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The Boundaries of Terror

Feminism, Human Rights, and the Politics of Global Crisis

LEELA FERNANDES

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the gendered politics which unfolded in the public domain in the United States seemed to echo a long history in which gendered ideologies and women's bodies have served as central signifiers for nationalist agendas and international political conflicts. For instance, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, during the U.S. military preparations and during the period of the military campaign against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, media images and public discourses were rife with images of veiling and of the oppression of women in Afghanistan. Such discourses did not require much ideological creativity given the very real repression of Taliban rule, which feminist activists had been working against long before the events of 9/11, and given the long history of colonial representations of veiled women as a core narrative of orientalist ideologies which have historically shaped Western approaches to the Middle East and Islamic world (Said). Sensationalized reporting of the gender oppression of women in Afghanistan, on the one hand, was juxtaposed by new narratives of masculinized heroes in the depictions of the roles of firefighters and policemen in the context of the 9/11 attacks, on the other hand.

The deeper links between such gendered discourses of veiled women in the media and the interests of the U.S. military campaign become apparent when one considers how the social, economic, and political interests and rights of Afghan women dropped out of U.S. mainstream media discourses once the initial military campaign was successful. In many ways the dynamics of this form of gendered politics have been emblematic of familiar patterns in which women have been deployed as cultural signifiers as social groups and nations have pursued interests that usually have had little to do with women's rights. The ways in which the Taliban's repressive gender regime sought to use women as the foundation for their

political agenda of cultural purification or the ways in which mainstream media representations in the United States have presented veiled women as silent victims are quintessential instances of such dynamics.

The politics of representation of non-Western women are part of a much longer history of colonialism that has been well analyzed by feminist scholars in a range of comparative contexts (Ahmed; Mani; McClintock; Mohanty). These representations continue to play a powerful role in shaping hegemonic understandings of contemporary political conflict in what becomes a kind of national common sense in places like the United States.[1] However, such longstanding gendered colonial narratives have also been configured in new ways in the post-9/11 period. In this chapter, rather than focusing exclusively on the ideological workings of gender in terms of media stereotyping and the politics of visual narratives, I want instead to explore some of the insights that a feminist perspective on the U.S. war on terrorism can provide for contemporary debates about human rights. I explore the ways in which feminist debates on the language of human rights and the politics of representation are affected by shifts in national and global political processes in the post-9/11 period. I specifically focus on two central areas of inquiry. First, I argue that shifts in global political processes have complicated languages of human rights and languages of feminism in ways that draw on both older questions of global inequality (Barlow; Grewal) and newly emerging patterns of post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy. Second, I argue that the politics of representation are central to new power configurations that have begun to connect discourses of terrorism and the language of human rights. This politics of representation, as I will argue, is not merely centered on the proliferation of specific visual strategies such as the deployment of media images. Instead, I argue that the politics of representation are part of a series of state practices that rework the boundaries of categories such as civil society and terror.

My analysis draws on theoretical work that has questioned the assumption that there are predetermined or self-evident boundaries between state and civil society (Migdal; Mitchell). Joel Migdal, for instance, has argued for a "state-in-society" approach that analyzes the state in terms of the image of the state as a unified entity that claims to represent its people (16) as well as a series of practices, "those routinized performative acts—that batter the image of a coherent, controlling state and neutralize the territorial and public-private boundaries" (19). This encompasses a wide array of practices, ranging from the ways in which state functionaries may use their official roles to pursue their own private business interests (Migdal; Mitchell) to a Gramscian depiction of the ways in which "private" organizations within civil society, such as schools, universities, and religious bureaucracies, may represent sites for the extension and exercise of state power. The heart of state power in such a conception lies in the ways in which it is able to draw a series of social, political, and territorial boundaries that create what Timothy Mitchell has described as an appearance of a clear demarcation between state and civil society. As Mitchell notes, "It is a line drawn internally,

within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a certain social and political order is maintained" (90).

Drawing on the insights of such approaches, I explore some of the representational politics of this process of boundary formation and examine the ways in which such forms of politics draw on intersecting ideologies of race, gender, and nation. Such representational practices, whether they are in the form of media representations, the rhetorical strategies of politicians' speeches, or new forms of legislation such as the Patriot Act, are an essential part of the contemporary politics of the exercise of U.S. state power, both within and across its national territorial borders. As I argue, an understanding of the ways in which state practices centrally invoke and produce the boundaries of categories such as civil society, civilization, terror, and terrorism is critical for any political project that seeks to adopt a framework of human rights. On the one hand, the language of human rights is implicated in such power-laden projects of boundary production that mark the post-9/11 exercise of U.S. state power.[2] On the other hand, a human rights approach can also provide important understandings of and responses to these state practices.

A feminist analysis of arenas such as state, foreign policy, and the language of human rights thus does not necessarily turn on the public visibility of women in the form of specific visual images. While there are some conventional examples of the use of specific images, such as the gendered process of militarization (Enloe) in the depiction of the rescue of Jessica Lynch from Iraq and the depiction of veiled women in earlier phases of the war with Afghanistan, strategies of representation have focused more on generalized discourses of national injury,[3] security, and the threat of the racialized masculinity of Muslim/immigrant men. This chapter seeks to develop a series of feminist reflections on the dynamics of such representational practices through a focus on state practices and interests. These state practices redraw boundaries between the public and private in ways that both produce new challenges for feminist political strategies that draw on a human rights–based approach and make a feminist analysis crucial for an understanding of contemporary global politics.

The U.S. War on Terrorism and the Politics of Human Rights

Feminist critics of a global human rights approach to women's activism have called attention to two central issues. First, such critics have noted that feminist human rights approaches have often inadvertently engaged in questionable representational practices that have depicted mainly non-Western women as victims of essentialized cultural traditions and have paid less attention to questions such as state power or economic rights (Basu; Grewal). Second, feminist critics have argued that feminists using a global human rights approach have often paid less attention to inequalities between nation-states and the dominant global political-military role of the United States and to the ways in which such inequalities

permeate global or universal languages, such as the discourse of human rights (Barlow; Grewal). Such insights are of particular significance in the aftermath of 9/11 and the initiation of the U.S.-declared global war on terrorism. In particular, the war on terrorism has set in motion political processes that rest on the expansion of U.S. state power both within and beyond its national territorial borders. This has involved the use of conventional forms of state power, such as military power, state surveillance, and law enforcement, as well as more subtle forms of disciplinary power through new normative constructions of citizenship. I will first consider the ways in which such political processes inform and further complicate the question of human rights.

In many ways, the U.S.-declared war on terrorism marks a new period in international relations and global conflict that is distinctive from earlier forms of war and conflict. A distinctive aspect of the U.S. war on terrorism is that the United States, by declaring war on a phenomenon such as "terrorism," both invoked the role and responsibility of nation-states and simultaneously sought to transcend the relevance of sovereign national borders. Thus, on the one hand, George W. Bush's warning to the world that "you are either with us or against us" invoked the requirement that nation-states cooperate in the war against terrorism or risk being defined as terrorist states for supporting or harboring terrorists. On the other hand, the transnational and hidden nature of al-Qaeda terrorist operations and networks has provided an ideological basis for the United States to define its war on terrorism as one that by definition must transcend questions of national borders and state sovereignty; thus, the U.S. state reserves the right to transcend national borders either through small operations in cooperation with the governments of specific nation-states (for instance, in the Philippines and Pakistan), or through overt military campaigns, as in Afghanistan and Iraq. This policy, I argue, marks a shift in the American conception of the global order to a situation where questions of state sovereignty are contingent in more overt ways on the interests and requirements of U.S. perceptions of its national security; it is this form of American globality that is the foundation of what some commentators and academics have sought to analyze as a contemporary form of American empire.[4]

This global expansion of U.S. state power has important implications for activist strategies and discourses that seek to draw on global or transnational frameworks. Consider the case of a global feminist approach that seeks to draw on a human rights approach to activism. One underlying political and philosophical assumption of a global feminist approach is that local women's organizations can either transcend or pressure the constraints of their own states by appealing to international organizations and pressing for global norms regarding women's rights. The feminist adoption of a human rights framework has been one specific model of such an endeavor, which has sought to press for the application of global human rights norms to women's issues. Implicit in such an approach is the notion that women in local situations will benefit from a global framework that makes

state sovereignty subservient to an overarching framework. Indeed, such an approach has led to important developments and, in many cases, has enabled local women's organizations in comparative contexts to use languages of human rights to press their governments for rights at the local level. The question at hand, however, is one that addresses the ways in which inequalities between nation-states affect the deployment of such global languages and norms. In particular, the transcendence of state sovereignty through such forms of transnational feminist practice is complicated by the exercise of U.S. state power in the post-9/11 period of global politics.

Consider the ways in which U.S. state and public discourses that have emerged in the post-9/11 period have sought to produce linkages between the languages of human rights, Western civilization, and U.S. national security and military action. As Peter Fitzpatrick has argued, an association between war and human rights, an association that characterized earlier conflicts,[5] has been extended to the current war on terrorism. For instance, political and public discourses in the United States sought to represent the military attack on Afghanistan as a "just war"—a part of the broader war on terrorism, a war that would preserve the democratic rights of the "civilized" world (Fitzpatrick 114). As Fitzpatrick argues, the war on terrorism "takes the idea of a human rights war to something like its ultimate extent. That is, the exemplary espousal of human rights along with the values taken as sustaining them—values of civilization, freedom and democracy—are operatively combined with their extension throughout the globe through the waging of war on those who are deemed in terms of a protean 'terrorism' to be opponents of such rights and values" (118).

Such strategies of representation can be seen in numerous examples, ranging from Bush's references to the protection of freedom and civilization to media images that have constructed U.S. military activity in the war on terrorism through discourses of freedom and liberation. The most recent and overt instance of such strategies can be seen in the representation of the military attack and occupation of Iraq as a U.S.-led war of liberation for the Iraqi people. This ongoing military campaign represents a quintessential example of the construction of war as a human rights project. Such a construction occurred through two central sets of discursive strategies. Prior to the start of the military campaign, U.S. and British state discourses and mainstream media representations constructed Iraq as a critical threat to global peace through its alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction. In such discourses, this potential use of weapons of mass destruction was constructed as a generalized threat to global security; the question of human rights was implicit in the associations between security and the protection of freedom and civilization. However, it was only during the current period of U.S. occupation, and in light of the failure of the United States to find weapons of mass destruction, that the state's discursive strategies have shifted to justify the war and occupation in the explicit terms of Iraqi human rights, through representations of the actual and severe human rights abuses of Saddam Hus-

sein's regime. Consider, for instance, the following depiction in a speech made by George Bush to the UN General Assembly:

> [B]ecause a coalition of nations acted to defend the peace and the credibility of the United Nations, Iraq is free, and today we are joined by representatives of a liberated country. Saddam's monuments have been removed and not only his statues. The true monuments of his rule and his character, the torture chambers and the rape rooms and the prison cells for innocent children are closed. And as we discover the killing fields and mass graves, the true scale of Saddam's cruelty is being revealed. The Iraqi people are meeting hardships and challenges, like every nation that has set out on the path of democracy. Yet their future promises lives of dignity and freedom and that is a world away from the squalid, vicious tyranny they have known. Across Iraq life is being improved by liberty. Across the Middle East, people are safer because an unstable aggressor has been removed from power. Across the world, nations are more secure because an ally of terror has fallen. Our actions in Afghanistan and Iraq were supported by many governments, and America is grateful to each one. I also recognize some of the sovereign nations of this assembly disagreed with our actions. Yet there was, and there remains, unity among us on fundamental principles and objectives of the United Nations. We are dedicated to the defense of our collective security, and to the advance of human rights.[6]

The excerpt of this speech, which I have quoted at length, demonstrates how the Bush administration has sought to link together three distinctive elements: (1) specific U.S. state policies that have rested on conventional military campaigns against existing nation-states in its war of terrorism, (2) the question of "collective security," and (3) the actual repression of authoritarian regimes, such as that of Hussein, that violate international norms of human rights.

While the repressive nature of the former Iraqi regime is undebatable, the deeper question at hand for an understanding of the politics of representation in the post-9/11 period is one that addresses this linkage between human rights, security, and U.S. state policy. This linkage rests on two paradoxical processes. First, the case of the war and occupation of Iraq demonstrates how both the language of human rights and the language of security form significant discursive/ideological strategies of representation which are deployed by the U.S. state and dominant public discourses; in this process, human rights and national security become intrinsically linked to the interests of the U.S. state and to current state policies. Second, the distinctiveness of the contemporary political form of U.S. state power is such that it necessarily transcends both the sovereignty of weaker states and the constraints of international law. Thus, for instance, mainstream political discourses (particularly visual media depictions) in the United States

have continued to portray the war on Iraq as a war defending both human rights and global security despite the absence of a United Nations mandate for the war. It is this simultaneous promotion of the interests of a single dominant nation-state and the transcendence of state sovereignty and international law that has spurred some scholars to distinguish the current world order in terms of a political form of empire rather than in terms of international or transnational global order.

This political and analytical distinction between empire, on the one hand, and internationalism and transnationalism, on the other, poses critical challenges for feminists concerned with both global forms of activism and the use of a human rights framework. In the contemporary moment, for instance, the formulation of a global, international, and transnational feminist human rights approach must navigate within the representational terrain that I have been outlining. The point at hand is not to dismiss the possibilities for feminist activists/thinkers to rework the political terms of security or human rights but to point to the representational strategies and political discourses that complicate this project in critical ways.

If feminist narratives of justice and human rights are to circumvent the risks of being appropriated in such hegemonic fields of meaning, they will need to confront in explicit terms the politics of empire and the state and move away from a preoccupation with static understandings of cultural tradition (Mohanty; Narayan). This dynamic was already evident in the ways in which U.S. media and political discourses were able to deploy narratives of oppressed Afghan women to help mobilize public opinion in favor of its military attack on Afghanistan. As I have noted, such dynamics in many ways echo much older historical processes that have been well analyzed by feminist scholars and activists. Thus, for example, in the case of nineteenth-century European colonialism, the gendered and racialized representations of uncivilized "natives" provided a critical foundation for the justification of colonial rule. Images of veiled women in the Middle East (Ahmed) and the burning of widows in India (Mani) serve as symbols of both the barbarity of the "East" and the necessity of the civilizing mission of colonialism.

While the gendered politics of representation point to clear continuities between earlier processes of colonialism and the contemporary politics of U.S. state and global power, the question that arises, then, is whether and how such political processes are reconfigured by the post-colonial specificities of the contemporary world order. I argue that rather than assuming that the contemporary politics of empire are merely a reproduction of older colonial historical processes, the specificities of the post-colonial period require a deeper understanding of the relationship between empire and the modern post-colonial nation-state.[7] The post-colonial nation-state is thus an integral part of the strategies of representation that shape the unfolding politics of U.S. global power. At an immediate level, for instance, this can be seen in the ways in which the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq is constructed in terms of U.S. state rhetoric of nation-building.[8] How-

ever, this politics of representation is not simply limited to such forms of explicit ideological or visual images that represent U.S. troops as liberators or protectors of freedom and civilization. At a deeper level, such strategies of representation engage in a series of boundary projects, producing the boundaries between state and civil society both in the United States and globally in ways that provide a critical foundation for the U.S. war on terrorism. The representational politics of the state produce a distinction between "civil" and "uncivil" society, where the latter becomes a site of potential terrorism and a legitimate target of U.S. state intervention. Such processes, as I will demonstrate, can be seen in an array of practices including media representations, political discourses, and legal and police action through the use of the Patriot Act. This representational politics redraws the boundaries between the public and private and builds on a series of gendered and racialized ideologies in ways that are of critical significance for a feminist understanding of global politics.

Civil Society, the "War on Terrorism," and the Representational Politics of the State

One of the central dimensions of the representational politics of the state centers on how the construction of terrorism operates in the proliferation of public discourses in the aftermath of 9/11. At one level, the definition of terrorism is clear-cut, as it involves intended violence against targets that are clear civilian sites in order to produce terror and disrupt the lives of civilian populations.[9] In my own view, violence of any form which deliberately targets civilian spaces does begin to provide a useful working basis for a construction of terrorism, and al-Qaeda's targeting of civilians is a self-evident example of this form of violence. At a deeper level, however, the question that the current war on terrorism raises is how the boundaries of civilian space are defined. In other words, any understanding of the war on terrorism is linked to political constructions of what is counted as civilian. State practices, as I will argue, have been engaged in the narrowing of the boundaries of what counts as civilian space both at a global level and within the United States.

The narrowing of civilian space can be seen in a number of different instances. One significant example is the lack of official or public accounting in the United States of the numbers of civilian deaths that have occurred since the beginning of the military campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq. Scattered news reports have noted the death of civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq. For instance, during the initial military campaign in Afghanistan, mainstream news provided scattered reports of particular events, the most visible being the mistaken bombing of an Afghan wedding party. Given the emphasis that social scientists place on data, particularly quantitative data, this absence is a noteworthy one. An exception to this is the ongoing study by Marc Herrold, who has compiled data on civilian deaths. Drawing on well-known international media sources, he has estimated

the number of civilian deaths to be over three thousand, a figure substantially higher than estimates sometimes given by mainstream news sources such as the *New York Times*. This absence of clear-cut data points to the question of when and where civilian spaces are acknowledged—a question that is fundamentally linked to the framing of the current war on terrorism. Herrold has noted, for instance, that "the absence of images of human suffering" caused by the bombing created a "war without witnesses" in the United States, and he has further suggested that the erasure of civilian deaths is fundamentally linked to racialized national ideologies that shape which bodies count in the context of global conflict.

One narrative that often unfolds in a discussion of civilian spaces in such contexts is that calling attention to civilian victims implies a defense or justification of the regime under attack, in this instance the Taliban regime. In effect, this narrative strategy invokes the very assumptions of the militarization of human rights in the form of a nationalized "human rights war." Thus, presidential speeches by George Bush have consistently, as I have noted above, represented the war against Iraq as a project that has simultaneously protected the national security interests of the United States and defended the human rights of the Iraqi people. The underlying result is that critics of the war risk being constructed as either anti-patriotic or as defenders of repressive regimes. Examples of such processes range from the rhetoric of far-right public commentators to more subtle processes through which political discourses are framed. For instance, an extreme example can be seen in the rhetoric of a public figure such as Ann Coulter, whose book *Treason* explicitly argues that American liberals have consistently adopted unpatriotic and "anti-American" positions throughout U.S. history. More subtle examples can be seen in the ways in which hegemonic political discourses in the United States have produced a national framework of meaning in which the act of invoking the devastating loss of life during the 9/11 terrorist attacks has provided an effective rationale for U.S. military action. The most recent instance of this is the case of Iraq, where constant invocations of 9/11 by state officials resulted in polls continually showing that a majority of Americans believed that Iraq was involved in the 9/11 attacks, despite a lack of factual evidence of such involvement.

The result has been a kind of nationalist common sense according to which regions designated as targets of the current war on terrorism become marked as symbols of terror and human rights violations devoid of civilian space. Consider, for example, the discursive construction of the phrase "Sunni triangle," which has become part of the everyday national political vocabulary. The phrase refers to the Sunni-dominated area in Iraq that has been a source of militant insurgency. The term transforms a complex, socially stratified area into an objectified ethnic-territorial category, one that discursively transforms an entire community into a symbol of potential terrorists, insurgents, and loyalists of Hussein's authoritarian rule. The result is that references to the Sunni triangle that permeate news reports, particularly on the twenty-four-hour news channels, depict an area that appears devoid of civilian space. What is rendered invisible through such repre-

sentational politics is that military strategies such as the encirclement of entire villages represent a systematic targeting of civilian spaces.[10]

The paradox lies in the way in which the U.S. war on terrorism and the corresponding deployment of a human rights language designed to protect civilian space have narrowed the boundaries of what counts as civilian space. I argue that this is less a problem with the universalism of human rights language than it is with the appropriation of the language of human rights in the service of particular state interests.[11] For instance, from a human rights perspective, one of the most significant political and ethical implications of the 9/11 attacks is linked precisely to an understanding of the devastation and suffering produced by acts of violence against civilians in universal terms that transcend the interests of states and the ideologies of nationalism. The political/discursive assumption that links human rights and civil society with the national security of particular states is a problem of the particularization rather than the universalism of a human rights framework. In this process of particularization, human rights concerns are constrained through bounded understandings of civilizational identity and the erasure of civilian space, which reduces entire national contexts in non-Western (and particularly in Middle Eastern) countries to the particular repressive or authoritarian regimes in power in those contexts. This tendency is specifically intensified during the period of military action—a time when civilian populations are at particular risk of turning into collateral damage. For instance, prior to the military campaign against Iraq, while mainstream political discourses engaged in a debate on the pros and cons of an attack, the question of the impact of bombing heavily populated cities in Iraq did not represent a significant factor for consideration. This trend has continued in the occupation phase of the campaign as no official or public systematic data has been compiled on Iraqi deaths. Iraqi deaths and arrests are thus summarily depicted as an assault on terrorists without actual formal evidence of links between specific Iraqi individuals and acts of violence. Thus, for example, television news channels such as CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News run continual captions and reports stating the numbers of suspected terrorists or insurgents being arrested or detained. However, with the exception of cases in which large numbers of weapons have been found, such reports generally do not follow up with investigations or evidence that detained individuals have been involved in violent insurgency. Such public silences are fundamentally linked to the representational politics that have effectively narrowed the boundaries of civil society and civilian space.

I have been addressing the relationship between the war on terrorism and the question of what and who is included within the boundaries of civilian space in terms of the role of the United States. However, it is important to note that this relationship also has serious consequences for other regional conflicts, which have distinctive histories but are being linked to the global war on terrorism in new ways.[12] For instance, consider cases such as the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir, Russian policy toward Chechnya, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While it is not possible to address the complexities of these cases within the confines of this chapter, it is clear that the current focus on terrorism is a significant force that is shaping each of these situations. In such contexts, how states define what counts as legitimate civilian resistance in light of the war on terrorism is a critical question. If the narrowing of the boundaries of what counts as civilian space results in the foreclosure of legitimate nonviolent civil resistance, such a process will not only dislodge the potential for peace negotiations in ways that are already evident but will also serve to fuel the very forms of violent political activity which the war on terrorism seeks to quell.

Race, Gender, and the War on Terrorism

The assumption that authoritarian regimes are devoid of civilian space reflects older colonial stereotypes, which now intersect with contemporary ideologies of race and gender. Feminist perspectives have a long intellectual history of addressing the intersections of race and gender and thus are particularly important in understanding such dynamics. One critical strand, which comes to light, has to do with the ways in which racialized constructions of masculinity play a central role in contributing to the narrowing of the boundaries of what counts as civilian space. This can be seen in the way in which the figure of dark-skinned men (who are assumed to be of Middle Eastern or South Asian Muslim descent) have operated as symbols of global terrorism. Such a construction is an implicit factor in how civilian populations are rendered invisible in discussions of regimes or regions designated as terrorist sites. However, such processes can also be seen unfolding within the United States. To take just one instance, current discussions about the need for racial profiling operate on an explicit assumption that it is acceptable to assume that individuals who fit this profile are potential threats to the safety of ordinary citizens in public arenas such as airports, spaces that are an integral part of civil society.

Consider, for example, the findings of an extensive Human Rights Watch report on the post-9/11 detentions.[13] The report notes that following the 9/11 attacks, "The decision of whom to question often appeared to be haphazard, at times prompted by law enforcement agents' random encounters with foreign male Muslims or neighbors' suspicions" (3). As the report goes on to document, "indications" of suspicious terrorist-related activity were often linked simply to identity markers of nationality, religion, and gender (9). This is borne out by the fact that the approximately twelve hundred detainees were almost wholly Muslim non-citizen men, most of whom, as the Department of Justice later acknowledged, were charged with immigration violations but were of no interest to its antiterrorist activities (3).[14]

What is significant here is how this construction of racialized masculinity by designating particular individuals and immigrant communities as a threat to ordinary citizens in effect places them outside the boundaries of U.S. civil society.

The search for security in this situation is thus based on the narrowing of the boundaries of who merits the status of civilian—a process in which the status of citizenship itself is fundamentally altered by the politics of gender, race, and national origin. An important dimension of this process is how the state encouraged and relied on "ordinary citizens" to report suspicious activity (for instance, in the case of neighbors' suspicions discussed above) and to serve as an informal part of the state surveillance apparatus. In other words, state practices of surveillance incorporated the activities of private individuals. Such practices exemplify Evelyn Nakano Glenn's discussion of the ways in which the racialized, gendered nature of citizenship in the United States has historically been produced through the everyday practices of local actors. As she argues, "In some cases the actors are state, county or municipal officials, for example a welfare department social worker ruling on the eligibility of a black single mother for benefits. In other cases they are 'private citizens,' for example a movie theater owner deciding whether or not to allow Mexican Americans to sit on the main floor. It is these kinds of localized, often face-to-face practices that determine whether people have or don't have substantive as opposed to purely formal rights of citizens" (2). It is this production of citizenship that we see unfolding through the practices of racialized, gendered surveillance and suspicion which I have been discussing. Numerous qualitative cases of such practices have been documented by immigrant organizations and human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch. The Human Rights Watch report, for instance, describes cases in which Muslim men were picked up and detained "simply because spouses, neighbors, or members of the public said they were 'suspicious' or accused them without any credible evidence" (12). In many cases, such reports led to deportations of individuals who may have violated their visa terms, thus creating a situation in which everyday local practices of private citizens literally aided the state in its policing of the territorial borders of the nation-state, a task normally the prerogative of official agencies such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service. As we have seen through this case of the post-9/11 detainees, these practices demonstrate the blurring of the boundaries between state and civil society and enable the "private" realms of citizenship and civilian space to perform the "public" work of state authority.

Such processes connect in important ways with existing research on a longer history of violence, imprisonment, and the intersections of race and gender, intersections that have historically shaped "racial profiling" of African Americans. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, for instance, has examined the ways in which a Los Angeles multiracial organization, Mothers Reclaiming Our Children, began to organize against an expanding prison system increasingly used by the U.S. state as a policy response to social problems. Her analysis calls on feminists to expand the boundaries of mainstream feminist activism and to engage in explicit ways with the racialized, gendered effects of the U.S. state. The implications of such an analysis are heightened in the post-9/11 period as the domestic politics of incarceration intersect with the global dimensions of the U.S. war on terrorism and target

vulnerable groups such as undocumented workers and immigrant communities. The most visible evidence of this is perhaps seen in the fact that reports have suggested that anti-terror laws have increasingly been used to tackle domestic crime.[15]

Violence, Security, and the Boundaries of Terror

The gendered racialization of citizenship points to the ways in which the U.S. war on terrorism has produced a culture of security that has sought to redraw the boundaries of what counts as political violence. State strategies of representation have been increasingly effective in defining political violence purely in terms of the threat of Islamic terrorism in ways that displace public attention from other forms of political violence that include gender-based domestic violence, hate crimes, and the structural violence of poverty and violence enacted by the state itself. Consider the current U.S. war on terrorism from a feminist perspective that draws on long histories of addressing questions of violence and the relationship between the public and private. While the war on terrorism represents an expansion in terms of the breadth of the geographical areas it incorporates, it has, in fact, been defined by a narrowing of what counts as public political violence. For instance, feminist activists in comparative contexts have for decades been working to broaden the definition of what counts as human rights and, more specifically, of what counts as violence that demands state and international accountability. This has been manifested in a range of activities focused on addressing violence against women in ways that have sought to represent the household as site of power dynamics and that have sought to focus attention on the use of rape and violence against women as political violence that is used systematically in various forms of conflicts involving ethnic, religious, and national strife.

The war on terrorism has inadvertently begun to produce a discourse that increasingly defines public or political violence in terms of specific strategies of terrorism used by organizations such as al-Qaeda. Given the global significance of the current war on terrorism, the importance of U.S. discourses in shaping international agendas, and the ways in which women's rights are easily displaced from the public domain, the implications of the war on terrorism for how violence and violence against women in particular are dealt with represent an important question which requires further systematic examination. The most visible instance of this has to do with the ways in which the language of women's rights has been deployed as a symbol that highlights the backwardness of Islamic fundamentalists such as the Taliban. In this symbolic politics, the war on terrorism becomes synonymous with a war for women's rights. Yet little mainstream public attention in sites such as the news media or the rhetoric of political leaders has addressed the ways in which women gain access to real political or economic power in countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan. Nor is there significant public reporting on violence against women once the initial U.S. military campaigns have led to U.S. troop presence in these regions. Despite the wealth of feminist research that has

demonstrated the gendered specificities of violence that women face in contexts of war and occupation, such research has not significantly entered public mainstream discourses. Political discourses that often present a slippage between declaring a "war on terrorism" and a "war on terror" are a telling reflection of precisely this danger. The slippage seems to suggest that the terror of systematic violence against civilians is reducible to the activities of organized terrorist groups—a slippage which, as I have noted, counters the core of much feminist work on the nature of violence against women. If domestic discourses in the aftermath of 9/11 focused on a generalized sense of national injury, the ensuing war of terrorism has constructed a generalized discourse on the need to attack terror. Such a generalized conception of "terror" has become a naturalized national meaning, one that is then projected onto to the international stage through U.S. state policy and rhetoric.

A more subtle form of the displacement of questions of women's rights can be seen in terms of responses to human rights violations within the United States. While the politics of racialized masculinity construct particular groups of immigrant men as hyper-visible figures, immigrant women in such cases have often been rendered invisible. Thus, while some public discourses have called attention to the prolonged detention of immigrant men in the post-9/11 period, less public attention has been paid to the ways in which immigrant women have coped, responded to, and survived in light of the detention of male relatives. Little systematic data exists on the impact of detentions on family networks or on the coping strategies of female relatives of male detainees. For instance, the Human Rights Watch report points out that immigrant detainees have not been granted the right to notify their families or receive regular visits with family members and that no means have been provided for detainees to communicate with families that may be outside of the United States (84). However, the report does not examine what such detentions have meant for female relatives of the male detainees—for instance, in terms of their immigration status, economic survival (with the loss of a wage earner in the family), and other social and cultural factors, such as language barriers, which may prevent them from gaining full access to legal recourse. Such questions necessitate a broader gendered understanding of the conceptualization of human rights, including the impact on female relatives as an integral part of any classification of human rights violations, which organizations such as Human Rights Watch have carefully documented.[16]

Conclusion: Feminist Reflections on State, Civil Society, and the Politics of Human Rights

This chapter goes to press at a time when the Iraqi prisoner scandal has only recently broken. Although an in-depth discussion of these events is not possible, the scandal brings to the forefront the implications of many of the processes I have been analyzing in this chapter. While the American mainstream public

reaction has been one of shock, in many ways the graphic details of torture and abuse are perhaps an inevitable outcome of the political dynamics of the war against terrorism, which I have been discussing. Mainstream news reports have portrayed the occurrences as a deviation from normal operations of the state and military, and politicians and news commentators have used the investigations and hearing as proof of the superiority of American identity. Public congressional hearings have allowed the state to step in as a neutral arbiter of justice and the protector of truth and human rights. Once again, what lies concealed in the midst of most of the public discourses and self-criticism is the deeper implication of the U.S. state in these human rights abuses; that is, an acknowl- edgment that such human rights abuses are an integral part of the U.S. state's policies in relation to the war on terrorism.

The relationship between the current war on terrorism and the production of civilian space provides a paradoxical reworking of the relationship between the public and private realms of activity with which feminism has long been preoccupied. As feminist activists and writers have historically demonstrated, the private sphere has never been an innocent realm. If feminists have traditionally sought to reveal the political nature of the private sphere, such an approach can provide the means to further examine the ways in which the private sphere is intricately related to the exercise of state power. This points to a larger question: the implications that the current politics of global crisis has for the terms and direction of feminist thought and feminist practice. Such linkages fundamentally represent the ways in which the lines between the public and the private are drawn, in this case between what counts as public violence and what counts as protected, private, civilian space. As feminist scholars have long argued, the ways in which the boundaries between the public and the private are drawn have serious material and political effects.

The implications for feminist debates on human rights are paradoxical. On the one hand, I have demonstrated that U.S. state practices have incorporated the language of human rights in the current war on terrorism. As I have noted, this process of incorporation curtails the universality of a human rights framework through the specificity of particular state interests. Consider, for instance, the violations of human rights in relation to prisoners of war whether they are the Taliban in Afghanistan, detainees in Guantanamo Bay, or Iraqis arrested by U.S. military forces. Meanwhile, the U.S. state has sought to use liminal geographical spaces in order to circumvent both global human rights and U.S. law with regard to the interrogation of suspected terrorists. Thus, as one U.S. Navy source quoted in a *Newsweek* report put it, "The most interesting thing about interrogations is how the U.S. government and military capitalizes on the dubious status (as sovereign states) of Afghanistan, Diego Garcia, Guantanamo Bay, Iraq and aircraft carriers to avoid certain questions about rough interrogations."[17] Such cases caution against an easy dismissal of human rights as a useful framework for ethical and political action. A perspective that points to the violations of human rights in

cases such as the post-9/11 detentions, and in analyses of civilian casualties and human rights violations caused by U.S. military actions, can provide important moments of contestation of the state appropriation of the rhetoric of human rights. The theoretical approach of analyzing state power as a series of practices contains within it the potential for such contestation. As Migdal has noted, "Through their practices, states lay claim to the collective consciousness of their population. Institutions *and* symbols have been at the core of the continuing reinvention of society. But, tremendous contestation prevails over who—the state as a whole, parts of the state, other social organizations—defines and taps into collective consciousness in society" (38). I argue that a feminist attempt at reinventing this sense of collective consciousness must simultaneously analyze the discursive politics of the representation of human rights and advocate for a human rights approach that is not constrained by the interests of the United States, given its dominance as a global power.

Such an approach poses more subtle challenges for feminists and for how the boundaries of feminist agendas are drawn. For instance, potential human rights abuses I have described involve individuals in groups such as the Taliban, whose agendas are fundamentally antithetical to feminist concerns with human rights. Such representational and political dynamics of the war on terrorism may now challenge feminists to work with human rights frameworks that include male victims as a central focus rather than taking women as an exclusive focus of analysis. Such an analysis is particularly critical given the role of women in human rights abuses such as the abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners. It is not enough to suggest that they were following orders from larger patriarchal structures. These events have demonstrated that feminists need more than ever to take account of the fact that women can abuse human rights and can participate in the sexual abuse of men. In other words, the category of woman is not simply a construction; it is a construction mediated by state power. An intersectional analysis of the politics of state power and human rights calls for a focus that addresses both how the intersections of race, gender, and the state shape women's lives and the construction of racialized masculinity. As I have argued this, construction of racialized masculinity is a central strategy of U.S. state power in the war on terrorism, one that has broad and critical implications for both men and women at an international level.

I have used a feminist analysis of the intersections of race, gender, and the nation to explore some of the implications that the current U.S. war on terrorism has for both feminism and human rights. In particular, I have sought to examine what I have called the representational practices of the U.S. state. In this endeavor, I have focused on an understanding of the politics of representation as a set of state practices. As I have argued, a critical dimension of contemporary U.S. state power lies in its attempt to engage in a series of boundary projects, demarcating the lines of what counts as "civil society," "civilian space," and "terror." Understanding such representational practices as a dimension of state interven-

tion is particularly critical given the ways in which dominant media images in the United States have increasingly been interwoven into state and nationalist agendas. Perhaps the most vivid instance of this process was captured in the use of "embedded" journalists in the military campaign against Iraq. If the U.S. construction of the war in Afghanistan led to a form of "war without witnesses" (Herrold), this process of embedding explicitly represented the war through the eyes of the state. In this context, feminist strategies that draw on a human rights framework are compelled to address how universal languages of human rights are bounded through the territorialized interests of the nation-state.

NOTES

1. Such discourses also exist, as they always have, with long histories of women's activism in a variety of forms ranging from women's resistance in Afghanistan to Taliban rule, resistance that long predated the current U.S. military campaign, to local women's peace campaigns that provide nonviolent alternatives to social change in a range of regional and national contexts.
2. There are, of course, historical continuities with earlier forms of U.S. state formation as well as the shifts in the post-9/11 period, which is my main focus of analysis. For a useful discussion of such continuities and discontinuities, see Steinmetz.
3. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.
4. See, for example, Steinmetz; Ferguson; and Gonzalez et al. For the purposes of this essay, I will focus more on questions of state power rather than engaging with this debate on the nature of hegemony and empire.
5. For instance, consider the association between World War II and the more recent intervention in the Balkans.
6. Transcript of President Bush's address to the U.N. General Assembly, http://cnn.com/2003/U.S./09/23/sprj.irq.bush.transcript/index.html, September 23, 2003, p. 2.
7. I elaborate on this argument in greater depth in "Class, Space, and the State in India."
8. The actual extent of such nation-building is, of course, debatable given the relative lack of resources the United States has actually invested in reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq. See Ignatieff.
9. This is also a central element of the official U.S. definition of terrorism.
10. See, for example, "U.S. Troops Smash into Homes, Shops in Raid for Guerrillas," *Dodge City Daily Globe*, December 18, 2003.
11. See Bradley and Petro for a discussion of other cases in which states have appropriated the language of human rights.
12. I explore some of the regional dimensions of contemporary empire in "Class, Space, and the State in India."
13. Human Rights Watch.
14. The number is an estimate in the report, as there is no official or public data on the number of detentions, arrests, and interrogations. The report is based on extensive interviews with current and former detainees and their lawyers.
15. "Anti-Terror Laws Increasingly Used against Common Criminals," http://cnn.com/2003/LAW/09/14/anti.terror.laws.ap/index.html.

16. Note that a U.S. Department of Justice Report, issued by the Office of the Inspector General, has confirmed 9/11 detainee abuses and has confirmed findings of the Human Rights Watch report I have been discussing. See http://hrw.org/press/2003/03/us031203.htm.
17. "We Have Ways of Making You Talk," August 27, 2003. http://www.msnbc.com/news.

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