Sex & World Peace, Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 304 pp., $26.50 cloth.

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This is an important, well written, and informative book that will serve a wide audience of graduate and undergraduate students, academics, and policy-makers, as well as the interested public. It is a testament to the writing and presentation of the authors' argument that such a diverse audience will be challenged and enlightened by this work. And while there are particulars about which some will disagree, the breadth of information and analysis offered in *Sex & World Peace* provides ample material for spirited engagement and further learning.

The authors set forth three complementary but distinct arguments, each of which can be taken on its own merits. The first is that gender inequality, by which the authors mean the subordination of women, is a form of violence "no matter how invisible or normalized" it may be (p. 5). (The authors define gender as "socially defined differences between men and women" and inequality as an "aspect of violence based on . . . relative power . . . in society [p. 6]. Gender inequality, then, is the subordination of those who are different and lacking in power and status—in other words, women.) Second, security studies as both a discipline and a practice must account for women's security in its identification and evaluation of independent variables. Third, what is learned from this book should be taken as a call to action and a call for positive changes in policy and practice.

The overarching premise of the book is that "we can no longer speak of achieving national and international security without speaking, in the same breath, about the security of women" (p. 208). Further, the authors argue, the security of women is violated through gender inequality, which is itself buttressed by and constitutive of three specific forms of "micro-aggression" against women (p. 17). These are: "(1) lack of bodily integrity and physical security, (2) lack of equity in family law, and (3) lack of parity in the councils of human decision-making" (p. 19).

These claims, certainly, are not without centuries of precedent, as feminist scholars and activists have long pointed out. As Simone de Beauvoir observed regarding relations between the sexes, "All oppression creates a state of war. And this is no exception" (*The Second Sex*, 1949, p. 717). The Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams devoted a book to the configuration of women and war, speculating that the difficulties in providing food for one's family during times of war ("the labor for bread") was crucial to understanding the costs of war, and specifically the costs to women (*Peace and Bread in Time of War*, 1922, p. 77). And, of course, Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938) took up the absence of women in the councils of politics, the persistence of patriarchy, and the complex interdependence of patriarchy and the promulgation of war.

And yet this great history of debate and storehouse of feminist scholarship and literature has still to become commonplace knowledge, much less a richly used resource, by those seeking to create greater global security, if not world peace. And, as the authors phrase it, it has not yet become

"imperative" to understand the relationship between national/international security and the security of women, but it must (p. 101).

The authors venture that one of the reasons this relationship is continually overlooked or marginalized is the lack of an "acceptable conventional empirical warrant" proving it exists (p. 101). That is, that scholarship on the relationship of national/international security and women has tended to be more narrative, qualitative, and empirical rather than conforming to "standard statistical hypothesis testing" (p. 100). Consequently, *Sex & World Peace* synthesizes an impressive array of studies, including the authors' own research on the subject. The pattern revealed is that the higher the social, political, and economic inequality between men and women within a state, the more likely force and violence will be used to settle disputes within that state, and the higher the likelihood that that state would engage in international conflict.

Most significantly, *Sex & World Peace* further amplifies and corroborates the results of other studies on the topic. The authors have created their own dataset through a review of "the extant literature and . . . expert interviews to find qualitative and quantitative information on over 310 indicators of women's status in 174 countries" (see womanstats.org/). As any scholar who has attempted to ascertain robust data on the status of women can attest, there are enormous gaps in the conception and collection of such data. Consequently, this prodigious dataset possesses immeasurable value for scholars and policy-makers.

Hudson, Ballif-Spanvill, Caprioli, and Emmett caution that the research drawn from their dataset continues to be exploratory, as the data is fresh and there are obvious limitations to proving causality (assuming that proving the existence of causal relationships is even the goal of such research). Instead, the authors argue that their research is generally oriented toward "assessing the significance of association in the context of . . . dominance hierarchies rooted in evolutionary human male reproductive strategies . . . which . . . create templates of violence that diffuse through society widely, affecting even state behavior in relation to external and internal entities" (p. 109).

Here is where the authors' argument is weakest (although it is not necessarily needed to support the rest of their work), for while evolutionary male reproductive strategies may indeed be of note, identifying them as the causal factor, "the origins of a global predicament" or "how it happened," in creating gender inequality is less convincing (p. 68). After all, their role and influence is difficult to measure, while the claim to universal and epochal significance is still yet more difficult to accept, considering the change in environmental and genetic interaction over a period of centuries (the authors' are not clear as to how far back the process begins). Further, the importance of differences, differentiation, and multiplicity in cultures, experiences, environments, individual traits, and population trait differences vis-à-vis "reproductive fitness" over generations cannot be generalized away. (For more on this, see Anne Fausto-Sterling's 2012 article "The Dynamic Development of Gender Variability" in the *Journal of Homosexuality*, and Rebecca Jordan-Young's 2011 book *Brain Storm: The Flaws in the Science of Sex Differences*.)

Finally, there remains a fundamental vagueness or confusion as to theorizing nature and nurture in regard to "natural selection" (p. 69). As Evelyn Fox Keller so

clearly outlines in *The Mirage of a Space Between Nature and Nurture*, there are multiple "ambiguities" in the scientific literature that lead to an "incoherence" in much of the assessment of scientific concepts—for example, in the idea of heritability—but *Sex & World Peace* takes many of these concepts as foundational, and not contested.

These concerns aside, using an impressive set of data, and with sophisticated empirical evidence, *Sex & World Peace* clearly and forcefully lays out the links between women's security and international and domestic security, thus providing a clear template for change. While the authors' explanation of male reproductive strategies as originally causing women's "overall insecurity and oppression" may not be as convincing, that explanation need not be so if it encourages further exploration and analysis of this important subject.

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