotiating gender and national identities in conflict* (London: Zed, 1998); Wendy Harcourt, ed., *Women@Internet* (London: Zed, 1999); Catherine Eschle, *Global democracy, social movements and feminism* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001); Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai, eds, *Women's activism and globalization: linking local struggles and transnational politics* (London: Routledge, 2002).

³⁹ See the nuanced arguments in Jane L. Parpart, Shirin M. Rai and Kathleen Staudt, eds, *Rethinking empowerment: gender and development in a global/local world* (London: Routledge, 2002). See also Vivienne Jabri and Eleanor O'Gorman, eds, *Women, culture and International Relations*: Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

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