



Section 6: Gender & IR

Zari and Zeerak from Baghch-e-Simsim (Sesame Garden)



“The temptation is powerful to close our eyes and wait for the worst to pass, but history tells us that for freedom to survive, it must be defended, and that if lies are to stop, they must be exposed.”

–Madeleine Albright in Fascism: A Warning

Gender in IR

- WHO definition of **gender**: socially constructed characteristics of women, men, boys and girls
 - **Gender identity**: one's deeply felt individual experience of gender, which does not necessarily correspond to physiology/designated sex at birth
- 3 ways IR scholars address gender:
 1. As a structural feature of the international system
 2. As a leader attribute
 3. As an issue area

Gender x international system

1. State identity portrayed in gendered terms
2. States differentiated in terms of association with masculinity
3. Interaction of interests premised on gender hierarchy

Gender x leaders

1. Recap: how do gender stereotypes and bias influence the course of international crises? (Hint: Post and Sen 2020)
2. “Do women make more credible threats?” If so, why? (Bonus paper: Schwartz and Blair 2020)
3. What would greater gender equality globally mean for the quality of interstate relations? (Bonus paper: Barnhart et al. 2020)

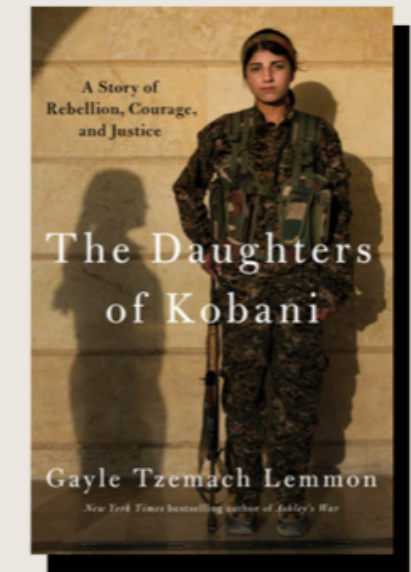
Gender x terrorism

- **Terrorism:** violence against civilians to attain political goals
 - *Rational model:* violence as costly signals (Kydd and Walter 2006)
 - *Nonrational model:* symbolic/social violence against gender & sexual minorities (Cohen 2016; Tschantret 2018)

The Women Who Helped Topple the Caliphate

“The Daughters of Kobani” chronicles the female Kurdish fighters who battled terrorists, fought for equality, and then got stabbed in the back.

Ferocious and unwavering, these women were protective of the troops under their command, many of them men. But they were also deeply committed to their cause. This was not just a military fight but a political struggle and a responsibility to shape the future for the next generation. As Lemmon tells it, few women seem more comfortable with their power and less apologetic about owning it. When it came time to cross the Euphrates River to liberate Manbij, for instance, the YPJ women went first under the dark of night to secure the riverbank. As they racked up victories against the Islamic State, their regional stature grew, with women coming from Iraq, Iran, and Turkey to join their ranks.



The Daughters of Kobani: A Story of Rebellion, Courage, and Justice, Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, Penguin Press, 288 pp., \$27, February 2021

Source: Elise Labott, *Foreign Policy* (2/15/2021)

Gender x insurgency

- Recall: **insurgency** is armed rebellion against the state for political purposes
- **Counterinsurgency**: efforts to get militant group to stop violence
 - Use force to fight and defeat rebels
 - Win “hearts and mind” of population to diminish insurgent support and gain local assistance in fighting
- Are women the key to effective counterinsurgency?

Letting Women Reach Women in Afghan War

By Elisabeth Bumiller

March 6, 2010

These are not your mother's Marines here in the rugged California chaparral of Camp Pendleton, where 40 young women are preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in one of the more forward-leaning experiments of the American military.

Next month they will begin work as members of the first full-time “female engagement teams,” the military's name for four- and five-member units that will accompany men on patrols in Helmand Province to try to win over the rural Afghan women who are culturally off limits to outside men. The teams, which are to meet with the Afghan women in their homes, assess their need for aid and gather intelligence, are part of Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal's campaign for Afghan hearts and minds. His officers say that you

Rural Afghan women, who meet at wells and pass news about the village, are often repositories of information about a district's social fabric, power brokers and militants, all crucial data for American forces. On some occasions, Captain Pottinger said in an e-mail message, women have provided information about specific insurgents and the makers of bombs.

Policy application: Gender x human rights

Taliban Renege on Promise to Open Afghan Girls' Schools

The schools were supposed to reopen this week, and the reversal could threaten aid because international officials had made girls' education a condition for greater assistance.

By **Safiullah Padshah** and **Christina Goldbaum**

March 23, 2022 Updated 10:42 a.m. ET

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban on Wednesday abruptly reversed their decision to allow girls' high schools to reopen this week, saying that they would remain closed until officials draw up a plan for them to reopen in accordance with Islamic law.

The move is likely to deal a significant blow to the credibility the Taliban had been trying to build with international donors in recent months. And it could threaten the billions of dollars of humanitarian aid that have helped keep millions of Afghans from famine as the country grapples with a devastating economic collapse.

The news was crushing to the over one million high school-aged girls who had been raised in an era of opportunity for women before the Taliban seized power in August last year — and who had woken up thrilled to be returning to classes on Wednesday.

1. Do these developments within Afghanistan matter to IR?
2. Should the international community engage or isolate the Taliban?
3. What strategies of addressing women's education in Afghanistan hold the greatest chance of success?

This section was brought to you by Nadia Murad.



- Nobel Peace Prize recipient (2018) for “efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict”
- Born in Kojo, Iraq and a member of the Yazidi minority
- Survivor of ISIS abduction and subsequent sexual enslavement
- UN Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and author of “The Last Girl”