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# Rethinking Women, Peace and Security: *A Critique of Gender in the Canadian Human Security Agenda*

Erin Baines

*Director, Conflict & Development Programme*



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

6476 NW MARINE DRIVE  
VANCOUVER BC  
CANADA V6T 1Z2

[www.ligi.ubc.ca](http://www.ligi.ubc.ca)

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## **Rethinking Women, Peace and Security** **A Critique of Gender in the Canadian Human Security Agenda**

Erin K Baines  
erin.baines@ubc.ca

On the cover of Canada's 2001 Foreign Policy for Human Security, *Freedom from Fear*, a photograph is presented of Afghan refugee children atop abandoned military hardware. The photograph stirs conflicting emotions of hope and despair in the viewer. Will these children grow up to know peace, represented by their defiant stand atop the ruined metallic beast? Or does the picture foreshadow the loss of innocence? Will some of these children become soldiers, their playground to become their battleground? Beyond some sense of international moral obligation, the Canadian viewer might question why they should care about the undetermined fates of these children. In anticipation, the opening paragraphs of the Policy states 'the safety and security of Canadians at home are inextricably linked to the safety of those living beyond our borders. In this context, our work to advance Canadian values abroad ... enhances the safety and security of Canadians'(5). Canadian values on human rights, democracy, good governance and humanitarianism then, are for export. This paper is centrally concerned with the question of whether or not gender equality is among the values being promoted within Canada's foreign policy on human security. Is the *Freedom from Fear* Agenda feminist?<sup>i</sup>

On closer look at the cover photograph, we might observe that of the thirty-seven children visible, at least eight are girls. All of the girls are sitting down, some with their smiles covered by their hands and one holding a smaller child on her lap. The human tragedy of Afghanistan today is perhaps most often conveyed through representations of oppressed women and girls. The international media, advocacy groups and state actors have expressed a near fetish with the covering of Afghan women's bodies, symbolic of their invisibility in public spaces. The experiences of Afghan women and girls offend Canadian sensibilities and values regarding gender equality. It is particularly interesting then, that Afghan girl children are present in the cover photo – albeit represented in passive and domestic roles – their colourful clothing distinguishing them from the vast number of boys surrounding them. It is interesting because, like the moral obligations evoked in the viewer above, Canadians are prompted to consider their responsibility towards women's equality in a country like Afghanistan, and what difference caring might make to Canadians. Once again, the answer already lies within the document, '...understanding the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, and developing effective responses to guarantee their protection and full participation in peace processes, directly contributes to maintaining international peace and security' (12). Having pointed this out, a secondary concern of this paper is, what kind of assumptions about gender guides the *Freedom from Fear* Agenda in general, and its support of Security Council Resolution

1325 on Women, Peace and Security in particular? I ask these questions in the spirit of opening debate on what feminists contribute to and want from the human security agenda, and to consider future research directions.

### **Overview of Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security**

Perhaps with the understanding that human security can mean 'everything and nothing', Canadian foreign policy (CFP) defines the concept narrowly, focusing on freedom from fear. Human security is the "freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety or lives. Canada's agenda focuses on increasing people's safety from the threat of violence"(3).<sup>ii</sup> Recognizing the changing nature of armed conflict and high cost of conflict to civilians, the Canadian foreign policy agenda on human security has sought to reduce violent conflict since it was first introduced by then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, in 1996. Axworthy built a coalition of like-minded countries and set about building a safer world for civilians. His first initiative, the Land Mines Treaty, gave impetus to future government-civil society partnerships for building norms based on the principle of human security. These relations have been further deepened within the Canadian context, where public consultations on foreign policy issues continue today. Among the legacies of the Axworthy years was the introduction of a peacebuilding agenda in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), operationally realized with the creation of the Peacebuilding Fund. Exporting Canadian values abroad was considered central to a safer world.

In the 2001 CFP policy paper on human security, the DFAIT has focused on five priorities: 1) public safety; 2) the protection of civilians; 3) conflict prevention; 4) governance and accountability; and, 5) peace support operations. To realize these policy priorities, DFAIT strives to strengthen international institutions, develop and reinforce global norms and multilateral forums relating to issues of international security, thereby exporting Canadian values on peace. Banning landmines, controlling small arms and transnational crime are critical interventions, as are legal and normative interventions, such as the creation of the International Criminal Court or launch of the International Commission on International and State Sovereignty (ICISS). The emphasis is placed on building norms that put people first, particularly the most vulnerable to armed conflict, including children and women.

To realize this is not easy, and the human security agenda is greatly challenged by the *real politik* of global relations. The task of bringing diverse states with varying powers and interests together to collectively address the vulnerability of the individual, or to hold another state accountable, must confront the centrality of the principle of sovereignty and legacies of colonialism and Cold War interventions. Yet the Canadian human security agenda strives to emphasize the inter-relatedness of state and human security:

Human security is strengthened where open, tolerant and responsive states work to ensure the safety of all men, women, boys and girls within their borders. At the same time, human security reinforces the state by strengthening its legitimacy and stability. States, however, do not always guarantee human security. Where states are externally aggressive, internally repressive or too weak to govern effectively, people's security is undermined.

The ICISS report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, clarifies collective responsibility for human security, where "states are unable or unwilling to ensure such protection" and in extreme cases "the exercise of that responsibility may require external military intervention." Thus human security does not preclude traditional military intervention, an area of intense debate today. Moreover, the report argues that the responsibility to protect has three dimensions, including prevention, reaction and the responsibility to rebuild. This reinforces the relevance of a more recent global trend to policy coherence, where military actors increasingly work alongside humanitarian and development agencies. Third World states raise concern that 'human security' introduces a form of neo-colonial control, inviting more powerful Western countries to intervene on the grounds and justification of 'saving lives'. Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, the concept of human security has received further scrutiny: simultaneously more important to the concept of national security but subverted by a realist turn. Thus we see CNN reporting on the 2003 war on Iraq covered not only battle plans and strategies, but also civilian suffering and importance of humanitarian assistance. Given these overarching concerns, debates and dilemmas, what do feminists want from the human security agenda in Canada, and what contributions have they made to it?

### **'What Women Want': Feminist and Gender Approaches to Security**

Long before the introduction of the Canadian *Freedom from Fear* Agenda, feminists from a range of disciplines and advocacy groups worked to redefine international norms on security, highlighting gender-related forms of harm experienced by women during armed conflicts, such as rape, forced abortion or pregnancy, sexual torture and exploitation (Forbes Martin 1992; Byrne 1995; Friedman 1995; Lorentzen and Turin J 1998; Turshen and Twagiramariya C 1998; Clark and Moser 2001; Goldstein 2001; Moser and Clark 2001).<sup>iii</sup> Once considered too personal to be a matter for the state, feminists have illustrated a nexus between gender-related forms of harm to women, military strategies and state complicity (Pettman 1996; Enloe 2002).

Feminist theories of security then, contribute new perspectives on the nexus of the security of the person and structures of violence at the local, national and global level, as well as state complicity in these forms of violence where the state is unwilling or unable to extend protection.<sup>iv</sup> These studies have both informed and drawn upon nascent transnational and regional women's movements promoting gender equality within international institutions and regimes (Gallagher 1997; Kuttner 1997;

Bretherton 1998; Meyer and Prügl 1999; Kardam 2002). These efforts have been recognized under a rubric of international laws, conventions and multi-national and bilateral forums relating to international security (A/CONF.177/20 1995; A/52/3 1997; A/S-23/10/Rev.1 2000; S/2000/693 2000; S/RED/1325 2000), the most central of which is Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security* (2000), a resolution Canada actively promoted during its two year tenure in the Security Council.

Within the emerging body of feminist and/or gender studies, literatures and policies on women, peace and security, at least three themes emerge (UN, Whitworth et al. 2002; UNIFEM, Rehn E et al. 2002).<sup>v</sup> Under the first theme, the impact of armed conflict on women, gender relations and gender roles are highlighted. Gender studies differentiate forms of harm encountered by men, women, boys and girls throughout cycles of violent conflict. Studies also examine how violent conflict disrupts family units, with wider implications for gender relations. For instance, women and girls are sometimes forced to take on untraditional gender roles in the public sphere – leading to opportunities for empowerment. For men, limited economic opportunities tend to prohibit their ability to fulfil expected roles as ‘producer’, and they may be more inclined to participate in violent conflict as combatants, or be forced to against their will.

A number of studies have also begun to examine how gender relations shape or contribute to violent conflict (ACORD 2002; Schmeidl and E Piza-Lopez 2002; Baines 2003). These studies reveal how gender, ethnicity and sexuality are manipulated and exasperated in conflict-prone settings, resulting in gender-related forms of insecurity for men and women. Empirical data collected and interpreted in these studies might therefore serve as potential conflict prevention indicators. For instance, a number of academics have argued that violent conflict is significantly more likely to take place in countries that have a large number of male youth with few economic opportunities and/or marriage prospects (Hudson and Der Boer 2002). In these instances, such groups of male youth are more likely to be targeted and recruited into ultra-nationalist campaigns. Girls and women on the other hand, are often the target of strict gender codes regarding marriage, morality and sexuality (Baines 2003).

A second theme concentrates on the ways in which international humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping operations widen or diminish unequal gender relations within a given population (IASC 1999; Mertus 2000; Clifton and Gell 2001). “Improving the effectiveness of modern multi-disciplinary peace support operations requires ensuring that the human rights of women and girls are not compromised” (*Freedom from Fear* 12). Gender-neutral assistance practices or development initiatives potentially fail to grasp security concerns of women. In *Refugee Women*, Susan Forbes Martin (1992) illustrated security concerns in refugee and internally displaced camps documenting a wide variety of cases where health, shelter, food and water distribution or camp set-up increased women’s vulnerability to sexual predators. This text gave impetus to a substantive collection of similar studies in

settings of violent conflict or post-conflict, and contributed to policy changes in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN bodies. For instance, in 1993, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group issued the guidelines *Gender Mainstreaming in the Humanitarian Response to Emergencies*.<sup>vi</sup>

A third theme concentrates on the relative absence of women in positions of decision-making in formal institutions considered central to building peace, such as peacekeepers, humanitarian aid workers, security officers, development officers, peace negotiators, community decision-makers and managers (Hicks-Stiehm 1999; International Peacekeeping 2000). “Ignoring gender dynamics and excluding women from peace negotiations inhibits the implementation of the resulting agreements” (*Freedom from Fear* 12). Appealing to universal principles of equality, not to mention implicit morality, Noleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM asked the international community that if, “Women are half of every community, are they therefore not half of every solution? How can we, in good conscience, bring warlords to the peace table and not women?” (2000). In turn, a number of humanitarian and peace initiatives have adapted affirmative action plans and set up quotas, and have begun to support leadership of grassroots women to participate in peace building measures.

For instance, several UN, bilateral agencies<sup>vii</sup> and NGOs supported the All Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference that eventually realized female representation in the negotiation of the Burundian Peace Process. Financial and moral support to grassroots women's organizations, particularly those working towards peace, is considered another critical policy intervention. The international community employs 'women's empowerment' projects in post-conflict settings to help build the sustainability of women's organizations and networks initiatives (USAID 2000). In turn, empowerment projects are designed not only to build capacity, but also to ameliorate the negative impacts of gender-neutral approaches (Clifton and Gell 2001). Here, affirmative action is considered to be central to promoting women's economic, social and political participation in peacebuilding. This approach fits well with the civilian focus of human security policy approaches more generally, although efforts to 'empower' women in peacebuilding still need more careful study, particularly given essentialist assumptions regarding women's gender roles that frequently guide such efforts, a subject we will return to in a moment. Policy solutions have also included the introduction of quotas designating a percentage of key decision-making positions are to be held by women. For instance, in November 2000, the European Union passed a resolution that called on all member states to allocate 40 percent of all reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict prevention posts to women.

While diverse and wide ranging, feminist literatures rests on the central idea that gender equality facilitates, or is essential to realizing, sustainable peace: “Only if women play a full and equal part can we build the foundations for enduring peace” (Kofi Annan, in UN, Whitworth et al. 2002). This idea is reiterated in *Freedom from Fear* and the Security Council Resolution 1325 it supports. The idea that peace and

gender equality are interdependent variables, however, reveals a number of powerful assumptions in need of closer, more critical analysis, explored below.

First, women are frequently portrayed as, and/or perceived to be, more peaceful than men due to their gender roles, despite notable women combatants or violent leaders. “Exceptions aside...women are often the most powerful voices for moderation in times of conflict” (Hunt and Posa 2001, 38). This leads to the justification of the argument that women should be included in peacebuilding measures by virtue of their socially constructed and/or biologically given gender roles: “While most men come to the negotiating table directly from the war room and battlefield, women usually arrive straight out of civil activism and – take a deep breath – family care.” In this construction, men are projected as predisposed to violence and women, peace.

At a global level, Charli Carpenter (2003) suggests that while international humanitarian norms and laws might in principle protect men and women equally, in practice they are highly gendered. Thus, in calls for humanitarian evacuations, policy leaders often point to the number of female or child victims as a way of justifying intervention despite the fact men are more likely targets of violence in armed conflict. She thus challenges the idea that women and children are more vulnerable in armed conflict - a position often repeated in feminist literatures and advocacy campaigns. Such a construction only plays into stereotypes of men as aggressive and women as innocent, and do not lead to understanding the gender dynamics of armed conflict, and therefore also to inappropriate interventions. Carpenter refers to the sex-selective massacre of 7,000-8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica under the orders of General Mladic, who at the same time sought to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the international community by providing transport of women and girls to safety. The UN peacekeeping forces abetted this process, helping Mladic’s troops separate men and women, boys and girls in the process of evacuation on the understanding men were more likely armed combatants to be ‘interviewed’ by the Bosnian-Serb army.<sup>viii</sup>

A second, interconnected assumption is that women best represent other women, and so a gender-sensitive approach will be more likely adopted in peace agreements if women are present at peace tables. By linking the prospects for peace to sustainable social change, gender proponents move beyond a moral normative argument (about fairness and equality) to one of practicality. That is, by including a gender equality approach, a peacebuilding (or human security) initiative will be more efficient and effective (Moser and Clark 2001, 34). If women are better peacemakers, than possibilities of bridging divisions created by war between fighting groups are also increased. And if gender-related forms of harm are recognized, then international humanitarian actors are more likely to effectively protect the populations under their care. The idea that women (and children) are more vulnerable than men in conflict prone settings, or constitute the majority of vulnerable persons affected in such settings, is simultaneously appealed to in order to motivate target interventions on their behalf.

A third, seemingly contradictory assumption represents women as both passive ‘victims’ and active ‘subjects’, stemming from the focus on the impact of armed conflict on women, and roles women play as potential peace-builders or, presumably less often, perpetrators. When speaking of women as victims, both academic and grey literatures, as well as in policies and programmes, tend to focus on *the most vulnerable* groups of women (female heads of household or survivors of rape in volatile settings), a representation that reifies the idea that in conflict, men are perpetrators and women are victims.

In contrast to the labelling of women as victims, some feminists have described exile and conflict as an opportunity for women’s empowerment, precisely because gender roles are more in flux and amenable to change and traced either the peace or gender equality seeking activities of subaltern women towards this end. Another strain of gender studies documents another form of women’s agency in armed conflict, either as combatants, service providers to combatants or covert supporters. The key here is to illustrate that the image of women as peaceful – an idea considered by some to be dangerously close to that of biological determinism – is socially constructed rather than determined, with exceptions to the rule.

However, in all of these approaches - whether women are conceptualized as agents of change, perpetrator or victims - the central category of analysis and subject, ‘women’ remains problematically in place. Women’s agency or relative victimization often is defined solely in relation to their gender related roles, and so homogenizes women’s contrasting experiences of conflict, where class, ethnicity, sexuality and other relations shape this experience profoundly. As a group defined by gender, women are then cast in opposition (or competition) to that of men, obscuring more complex dynamics of conflicts. When Noleen Hayzer demands that women be brought to peace tables, we might well ask, ‘*which women?*’

Some of the more promising feminist-minded studies address the intersections of gender with ethnicity, clanship, geography, age, and sexuality (ACORD 2002; Schmeidl and E Piza-Lopez 2002). While some studies have examined the potential of women working across differences (Cockburn 1998) and toward a shared goal of peace, not enough attention has been paid to the power relations which riddle women’s movements and associations within specific country contexts. My concern is that donors, seeking to engage women in decision-making or peacebuilding may fail to understand the complex web of constantly changing social dynamics both within specific conflicts, and within different enclaves of a conflict or post-conflict setting. In failing to do so, inequalities based on gender might be addressed, but class, region or ethnic differences might potentially be exacerbated. While such a criticism is not new, most feminist studies of conflict and peace have remained a “solid feminist description of women’s troubles”, and failing to explain gender as a relational power construct, practice or outcome” (Carpenter 2002, 160; For a policy example see CIDA ND).



On the other hand, the primacy placed on gender roles in liberal feminist approaches tends to reinforce essentialist thinking about women, threatening to reproduce patriarchal gender imagery. As Elissa Helms illustrated in her study of international donor support to Bosniak, Croatian and Serbian women's associations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, donors send a message to locals that "reinforces the primacy of women's domestic roles as wives, mothers and nurturers". Ironically then, women's projects in conflict or post-conflict zones are often justified on the basis of "patriarchal gender stereotyping rather than images which suggest more equality between men's and women's roles" (Helms 2002, 19).

Finally, feminist approaches to security not only privilege gender, but also women. The normative thrust of feminism is to explain women's relative status to men and to illustrate different paths to emancipation. As such, the male-female binary is again reinforced, leaving one to puzzle over the inequalities between men and the role of gender in perpetuating such inequalities. War and military machineries are highly masculinized and male dominant, yet these subjects have been understudied in the past, with a few more recent exceptions (Zalewski and Parpart 1998; Goldstein 2001; Cockburn and Zarkov 2002) and even fewer policy or programmatic interventions.

A number of interests guide these assumptions and representations within feminist approaches to women, peace and security. For one, the feminist normative claims naturally focus analyses and strategies for intervention on women. In focusing on women's experiences, needs and resources, women become more visible in an otherwise male dominated realm - and so this is a keen strategy for advocates to promote. Such representations also make international policy interventions more 'manageable' and 'justifiable' for international actors working in otherwise highly political contexts and ethically challenging operations. Defined by their victim-hood or as solely gendered, women are cast as apolitical, ahistorical and in need of rescue or international support. When donors cast women as natural peacemakers, as apolitical or antinationalistic, "they also risk reinforcing patriarchal values, trapping women into domestic roles and excluding them from formal political activities" (Helms 2002, 16). Moreover, they fail to identify or challenge power relations between women.

On the other hand, when feminist insights into complex social relations are revealed as political and not personal, the vulnerabilities and capabilities of women and men are made more transparent to decision-makers in the human security agenda. To this end, feminists have a great deal to contribute to understanding the dynamics of human insecurities within violent conflict, a subject we return to in the final section of this paper.

## **Feminism in the *Freedom from Fear* Agenda**

Having explored some of the central demands and contributions of feminists to the issue of human security we now might begin to address the question, is the Canadian *Freedom from Fear* Agenda feminist? The central concerns of human security and feminist approaches to security appear to lend to a healthy alliance. Both are concerned with people rather than states, and both seek to increase the security of people vis-à-vis the state. However, some feminists are still concerned their contributions were not being taken seriously within the Canadian context. In, *Women's Empowerment and Human Security*, Beth Woroniuk (1999) identified the conceptual overlaps and gaps between a human security and a gender approach, arguing key issues related to women are currently missing. For instance, Woroniuk argues that issues such as rape, domestic violence or forced pregnancy or abortion should form a more central part of the human security agenda. This raises the question, how central should gender-related violence be? And if it was 'central', what would this security agenda look like? For instance, Canada did take a lead role in promoting rape as a war crime in the creation of the International Criminal Court, and has increasingly worked to reduce the human costs of small arms and gun violence, including domestic violence. Is this marginal or integrated? What, exactly, are we using to develop attribution measures, or measures of 'centrality'?

Woroniuk also points to the lack of discussion on power inequalities within civilian populations which result in differing access to and control over resources, participation in decision-making and need for empowerment projects. This point taps into a larger debate that freedom from fear should not be addressed outside of a freedom from want agenda. Critics have argued that policy responses flowing from the freedom from fear approach are palliative, responding to violence but failing to address the root causes of it (Off 2000). Again, questions of measuring intervention impacts arise here – where does prevention begin and palliative responses end? For instance, does building normative standards count as prevention?

*Freedom from Fear* does make explicit its commitment to upholding and promoting Security Council Resolution 1325, and fosters partnerships with international and Canadian coalitions of NGOs organized around 1325. As a contribution to institution building, the Canadian state has developed a gender training module for peace support personnel, and supported grassroots women's organizations and movements under the Canadian Peacebuilding Fund and Human Security Programme. In multilateral forums Canadian representatives support women's participation in peacemaking, and recognize the different gender impacts of conflict for women and men, illustrated as far back as 1993 when Citizenship and Immigration Canada introduced the Guidelines on Gender Persecution. Canadian delegates from DFAIT and CIDA are important advocates of a gender equality approach globally, often providing critical funds to galvanize gender mainstreaming initiatives and contributing key analytical tools (CIDA ND). The Government of Canada has likewise been active in multilateral forums and conferences on women's rights issues,

such as contributing to the drafting of the Beijing Platform for Action. Exporting Canadian values on gender equality then, does not appear to be a commitment that most Canadian officials shy away from.

All of these initiatives are important enough and given the limited operational scope of the Canadian human security policy, commitments to promoting women's equality should be applauded. But while gender equality principles might guide obvious areas of intervention, such as Canadian commitments to 1325, the extent to which they are in turn promoted and addressed within each policy priority of the *Freedom from Fear* Agenda requires further investigation. When are certain interventions amenable to gender analysis and why? To what extent does the kind of feminism advocated within the Canadian human security agenda make a difference in terms of receptivity in security areas. Reviewing DFAIT and CIDA programmes, we see that most are liberal in nature, advocating equality of participation, protection and resources. Such assumptions tend to reproduce the privileging of gender, resulting in some of the more problematic outcomes outlined above. Further, it potentially fails to engage the larger socio-economic and political contexts in which gender related change takes place, globally, nationally and locally. To what extent does the liberal approach of human security constrain or facilitate the kinds of feminisms advocated? More research that critiques the liberal approach and illustrates alternative policy and programme action is necessary.

Furthermore, the relationships between human security and traditional security thinking need elaboration. To what extent, in a post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, has human security taken precedent over traditional security interventions? Feminists continue to find that "traditional thinking about war and peace either ignores women or treats them like victims" (Hunt and Posa 2001) and moreover that gender-specific security needs have "not yet been incorporated into the study of internal armed conflict within the international security field. Instead it continues to be viewed as a minor aspect within broader analyses of humanitarian intervention"<sup>ix</sup> (Shoemaker 2001, 2). This seems to suggest that human security is minor within the traditional security approach. These observations beg further investigations by scholars and practitioners of human security and feminism alike.

### **Future Research Directions**

Perhaps the most important future research directions for feminist studies of security might begin with some of the more problematic assumptions outlined in the second section of this paper. Feminists need to do far more empirical and theoretical research to either prove or disprove assumptions regarding women, peace and security, and to challenge some of the binary and essentialist thinking which emerges in academic and grey literatures. The underlying assumption that gender equality in turn builds

sustainable peace needs further articulation beyond some moral appeal. If this is the case, then how do we know it?

On the question of selective marginalization of gender issues in security, one might look to literatures on social movements and norm change (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and gender studies of international organizational change (Goetz 1997) for answers. In what contexts and why are gender and human security approaches marginalized in CFP?

But while the process of gender mainstreaming is an important one to study, I suggest that more work needs to be done to critique the assumptions and ideas guiding the current CFP itself. That is, the *Freedom from Fear* Agenda must be situated in relation to wider transformations in global political, economic and humanitarian regimes, and feminists might want to consider what implications these global changes have for human security in general, and women and men's security in particular. For instance, an important debate exists in security studies on the impact of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. What impact have these events had on the human security agenda? Have national security interests to control terrorist networks, population movements and crime syndicates overshadowed human security interests? Or has the human security agenda conformed to national security interests? Should we export values or arms? This is a debate in which feminists have been relatively silent.

Rachel Freitas (2002) observed that the human security of people in states of violence is increasingly framed in reference to the internal security of people 'at home'. This is evident in the Canadian *Freedom from Fear* Agenda, where the justification of a human security approach in part, appeals to national security concerns – *their* security enhances *our* security. In a world where Canadians feel increasingly insecure within their own borders by criminal, terrorist and economic threats outside it, the concern is that human rights will once again take a back seat to sovereignty. For example, new Canadian asylum legislation to restrict population movements across Canadian borders has also resulted in considerable restrictions on refugee rights. Thus Freitas' question – "is it security from refugees or is it the security of refugees" (38) – is an important analytical intervention for feminists concerned with integrating gender into an increasingly restrictive asylum system. At a global level, attempts to promote gender-related change in the refugee regime must move beyond a liberal 'add women and stir approach', to address the restrictive transformations the refugee regime has undergone in the past decade. In other words, Canadian policies on gender-related harm will not make much of a difference if men and women are deterred far away from Canadian borders, and fail to ever make it out of zones of conflict to apply for asylum in the first place.

In the post Cold War era the apolitical, neutral and non-interventionist principles guiding past humanitarian practices have been called into question. Increasingly, 'new' humanitarian practices seek to prevent conflict, and often tie aid to political or economic conditionalities or involve radical new strategies such as

'preventative protection' which directly involve humanitarians inside zones of conflict to thwart displacement and alleviate human suffering. The new humanitarianism calls for policy coherence between humanitarian, development and military actors who increasingly work in concert with one another in the same operations, such as in Bosnia (1992), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001) and soon Iraq (2003).

These emerging changes in principles and practices of humanitarianism raise important questions for scholars of human security, and require a gender analysis. Joanna Macrae (1999; 2001) points to an increasing trend of 'bilateralisation', whereby humanitarian aid in material terms has grown and is increasingly channelled through bilateral rather than multilateral institutions. In an era of increased public accountability and transparency, bilateral institutions have taken on a greater presence in field operations promising greater policy coherence between military, humanitarian and development approaches in settings of violence. CIDA and DFAIT have both strengthened their human security and peacebuilding operations, with CIDA pursuing a coherent conflict and development approach, and pressing multilateral relief agencies to better integrate longer term development concerns. This trend follows that of other bilateral donors, such as Great Britain, the Netherlands and the United States. Macrae's concern is that the new humanitarianism is a political project of containment that is neither ethically palatable nor effective in ameliorating human suffering and violent conflict.

These concerns are also voiced by a number of Third World governments who protest central principles held within the *Responsibility to Protect*. Humanitarian intervention is perceived as a tool of Western intervention in the sovereignty of states and the principle of universalism within human security a mere disguise for Western liberal values. According to the critics, the narrow focus on the *Freedom from Fear* neglects fundamental structural insecurities, such as the freedom from want. In this argument, the political nature of the new humanitarianism is revealed, where global economic, political and social inequalities are not addressed, but the threat of Third World turbulence spreading outside national borders to reach the First World is contained. Without addressing these debates and concerns, contributions from the women, peace and security perspective will likely be perceived to be simply part and parcel of the liberal peace agenda and new humanitarianism.

This is not to argue that feminist contributions to the study of security are not important or are analytically weak. On the contrary, in some ways feminists are ahead of academics on human security. As David Carment has argued, in contrast to most foreign policies guided by the realist school of thought, human security appears to be a policy search of a theory. Yet a great deal of empirical data on the question of 'women's security' can be found in both the academy, human rights literatures and policy research institutes, data that has helped to inform feminist theories of gender-related forms of harm.<sup>x</sup> In starting theory from the individual, feminists map the intersection of individual forms of harm or insecurity to the state, conflict and

violence. As such, feminists offer not only important data on the security of the individual, but also fresh new perspectives into the nexus of the individual and structures of violence at the local, national and global level. Given the stated lacunae between human security policy and theory then, it is curious that only marginal attention has been paid to the theoretical insights of feminist literatures. To this end, human security academics would do well to incorporate and build upon these insights - an area where policy makers also already seem to be well ahead of them on. Thinking through and acting on some of the larger research and policy questions presented here is more than just an academic or policy exercise, it is an everyday reality of those living in the midst of human insecurities of which they are a part.

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<sup>i</sup> Feminism is employed in this paper from a liberal perspective, that is, seeking gender equality and equity to men within various social, economic and political institutions and life. I recognize there are different streams of feminist theory and action that would approach this topic in different ways, with different conclusions. However, because the primary impetus of the *Freedom from Fear* Agenda is overwhelmingly liberal, I confine the analysis to this particular perspective. Critical analyses from a feminist post-modern, Marxist or post-colonial perspectives would be welcome points of furthering the debate presented here.

<sup>ii</sup> In this respect, the Canadian human security agenda does not seek to be comprehensive but operational and effective through a focused effort to reduce individual insecurity, and in compliment to other approaches: "This approach complements both existing efforts focused on ensuring national security, as well as international efforts to protect human rights and promote human development".

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<sup>iii</sup> This review is not intended to be comprehensive, and acknowledges that it is missing critical theories in the discipline of international relations on the social construction of the state, conflict and military by feminist thinkers such as (Sylvester 1994; Pettman 1996; Tickner 1997; Sylvester 1998).

<sup>iv</sup> Perhaps one of the richest theoretical contributions of feminists in redefining security from the personal to the political is on the topic of rape during violent conflict. At least five explanations have been articulated as to why rape and mass rape are military strategies in 'ethnic' conflicts in the 1990s, and therefore different from rape in non-violent conflict settings. First, rape may be used as a means of humiliating the enemy (Stiglmeier 1994; Allen 1996). This has a dual effect of emasculating men as well as women, although for different reasons related to gender roles. Nationalist and military campaigns often call upon men to act as soldiers to protect both the nation, but also the family and primarily, women – constructed as the reproducers (or 'mothers') of the nation (Korac 1998; Kesic 1999). Testimonials from survivors often recall that they were raped in front of their families, or that men were forced to rape their daughters, or sons their mothers (African Rights 1995). In this case, men involved are sent a clear message regarding their inferiority as men, unable to protect 'their' women. For women survivors on the other hand, rape symbolizes the violation of women's bodies and their most sacred roles as mothers or reproducers. This symbolic violation is linked to a more maniacal practical one, to 'ethnically cleanse' a member of the enemy group by 'killing it at its root' – in the wombs of women. The stigma of rape in countries as diverse as Rwanda and Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Kosovo means that few survivors will marry again. In the framework of the nuclear, heterosexual family, this means survivors will cease to have reproductive roles. A third explanation of rape in armed conflict again locates women within the reproductive function of their 'bodies', that is, rape is a means of forcible impregnation. A fourth explanation of rape in armed conflict refers to the construction of the highly masculinist and hierarchical culture and nature of militaries and warfare. Acts of rape are acts of violence and aggression inscribed with gender and ethnic meanings, where rape of the 'others' women reaffirms the authority of one ethnic or nationalist group 'over' another. As recounted in Africa Rights Watch and the Human Rights Watch testimonies, *genocidaires* in the Rwandan genocide repeatedly told survivors: 'if it was not war you would never have me' and 'you Tutsi women think you are too good for us', which refers to the colonial history of Hutu racial inferiority in that country. Moreover, in forcing soldiers or militias to rape women, senior military men both reaffirm loyalty and obedience. Finally, as Lene Hansen wrote, rape is also a perverse means of binding a nation together '...Rape in warfare does not simply constitute attacks on already formed nations and women/men...[The] productive power of rape is that it forms and reinforces national and gendered identity. While wartime rapes on one level serve to destroy the nation, at another level, they simultaneously inscribe the nation they aim to erase' (Hansen 2001). The fifth explanation commonly articulated in feminist literatures relates to the use of 'rape imagery' to justify military aggression or intervention. Rapes of Serbian nuns and women by Albanian men were reported widely in Serbian newspapers in the 1980s, with the explicit link drawn between these acts, and an attack on the Serbian nation as a whole (Sofos 1996). The mass rape of women in Bosnia and Kosovo were likewise given significant international attention by women's groups and state actors alike to strategically advocate for humanitarian intervention.

<sup>v</sup> The phrase 'women, peace and security' will be used to refer to the wide variety of multi-disciplinary studies on gender, women (and sometimes men) and armed conflict, intra-state conflicts, conflict-prone or post-conflict settings, settings of forced displacement or return, and peacekeeping, peace support or peacebuilding initiatives. What unites these diverse approaches is a common concern with gender issues, and specifically gender-related issues encountered by women in violently insecure settings globally.

<sup>vi</sup> More recently, cases of peacekeepers and aid workers exchanging protection for sex have been documented in West, East and Southern African countries, Central Asia and the Balkans, raising concerns about the relative lack of gender-sensitive accountability structures and the need for stricter Codes of Conduct. While feminists have been aware of the growth of sex industries and implications for human security of trafficking in women and children for such industries, these events have opened a new set of research questions and set new policy mandates.

<sup>vii</sup> Including CIDA.

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<sup>viii</sup> Evidence suggests otherwise, that most soldiers had already left Srebrenica prior to its fall, and the majority of men who remained were non-combatants (Rohde 1997).

<sup>ix</sup> While the *Responsibility to Protect* report sought to clarify a clouded debate on intervention in sovereign states, one wonders when and if states might intervene in a country considered to exercise extreme prejudice and oppression against women. What did the international community learn from the exposure and recognition of mass rape during the Bosnian war? While mass rapes in Kosovo were in the media to justify military intervention to the public, was this part of the equation for deciding if NATO should drop bombs? Is this even the most effective way to stop sexual violence?

<sup>x</sup> And in turn led to policy and programme changes, see for example (Baines 2002)