Gender and War: Causes, Constructions, and Critique

By Elisabeth Prugl

War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa. By Joshua S. Goldstein. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 523 pages. $40.00 cloth.

"Despite the diversity of gender and of war separately, gender roles in war are very consistent across all known human societies" (3). Starting off with this apparent paradox, Joshua Goldstein offers an encyclopedic overview of literature that addresses the issue from the perspectives of biology, psychology, anthropology, history, political science, and cultural and women's studies. The book should lay to rest, once and for all, highly charged debates over the hardwiring of gender traits that associate men with war and women with peace, and clear the way for a serious consideration of the co-constitution of gender and war. Indeed, the most important contribution of this book may be that it shows gender to be ontologically enmeshed in war—in other words, it is difficult to "do war" without "doing gender" and vice versa.

The argument is not new. Indeed, feminist writers from Betty Reardon to Jean Bethke Elshtain, to Cynthia Enloe, have made precisely this point.[1] What is new about the book is the thoroughness with which it surveys evidence from diverse disciplines, including the "hard" sciences; its adherence to scientific conventions from the positivist tool chest (such as hypothesis testing) to make an argument about culture; and last but not least, the fact that the writer is a well-established male political scientist. In a discipline where Ph.D. candidates are still warned to stay away from gender topics in order not to risk marginalization, writing about gender and war treads dangerous territory. Goldstein's work will add new fuel to the debates about building bridges between feminist/critical/constructivist/poststructuralist approaches and "the mainstream."

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How does gender relate to war? Cultural constructions and gendered codes of domination carry the main weight in Goldstein's explanation, which he develops after discussing the evidence from biology and anthropology. This evidence disconfirms the significance of genetic codes, male-bonding practices, or differential group loyalties in explaining warlike behavior among men. With regard to male and female hormones, Goldstein finds complicated feedback loops between culture and biology that similarly undermine suggestions of a biological hardwiring of difference. And he finds that the slight differences between women and men in size and strength, in cognitive abilities, and in the orientation toward status hierarchies combine with gender segregation in childhood to offer some explanation for a tendency to associate combat with men, but not enough to account for the categorical difference of gender roles in warfare. The evidence leads him to probe cultural constructions, as well as sexual and economic domination.

Tough Men, Tender Women

Goldstein finds that culturally constructed gender identities enable war. Masculinity is associated with qualities that make good warriors. Appeals to masculine identity help to overcome men's reluctance to go to war and help produce a functioning army. Men are not innately disposed to war; instead, they most often "need to be dragged kicking and screaming into [war], constantly brainwashed and disciplined once there, and rewarded and honored afterwards" (253). Indeed, fear and combat trauma are pervasive among men in battle, and appeals to a warrior masculinity "force men to endure trauma and master fear, in order to claim the status of 'manhood'" (264).

A range of cultural practices contributes to the production of such manhood. Cross-culturally, male rites of passage entail ordeals and tests that show bravery, practices of which military boot camp is a remnant. The development of other warrior qualities, including physical courage, endurance, strength, skill, and honor, also is part of the cross-cultural repertoire of male socialization. Bravery and discipline (i.e., self-control and obedience) are particularly important to fighting fear and entail the suppression of emotions. In the U.S. army, this takes the form of a taboo on tenderness and crying. Shame is the crucial mechanism that accomplishes the

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making of such warrior masculinity. Males who fail tests of manhood are publicly humiliated. Women themselves often have shamed men into going to war.

Goldstein provides historical examples of men enacting militarized masculinity. They include regular soldiers in the Civil War who exhorted themselves to bravery and statesmen such as Kaiser Wilhelm II, whose constant need to parade his power has been interpreted as a defense against his private homosexual desires. Militarized masculinity is also present in nationalist discourses and in the cultural sphere. Both world wars were understood to effect a restoration of nations, "uplifting, cleansing, and invigorating" (275) in the case of World War I, and restoring Germany's manhood in the case of World War II. War films often enact the deep psychological structure entailed in making men through war: "boy leaves home, faces death (representing fear of castration), wins war, returns to claim bride, and wins acclaim from father-figures" (279).

Creating male warriors also takes the effort of women. Gender organizes belief systems and identities, retaining a space outside war, "a place to return to, or at least to die trying to protect—a place called home or normal or peacetime" (301). Women symbolize this place, and their status as placeholders of the normal is institutionalized in their protected status during war. In their various roles, women reinforce this gender order and facilitate militarized masculinity. As witnesses they spur on and sing of male bravery; as mothers they raise boys to excel as men; as sweethearts they cheer soldiers and heal them when they return; as nurses they put men back together and serve as substitute mothers. Women are thus complicit in the reproduction of militarized masculinity. Moreover, Goldstein notes, to the extent that women's peace activism associates women with peace, it runs the danger of reinforcing gender stereotypes that motivate soldiers to fight.

Men's Domination of Women

After surveying literatures on the cultural construction of gender, Goldstein takes on another key element of the feminist understanding of gender. Not only is gender a social construct, but it also encodes relationships of domination. Goldstein narrows his analysis to men's domination of women in times of war and asks, Does male sexuality during wartime cause aggression? Does the feminization of the enemy lead men to rape conquered women and explain the absence of women in their own ranks? Do societies keep women away from combat roles so that they can exploit women's labor more extensively during war?

Here Goldstein offers an excellent overview of materials describing sexual practices in war, from uncoerced sex to military-organized prostitution, to the coerced sex extracted from "comfort women." He attributes sexual practices of soldiers to the disruption of social norms in war but finds no evidence that male sexuality is a cause of aggression. Feminist literature may point out the phallic symbolism attached to weapons, TV's conversion of war into voyeuristic pornography, and the structural similarity of war and sports in terms of their evoking castration anxiety and phallic penetration. But psychological experiments have shown no evidence that sexual stimulation leads to male aggressiveness.

If sexuality thus does not seem to cause violence, then perhaps it operates as a form of symbolic domination to explain why men and not women participate in war. Historical evidence shows that a feminization of enemies was widespread throughout the ancient world. The execution of men (often combined with the raping of women and the taking of women and children as slaves) was a way to literally feminize a conquered population. The castration of prisoners, anal rape of enemy soldiers, and insults that intimated homosexuality or effeminateness effected a metaphorical feminization. The raping of women is pervasive in modern wars for a variety of reasons, including men's awakened aggressiveness and weakened social norms. According to Goldstein, it is also a way to impose domination on a male enemy (by violating his cherished property).

Rape thus becomes the "the ultimate metaphor for the war system" (371, quoting Betty Reardon). It symbolically genders the victor as male and the vanquished as female. Misogyny, visible in warrior rites that keep women at a distance and betray a fear of women as an uncontrollable force, fuels both male aggression in war and militarism more broadly. The widespread homophobia in militaries is part of this logic: men constructed as effeminate (i.e., gays) shatter the unity needed to defeat a feminized enemy.

In addition to this symbolic form of domination, do men prevent women from joining combat out of a need to control women's labor power, especially during war? In other words, can the suggestion that patriarchy rests on men's exploitation of women's labor also explain warlike tendencies of societies so organized? While there is ample evidence that women's labor is indispensable to military success, the need for it in wartime seems to explain little about gender role differences. There is a correlation, though modest and uneven, between war proneness and gender inequality; societies seem to go to war more frequently when women have lower status. But there are exceptions to this rule, and the direction of causality is uncertain.

Adding up the evidence, Goldstein finds that men's domination of women primarily plays a symbolic role in warfare: it serves as a metaphor for domination of the enemy. Combined with his earlier findings, the symbolism of domination helps to explain the cross-cultural consistency of gender roles in war as follows: "small, innate biological gender differences in average size, strength, and roughness of play" combine with the "cultural modeling of tough, brave men, who feminize their enemies to encode domination" (406). Biology and culture interact to produce a universal pattern; but in a strikingly novel suggestion, culture is stubbornly stable while biology emerges as comparatively malleable.

Gender: Cause, Construction, Critique

Goldstein adds a unique voice to the diverse theorizations of gender and war. It is a voice committed to science as an enterprise of truth seeking. It is a voice attuned to the complexities of human existence. And it is a feminist voice opposed to male domination and dedicated to promoting "women's interests and gender equality" (2). Goldstein does not position himself on the terrain of feminist theorizing in the subfield of international relations

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except to signal that "a strong version of postmodern feminist analysis" (51) is incompatible with his findings. He claims not to theorize at all, insisting instead that "this book is a dossier of evidence, not a theoretical contribution" (58). Indeed, he stops short of conventions that demand either deductive testing of theories or an inductive connecting of empirical regularities in an overarching framework. However, his is a narrow understanding of theory wedded to a positivist epistemology.

From the post-positivist perspective that many feminists have adopted, there is theory in all truth claims. Locked in language, truth claims convey what has been validated previously, often under conditions of male bias. Although *War and Gender* does not question the everyday theories enmeshed in its empirical evidence or the social contexts from which this evidence has emerged, as a set of truth claims it cannot avoid theory. Theory pervades its choice of categories and the scope of its argument. Goldstein's understanding of gender as a social construct is amenable to a treatment of gender as a political category, a category that steers, enables, and obstructs. Indeed, the salience of the cultural and symbolic significance of gender in Goldstein's findings would invite such an approach.

Reflecting on the theory inherent in rhetoric on war and gender would complement the book's positivism to show more extensively the way in which gender and war produce each other, the way gender works as an organizer of knowledge both in security institutions and social science disciplines. It would furthermore shed light on how militarism and gender subordination operate together in discursive terrains beyond the individual, and how the co-constitution of gender and war engages warlike actors as much as their observers. I elaborate my critique by exploring the permutations of the concept of gender deployed in the book and providing a case study that illustrates the uses of a broader notion of theorizing.

Feminists have used gender at least in three ways. First, they have treated it as a variable to explain inequality and subordination. In this usage, gender presumes essential qualities of women and men, and the explanation focuses on the difference in these qualities. Second, they have described gender as a social construct; as such it consists of identities, institutions, and symbols reproduced in all types of social practices and at all levels of society, from individual socialization to foreign policy practices. Third, they have used gender as an analytical category, a critical wedge that allows for studies in the operations of difference. Such studies move behind regulatory norms to ask about the context in which those norms were created, the power that they exercise, the rights that they author, and the way in which identities are forged not only in tune with social prescriptions but also against them.[2]

Goldstein's definition of gender shares a kinship with constructivist understandings. He considers gender a social and biological construct: "the conception of biology as fixed and cultures as flexible is wrong. . . . No universal biological essence of 'sex' exists, but rather a complex system of potentials that are activated by various internal *and* external influences." Accordingly, gender covers "masculine and feminine roles and bodies alike, in all their aspects, including the (biological and cultural) structures, dynamics, roles, and scripts associated with each gender group" (2). There is theory in these definitions. When talking about biology, Goldstein employs the language of complex systems, and when talking about culture, he employs the language of construction. Gender as a system and gender as a construction encompass "structures, dynamics, roles, and scripts," indicating a very broad and inclusive understanding that resonates with a feminist constructivist approach to gender.

Despite this constructivist point of departure, *War and Gender* tends to move gender analysis from the terrain of construction onto a terrain of givens, where it is treated as an explanatory variable. This happens because the book's empirical materials largely treat gender as denoting accomplished roles (rather than dynamics and scripts). Gender roles are something that children are socialized into, something that men and women are shamed into. But as social facts, they preexist socialization. Indeed, they are stable enough to assume a facticity fixed not only in time but also in space, becoming a cross-cultural universal, the point of departure for Goldstein's research puzzle. Exceptions are discussed, but they are found to be just that. The rule is gender role difference in war in all cultures and historical epochs.

Treating gender as an accomplished role allows the scientific observer to stabilize what it means to be a woman or to be a man, making it possible to ask about the causes of this outcome. It facilitates the quasi-positivist setup of the book as an exercise in hypothesis testing. Gender now means women and men, and Goldstein can align his questions about universal gender difference in war fighting with those of biologists, psychologists, primatologists, and anthropologists: Are men more aggressive and competitive than women? Are they stronger? Do they bond more easily and have a stronger tendency to work in hierarchies? Do they show more group loyalty? Gender here is prior to war, the meanings of manhood and womanhood known. A positivist treatment becomes possible at the expense of understanding the instability of gender and reproducing a scientific myth of gender as a universal binary.

But Goldstein knows that the issue is more complicated than this, that there are many examples of "reverse causality"—instances where gender helps explain war *and* war helps explain gender. The examples are dispersed throughout the book. Reverse causality appears in the distinction between combat and noncombat in the U.S. military: during the Gulf War, "the Pentagon followed the rule . . . that if a soldier was female she must not have been in combat and could not receive combat medals" (95). As Goldstein points out, it appears also with the integration of women in the military at low ranks and with low pay; with the many cross-dressed women in various wars who passed as men; and with Xerxes disapproving of his commanders while praising the "manly courage" of Artemisia of Halicarnassus, his warrior queen, with the following words (as reported by Herodotus): "My men have turned into women, my women into men" (118). In all these instances, combat made men and noncombat made women. Soldiers in the Gulf War, cross-dressers, and women in Xerxes' army became "masculine" war heroes; women in the U.S. military became feminine noncombatants; and men in Xerxes' army, feminized failures.

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In this formulation, there are echoes of a different understanding of gender as a social construct, one in which womanhood and manhood are not fixed, one in which war makes gender as much as men and women make war. In Goldstein's own words: "Causality runs both ways between war and gender. Gender roles adapt individuals for war roles, and war roles provide the context within which individuals are socialized into gender roles" (6). This is the "vice versa" in the book's title.

But if gender really is a social construct and one concedes reverse causality, then why not employ constructivist theorizing? Given the penchant of feminists for constructivist arguments and given recent inroads of such theorizing in the subfield of international relations, it is surprising that Goldstein fails to engage with this literature. Such an engagement might have prevented a second problem with the book: the narrow focus on gender as pertaining to the individual level of analysis.

Roles and bodies, the objects of construction in Goldstein's definition, attach to individuals. Goldstein defends such "reductionism," as it has been spectacularly successful in explaining organisms on the basis of biochemistry and DNA. Indeed, "sometimes, similar processes recur on different levels of analysis," and it appears that "the interstate system reproduces at the level of large groups the biologically based scripts and dynamics found at the level of small groups" (408). Goldstein goes so far as to suggest that the interstate system can be understood through the dynamics among a small group of leaders and is thus amenable to the gender analysis he proffers.

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Whether his argument about parallel dynamics at different levels is credible or not, feminist and constructivist theorizing would have provided the means to transcend the levels-of-analysis problem that he writes himself into. There is no need to confine gender to lower levels of analysis. An understanding of gender as a social construct that moves away from role theory and toward a language-oriented understanding captures not only individual identities, but also the identities of nations, states, and institutions. It encompasses not only the spheres of biological reproduction, socialization, and private life, but also the rules that make up political institutions, the symbols that fuel culture, and the commitments that enable international relations.

Goldstein himself cites some of this literature describing how manliness became a goal for nations on the eve of World War I and for Germany in the run-up to World War II. He also reviews some literature on the cultural production of gender and war and on gender as an organizer of social space. However, he considers such cultural practices significant primarily because they help construct individual soldiers and their feminine opposites. He shies away from an interpretation that sees international relations as a gendered social space in which gender relations suffuse relations among states and inform international regimes. Thus, government negotiations over military prostitution, human rights regimes that have defined women's rights as outside their purview, the sex-coded masquerades of foreign policy, the exclusions of women from and their usages in diplomacy, and the gendered practices of realpolitik play no role in his depiction of the gendered rules that enable wars. This is unfortunate because it prevents him from making gender relevant to social constructs that international relations scholars consider to be central to the pursuit of warfare, such as states, nations, ethnicities, "civilizations," and international organizations.

In approaching gender as a construct of roles, Goldstein forecloses a critical deployment of gender as an analytical category, choosing instead to aggregate gender into implicitly binary "gender groups" that contain attached structures, dynamics, roles, and scripts. These structures do not seem to be in a process of structuration, the dynamics do not seem to move, and the scripts do not seem to be written and rewritten. Had Goldstein made the linguistic turn—i.e., had he adopted an understanding of the social world as produced through language (whether through speech acts, language games, or discourses)—he would have been led toward probing the different meanings that emerge out of the relationship between war and gender in different contexts, enabling him to destabilize gender in the narratives of war, and war in the narratives of gender. He also may have asked how language that associates war and gender authorizes particular practices, produces particular selves, and empowers particular forms of agency. He might have probed how such language suggests appropriateness, normative rightness, and truth. He might have explored the way in which difference in general and gender difference in particular are part of the grammar of war that informs strategies, policies, and institution building. In not applying gender as an analytical category to war and security rhetoric, he forgoes an opportunity to shed critical light on existing practices.

This is perhaps most readily evident in the book's last substantive chapter, which deals with "men's sexual and economic domination of women." Somewhat surprising for a book on gender, this is the only chapter that addresses notions of domination, exploitation, and power. The terms are not defined; instead, the chapter sets up three hypotheses to be tested: (1) male sexuality causes aggression, (2) war borrows gender as a code for domination-submission relationships, and (3) dependence on exploiting women's labor leads to keeping women out of combat roles. In testing the first hypothesis, Goldstein offers a wide-ranging discussion of more or less forced sexual practices during wartime, the military uses of pornography, the phallic symbolism of weapons, and the voyeuristic aspects of modern war making. Though he touches on interpretive materials, we are served up the surprising conclusion that based on psychological experiments sexuality is not "a key component of male soldiers' aggressiveness" (356). This may be true, but it seems beside the point that literature on the sexual coding of war wants to make.

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The focus on roles and groups limits what Goldstein is able to see. It blinds him to the fact that sexuality is more than a potential explanatory variable for aggression; interwoven in the discourses and practices of war, it also is a terrain for the entwined operations of power and desire. The grammars of war and sexuality share similarities, and these similarities entangle war practices and sexual practices. Interfering with the grammar of war disrupts the grammar of sex and vice versa. Though sexuality may not be a cause of soldiers' aggressiveness, cultural scripts of sexuality are central to the enactment of war, and cultural scripts of war are acted out in sexual relations. Examples of this abound. They include the sexualized imagery in the language of defense intellectuals that Carol Cohn has described.[3] They include the chant of U.S. soldiers in basic training: "This is my rifle [holding up the rifle], this is my gun [pointing to penis]; one's for killing, the other's for fun" (350). They include men bragging about "kills," meaning sexual exploits. And they include the diverse deployments of the word *fuck* to denote sexual intercourse ("man fucks woman," never the other way around, as Catharine McKinnon has pointed out),[4] together with other conquests and defeats ("fucking them over").

Goldstein's second hypothesis (gender as a code for domination-subordination relationships) takes interpretive approaches more seriously. Here, the findings show the parallel between multiple ways of feminizing the enemy, rape, and military homophobia: all encode domination. This section comes closest to employing gender as an analytical category of critique. Gender emerges as an organizer of difference that ranges widely in the discursive terrain of war: as an identifier of enemies, as a disciplinary means of enforcing a binary sex/gender order, as a means of asserting power. Indeed, the third hypothesis, which treats women's economic exploitation as a cause of different gender roles in war, might have been approached more productively from this perspective. Instead of emerging as a modest cause for differential gender roles in war, women's war work could then have served as an illustration of the emptiness of gender "roles," of the instability of their contents, of gender difference as an operation of power, and of the subversions of gender that wars make possible.

There are lessons in this book about the strengths and weaknesses of positivist feminism. Perhaps the greatest strength of this book, deriving no doubt from Goldstein's commitment to science, is its extensive use of evidence. (I have used resources from the book to great profit in my class.) By brandishing evidence against evidence, positivist feminism has uniquely served as a debunker of myths. Goldstein makes a powerful argument against cherished ideologies of biological hardwiring, showing that gender is cultural more than biological, and opening up feminist space for critiquing the gendered practices of war fighting. His argument will help make the case that gender matters in international relations to many who have not been convinced by feminist critiques offered in a post-positivist vein. In this sense, the book builds an important bridge between feminism and the mainstream.

On the other hand, positivism has its limits. It cannot operate with unstable categories. It fails to question the premises inherent in the categories it employs, and tends to locate gender at the individual level of analysis. *War and Gender* is thus not suspicious of the portrayal of cross-culturally uniform gender roles in war fighting, because it cannot consider man and woman as outcomes of ongoing construction processes. It cannot investigate the heterosexist preconceptions that have informed the questions of biologists, psychologists, and anthropologists, and it does not probe how gender moves beyond the individual level of analysis to organize spaces and authorize conduct in international relations. But then again, Goldstein never set out to do so. What *War and Gender* has done is clear the ground for precisely these tasks.

Now What?

What follows is a suggestive illustration of what becomes possible when moving outside the positivist framework to approach gender as a social construct and an analytical category in a security context. Such an approach focuses less on what women and men do but more on what gendering does. Probing gendering as a social and political process complements and latches on to the analysis Goldstein has offered in *War and Gender*. My case is the current effort to build a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). From a constructivist perspective, this effort amounts to putting in place the rules that empower European policy makers to securitize—i.e., to activate extraordinary means to deal with issues defined as threats.[5] War continues to be part of the repertoire of extraordinary means that states resort to in a context of securitization; and the creation of ESDP must be seen as enabling the European Union to go to war. The institutions of ESDP and the politics of their creation have been widely described. They include most prominently a rapid reaction force, political and military bodies that will give political guidance and strategic direction to this force, and a definition of the tasks for which the force will be used. These "Petersberg tasks" have not been described as "war" but as search-and-rescue missions, humanitarian missions, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement. Combat is not precluded; indeed, it is expected in peace enforcement operations.

Gender plays a powerful role in the construction of European security identities and institutions, in building a European capacity to securitize. Illustrative in the realm of identity is the debate over what kind of a military power Europe might be. Illustrative in the institutional arena is the perceived feminization of European militaries together with the rhetorical feminization of peacekeeping. The following sketch suggests how an understanding of gender as a social construct and analytical category lifts gender relations beyond the individual level of analysis and makes visible the rhetorical power of diverse invocations of gender and the entwining of gender and war in contemporary debates about European security.

A European Security Identity

Discussions about a European security identity started within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union in the 1990s in the face of a perceived failure of Europeans to live up to their alliance commitments and to help ensure global security. European militaries had little to contribute to the Gulf War or to the wars in the Balkans. The Kosovo intervention in particular showed the immense military superiority of the United States. An often-repeated statistic within NATO and EU security

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circles is that the defense budget of European NATO members is about 60 percent of the United States', but they accomplish only 10 percent of the U.S. military's effectiveness.[6] It is common wisdom that Europe's militaries need to modernize and become more efficient. A European security identity is emerging out of comparisons with the United States and is tightly linked to the shape of the transatlantic relationship. References in U.S. discourse to Europeans—and self-comparisons of Europeans to the United States—are thus instructive of the emerging European security identity. The examples presented here are drawn mostly from EU-level, German, and U.S. sources. While offering only one slice of the picture (importantly omitting the French and the British), they suffice to illustrate the uses of gender as an analytical category and a social construct.

"Wimps or not," is how Chris Patten, the EU commissioner for external relations, characterized the debate over Europe's security identity during a speech in Miami. A European preoccupation with consensus seeking, he argued, is often unfairly dismissed as wimpishness by a U.S. administration fueled by conviction. Such questions about European virility have become part of the discursive inventory deployed in the search for a European defense identity. From the U.S. point of view, Europe clearly does not measure up. It is in the habit of "talking loudly and carrying a small stick."[7]

Many Europeans have adopted the American interpretation and are being shamed into increasing their defense spending. Angela Merkel, the leader of the German Christian Democrats, finds it "shameful" how little military capability the Europeans buy for their expenditures.[8] And Michael Glos, the leader of the Christian Socialist sister party, enviously eyes the men gathering around George W. Bush for the business of preparing war. At the parliamentary debate over a German role in Afghanistan, Glos suggested that the German chancellor would "love to be in a row with Tony Blair [and] Putin . . . invited to the ranch in Texas,"[9] a potent "friend" of the swaggering cowboy. He bemoaned that the Social Democrats' green coalition partners (with a policy of gender parity in leadership positions and pacifist inclinations) prevented Germany from becoming a "credible" force. The German Europe portrayed here falls short of standards of masculinity that inhabit the U.S. understanding of security—short of a forceful stepping forward and waving of big sticks.

Other Europeans have pointed to the extensive contribution that Europeans have made to peacekeeping and reconstruction and the unique capabilities they have developed in this arena. Indeed, there is a vision, not only in the United States, of an international division of security tasks that puts the United States in charge of large-scale war fighting and Europeans in charge of smaller missions and "peace-support operations." This fits with the vision of constructing a different kind of European power, one that foregrounds peacekeeping, peacemaking, and humanitarian missions and recognizes the United Nations as the primary agent in charge of maintaining international peace and stability. It fits with the broadening of the security agenda in the EU context; its concern with alleviating poverty and alienation, counteracting environmental deterioration, and the problems of failed states; and its emphasis on conflict prevention and civilian crisis management.

Gender has informed this discourse of security labor division. Here, Europe does not aspire to be an equal or friend to the cowboy, but is content to be its spouse, a "partner." From the U.S. point of view, the marriage often emerges as a rather traditional arrangement. In the words of one former U.S. Army officer: "Superpowers don't do windows."[10] Condoleezza Rice agrees: the United States doesn't "need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten."[11] Peacekeeping operations (windows and kids) are not for the United States; they are for feminized others. The recurring spats with Europeans are over the terms of the partnership arrangement. As David Ignatius put it in the *International Herald Tribune:* "It's like a marriage that has gotten out of sync—with one partner feeling left behind as the other becomes more successful." Concerned about saving the "Euro-American marriage before either spouse does something really stupid," he suggests cooperation in the civil arena—in intelligence operations and police work—to fight terrorism: "It's certainly a cheaper option than divorce."[12] It also moves the partnership from the military terrain to an institutional and discursive terrain with different gender rules.

When deployed as an analytical category and approached as a social construct in transatlantic space, gender operates in multiple ways. First, for those wanting to beef up European military strength, the United States displays aspects of a warrior masculinity that Europeans should measure up to: potency, talking softly, and carrying a big stick. For those aspiring to a different model of European security, the United States presents itself as masculine, but these Europeans do not aspire to be like Americans as much as they want to be equal partners. In the first case, notions of weak femininity and strong masculinity are preserved. In the second, there seems to be disagreement about the meaning of security and, in a related manner, about proper gender relations. The feminization of European aspirations in U.S. rhetoric along the lines of a traditional and highly unequal model of partnership puts these aspirations in a subordinate place. In contrast, moving away from the military realm holds out the promise of a more equal partnership.

"Feminizing" European Militaries

Gender constructs become real not only in discourse but also through institutionalization. The understandings of gender that emerge from transatlantic discourses are mirrored in the construction of European security institutions. In a landmark ruling in January 2000, the European Court of Justice declared the German constitutional prohibition of women in the military to be incompatible with the European Union's equality directives. Since then, military positions in all EU countries have opened for women. Paralleling discursive constructions of a European security identity as feminine has been a construction of European militaries as needing women, justified by the unique requirements of peacekeeping (together with personnel shortages). One response has been a backlash effort to preserve the masculine warrior culture.

The German press justified the opening of militaries to women by the demands of peacekeeping: "To save, to protect, to help, to

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make peace: increasingly the militaries of the Western world are committed to these tasks. Like a modern service-providing enterprise they thus encompass tasks that are traditionally defined as female."[13] What is needed in the new militaries, the argument went, is a combination of "fighter, diplomat, police officer, Samaritan, and civil engineer ('Technischer Hilfswerker'). He or she should be of robust nature, cosmopolitan and multilingual, empathetic, but also able to improvise and perhaps have administrative skills."[14] German public opinion decisively favored the ruling of the European Court and the opening of the military to women,[15] and the German parliament changed the German constitution without much debate. One argument put forward in the parliamentary debate was that women would be uniquely suited to peacekeeping tasks.[16]

The association of women soldiers with peace is replicated both at the United Nations level and at the European Union level. The first UN Security Council resolution ever to address gender issues in the military (Resolution 1325) focuses on women in peacekeeping; and in the European Parliament, the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities has dealt with women in a security context primarily by reference to their potential role in "peaceful conflict resolution." [17] Insofar as the messages from such reports and resolutions are taken seriously, they are part of the institutionalization of a feminine side of military operations, and this feminine side is associated with peace.

But gender is not merely a social construct; it also carries messages of power. The association of peacekeeping and conflict resolution with women is pernicious because it opens the door for a denigration of these strategies. Not surprisingly, there is resistance against the feminization of militaries, a sentiment that women and peacekeeping (now conceptually linked) undermine combat capabilities, that soldiers cannot be both warriors and peacekeepers.[18] And according to one critic in the German military, the entry of women soldiers (together with feminist interventions in the subfield of international relations) is undermining military readiness.[19] The suggestion is somewhat ironic given the fact that the Western militaries most likely to engage in combat (the United States and the United Kingdom) also are among those with the highest proportion of women in the force (14 percent and 8 percent, respectively).[20] But the backlash argument is not only about women's capacities, which are variously questioned in the backlash literature. It is also (and perhaps more) about defending constructions of gender that associate masculinity with combat prowess in defense of the feminine. For backlashers, military combat remains the gold standard of a masculine identity. Admitting women into militaries (and into peacekeeping and noncombat missions) undermines the male warrior identity.

In sum, gender constructions in transatlantic discursive spaces resonate in institutional environments. Differently gendered security identities and militaries support different security agendas. Not surprisingly, gender constructions in a security context—together with the agendas they inform—are fiercely contested, engaging notions of complementarity and equality between female and male soldiers in Europe and the United States, and negotiating the meanings of partnership and security.

The analysis I have offered employs a post-positivist understanding of gender as a social construct and an analytical category. It portrays gender as an unstable category that takes on different meanings to different effect. It probes the politics behind the categories employed and seeks to undermine their force. It moves gender beyond the individual level of analysis, beyond the construction of soldiers and mothers, girlfriends, and nurses, to explore the way that gender produces meanings within global security orders and enables war through the privileging of combat over alternatives. Shedding light on these operations of gender is an important critical task for feminists and a necessary complement to the unmasking of militarized masculinity so forcefully advanced in *War and Gender.*

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Notes

1 Reardon 1985; Elshtain 1987; Enloe 1983.
2 Scott 2001.
3 Cohn 1987.
4 McKinnon 1989, 4.
5 Buzan et al. 1998.
6 Kaestner 2001; Lalumière 2000; Merkel 2002.
7 Inacker 2002, 8.
8 Merkel 2002.
9 Quoted in Die Debatte . . . , S6, my translation.
10 Nash and Hillen 2001, Web edition, 4.
11 Gordon 2000, A1.
12 Ignatius 2002, 4.
13 Thelen 2000, S45, my translation.
14 Szandar 1999, my translation.
15 Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2000.
16 Liebert 2000.
17 Theorin 2000.
18 Compare Nash and Hillen 2001.
19 Stahlhut 2002.
20 Other NATO members with relatively high proportions of women in the military are Canada (11.4 percent), Hungary (9.6 percent), France (8.5 percent), the Netherlands (8.0 percent), and Belgium (7.6 percent). *NATO Review* 2001.

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