

ТМ	Г. XXXIII	Бр. 4	Стр. 1435-1452	Ниш	октобар - децембар	2009.
----	-----------	-------	----------------	-----	--------------------	-------

UDK 327:141.72

Прегледни рад

Примљено: 6.9.2009.

Scott Nicholas Romaniuk  
Institute of European, Russian and  
Eurasian Studies  
Ottawa (Canada)

## ENGAGING GENDER (IN)SECURITY

### Summary

Despite the proliferation of diverse feminist scholarship in the field of international relations (IR) theory over the past two decades, this body of work has been marginalized in the discipline. Consequently, a key contribution of feminist literature, the introduction of gender in the study of international relations and its focus on the gendered nature of other IR theories is overlooked. This article is a contribution to the ongoing debate on gender in the context of international relations and security studies. It presents the argument that while the feminist literature has presciently critiqued the realist conception of security and advocated for a multi-dimensional and multi-level re-definition of security, solutions proffered to achieve this more encompassing security inadvertently risk reifying gender as innate rather than constructed and, as a result, have yet to achieve their desired ends. Even though a push for increased participation in the relevant decision-making spheres is accompanied by attempts to alter the present discourse by emphasizing various “devalued feminine principles,” if these are being pushed solely by women, it will have little effect. Accordingly, an alternative is proposed in this essay that advocates focusing efforts to include more male participants in the discourse and a further emphasizing of male insecurities, as well as female insecurities, to help “denaturalize and dismantle” gendered hierarchies to contribute to greater security.

**Key Words:** Feminist scholarship, discourse, international relations, gendered hierarchies, security, constructed

*Gender perspectives not only allow for articulations of security needs by individuals, but illustrate the ways in which these security needs transcend some of the traditional barriers we have placed between individuals on the basis of north/south or secure/insecure divisions.<sup>1</sup>*

Gunhild Hoodensen and Svein Vigeland  
Rottem University of Tromsø, Norway, 2004

### *Introduction*

Despite the proliferation of diverse feminist scholarship in the field of international relations (IR) theory over the past two decades,<sup>2</sup> this body of work has been marginalized in the discipline.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, a key contribution of feminist literature, the introduction of gender<sup>4</sup> in the study of international relations and its focus on the gendered nature of other IR theories is overlooked.<sup>5</sup> Feminists argue that the neglect of gender by other IR theories, specifically realism and its variants, results in a narrow conception of security and does not account for the changing realities in international affairs.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, emphasis has been shifting in the literature from an exclusive focus on national security to a broadening of the concept to encompass

---

<sup>1</sup> Gunhild Hoogensen and Svein Vigeland Rottem. "Gender Identity and the Subject of Security," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 2, (June 2004), 168.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Jones, "Does 'Gender' Make the World Go Round? Feminist Critiques of International Relations," *Review of International Studies*, No. 22 (1996), 405-406. It is acknowledged here that "there is no one feminism." Heidi Hudson, "'Doing' Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 48. While it may be inferred that this paper's use of the general term feminism implies a unified body of thought, a qualified "many" or "much of" is intended each time the term is used. J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 48.

<sup>3</sup> Jill Steans, "Engaging from the Margins: Feminist Encounters with the 'Mainstream' of International Relations," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (August 2003), 430.

<sup>4</sup> It is argued here and elsewhere that while sex is biological, gender is a social construction whereby certain traits are ascribed to the male sex and the female sex resulting in notions of what constitutes the "masculine" and the "feminine" respectively. Francine D'Amico and Peter R. Beckman, "Introduction," in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D'Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Jones, "Does 'Gender' Make the World Go Round? Feminist Critiques of International Relations," *Review of International Studies*, No. 22 (1996), 405-406. It is acknowledged here that "there is no one feminism."

<sup>6</sup> Tickner, *Gendering World Politics*, 406.

human security.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, it has been argued that this new focus often, as well, neglects the dynamic of gender in its analysis.<sup>8</sup>

Feminists also argue that failing to understand the role of gender in international relations perpetuates gendered hierarchies that value the masculine over the feminine to the detriment of “women’s (and certain men’s) real security.”<sup>9</sup> It is argued in this essay that while feminist literature has presciently critiqued the realist conception of security and advocated for a multi-dimensional and multi-level re-definition of security, solutions proffered to achieve this more encompassing security inadvertently risk reifying gender as innate rather than constructed and, as a result, have yet to achieve their desired ends.<sup>10</sup> An alternative is proposed that advocates focusing efforts to include more male participants in the discourse and further emphasizing male insecurities, as well as female insecurities, to help “denaturalize and dismantle” gendered hierarchies to contribute to greater security for all.<sup>11</sup>

### *‘Gender-ing’ the Security Dialogue*

The term security, in and of itself, is a highly contested concept, subject to a myriad of definitions.<sup>12</sup> Security, to scholars, “conveys urgency [and] demands public attention.”<sup>13</sup> While there is no single precise definition, traditional conceptions envision the state as guarantor of the security of its citizens from the threats of other states.<sup>14</sup> This thinking is

---

<sup>7</sup> Gunhild Hoogensen and Svein Vigeland Rottem, “Gender Identity and the Subject of Security,” *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 2 (June 2004), 156.

<sup>8</sup> Heidi Hudson, “‘Doing’ Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 156.

<sup>9</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 62.

<sup>10</sup> J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 624.

<sup>11</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 62.

<sup>12</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003), 1289.

<sup>13</sup> Roland Paris, “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” in *Global Politics in a Changing World: A Reader* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Richard W. Mansbach and Edward Rhodes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 258.

<sup>14</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003), 1289.

held by the proponents of realism, “the dominant theoretical tradition” in international relations theory.<sup>15</sup>

For realists, sovereign, self-interested states are the primary actors in an anarchical international environment.<sup>16</sup> All states engage in power-maximizing activities to achieve their desired ends.<sup>17</sup> This pursuit of power becomes problematic in an arena absent of order. War is an ever imminent possibility “because there is nothing to prevent [it].”<sup>18</sup> Given the realities of state behaviour and the anarchical nature of the international arena, states must “rely on *self-help* for protection.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, for the realists, the security of the state is tied to its military and its preparedness to fight wars.<sup>20</sup> However, increasing military expenditures or enhancing readiness may provoke suspicion on the part of another state. Concern could arise that a state’s expanding army may be for offensive rather than defensive purposes and it in turn may seek to increase its capabilities, setting off further action by the initial state.<sup>21</sup> This represents a “security dilemma” for realists, though does not necessarily entail “continual war” as states will engage in a variety of behaviours to manage the threats posed by other power-seeking states.<sup>22</sup> If one state is perceived as becoming too powerful, other states may ally to counterbalance the increased power of the former state in order to ensure their security.<sup>23</sup> Thus, war is constrained though always possible. As such, realists believe that security can never be fully assured.<sup>24</sup>

Though realism has been a long-standing theory of international relations, its views do not reflect the changing reality of the international

---

<sup>15</sup> Peter R. Beckman, “Realism, Women, and World Politics,” in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D’Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 16.

<sup>16</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 38.

<sup>17</sup> Brian C. Schmidt, “Competing Realist Conceptions of Power,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2005), 527.

<sup>18</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 39.

<sup>19</sup> Peter R. Beckman, “Realism, Women, and World Politics,” in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D’Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 19.

<sup>20</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 32.

<sup>21</sup> Peter R. Beckman, “Realism, Women, and World Politics,” in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D’Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 29.

system. Even though states still predominate, the vast majority of wars are no longer inter-state but rather intra-state.<sup>25</sup> The number of wars that occur between states has declined rapidly for the past two decades, a trend that persists to date.<sup>26</sup> This marked decline in inter-state war saw a rapid increase in intra-state conflict during the waning years of the Cold War.<sup>27</sup> Even though the number of civil wars has since started to decrease, these still outnumber the amount of inter-state wars that have occurred in recent history.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the nature of war has been changing such that it is currently characterized not by the struggles of two contending state armies but rather by various factions who, in fighting, “frequently target civilians.”<sup>29</sup> For this reason, among others, realists’ adherence to national security has come increasingly under attack by a diverse range of theorists.<sup>30</sup> Feminist scholars of international relations have observed these trends and have argued that “new threats to security demand new solutions quite at odds with the power politics prescriptions of traditional international relations theory.”<sup>31</sup> These assertions are supported by the conclusions of others who argue that inter-state war is likely to remain a rare phenomenon.<sup>32</sup>

Realism continues to maintain its narrow conception of security, as its “state-centric, militaristic” definition of security emanates from a masculine bias inherent in the theory.<sup>33</sup> Feminist scholars have argued co-

---

<sup>25</sup> Human Security Centre, “Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” The University of British Columbia, <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=63> (accessed July 18, 2009), 149-150.

<sup>26</sup> Human Security Centre, 148. John Mueller further observes that “there have been remarkably few international wars of any sort since World War II.” John Mueller, “Accounting for the Waning of Major Power War,” in *The Waning of Major War: Theories and Debates*, ed. Raimo Vayrynen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 64.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 34

<sup>30</sup> Gunhild Hoogensen and Svein Vigeland Rottm. “Gender Identity and the Subject of Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No.2, (June 2004), 155. J. Ann Tickner observes that a myriad of scholars have sought to broaden the concept of security to include “economic and environmental as well as political/military” issues since the 1980s. J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 624.

<sup>31</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 20.

<sup>32</sup> Human Security Centre, “Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” The University of British Columbia, <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=63> (accessed July 18, 2009), 155.

<sup>33</sup> Gunhild Hoogensen and Svein Vigeland Rottm. “Gender Identity and the Subject of Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No.2, (June 2004), 159. It should be noted

gently that the gendered nature of the theory prevents it from viewing the whole picture with respect to security, seeing only “a partial view of reality.”<sup>34</sup> Feminists have observed that men have long been ascribed certain characteristics such as “[s]trength, power, autonomy, independence and rationality.”<sup>35</sup> For these reasons, men have been seen as rightfully operating in the public domain while women have been relegated to the private, because they are seen as weak, peaceful, cooperative and reliant on others for protection. The feminine, in these socially constructed gendered binaries, becomes the devalued other, needing protection.<sup>36</sup> Feminists argue that from these social constructions, the hegemonic masculinity outlined above is “projected [by realists] onto the behaviour of states whose success as international actors is measured in terms of their power capabilities and capacity for self-help and autonomy.”<sup>37</sup> The realist bases their view of the state and behaviour in the international system on “the behaviour of men in positions of public power.”<sup>38</sup> The state is viewed as aggressive, as males are viewed as aggressive. Indeed, for realists, this masculine trait is necessary in an anarchic international system where states are struggling for power. If a state were not aggressive, if it was unable to rely on its own capabilities, it could be seen as weak and dominated by other states. Thus, for realists, while aggressiveness is frowned upon in the private sphere where the state maintains order and which it protects, this trait is encouraged in the public sphere.<sup>39</sup> As feminists note, the equation of males/masculinity with aggressiveness precludes any role for females in decision-making processes pertaining to national security.<sup>40</sup> It also proscribes certain activities for women such as war-fighting that are viewed as masculine. Soldiering is the preserve of males who must protect their female compatriots. The state must be prepared for war to guarantee the security of its own. For realists, “survival in a violence-prone

---

that realism is blind to this fact, believing gender to be “*irrelevant* to world politics.” Peter R. Beckman, “Realism, Women, and World Politics,” in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D’Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 22.

<sup>34</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 30.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Heidi Hudson, “‘Doing’ Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 156.

<sup>37</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003), 1290.

international system “requires” war-capable states peopled by heroic masculine ... warriors.”<sup>41</sup>

By bringing in gender, feminists have exposed realist conceptions of security as based on a hegemonic masculinity and are not reflective of the full reality of human experience.<sup>42</sup> Resultantly, they circumscribe a myriad of possibilities that would engender greater security.<sup>43</sup> Through the incorporation of the experience of women, feminists show that there is room for both “competition *and* cooperation,” for aggressiveness *and* passiveness.<sup>44</sup> However, this is not because women have certain innate feminine characteristics that differentiate them from men. Gender is indeed malleable.<sup>45</sup> Rather, women have been ascribed characteristics that can exist in both sexes, much like men have been ascribed traits that can be held by both males and females. For example, the current construction of the male as protector and the woman as dependent can be either reversed or abolished outright. Indeed, this binary “has been an important motivator for the recruitment of military forces and support for war.”<sup>46</sup> Understanding the constructed nature of gender and its instrumental use, feminists argue that war is also a social construction and “not inevitable as realists suggest.”<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, feminists question the anarchy/order distinction held by realism demonstrating how its state-centric emphasis “[misses] the interrelation of insecurity across levels of analysis.”<sup>48</sup> Quite simply, this is because realism is unaware of how its theory is based on gendered binaries of domination and subordination which threaten women’s security. Despite the alleged ordered nature of the state, individuals and women in particular, are threatened within this environment. Women are often the targets of rape and domestic assault.<sup>49</sup> This violence stems from “a gen-

---

<sup>41</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 50.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>44</sup> Peter R. Beckman, “Realism, Women, and World Politics,” in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D’Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Heidi Hudson, “‘Doing’ Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 156.

<sup>46</sup> Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand,” 627.

<sup>47</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 51.

<sup>48</sup> J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 625.

<sup>49</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 56-57.

dered society in which male power dominates at all levels.”<sup>50</sup> This includes the state level, where women are also ostensibly protected. Feminist theorists have attempted to elucidate how states have not been adequate security providers by “[focusing] on the consequences of what happens during wars rather than on their causes.”<sup>51</sup> Women have been the primary targets of wartime sexual violence.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, women have increasingly been casualties in war though they are overwhelmingly civilians and have often born the brunt of “economic sanctions associated with military conflict.”<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, feminists argue that the exclusively military focus of security by realists misses various other dimensions where women are rendered insecure due to unequal gender relations. Women are disadvantaged economically, whether as a result of “the gendered division of labour” or “the discounting of work in the home.”<sup>54</sup> Environmental degradation is also a source of insecurity for many women around the world.<sup>55</sup>

Thereby, feminists advocate a move past the state-level militaristic conception of national security held by realists to a multilevel, multidimensional security that focuses on “mutual enablement rather than domination.”<sup>56</sup> As Heidi Hudson has argued, such a redefinition of security where “the survival of one depends on the well-being of the other; would not only enhance women’s security but that of men, who are similarly threatened by the conventional gendered approach to security.”<sup>57</sup> In so doing, feminists have sought to reveal and dismantle the gendered hierarchies that place the masculine over the feminine and value traits such as conflict and autonomy over cooperation and interdependence. For these scholars, “a truly comprehensive security cannot be achieved until gender relations of domination and subordination are eliminated.”<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>51</sup> J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 625.

<sup>52</sup> Miranda Alison, “Wartime Sexual Violence: Women’s Human Rights and Questions of Masculinity,” *Review of International Studies*, No. 33 (2007), 75-90.

<sup>53</sup> J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 625.

<sup>54</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003), 1298.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 65.

<sup>57</sup> Heidi Hudson, “‘Doing’ Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 156.

<sup>58</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 23.



There has been a marked absence of realist rejoinder to these feminist critiques. When forthcoming, responses have been dismissive, asking “[what] ...this talk [has] to do with solving “real-world” problems such as Bosnia, Northern Ireland or nuclear proliferation?”<sup>59</sup> Feminists would argue that being cognizant of the role of gender in international affairs allows one to see how national security is based on gendered assumptions and how those in decision-making positions of the state are predominantly male. The discourse surrounding national security issues is thus structured to favour the masculine. Resultantly, when dealing with the aforementioned problems, “[t]he impact of gender discourse is that some things get left out.”<sup>60</sup> Policy alternatives may never be voiced for fear that they will be seen as weak, as feminine. The nature of a gendered discourse that privileges the masculine over the feminine delimits what is acceptable and what is not and thus can perpetuate insecurity rather than allowing for the airing of diverse viewpoints which may represent the best approach for the policymakers concerned.<sup>61</sup>

While most engagement with feminist scholars has been selective and limited, Francis Fukuyama, in an article for *Foreign Affairs*, articulated what most closely approximates a realist rebuttal.<sup>62</sup> He asserted that gender differences are not socially constructed but rather biologically rooted.<sup>63</sup> For Fukuyama, the male is naturally violent and aggressive.<sup>64</sup> The female, following the traditional binaries, is less violent, less aggressive. Noting the increased participation of women in the public realm of democratic countries, Fukuyama argued that these countries have resultantly become more “feminized.”<sup>65</sup> He problematizes this trend noting that it engenders a security threat as “[i]n anything but a totally feminized world, feminized politics could be a liability.”<sup>66</sup> For Fukuyama, noting global demographic changes, a greying Western population that will arguably produce more female leaders, will encounter the rest of the world which will not only remain more youthful but be “led mostly by younger men.”<sup>67</sup> This will pose significant challenges to the western world as for

---

<sup>59</sup> J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 612.

<sup>60</sup> Carol Cohn, “Wars, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War,” in *Gendering War Talk*, eds. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 231.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>62</sup> Scholars have noted how Fukuyama’s argument rests on “realist assumptions.” Blanchard, 1303.

<sup>63</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Women and the Evolution of World Politics,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (September/October 1998), 30.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

Fukuyama, states are still driven by power-maximizing states in an anarchical environment and anything other than building the necessary capabilities to repel enemies runs the risks of war and domination. Thus, what is needed in this world is not feminized politics but masculine policies.<sup>68</sup> Fukuyama's argument is similar in some respects to Robert Keohane's musing that "[p]erhaps states with less gender hierarchy could resolve conflict more easily; but it is also possible that they would be more easily bullied."<sup>69</sup>

Francis Fukuyama's argument is flawed in two respects. First, it mistakenly designates the gender binaries as biologically rooted rather than socially constructed. If it were in fact the former rather than the latter, one "would expect a clear distinction between men and women, with relatively little variation within one sex."<sup>70</sup> However, there is incredible variation intra-sex. There are pacific women agitating for the abolition of war just as there are female agents of political violence.<sup>71</sup> The same is true for men. Militaristic and anti-militaristic males have served as political leaders.<sup>72</sup>

Secondly, even if the United States of America theoretically becomes more egalitarian, this does not mean that it will be bullied by a China where gender relations remain unequal. As noted previously, there is a capacity for cooperation and conflict that is inherent in both sexes. It is only when one assumes that traits such as aggressiveness are genetically rooted rather than socially constructed that such a scenario may be plausible.

### *Engendered (In)Security*

The feminist critique of realism exposes a conception of security defined narrowly in national terms, ignoring the security needs of the individual. Other scholars of international relations have also found the re-

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Keohane, "Beyond Dichotomy: Conversations Between International Relations and Feminist Theory," *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 42 (1998), 197.

<sup>70</sup> Peter R. Beckman, "Realism, Women, and World Politics," in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D'Amico (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Miranda Alison, "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (December 2004), 447-463. In a direct response to Francis Fukuyama, Barbara Ehrenreich took issue with the author's claims that violence and aggressiveness are inherent in one sex observing that women have long been warriors, dating back to the second millennium B.C. Barbara Ehrenreich, "Men Hate War Too," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 1 (January/February 1999): 119.

<sup>72</sup> Ehrenreich, "Men Hate War Too," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 1 (January/February 1999): 121.

alist's definition increasingly problematic in a rapidly changing global environment and have increasingly promoted human security, a concept designed to "encourage policymakers and scholars to think about international security as something more than the military defense of state interests."<sup>73</sup> While precisely what is encompassed by the concept of human security is subject to debate, there is general concurrence that this broader definition of security, while not exclusively moving away from the security interests of the state, places individual security interests more front and centre.<sup>74</sup>

As a relatively new concept, it is widely used to describe the complexity of interrelated threats associated with civil war, genocide, and the displacement of populations. The primary reason for the construction of a new approach to security centres on the fact that the analytic frameworks that have traditionally be employed to explain war and violent conflict between nation-states have simply grown out of place when addressing violent conflicts that take place within nation-states. Since both concepts intersect in many ways, human security and national security should be—and often are—mutually reinforcing. However, as the degree of security for a state increases, the security for its people does not necessarily follow suit. The Human Security Report for 2005 asserts that "protecting citizens from foreign attack may be a necessary condition for the security of individuals, but it is certainly not a sufficient one."

For scholars of the respective disciplines, this re-definition is sorely needed given that the traditional definition does not address a myriad of insecurities. J. Ann Tickner has argued that this broadening of the definition of security is "more compatible with most contemporary feminist scholarship" than the traditional definition espoused by realism.<sup>75</sup> However, even though the redefining of security has been more in line with the multidimensional, multilevel security advocated by feminist scholars, the human security approach often neglects gender and how it factors in to security issues.<sup>76</sup> An understanding of gender is crucial to any analysis in international affairs as it is "[g]ender [that] decides who

---

<sup>73</sup> Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" in *Global Politics in a Changing World: A Reader* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Richard W. Mansbach and Edward Rhodes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 253.

<sup>74</sup> Heidi Hudson, "'Doing' Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 163.

<sup>75</sup> J. Ann Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists," *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997), 624.

<sup>76</sup> Heidi Hudson, "'Doing' Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005), 157.

goes to war and who does not; who is a victim and who is not; and who is legitimate within the security discipline and who is not.”<sup>77</sup>

While the human security approach has sought to focus on and foster security for individuals, its tendency to overlook gender results in an approach that addresses the security needs of some individuals and not others. Proponents of human security have focused on the plight of child soldiers conscripted by various groups to fight in a myriad of conflicts. However, the long-standing assumption of those concerned with the welfare of child soldiers has been that these children are exclusively male.<sup>78</sup> It is a gendered assumption that is predicated on the belief that males are the aggressive, violent sex. For some, it is difficult to envision female fighters even though research has demonstrated that females may comprise an estimated 30% of child soldiers across the globe.<sup>79</sup> As such, programming directed towards the needs of these children has been gendered and has not addressed the specific needs of female child soldiers. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs to help child soldiers have failed to recognize that not all female child soldiers were combatants.<sup>80</sup> Some were conscripted for “forced labour or sex” and as such, these programs, which “often required the surrender of a weapon” for entrance in the program, excluded many female child soldiers from receiving care.<sup>81</sup>

The human security approach, when it does acknowledge gender, often reifies existing constructions through various practices which perpetuate “a highly gendered understanding of who is to be secured.”<sup>82</sup> R. Charli Carpenter has argued that programs addressing gender-based violence have portrayed women and children as those necessitating protection, whereby the vulnerabilities of men are ignored even though they are often specifically targeted in war on the basis of their gender.<sup>83</sup> Men are often massacred by opposing enemy forces for fear they could be possible combatants and boys are targeted as they represent future generations of soldiers.<sup>84</sup> It is the gendered understanding of soldiers committing these crimes that it is men that will be violent and not women and this is entrenched when programs which are designed to help civilians in wartime

---

<sup>77</sup> Gunhild Hoogensen and Kirsti Stuvoy, “Gender, Resistance and Human Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (June 2006), 212.

<sup>78</sup> Mary-Jane Fox, “Girl Soldiers: Human Security and Gendered Insecurity,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (December 2004), 465.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 473.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> R. Charli Carpenter, “Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (March 2006), 85.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

present civilian victims as women and children and overlook the insecurities of civilian men.<sup>85</sup> While the human security approach is beneficial through its broadening of security, the feminist perspective, through its analysis of the role of gender on security, allows for a more comprehensive approach to security for all individuals, rather than a select few.<sup>86</sup>

Though feminist scholarship has offered a compelling critique of current conceptions of security, solutions proffered to achieve “a nongendered perspective” are insufficient and risk reifying the social constructions of masculine and feminine as innate to the respective sexes, rather than denaturalizing them.<sup>87</sup> Feminist writing has posited two solutions to move past the current paradigm. Firstly, feminists have argued that it is important to change the discourse on security by exposing the inequalities and problematizing the construction of gender. Secondly and concomitantly, many feminists have advocated the increased representation of women in decision-making structures. For some scholars, “no fundamental change in the hierarchy of the sexes is likely to take place until women occupy half, or nearly half, the positions at all levels of foreign and military policy-making.”<sup>88</sup> Additionally, it is advocated that women should be involved in the decision-making process at all levels, in all spheres including the economic realm.<sup>89</sup> Women, for reasons described above, have been traditionally excluded from these positions and even in key positions in international organizations.<sup>90</sup> However, feminists point to the need for women to be involved beyond the local.

While both of these are laudable and arguably necessary, the latter carries an inadvertent risk that gender will be essentialized and that the present hierarchy of the sexes will remain entrenched. As Christine Chinkin has observed, women who obtain positions in decision-making institutions nationally and internationally are often relegated to “women’s issues” rather than being included in bodies that deal particularly with issues of security.<sup>91</sup> For example, in Canada, elected women may be slotted

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>86</sup> Gunhild Hoogensen and Kirsti Stuvoy, “Gender, Resistance and Human Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (June 2006), 209.

<sup>87</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 127.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>89</sup> Betty Reardon, *Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 20.

<sup>90</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 42.

<sup>91</sup> Christine Chinkin, “Gender and International Society: Law and Policy,” in *New Millennium, New Perspectives: The United Nations, Security, and Governance*, eds. Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000), 244.

for portfolios in Cabinet other than the key positions that pertain to foreign and policy-making. These may be predominantly assigned to their male colleagues. Additionally, even if women obtain key foreign affairs or defence posts, these women will be placed in a double-bind. If they advocate what have been traditionally structured as masculine positions, this will be viewed as acceptable, but these women will be viewed as anomalies. Being seen as an aggressive negotiator is an unfeminine image. Conversely, women who espouse positions that are structured as feminine will reinforce present beliefs that gender is innate rather than constructed. Given this, it is difficult to see how including more women in the key decision-making processes will result in a denaturalizing and dismantling of existing gendered hierarchies.

Even though a push for increased participation in the relevant decision-making spheres is accompanied by attempts to alter the present discourse by emphasizing various “devalued feminine principles,” if these are being pushed solely by women, it will have little effect.<sup>92</sup> While it is not disputed that these “could play an important role in building alternative modalities of behaviour” it is argued here that the entrenched structures will continue to devalue these principles even if espoused by women in positions of power.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, it will continue to reinforce unwanted gender essentialisms. Various scholars, in an effort to problematize essentialist notions of the female as peaceful, have published accounts of women long-engaged in various forms of violence.<sup>94</sup> However, this approach has been to little avail as the stereotype of women as peaceful continues to pervade despite all evidence to the contrary.<sup>95</sup>

Feminists have and continue to face immense challenges in attempting to dislodge the gendered hierarchies which produce insecurity. The theory is still marginalized in the field of international relations, more than two decades since it came to the fore. The discourse in international relations and in security studies is still gendered, despite a broadening of the definition of security beyond the state. Indeed, almost a decade after the publication of her groundbreaking *Gender in International Relations*, J. Ann Tickner noted that women still have not achieved a high level of participation in intergovernmental organizations and substantial

---

<sup>92</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003), 1298.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> See, Miranda Alison, “Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (December 2004), 447-463.

<sup>95</sup> Marysia Zalewski, “Well, What is the Feminist Perspective on Bosnia?” *International Affairs*, No. 71 (1995), 348.

barriers still exist for women seeking formal political office.<sup>96</sup> The solutions posited do not seem to have had any discernible effect.

### *Summary and Concluding Remarks*

There is no simple solution that will result in the dismantling of gendered hierarchies and the engendering of greater security. Nevertheless, it is suggested here that the aforementioned solutions be coupled with a greater emphasis than has been provided on emphasizing male insecurities and encouraging males to be greater participants in eliminating gender inequalities. It is not enough for women to be the core of the solution. As Carol Cohn has noted, in order “to develop, explore, rethink, and revalue those ways of thinking that get silenced and devalued ... men, too, [will] have to be central participants.”<sup>97</sup> Men will need to voice ideas and values designated feminine in the decision-making rooms where the discourse has been structured masculine. Men will need to voice women’s security concerns. Women will need to be in this room as well. It is both sexes, in offering ideas and making statements viewed as traditionally feminine, and also those seen as masculine, that will denaturalize these social constructions and allow for the elimination of gender inequalities that at present, predominantly threaten the security of women. It is difficult to propose concrete measures to secure increased male participation. However, it is argued here, that this represents a better way forward than traditional suggestions which rested on increased female participation in the realms of foreign and military policy-making.

Feminists need to shed light on male insecurities as much as female insecurities. Indeed, feminist scholarship has already engaged in this practice. Miranda Alison in a recently published article on wartime sexual violence illustrated the gendered nature of this violence and how not only women, but men were rendered insecure. Accounting for male victims challenges the dominant discourse that it is only women who need protection and that all men are protectors.<sup>98</sup> As noted above, R. Charli Carpenter has also demonstrated how men’s security is threatened by gendered assumptions that all males are aggressive. By focusing on these victims, this can further denaturalize beliefs that it is only females that need protection and allow for the development of a broader security.

---

<sup>96</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 110.

<sup>97</sup> Carol Cohn, “Wars, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War,” in *Gendering War Talk*, eds. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 239.

<sup>98</sup> Miranda Alison, “Wartime Sexual Violence: Women’s Human Rights and Questions of Masculinity,” *Review of International Studies*, No. 33 (2007) 84.

Further scholarly work in the same vein is needed. Though some have noted that an emphasis on the insecurities of men may hide the fact that existing hierarchies predominantly threaten women's security, it has been argued that the alternative, seeing "the oppressive position of masculinity as inevitable and immutable, makes continued research in this direction seem worth the risk."<sup>99</sup>

Feminist research in international relations has helped expose the gendered nature of realist theory and its detrimental affect on the security of individuals, particularly women. This perspective has also shown how human security approaches often overlook gender and thus, fail to offer programs which engender security for the entire population. While feminist theorists have correctly pointed the way forward, the solutions proffered in the literature have yet to achieve desired ends. The difficulty encountered in denaturalizing the current construction of gender illustrates the deeply entrenched nature of this concept. However, as feminists have noted, not problematizing gender will only perpetuate an environment in which women's security is threatened.

### *References*

- Alison, Miranda. "Wartime Sexual Violence: Women's Human Rights and Questions of Masculinity." *Review of International Studies*, No. 33 (2007): 75-90.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security." *Security Dialogue*, No. 35 (December 2004): 447-463.
- Beckman, Peter R. "Realism, Women, and World Politics." in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D'Amico, 15-27. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994.
- Blanchard, Eric M. "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003): 1289-1312.
- Carpenter, R. Charli. "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (March 2006): 83-103.
- Chinkin, Christine. "Gender and International Society: Law and Policy." in *New Millennium, New Perspectives: The United Nations, Security, and Governance*, eds. Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman, 242-260. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000.
- Cohn, Carol. "Wars, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War." in *Gendering War Talk*, eds. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott, 227-246. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- D'Amico, Francine and Peter R. Beckman. "Introduction." in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, eds. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D'Amico, 1-11. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994.

---

<sup>99</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2003), 1305.



- Ehrenreich, Barbara. "Men Hate War Too." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (January/February 1999): 118-122.
- Fox, Mary-Jane. "Girl Soldiers: Human Security and Gendered Insecurity." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (December 2004): 465-479.
- Fukuyama, Francis. "Women and the Evolution of World Politics." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (September/October 1998): 24-40.
- Hoogensen, Gunhild and Kirsti Stuvoy. "Gender, Resistance and Human Security." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (June 2006): 207-228.
- Hoogensen and Svein Vigeland Rottem. "Gender Identity and the Subject of Security." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (June 2004): 155-171.
- Hudson, Heidi. "'Doing' Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June 2005): 155-174.
- Human Security Centre. "Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The University of British Columbia. <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=63> (accessed July 18, 2009).
- Jones, Adam. "Does 'Gender' Make the World Go Round? Feminist Critiques of International Relations." *Review of International Studies*, No. 22 (1996): 405-429.
- Keohane, Robert. "Beyond Dichotomy: Conversations Between International Relations and Feminist Theory." *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 42 (1998): 193-198.
- Mueller, John. "Accounting for the Waning of Major Power War." in *The Waning of Major War: Theories and Debates*, ed. Raimo Vayrynen, 64-79. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Paris, Roland. "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" in *Global Politics in a Changing World: A Reader* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, eds. Richard W. Mansbach and Edward Rhodes, 253-260. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.
- Reardon, Betty. *Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Schmidt, Brian C. "Competing Realist Conceptions of Power." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2005): 523-549.
- Steans, Jill. "Engaging from the Margins: Feminist Encounters with the 'Mainstream' of International Relations." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (August 2003): 428-454.
- Tickner, J. Ann. *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists." *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 41 (1997): 611-632.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Zalewski, Marysia. "'Well, What is the Feminist Perspective on Bosnia?'" *International Affairs*, No. 71 (1995): 348.

**БАВЉЕЊЕ РОДНОМ (НЕ)СИГУРНОШЋУ****Резиме**

Упркос све већем броју феминистичких студија из области теорије међународних односа у последњих двадесет година, у овој научној дисциплини се феминистички приступ проблему маргинализује. Као последица, превиђа се један од кључних доприноса феминистичке литературе - питање рода у изучавању међународних односа и фокус на родно условљењу природу многих питања у теорији међународних односа. Овај рад представља допринос актуелној дебати о улози рода у контексту међународних односа и безбедносних студија. Он износи аргумент да, док је феминистичка литература далековидо критиковала реалитетну концепцију безбедности и залагала се за вишедимензиону и вишеслојну рedefиницију безбедности, решења која се нуде не би ли се стигло до овог свеобухватнијег појма безбедности ненамерно ризикују да реификују род као урођен, а не конструисан, те зато тек треба да постигну своје жељене циљеве. Иако је притисак за повећаним учешћем у доношењу значајних одлука праћен покушајима промене садашњег дискурса, где се истичу различити „феминистички принципи којима је умањена вредност“, ако такве напоре чине само жене, ефекат ће бити мали. Стога у овом есеју предлажемо једну алтернативу која се залаже за то да се више мушкараца укључи у дискурс, где треба додатно нагласити и женске и мушке несигурности како би се „денатурализовале и раставиле“ родне хијерархије и дошло се до веће безбедности.

**Кључне речи:** феминистичка истраживања, дискурс, међународни односи, родне хијерархије, безбедност, конструисано