psychology, and political science. The coverage is not as thorough for each explanation as it could be. The section on biological explanations, for example, is more than twice as long as that on socialization; yet, the vast majority of women and politics scholarship begins with the assumption that the gender gap is a function of childhood socialization. She does not explain, for example, how "gender role socialization leads children to believe that women should be cooperative and nurturing" (26). For that, Caughell should examine more of the literature in social psychology, particularly social role theory. In *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*, Kira Sanbonmatsu (2004) demonstrates there is significant ambivalence about women's roles in society. As such, Caughell should consider multiple measures of gender roles. The other four indicators are measured with an index of several items, but the socialization explanation relies on a single indicator.

Caughell's book is a valuable update of contemporary gender gaps and tests of their roots. I would have liked to see more on differences in attitudes among women. At different parts of the book, Caughell notes that women are not a monolithic group and that there is great variety among women in their political attitudes. An analysis of gender gaps between married women and men and between married women and single women, or differences between black women and men and black women and white women or Latinas or Asian women would have been a valuable addition to our knowledge of gender gaps.

J. Celeste Lay is Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University: jlay@tulane.edu

REFERENCE

Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2004. *Democrats/Republicans and the Politics of Women's Place*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Death in the Shape of a Young Girl: Women's Political Violence in the Red Army Faction. By Patricia Melzer. New York: New York University Press, 2015. 352 pp. $35.00 (hardcover).

doi:10.1017/S1743923X17000046

Renée Heberle
University of Toledo

When Ulrike Meinhoff and three other women in the Red Army Faction (RAF) conspired to break Andreas Baader out of a German prison in 1970, they hired a man to participate. They did so to ensure prison guards would take the prison break seriously. The thinking was that the threat of four women with guns would be dismissed, forcing those women to fire their guns to force compliance on the part of the guards; a man with a gun, however, would be taken seriously, and, theoretically, the guards would comply without shots being fired.

In 1977, Jurgen Ponto, CEO of one of Germany's largest banks, opened the door to his home to a young woman carrying flowers, an encounter that ended with his murder by the Movement 2nd June (M2ndJ). The media remarked on this manipulative use of her femininity as she conspired in a violent act of kidnapping. Hence the title of Patricia Melzer's book, *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl*, a feminist historical and theoretical analysis of women's participation in the armed confrontations of the RAF and the M2ndJ in Germany in the 1970s and early 1980s. Women were in the majority among these underground and explicitly violent leftist organizations. This book is a study of the gendered dynamics of the RAF and M2ndJ as they played out in the women's lives, as they were represented in the media, and as they challenged feminist arguments about mothering and female political agency.

As armed confrontations between the German state and militant leftist organizations escalated in the 1970s and 1980s, much was made in the mainstream press — but also on the left generally and among feminists — of women's participation in armed violence, as (non)feminine figures but also as mothers. The mainstream press speculated about women's political violence as symptomatic of an "excess of feminism" or of pathologies related to femininity. While critical of the sexist assumptions of mainstream expressions of shock and dismay about women's capacity for violence, Melzer argues that feminists failed to capture the significance for feminist politics of the women's violence. Through archival research she shows how the women themselves engaged with the consequences of going underground and with the ideas of the emergent women's liberation movement. Their decisions about cutting ties, including issues about care for their own children, were complicated and complicate feminist arguments about linkages between motherhood (and, by implication, femininity) and nonviolence. The association made by feminists and nonfeminists of women with mothering and of masculinity with political violence is belied by the decisions and the actions of women in these organizations.

Melzer's study asks, "How do masculinity and femininity operate as cultural parameters for political action? How does gender as an analytical variable contribute to our understanding of terrorism?" She engages with these questions by "examining, through the specific case of left-wing German female terrorists, how gender shapes our perception of women's political choices and of political violence more generally" (2). Her study is an excellent example of how gender should be used as an analytic category, tracing how it is implicated in the conception and construction of power itself.

Melzer's general argument is that the women of the RAF and M2ndJ, in engaging in armed confrontations with the state, were engaged in feminist practice even while they did not identify as feminist subjects. This argument builds upon Jean Luc Nancy's distinction between "true violence" and the "violence of truth." True violence is that deliberately enacted as means to particular ends by the men and women on the radical left. When terrorist women use violence, however, they do more than this; they disrupt patriarchal assumptions about women and their place outside of a history made through forms of violence presumed to be extensions of masculinist power. Nancy's version of the violence of truth confronts objective forms, in this case a naturalized gender binary that normalizes masculinity and femininity as oppressive and limiting identity formations. Ultimately, Melzer asks whether the "image" of the female terrorist subverts gender norms. She considers this conversation to be distinct from one that focuses on the "true violence" the woman herself chooses to deploy toward political ends. She is less concerned with the morality or instrumental ends reached by the use of political violence than in whether and how these practices impact upon gender relations and disrupt sedimented assumptions about masculinity and femininity.

Thus there is not a lot of discussion of the violent actions carried out by the women Melzer is writing about. The most extended analysis of their actual practices comes in a chapter about the ongoing hunger strikes carried out in prison by RAF and M2ndJ members. In her analysis of death fasts in Turkey in the 1980s, Banu Bargu (2014) has argued that the hunger strike is a "wrenching of the power of life and death back from the state in which this power is conventionally invested" (27). For Melzer, the hunger strike as such is a feminist gesture challenging the masculinized, patriarchal, liberal subject. Hunger strikes are conceived of here as an intrinsically gendered biopolitical intervention that takes the body seriously as a weapon of struggle, not as an addendum to

"reason" but as the focal point of struggle itself. Her focus on the body supplements Bargu's focus on the power of life and death as that which is at stake in hunger striking. A hunger strike is, in Melzer's analysis, a feminized political action in its necessarily passive relationship to a dominant power that holds the body in confinement, violently restricting all autonomous activity. Melzer, moving beyond Bargu, thus asks, "How does a feminist focus on the body shift a liberal/enlightenment political subjectivity towards a more radical collective identity in the context of the collective hunger strike that uses bodies to assert a politicized presence?"(157).

Death in the Shape of a Young Girl grounds the study of the practices and public reception of "female terrorists" in feminist theory. But it also shows how those practices should inform a critique of a particular strand of feminism that presupposes how women and men, in their respectively socialized gendered identities, will do politics. While Melzer insists on the distinction between assessing political violence as a moral and/or effective means to the ends of social change and her project of assessing how women's participation in political violence has feminist consequences and consequences for feminism, the analysis consequently abstracts from the acts of violence themselves. Missing from the study is any close reading of how and why particular acts of violence were chosen, rationalized, or understood by the women who themselves were working in complex contexts to come to conclusions about what to do in the name of political change. Their relationship to the emergent feminist movement is discussed at length, but not their relationship to the violence they were enacting in the name of the particular ends of the organizations of which they were a part. I think it would enrich the significance of such a study to see more clearly how political violence, as opposed to other strategies, came to make sense to the organizations and to the women themselves.

Renée Heberle is Professor of Political Science and the Codirector of the Program of Law and Social Thought at the University of Toledo: renee.heberle@utoledo.edu

REFERENCE

Bargu, Banu. 2014. *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons*. New York: Columbia University Press.