

Gender Washing War: Arms Manufacturers and the Hijacking of #InternationalWomensDay

NATALIE JESTER

University of Gloucestershire, UK

AND

ROSIE WALTERS

Cardiff University, UK

If asked what “arms manufacturer” first brings to mind, few people would likely answer “women’s rights.” And yet, each International Women’s Day (IWD), leading global arms manufacturers present themselves as working to help bring about gender equality. “Gender washing” refers to corporate social responsibility communications aimed at presenting a corporation as empowering to women and girls, even while their own products, supply chains, or employment practices harm them. In this article, we show how arms manufacturers use social media communications about IWD to gender wash their images, positioning themselves as progressive and caring. Bringing into conversation feminist work in Security Studies and International Political Economy, we identify new varieties of gender washing specific to war and martial violence: client military and government partnerships, and constructive silence. We also expand the global hierarchy of publics targeted by gender washing communications, reflecting the fact that unlike other transnational corporations, arms manufacturers are not concerned with garnering “brand loyalty” amongst the general public. Rather, they communicate both to and with Global North governments and militaries. Thus, what is at stake in these representations, we argue, is not simply the reputation of the individual corporations concerned, but a broader process of gender washing war.

Si l’on nous demande ce que nous évoque l’expression « fabricant d’armes », peu d’entre nous répondraient « les droits de la femme ». Et pourtant, chaque Journée internationale des femmes (JIF), les principaux fabricants d’armes mondiaux cherchent à montrer qu’ils s’efforcent d’atteindre l’égalité des sexes. Par « gender washing », l’on entend les communications de responsabilité sociale des entreprises qui promeuvent leurs efforts pour le pouvoir d’action des femmes, et ce, même si leurs propres produits, chaînes d’approvisionnement ou pratiques patronales leur nuisent. Dans cet article, nous montrons comment les fabricants d’armes communiquent sur les réseaux sociaux à propos de la JIF pour redorer leur image, en se montrant progressistes et attentifs. En nous appuyant sur le travail féministe des études de sécurité et d’économie politique internationale, nous identifions de nouvelles sortes de gender washing spécifiques à la guerre et la violence martiale : les armées clientes et les partenariats avec les gouvernements, ainsi que le silence constructif. Nous développons par ailleurs la hiérarchie mondiale des publics ciblés par les communications de gender washing, pour refléter le fait qu’à la différence d’autres sociétés transnationales, les fabricants d’armes ne cherchent pas à fidéliser le grand public à leur marque. Leur communication s’adresse plutôt aux gouvernements et armées des pays du Nord. Aussi affirmons-nous qu’il ne

se joue pas là simplement la réputation des sociétés concernées, mais aussi un processus frontalier de guerre de gender washing.

Si se preguntara a varias personas qué es lo primero que les viene a la mente si se habla de “fabricantes de armas,” pocas de estas personas responderían “los derechos de las mujeres.” Y, sin embargo, cada Día Internacional de la Mujer (DIM), los principales fabricantes de armas a nivel mundial se presentan a sí mismos mostrando sus esfuerzos para ayudar a lograr la igualdad de género. El “lavado de género” se refiere a aquellas comunicaciones de responsabilidad social corporativa que están destinadas a presentar a una empresa como si esta fuera empoderadora de mujeres y niñas, incluso en aquellos casos en los que sus propios productos, cadenas de suministro o prácticas laborales las perjudiquen. En este artículo, mostramos cómo los fabricantes de armas utilizan sus comunicaciones en redes sociales sobre el DIM con el fin de hacer un lavado en materia de género de su imagen, tratando de posicionarse como progresistas y solidarios. Identificamos, relacionando el trabajo feminista en materia de Estudios de Seguridad con el trabajo feminista sobre Economía Política Internacional, nuevas variedades de lavado de género específicas para la guerra y la violencia marcial: asociaciones clientelares militares y gubernamentales, y silencio constructivo. También ampliamos la jerarquía global del público objetivo al que se dirigen las comunicaciones de lavado de género, lo cual refleja el hecho de que, a diferencia de otras empresas transnacionales, los fabricantes de armas no están preocupados por obtener “lealtad a la marca” entre el público en general. Más bien, sus comunicaciones tienen lugar con y hacia los Gobiernos y las fuerzas armadas del Norte Global. Por lo tanto, argumentamos que lo que está en juego en estas representaciones no es simplemente la reputación de las corporaciones individuales involucradas, sino un proceso más amplio de guerra en materia de lavado de género.

Introduction

In March 2022, an anonymous Twitter (now known as X) user created the “Gender Pay Gap Bot,” an account dedicated to quote-tweeting the International Women’s Day (IWD) posts of corporations, public sector bodies, and NGOs with information about their gender pay gap. Within hours, the bot’s tweets garnered thousands of likes and retweets, while communications teams deleted IWD content or posted without hashtags to circumvent it. This anonymous account highlighted in a few hours what feminist activists have argued for decades: that corporations use events such as IWD to present themselves as empowering to women, even as they fail to address gendered inequalities internally. It highlighted not only corporate hypocrisy, but also the levels of public distaste for it and the very real possibility of resistance to it.

“Gender washing” refers to “a range of communications with the intent to mislead publics into adopting overly positive beliefs about the impact of an organisation’s practices, policies or products on girls and women” (Walters 2022, 1579). Drawing on extensive literature and activism on greenwashing (e.g., Harris 2015), where corporations present themselves as environmentally friendly despite harmful or polluting products and supply chains, feminist scholars in Business, Organization, and Management studies, and more recently International Political Economy (IPE), are highlighting corporate hypocrisy in relation to women and girls. In this article, we analyze gender washing communications by five leading global arms manufacturers (Kuimova et al. 2022, 2), whose combined income from weapons sales and military technologies in 2020 alone was US\$222 billion (BAE Systems 2021, 26). This

places them at the center of global political and economic processes that facilitate the flow of money to the Global North in return for deadly weaponry, ultimately costing lives. And yet, annually on IWD—a day known for its origins in socialist movements and women’s First World War peace organizing (LeSavoy and Jordan 2013)—these same corporations profess commitment to gender equality. This article seeks to understand how the IWD tweets of arms manufacturers might “cleanse” practices of violence. In so doing, we speak to core concerns of International Political Sociology, namely, “how power is mobilised, consolidated and dispersed in ways that entrench and sometimes subvert global asymmetries” (Lisle 2017, 299).

We first summarize relevant feminist Security Studies literature and recent efforts for greater integration with feminist IPE. We then turn to the emerging literature on gender and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Next, we set out our conceptual framework, namely, employing and augmenting Walters’ framework of varieties of gender washing (2022). Building on cross-disciplinary work by feminist and post-colonial scholars, we seek to identify the “publics” being targeted within the arms trade and the relationships between them. We then detail our method before analyzing our sample of tweets, exploring examples of existing varieties and publics of gender washing, as well as new varieties and publics identified in this context.

This article makes a number of contributions. Firstly, we expand existing conceptualizations of gender washing communications by applying frameworks developed in feminist IPE to the global arms trade. This includes expanding the global hierarchy of publics at whom corporate gender washing is targeted to include additional publics relevant to security industries. Secondly, and related to our identification of militaries and governments as important publics to gender washing in this context, we introduce “client military and government partnerships” as a variety of gender washing specific to security industries. Thirdly, we add another new variety of gender washing, “constructive silence.” Drawing on the feminist literature on silences in international security, we explore how we might identify instances where the already powerful—in this case global arms manufacturers—are able to further legitimize their power by saying nothing at all on inequalities, whilst constructing that silence as action. Fourthly, and finally, our analysis explores how all actors engaged in the global arms trade engage in a broader process of “gender washing war,” which refers to the overarching effect of (all forms of) gender washing in presenting organizations, technologies, and knowledges concerned with the conduct of mass violence as empowering to women and girls. These representations, we argue, position corporations as drivers of social progress, on a mission to empower female staff, educate girls, and keep the general population safe, even as their products kill, maim, and displace women and girls around the world.

Gender, In/Securities, and Global Capital

Drawing on the work of feminist security scholars, we follow Howell (2018), who advances the idea of martial politics in considering subjects and phenomena that are “of war” and not just “war” itself. This is because war exists not as a discrete event but as a process, connected to other social and political processes or structures (Goldstein 2003), including (neo)colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. As Barkawi and Brighton (2011, 127) argue, “There is little in social life not touched by war.” The corporations discussed in this article produce weaponry and technologies that are used in many different situations, the nuances of which it would be impossible to consider in full here; however, they are undoubtedly “of war,” making violence, displacement, and destruction possible and ever more technologically advanced. We see the impacts of these corporations’ products as gendered and worthy of analytical attention (Åhäll 2016).

Women face myriad specific challenges in conflicts, for example, obtaining relevant healthcare, accessing peacebuilding processes, and increased risk of exploita-

tion, violence, and trafficking resulting from displacement (Enloe 2000). War also engenders discourses and practices of imperialism, heteronormativity, and nationalism (Parashar 2013). Nevertheless, women are often omitted from empirical or conceptual understandings of war, with the state being the traditional focus (Sylvester 2010). Traditional security understandings have been presented as identity-neutral, but security is “inextricably related to identity, and security policy to the reconstruction of collective identity” (McSweeney 1999, 12). This is especially evident when examining recent sociologically informed works on security, broadly conceived (e.g., those drawing upon Giddens, such as Rosher 2022). Analyses of everyday practices of in/security seek to challenge the “war”/“not war” binary (Howell 2018; Jester and Dolan 2023; Jester 2023a) and broaden debates about “what counts” as war, and who is impacted (Åhäll 2016).

Similarly, feminist Security Studies challenges binary distinctions between the international and the national, the global, and the local, focusing instead on “rethinking the international through dynamics of power” (Bigo 2016). While traditional approaches to security have focused on “high-level” matters, for example, nuclear politics and territorial incursions, feminist Security Studies emphasizes the importance of the everyday (Åhäll 2016). It also argues that we must focus on the “emancipation of marginalized subjects” (Krulišová and O’Sullivan 2022, 35) because, for the many women impacted by insecurity in their daily lives, this is not a conceptual exercise (Parashar 2013).

Feminist scholars and activists have succeeded in influencing “high-level” politics and securing legal and political recognition for the many challenges faced by women in war. The most notable example is the Women Peace and Security (WPS) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which was adopted after a unanimous vote. WPS is part of a mounting recognition of war’s impact on women, and the ways in which they actively participate in it. A slowly increasing number of states are now also pursuing “feminist foreign policy,” including Canada, Mexico, and, if in approach rather than name, others including South Africa (Haastrup 2020). However, the WPS agenda also starts to reveal some of the many tensions between the adoption of feminist policies or norms by global elites, and their corresponding behaviors (Robinson 2021). Vucetic (2017) argues, for example, that there is a disconnect between the Trudeau government’s self-proclaimed feminism and its continued issuance of arms export licenses to states restricting women’s rights and failing to punish maltreatment of migrant workers. Sweden also made few changes to its arms export regime during its period of feminist foreign policy, despite disquiet about companies manufacturing arms within the state (Thomson 2020).¹ More broadly, international commitments to feminist foreign policy have recently seen a dilution of long-standing feminist commitments to disarmament (Stavrianakis 2020). This mirrors literature on WPS, with mounting criticism of women’s role within militarized institutions positioning this as contrary to feminist goals (Gibbins 2011). While a number of states profess to embrace feminist approaches to security, the underlying practices of war that continue to kill, maim, and displace women globally remain the same.

Feminist foreign policy and WPS typically emphasize security and physical safety, resulting in under-exploration of capital, finance, and business, yet feminist IPE is vital in understanding feminist Security Studies. A variety of scholars argue that analysis needs to consider a broader range of actors, including international corporations. This body of work considers not only women’s labor, but also, for example, femininity and masculinity; the weaponization of feminist discourses (e.g., Jester 2023b); the association between masculinity, profit, and the global arms trade

¹Despite being the first state to adopt a feminist foreign policy—and therefore a norm entrepreneur (Rosén Sundström and Elgström 2020)—Sweden renounced it in 2022 at the behest of the new Foreign Minister Tobias Billström.

(Carver and Lyddon 2022); and corporate professionalism within private military and security contractors (Joachim et al. 2018). Both feminist Security Studies and feminist IPE aim to “bring women in” to analysis, for example, through making women’s contributions and experiences visible. Both also seek to complicate and debate the emancipatory potential of “bringing women in” to global neoliberal processes of accumulation (Kronsell 2005; Bedford and Rai 2010).

More broadly, feminist IPE advocates for a consideration of *gendered logics* and their relation to capital, entailing analysis of power (Peterson 2005). Feminist Security Studies mirrors these concerns about gender and hierarchy, for example, focusing on how Global North states invade the Global South risking women’s safety, or how men of the Global South are recruited into the militaries of those claiming their states as “protectorates” (Chisholm and Ketola 2020). These examples also neatly highlight links between gender, race, and imperialism within security and political economy (Parashar 2013). As a result of their shared focus on both women and global gender logics, Sjöberg (2015) and Stern (2017) argue that a closer engagement between feminist Security Studies and IPE would help us to better understand *both* domains. We therefore heed calls from Chisholm and Stachowitsch (2017; see also Elias 2015) to “reintegrate” Security Studies and IPE within feminist approaches.

The critical literature on CSR is a clear example of how scholars have identified the gendered logics and power relations inherent in global capitalist processes of accumulation. In recent decades, CSR has emerged as a means of cleansing the corporate image, demonstrating that companies are “doing well by doing good” (Falck and Hebllich 2007). However, critical scholars working across Business, Organization, and Management studies argue that CSR “legitimise[s] the power of large corporations” (Banerjee 2008, 52) by displacing calls for legal regulation and greater accountability, and presenting the current global economic system as capable of addressing the many environmental and rights abuses it perpetuates (Cho et al. 2015, 80). A frequent critique is that corporations spend more time, effort, and money on high-profile “promotional CSR” (through external partnerships, for example) than on “institutionalized CSR,” which requires addressing issues within their own practices (Sternbank et al. 2021, 2–3).

The twenty-first century has seen an increase in CSR programs targeted specifically at women and girls (Miller et al. 2013). Transnational corporations and global elites have converged around the business case for gender equality, championing women’s and girls’ “empowerment” programs based on the need for women and girls to increase their “human capital” to compete in global markets and improve corporate profitability (Calkin 2017). In this way, “CSR can be conceptualised as an epistemological act that creates its desired subject and then immediately intervenes on their behalf” (Ozkazanc-Pan 2019, 861). There is a lively debate within feminist IPE about the extent to which these initiatives can be labeled as “feminist,” or whether feminism has been co-opted by neoliberalism (see, for example, Prügl 2016; Eisenstein 2017). In this article, we follow Eschle and Maignushca (2018, 232) (amongst others) in analyzing this phenomenon as an “appropriation of feminist ideas, understood as a process of hijacking or instrumentalizing something that is not one’s own.” We see the gendered CSR communications of global arms manufacturers as an ideal means of exploring how corporations hijack feminist language and ideas, drawing on gendered logics to present themselves as progressive and egalitarian, even while their entire business model centers on reproducing insecurities.

Further, we seek to contribute to the efforts of transnational feminist scholars and activists to cease “paternalistically directing our gaze toward gender-oppressive practices in the global South,” and instead “focus on the role played by Northern governments, Northern multinational corporations, and Northern individuals in the economic marginalisation of Southern women and men” (Rajan 2018, 279). We

thus focus attention on the role of Global North arms manufacturers not only in the economic marginalization of Southern women and men, but also in conflicts that target, displace, maim, and kill them. We show how the practice of “gender washing”—a term drawn from Business and IPE—can be employed as a means of sanitizing war. This allows us to offer a sociologically informed analysis unpacking the relationship between feminist approaches to Security Studies and IPE.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of “washing” the image of a corporation, institution, or state through use of a particular color, identity, or issue appears across multiple disciplines and literatures. In IPE, International Political Sociology, Business Studies, and interdisciplinary work on the environment, “greenwashing” describes communications that present corporations as more environmentally friendly than they are (e.g., Harris 2015; Lyon and Montgomery 2015); “crip washing” has been coined in disability studies (e.g., Moscoso and Platero 2017, 472); and in International Political Sociology and Security Studies, scholars and activists highlight Israel’s attempts to “wash” its human rights record in the Occupied Palestinian Territories through progressive narratives about culture and cuisine (such as “foodwashing”), LGBTQIA + rights (“pinkwashing”) and the inclusion of disabled soldiers in national service (Schulman 2011; Eastwood 2019; Baron and Press-Barnathan 2021). In recent years, a growing body of literature in Business, Organization, and Management studies, and more recently in IPE, has focused on gender washing.

Walters (2022) identifies seven “varieties” of gender washing communications: selective disclosure; empty gender claims and policies; dubious certifications and labels; co-opted NGO endorsements and partnerships; ineffective public voluntary programs; misleading narrative and discourse; and misleading branding. This framework offers a useful structure for analysis, but is an imperfect fit for Security Studies, partly due to the different publics interpellated by gender washing practices, as discussed below. In this analysis, we adapt and build on this framework by identifying two new varieties of particular relevance to war, as outlined in Table 1.

Much emerging literature on CSR focuses on individual corporations’ images. CSR programs’ positioning of corporations as “[places] of equality” (Fox-Kirk et al. 2020, 587) chimes with concerns in both feminist IPE and Security Studies that neoliberal feminism seeks to insert women into the same roles as men, with no structural change to organizations or logics of war (Kronsell 2005). We expand on this work, considering how corporate communications cleanse an entire *sector*, with devastating impacts for women. Security-related corporations speak to a specific range of stakeholders. While they do, on some level, seek “an opportunity to gain a commercial advantage over rivals” (Kinsey 2008, 74), arms manufacturers also rely on supportive policy environments, subsidization, and clientele from national governments and defense coalitions (Carver and Lyddon 2022). This necessitates broader public perceptions of security-related corporations as socially responsible, despite clear contrary evidence (Byrne 2007, 201). It also requires that corporations, governments, and militaries work together in a much broader process of gender washing war.

Postcolonial scholars highlight that CSR activities are targeted at a hierarchy of publics: (1) Global North shareholders, (2) Northern consumers, (3) Northern activists, (4) workers employed in supply chains in the Global South, and finally (5) Southern citizens (Munshi and Kurian 2005, 514; Figure 1). They argue that “corporate PR efforts, therefore, focus on undercutting the protests of the third public to appease the second public and directly benefit the first public. Its agenda has no place for the colonized fourth and fifth publics” (Munshi and Kurian 2005). We identify a hierarchy of eight publics within arms manufacturers’ communications (Figure 1). These are as follows: (1) corporate shareholders, predominantly in the

Table 1. Varieties of gender washing (Walters 2022, 1585, with additions based on our own analysis indicated with an *)

1. Selective disclosure	Communications emphasizing only areas of progress on gender related measures
2. Empty gender claims and policies	Claims to be implementing policies that will transform gender relations, but which in reality have little impact
3. Dubious certifications and labels	“The use of third-party labels and certification to imply a product is beneficial to women and girls”
4. Co-opted NGO endorsements and partnerships	Association with organizations focused on girls’ or women’s rights in order to boost corporate gender credentials
5. Ineffective public voluntary programs	Voluntary commitments on gender equality in the workplace, with no legal enforcement mechanisms
6. Misleading branding	Use of female or feminine symbols, voices, and logos to present corporations as women-friendly
7. Misleading narrative and discourse	Positioning of corporations as gender equality experts, despite no evidence of a track record
*8. Military and government partnerships	Joint initiatives with governments and militaries to present the security sector as empowering to women and girls
*9. Constructive silences	Benefiting from a conversation about gender equality, without contributing to or furthering it

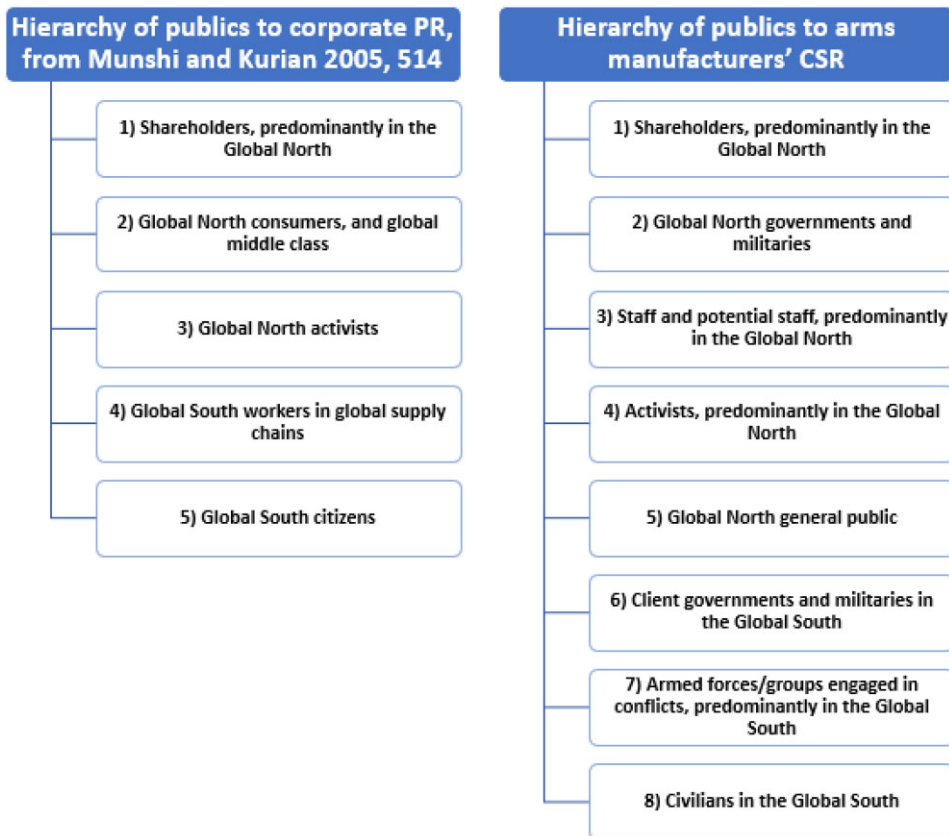


Figure 1. Hierarchy of publics to corporate communications

Global North; (2) Global North governments and militaries, as the ones purchasing weapons or permitting their sale; (3) staff and potential staff, predominantly in the Global North; (4) activists, predominantly in the Global North; (5) the Global North general public; (6) client governments and militaries in the Global South; (7) armed forces and groups engaged in conflicts, predominantly in the Global South; and finally (8) civilians in the Global South. There are also relationships *between* these different publics, making corporate communications all the more interesting within this space.

With respect to the first public, Kytömäki (2014, 17) argues that “In the end, companies’ risk management and reputational activities all aim at maximizing shareholder value.” The mitigation of shareholder risk increasingly means accounting for ethical issues that might cause the company to lose profit. Defense firms firstly must satisfy their shareholders but, on occasion, their interests also align with governments as part of the “military–industrial–political complex” (Parker and Hartley 2003; Hartley 2007, 1139).

Over the last approximately 20 years, some governments and international organizations have pushed for more responsible sales of arms, in a move toward an “ethical” arms trade (Dunne and Perlo-Freeman 2003), including actions such as the creation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Interestingly, “in the lead-up to the 2012 ATT Conference, a group of 39 institutional investors with US\$3 trillion of assets issued a statement calling for UN member states to support a strong, legally binding and comprehensive treaty” (Kytömäki 2014, 20). The aforementioned shareholder concern with ethics is, perhaps, a reflection of changing government policy around the world and demonstrates further the link between these two publics. The third public—staff and potential staff—is also relevant here. Arms manufacturers are reliant upon their staff to produce the “best” products and maximize profit. Those working for the companies, therefore, must be at least minimally satisfied that their employers are behaving appropriately.

Arms manufacturers’ CSR communications are also targeted at undercutting the activism of the fourth public—activists in the Global North. Erickson (2015, 17) asserts that this is an issue of “social reputation,” whereby civil society can hold leaders to account (or not) for arms sales perceived to be especially damaging. While there are of course many activists in war-affected communities in the Global South speaking out against the global arms trade, we focus here on activists in the Global North because global power structures mean that they are most likely to influence the fifth public (the Global North general public). The implicit consent of the fifth public is needed in order for their governments to continue to support the sector (Akerman and Larsson Seim 2014). This requires Northern electorates to locate the bulk of the corporation’s activities (technological development, employment and “empowerment” of Northern citizens, safety) outside of “war.” To complicate matters, arms sales provide a boost to domestic economies, making them more globally competitive, but also increasing tax revenue that can go back into public spending (Kolodziej 2014). The fifth public thus benefits from the sale of arms, linking their interests to the first and second publics also.

The sixth public is important to corporate business models, but is unlikely to be concerned with CSR efforts when making decisions about which particular weaponry to purchase. The corporation’s agenda has no place for the seventh and eighth publics, who are those most likely to be killed or maimed by the weaponry. This is because the seventh and eighth publics have the least influence over the security sector itself and, therefore, are not a significant consideration within communications.

Methods

To analyze how arms manufacturers gender wash war, we look specifically at their IWD posts on Twitter/X.² As above, martial politics exceeds the arena of war itself. One space into which it reaches is Twitter/X; this is part of the “everyday life of in/security” (Nyman 2021) and a key site of elements of modern governance, such as “digital diplomacy” (Duncombe 2019, 409). This makes it an ideal space to understand how key players in the global business of war present the sector to different publics. We analyze the 2021 IWD tweets of five leading global arms manufacturers as identified by the Stockholm Institute for Peace Research (Kuimova et al. 2022): BAE Systems, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon. Using Twitter’s own search function, we identified tweets published by official accounts belonging to those corporations and their subsidiaries (for example, Lockheed Martin India). We searched for content posted on IWD itself, using a hashtag or reference to the day (e.g., #IWD2021, or #ChoosetoChallenge, the theme for that year). This generated a sample of thirty-four tweets.³

Our approach to analysis is a post-structural one, examining how language and imagery reproduce wider understandings and discourses relating to (in)security and gender, as well as the alternative interpretations that are silenced in these discourses (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 26). This work deploys Doty’s (1993) concept of subject positioning to better understand how women are constructed within the aforementioned tweets. We unpack the relationship between women—referring to employees, individuals, and the broader category “woman”—and the companies in question, for example: to what extent do women matter within these tweets? Do the companies present themselves as champions of women? As Doty (1993) explains, discourses make possible particular outcomes, making it valuable to ask what kinds of knowledge they produce. In particular, our analysis of subject positioning focuses on discursive instances of “washing,” which make possible corporate practices ranging from the ongoing exploitation of female staff in the Global North through gender pay gaps, to the continuing sale of weaponry to be used in deadly conflicts around the world.

Ethical approval was obtained from one author’s institution, but not required by the other’s. While there is some debate around consent, privacy, and anonymity when analyzing social media content, tweets of official corporate accounts are intended to be broadcast to, and shared by, a wide audience and to present a certain image of the corporation, which is precisely what we aim to analyze. As a result, there is assumed assent to analyze their material.⁴ There is also a normative justification for examining the output of companies that manufacture arms due to their products’ potential for fatality (Jester 2023a).

Gender Washing War: Arms Manufacturers and #InternationalWomensDay

In the sections that follow we identify the different varieties of gender washing communications by arms manufacturers on IWD (within our sample of tweets). We briefly explore examples of existing varieties of gender washing targeted at publics identified in feminist IPE, before going on to consider the new varieties and publics made visible by applying the framework to a security context. We explore how one

²Twitter has undergone significant changes, while we have been undertaking this analysis; in 2022, it was bought by Elon Musk. A number of policies have changed since then, including looser content moderation and the removal of free account verification for notable figures and organizations. In August 2023, Musk changed the site name to “X.” All corporations discussed in this article have retained their accounts and still have significant numbers of followers. Despite this, we have retained the language of tweets and retweets as this was the terminology used when the data were collected, and the root URL of the items examined is twitter.com.

³See Supplementary Online Materials.

⁴We omit individuals’ names, lest they ask their employer to remove the tweet in future. Our research emphasizes how this body of tweets as a whole (re)produces certain discourses, rather than the words of individual staff.

existing variety (misleading narrative and discourse) is targeted at different publics in a security context and propose two new varieties (client military and government partnerships and constructive silence).

Resonance with Existing Varieties and Publics of Gender Washing

We found many examples within this sample of tweets of the varieties of gender washing identified in the existing literature on corporate communications. We focus here on the three that emerged most frequently in our sample: selective disclosure, empty gender claims and policies, and co-opted NGO partnerships and endorsements.⁵ Selective disclosure is emphasis within corporate communications only on areas of improvement (Walters 2022), such as celebrating improved female representation within senior management, while remaining silent about ongoing discrimination litigation. The IWD tweets of arms manufacturers are very selective indeed in terms of the information they disclose. For example,

Happy International Women's Day! We are thrilled at LM Canada to have so many inspiring women pushing the organisation forward. We will continue to work on inspiring and giving opportunities to the younger generation of female leaders!

#IWD2021 #ChoosetoChallenge

(Lockheed Martin Canada 2021a; see [supplementary online materials](#))

LM Canada has many “inspiring” female employees; embraces change, and the progress this represents, “pushing the organization forward”; provides opportunities to young women; and keenly celebrates these things. This positioning targets staff and potential staff. It proffers no details about female employment levels, including within leadership (23 percent of Lockheed Martin employees and 22 percent of executives self-identify as female [Lockheed Martin 2020a]), omits initiatives to increase representation, and is silent on corporate performance in areas like equal pay.

Mirroring findings in Business and Leadership Studies (e.g., Fox-Kirk et al. 2020), selective disclosure is also targeted at shareholders as a public, to persuade them of the business case for gender equality and reassure them that gender equality initiatives will not result in reduced dividends. For example, a BAE Systems AI (2021a; see [supplementary online materials](#)) Account Director challenges colleagues “to perceive single-gender teams, for example, as a risk to delivery.” In our sample, the images, voices, and words of women show fellow female employees that the corporation is “thrilled” to employ them, and persuade male executives and shareholders of the case for workforce diversity (see also, Lockheed Martin Canada 2021e; see [supplementary online materials](#)). The tweets are a celebration, avoiding disclosure of details about the corporations’ staff make-up or gender pay gap. At BAE Systems in 2019/2020, for example, men were paid 17 percent more, with women comprising 42 percent of employees in the lowest hourly pay quarter, and just 18 percent of those in the highest (UK Government Gender Pay Gap Service 2020).

We also found evidence of empty gender claims and policies, which are initiatives to (supposedly) redress gender inequalities, receiving little funding or support. Organizational women’s networks are a key example, demanding women self-improve through networking, training, and mentoring, without engaging male colleagues or managers in tackling gender inequality (Bierema 2005, 214). Raytheon Intelligence and Space (2021; see [supplementary online materials](#)) demonstrates

⁵While less relevant in this sample, the remaining three are relevant more broadly in a Security Studies context. For example, a 2018 news story about painting a US Navy fighter jet pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month could be analyzed as an example of dubious certifications and labels, and misleading branding (Criss and Patterson 2018), while numerous voluntary agreements exist surrounding the arms trade. We have therefore kept these varieties within our revised framework (see [Table 1](#)).

this by re-tweeting the RAF Museum discussing an event with/for female Raytheon employees, aimed at helping them to “get to know how to handle “sitting at the big table” to overcome your own fears” (see also, Northrop Grumman Careers 2021; see [supplementary online materials](#)). This targets the corporation’s own female staff, and women in the defense sector more broadly. Congruent with neoliberal appropriations of feminist language and ideas (Jester 2023a), women are encouraged to take time away from jobs—where they are paid less than male colleagues—to learn how to “overcome their fears” and “sit at the big table.” The language is patronizing, positioning women as timid children who must improve themselves to be seen by men as adults.

In several tweets, arms manufacturers promote staff involvement with NGO partners, a variety of gender washing labeled co-opted NGO partnerships and endorsements in the existing literature. For example, Lockheed Martin Canada (2021b; see [supplementary online materials](#)) tweeted about employee participation in a conference organized by Canadian NGO Techsploration, which “encourages young women, grades 9–12, to explore more career options in the STEM fields.” This is a classic example of “promotional” as opposed to “institutional” CSR (Sternbank et al. 2021, 2–3). Here, the focus is on “fixing” girls’ aspirations, speaking to the public of Northern governments keen to improve uptake of STEM education and upskill workforces. There is no mention within the above tweet, or elsewhere in this sample, of “fixing” inequalities within STEM industries.

Similarly, BAE Systems Malaysia (2021; see [supplementary online materials](#)) retweeted its own tweet from October 5, 2020 about a joint project with the Malaysia Girl Guides, saying:

Throwback to when we launched our engineering challenge with @pputerimy. Looking forward to getting more young women excited about engineering through this initiative #InternationalWomensDay.

The fact that the communications team had to “throwback” five months to an example of gender CSR activity speaks volumes. The tweet further emphasizes partnerships with girls’ empowerment organizations over, for example, engaging with complex and institutional inequalities within STEM: if enough girls “take an interest,” inequalities address themselves.

Much of the analysis so far resonates with the existing literature on CSR in Business studies and IPE, albeit with different emphases. In the remaining three sections of analysis, however, we explore in detail how CSR communications within international security *also* take different forms and target different publics.

Misleading Narrative and Discourse

In CSR communications, corporations sometimes construct a positive narrative or discourse around their action on a given issue which, when taken in the context of their wider behaviors, is misleading (Walters 2022). We found multiple examples of tweets by subsidiaries of Lockheed Martin in which IWD was utilized to present the corporation as an educator, and empowerer, of women of color. However, unlike in the literature in IPE to date, this misleading narrative was not targeted at consumers in the Global North, but contributes to a broader process of constructing military intervention in the Middle East as liberating for women and girls of the region.

For example, Lockheed Martin Middle East shared a video with accompanying tweets in Arabic (2021a; see [supplementary online materials](#)) and English (2021b; see [supplementary online materials](#)) showing a group of female engineers attending LM’s Center for Innovation and Security Solutions in Abu Dhabi, UAE. The English text states that the company is “committed to inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers through real-world #STEM education.” The video shows a group of women wearing traditional Emirati dress (the Abaya and Shayla), with

black facemasks covering mouths and noses, presumably due to pandemic restrictions. They wear expensive jewelery, with highly manicured, henna-adorned hands, and eye makeup. The laboratories are futuristic, windowless, with white walls and bright white and blue downlighting. Women experiment with large touch screens, selecting images of helicopters flying over deserts; examining a drone while making notes in their notebooks; examining circuit boards; and sitting next to magnifying glasses. The video is accompanied by instrumental music that could be the soundtrack to a Hollywood action movie. No men feature, except portraits of men in Emirati dress (Kandura, Gutra, and Agal) on the walls.

The women of the Global South that Lockheed Martin is “committed to” are not named and do not speak for themselves. However, this video positions LM’s Center in Abu Dhabi as a site for modernity, even futurity, technology, and women’s empowerment. It positions LM as furthering women’s rights in the Middle East. The tweets send the message that *even* women in traditional Islamic dress and henna tattoos can be “inspired” to learn through this program of “real-world STEM education,” which allows them to get hands-on experience using the very military technologies that are being deployed in many parts of their region.

Lockheed Martin has consistently sold weapons to, and partnered with, warring parties in the Middle East, even as they face accusations of humanitarian and human rights abuses. For example, the corporation signed a \$110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia in 2021 (Reuters 2021), despite the Kingdom’s ongoing role in the conflict in Yemen, which has caused tens of thousands of deaths as a result of airstrikes and a humanitarian disaster (Lee et al. 2022). The United Nations (2022) estimates that 23.4 million people—two-thirds of the population—require humanitarian aid, including 1.3 million pregnant or breastfeeding women and 2.2 million children under five. In these tweets, however, Lockheed Martin positions itself as an empowerer of Middle Eastern women, encouraging them into STEM careers they might otherwise eschew. While existing analyses of misleading narrative and discourse have focused on how it might assuage the concerns of consumers in the Global North who might ultimately purchase a corporation’s products, in this case, we argue that the misleading communications are part of a broader process of making technologies and products of war appear peaceful and progressive. These tweets target any and all of the first five publics, aiming to assuage ethical concerns and gain ongoing consent and support for the corporation’s operations. The tweets resonate with dominant “polarizations that place feminism on the side of the West” and discourses that position Western military interventions in the Middle East as primarily concerned with women’s rights (Abu-Lughod 2002, 788). LM’s sale of weapons to warring parties, with devastating impacts for Yemeni women, thus becomes a learning and career opportunity aimed at “inspiring” women of color across the world. These tweets reproduce rescue discourses that ultimately benefit the corporations, but also militaries and governments of the Global North.

Client Military and Government Partnerships

This leads us to another interesting finding in our analysis: that militaries and governments are a public to, and co-communicator in, gender washing practices. BAE Systems AI (2021c; see [supplementary online materials](#)), for example, used IWD to promote partnerships with Greater Manchester regional authorities and a “drive to become a world leading digital city-region.” A senior female employee at BAE Systems contributed a blog post—linked in the tweet—to the initiative website on the importance of gender diversity to its success. Meanwhile, the Innovation and Partnerships Lead at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority contributed a blog post to BAE Systems’ website entitled, “A city region that Chooses to Challenge in 2021,” which the corporation shared on Twitter/X (BAE Systems AI 2021b; see [supplementary online materials](#)).

The ties with militaries and governments are evident also in tweets referencing female employees' work with national militaries (e.g., Lockheed Martin Canada 2021c; see [supplementary online materials](#)) or embedded in military bases (e.g., Boeing UK and Ireland 2021; see [supplementary online materials](#)); showing female employees participating in communications initiatives by national militaries (e.g., Raytheon Intelligence and Space 2021); promoting a career program linked to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (e.g., Raytheon Professional Services 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d; see [supplementary online materials](#)); sharing joint communications campaigns with the UK Ministry of Defence (BAE Systems AI 2021d; see [supplementary online materials](#)); and featuring an interview with a UK Royal Navy captain about his views on gender diversity (BAE Systems AI 2021e; see [supplementary online materials](#)).

This is a new kind of partnership in the gender washing literature. Where many TNCs gender wash in order to garner consumer brand loyalty, arms manufacturers speak to the public of militaries and governments to strengthen their relationships. As clients to—and subsidizers of—arms manufacturers, Northern militaries and governments respectively are a public to their gender washing communications. Further, as organizations with a shared interest in securing the ongoing consent of Northern publics for the use of weaponry in conflicts around the globe, all three work together to gender wash the security sector as a whole (Stohl and Grillot 2013). These communications undermine the protests of activist publics to ensure that the general public in the Global North associates their state's role in global conflicts with anything but war, providing continued consent for the ongoing sale (and purchase) of weaponry. The inclusion of women and girls in STEM jobs and education facilitates this, presenting security as a site of girls' education and women's professional empowerment.

Constructive Silence

Finally, we propose a further new type of gender washing: constructive silence. This is defined as constructing one's own silence on gender equality as a contribution to furthering the cause. In this case, we provide examples where women are presented out of context, except for use of the term "International Women's Day" or related hashtags. The tweets and linked web pages could be used for any other purpose, except here they have been assigned the label "women" to capitalize on IWD. While in misleading narrative and discourse, corporations seek to construct a misleading narrative that sees them as taking action on gender inequality in various ways despite contradictions with their other behaviors, constructive silence involves not actually saying anything on the topic at all. Yet, through the use of slogans or hashtags, a silence is constructed as a contribution.

Once again, we draw on feminist scholarship in challenging binaries that limit our understandings of power in international relations, in this case, the assumed binary between "voice as agency and silence as disempowerment" (Parpart 2020, 320). In International Relations scholarship, as well as in many social movements, voice has historically been seen as unquestionably linked to power; one either has a voice or is silenced (Dingli 2015, 723). Silence has been interpreted as an absence of voice, often as the result of a violence (Carrillo Rowe and Malhotra 2013, 4; Guillaume 2018, 477). Feminist security scholars have complicated this binary by analyzing how for many women, speaking out against oppression may be dangerous, even deadly (Hansen 2000), and yet they can, and do, exercise agency within their silence. Silence can be a strategic, indeed political, choice. And those who are silent, or silenced, can still influence global processes of capital and of security (Enloe 1996, 188). Silences can maintain oppressions, but they can also challenge and undermine them, leading to incremental change.

While the marginalized might use silence to refuse or renegotiate their position in global politics, the already powerful use silence as a “technology of power” (Guillaume 2018, 481). As Kronsell argues, “silence on gender is a determining characteristic of institutions of hegemonic masculinity” (2006, 109). In that sense, it is perhaps unsurprising that arms manufacturers had little, and frequently nothing, to say about gender equality. But in that case, this begs the question, why tweet for IWD? We argue that it is precisely because masculinized discourses of war are so dominant that they are able to construct a silence as its opposite, without any expectation of challenge or scrutiny. In this case, hashtags and IWD slogans allow arms manufacturers to tap into conversations about women’s empowerment—and may be read alongside tweets on violence against women or abortion access—while making none of their own contributions. We call this constructive silence and see it as a means by which the already powerful are able to reframe their ongoing silence on a given issue as helping to move the conversation forward.

One tweet by Lockheed Martin Canada (2021d; see [supplementary online materials](#)) describes a female employee as “helping to create a vision for training organization growth that helps keep Canadian sailors safe.” An embedded link discusses technology and sailor safety (Lockheed Martin 2020b). There is no discussion of actions to empower women, and the linked page does not discuss gender or IWD either. Indeed, the source code (accessed using the View Page Source feature) indicates that it was originally published in December 2020. Similarly, another Lockheed Martin Canada tweet (2021c) discusses a female employee who is “a mentor for many young women in STEM,” and “leading a team that is always innovating & maturing our processes, ensuring we are delivering the best results for our clients.” Thus, Lockheed Martin invokes female employees as drivers of social progress and efficiency, tapping into important conversations about gender equality, without actually naming gender inequality as an issue that needs addressing.

There are other cases where relevant hashtags are the only way to know that these posts are related to IWD. For example, one tweet by Lockheed Martin India (2021b; see [supplementary online materials](#)) uses the hashtags #InternationalWomensDay #NariShakti #ChooseToChallenge, with no immediately obvious link to the rest of the text posted.⁶ The accompanying photograph of a statement by the chief executive of Lockheed Martin India states that “diversity and inclusion . . . reflect our core values of doing what’s right, respecting others and performing with excellence” (see also, Lockheed Martin India 2021a; see [supplementary online materials](#)). The label “diversity” is often affixed to particular demographics (Ahmed 2012); in this case, the statement does not even explicitly name women, so we are left to deduce from wider cultural clues and the accompanying hashtags that it relates to gender equality.

In some cases, the tweets function as recruitment materials for martial organizations (Joachim et al. 2018), while hashtags frame this as furthering efforts toward gender equality. One tweet by Raytheon Professional Services (2021a) is instructive. The only evidence that it relates to IWD is the hashtag #IWD2021. There is no mention of women or gender: “Our Cyber Academy reskilling programme is preparing UK residents, like [name], for a rewarding career in #cyber. Learn how to start your career today!” This is accompanied by a graphic of a statement from someone undertaking the program. The only reason we suspect this person is female is the IWD hashtag. A tweet about another participant (2021b) is similar, discussing how she used to code as a “hobby,” but now “the situation with COVID-19 was an opportunity for me to improve my skills in something that I love.” A further, almost identical tweet (2021c) quotes an academy participant saying, “It will be nice to learn how to secure systems and help the community.” This tweet resonates with [Elshtain’s \(1982\)](#)

⁶Nari Shakti Puraskar is an award bestowed by the Government of India (2022, 1) annually on IWD, “in recognition of their service towards the cause of women[’s] empowerment, especially vulnerable and marginalized women.”

analysis of dominant understandings of women as “beautiful souls” keen to support others and unable to do harm, while “help” is reminiscent of appeals to join the military to help other people (Jester 2021).

The above tweets position women as requiring “reskilling” or an “update,” to be “prepared” for the “opportunity” that pandemic-related redundancy represents for their career. As elsewhere, this targets the public of Northern governments, who are keen to upskill their workforce but also addresses a growing concern about capacity to improve cyber security (Johnson Cobb 2021). The post does not discuss the wider material concerns of women, and why they might need to reskill in the first place: roles perceived as “women’s work” typically earn less, and women are often pushed out of the workforce by childcare issues. The tweet recalls a recent—widely mocked—British government advertisement of a ballerina, captioned “Fatima’s next job could be in cyber (she just doesn’t know it yet)” (Walsh 2021, quoted on p. 47). Jester (2021) argues that women are conceptualized as an untapped resource with regard to martial recruitment (in that case, the military) because there is a perception that there are no more men to persuade; there is a parallel here with “cyber” recruitment.⁷ Once again, the focus is on “fixing” women, their abilities, and aspirations, while nothing is said about gender within these corporations or indeed at all. Through constructive silences, arms manufacturers hijack feminist hashtags to recruit more women into the practice of war.

While these tweets do speak to the corporations’ shareholders, partner militaries and governments, and staff predominantly (publics 1, 2, and 3) with messages about the benefits of training and educating women, they say nothing at all about gender equality, or human rights more broadly, which avoids highlighting these issues to activists and the general public (publics 4 and 5). In this sample, the median number of retweets per tweet was just two, while the median number of likes was five. Across the whole sample, there were just thirteen comments from other Twitter users, on just six of the tweets. This is a remarkably low level of active engagement for global corporations of this size. The tweet that garnered by far the most attention was from Boeing (2021; see [supplementary online materials](#)), with 17 retweets, 100 likes, and 5 comments; still an underwhelming response for an account with 671,600 followers. By contrast, an account with 318,400 followers (the British Royal Air Force, @RoyalAirForce), fewer than half as many as Boeing, attracted 179 retweets, 430 likes, and 12 comments on a 2023 tweet about IWD (Royal Air Force 2023). Through constructive silences, these five corporations succeed in linking into conversations about gender equality in a way that targets the first three publics (highlighting the benefits to corporate profitability, national economies, and employee experience, or even recruiting more women into the practice of war), while largely avoiding accusations of hypocrisy from the fourth and fifth publics, activists, and the general public in the Global North. Their hegemonic position, and their position as suppliers to and co-communicators with Northern governments and militaries, allows them to construct their ongoing silence on gender equality and human rights as a positive contribution.

Conclusion

While discussions of gender washing have emerged in activist circles and social media discussions in recent years, it is presently under-researched. Where articles define and analyze corporate gender washing, they do so within feminist Organization Studies, Management, and Business Studies, or IPE. In this article, our first contribution is to integrate a framework from IPE with feminist Security Studies. An analysis of the gender washing of war, we argue, creates a space in which to com-

⁷Computer programming used to be perceived as an easy role and was filled by women. When the role began to garner prestige, the industry became male-dominated (Ensmenger 2010).

bine insights from both of those disciplines with a sociologically informed analysis of global systems of power. In doing so, we have set out a new global hierarchy of publics to gender washing communications, reflecting the fact that not all corporations target CSR activities at increasing sales amongst (Global North) consumers. For arms manufacturers, their quest for legitimacy centers upon securing continuing support, custom, and subsidization from Global North governments. They must be seen to address activist concerns, but ultimately, do not need the average Northern civilian to feel affiliation to any particular brand of missile or fighter jet. In this case, then, governments and militaries are an important public to gender washing communications, while general publics and activists in the Global North are only important in as far as they have the capacity to influence their governments' policies.

Secondly, and relatedly, we identify partnerships with client militaries and governments as publics and co-communicators as a further variety of gender washing, specific to security industries. Thirdly, we also add "constructive silence," a form of communications through which the already powerful construct their ongoing silence on the rights of women and girls as the opposite of silence. While feminist literature has previously explored how women and girls might exercise agency even as they appear on the surface to be silenced, or how the silences of powerful actors on gender equality serve to further silence women and girls, "constructive silence" denotes something different. It identifies how corporations and powerful actors in international relations might draw on dominant discourses, and use their position of power, to contribute to a conversation on gender without actually saying anything at all. While this throws up fascinating possibilities in terms of analyzing gender washing in Security Studies, it also suggests a future area of research in exploring how transnational corporations in other fields may use constructive silences to gain from conversations to which they are not contributing and to shore up existing positions of power.

Finally, our fourth key contribution is in highlighting the process of gender washing war. Our analysis shows how corporations whose very business models, products and employment practices are masculinist, violent, and destructive use IWD to portray themselves as women-friendly, responsible, and indeed empowering. They drew on hashtags, slogans, stories, and images of female employees to present themselves as progressive and enlightened. In this narrative, power relations, technologies, and knowledges that are causing gendered crises for civilians predominantly in the Global South are bringing progress and empowerment to otherwise "backward" cultures; promoting gender equality; educating girls; and making the world a safer place. There is significant scope to develop this research further, combining analyses of global flows of capital in the arms trade and of attempts by states, militaries, and corporations to present war, and the sale and purchase of deadly weaponry, as feminist. In setting out our analysis, and the concepts that have informed it, we hope to contribute to ongoing efforts by feminist scholars and activists alike to highlight this hypocrisy.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers and the editors for their generous and constructive feedback on previous versions of this article.

Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available in the *International Political Sociology* data archive.

References

- ABU-LUGHOD, LILA. 2002. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104 (3): 783–90.
- ÅHÄLL, LINDA. 2016. "The Dance of Militarisation: A Feminist Security Studies Take on 'The Political'." *Critical Studies on Security* 4 (2): 154–68.
- AHMED, SARA. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- AKERMAN, ANDERS, AND ANNA LARSSON SEIM. 2014. "The Global Arms Trade Network 1950–2007." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 42 (3): 535–51.
- BAE SYSTEMS. 2021. "Annual Report." <https://investors.baesystems.com/~media/Files/B/BAE-System-s-Investor/documents/bae-ar-complete-2021.pdf>.
- BANERJEE, SUBHABRATA BOBBY. 2008. "Corporate Social Responsibility: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." *Critical Sociology* 34 (1): 51–79.
- BARKAWI, TARAK, AND SHANE BRIGHTON. 2011. "Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique." *International Political Sociology* 5 (2): 126–43.
- BARON, ILAN ZVI, AND GALIA PRESS-BARNATHAN. 2021. "Foodways and Foodwashing: Israeli Cookbooks and the Politics of Culinary Zionism." *International Political Sociology* 15 (3): 338–58.
- BEDFORD, KATE, AND SHIRIN M. RAI. 2010. "Feminists Theorize International Political Economy." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (1): 1–18.
- BIEREMA, LAURA L. 2005. "Women's Networks: A Career Development Intervention or Impediment?" *Human Resource Development International* 8 (2): 207–24.
- BIGO, DIDIER. 2016. "International Political Sociology: Rethinking the International through Dynamics of Power." In *International Political Sociology: Transversal Lines*, edited by Tugba Basaran, Didier Bigo, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet and R.B.J. Walker. Routledge. London and New York
- BYRNE, EDMUND F. 2007. "Assessing Arms Makers' Corporate Social Responsibility." *Journal of Business Ethics* 74: 201–17.
- CALKIN, SYDNEY. 2017. "Disrupting Disempowerment: Feminism, Co-Optation and the Privatised Governance of Gender and Development." *New Formations* 91: 69–86.
- CARRILLO ROWE, AIMEE, AND SHEENA MALHOTRA. 2013. "Still the Silence: Feminist Reflections at the Edges of Sound." In *Silence, Feminism, Power: Reflections at the Edges of Sound*, edited by Sheena Malhotra and Aimee Carrillo Rowe. 1–22. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- CARVER, TERRELL, AND LAURA LYDDON. 2022. *Masculinities, Gender and International Relations*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- CHISHOLM, AMANDA, AND HANNA KETOLA. 2020. "The Cruel Optimism of Militarism: Feminist Curiosity, Affect, and Global Security." *International Political Sociology* 14 (3): 270–85.
- CHISHOLM, AMANDA, AND SASKIA STACHOWITZ. 2017. "(Re)Integrating Feminist Security Studies and Feminist Global Political Economy: Continuing the Conversation." *Politics & Gender* 13 (4): 710–15.
- CHO, CHARLES H., MATIAS LAINE, ROBIN W. ROBERTS, AND MICHELLE RODRIGUE. 2015. "Organised Hypocrisy, Organisational Facades and Sustainability Reporting." *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 40: 78–94.
- CRISS, DOUG, AND THOM PATTERSON. 2018. "Pretty in Pink: Navy Fighter Jet Painted for Breast Cancer Awareness Month." *CNN*. October 18. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/18/health/pink-fighter-jet-trnd/index.html>.
- DINGLI, SOPHIA. 2015. "We Need to Talk about Silence: Re-Examining Silence in International Relations Theory." *European Journal of International Relations* 21 (4): 721–42.
- DOTY, ROXANNE LYNN. 1993. "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines." *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (3): 297–320.
- DUNCOMBE, CONSTANCE. 2019. "The Politics of Twitter: Emotions and the Power of Social Media." *International Political Sociology* 13 (4): 409–29.
- DUNNE, PAUL, AND SAM PERLO-FREEMAN. 2003. "The Impact of a Responsible Arms Control Policy on the UK Economy." Oxford: Oxfam. <http://carecon.org.uk/Users/paul/Oxfamreport7.pdf>.
- EASTWOOD, JAMES. 2019. "Enabling Militarism? The Inclusion of Soldiers with Disabilities in the Israeli Military." *International Political Sociology* 13 (4): 430–46.
- EISENSTEIN, HESTER. 2017. "Hegemonic Feminism, Neoliberalism and Womenomics: 'Empowerment' Instead of Liberation?" *New Formations* 91: 35–49.
- ELIAS, JUANITA. 2015. "Introduction: Feminist Security Studies and Feminist Political Economy: Crossing Divides and Rebuilding Bridges." *Politics & Gender* 11 (2): 406–8.
- ELSHTAIN, JEAN BETHKE. 1982. "On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness." *Women's Studies International Forum* 5 (3): 341–48.

- ENLOE, CYNTHIA. 1996. "Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs: How to Overcome the Underestimation of Power in the Study of International Relations." In *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, edited by Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski. 186–202. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2000. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- ENSMENGER, NATHAN. 2010. "Making Programming Masculine." In *Gender Codes: Why Women Are Leaving Computing*, edited by T.J. Misa. 141–30. New Jersey: Wiley.
- ERICKSON, JENNIFER. 2015. *Dangerous Trade Arms Exports, Human Rights, and International Reputation*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- ESCHLE, CATHERINE, AND BICE MAIGUASHCA. 2018. "Theorising Feminist Organising in and against Neoliberalism: Beyond Co-Optation and Resistance?" *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 1 (1-2): 223–39.
- FALCK, OLIVER, AND STEPHAN HEBLICH. 2007. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing Well by Doing Good." *Business Horizons* 50 (3): 247–54.
- FOX-KIRK, W., RITA A. GARDINER, HAYLEY FINN, AND JENNIFER CHISHOLM. 2020. "Genderwashing: The Myth of Equality." *Human Resource Development International* 23 (5): 586–97.
- GIBBINGS, SHERI LYNN. 2011. "No Angry Women at the United Nations: Political Dreams and the Cultural Politics of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13 (4): 522–38.
- GOLDSTEIN, JOSHUA. 2003. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- GOVERNMENT OF INDIA. 2022. "Guidelines for 'Nari Shakti Puraskars'—National Award for Women." Accessed May 24, 2024. https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/NSP%202022%20Guidelines_1.pdf.
- GUILLAUME, XAVIER. 2018. "How to Do Things with Silence: Rethinking the Centrality of Speech to the Securitisation Framework." *Security Dialogue* 49 (6): 476–92.
- HAASTRUP, TONI. 2020. "Gendering South Africa's Foreign Policy: Toward a Feminist Approach?" *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16 (2): 199–216.
- HANSEN, LENE. 2000. "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29 (2): 285–306.
- HARRIS, PETER. 2015. "Militarism in Environmental Disguise: The Greenwashing of an Overseas Military Base." *International Political Sociology* 9 (1): 19–36.
- HARTLEY, KEITH. 2007. "The Arms Industry, Procurement and Industrial Policies." In *Handbook of Defense Economics: Defense in a Globalized World*, edited by Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley. 1139–76. The Netherlands: North Holland.
- HOWELL, ALISON. 2018. "Forget 'Militarization': Race, Disability and the 'Martial Politics' of the Police and of the University." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20 (2): 117–36.
- JESTER, NATALIE. 2023a. "Accessible, Transparent, Progressive: Conceptualising the Militarisation of Digital Space Through the Social Media Presence of Arms Manufacturers." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 51 2 463–488.
- . 2023b. "Making Martial Politics Palatable: Constructing Neoliberal Feminist Subjects in Arms Manufacturers' Social Media Feeds." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 25 (2): 310–333.
- JESTER, NATALIE, AND EMMA DOLAN. 2023. "Arms, aviation, and apologies: mapping the Boeing social media response to the 2019 Ethiopian Airlines crash." *Critical Studies on Security* 12 (1): 2–17.
- JESTER, NATALIE. 2021. "Army Recruitment Video Advertisements in the US and UK Since 2002: Challenging Ideals of Hegemonic Military Masculinity?" *Media, War & Conflict* 14 (1): 57–74.
- JOACHIM, JUTTA, MARLEN MARTIN, HENRIETTE LANGE, ANDREA SCHNEIKER, AND MAGNUS DAU. 2018. "Twittering for Talent: Private Military and Security Companies between Business and Military Branding." *Contemporary Security Policy* 39 (2): 298–316.
- JOHNSON COBB, M. 2021. "Plugging the Skills Gap: The Vital Role that Women Should Play in Cyber-Security." *Computer Fraud & Security* 18 (1): 5–8.
- JØRGENSEN, MARIANNE W., AND LOUISE J. PHILLIPS. 2002. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage.
- KINSEY, CHRISTOPHER. 2008. "Private Security Companies and Corporate Social Responsibility." In *Private Military and Security Companies Ethics, Policies and Civil-Military Relations*, edited by Andrew Alexandra, Deane-Peter Baker and Marina Caparini. 70–86. Abingdon: Routledge.
- KOŁODZIEJ, EDWARD. 2014. *Making and Marketing Arms the French Experience and Its Implications for the International System*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- KRONSELL, ANNICA. 2005. "Gendered Practices in Institutions of Hegemonic Masculinity." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 7 (2): 280–98.
- . 2006. "Methods for Studying Silences: Gender Analysis in Institutions of Hegemonic Masculinity." In *Feminist Methods for International Relations*, edited by Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui

- True. 108–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KRULIŠOVÁ, KATEŘINA, AND MÍLA O’SULLIVAN. 2022. “Feminist Security Studies in Europe: Beyond Western Academics’ Club.” In *Feminist IR in Europe*, edited by Maria Stern and Ann E. Towns. 33–53. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- KUIMOVA, ALEXANDRA, PIETER D. WEZEMAN, AND SIEMON T. WEZEMAN. 2022. “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2021.” Stockholm Institute for Peace Research. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.55163/CBZJ9986>.
- KYTÖMÄKI, ELLI. 2014. “The Defence Industry, Investors and the Arms Trade Treaty.” *Chatham House Research Paper*. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2014/12/defence-industry-investors-and-arms-trade-treaty>.
- LEE, JOYCE SOHYUN, MEG KELLY, AND ATTHAR MIRZA. 2022. “Saudi-Led Airstrikes in Yemen Have Been Called War Crimes. Many Relied on US Support.” *The Washington Post*. June 4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/saudi-war-crimes-yemen/>.
- LESAVOY, BARBARA, AND GARETT JORDAN. 2013. “The Capitalist Hijacking of International Women’s Day: Russian and American Considerations.” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 14: 244–58.
- LISLE, DEBBIE. 2017. “Learning How to See.” In *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology*, edited by Xavier Guillaume and Pinar Bilgin. 299–308. Abingdon: Routledge.
- LOCKHEED, MARTIN. 2020a. “2020 Global Diversity and Inclusion Report.” Accessed May 20, 2021. <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/who-we-are/global-diversity-inclusion.html>.
- . 2020b. “Discover the Dream Job: Training Canada’s Next Generation Sailors.” Accessed May 20, 2021. <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-ca/features/discover-the-dream-jobtraining.html>.
- LYON, THOMAS P., AND MONTGOMERY A. WREN. 2015. “The Means and End of Greenwash.” *Organization & Environment* 28 (2): 223–49.
- MC SWEENEY, BILL. 1999. *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MILLER, JULIA, ANGELIKA ARUTYUNOVA, AND CINDY CLARK. 2013. “New Actors, New Money, New Conversations: A Mapping of Recent Initiatives for Women and Girls.” Association for Women’s Rights in Development. <https://www.awid.org/publications/new-actors-new-money-new-conversations>.
- MOSCOSO, MELANIA, AND R. LUCAS PLATERO. 2017. “Cripwashing: The Abortion Debates at the Crossroads of Gender and Disability in the Spanish Media.” *Continuum (Society for Social Work Administrators in Health Care)* 31 (3): 470–81.
- MUNSHI, DEBASHISH, AND KURIAN PRIYA. 2005. “Imperialising Spin Cycles: A Postcolonial Look at Public Relations, Greenwashing, and the Separation of Publics.” *Public Relations Review* 31: 513–20.
- NYMAN, JONNA. 2021. “The Everyday Life of Security: Capturing Space, Practice and Affect.” *International Political Sociology* 15 (3): 313–37.
- OZKAZANG-PAN, BANU. 2019. “CSR as Gendered Neocoloniality in the Global South.” *Journal of Business Ethics* 160 (4): 851–64.
- PARASHAR, SWATI. 2013. “Feminist (in)Securities and Camp Politics.” *International Studies Perspectives* 14 (4): 440–43.
- PARKER, DAVID, AND KEITH HARTLEY. 2003. “Transaction Costs, Relational Contracting and Public Private Partnerships: A Case Study of UK Defence.” *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management* 9 (3): 97–108.
- PARPART, JANE. 2020. “Rethinking Silence, Gender and Power in Insecure Sites: Implications for Feminist Security Studies in a Postcolonial World.” *Review of International Studies* 46 (3): 315–24.
- PETERSON, SPIKE V. 2005. “How (the Meaning of) Gender Matters in Political Economy.” *New Political Economy* 10 (4): 499–521.
- PRÜGL, ELISABETH. 2016. “Corporate Social Responsibility and the Neoliberalising of Feminism.” In *Gender Equality and Responsible Business: Expanding CSR Horizons*, edited by K. Grosser, L. McCarthy and M.A. Kilgour. 46–55. Sheffield: Greenleaf.
- RAJAN, HAMSÁ. 2018. “The Ethics of Transnational Feminist Research and Activism: An Argument for a More Comprehensive View.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43 (2): 269–300.
- REUTERS. 2021. “Saudi Arabia Signs Deal with Lockheed Martin to Enhance Kingdom’s Defense and Weapons Manufacturing Capabilities—Weeks after Biden Announced Temporary Freeze on Arms Sales to Middle East.” *Daily Mail*. February 21. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9283775/Saudi-SAMI-signs-defense-venture-deal-U-S-Lockheed-Martin.html>.
- ROBINSON, FIONA. 2021. “Feminist Foreign Policy as Ethical Foreign Policy? A Care Ethics Perspective.” *Journal of International Political Theory* 17 (1): 20–37.
- ROSÉN SUNDSTRÖM, MALENA, AND OLE ELGSTRÖM. 2020. “Praise or Critique? Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy in the Eyes of Its Fellow EU Members.” *European Politics and Society* 21 (4): 418–33.
- ROSHER, BEN. 2022. “And Now We’re Facing that Reality Too’: Brexit, Ontological Security, and Intergen-

- erational Anxiety in the Irish Border Region." *European Security* 31 (1): 21–38.
- ROYAL AIR FORCE. 2023. "This #InternationalWomensDay, We..." <https://twitter.com/RoyalAirForce/status/1633377019538059265>.
- SCHULMAN, SARAH. 2011. "Israel and 'Pinkwashing'." *The New York Times*. November 22. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/opinion/pinkwashing-and-israels-use-of-gays-as-a-messaging-tool.html>.
- SJOBERG, LAURA. 2015. "From Unity to Divergence and Back Again: Security and Economy in Feminist International Relations." *Politics & Gender* 11 (2): 408–13.
- STAVRIANAKIS, ANNA. 2020. "Towards a Postcolonial, Anti-Racist, Anti-Militarist Feminist Mode of Weapons Control." In *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*, edited by Soumita Basu, Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd. 153–68. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- STERN, MARIA. 2017. "Feminist Global Political Economy and Feminist Security Studies? The Politics of Delineating Subfields." *Politics & Gender* 13 (4): 727–33.
- STERNBANK, Y., S. CHAMPLIN, K. WINDELS, AND S. SHELTON 2021. "Is Femvertising the new greenwashing? Examining corporate commitment to gender equality" *Journal of Business Ethics*. 177 (1): 1–15.
- STOHL, RACHEL, AND SUZETTE GRILLOT. 2013. *The International Arms Trade*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- SYLVESTER, CHRISTINE. 2010. "Tensions in Feminist Security Studies." *Security Dialogue* 41 (6): 607–14.
- THOMSON, JENNIFER. 2020. "What's Feminist about Feminist Foreign Policy? Sweden's and Canada's Foreign Policy Agendas." *International Studies Perspectives* 21 (4): 424–37.
- UK GOVERNMENT GENDER PAY GAP SERVICE. 2020. "BAE Systems PLC 2019/20 Gender Pay Gap Report." Accessed JUNE 15, 2021. <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/EmployerReport/zjC4jdFb/2019>.
- UNITED NATIONS. 2022. "Huge Needs Remain in Yemen as Fragile Peace Extends beyond Truce: UN Deputy Relief Chief." Accessed APRIL 1, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129582>.
- VUCETIC, SRDJAN. 2017. "A Nation of Feminist Arms Dealers? Canada and Military Exports." *International Journal* 72 (4): 503–19.
- WALSH, FINTAN. 2021. "Grief Machines: Transhumanist Theatre, Digital Performance, Pandemic Time." *Theatre Journal* 73 (3): 391–407.
- WALTERS, ROSIE. 2022. "Varieties of Gender Wash: Towards a Framework for Critiquing Corporate Social Responsibility in Feminist IPE." *Review of International Political Economy* 29 (5): 1577–600.