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Gender, structure, and war: what Waltz couldn't see

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This article theorizes Waltz's 'third image,' international system structure, through feminist lenses. After briefly reviewing International Relations (IR) analysis of the relationship between anarchy, structure, and war, it introduces gender analysis in IR with a focus on its theorizing of war(s). From this work, it sketches an approach to theorizing international structure through gendered lenses and provides an initial plausibility case for the argument that the international system structure is gender-hierarchical, focusing on its influence on unit (state) function, the distribution of capabilities among units, and the political processes which consistently govern unit interaction. It outlines the implications of an account of the international system as gender-hierarchical for theorizing the causes of war generally and wars specifically, with a focus on potentially testable hypotheses. The article concludes with some ideas about the potential significance of a theorizing gender from a structural perspective and of theorizing structure from through gendered lenses.

Keywords: gender; feminism; anarchy; war; international security; structure

Why do states make war? When (and why) do states refrain from making war? Though the 'war puzzle' has attracted much scholarly attention, one commentator lamented that, while 'much has been written about the causes of war, little has been learned about the subject' (Vasquez 1993, 3). This may be because war 'multi-causal' (Suganami 1996, 401) and putting together the 'war puzzle' (Vasquez 1993, 1) is complex. Several scholars have provided pieces of the 'war puzzle' both in terms of the causes of war generally and the causes of wars specifically, focusing on systemic-level variables (like international anarchy); super-national-level variables like culture and norms; state-level variables like regime type,

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trade interdependence, shifts in relative power, or changes in military technology; and sub-state level variables like leadership.[1] Many of these theoretical approaches find little common ground in addressing the 'war puzzle.' A characteristic they do share almost universally, however, is the omission of gender analysis. By 'gender analysis,' I mean thinking about the way that social expectations about masculinities and femininities influence the constitution, processes, and structures of global politics.[2]

On the other hand, the feminist tradition in International Relations (IR) has argued that the theory and practice of war has been gendered throughout modern history and that gendered elements at all levels of global politics are important causal and constitutive factors in causing war generally and wars specifically (Steans 1998; Tickner 2001; Sjoberg 2006a). Feminist theorizing about war has proposed that war is productive of and reflective of gender norms in global politics, that gender-based causal variables are required to understand war-making and war-fighting, and that the consequences of war can be understood in gendered terms (see, e.g. Tickner 1992; Sylvester 2010). While feminists theorizing war and wars have done important work, epistemological, ontological, and methodological barriers have often stopped feminist analysis from attracting a 'mainstream' audience in the discipline. Critics of feminist work (e.g. Halliday 1988; Keohane 1998) in IR have argued that there is not a feminist theory of IR or a feminist theory of war on par with a realist theory of war or a liberal theory of war. While this seems to me a hypocritical critique, since there is not *a* theory of war coming from any other paradigmatic approach to IR, it is nonetheless a critique feminist theorizing must overcome.

This article looks to overcome those barriers by theorizing about war and wars through feminist lenses, but engaging an existing approach to theorizing war. Though there are doubtless a number of approaches to engage, this article focuses on one in particular, exploring the relevance of gender to understanding the general causes of 'war,' or, in Waltz's (1959)

[1] About anarchy, see Waltz (1979; 1959); about culture as a cause of war, see Huntington (1996), Henderson (1997), and Fearon and Laitin (2003); about norms, see English (2000) and Farrell (2005); about state regime type, see Doyle (1983) and Russett (1993); about trade interdependence, see Oneal *et al.* (1996), Oneal and Russett (1997), and Cederman and Rao (2001); about relative power, see Organski (1958), Levy (1983), Tammen *et al.* (2002), and Little (2007); about technology changes, see Van Evera (1998) and Gortzak *et al.* (2005); for an evolutionary approach, see Gat (2009).

[2] Distinct from and adding to work that acknowledges the importance of sex in global politics (e.g. Caprioli 2000; Goldstein 2001; Den Boer and Hudson 2002; Hudson *et al.* 2009). For more of a discussion on this distinction, see Sjoberg (2009b).

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terms, 'third image' analysis.[3] Particularly, it focuses on the question of structure at the 'third image' or systemic level.[4]

It is important to note, before embarking on feminist 'third image' theorizing, that such an approach is not an intuitive step for feminist theorizing, and will not be without its feminist critics. Many feminist theorists explicitly express a political commitment to understanding the world from the perspectives of women and/or other marginalized or socially subjugated actors (Brown 1988; Tickner 1992). Such a commitment seems to be at odds with structural theorizing, and feminists have correspondingly critiqued the neglect of 'low politics' in structural accounts of global politics (Peterson 1992). Particularly, feminists have read structural realist accounts of anarchy as ignoring questions of the politics of identity, the role of social hierarchy in organizing political life, and the links between militarism, sexism, and racism (e.g. Tickner 1992, 56; Hooper 2001). Feminists have also criticized structural theorizing for disaggregating the three 'levels' of analysis as if they are separable when in fact they are interdependent and related (True 1996).

Perhaps because of these problems, feminist IR scholars rarely use the word 'structure' and even more rarely discuss the relationship between gender and structure in global politics explicitly. While that reaction is understandable, I argue that failing to engage 'third image' theorizing directly assumes either that there is no 'structure' in Waltzian terms in global politics, or that gender is irrelevant to understanding that structure. This article, with a majority of scholarship in IR, finds the question of international system structure worth exploring. Borrowing from feminist literatures in sociology and women's studies, it argues that gender can be seen as structural. As such, it contends that feminist 'third image' theorizing is not only called for but imperative, as there is a structure to the international system and that structure cannot be understood without gender analysis.

One cannot, however, engage in feminist 'third image' theorizing without having a sense of *which* third image theorizing to engage first.[5] This article starts with Kenneth Waltz's understandings of structure, in

[3] See also Singer (1961).

[4] Kenneth Waltz (and others) theorized the 'third image' or international system from a realist perspective, but Reus-Smit (2008) sees systemic theorizing in constructivism, particularly in the work of Wendt (1992; 1994; 1995; 1999). Reus-Smit characterizes this as systemic because 'everything that exists or occurs within the domestic political realm is ignored, and an account of world politics is derived simply from theorizing how states relate to one another' (2008, 223). It is important to note that this is a *systemic*, but not *structural* account in Waltzian terms.

[5] A number of approaches to structure could be engaged, including most prominently, Waltz's (1959; 1979) structural realist approach and Wendt's (1992; 1999) structurationist sociological approach.

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part because Waltz's work serves as the foundation of much of IR's history of structural theorizing but also because 'structural realism is a far richer sociological theory of international politics than its critics and defenders usually recognize' (Goddard and Nexon 2005, 10). In Waltz's conception of structure, 'action is a social and relational category' where interaction is 'the product of discrete and irreducible systems,' which can be seen working in the interaction of component parts (Goddard and Nexon 2005, 15, 16). Such an approach emphasizes the material and authoritative aspects of international system structure over the social or cultural elements.[6] This approach may be 'hard case' for gender analysis in global politics (which many consider to be exclusively social), but could also serve as foundational for feminist engagements with the structuralist literature in IR from its foundations to its present manifestations. This article, then, takes a feminist 'third image' approach to theorizing critiquing and building off of Waltz's notions of structure.

This article begins by briefly reviewing Waltz's analysis of the meaning and function of structure in causing war, as well as objections raised by critics of structure realist approaches. It then introduces gender analysis in IR with a focus on its theorizing of war(s). The third section, with reference to the work in feminist sociology on gendered organizations and cultures, sketches an approach to theorizing international system structure through gendered lenses. It is followed by a section that makes an initial plausibility case for the argument that the international system structure is gender-hierarchical, focusing on its influence on unit (state) function, the distribution of capabilities among units, and the political processes, which consistently govern unit interaction. A fifth section outlines the implications of an account of the international system as gender-hierarchical for theorizing the causes of war generally and wars specifically, while a sixth section focuses on some places where the Waltzian account of international structure and my own feminist account might predict different outcomes in the making and fighting of wars. The article concludes with some ideas about the potential significance of a theorizing gender from a structural perspective and of theorizing structure through gendered lenses.

Anarchy, structure, and war

Waltz's (1959) 'three images' (man, the state, and war or the international system) have become a staple for explaining IR generally and

[6] This should not be taken as arguing that exploring the relationship between gender and the social and cultural elements of the international system is not a fruitful avenue of exploration; quite the opposite, a feminist exploration of the 'cultures of anarchy' (Wendt 1999) would be an important contribution to the literature, if a different one than this project.

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war specifically, even among scholars who disagree with Waltz's categories. 'Third image,' or systemic, theorizing has been central to structural realist research since its inception. Waltz saw system structural analysis as an important way to address 'what accounts for the repetition of wars even as their [individual and state level] causes vary' (1979, 67). In other words, according to Waltz, the third image was never meant to account for all of the variation in war(s), or to be seen in isolation from other causal factors, just as a different sort of cause with a different role. Goddard and Nexon (2005) go so far as to characterize Waltz's third image as a thought experiment that was to him analytical rather than strictly speaking real. Whether or not that is the case, Waltz (1979) clearly acknowledged other causes of wars.

Still, Waltz argued that there was something inherent in the international structure that is a condition of possibility of, or a permissive cause of, war. That 'something,' in Waltz's understanding, is anarchy (Waltz 1959, 233). The understanding that the international arena is anarchical has also been adopted by proponents of liberal institutionalism (e.g. Axelrod and Keohane 1985; Snidal 1985) and constructivism (Wendt 1992; Hopf 1998). Still, realists like Waltz tell a particular story about the implications of anarchy. According to Waltz, anarchy leads to the recurrence of war through the absence of exogenous authority (1959, 227), the resulting need for units (states) to rely on 'self-help' (1979, 91, 104), and the corresponding differentiation of 'like-unit' states on the basis of capabilities (1979, 94). Neorealism often takes this conception of anarchy as a starting point for analyzing both the causes of war generally and the causes of wars particularly (e.g. Grieco 1988; Walt 1988; Mearsheimer 2001).

The idea that structural international anarchy is a permissive cause of war, however, has its critics. Some critics, mostly from the liberal tradition, contend that international anarchy is tempered by the existence of some order and organization. For example, Keohane and Lisa Martin (1995) characterize institutionalist theory as 'utilitarian and rationalistic' in its expectation that 'interstate cooperation will occur if states have significant common interests.' A second set of realists' critics, mainly constructivists, argue that there's nothing essential about anarchy, which makes war either possible or probable, since 'self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy' (Wendt 1992, 394). Wendt suggests, instead, that there are a number of 'cultures of anarchy' that can cause anarchy to have different practical implications, accounting for culture as 'socially shared knowledge' (Wendt 1999, 142). Many of these theorists suggest that it is instead appropriate to focus on processes (often, intersubjective interactions), either at the systemic level

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or elsewhere.[7] A third approach questions the utility of understanding anarchy as a permissive cause of war. Suganami argues that a strong definition of anarchy (the absence of government) cannot explain war because it does not vary, while a weak definition of anarchy (the absence of a perfect anti-war device) is tautological as a permissive cause of war (1996, 201).[8]

One concern that many critics share is that anarchy as a permissive cause of war predicts the existence or war, but not individual wars. This is because anarchy is constant; war recurs, but is by no means constant. As Waltz originally noted, anarchy is a structural factor that accounts for the 'recurrence of war' despite its 'various causes' (1979, 1). Many, however, find something fundamentally unsatisfactory about such a structural factor. In Suganami's (1996, 201) words, it is 'trivial,' since it is always there (and thus a permissive cause of war) but never itself sufficient as a cause (of wars individually or variation in them). While some theorists take this and other critiques of the structural realist approach to the 'third image' as a call to move attention from structure to process and/or to radically reconceptualize structure, another route asks if perhaps the problem with realist understandings of structure is not structural theorizing itself (or even Waltz's definition of structure) but the realist myopic focus on anarchy. While remaining committed to 'third image' theorizing, this path of inquiry reopens the question of the content of 'international structure' if not its meaning.[9] Put differently, could a structural property of international system *other than* anarchy explain the possibility of (and perhaps occurrence of) war?

A crucial first step to answering this question is understanding what is meant by 'structure' in this very specific sense. Waltz defined structure as 'the arrangement, or the ordering, of the parts of a system' (Waltz 1979, 81). In this view, there are three properties of a structure: the principle by

[7] Different constructivist views propose different mechanisms for the evolution of the current form of international anarchy. The most interesting of which, to me, is Onuf's, who, in *World of Our Making* (1989) argues that speech acts, rues, and rule are central elements in a systematic and inclusive framework where (personal correspondence, 2003) 'social reality subsumes material reality by making intersubjective sense of the world we experience individually.'

[8] Realists respond to liberal critics by arguing that institutions have very little impact on the anarchical structure of international politics; that constructivists are describing changes *in* the system rather than changes *of* the system; and that Suganami (1996) and other critics misunderstand the limited nature of the realist claim that anarchy is a permissive cause of war.

[9] There has been some discussion of this in the constructivist literature, for example, Wendt (1992; 1999); Goddard and Nexon (2005). Though there is no space in this project to engage this debate fully, I think there's value in further inquiry into if/how structure *in Waltz's definition* exists.

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which a system is ordered, the specification of functions of different units, and the distribution of capabilities across units (Waltz 1979, 100–101). The effect of structure, according to Waltz, is that 'political structures shape political processes' (1979, 82). Given this definition, one can ask: are there principles that the international system is ordered by, other than the presence or lack of government? Are such principles manifested in unit function, unit capability, and political processes among units?

Waltz's work itself implies the possibility of alternative structures, as he observes that, 'in looking for international structure, one is brought face to face with the invisible, an uncomfortable position to be in' (Waltz 1979, 89). If international structure is 'invisible,' two possibilities exist: either, as Waltz concludes, international structure is the null set, anarchy; or there is substance to international structure (it exists in some meaningful form) but that substance is invisible (or informal) and thus cannot easily be seen or identified. This article explores the argument that gender hierarchy is a key part of the structure of the international system, though unseen by most.

The argument that gender hierarchy is a key part of the structure of the international system as laid out in this article is not meant to imply that gender hierarchy is prior to other hierarchies in global social or political life. It is instead meant to argue that hierarchies in globalization (of gender, race, religion, culture, ethnicity, etc.) are also fraught with gendering, where devalorizing the 'other' in hierarchies often takes place through feminization (see MacKinnon 1993; Peterson 2010; Peterson and Runyan 2010). This approach may beg the question: if gender is in all hierarchies, why would it be useful to talk about gender? First, were gender in all hierarchies, then it would be useful to talk of gender as a constitutive feature of hierarchies. Second, though, this article not making the argument that all hierarchies are gendered, but instead that even hierarchies which are (first-order) 'about' something else are often performed in gender terms as well. In order to begin exploring gender hierarchy as a possible feature of the international system structure, the next section introduces the idea of gender hierarchy, and briefly discusses feminist work that relates gender hierarchy and war.

Gender hierarchy and war

The word 'sex' usually refers to perceived membership in the biological classes 'male' or 'female,' though that interpretation has been questioned by a growing research program interested in other sexes (e.g. transgender, genderqueer, intersex, etc.) as well as a literature that characterizes sex as a sociobiological (e.g. Butler and Scott 1992; Fausto-Sterling 2000; 2005). The word 'gender' generally refers to expectations that persons perceived to

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be members of a biological sex category will have certain characteristics or interact with others in certain ways. In its simplest form, 'gender' is characteristics (or learned attributes) associated with maleness (masculinity) and characteristics associated with femaleness (femininity). Observing contemporary Western culture, feminists have noted that characteristics associated with femininities include weakness, interdependence, private life, emotion, sensuality, and domesticity; characteristics associated with masculinities include strength, autonomy, public life, rationality, power, and aggression (see Tickner 1992). While these characteristics do vary over time and place, there are surprising similarities across recorded history (see Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

Still, there is not just one 'masculinity' and one 'femininity' even in any given time and place, but instead, gender is a system of symbolic meaning that creates social hierarchies based on [degrees of] perceived association with masculine and feminine characteristics (Scott 1987). Genders (often though not always mapped onto sexes) can be found across states, and those genders have been organized into hierarchies in our social and political organizations (Mann 1986; Goldstein 2001).

As such, as Lauren Wilcox explains, 'gender symbolism describes the way in which masculine/feminine are assigned to various dichotomies that organize Western thought' where 'both men and women tend to place a higher value on the term which is associated with masculinity' (Wilcox 2009). To be clear, this *does not mean* that masculinities are invariably valued over femininities. Instead, it means that masculinities and femininities are regularly delineated, visible, and assigned different value, and that the different value is likely to prize masculinities over femininities. Connell (1995) describes this difference in the value of gender-associated characteristics in terms of the (overt or covert) dominance of an ideal-typical hegemonic masculinity ('this is what a real man should be') in any given social or political context, to which all other masculinities implicitly should aspire, and of which femininities will, by definition, fall short. Therefore, characteristics (and people) associated with masculinities (which map loosely but not absolutely onto maleness) usually occupy a position of privilege, and characteristics (and people) associated with femininities (which map loosely but not absolutely onto femaleness) usually occupy a subordinate position.

The conventional trend of valuing (perceived) masculinities over (perceived) femininities also *does not mean* that all symbols of masculinity are male, and women are the only persons who are feminized. Women can be *masculinist*, that is, they can express a social preference for masculinity and subordinate and/or exclude femininity. Correspondingly, men, corporations, and states can be *feminized*, that is, they can be subordinated by association with values perceived as feminine (MacKinnon 1993). Feminization

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devalorizes, ideologically and materially, and normalizes the exploitation of feminized practices, institutions, and persons (Peterson 2010; see also Peterson and Runyan 2010). It is because of the prevalence of these gendered symbols and significations that feminists have talked about both genders and gender hierarchies as constant features of sociopolitical life. Wilcox (2009) has accounted for gendered social hierarchy as at once a social construction and a 'structural feature of social and political life' that 'profoundly shapes our place in, and view of, the world.' In my view, this is not a process-based account of structure, instead, it is arguing that gender hierarchy is a social structure in international politics, where gender hierarchy is a constant feature of the international system, which dictates political processes of gendering and of gendered competition.

Feminist political theorists have long argued that all systems of political thought and political interaction have conceptions of gender, and 'the conceptions of gender that are implicit and explicit in these systems are not accidental, but necessary' and 'are also constitutive' (Frazer 1998, 54). While various feminist theorists have found the source of the enduring nature of gender hierarchy in different sources, such as reproductive capacity (see Scott 1987), language (Tannen 1990), performance (Butler 1990), sexuality (MacKinnon 1989), human nature and/or psychology (see Hirschmann 1989), human social organization (Brown 1995), and evolution (Gailey 1987), feminist theorizing has emphasized that, though genders and their relationships change over time, place, and culture, gender hierarchies can be found across all of those variations. As such, feminist theorists have argued that 'issues of gender are clearly central to any understanding of the political,' interpretively, empirically, and/or genealogically (Brown 1988; Squires 2000). While gender has not been characterized explicitly as international structure, I argue that such a characterization is useful both to feminist theory and to international theory.

While the existence of gender and gender hierarchies is often characterized as (in various capacities) universal in feminist theorizing, the *genders* in those hierarchies differ. If 'gender' is the existence of a set of characteristics associated with (perceived) sex that form a social structure, *a gender* is *a particular* set of social characteristics associated with particular (perceived) sexes in a particular sociopolitical context. Each person lives gender in a different culture, body, language, and identity. Therefore, there is not one gendered experience of global politics, but many. Masculinities and femininities change over time, and differ by location and cultural context as well as race and social class. In terms familiar to IR, perhaps, the existence of gender and of hierarchies between genders are fixed or constant, and the content of those genders varies through a political process of gendered competition resulting from the structural nature of gender hierarchy.

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Waltz's (2000) distinction between changes *in* the system and changes *of* the system might be useful for understanding this view on gender as structural. Waltz argues that 'the system' is international anarchy, and international anarchy is anarchy whether there are a couple of stray regional organizations or a robust system of international organizations – anarchy is structure so long as there is no world government. On the other hand, things *in* the system change regularly – states can go from having a couple of regional organizations to a robust system of international organizations (and back again) and still be in an anarchy. The constant element of gender is that human social and political organization is authorized, intervened in, legitimated, and organized along gender lines. Changes 'of' the system, or changes within the gendered order, are more common and more likely than changes 'in' the system (undoing gendered order), since both masculinities and femininities (and the relative power among the multiple ones) change over time, place, and situation.

Gender has been talked about as authoritative (e.g. Shepherd 2008) and as changing (e.g. Enloe 2010) in the feminist IR literature. Work using both of those approaches has often focused on uncovering the gender hierarchies that make women invisible in conventionally told histories not only of global politics but of the field of IR (Tickner 2001, 5). This article uses both approaches, arguing that there is a constant presence of gender hierarchy in the international system, and that genders along that hierarchy are sticky but fungible. Like other feminist research on gender, this research serves two purposes: the feminist political purpose of identifying and redressing gender injustice, and the intellectual purpose of knowing as much as we can about what we study. Feminists have argued that, when scholars ignore women or gender in their IR analysis, they are not just reifying gender hierarchy, but giving themselves an incomplete picture of events in and the constitution of global politics. Gender 'matters' in global politics in a number of ways, feminists argue, including but not limited to the tendency of the gendering of nationalist and ethnic identities to exacerbate conflict; the links between masculinity, virility, and violence in militarized cultures; the ways that feminization maps onto racial, ethnic, and class conflicts; and the distribution of socioeconomic benefits on the basis of gender (Tickner 2001, 6–7).

Gender and war(s)

Feminist theorists have also suggested that sex and gender are key to theorizing war. Some scholars have shown sex to be a key variable in war(s) by linking sex equality within states and states' tendency to make war(s) (e.g. Den Boer and Hudson 2002; Caprioli 2004; Hudson *et al.* 2009).

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Using statistical evidence, Hudson *et al.* made the state-level (or 'second image') argument that 'the treatment of females within society' is a 'fundamental and powerful factor' in explaining when wars occur (2009, 7). While this work using gender as variable is interesting, using gender subordination as an analytical concept through which to understand international conflict provides more leverage to analyze the gendered nature of states, militarism, and war.[10]

This perspective is the foundation for an emerging subfield of Feminist Security Studies that argues that security can be understood as constituted by gender, war seen as caused by gender hierarchy, and wars considered gendered competitions (Sjoberg 2009a; Sylvester 2010; Wibben 2011). Feminist scholarship has explicitly linked war and gender subordination in a number of different ways: conceiving of global politics as a 'war system' where sexism, human subordination, and violence are linked (Reardon 1985); noting that war often victimizes women (Stiehm 1983); pointing out the co-constitution of gender, nationalism, and conflict (Yuval-Davis 1997); linking gender and militarism (Enloe 1989), and understanding the enterprise of war as fundamentally gendered (Tickner 1992).[11] This article argues that feminist theorizing of war and feminist structural theorizing can be productively linked.

Feminist structural theorizing?

This section sets the theoretical groundwork for the thesis that the international system structure is gender hierarchical. At the outset, it is important to note that this 'third image' approach is different and separate from (though not necessarily mutually exclusive with) other views about gender in global politics. Particularly, it is distinct from 'second image' argument that states are gendered, or that the level of gender inequality in a state is a predictor of the level of aggressiveness that state will show in interstate relations. That is, if the international system structure is gender-hierarchical, its component units (states) are also gendered (particularly in their constitution and relationships), but that is a part and a result of structural gender hierarchy rather than confounding evidence for a structural interpretation. In other words, a 'third image' approach asserts that gender of, within, and among states reflects and reproduces the gendered nature of the international system structure, rather than being an incidental property of its units. It is also distinct from a 'first image' argument that gender subordination is a

[10] Thanks to Spike Peterson for this distinction.

[11] These are early examples; each of these works sparked scholarly traditions in the research area.

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constant part of human nature and therefore a constant part of international interaction. Instead, it characterizes gender hierarchy as a sociopolitical ordering principle rather than an innate property of being human. Finally, it is distinct from the feminist argument that the three 'levels' (the individual, the state, and the system structure) cannot be disaggregated. Though this approach acknowledges connection between the 'levels,' it looks to see if there is something to be gained from an approach analyzing the role of gender at the international system level.

So what would it mean to see gender hierarchy as structural in global politics? Waltz specifies that a structure in global politics provides a principle or principles by which the system is ordered, specifications of the functions of the units, and distribution of capabilities among units. Seeing gender hierarchy as structural, then, would mean that gender hierarchy provides an ordering principle for the international system, specifies the functions of units, and distributes capabilities among them. The question of what that would look like has not been addressed in detail in feminist IR. It is instructive here, then, to borrow from feminist sociologists, who have provided a framework for understanding whether or not gender hierarchy is a structural feature in an organization.

Gendered organizational structures and cultures

The literature on gendered organizational structures and cultures in sociology explores the idea that gender is a foundational element of organizational structure, where it is 'present in processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power' (Britton 2000). Joan Acker introduced a framework for understanding if and how organizations are gendered, because she was concerned 'in spite of the feminist recognition that hierarchical organizations are an important location of male dominance, most feminist writing about organizations assume that the organizational structure is gender neutral .... posing the argument as structure *or* gender' (1990, 139). This approach, Acker (1990, 143) notes, 'implicitly posits gender as standing outside of structure' even while critiquing gender bias in organizational processes. Similarly, feminist writing about global politics can be seen as implying that international structure is gender neutral, even while critiquing gender bias in global political processes (e.g. Tickner 1992; Pettman 1996).[12]

Rejecting the idea that organizations are structurally gender neutral, Acker points out that 'assumptions about gender underlie the documents and contracts used to construct organizations and provide the commonsense

[12] Acker's discussion here is a large part of why this article builds off Waltz's material/organizational notion of structure rather than Wendt's culture-based reading of structure.

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ground for theorizing them' (Acker 1990, 139). In this view, gender hierarchy is a structural feature of organizations, but it has been normalized to such a degree that its presence and operation can be invisible. Particularly, Acker notes that 'as a relational phenomenon, gender is difficult to see when only the masculine is present' (1990, 142) because:

> Men in organizations take their behavior and perspectives to represent the human, organizational structures and processes are theorized as gender neutral. When it is acknowledged that women and men are affected differently by organizations, it is argued that gendered attitudes and behavior are brought into (and contaminate) essentially gender-neutral structures. (Acker 1990, 142).

Acker uses the example that MacKinnon's (1989) argument that the sexual domination of women is embedded within legal organizations has not to date become a part of mainstream discussions. Rather, behaviors such as sexual harassment are viewed as deviations of gendered actors, not, as MacKinnon might argue, components of organizational structure. Acker, then, sees gender analysis as problematic insomuch as it fails to recognize *gender as structure*. She characterizes gender as a structural feature of organizations:

> To say that an organization … is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition of ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of these processes, which cannot be properly understood without an analysis of gender …. Gendering occurs in at least five interacting processes … first is the construction of divisions along lines of gender – divisions of labor, of allowed behaviors, of locations in physical space, of power … second is the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions … third … interactions between women and men, women and women, men and men, including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission … fourth, these processes help to produce gendered components of individual identity … finally, gender is implicated in the fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures … a constitutive element in organizational logic (Acker 1990, 146–147).

A gendered structure, in Acker's terms, then, distributes capabilities (defined as advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, and meaning and identity) among units on the basis of a unit's place in a gender hierarchy that orders the organization. Gender hierarchy, in this view, defines the function of units, by dividing labor,

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constraining allowed behavior, producing gendered components of unit identity, positioning units as dominant and subordinate, and influencing or dictating the ongoing processes of organizational function. Sexes and genders, then, become at least in part differences derived from discrimination in a gender-hierarchical organization (MacKinnon 1993).

The international system structure as a gendered organization

A close look at Acker's understanding of structure in organizations shows that it shares common elements with Waltz's definition of structure in the international system. Both describe a structure as a principle that orders systems, specifies functions of units, distributes capabilities among units, and is productive or constitutive of political processes that shape unit relations. Both also see the structure of the system as shaping unit behavior rather than seeing unit behavior as incidental, or as shaping the structure.

Mirroring Acker's argument might give a sense both of what a structural gender hierarchy might look like and of what features might be expected of a gender-hierarchical international system as distinct from a system where gender hierarchy was not a structural factor. If the international system structure is gender hierarchical, then assumptions about gender underlie the structure and ordering principles of the international system and provide commonsense ground for theorizing them. When the international system structure is theorized as gender-neutral, it is often because of a blindness to its gendered nature. After all, as Tickner (1992) noted, men who theorize IR often take their approaches to be representative of the human even when they are narrow and unrepresentative. When it is acknowledged that global politics affects women and men differently, it is argued that gendered attitudes and behavior are brought into (and contaminate) gender-neutral structures, both in global politics more generally and in racial, class, ethnic, or religious conflicts specifically. Because the available discourses conceptualize the international structure as gender neutral, as a relational phenomenon, gender is difficult to see when masculinities appear gender-neutral. Even feminist theorizing focuses on moving away from structural theory, which implicitly posits gender as standing outside of structure. This makes the structural nature of gender hierarchy 'invisible' to scholars like Waltz who are not looking for it.

Even if it is 'invisible,' there are ways, according to Acker, to tell if gender is a structural feature of global politics. Gender is a key part of international structure if advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through masculinities and femininities. If units in the international system have

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their interactions, competitions, and relationships governed and ordered by perceived associations with gender-based characteristics, the international system can be seen as gender-hierarchical. In this understanding, gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Instead, in a gender hierarchical international structure, 'units' have their labor, allowed behaviors, locations in physical space, and power distributed on the basis of perceived gender characteristics. This occurs within a system of constructed symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, and sometimes contest these gendered divisions. Units interact, then, on the basis of these distinctions and symbols. These processes help produce gendered components of state and national identity, like notions of honor, shame, chivalry, and protection. Gender is implicated in creating and conceptualizing political processes social relations between units, and is a constitutive element of the international system.[13]

Combining Waltz's understanding of what an international structure is with Acker's concept of how a gendered structure is manifested in organizational and unit behavior yields a description of what gendered structure might look like (as opposed to the counterfactual):

1. State identity having gendered components (unit function);
2. States' positions, allowed behaviors, locations in physical space, and power being distributed on the basis of perceived gender characteristics, and advantage, meaning, control, and action between states to be distributed on the basis of association with masculinity and femininity (unit capability distribution); and
3. Inter-state interaction being premised on the gender hierarchy between states (production of political processes for unit interaction).

Though offering empirical proof for the general narrative of structural gender hierarchy and/or these specific potential manifestations is beyond the scope of this theoretical article, the next section explores their plausibility, combining previous feminist research and examples. This exploration has two main goals: providing readers with evidence that feminist 'third image' theorizing is both feasible and productive, and suggesting productive areas for further research into the proposition that the international system's gender hierarchy is related to the causes of war(s).

[13] A reviewer for this article contended that this is a catch-22: if the unit can escape this structure, units matter more, and this is fundamentally second-image analysis; if it cannot, this is a pessimistic view global politics. Instead, I think that units operate in a system that uses gender codes to organize units, but the gender codes it uses are fungible, and could be more humane, giving the unit hope, despite the inflexibility of the overall system.

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Seeing gender hierarchy in international structure

One element of a gender-hierarchical international system would be that that assumptions about gender underlie the structure and ordering principles of the international system and provide commonsense ground for theorizing them. This is an observation consonant with feminist observations of global politics, which have characterized the global political arena as a 'patriarchal structure of privilege and control' (Enloe 1993, 70). Others see the global political arena a place where 'the structure of political communities has assumed gendered forms' (Steans 2003, 43), and ordered by 'gender relations [which] structure social power' (Pettman 1996, 43). These observations are rooted in feminist work which shows gender operating in how political leaders are chosen (Tickner 1992), how state governments work (Peterson 1992), how militaries function (Enloe 1989), and how economic benefit is distributed (Pettman 1996). States have been shown their relative military prowess, judged and asserted their relative power, and demonstrated and adjusted their relative economic status through gendered competition using gendered language (e.g. Cohn 1988). The gender hierarchy in the world 'out there' can be read as replicated in the 'commonsense ground' or traditional theorizing in IR, which feminist theorists (e.g. Tickner 1988) have characterized as partial at best and unrepresentative at worst because it often analyzes the perspectives and lives of only a small, elite, male portion of the global population.

This theme in feminist theorizing in IR suggests that there might be something to the idea that international structures are theorized as gender-neutral because men take their perspectives to represent the human. Feminists have characterized conventional knowledge in IR as problematic because it is constructed only by those in a position of privilege, which affords them only distorted views of the world.[14] As such, it has been a crucial part of the feminist project in IR to 'not only add women but also ask how gender – a structural feature of social life – has been rendered invisible' by working to 'distinguish "reality" from the world as *men* know it' (Peterson and True 1998, 23). Often, in disciplinary knowledges, 'gender' is seen as a proxy for 'women' because 'women' are perceived to *have* gender, where men are not.

Another element of a gendered international system structure would be that, when it is acknowledged that gender plays a role in global politics,

[14] Scheman 1993; Garry and Pearsall 1996; Harding 1998. There is a sociology to what is understood as central to the discipline, where what counts as 'IR' matches what men do more than it matches what women do at least in part because the perspectives of male scholars have defined the boundaries of the discipline (Sjoberg 2008).

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it is often discussed as a corruption of a gender-neutral system rather than a product of a gendered system. For example, work like that of Inglehart and Norris (2002) and Hudson *et al.* (2009)[15] argues that it is states that treat their women the worst that corrupt not only the gender order but the potential for interstate peace, cooperation, and development. This logic is replicated in many discussions of gender in the policy world as well. For example, 'gender mainstreaming' agendas (see True and Mintrom 2001; Shepherd 2008) engage in a process of integrating gender concerns into the structures that already exist in governments and organizations. The scenario derived from Acker's theorizing suggests that when gender subordination is characterized as the exception, rather than the rule, in international political interactions, gender is difficult to see because the masculine is at once assumed and invisible. The recurrent focus in feminist work on the need to ask IR theory 'where are the women?' (Enloe 1983) and 'where is gender?' (Bell and O'Rourke 2007) suggests that it is plausible that gender is difficult to see in IR because the masculine dominates our visions of the international system. It is important to note that the masculine here involves and implicates, but is not reducible to, men.

Waltz 'tests' his idea of structure primarily by its predictive power and its indirect manifestations (1986, 72). He argues that, since the anarchical nature of the international system is invisible and thus cannot be directly verified or proven, it must be verified by its manifestations and implications (Waltz 1986, 73). This verification, to Waltz, comes by examining unit function, distribution of capabilities across units, and political processes of unit interaction. The remainder of this section considers whether there is evidence in those three observable parts of global politics that the international system may be gender-hierarchical.

Unit function: does state identity have gendered components?

In Waltz's account, 'a system is composed of a structure and of interacting units' where 'the structure is the system-wide component that makes it possible to think about the system as a whole' and 'the arrangement of units is a property of the system' (1986, 70, 71). Waltz sees the system as an anarchy, which by definition specifies that units have the same function. Still, Waltz gives a sense of what would be different if the system was a hierarchy, since 'hierarchy entails relations of super- and subordination among a system's parts, and that implies their differentiation' (1986, 87). Calling states 'like units' in Waltz's terms is 'to say that each state is like

[15] Inglehart and Norris' (2002) () work is based on a survey of values, while Hudson *et al.* (2009) base their work on their collected empirical data about indicators of women's rights.

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all other states in being an autonomous political unit' (Waltz 1986, 89). Waltz sees states as performing fundamentally similar tasks in similar ways, and argues that the differences between states are in capabilities not in function or task (1986, 91).

This section explores two arguments about gender and the function of the units of the international system. First, it argues that gender can be seen as constituting unit 'function' in the international system, whether the units are 'like' or differentiated. Second, it proposes that gender hierarchy actually differentiates unit function in the international system.

The argument that gender constitutes the function of all units in the international system is supported by the degree to which states define their identities (and therefore the tasks of domestic and foreign policy) in gendered ways. A growing literature on ontological security (e.g. Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008) characterizes state identity in terms of 'sense of self,' a language that has long been used in feminist accounts of nation and nationalism. Feminists who have worked on nationalism have argued that national identity and gender are inextricably linked, and that 'all nationalism are gendered, all nationalisms are invented, and all are dangerous' (McClintock 1993).[16] Feminists have shown that gendered imagery is salient in the construction national identities, particularly when, often, women are the essence of, the symbols of, and the reproduction of state and/or national identity (Yuval-Davis 1997; Wilcox 2009).

A number of examples illustrate the link between national identity and gender. Feminist studies have demonstrated that gender has been essential to defining state identity in Korea (Moon 1997), modernizing Malaysia (Chin 1998), Bengal (Sen 1993), Indonesia (Sunindyo 1998), Northern Ireland (Porter 1998), South Africa (Meintjes 1998), Lebanon (Schulze 1998), Armenia (Tachjian 2009), and a number of other states. For example, Niva has noted that, during the First Gulf War, the United States' identity was understood as a 'tough but tender' masculinity where it was expected that the United States military would courageously defeat the Iraqi military, but would at the same time rescue the feminine state of Kuwait from the hypermasculine clutches of the Iraqi state (1998). On the other hand, responding to the United States' and United Nations' threats of military intervention in Kuwait, Saddam Hussein's Iraq consistently used gendered references to hypermasculine understandings of state identity (Sjoberg 2006b). Gendered nationalisms, however, do not just arise in

[16] These discussions are not meant to conflate state and nation, an area where feminists have done a lot of work on the differences and nuances (e.g. Yuval-Davis 1997), but instead to focus on addressing the state, the 'unit' in third-image theorizing in IR, despite broader applicability.

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conflict situations. Bannerji has noted that Canadian national identities are constructed through 'race,' class, gender, and other relations of power, where subordinate classes and 'races' are feminized in relation to the dominant image of Canadian identity, not only within the Canadian state but also in Canada's external projection of nationalist identity (2000, 173). Taylor's analysis of the 'Dirty War' in Argentina characterizes identity in the conflict as 'predicated on the internalization of a rigid hierarchy' of gender and argues that 'the struggle, as each group aimed to humiliate, humble, and feminize its other, was about gender' (1997, 92, 34).

A brief look at one example recently used in the literature might further illustrate the point. In his book, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, Steele (2008) notes that honor and shame shape states' self-perception of their identities. Contrary to the realist logic that state prioritizes prudence and survival over honor and justice, Steele sees honor as a universal part of state self-identity, where states look for honor even sacrificing physical integrity. To illustrate the role of honor in state self-identity, Steele uses the example of the Belgian choice to fight a losing war against the Germans in 1914 rather than allow Germany access to Belgian territory and avoid the casualties and terror involved in their inevitable defeat. Steele notes that honor was implicated in Belgium's response to Germany's ultimatum, given that most policy statements stressed their need to 'fight for the honor of the flag' and 'avenge Belgian honor' (Steele 2008, 112).

Feminist analysis suggests that we cannot understand the role of honor in state self-identity without reference to both masculine and feminine conceptions of honor in the state (Jowkar 1986). Masculine conceptions of honor vary between chivalric and protection-oriented and aggressive and prideful, while feminine conceptions of honor often focus on the purity and innocence of the territory of the state and/or the women and children inside (see Elshtain 1985). Through gender lenses, the Belgian discussion of national honor in 1914 was one where the leaders' (masculine) honor was tied to not giving in to, and even resisting, the would-be violators of the territory's (feminine) honor, which was tied to purity. The 'honor' of the Belgian government then was tied to unwillingness to sacrifice the 'honor' of the innocent, neutral, vulnerable, and untouchable identity and position of Belgium *vis a vis* its neighboring Germany. It is no coincidence that the following attack was referred to as the 'Rape of Belgium' (Niarchos 1995). In the 'Rape of Belgium' narrative, the German invasion spoiled the feminine elements of Belgian state identity, and emasculated Belgian leaders as protectors of its feminized territory. Survival or prudence cannot account for Belgium's actions in 1914; in fact, as Steele pointed out, Belgium acted contrary to both. Honor can explain the

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behavior, but neither the form nor function of that honor is clear without accounting for the gendered elements of Belgian state identity. The story about gendered state identity can also be read onto Germany (as a hypermasculine aggressor) and Britain (as a chivalrous protector).

While some might see the influence of gender on state or national identity as a 'second-image' or unit-level explanation,[17] Waltz explains that a factor is structural if it is not influencing state identity (and therefore state function) in states individually, but instead influencing the identities (and therefore functions) of states generally. In other words, forces that define one state's identity or five states' identities are second-image; forces that influence *all* states identities are third-image. Feminist scholars have shown that 'nationalism is naturalized, and legitimated, through gender discourses that naturalized the domination of one group over another through the disparagement of the feminine' (Peterson 1999). These gender hierarchies are always present even if specific genders and their orders in hierarchies are fungible. In other words, it is not particular nationalisms that are gendered (and some nationalisms that are not), it is that gender hierarchy as a structural feature of global politics defines the properties and functions of the system's constituent units, including their national identities. All nationalisms being gendered does not mean that all nationalisms are the same, however.

The mechanism through which gender hierarchy can be seen to influence national identity and state function is through the link between any given state's national identity and the 'hegemonic masculinity,' or particular ideal-typical gender that is on top of the gender hierarchy that state 'units' are situated in at any given time and place (Hooper 1998, 34). The argument that states' structures and functions are often defined by masculinities (see Peterson 1992) is not based on the observation that states are (mostly) governed by men. Instead, as Connell explains, 'the state organizational practices are structured in relation to the reproductive arena' (1995, 73). Some states' hegemonic masculinities are aggressive and projected, others are tough but tender, and still others are stoic and reserved. All hegemonic masculinities relate to a feminized other, but they do so in different ways: some encourage violating it, some define themselves in

[17] There is something of a chicken-and-egg question here, where some ask whether 'third image' structural gender had to 'come from' emergent or constant 'second-image' properties. First, I think that our conceptions of structure (be they based on Hobbesian or Lockean states of nature) are gendered from the outset, and that gendered structure is therefore ahistorical. Assuming the reader is not convinced by that argument, however, it is sufficient to consider gender as a structural element governing relations between states to be a feature of the Westphalian state system.

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opposition to it, some understand it as treasured and to be protected, and some mix elements of all of the above. The gendered nature of national identities influences the function of states, particularly in the areas of war-making and war-fighting, but also in terms of citizenship, economic organization, diplomatic relations, and involvement in international organizations.[18] For example, feminists have catalogued throughout the history of the modern state system a relationship between military service, masculinity, and full citizenship (either *de jure* or *de facto*) in states (Moscovici 2000).

Though the relationship between gender and nationalism generally (and genders and nationalisms specifically) influences the function of units whether they are like units (in anarchy) or not like units (indicative of a hierarchical system in Waltz's terms), evidence of different gendered nationalisms suggests that gender hierarchy in global politics differentiates between functions of units in the system rather than dictating that all units function similarly. Units in the system (even defined in the narrow realist terms where only states count as units) do have many similar functions in terms of governance, education, health care, and the like. But especially in their external relations, states also have a number of differentiated functions. Some states were/are colonizers, some states were colonized and still deal with remaining markers of colonization. Some states are aggressors, while other states are the victims of aggression. Some states are protectors, while other states require protection. Some states provide peacekeeping troops, international humanitarian aid, and other public goods, while other states do not serve those functions, depending on state identity (e.g. Savery 2007). Some states serve to facilitate international cooperation while others act as cogs in cooperation's wheels. Some states see their masculinity as affirmed in the interstate equivalent of rape and pillage, while other states see it in chivalry, honor, and a sense of the genteel.

While Waltz might classify these differences as merely capabilities gaps, different state functions in the community of states do not map one-to-one onto capabilities. Instead, I propose that they map onto the ways that gender shapes state identities and functions. As Peterson (2010) notes, 'not only subjects but also concepts, desires, tastes, styles, ways of knowing … can be [masculinized or] feminized,' such that states' ontological security is related to their gendered identities. For example, a number of feminist analyses of the United States during the first Gulf War identify its policy

[18] see, for example, interms of war-making and war-fighting, Pettman 1996; Peterson 1999; 2010; Sjoberg 2006b, in terms of citizenship, Stiehm 1983, economic organization, Pettman 1996, diplomatic relations (Scott 1986), and involvement in international organizations, Meyer and Prugl 1999.

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choices and military strategies as consonant with a new, post-Cold War 'tough-but-tender' image of the United States' masculinity, which maintained the Cold War-era projection of strength, but added an element of sensitivity and a chivalric conception of protecting the weak (e.g. Niva 1998; Sjoberg 2006a). Seemingly inconsonant functions for the US military as at once an attack force and a tool for protection then make sense, because the state does *function differently* based on its *self-perception of identity*, which might be seen as (at least in part) a product of structural gender hierarchy in the international arena.

Distribution of capabilities: does gender hierarchy distribute advantage?

Waltz argues that structures dictate the differentiation of capabilities across units, distinguishing this from first and second image theorizing by noting that 'although capabilities are attributes of units, the distribution of capabilities across units is not' (Waltz 1986, 93). In other words, state capacity is a second-image issue, but the distribution of capacities among states is a manifestation of system structure. By 'distribution of capabilities,' Waltz means the organization of states or 'units,' positionally, in relation to each other, on the basis of their relative power. While positionality and power are a part of Acker's understanding of how structures distribute capabilities as well, Acker adds several features (which may be thought of in IR terms as absolute, rather than relative, differences), including allowed behaviors, meaning, control, and action. In Waltz's relative terms, 'structure defines the arrangement, or the ordering, of the parts of a system or relative capability' (Waltz 1986, 73), and in Acker's terms, that, and absolute capabilities and constraints as well. While structural gender hierarchy likely has something to contribute to the question of absolute unit capabilities in the international system, this section focuses on the questions of relative capabilities that Waltz identifies as indicative of structure. Along those lines, it contented that states' position, allowed behaviors, and power are distributed on the basis of perceived gender-associated characteristics and changes therein.

Feminists have long argued that 'the structural and ideological system that perpetuates the privileging of masculinist' in IR is 'a principle cause for so many of the world's processes [such as] empire-building, globalization, modernization' (Enloe 2004, 4, 6). Differences between hegemonic masculinities and those masculinities they subordinate, play a role in the ordering of the international system (Hooper 2000, 70). Enloe details:

> Patriarchal systems are notable for marginalizing the feminine. That is, insofar as any society or group is patriarchal, it is there that it is

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> comfortable – unquestioned – to infantilize, ignore, trivialize, or even actively cast scorn upon what is thought to be feminized (Enloe 2004, 5).

'The feminine' in these terms is not just women or self-identified feminine actors or entities. It is also characteristics associated with femininity wherever they are found. This section briefly explores two arguments about how a gender hierarchical international system might distribute unit capabilities: in terms of units' perceptions of their relative positions and in terms of units' actual relative capabilities.

In terms of unit perception of relative position, there is evidence that states and other political actors position themselves relatively according to the degree to which other states meet their gender expectations or measure up to their ideal-typical masculinity. A brief contemporary example shows the ways gender tropes influence states' perceptions of relative position, and links them to a discussion of 'actual' relative position as well. Banerjee describes this dynamic in the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir particularly, which she calls a 'clash of masculinities' where each state amasses troops along the Line of Control (2005, 12). Banerjee explains that two very different understandings of masculinity, the Indian Hindu ideal-type and the Pakistani Muslim ideal-type are 'locked in a struggle defined by the valorization of martial prowess, physical strength, and the unwillingness to compromise' where each sees their own ideal-typical understanding of masculinity as superior and uses that as a basis for an understanding of national superiority (2005, 12–13). Feminists have called this approach a muscular or militarized masculinism, where states perceive their relative power and position based on their understandings of the most valued masculine characteristics. Similar dynamics of states using gender to judge relative position have been documented across the feminist literature. Feminists have made this argument referencing the United States, Iraq, and Kuwait (Sjoberg 2006a); the former Yugoslavia (Zalewski 1995), India and Pakistan (Das 2003; Banerjee 2010), the United States and China (Peterson and Runyan 2010; Sjoberg 2010), China and Hong Kong (Swider 2006), Ireland and Northern Ireland (Banerjee 2010), Russia and Chechnya (Eichler 2010), Apartheid South Africa and its critics (Conway 2008), the United States and Egypt (McFarland 2010), the 'Western World' and the 'Arab World' (Peterson and Runyan 2010), Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey (Agathangelou 2002), the Hutus and the Tutsis in the Great Lakes Region (Desforges 1999), among the major players in international trade and lending (Mohanty 2003; Elias and Beasley 2008), and a number of other places in the world. This analysis has caused scholars like Enloe to warn that 'if we miss patriarchy when it is in fact

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operating as a major structure of power, then our explanations about how the world works will be unreliable' (2004, 4).

At the same time, Banerjee's description of the conflict between India and Pakistan suggests that it is not only states' perception of their relative capabilities that are dictated by gender hierarchy but also states' 'actual' relative capabilities and their interests in relative power. At the same time that India and Pakistan are identifying 'self' and 'other' in terms of relative conformity to an ideal-typical masculinity, they are also struggling against each other with means and methods prescribed by those masculinities. It is possible, then, that relative position within the international gender hierarchy helps to define what counts as 'capability' for units. Realists have defined capability in terms of military power and economic resources that can be devoted to the development of military power (e.g. Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). Feminists have argued that both the conflation of 'capabilities' and 'military power' and the distribution of military power are profoundly gendered (Enloe 1983; 1989; 2010). Instead, relative capability is at least in part *actually constituted by* relative positioning on along gender hierarchies. Cynthia Weber gives the example of this in discussing the United States and Cuba:

> A story of conquest, loss, and recovery long played out in U.S. foreign policy but one that reached a critical anticlimax in U.S.–Caribbean relations between 1959 and 1994. During this period, a masculinized United States 'lost' its Caribbean reward for hemispheric valor in the Spanish–American War – the feminized Cuba, its symbolic object of desire. Playing a role in the U.S. imaginary as a sort of trophy mistress, Cuba was the near colony and certain feminine complement that the United States relied on to forestall any pending midlife/hegemonic/masculine identity crisis .... Misreading Castro and Castro's Cuba, the United States ... continued to pursue Cuba as an idealized feminine object, even once its mistress had grown a beard .... As a result, U.S. policy toward the Caribbean has consisted of a series of displacements of castration or castration anxiety (Weber 1999, 1–3).

In this view, gender can account for the United States' perception of Cuba's relative power as (still inferior but) significantly higher than its military capacity and strategic position might merit, especially outside of Cold War politics. Cuba's place as symbolic object of desire can be read as a constitutive part of its relative capability *vis a vis* the United States, and perhaps in global politics more broadly.

In addition to impacting the actual distribution of state relative capability, seeing the international system as gender hierarchical helps explain why relative power matters so much. Understanding the international system

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as a gender hierarchy helps to explain the emphasis put on self-help, power politics, action, advantage, and control in distribution of goods and services. If, following Wendt (1992), anarchy is itself inadequate to make the international arena competitive, there is an alternative to seeing it based in 'cultures of anarchy' (Wendt 1999). There are foundational characteristics of systemic gender hierarchy that could account for state competition and conflict. In patriarchal social structures, equality and coexistence are undesirable, and dominance is the measure of success. As such, international system patriarchy *itself* incentivizes rejection of inequality, competition, and striving for dominance. In a gender-hierarchical international system, we can expect states to find equality undesirable, to see dominance as a goal, and to enforce this dominance on any number of axes. This account has the potential to explain the struggle for relative power among state-units in the international system more compellingly than the logic of survival derived from an understanding that the international system is anarchical.

Inter-state interaction: does gender hierarchy shape political processes?

The third manifestation of international system structure, according to Waltz, is that structure shapes the political processes among units, and insures the basic continuity of political processes so long as the structure remains. Though there are a number of political processes between states that could be discussed as related to gender hierarchy, including diplomacy (Enloe 2000), interstate jurisprudence (Charlesworth *et al*. 1991), and international institutions (Moser and Moser 2005), this brief exploration will focus on two aspects: competitive power between states generally and militarization specifically.

As mentioned in the last section, a patriarchal social order in the international system incentivizes unit competition. The international system gender hierarchy is also manifested in the processes by which that competition takes place. Particularly, feminist scholars have argued that the gendered competition among states selects for a particular (masculinized) sort of power (dominance). Allen (2000) delineates three sorts of power: power-over, or dominance, the sort of power that is most recognized in the international arena; but also power-to (the ability to act contrary to dominant forces despite their preponderance or power-over); and power-with (the ability of weaker actors to act together for counter-hegemonic purposes).

If power is the driving force behind interstate relations and global politics (an assumption made by much if not most of IR theory and most structural theory), then seeing power as power-over means that the

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accumulation of power is necessarily competitive *and* zero-sum, making conflict likely if not necessary as power-seeking states for relative position. Viewing power as zero-sum also presumes a stark and delineable distinction between self(state) and other(state) where accumulated power is a resource the advantages of which can be confined to its accumulator. This narrow view dominates interstate processes, where 'gendered power is the victory of certain ideas over others in social [and political] interaction because they are associated with valorized gender' (Sjoberg 2006a, 33). In this way, gender 'a particular kind of power relation … central to understanding international processes' (Steans 1998, 5).

States that lack power-over are not necessarily powerless, but alternative, non-competitive versions of power are feminized and devalued in the international arena in competitions for masculinized dominance. This is why, in states' competitions, in war, trade, or sport, the winner's masculinity is implicitly and often explicitly affirmed, while the loser's masculinity is subordinated or doubted. Other processes are possible, however. As Allen argues, 'to think about power solely in terms of domination neglects … empowerment' (Allen 1999, 122). While, 'by emphasizing plurality and community …[feminist theory] consciously seeks to distance power from domination' and understand power collaboratively, the gender-hierarchical international system is blind to such an alternative (Allen 1999).

Policy options like empathy (Sylvester 1994), positive-sum collaboration (Lennie 1999), unilaterally deconstructing the cycle of violence (Elshtain 1992), care (Robinson 2011), or empowerment (Hill Collins 2000) are often outside of states' (perceived) toolboxes because the gendered system selects for power-over rather than power-to or power-with as a political process among units. The dominance of power-over as how states relate is relatively stable so long as the system remains gender hierarchical. Feminist scholars have seen gender hierarchy inspiring power-over relationships despite other possibilities in human rights discourses in Latin America (Brysk 2000), international interactions with Saddam Hussein's Iraq (Sjoberg 2006a), the United States in the 'war on terror' (Young 2003), in Asia-Pacific Relations (D'Costa and Lee-Koo 2008), among states in post-Cold War Eastern Europe (Waylen 1994), and inter-Arab League relations (Tessler and Warriner 1997). Countless other examples from realist analyses of foreign policy-making show the dominance of competitive approaches to power among states; feminist work suggests that the source of the dominance of these approaches is in gendered competition as a political process, possibly inspired by structural gender hierarchy in the international system.

If gendered competitions through power-over are one political process that international system gender hierarchy can be seen to shape, a number

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of related processes can also be discussed in these terms.[19] For the purposes of space, here, we will discuss one, militarization. Peterson and Runyan (1999, 258) defined militarization as 'processes by which characteristically military practices are extended into the civilian arena.' Though war is an essential condition of militarism – the apex or climax – militarization is much broader than war, activating an underlying system of institutions, practices, and values. Feminists have pointed out that the militarization pervasive in global politics 'occurs through gendered workings of power' (Enloe 1993, 246). In the gendered process of militarization, military–industrial complexes need men to be willing to kill and die on behalf of their states to prove their manhood *and* women to behave as properly subservient to meet the needs of militaries (Enloe 1983, 212; Peterson and Runyan 1999, 118). Militarization is shaped by gender hierarchy in its aims (competitive power-over), its means (the military–industrial complex), its language (of strength and domination), and its impacts (which disproportionately affect women).

While there has been too large a volume of feminist work on militarization to go over here, a brief discussion of a recent example of militarization in the literature might illustrate how I think it fits into Waltz's idea of structure reflected in process among units. Alexander (2010) has explored the role of militarization in Pacific Islands politics, particularly in the Bougainville Crisis. Alexander (2010, 71) explains that militarization in the Pacific Islands has progressed in ways that are uniquely linked to the cultural histories of Pacific Island states, but is inextricably linked to gender hierarchy, race hierarchy, and cultural governance and 'constituted through systemic power relations.' In the Bougainville crisis, Alexander describes the conflict, the violence, and the ultimate de-escalation of the violence all in terms of the contestation of gendered ideas of state and nation played out through the process of militarization. This and other feminist work suggests that militarization, like the gendered competition it is related to, is one of many political processes among units in the system that may be said to be products of structural gender hierarchy.

Certainly, more careful, and more detailed exploration would be required to make the empirical claim that gender hierarchy is indeed a (or even *the*) structural feature of the international system.[20] The purpose of this preliminary discussion has only been to establish the initial plausibility of the existence of such a structure, such that deriving potential

[19] Others include concepts like capitalism, globalization, governance, and governmentality, which have been discussed extensively in the feminist literature.

[20] Perhaps this could be done by constructing a multidimensional geometric model of state masculinities and femininities and measuring both general and dyadic bellicosity against it.

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testable hypotheses and other theoretical implications of such a position has merit as an intellectual endeavor. In other words, *if* gender hierarchy were a constitutive feature of the structure of international politics, how would we expect states to behave? And what would it mean for the possibility, plausibility, and occurrence of war, the puzzle that inspired this journey to begin with? The remainder of this article is devoted to the specific potential contribution of such an approach to Waltz's main object of study, the phenomenon of war in interstate relations.

Gender hierarchy as a/the cause of war

Seeing the international system as gender-hierarchical suggests different understandings of when, how, and why war occurs than those currently dominant in IR theory and Security Studies. First, appropriating a Clausewitzian observation, war can be seen as politics by other means. If gender hierarchy is a structural feature of the international system and a key organizing principle in dictating state identity, interaction, and relative position, then conflicts between states can be characterized as conflicts within/about the gendered order of the international structure. Conflict can be seen as, at least in part, gendered posturing between actors jockeying for a higher position along the gendered sociopolitical hierarchy among states. Conflict is not, as realists argue, a competition for survival (an explanation which has always been somewhat unsatisfactory given the relative inequality of states and the self-help behavior of states at no risk of failing to survive). Instead, it is a competition where states, as gendered actors in a gendered system, are out to dominate rather than to survive, and are more interested in dominance than prudence. For example, Haynes notes that Soviet World War II-era socialist realist film characterizes the Nazi breaking of the non-aggression pact in terms of gender, where Nazi Germany's hypermasculinity would ultimately be its downfall (2003, 7). States do not look to continue to exist or to end others' existence, they look to affirm their masculinity (and protect their feminine elements) while feminizing others. When we think of structural gender hierarchy as a key part of explaining state behavior, governments that risk their survival for honor (like the Belgians or the Melians before them) do not appear so singular.

Second, and following, then, gender hierarchy can be seen as a/the permissive cause of war. Wendt (1999) was correct in arguing that there is nothing inherent about anarchy that makes the international system conflictual, but perhaps too quick in looking for 'cultures of' that anarchic structure. A third theoretical path, the one I argue holds the most explanatory potential, is that there is a structural factor *other than* or

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in addition to anarchy in the international system which can explain the conflictual nature of the international system. I suggest that gender hierarchy is such a structural factor.

Some scholars might see little theoretical progress in the assertion that gender hierarchy (rather than anarchy) might be a permissive cause of war. I argue that even if this supposition did not add predictive value to theorizing global politics, it would be of value for its explanatory power. Gender hierarchy, though it manifests itself in different ways at different times in different contexts, consistently organizes social and political value on the basis of (perceived) gender and normally valorizes characteristics associated with (hegemonic) masculinities over characteristics associated with (subordinated) femininities. As such, regardless of the specific content of the competition, units within the system (states) are in constant competition to prove their masculinities and deny (or protect) their femininities, in whatever configuration. Since gender-based characteristics are often measured relatively, this incentivizes competition and conflict in the international system. Even if this explanation predicted competition the same way that understanding the international system as anarchic did, it would be useful to think about the influence of gender to the extent that it exists.

I suggest there is more to it, however. The third potential implication of system structural gender hierarchy is that it functions differently than anarchy as a permissive cause of war, and potentially adds predictive ability as well as improving explanatory value. This is because variations among states' ideal-typical understandings of genders can account for variations in the level of competition and bellicosity of states within the gender hierarchical structure of the international system. Therefore, it is possible that structural gender hierarchy has something to say not only about the causes of war, but also about the causes of *wars* and the variations among them.

Genders in the gender hierarchy among states vary both at the system-level and *within* the system. If gender hierarchy is the structural property of the international system, which shapes political processes, the particular *gender tropes* along the hierarchy and the relative position thereof both differ among units (states) and change over time despite the constant nature of structural gender hierarchy. Put differently, a fundamental limitation of most structural explanations for war is that they are *only* structural explanations and therefore *only* a permissive cause, since whatever makes them structural makes them immovable. As a result, what Waltz identifies as 'other causes' are necessary to explain the occurrence of wars and the variation among them. A more parsimonious way to account for the frequent occurrence of wars alongside the frequent non-occurrence of wars is to look for a structural feature of global politics,

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which is at once structural (constant, ordering) and varies (accounting for when states fight and when they do not). Systemic gender hierarchy provides such a structural explanation, as gender as an ordering principle is constant, even as *the genders* and *their orders* are fungible.

Therefore, and fourth, it is possible to see that gender hierarchy as a structural feature of the international system predicts state behavior differently (and potentially more precisely) than seeing the international system as an anarchy (alone). While structural gender hierarchy predicts the existence of war (the question that Waltz was interested in), it also has the potential to do some accounting for *wars*. The next section of this article briefly discusses some potential hypotheses which arise.

Structural gender hierarchy and wars

A feminist understanding of gender hierarchy as a structural feature of global politics suggests some suppositions about war and about war(s), discussed here in narrative form for economy of space. One hypothesis might be that the content and salience of the hegemonic/ideal-typical masculinity in states would be expected to be a predictor of their relative tendency to go to war. In a gender hierarchical international system, relative material or symbolic equality between states would be expected to breed conflict, while conflicts between states with vastly different functions or capabilities would be expected to be less frequent. Still, asymmetric conflicts would be expected to occur when a conflict between states' claims to masculinity and/or states' insults to each others' masculinities occurs.

Put differently, (state) gender relations would be expected to be an intervening variable in how power parity influences aggression. States with elements of hypermasculinity (Nayak 2006; Heeg Maruska 2010) in their nationalist discourses would be expected to be more aggressive, while states with elements of gender equity in their nationalist discourses (state feminists) would be less likely to be aggressive (see Mazur and Stetson 1995; Mazur 2001; Lovenduski and Baudino 2005). This is not because of any inherent property of the state but instead because of where the (perceived or actual) properties of the state place it on a gender hierarchy among states. The relative frequency of wars would be expected to vary with the relative intensity of gendered competition between states, which would be expected to vary with the relative aggressiveness of the ideal-typical masculinity in the international system. Gendered elements of state identities (like honor, protection, chivalry, and aggression) would be expected to determine 'centers of gravity' (Clausewitz 1830) that cause war, while gender hierarchy among states would be expected to be a permissive cause of war.

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A dominant hypermasculinity in the international system structure would lead states to approximate hypermasculinity in their functions, search for capabilities, and interaction with each other. Such an international arena would be expected to be conflictual and competitive. A dominant chivalric masculinity would produce different results, emphasizing values like 'the responsibility to protect' and incentivizing states to function and relate in ways that maintain toughness and tenderness. This can be expected to be manifested across states, not only in individual ones, using Waltzian logic.

These potential hypotheses (which would require development as this research program continues) provide an opportunity to examine whether or not structural gender hierarchy is present in the international system, whether or not it influences the likelihood of actors in the international system to make and fight wars, whether or not it provides more explanatory leverage than the realist theoretical understanding of anarchy as a permissive cause of war, and the degree to which it accounts for variation in the making and fighting of wars.

Conclusion/look forward

While this sketch remains preliminary, it is an important step. Feminists have continuously pointed out the invisibility of gender in most IR work. This blindness is partly a blindness to gender, and partly a blindness to gender *at the locations that those theorists study*. This is why, in my view, feminists must at once critique the system- and state-centric nature of (particularly realist) IR theory *and* engage it. This article has attempted to do just that, asking about the importance of gender at the level of structural theorizing in IR. It has argued that gender hierarchy is not only found in the lives of Korean prostitutes (Moon 1997) or Chiquita banana ads (Enloe 1989), but also in the military–industrial complex and capitalist world system that produces those, and in the international system structure that makes each possible (Peterson 2003; Enloe 2010).

In this way, gender is a key omission from IR generally, but is also a key omission from structural theorizing, even though most feminists see gender as in some way structural rather than just a characteristic of individuals and collectives (e.g. Harding 1998). The claim that gender hierarchy is a key feature of the international system structure is not meant to imply that gender is the only, or even the primary, axis of power differentiation and/or oppression in global politics. So why gender? The argument that feminists theorists make, and the one made in this article, is that axes of power differentiation and/or oppression in global politics, whether or not they are directly related to sex, are *gendered* as devalorized others are feminized and masculinity is prized. This approach would

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see that gender hierarchy as a structural feature in global politics, then, reaches beyond direct relations between men and women or even masculinities and femininities to shape unit function, distribute capabilities among units, and shape the political processes through which units interact.

I do not claim to have 'proved' this argument in this article; that was not my goal. My goal was to suggest the fruitfulness of a research agenda inquiring into the question of gender hierarchy as structural in the international system. Certainly, it is important at least to ask – is gender hierarchy a structural feature of international politics? If so, what are the implications *for* international politics? For war, the key object of study in Security Studies? My suspicion is that scholars interested in exploring this question will find a positive answer, and that the rewards both for explaining and understanding IR (Hollis and Smith 1991) will be great.

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