

The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State

My most important job as your President is to defend the homeland; is to protect American people from further attacks.

—George W. Bush, remarks given on March 29, 2002 (2002b)

Every man I meet wants to protect me. I can't figure out what from.

—Mae West

The American and European women's movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s contained a large segment that organized around issues of weapons, war, and peace. Creative civil disobedience actions wove webs of yarn at entrances to the Pentagon and set up colorful camps on cruise missile sites in England's Greenham Common. Writings of the women's peace movement tried to make theoretical connections between male domination and militarism, between masculine gender and the propensity to settle conflicts with violence, and these echoed some of the voices of the women's peace movement earlier in the twentieth century. By the early 1990s the humor and heroism of the women's peace actions had been all but forgotten.

Organized violence, led both by states and by nonstate actors, has certainly not abated in the meantime and has taken new and frightening forms (Kaldor 1999). Thus there are urgent reasons to reopen the question of whether looking at war and security issues through a gendered lens can teach lessons that might advance the projects of peace and de-

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mocracy. In this article I analyze some of the security events and legal changes in the United States since fall 2001 by means of an account of a logic of masculinist protection.

Much writing about gender and war aims to explain bellicosity or its absence by considering attributes of men and women (Goldstein 2001). Theories adopting this approach attempt to argue that behavioral propensities of men link them to violence and those of women make them more peaceful and that these differences help account for the structure of states and international relations. Such attempts to connect violence structures with attributes or behavioral propensities that men or women supposedly share, however, rely on unsupportable generalizations about men and women and often leap too quickly from an account of the traits of persons to institutional structures and collective action. Here I take a different approach. I take gender not as an element of explanation but rather one of interpretation, a tool of what might be called ideology critique (cf. Cohn 1993). Viewing issues of war and security through a gender lens, I suggest, means seeing how a certain logic of gendered meanings and images helps organize the way people interpret events and circumstances, along with the positions and possibilities for action within them, and sometimes provides some rationale for action.

I argue that an exposition of the gendered logic of the masculine role of protector in relation to women and children illuminates the meaning and effective appeal of a security state that wages war abroad and expects obedience and loyalty at home. In this patriarchal logic, the role of the masculine protector puts those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in a subordinate position of dependence and obedience. To the extent that citizens of a democratic state allow their leaders to adopt a stance of protectors toward them, these citizens come to occupy a subordinate status like that of women in the patriarchal household. We are to accept a more authoritarian and paternalistic state power, which gets its support partly from the unity a threat produces and our gratitude for protection. At the same time that it legitimates authoritarian power over citizens internally, the logic of masculinist protection justifies aggressive war outside. I interpret Thomas Hobbes as a theorist of authoritarian government grounded in fear of threat and the apparent desire for protection such fear generates.

Although some feminist theorists of peace and security have noticed the appeal to protection as justification for war making (Stiehm 1982; Tickner 1992, 2001), they have not elaborated the gendered logic of protection to the extent that I try to do here. These accounts concentrate on international relations, moreover, and do less to carry the analysis to

an understanding of the relation of states to citizens internally. My interest in this essay is in this dual face of security forms, those that wage war outside a country and conduct surveillance and detention inside. I notice that democratic values of due process, separation of powers, free assembly, and holding powerful actors accountable come into danger when leaders mobilize fear and present themselves as protectors.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, I argue, the relation of the leaders of the United States to its citizens is well illuminated by interpreting it under the logic of masculinist protection. The Bush administration has mobilized the language of fear and threat to gain support for constricting liberty and dissent inside the United States and waging war outside. This stronger U.S. security state offers a bargain to its citizens: obey our commands and support our security actions, and we will ensure your protection. This protection bargain between the state and its citizens is not unique to the United States in this period but rather often legitimates authoritarian government. I argue that the bargain is dangerous in this case, as in most others. The essay concludes with a gendered analysis of the war against Afghanistan of fall 2001. While the Bush administration initially justified the war as a defensive action necessary to protect Americans, its rhetoric quickly supplemented this legitimation with an appeal to the liberation of Afghan women. I suggest that some of the groundwork for this appeal may have been laid by feminist campaigns concerning the Taliban, which the Bush administration chose at that moment to exploit. I argue that the apparent success of this appeal in justifying the war to many Americans should trouble feminists and should prompt us to examine whether American or Western feminists sometimes adopt the stance of protector in relation to some women of the world whom we construct as more dependent or subordinate.

Masculinism as protection

Several theorists of gender argue that masculinity and femininity should not be conceptualized with a single logic but rather that ideas and values of masculinity and femininity, and their relation to one another, take several different and sometimes overlapping forms (Brod and Kaufman 1994; Hooper 2001). In this spirit, I propose to single out a particular logic of masculinism that I believe has not received very much attention in recent feminist theory, that associated with the position of male head of household as a protector of the family, and, by extension, with masculine leaders and risk takers as protectors of a population. Twenty years ago Judith Stiehm called attention to the relevance of a logic of masculinist

protection to analysis of war and security issues, and I will draw on some of her ideas (Stiehm 1982). Her analysis more presupposes than it defines the meaning of a masculine role as protector, so this is where I will begin.

The logic of masculinist protection contrasts with a model of masculinity assumed by much feminist theory, of masculinity as self-consciously dominative. On the male domination model, masculine men wish to master women sexually for the sake of their own gratification and to have the pleasures of domination. They bond with other men in comradely male settings that give them specific benefits from which they exclude women, and they harass women in order to enforce this exclusion and maintain their superiority (MacKinnon 1987; May 1998, chaps. 4–6).

This image of the selfish, aggressive, dominative man who desires sexual capture of women corresponds to much about male-dominated institutions and the behavior of many men within them. For my purposes in this essay, however, it is important to recall another apparently more benign image of masculinity, one more associated with ideas of chivalry. In this latter image, real men are neither selfish nor do they seek to enslave or overpower others for the sake of enhancing themselves. Instead, the gallantly masculine man is loving and self-sacrificing, especially in relation to women. He faces the world's difficulties and dangers in order to shield women from harm and allow them to pursue elevating and decorative arts. The role of this courageous, responsible, and virtuous man is that of a protector.

The “good” man is one who keeps vigilant watch over the safety of his family and readily risks himself in the face of threats from the outside in order to protect the subordinate members of his household. The logic of masculinist protection, then, includes the image of the selfish aggressor who wishes to invade the lord's property and sexually conquer his women. These are the bad men. Good men can only appear in their goodness if we assume that lurking outside the warm familial walls are aggressors who wish to attack them. The dominative masculinity in this way constitutes protective masculinity as its other. The world out there is heartless and uncivilized, and the movements and motives of the men in it are unpredictable and difficult to discern. The protector must therefore take all precautions against these threats, remain watchful and suspicious, and be ready to fight and sacrifice for the sake of his loved ones (Elshtain 1987, 1992). Masculine protection is needed to make a home a haven.

Central to the logic of masculinist protection is the subordinate relation of those in the protected position. In return for male protection, the woman concedes critical distance from decision-making autonomy. When the household lives under a threat, there cannot be divided wills and

arguments about who will do what, or what is the best course of action. The head of the household should decide what measures are necessary for the security of the people and property, and he gives the orders that they must follow if they and their relations are to remain safe. As Stiehm puts it: "The protector cannot achieve status simply through his accomplishment, then. Because he has dependents he is as socially connected as one who is dependent. He is expected to provide for others. Often a protector tries to get help from and also control the lives of those he protects—in order to 'better protect' them" (1982, 372).

Feminine subordination, in this logic, does not constitute submission to a violent and overbearing bully. The feminine woman, rather, on this construction, adores her protector and happily defers to his judgment in return for the promise of security that he offers. She looks up to him with gratitude for his manliness and admiration for his willingness to face the dangers of the world for her sake. That he finds her worthy of such risks gives substance to her self. It is only fitting that she should minister to his needs and obey his dictates.

Hobbes is the great theorist of political power founded on a need and desire for protection. He depicts a state of nature in which people live in small families where all believe some of the others envy them and desire to enlarge themselves by stealing from or conquering them. As a consequence, everyone in this state of nature must live in a state of fear and insecurity, even when not immediately under attack. Households must live with the knowledge that outsiders might wish to attack them, especially if they appear weak and vulnerable, so each must construct defensive fortresses and be on watch. It is only sensible, moreover, to conduct preemptive strikes against those who might wish to attack and to try to weaken them. But each knows that the others are likely to make defensive raids, which only adds to fear and insecurity. In Hobbes's state of nature some people may be motivated by simple greed and desire for conquest and domination. In this state of nature everyone has reason to feel insecure, however, not because all have these dominative motives but because he or she is uncertain about who does and each person understands his or her own vulnerability.

In her contemporary classic, *The Sexual Contract*, Carole Pateman interprets Hobbes along the lines of contemporary feminist accounts of men as selfish aggressors and sexual predators. In the state of nature, roving men take advantage of women encumbered by children and force them to submit to sexual domination. Sometimes they keep the women around as sexual servants; thus arises marriage. These strong and aggressive men force other men to labor for them at the point of a sword. On Pateman's

account, this is how the patriarchal household forms, through overpowering force (1988, chap. 3).

One can just as well read Hobbes's ideas through the lens of the apparently more benign masculinity of protection. Here we can imagine that men and women get together out of attraction and feel love for the children they beget. On this construction, families have their origin in a desire for companionship and caring. In the state of nature, however, each unit has reason to fear the strangers who might rob or kill its members; each then finds it prudent at times to engage in preemptive strikes and to adopt a threatening stance toward the outsiders. On this alternative account, then, patriarchal right emerges from male specialization in security. The patriarch's will rules because the patriarch faces the dangers outside and needs to organize defenses. Female subordination, on this account, derives from this position of being protected. As I will discuss in the next section, however, Hobbes does not think that it is a good idea to leave this armed power in the hands of individual male heads of household. Instead, the sovereign takes over this function.

Both Pateman's story of male domination and the one I have reconstructed depict patriarchal gender relations as upholding unequal power. It is important to attend to the difference, however, I think, because in one relation the hierarchical power is obvious and in the other it is more masked by virtue and love. Michel Foucault (1988, 1994) argues that power conceived and enacted as repressive power, the desire and ability of an agent to force the other to obey his commands, has receded in importance in modern institutions. Other forms of power that enlist the desire of those over whom it is exercised better describe many power relations both historically and today. One such form of power Foucault calls pastoral power. This is the kind of power that the priest exercises over his parish and, by extension, that many experts in the care of individuals exercise over those cared for. This power often appears gentle and benevolent both to its wielders and to those under its sway, but it is no less powerful for that reason. Masculinist protection is more like pastoral power than dominative power that exploits those it rules for its own aggrandizement.

The state as protector and subordinate citizenship

The gendered logic of masculinist protection has some relevance to individual family life even in modern urban America. Every time a father warns his daughter of the dangerous men he fears will exploit her and forbids her from "running around" the city, he inhabits the role of the

male protector. Nevertheless, in everyday family life and other sites of interaction between men and women, the legitimation of female inequality and subordination by appeal to a need for protection has dwindled. My purpose in articulating a logic of masculinist protection is not to argue that it describes private life today but rather to argue that we learn something about public life, specifically about the relation of a state to its citizens, when state officials successfully mobilize fear. States often justify their expectations of obedience and loyalty, as well as their establishment of surveillance, police, intimidation, detention, and the repression of criticism and dissent, by appeal to their role as protectors of citizens. I find in Hobbes a clever account of authoritarian rule grounded in the assumption of threat and fear as basic to the human condition, and thus a need for protection as the highest good.

Hobbes tells a story about why individuals and families find it necessary to constitute a sovereign, a single power to rule them all. In response to the constant fear under which they live, families may join confederations or protection associations. Such protection associations, however, no matter how large and powerful, do not reduce the reasons for fear and insecurity. As long as the possibility exists that others will form larger and stronger protective associations, the nasty state of war persists. As long as there is a potential for competition among units, and those units hold the means to try to force their desires on one another, they must live in fear. Without submission to a common power to which they yield their separate forces, moreover, members of a protective association are liable to turn on one another during times when they need to rely on one another for protection from others (Hobbes [1668] 1994, chap. 17, 3, 4; cf. Nozick 1974, chap. 2). So Hobbes argues that only a Leviathan can assure safety and quell the fear and uncertainty that generate a spiral of danger. All the petty protectors in the state of nature give up their powers of aggression and defense, which they turn over to the sovereign. They make a covenant with one another to live in peace and constitute civil society under the common rule of an absolute authority who makes, interprets, and enforces the laws of the commonwealth for the sake of peace and security of subjects.

Readers of Hobbes sometimes find in the image of Leviathan a mean and selfish tyrant who sucks up the wealth and loyalty of subjects for his own aggrandizement. Democratic values and freedoms would be much easier to assert and preserve in modern politics if the face of authoritarianism were so ugly and easy to recognize. Like the benevolent patriarch, however, Leviathan often wears another aspect, that of the selfless and wise protector whose actions aim to foster and maintain security. What I

call a security state is one whose rulers subordinate citizens to ad hoc surveillance, search, or detention and repress criticism of such arbitrary power, justifying such measures as within the prerogative of those authorities whose primary duty is to maintain security and protect the people.

The security state has an external and an internal aspect. It constitutes itself in relation to an enemy outside, an unpredictable aggressor against which the state needs vigilant defense. It organizes political and economic capacities around the accumulation of weapons and the mobilization of a military to respond to this outsider threat. The state's identity is militaristic, and it engages in military action but with the point of view of the defendant rather than the aggressor. Even when the security regime makes a first strike, it justifies its move as necessary to preempt the threatening aggressor outside. Security states do not justify their wars by appealing to sentiments of greed or desire for conquest; they appeal to their role as protectors.

Internally, the security state must root out the enemy within. There is always the danger that among us are agents who have an interest in disturbing our peace, violating our persons and property, and allowing outsiders to invade our communities and institutions. To protect the state and its citizens, officials must therefore keep a careful watch on the people within its borders and observe and search them to make sure they do not intend evil actions and do not have the means to perform them. The security state overhears conversations in order to try to discover conspiracies of disaster and disruption, and it prevents people from forming crowds or walking the streets after dark. In a security state there cannot be separation of power or critical accountability of official action to a public. Nor can a security state allow expression of dissent.

Once again, Hobbes explains why not. It is necessary that the sovereign be one. The commonwealth can secure peace only if it unites the plurality of its members into one will. Even if the sovereign consists of an assembly of officials and not only one ruler, it must be united in will and purpose. It is the mutual covenant that each man makes to all the others to give over his right of governing his own affairs to the sovereign, on condition that all others do the same, that gives the sovereign both its power and unit of will (Hobbes [1668] 1994, chap. 17, 13). Sovereign authority, then, must be absolute, and it cannot be divided. The sovereign decides what is necessary to protect the commonwealth and its members. The sovereign decides what actions or opinions constitute a danger to peace and properly suppresses them. "The condition of man in this life shall never be without inconveniences; but there happeneth in no commonwealth any greater inconvenience, but what proceeds from the subject's

disobedience and breach of these covenants from which the commonwealth hath its being, and whosoever, thinking sovereign power too great, will seek to make it less, must subject himself to the power that can limit it, that is to say, to a greater” (Hobbes [1668] 1994, chap. 20, li, 135).

Through the logic of protection the state demotes members of a democracy to dependants. State officials adopt the stance of masculine protector, telling us to entrust our lives to them, not to question their decisions about what will keep us safe. Their protector position puts the citizens and residents who depend on state officials’ strength and vigilance in the position of women and children under the charge of the male protector (cf. Berlant 1997). Most regimes that suspend certain rights and legal procedures declare a state of emergency. They claim that special measures of unity and obedience are required in order to ensure protection from unusual danger. Because they take the risks and organize the agency of the state, it is their prerogative to determine the objectives of protective action and their means. In a security state there is no room for separate and shared powers, nor for questioning and criticizing the protector’s decisions and orders. Good citizenship in a security regime consists of cooperative obedience for the sake of the safety of all.

The authoritarian security paradigm, I have argued, takes a form analogous to that of the masculine protector toward his wife and the other members of his patriarchal household. In this structure, I have suggested, masculine superiority flows not from acts of repressive domination but from the willingness to risk and sacrifice for the sake of the others (Elshtain 1987, 1992). For her part, the subordinate female in this structure neither resents nor resists the man’s dominance, but rather she admires it and is grateful for its promise of protection.

Patriotism has an analogous emotive function in the constitution of the security state. Under threat from outside, all of us, authorities and citizens, imagine ourselves a single body enclosed on and loving itself. We affirm our oneness with our fellow citizens and together affirm our single will behind the will of the leaders who have vowed to protect us. It is not merely that dissent is dangerous; worse yet, it is ungrateful. Subordinate citizenship does not merely acquiesce to limitations on freedom in exchange for a promise of security; the consent is active, as solidarity with the others uniting behind and in grateful love of country.

The United States as a security state

A security state is what every state would have to be if Hobbes were right that human relations are always on the verge of disorder and violence, if

only an authoritarian government that brooks no division of power or dissent can keep the peace, and if maintaining peace and security is unambiguously the highest value. Democratic theory and practice, however, question each of these Hobbesian assumptions. Democrats agree that a major purpose of government is to keep peace and promote public safety, but we deny that unquestioning obedience to a unified sovereign is the only means to achieve this, and we question whether values of freedom and autonomy must be traded against the value of security. In a nonideal world of would-be aggressors and states having imperfect procedural justice, transparency, accountability, and lax rights enforcement, every state exhibits features of a security state to some extent. It seems to me, however, that, in recent months, the United States has slipped too far down the authoritarian continuum. The logic of masculinist protection, I suggest, provides a framework for understanding how government leaders who expand arbitrary power and restrict democratic freedom believe that they are doing the right thing and why citizens accept their actions. It also helps explain this state's righteous rationale for aggressive war.

A marauding gang of outsiders attacked buildings in New York and Washington with living bombs, killing thousands in barely an instant and terrifying large numbers of people in the country. Our government responded with a security alert, at home and abroad. Many were frightened, and the heads of state stepped up to offer us protection. Less than a week after the attacks, the Bush administration announced the creation of an Office of Homeland Security to centralize its protection efforts. "Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attack. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans" (George W. Bush speech, September 14, 2001 [quoted in Roth 2001]).

The events of September 11, 2001, are certainly a turning point for U.S. politics, for the relation of the government to its citizens and to the rest of the world. Americans learned that "oceans no longer matter when it comes to making us safe" (Bush 2002a), that we are just as vulnerable as persons elsewhere who have long lived with the awareness that some people have the motive and means to kill and wound randomly. More than a year later, it appears that little has changed, either in the fear that some Americans say they have of another attack or in the material ability of law enforcement to predict or prevent one (Firestone 2002). Much has changed in the letter and application of the law in the United States, however, and in the environment of democracy. The Bush administration has repeatedly appealed to the primacy of its role as protector of innocent citizens and liberator of women and children to justify consolidating and centralizing executive power at home and dominative war abroad.

It is arguable that, before September 11, airports and other public places in the United States were too lax in their security screening protocol. I welcome more thorough security procedures; this essay is not an argument against public officials taking measures to try to keep people safe. The key questions are how much power should officials have, how much freedom should citizens have, how fair are the procedures, how well do they follow due process, and how easily can citizens review official policies and actions to hold them accountable. With respect to these questions, there have been very large and damaging changes in the United States since fall 2001, although a direction toward some of them had been enacted by legislation and judicial action in the years before.

The U.S. security state has expanded the prerogative of the executive and eroded the power of the legislative and judicial branches to review executive decisions or to be independent sources of decision making. In the week after the September 11 attacks, for example, Congress passed a resolution effectively waiving its constitutionally mandated power to deliberate and decide on whether the state shall go to war. Months later, again with virtually no debate, Congress approved the largest increase in the military budget in twenty years. Since the war on terrorism has no declared ending, the executive may have been granted permanent legal discretion to do what it wants with U.S. military personnel and equipment, at current taxpayer expense of nearly \$400 billion per year.

Drafted quickly and passed with almost no debate, the USA PATRIOT Act, signed on October 26, 2001, severely reduces the power of courts to review and limit executive actions to keep organizations under surveillance, limit their activities, and search and seize or detain individuals. Under its provisions, individuals and organizations have had their records investigated, their assets seized, and their activities and correspondence monitored. Citizen access to government files and records that took so much struggle to achieve in the 1970s has been severely reduced, with no fanfare and thus no protest (Rosen 2002). Thousands of people have been detained, interrogated, or jailed at the discretion of law enforcement or immigration officials, and hundreds remain in jails without being charged with any crime. Few are allowed access to lawyers. Many foreign residents have been deported or threatened with deportation, sometimes without time to arrange their lives. Laws with similar purposes have been passed in other supposedly liberal democratic states, such as the United Kingdom and Australia.

The U.S. executive branch has taken other steps to enlarge and centralize its power and to put itself above the law. In November 2002, Congress approved the creation of the Department of Homeland Security,

which merges twenty-two existing federal agencies. The Bush administration has flouted principles of a rule of law at the international level by holding captured citizens of many countries prisoner and declaring its prerogative to bring any or all of them before secret tribunals.

These and other legal and policy changes have far-reaching implications. The most ordinary and fundamental expectations of due process are undermined when search and surveillance do not require court approval, when persons can be jailed without charge, and when there is no regularity or predictability to the process that a person in custody will undergo. The basic American principle of the separation of power has been suspended, with no reversal in sight. Legislatures and judiciaries at federal and more local levels have been stripped of some formal powers and decline to use much of what they have left to question, criticize, or block executive action. Most citizens apparently register approval for the increased policing and war-making powers, and the ability of those who do not to organize, criticize publicly, and protest in public streets and squares has been seriously curtailed, not only by fear of peer and employer disapproval but also directly by official repression and intimidation.

How can citizens and their representatives in a democracy allow such rapid challenge to their political principles and institutions, with so little discussion and protest? The process of limiting civil liberties, due process, and deliberation about war has itself been deeply undemocratic, a bold assertion of dictatorial power. One part of the answer lies in a conviction that most people believe that their own rights and freedoms will not be threatened. Aliens will be subject to surveillance and deportation, and these enemies who have infiltrated deserve to be routed out by any means, and we can leave it to the discretion of police officers, immigration officials, and military personnel to determine who they are. Already many of those whose records have been seized or who have been detained without charge are U.S. citizens, however, and the new legislation and guidelines do not make any citizen immune. Well, then, many of us tell ourselves, the ones whose privacy is invaded or freedoms limited by government action must be doing something wrong and deserve what they get. Since I am not doing anything wrong, I am protected. The move from a relatively free society to one over which the state exercises authoritarian domination often occurs by means of just this logic; citizens do not realize how easily they may find themselves under suspicion by authorities over whose decisions there is no public scrutiny. The principle of trial by a jury of peers in which the accused is presumed innocent is an important protection any person has from false charge and arbitrary power. The slippery slope from

the fearsome outsiders, to the aliens within, to the bad fellow citizens is likely to end at my brother's front door.

The deeper explanation for why people who live in what promotes itself as one of the most enlightened democracies in history so easily allow and even support the erosion of basic rights lies in the mobilization of fear. John Keane (2002) challenges the opinion that democracies privatize fear. On the contrary, he claims, contemporary commercial communications media in democratic societies often exploit and incite fear. Although freedom of speech and press make possible such public accumulation of fear, the process threatens to shut down civic freedom. "Fear is indeed a thief. It robs subjects of their capacity to act with or against others. It leaves them shaken, sometimes permanently traumatized. And when large numbers fall under the dark clouds of fear, no sun shines on civil society. Fear saps its energies and tears and twists at the institutions of political representation. Fear eats the soul of democracy" (Keane 2002, 235).

Public leaders invoke fear, then they promise to keep those living under them safe. Because we are afraid, and our fears are stirred by what we see on television or read in the newspaper, we are grateful to the leaders and officers who say that they will shoulder the risk in order to protect us. The logic of masculinist protection works to elevate the protector to a position of superior authority and to demote the rest of us to a position of grateful dependency. Ideals of democratic equality and accountability go by the wayside in the process. Although some researchers claim to have noticed a shift in the acceptability of women occupying positions of authority since fall 2001 (O'Connor 2002), in the contemporary United States the position of protector and the position of those protected does not correspond to that of men and women. A few of the most security-minded leaders are women, and many of those who accept the promise of protection are men. What matters, I believe, is the gendered meaning of the positions and the association of familial caring they carry for people. It also matters that this relationship carries an implicit deal: forgo freedom, due process, and the right to hold leaders accountable, and in return we will make sure that you are safe.

Is it a good deal?

I discussed earlier how the logic of masculinist protection constitutes the "good" men who protect their women and children by relation to other "bad" men liable to attack. In this logic, virtuous masculinity depends on its constitutive relation to the presumption of evil others. Feminists have

much analyzed a correlate dichotomy between the “good” woman and the “bad” woman. Simply put, a “good” woman stands under the male protection of a father or husband, submits to his judgment about what is necessary for her protection, and remains loyal to him. A “bad” woman is one who is unlucky enough not to have a man willing to protect her, or who refuses such protection by claiming the right to run her own life. In either case, the woman without a male protector is fair game for any man to dominate. There is a bargain implicit in the masculinity protector role: either submit to my governance or all the bad men out there are liable to approach you, and I will not try to stop them.

I have argued so far that the position of citizens and residents under a security state entails a similar bargain. There are bad people out there who might want to attack us. The state pledges to protect us but tells us that we should submit to its rule and decisions without questioning, criticizing, or demanding independent review of the decisions. Some of the measures in place to protect us entail limitation on our freedom and especially limitation of the freedom of particular classes of people. The deal is this: you must trade some liberty and autonomy for the sake of the protection we offer. Is it a good deal?

Some years ago, Susan Rae Peterson likened the state’s relation to women under a system of male domination to a protection racket. The gangland crowd offers protection from other gangs to individuals, their families, and businesses, for a fee. If some people decline their services, the gangsters teach them a brutal lesson and by example teach a lesson to others who might wish to go their own way. Thus those who wish to break free of the racketeer’s protection discover that they are most in danger from him. Insofar as state laws and policies assume or reinforce the view that a “good” woman should move under the guidance of a man, Peterson argued, the state functions as a protection racket. It threatens or allows men to threaten those women who wish to be independent of the individualized protection of husbands or boyfriends. Not only do the protectors withhold protection from the women who claim autonomy, but they may become attackers (Peterson 1977; cf. Card 1996).

The security state functions as a similar protection racket for those who live under it. As long as we accept the state’s protection and pay the price it exacts not only in taxpayer dollars but also in reduction of our freedom and submission to possible surveillance, we are relatively safe. If we try to decline these services and seek freedom from the position of dependence and obedience in which they put us, we become suspect and thereby threatened by the very organization that claims to protect us.

Current forms of “homeland security” in the United States look like

a protection racket. As long as we are quiet and obedient, we can breathe easy. If we should step out of the bounds of “good” citizens, however, we may find ourselves unprotected and even under attack by the protector state. If we publicly criticize the state’s policies, especially the war or foreign policy, we may land on lists of unpatriotic people published to invite our neighbors or employers to sanction us. We may find that we are no longer allowed to assemble in some public places, even when we wish to demonstrate about issues other than war and the security regime, and that we are subject to arrest if we try. When we are able peaceably to protest, government officials nevertheless threaten us with horses and tear gas canisters and cameras taking our pictures. Organizations we support may appear on lists of terrorist organizations at the discretion of bureaucrats, and we will not even know that they are monitoring our e-mail or tapping our phones.

Some citizens become defined as not good citizens simply because of their race or national origin. Although public opinion only recently claimed to disapprove of policy and security practices that use racial or ethnic profiling, many now accept the state’s claim that effective protection requires such profiling. Residents who are not citizens, especially those from places defined as sources of danger, lose most of the protection they may have had from attack by neighbors or arbitrary and punitive treatment by state agents.

The United States is by no means unique in enacting such measures and justifying them by appeal to protective emergency, nor is this the first time in the past century when such logic has been apparent. This is not the first time either that citizens have applauded the threatening and surveillance activities of the security regime because they are anxious for protection and believe that such measures will only apply to others—the terrorists, the foreigners, and the disloyal citizens—and not to themselves. We endanger democratic practice, however, when we consent to this bargain. When we fail to question a legal distinction between the good citizen and the bad citizen that affords less legal protection to the latter, and when we allow the rhetoric of fear to label any foreigners as enemies within, increasing numbers of us are liable to find that our attributes or activities put us on the wrong side of the line. If we allow our fear to cow us into submission, we assume the position of subordinates rather than democratic citizens equal to and not above our neighbors, equal to and not beneath our government.

There is little evidence that the way the United States has chosen to conduct its war on terrorism has in fact made us or others in the world any safer. Indeed, it may have put Americans at even greater risk. When

U.S. planes began bombing Afghanistan in October 2001, officials publicly admitted that the action put Americans inside and outside the country at greater risk from retaliating attackers. It is plausible to suggest that the stances of increased belligerence between India and Pakistan that emerged in summer 2002 resulted in part from U.S. military actions, and it seems that the government of Israel has been emboldened by the U.S. example to conduct its own brutal war on terrorism. The Bush administration has buried the cold war doctrine of deterrence and announced its willingness to make preemptive strikes against what it decides are terrorist threats. The United States waged a war against Iraq that has made the region more disorderly. Even before the war, many Americans believed that the likelihood of terrorist attacks against Americans would increase if the United States went to war against Iraq (Longworth 2002). The claimed desire to protect by means of guns generates a spiral of danger and uncertainty (cf. Tickner 1992, 51–53).

The logic of masculinist protection positions leaders, along with some other officials such as soldiers and firefighters, as protectors and the rest of us in the subordinate position of dependent protected people. Justifications for the suspension of due process or partial abrogation of privacy rights and civil liberties, as well as condemnation of dissent, rest on an implicit deal: that these are necessary trade-offs for effective protection. The legitimacy of this deal is questionable, however, not only because it may not be effective in protecting us but also because it cheapens and endangers democracy. Subordinate citizenship is not compatible with democracy. The relation of leaders to citizens under democratic norms ought to be one of equality, not in the sense of equal power but in the sense that citizens have an equal right and responsibility with leaders to make policy judgments, and thus that leaders entrusted with special powers should be held accountable to citizens. Institutions of due process, public procedure and record, organized opposition and criticism, and public review both enact and recognize such equal citizenship. Trading them for protection puts us at the mercy of the protectors.

War and feminism

The logic of masculinist protection, I have argued, helps account for the rationale leaders give for deepening a security state and its acceptance by those living under their rule. There are two faces to the security state, one facing outward to defend against enemies and the other facing inward to keep those under protection under necessary control. So far I have concentrated on describing recent legislative and executive actions of the

U.S. government in terms of the inward-looking face. Now I shall turn to the outward looking face, the United States as war maker.

In fall 2001 the United States led a bombing campaign against Afghanistan. Even though that state had not taken aggressive action against the United States, the United States justified the war as a defensive reaction to the attacks of September 11. Perhaps because the claim that the state of Afghanistan actively supported al-Qaeda was weak, the United States quickly repackaged the war as a case of humanitarian intervention to liberate the Afghan people. The logic of masculinist protection appears in the claimed relationship of the United States to people outside the West, particularly in Islamic countries, ruled by brutal dictatorships. The United States will fight and sacrifice to save them. The Bush administration used the same discourse to justify a proposed war against Iraq. The United States defends not only itself in this scenario, but all the world's freedom for which the weapons Iraq might have are a threat. By saving ourselves we also save the Iraqi people from domination. So the United States is the protector of the world. Through this logic the American people and others who choose to identify with the actions of the United States can put themselves into the role of the protector, even as the state restricts our freedom for our own good.

Packaging the war against Afghanistan as a humanitarian war to protect the Afghan people from domination was particularly effective because the Bush administration and journalists focused on women (cf. Tickner 2002). The women of Afghanistan constituted the ultimate victims, putting the United States in the position of ultimate protector. Use of the rhetoric of women's rights by the Bush administration during and after the war against Afghanistan should make feminists very uncomfortable. I wonder whether some seeds for such cynical appeals to the need to save women might not have been sown by some recent discourse and practice that positioned North American and European feminists as protectors of oppressed women in Asia and Africa.

On November 17, 2001, Laura Bush became the first wife to give the president's Saturday morning radio address, which was devoted to condemning what she called the Taliban's war on women and justifying the U.S. war as an effort to free Afghan women (Stout 2001). After the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the Bush administration repeatedly invoked women's liberation to justify the war. In his 2002 State of the Union address, for example, George W. Bush said, "The last time we met in this chamber the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free, and are part of Afghanistan's new government" (George

W. Bush speech, January 29, 2002 [Bush 2002c]). On International Women's Day, Laura Bush spoke to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, linking the terrorist attacks with the oppression of women and thus, by implication, the war on terrorism with the liberation of women:

The terrorist attacks of September 11 galvanized the international community. Many of us have drawn valuable lessons from the tragedies. People around the world are looking closely at the roles women play in their societies. Afghanistan under the Taliban gave the world a sobering example of a country where women were denied their rights and their place in society. Today, the world is helping Afghan women return to the lives they once knew. Women were once important contributors to Afghan society, and they had the right to vote as early as the 1920s. . . . This is a time of rebuilding—of unprecedented opportunity—thanks to efforts led by the United Nations, the United States, the new Afghan government, and our allies around the world. (Laura Bush speech to United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, March 8, 2002 [L. Bush 2002])

Years before the attacks of September 2001, U.S. feminists mounted a campaign directed at saving the women of Afghanistan from the Taliban. Although they lobbied the Clinton administration to put pressure on the Taliban government regarding women's rights, neither Clinton nor Bush evinced any concern for the situation of women under the Taliban before the war. Appeal to women's rights was thus a cynical attempt to gain support for the war among the citizens of the United States and other liberal countries. Some feminists jumped onto the war bandwagon. Shortly after the war began, for example, Eleanor Smeal, leader of the Feminist Majority, chatted cordially with U.S. generals: “‘They went off about the role of women in this effort and how imperative it was that women were now in every level of the Air Force and Navy,’ said Smeal, who found herself cheered by the idea of women flying F16s. ‘It’s a different kind of war’ she says, echoing the President’s assessment of Operation Enduring Freedom” (Lerner 2001).

Certainly the Taliban should have been condemned for its policies, as should all the world's governments that perpetrate or allow systematic and discriminatory harms to and subordination of women. The Taliban stood with only a few other governments in the world in the degree of legally enforced restriction of women's freedom and horrible punishments. Even before the war it seemed to me, however, and still seems to me,

that feminist focus on women under the Taliban constructed these women as exoticized others and paradigmatic victims in need of salvation by Western feminists, and it conveniently deflected attention from perhaps more intractable and mundane problems of gender-based violence, domination, and poverty in many other parts of the world, including the enlightened West. What is wrong with this stance, if it has existed, is that it fails to consider the women as equals, and it does not have principled ways of distancing itself from paternalist militarism.

The stance of the male protector, I have argued, is one of loving self-sacrifice, with those in the feminine position as the objects of love and guardianship. Chivalrous forms of masculinity express and enact concern for the well-being of women, but they do so within a structure of superiority and subordination. The male protector confronts evil aggressors in the name of the right and the good, while those under his protection submit to his order and serve as handmaids to his efforts. Colonialist ideologies have often expressed a similar logic. The knights of civilization aim to bring enlightened understanding to the further regions of the world still living in cruel and irrational traditions that keep them from developing the economic and political structures that will bring them a good life. The suppression of women in these societies is a symptom of such backwardness. Troops will be needed to bring order and guard fledgling institutions, and foreign aid workers to feed, cure, and educate, but all this is only a period of tutelage that will end when the subject people demonstrate their ability to gain their own livelihood and run their own affairs. Many people living in Asian, African, and Latin American societies believe that not only U.S. military hegemony but also international trade and financial institutions, as well as many Western-based nongovernmental development agencies, position them in this way as feminized or infantilized women and children under the protection and guidance of the wise and active father.

In its rhetoric and practice, according to some scholars, the British feminist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries aligned itself with the universal humanitarian civilizing mission invoked as the justification for the British Empire. Feminists endorsed male imperial leaders' assessment of the status of women in other nations as a measure of their level of moral development. Such interest in the status of women was useful to feminists in pointing out the hypocrisy of denying women's rights in the center as one fought for them in the periphery. Providing services for Indian women and other oppressed women in the empire also offered opportunities for the employment of middle-class professional women (Burton 1994).

Some contemporary feminists have worried that Western feminism today has had some tendency to express and act in similar ways in relation to non-Western women. In a well-known essay, Chandra Mohanty, for example, claims that Western feminists too often use an objectified general category of third-world women, who are represented as passive and victimized by their unenlightened cultures and political regimes (1991). Uma Narayan claims that much feminist discussion of the situation of women in Asian and African societies, or women in Asian immigrant communities in Western societies, “replicates problematic aspects of Western representations of Third World nations and communities, aspects that have their roots in the history of colonization” (1997, 43).

Assuming that these criticisms of some of the discourse, attitudes, and actions of Western feminists have some validity, the stance they identify helps account for the ease with which feminist rhetoric can be taken up by today’s imperialist power and used for its own ends. It also helps account for the support of some feminists for the war against Afghanistan. Sometimes feminists may identify with the stance of the masculine protector in relation to vulnerable and victimized women. The protector-protected relation is no more egalitarian, however, when between women than between men and women.

According to some recent reports, the lives of women in Afghanistan have changed little since before the war, except that some of them have lost their homes, their relatives, and what little livelihood they had (Reilly 2002). The oppression of most of them remains embedded in social structure, custom, and a culture of warlord anarchism. I would not argue that humanitarian reasons can never justify going to war against a state. I think, however, that such protectionist grounds for military intervention must be limited to situations of genocide or impending genocide and where the war actually makes rescue possible (Young 2003). Even if the U.S. government is sincere in its conviction that its military efforts are intended to save the world from evil, its political and military hegemony materially harms many poor and defenseless people of the world and positions most of the world in a position of subordination that nurtures resentment.

Democratic global citizenship

The contemporary security state in the United States, like many security states, has two faces, one looking outward and the other inward. Each aspect reinforces the other. Both threaten democratic values in the institutions and practices of the United States, as well as globally. Citizens and residents who accept the security state because they fear attack allow them-

selves to be positioned as women and children in relation to paternal protector-leaders. At the same time, to the extent that we identify with a rhetoric of war for the sake of saving the victims of tyranny, we put ourselves in a position superior to those we construct as in need of our aid. Whether looking outward or inward, adopting a more democratic ethos entails rejecting the inequality inherent in the protector-protected logic.

When leaders promulgate fear and promise to keep us safe, they conjure up childish fantasies and desires. We are vulnerable beings, and we want very much to be made safe by a being superior in power to all that might threaten us. Democratic citizens, however, should resist leaders' attempts to play father over us. We should insist that government do its job to promote security without issuing guarantees it cannot redeem or requiring subordination from the people it promises to protect.

Democratic citizenship should first involve admitting that no state can make any of us completely safe and that leaders who promise that are themselves suspect. The world is full of risks. Prudence dictates that we assess risks, get information about their sources, and try to minimize them, and we rightly expect our government to do much of this for us. In a democracy citizens should not have to trade this public responsibility for submission to surveillance, arbitrary decisions, and the stifling of criticism.

In making this claim I am extending recent feminist arguments against a model of citizenship that requires each citizen to be independent and self-sufficient in order to be equal and fully autonomous. Feminist theorists of care and welfare have argued that the rights and dignity of individuals should not be diminished just because they need help and support in order to carry out their chosen projects (Tronto 1994; Kittay 1999). Persons who need care or other forms of social support ought not to be forced into a position of subordination and obedience in relation to those who provide care and support; not only should they retain the rights of full citizens to choose their own way of life and hold authorities accountable but also they ought to be able to criticize the way in which support comes to them (Sevenhuijsen 1998; Hirschmann 2002, chap. 5; Young 2003). This feminist argument rejects the assumption behind a notion of self-sufficient citizenship that a need for social support or care is more exceptional than normal. On the contrary, the well-being of all persons can be enhanced by the care and support of others, and in modern societies some of this generalized care and support ought to be organized and guaranteed through state institutions. The organization of reasonable measures to protect people from harm and to make people confident that they can move and act relatively safely is another form of social support.

Citizens should not have to trade their liberty of movement or right to protest and hold leaders accountable in return for such security.

Democratic citizenship thus means ultimately rejecting the hierarchy of protector and protected. In the article I cited above, Stiehm argues that rejection of this hierarchy implies installing a position of defender in place of both that of the protector and the protected. A society of defenders is “a society composed of citizens equally liable to experience violence and equally responsible for exercising society’s violence” (1982, 374). Modern democracies, including U.S. democracy, are founded partly on the principle that citizens should be able to defend themselves if they are also to defend the republic from tyranny. In the twenty-first century, in a world of organized and less organized military institutions and weapons capable of unimaginable destruction, it is hard to know what it might mean for world citizens to exercise collective self-defense. It certainly does not mean that every individual should amass his or her own weapons cache. Nor does it mean whole groups and nations engaging in arms races. The distinction between defender and protector invokes an ideal of equality in the work of defense, and today this may have at least as much to do with political processes that limit weapons and their use as with wielding arms.

The United States claims to use its arms to do this, much as a policeman does in domestic life. In a democratic relationship, however, the policeman-protector comes under the collective authority of the people whose neighborhood he patrols. Democratic citizenship at a global level, then, would constitute a relationship of respect and political equality among the world’s peoples where none of us think that we stand in the position of the paternal authority who knows what is good for the still-developing others. To the extent that global law enforcement is necessary, it is only legitimate if the world’s peoples together have formulated the rules and actions of such enforcement (cf. Archibugi and Young 2002).

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