



## Book Reviews

***Men, Militarism & UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis.*** By Sandra Whitworth. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner. 2004. 225 pp. \$49.95.

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Armed conflict, torture, murder, sexual assault, sexual enslavement, human trafficking and HIV/AIDS — United Nations peacekeepers are sent into conflict-torn countries to help prevent the further spread of these horrors. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan often highlights these brutalities when he publicly calls upon member states to send troops and resources to protect and assist vulnerable populations in conflict zones. In her most recent book, *Men, Militarism & UN Peacekeeping*, Sandra Whitworth provides a critical feminist analysis of a UN peacekeeping system that not only is failing to protect civilian populations but is also implicated in the spread of HIV/AIDS and in the torture, murder, sexual assault and enslavement, and human trafficking of the very populations the mission was purportedly sent to assist. Throughout, Whitworth uses sharp critical feminist analyses to help us understand why UN peacekeeping missions have too often become sites of violence and abuse.

Peacekeeping is often portrayed as an important alternative to the use of traditional military force, and its backers include not only a wide array of governments but also women's, peace, and human rights groups. Yet as Whitworth's at times disturbing and always challenging account makes clear, in a number of instances, the presence of peacekeeping forces has actually increased some populations' insecurity on the ground. In trying to understand why this is occurring, she contends that perhaps the two most important aspects to which we must pay attention are militarization and masculinity.

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Militarized masculinity saturates most of the peacekeeping operations, sometimes surfacing in displays of hyper-masculinity and violence. As a case in point, Whitworth examines Canada's official government and military response to its premier fighting units' involvement in the torture and murder of a young Somali male during peacekeeping operations. She also details sexual assaults against Cambodian children by UN peacekeeping personnel; the creation of pornographic materials by Eritrean peacekeepers, using the bodies of local women living in the war zones; and the hazing of Canadian Airborne members that included acts of sodomy and racial degradation. The author explores how most of the messages a soldier receives about appropriately masculine soldierly behavior are fundamentally at odds with the kind of behavior that is expected (at least by local communities) and, indeed, required in a peace operation that does not brutalize the populations it is sent to serve. She reveals that the allegations of abuse facing peacekeeping missions are indices of deep-rooted problems and cannot be explained (or wished) away by citing "a few bad apples."

One of the strengths of Whitworth's account is her ability to move seamlessly among the people who make up the peacekeeping missions to an interrogation of the structure of the missions themselves, including the pivotal role of mandates, the UN agencies working to fulfill those mandates, and the role of troop-contributing member states. Her questioning takes the reader to the very heart of peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, peace, and security. Moving back and forth between theory and evidence, she investigates why and how so-called middle and small powers—countries like Austria, Canada, Bangladesh, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Netherlands, and the Nordic countries—are participating in peacekeeping. In doing so, she reveals an important link between the "imagined communities" of the legitimate nation-state and its military (i.e., combat) readiness, a link that is infused with and shaped by notions of masculinity and manhood.

Using the first post-Cold War multidimensional peacekeeping mission as a case study, Whitworth takes a closer look at the UN mission to Cambodia. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) mission was widely hailed as a success story; then-UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali wrote that it "set a new standard for peace-keeping operations" (cited in Whitworth, p. 54). Beginning with the planning and staff composition of the mission, which had very few women in decision-making positions (literally zero in statistical terms),

Whitworth follows the mission away from the offices of Manhattan and onto the streets of Cambodia. While she does not deny significant achievements by the mission, she uncovers a more complex and less glowing reality on the ground. Her research documents the sexual abuse of local domestic workers; the massacres and exodus of the ethnic Vietnamese (who, during the attacks, were afforded no protection by the UN mission); the skyrocketing cost of food and housing, which was directly linked to the presence of the mission; the booming sex industry that involved children and women; and the drawing away of the most trained or experienced Cambodians from vital jobs (such as physicians) to make better money serving as drivers for UN staff. She argues that “in deploying a highly militarized, and highly masculinized, peacekeeping mission to Cambodia, increasing, rather than alleviating, the insecurities of many local people was almost ensured” (p. 73). The questions she asks about why and how this abuse was happening are as relevant today as they were the day the first peacekeepers arrived in Phnom Penh.

Whitworth’s analysis of the current success of the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping in hijacking and neutralizing critical feminist critiques of peace and security should serve as a wake-up call for those who think (or hope) that real progress is being made within this department. For the most part, she argues, critical feminist and gender analyses of peacekeeping have been co-opted and effectively silenced, thus leaving this UN body and its way of doing business largely untransformed. The results can be seen in recent media headlines as reporters continue to expose sexual violations and abuse by UN peacekeepers and humanitarian aid staff, mostly against women and children in the war-torn countries in which they are stationed.

Perhaps most importantly, Whitworth shows that a critical feminist engagement with peacekeeping, militarization, and masculinity means paying serious attention to why peacekeeping missions and peacekeeping personnel are at times implicated in the very horrors they are sent to mitigate. She presses us to ask questions about whose security is being enhanced and whose threatened. She highlights the necessity of examining the links among nationhood, militaries, and masculinities. She stresses the need to understand the successes or failures of peacekeeping missions through extended critical dialogue with the people in the communities the peacekeepers are sent to protect. What her new book provides is a more nuanced, smarter, and inevitably more complicated understanding of what keeping the peace means in conflict and postconflict situations.

***It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office.***  
By Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox. Cambridge and  
New York: Cambridge University Press. 2005. 203 pp. \$65.00 cloth,  
\$22.99 paper.

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Why do so few women occupy elected offices in the United States? One reason, perhaps the most important one, is that fewer women than men are politically ambitious. That is the major conclusion to emerge from the innovative research conducted by Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox. This finding alone is bound to make *It Takes a Candidate* a must-read, must-cite book for all scholars studying gender and politics.

The analyses and narrative structure of the book are framed by two complementary frameworks. First is their conception of the “winnowing process,” which has three discrete stages: First, women and men must find their way into the pool of those qualified to seek public office. Second, among those in the qualified pool, a smaller number are politically ambitious and have considered running for office. Third, actual candidates represent a small fraction of the politically ambitious. By showing steadily increasing gender imbalances after each of the latter two stages, Lawless and Fox clearly describe how men come to outnumber women as candidates.

The authors also employ an explanatory framework that focuses on three key aspects of contemporary U.S. culture. First, they point to the persistence of “traditional” family roles in the daily lives of men and women in the eligibility pool. For example, for professional women who also bear the majority of child-rearing and household responsibilities, elective office represents the equivalent of the third job—a burden shared by few men. Second, they point to a “masculinized ethos” that results in discrimination (women are less likely to be encouraged or recruited to run for office). Third, they describe a “gendered psyche,” which both appears to have a realistic component (women understand that they must be more qualified than comparable men in order to be taken seriously) and is based on misperception (even when they have the same credentials, women rate themselves as less qualified than men do).

These explanations are summarized in Chapter 1 and developed in more detail in the relevant substantive chapters. The authors do an excellent job in explaining the mechanisms, showing how they rest upon

extensive literatures in both political science and in gender studies more generally. The mechanisms are illustrated with apt, often colorful, anecdotes from the experiences of political elites and from qualitative accounts provided by the respondents.

The winnowing analysis and the explanatory frameworks are brought together in order to analyze data from the authors' Citizen Political Ambition Study. This impressive project is based on interviews with roughly 1,900 men and 1,900 women who, by virtue of their political activism or their positions in three "pipeline" professions (law, business, and education), comprise a sample of potential candidates for elective office. Two hundred women and men were selected for qualitative follow-up interviews. The male and female samples are virtually identical in terms of their education, income, race, and ethnicity. Each potential candidate completed a questionnaire that asked whether he or she had ever considered running for elective office. While an impressive 43% of the women answered affirmatively, this number is dwarfed by the 59% of men who had seriously considered such a run: *a gender gap of 16 points*.

Of those who considered running, 20% of the men and 15% of the women report having actually run for office. The big gap in consideration (the first step in their overall model) combines with the more modest gap in actually running (the second step) so that even if women were equally represented in the pipeline professions, we expect a two-to-one ratio of male-to-female candidates. Thus, most of the observed disparity in substantive representation in U.S. governments can be attributed to the fact that few women think of themselves as potential candidates.

Chapters 4–7 examine both quantitative survey data and answers from 200 follow-up interviews. A total of 24 statistical tables help us to understand the gender gap in political ambition from various angles. Readers should read these substantive chapters very closely for two reasons. First, the tables and in-depth interviews reveal many interesting patterns that will resonate with the three basic explanations put forward by the authors and with conventional understandings of patriarchy in the contemporary United States. The explanations "ring true" and the writing is engaging. Second, there is often a looseness to the analysis that sometimes leads the authors to make assertions that go beyond or even contradict their own data.

For example, on page 55, Lawless and Fox note that women were 3% *more* likely than men to speak with their parents about politics, 8% *less* likely to be encouraged to seek office by their parents, and 3% *more* likely to have parents who actually ran for office. I would call that a wash. But

from these (and perhaps other, unreported) findings, the authors conclude that the data “make clear” that “women were less likely than men to grow up in highly politicized homes” (p. 58). This unfortunate conclusion is repeated several times, including in the summary table in the final chapter.

The biggest disconnect, however, occurs in the interpretation of comprehensive models predicting political ambition. In these models, the dependent variable is whether individuals in the eligibility pool ever considered running for office. Independent variables include sex, demographic and socioeconomic status measures, measures of political interest and engagement, plus variables intended to operationalize aspects of traditional family roles, gendered psyche, or masculinized ethos.

If some combination of these explanations accounts for the gender gap in political ambition, the coefficient for “sex” should shrink to zero and statistical insignificance. Recall that there was a 16 point gap in political ambition initially. I was therefore surprised to see that when the authors controlled for the differential recruitment of men and women (Table 5.8), the estimated gender gap does not shrink. Yes, women are less likely to be recruited; and, yes, recruitment has an enormous effect on political ambition. But the authors’ analyses show that this does *not* account for the gender gap in ambition at all. Similarly, the authors show that women tend to undervalue their qualifications, and show that self-reported qualifications are related to ambition. But their analyses (Table 6.4 and Figure 6.1) show that if women evaluated themselves exactly as men do, the gender gap would still be about 15 points.

Thus, when the authors say on page 127 that “the results we presented in Chapters 3–6 offer substantial leverage not only in predicting whether a respondent has considered running for office, but also in accounting for much of the gender gap in political ambition,” they are contradicting the findings they report in numerous logistic regression tables. The “truth” is undoubtedly more complex, and a solution to these statistical paradoxes may lie in the authors’ data. But the paradox is a glaring one, and makes several key conclusions problematic.

The loose connection between sections of the narrative and the reported data analysis mar what is otherwise an outstanding, agenda-setting contribution. The authors have revealed a major gap in our understanding of gender and substantive representation and suggest that much of the problem lies in self-perceptions that are not easily changed. I recommend that all gender scholars read this book—but read it carefully.

*Gender and Social Capital*. Edited by Brenda O'Neill and Elisabeth O'Neill Gidengil. New York and London: Routledge. 2006. 425 pp. \$90.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

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The essays in this volume constitute a feminist response to Robert Putnam's influential book *Bowling Alone*, and they shed light on two inter-related questions: First, how is our understanding of the nature and impact of social capital enriched by the introduction of a concern with the consequences of gender differences? Second, how is our understanding of the relationship of gender to politics deepened by an ongoing concern with social capital? As Virginia Sapiro put it (p. 152) in her exceptionally clear theoretical essay: "Wherever discussions of social capital and politics lead, our understanding of the phenomenon will be severely limited if scholars neglect the roles of gender in the creation and distribution of social capital and in the links between social capital and politics. Important aspects of the historically different cultural constructions of male and female in society and politics suggest that disregarding gender in understanding social capital is unwise. Given how different are the structures of women's and men's day-to-day lives and the different types and amounts of financial and social resources to which they have access, a 'gender-neutral' story of social capital and politics is likely to be a faulty story."

The very diversity of the 13 essays (plus an introduction and conclusion by the editors) that makes them so useful as a collection also renders them difficult to review. With the exception of Sapiro's contribution, all the essays have an empirical base. However, they vary in the kind of evidence they use and in the analytical approach—ranging from case study to multivariate statistical analysis. While most of the authors present data about female and male citizens, Virginia Morrow focuses on early adolescents and Susan Carroll on women state legislators. One of the strengths of the collection is that the evidence is not confined to a single country: Two of the pieces—one by Dietland Stolle and Michele Micheletti and the other by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart—include systematic data from a number of democracies and are genuinely comparative; of the remainder, two are about the United Kingdom, four about the United States, and four about Canada.

Let me mention a couple of the essays that especially added to my understanding of the matters in question. Stolle and Micheletti show

that women are more likely than men to take part in a form of civic action that has been overlooked by students of political participation: political consumerism or “boycotting” and boycotting, that is, deliberately buying or not buying products for ethical or political reasons. As a form of collective action, political consumerism is notable both because it is increasing in an era when many democracies have witnessed a decline in some types of political activity and because the usual gender gap in political and civic participation is reversed. Stolle and Micheletti do not shy away from acknowledging the dark potential of political consumerism—for example, consumer boycotts with racist goals. However, I wish they had probed further into the limitations of political consumerism as a form of collective leverage. Targeting government policy is often a sensible strategy with potential for lasting consequences beyond a single company. The American grape boycott of the 1960s is cited as a successful example of political consumerism in which women’s participation was crucial. But the authors do not mention that a key reason for some kind of action on behalf of the grape pickers is that agricultural workers did not then—and still do not—fall under the National Labor Relations Act, which protects the right to unionize. Besides, there are times—for example, when a company engaging in objectionable environmental or labor practices sells only to other companies or to governments rather than directly to the public—when political consumerism is simply not a viable tactic.

A particular eye-opener is the essay by Kristin Goss and Theda Skocpol. They document a transformation since the 1960s in the policy concerns of national women’s organizations, such that the proportion of these organizations representing women’s special concerns (especially on matters of reproductive rights, pro and con) has increased substantially at the expense of the proportion seeking to improve society at large—by, for example, advocating for peace or supporting the public schools. What they describe implies not just a change in organizational goals but a revised definition of what constitutes a “women’s issue.” My hunch is that while there may be differences of opinion with respect to whether these processes are to be regretted or welcomed, there will be no controversy over the importance of Goss and Skocpol’s findings.

From time to time, some of these essays—I will spare both readers and authors the naming of names—illustrate the tendencies that sometimes emerge in the conduct of feminist scholarship. One issue is that small gender differences are sometimes overinterpreted. That is, when gender differences appear in the data, their small—even statistically



insignificant—magnitude may go unnoticed in the focus on patterns of gender distinctiveness. Gender differences are contextual, varying with the domain of human experience. When it comes to social capital and civic engagement in developed democracies, what separates men and women is a gap, not a chasm. A related concern is the relative neglect of the diversity among women (and among men). Women and men in these societies are divided along a variety of dimensions—among them class, race or ethnicity, immigration status, and, especially in Canada, language. I wish that some of the authors had paid more attention to whether the patterns they find obtain, for example, for those at the top and bottom of the social ladder in Britain, for Francophone as well as Anglophone in Canada, for African Americans as well as whites in the United States.

A final point: Had I been editing this collection, I might have suggested that more emphasis be placed on the significant issues of gender and social capital that give the collection its title, and less space and energy devoted to explicit critiques of Putnam. These essays share an admirable willingness not to accept without question traditional masculine ways of doing things. Perhaps feminist scholarship should extend that spirit to the tone of scholarly discourse. Rather than adopting the negative posture so often the norm in academic debate, would it not be distinctively feminist to assume a more constructive approach: recognizing the merits even of flawed work and using them as a point of departure in a process of building?

***Sharing Power: Women, Parliament and Democracy.*** Edited by Yvonne Galligan and Manon Tremblay. Aldershot: Ashgate. 2005. 271 pp. \$50.00.

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This insightful volume contributes to our understanding of women's numerical and substantive representation in national legislatures around the world. Specifically, it focuses on a full array of dimensions of women's political presence: obstacles to women's entrance into parliament, policy mechanisms to improve women's underrepresentation, and the policy impact of growing numbers of women in national politics. Chapter authors draw evidence from a variety of sources—aggregate data on per-

centages of women in parliament, cabinets and political parties, surveys of political elites and public opinion, and in-depth interviews with party officials.

This volume stands apart from previous studies of women and parliament for its wide geographical lens. The selection of case studies goes beyond the often-studied nations of Western Europe and North America to include economically developing and recently democratized countries from five continents. Individual chapters cover Indonesia, Hungary, Italy, France, Ireland, Peru, the United Kingdom, Croatia, Canada, Switzerland, Spain, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand, Scandinavia, and a comparison of 43 nations in sub-Saharan Africa.

*Sharing Power* is also unique in its comprehensive theoretical outlook. For example, studies will often focus on the role of electoral systems in facilitating women's representation, or on the role of political parties, yet rarely are these factors considered together. Each country-level chapter incorporates a full array of factors that impact women's parliamentary presence: electoral rules, political parties, candidate gender quotas, the women's movement, the state, gender attitudes, and socio-economic forces. International forces, such as the role of the European Union and the United Nations are mentioned in a few chapters, including the Swiss and Hungarian cases, and this would seem to be an important route for future cross-national research. Among the chapters focusing on newer democracies, democratic transitions appear more favorable for women in the political arena in Spain and Indonesia, and less favorable in Hungary and Croatia.

Several core themes recur through multiple chapters. It is important to note that the integral role of political parties in either promoting or hindering women's advances is highlighted in the cases of Hungary, Italy, France, Ireland, Croatia, Switzerland, and Australia and New Zealand. Similarly, bipartisan women's caucus groups facilitate women's numerical and substantive gains in Indonesia, Italy, sub-Saharan Africa, the UK, and the Netherlands. In addition, "critical acts" of pioneering women often emerge as catalysts for increasing women's political power. Several authors note the importance of women, such as Megawati Sukarnoputri, Simone Veil, Helen Clark, and Jadranka Kosor, in Indonesia, France, New Zealand, and Croatia, respectively.

The volume demonstrates that formal rules to heighten women's political presence have diffused around the world. Gender quotas have been legislated at the national level in countries as diverse as France, Peru, and Djibouti. At another level, voluntary party quotas have been adopted

in Africa, Scandinavia, Indonesia, Hungary, Spain, Australia, Ireland, Canada, and the UK.

Chapters on Hungary and Spain challenge our assumptions about the impact of electoral rules on women's representation. Both cases suggest that proportional representation and higher district magnitudes are not always more favorable to women. Indeed, electoral rules are embedded in a wider set of institutions, and these must be taken into consideration holistically to understand fully the cross-national variation in women's parliamentary presence.

Another important contribution of the book lies in its cross-national perspective on women's influence within parliaments. The evidence from these chapters is mixed. Taken together, the cases seem to suggest that most women legislators share some common idea that they "stand for women" and that higher proportions of women in parliament can shift the political agenda toward issues that more directly touch their lives, such as equal opportunity laws, women's health, violence against women, and family policies.

*Sharing Power* is well written, informative, and comprehensive. It will interest scholars of comparative politics generally, and of legislative studies, political recruitment, women and politics, and/or gender and politics more specifically. For those aiming to take stock of the comparative literature on women in parliament, it is an invaluable resource. Furthermore, because each chapter includes a brief overview of the political and party system, and the tables are quite accessible, this volume would be quite useful in courses on comparative politics, and in courses that look at politics through a gendered lens.

The book poses as many puzzles as it solves, and will spur future research. The take-home message is that explanations for women's increasing levels of political power are contingent on a complex blend of national attitudes toward gender roles; historical, political, and institutional context; party incentives and electoral forces; and the leadership of women already in power. Illustrative of this theme, the conclusions of individual country chapters offer mixed prospects for women's advancement in politics in the near future. For example, although the picture appears bleak in Indonesia and Hungary, it seems considerably brighter in Switzerland and the Netherlands. For all of the core themes, the reader is left with the sense that strong cross-national variation remains the best description of women's political inclusion and ability to transform national politics.