

# More bang for your buck: Nuclear weapons and their enactment of colonial and gendered power

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## Abstract

Analysing the nuclear weapons regime through both postcolonial and feminist frameworks demonstrates that the possession of nuclear weapons has incredibly important implications for the security agenda. While both postcolonial and feminist scholars have delved into the relationships between their respective disciplines and the dynamics of the nuclear weapons regime, gaps in the scholarship ensure that postcolonial feminist critiques of the regime are lacking. This article endeavours to combine postcolonial and feminist critiques to demonstrate how the nuclear weapons regime is underpinned by pertinent gendered and colonial assumptions. These assumptions ensure that certain states are prioritised over others; namely, the behaviour of nuclear weapons states is considered more legitimate than that of 'rogue states', their desire for nuclear weapons hinged upon racial, colonial and gendered assumptions of legitimacy. Closely analysing the gendered and colonial dynamics of the nuclear weapons regime sheds light upon how patriarchy and imperialism have shaped the security agenda in regard to nuclear weapons.

Security matters in the way that it demonstrates the political world order and its power structures. Dominant security discourses are demonstrative of whose voices are taken seriously and whose issues are deemed most important in international politics. By examining nuclear weapons through a postcolonial feminist framework, one can shed light on these dominant narratives as colonial and gendered constructions of power. Starting with postcolonial arguments, this article will demonstrate how the nuclear weapons regime has been manipulated by powerful states, benefiting their interests while overlooking those of seemingly 'lesser states'. This colonial domination of nuclear weapons has significant implications for the wider security field as, arguably, the possession of nuclear weapons remains a prerequisite for superpower status. Following on from this, feminist arguments explored in this article will highlight the gendered link between nuclear weapons and global patriarchy. In regards to security, highly gendered discourses work to feminise 'Third World'

possession of nuclear weapons in order to cement the masculine and patriarchal domination nuclear weapons states have within the security agenda. Finally, the last section of this article will demonstrate the links between the colonisation and feminisation of ‘Third World’ nations, as well as ‘rogue states’, within the security agenda.<sup>1</sup> Through looking at the colonial and gendered implications of superpower domination within the nuclear weapons regime, this article will demonstrate that security, as a field, matters greatly due to the ways in which it articulates global power structures and the way this impacts on what we prioritise as security issues.

## Postcolonial analysis of the nuclear weapons regime

Discursive colonisation, as coined by Chandra Mohanty, works to marginalise non-nuclear weapons states in international relations.<sup>2</sup> By examining the colonial dynamics of the nuclear weapons regime, this article will highlight the undeniable connections between colonial desires and the possession of nuclear weapons. This relationship will be discussed in regards to the North–South divide and the opposition to ‘Third World’ weapons in both political and racialised capacities. Despite there being a clear discourse of Western colonisation of the ‘Third World’, this article will also highlight colonial relationships between particular ‘Third World’ nations, namely India and Pakistan. The domination of nuclear weapons states within the global security realm has ensured that questions of colonisation remain pertinent.

Dominant postcolonial arguments surrounding nuclear weapons consider their creation and the ensuing regime as an historic example of colonisation at work. Initially developed in order to gain military pre-eminence, nuclear weapons became a tool for dominating international relations.<sup>3</sup> The bipolar race between the US and the USSR to build weapons sparked attempts to obtain weapons by others. The development of nuclear weapons defined the Cold War, yet the *Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT) only recognises those states who detonated weapons before 1 January 1970, decades before the conclusion of this conflict.<sup>4</sup> Many postcolonialists would argue that this was a strategic move on the part of the existing nuclear weapons states in order to maintain nuclear exclusivity while maintaining an ability to monitor non-nuclear weapons states’ adherence to ‘safeguards ... [which] shall be applied

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1 Terms such as ‘Third World’ and ‘rogue state’ will be used within apostrophes throughout this article in order to demonstrate the problematic assumptions that underpin such terminology.

2 Chandra T. Mohanty (1988), ‘Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses’, *Feminist Review*, 30, pp. 61–62.

3 Shampa Biswas (2001), “‘Nuclear Apartheid’ as Political Position: Race as a Postcolonial Resource?”, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 26(4), p. 493.

4 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (1970), *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)*, London: IAEA, p. 4.

on *all* source or fissile material'.<sup>5</sup> To this day, India's nuclear policy rests on the premise that the existing nuclear weapons regime is designed to restrict seemingly 'Third World' states from developing weapons, or even peaceful capabilities.<sup>6</sup> The application of safeguards upon these countries ensures the 'Depository Governments', namely the US, USSR and UK, are responsible for leading the enforcement of the NPT.<sup>7</sup> The partial test-ban treaty, as well as the comprehensive test-ban treaty, are considered policy-based restrictions on nuclear proliferation as they work to further criminalise the development of nuclear capabilities. While the P5—the five recognised nuclear weapons states and, not coincidentally, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—consider these measures to be safeguards against the unauthorised development of nuclear weapons, many acknowledge these policies as colonial restrictions on 'lesser' states in an effort to retain power.<sup>8</sup> While one may attempt to refute that these policies have exclusively colonial aims, there is no denying the international influence and political power utilised by those currently considered legitimate nuclear weapons states. In comparison, those states attempting to obtain nuclear weapons outside of the parameters of the NPT are considered 'rogue'; dangerous states dictated by passion and irrationality, the antithesis of the rational, security-centric and level-headed nuclear weapons states.

Non-nuclear weapons states remain one of the security agenda's largest proliferation concerns, though these concerns are often grounded in colonial sentiments. The concept of horizontal proliferation (the proliferation of nuclear materials and information between states) has become dominant in security discourses surrounding nuclear weapons.<sup>9</sup> While vertical proliferation (the building up of existing arsenals, seems problematic) preventing horizontal proliferation remains of paramount importance to the current security agenda.<sup>10</sup> In particular, there is a concern with 'rogue states' who attempt to obtain weapons by way of horizontal proliferation. These 'rogue states' are presented by the nuclear weapons regime as irrational, dangerous and often in alliance with non-state actors such as terrorist groups. 'Rogue states', and their 'ancient hatred and religious fanaticism', are consequently presented as the antithesis to the rational, patriarchal and population-centric pursuit of security by nuclear weapons states.<sup>11</sup> This concern with horizontal proliferation between non-nuclear weapons states is reflective of the colonial desire to maintain nuclear exclusivity amongst world powers by ensuring they do not spread. Demonstrating this dynamic, the US presents its pursuit of non-proliferation in

5 IAEA, *NPT*, p. 2.

6 Biswas, 'Nuclear Apartheid', p. 495.

7 IAEA, *NPT*, p. 4.

8 Hugh Gusterson (1999), 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other in the Western Imagination', *Cultural Anthropology*, 14(1), p. 129.

9 Erik Gartzke & Matthew Kroenig (2013), 'Nuclear Posture, Nonproliferation Policy, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 20(10), p. 1.

10 Gartzke & Kroenig, 'Nuclear Posture', p. 2.

11 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 123.

terms of a duty to global peace due to its superpower status.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, India's pursuit of nuclear weapons has been closely monitored by the US who express strong concerns about the 'political and technological maturity', of India and their ability to possess nuclear weapons safely.<sup>13</sup> Further, arguments continue to undermine the so-called 'Third World' as the current nuclear weapons regime questions the economic capacity of non-nuclear weapons states, along with their intentions, stability and trustworthiness.<sup>14</sup> While the possession and proliferation of nuclear weapons is accepted within the five nuclear weapons states, the 'Third World' is deemed incapable: 'People who cannot read, write or feed their children are forgetting these lamentable circumstances in the ghastly glory of being able to burn the planet or their enemies to a crisp.'<sup>15</sup> Concerns associated with horizontal proliferation highlight the colonial way nuclear weapons states, such as the US, attempt to maintain exclusivity within the 'Nuclear Weapons Club', by deeming the 'Third World' pursuit of nuclear weapons as illegal and highly problematic for the security agenda.

To further the aforementioned point, there is a highly racialised discourse surrounding horizontal proliferation, working to discursively colonise non-nuclear weapons states. Emerging early on in the Cold War, there developed a sentiment that 'wars of the future will most likely be "tribal conflicts" between neighbouring Third World countries'.<sup>16</sup> With the development of nuclear weapons, this sentiment remained pertinent as it dictated how security practitioners viewed the nuclear regime and who should, or should not, have access to nuclear technology. Many argue that from this there emerged a 'nuclear orientalism', whereby discourse specified 'us' and 'them'.<sup>17</sup> This nuclear orientalism defined this distinction as follows: 'where "we" are rational and disciplined, "they" are impulsive and emotional; where "we" are modern and flexible, "they" are slaves to ancient passions and routines; where "we" are honest and compassionate, "they" are treacherous and uncultivated'.<sup>18</sup> This notion is defined in highly racialised terms, heavily reliant on the colonial view of 'Third World' countries and reminiscent of nineteenth-century imperialism. The Cold War security agenda was defined by this colonial tendency to make racialised assumptions about 'Third World' countries and the dangers they posed. This undermined 'Third World' standing in international politics as well as delegitimising these countries' claims to nuclear weapons development as this process was now considered a threat to global security, rather than an enactment of security.

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12 Derek D. Smith (2006), *Deterring America: Rogue States and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 6.

13 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 121.

14 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 116.

15 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 131.

16 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 111.

17 Hugh Gusterson (2006), 'A Double Standard on Nuclear Weapons?', *MIT Center for International Studies Audit of the Conventional Wisdom*, 6(8), p. 2. (1–5).

18 Gusterson, 'Double Standard on Nuclear Weapons', p. 2.

While nuclear orientalism emerged at the height of the Cold War, this racialised ‘us’ and ‘them’ is still prevalent today. Bush’s justification for invading Iraq in 2003 was based upon suspicions that ‘unbalanced dictators’ and ‘unstable or revolutionary regimes’ possessed ‘weapons of mass destruction’ and intended on ‘deliver[ing] those weapons ... or secretly provid[ing] them to terrorist allies’.<sup>19</sup> Today, talking in terms of terrorist affiliations relies heavily on racialised stereotypes created by the West to distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Justifications for non-proliferation rely heavily on racialised notions that ‘Third World’ states are unpredictable and religiously fanatical.<sup>20</sup> The UK White Paper on Trident, published in 2007, justifies England’s nuclear posture by referring to ‘weak and failing states ... [which] offer safe havens for international terrorists’.<sup>21</sup> In this example, the UK is utilising public fear of the ‘other’ to create support for their nuclear weapons regime, drawing up racialised stereotypes in their official reports.<sup>22</sup> Those states that attempt to obtain weapons outside of the NPT are frequently referred to in highly racialised terms in order to reiterate their ‘devious nature’.<sup>23</sup> This deviousness is juxtaposed with Western nuclear security in a bid to highlight the illegitimacy of ‘rogue states’. The racialised stereotyping of these states as ‘failing’, and having ‘terrorist allies’, works to undermine their standing and cement the P5’s position at the head of international politics.<sup>24</sup> This racialised ‘othering’ is utilised throughout the Western security agenda, but has also permeated into the discourses of these so-called ‘rogue states’.

In addition to Western discourse, nuclear dynamics between India and Pakistan highlight the extent to which colonised narratives permeate within this regime. In India’s articulations of their nuclear posture and justifications for nuclear development, clear colonial dynamics are brought to the fore. India has often considered their possession of nuclear weapons as on behalf of the remaining ‘Third World’, removing any need for others to possess them.<sup>25</sup> While this can be viewed as an enactment of the aforementioned challenge to the exclusivity of nuclear weapons, India does not agree with allowing other marginalised and excluded states to participate in the nuclear ‘club’.<sup>26</sup> In this way, India is enacting a colonial dominance of their own. An example of this colonial desire to dominate the rest of the ‘Third World’, India’s discourse on the access by Pakistan of nuclear weapons is highly patronising and evocative of a colonial mentality.<sup>27</sup> Scholars who explore the

19 Smith, *Deterring America*, pp. 3–4.

20 Gusterson, ‘Nuclear Weapons and the Other’, p. 123.

21 Claire Duncanson & Catherine Eschle (2008), ‘Gender and the Nuclear Weapons State: A Feminist Critique of the UK Government’s White Paper on Trident’, *New Political Science*, 30(4), p. 555.

22 Duncanson & Eschle, ‘Gender and the Nuclear Weapons State’, p. 554.

23 Biswas, ‘Nuclear Apartheid’, p. 495.

24 Duncanson & Eschle, ‘Gender and the Nuclear Weapons State’, p. 555.

25 Karsten Frey (2006), *India’s Nuclear Bomb and National Security*, (Oxon: Routledge), p. 144.

26 Frey, *India’s Nuclear Bomb*, p. 144.

27 Runa Das (2010), ‘Colonial Legacies, Post-Colonial (In)Securities, and Gender(ed) Representations in South Asia’s Nuclear Policies’, *Social Identities*, 16(6), pp. 719–20.

dynamics of Indian and Pakistani nuclear politics have rooted its development in the turbulent national histories of the two states. As a result of the 1947 division of British India into India and Pakistan, highly imperial and colonial motives define their race for nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> India has explicitly justified their development of the bomb with a 'need to be armed and equipped ... so that they [Pakistan] learn to respect us'.<sup>29</sup> This desire to be acknowledged as the dominant and superior power dictates Indian nuclear development. Similarly, Pakistani nuclear policy is rooted in their perception that India challenged their status as a nation through the detonation of their first nuclear weapon: 'If you remember, India detonated the bomb first ... they challenged us ... Our security, peace, and stability was gravely threatened.'<sup>30</sup> Clearly, the tension between these two nations is grounded in historic notions of colonial superiority. In regards to the wider security agenda, this specific relationship is demonstrative of how important nuclear weapons remain in regards to international standing. The issues of nuclear weapons states are perceived as far more pressing than those outside of the 'club', increasing the incentive for admission.

## Feminist perspectives on the development of nuclear weapons and the ensuing regime

In a highly gendered world, there is no surprise that security discourse, specifically within the nuclear weapons regime, is also gendered. Masculine and patriarchal language does a lot of work within the nuclear weapons regime and feminising those outside of it. The feminist critique of nuclear weapons within this article will begin with Carol Cohn's work before exploring various other avenues of research. Despite being published in 1987 amidst a dramatically different security environment, Carol Cohn's work remains pertinent. Questions of patriarchy and feminisation on a world stage will also be discussed, along with an exploration of the highly gendered relationship between India and Pakistan. What will become clear is that notions of gender and the nuclear weapons regime cannot be separated.

Nuclear weapons discourse is inherently gendered and sexualised, as has been explored at length in Carol Cohn's 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals'. As mentioned, this piece is dated in terms of when it was published, but remains an important reference point for feminists exploring security. What Cohn demonstrated in 'Sex and Death' is that there is a highly sexualised 'technostrategic' language that defence intellectuals employ to describe nuclear weapons.<sup>31</sup>

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28 S. Paul Kapur (2007), *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia*, (California: Stanford University Press), p. 3.

29 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 734.

30 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 727.

31 Carol Cohn (1987), 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 12(4), p. 690.

This sexualisation and gendering of nuclear weapons happens in a variety of ways, some more nuanced than others. Starting with the most obvious, Cohn quotes intellectuals as having talked in regard to ‘orgasmic whumps’, ‘getting more bang for your buck’, and the idea that one nation may be ‘a little harder than us’.<sup>32</sup> These phrases present inherently dominant forms of sexualisation, whereby sex is tied directly into the act of building arsenals and detonating weapons. To further this sexualisation of the bomb, French nuclear strategists began naming missile craters after women, as these sites were where their masculine bombs were ‘penetrating’ Mother Earth.<sup>33</sup> While seemingly graphic, this highlights the casual nature with which this technostrategic language is wielded. This casualness becomes highly problematic for security studies as the use of nuclear weapons becomes inherently sexualised, working to marginalise femininity on a world stage. Furthering this marginalisation of femininity in place of masculinity, Cohn discusses the gendered nature of deterrence. Mutually Assured Destruction (also known as MAD) and the deterrence policies that it encouraged is an inherently gendered process, whereby the apparently ‘feminine’ idea of engaging in diplomatic discussions and negotiations is seen as negative.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the highly masculine act of building up one’s arsenal in order to assure deterrence became the main objective of the Cold War. While this article has only briefly drawn on Cohn’s extensive work, there are clear and important links between gender and nuclear weapons to be drawn. The discursive sexualisation of nuclear weapons and their use has ensured that the nuclear weapons regime remains a bastion of patriarchal masculinity.

Through rhetorical constructions of nuclear weapons states as global ‘father figures’, nuclear weapons can be seen to be gendered in favour of patriarchal constructions of power. Nuclear weapons, especially in the hands of states such as the US, create a father–son dynamic that legitimises the actions of these states on a world stage.<sup>35</sup> Obsessed with the monitoring and prevention of horizontal proliferation, the US maintains that it is their role, as a patriarchal figurehead, to pursue global peace. This patriarchal responsibility has been used to justify the US’s interference in a number of regimes’ pursuit of weapons, while also creating the basis for Western opinions on ‘Third World’ nuclear weapons as a whole.<sup>36</sup> In the pursuit of nuclear capabilities by Iran, India, Pakistan and North Korea, the US and their fellow nuclear weapons states have expressed severe reservations under the guise of retaining global peace.<sup>37</sup> In regard to Iran, they maintain that their peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy is an ‘inalienable right’, therefore the US has no business interfering in their domestic

32 Cohn, ‘Sex and Death’, p. 693.

33 Cohn, ‘Sex and Death’, p. 694.

34 Cohn, ‘Sex and Death’, p. 697.

35 Cohn, ‘Sex and Death’, p. 697.

36 Gusterson, ‘Nuclear Weapons and the Other’, p. 115.

37 Author Unknown (2016), ‘The Rogue-State Nuclear Missile Threat’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 February 2016.

politics.<sup>38</sup> Often the development of peaceful nuclear power programs within the global South are perceived with suspicion by nuclear weapons states. The United States consider it within their 'fatherly' duty to discourage the development of nuclear capabilities, even those of a peaceful nature, for fear of weapons development. The patriarchal way in which the five nuclear weapons states dominate the security agenda in regard to these weapons is considered to be natural as 'younger countries simply could not be trusted to know what was good for them', therefore their 'parents need ... to set limits for their children'.<sup>39</sup> The legal wielding of nuclear weapons, as defined by the NPT, is seen to be a marker of a patriarchally dominant and responsible state. It is this patriarchal dynamic that allows nuclear weapons states to interfere in international politics, dictating whose nuclear weapons pose a threat and whose doesn't. By creating an inherently gendered relationship between those who have nuclear weapons, and those who don't, the security agenda along with wider power constructs are built upon highly patriarchal notions of whose opinions matter and whose do not.

The relationship between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states is a highly gendered one with the possession of nuclear weapons linked to virility and masculinity. In conjunction with the obviously phallic aesthetic utilised in bomb manufacturing, bombs can be gendered in the way that they metaphorically represent male virility.<sup>40</sup> The nuclear arms race was largely underpinned by a masculine desire to gain superiority over other states, often referred to as 'missile envy'.<sup>41</sup> In a more contemporary context, 'rogue states' have justified their pursuit of nuclear weapons in regard to this masculine potency. Referring to India's 'peaceful' nuclear test, Hindu nationalist politician Bal Thackeray said, 'We have to prove that we are not eunuchs'.<sup>42</sup> This particular statement is very direct in its representation of nuclear weapons as a symbol of male potency. India has furthered this idea of nuclear weapons being essential for masculine power through the expression of their annoyance at the US's interference in their nuclear weapons regime. They claim that the US would not stop until 'India ... has carried out a complete emasculation of its nuclear establishment'.<sup>43</sup> In this way, nuclear disarmament is paralleled strongly with emasculation. Emasculation is often equated with femininity, painting non-nuclear weapons states in an inherently feminine light. Adding to these gendered relations, states pursuing weapons, such as India, are considered to be irrational, emotional and passionate.<sup>44</sup> In terms of gender dynamics, these traits are seen as inherently feminine, especially in unfavourable comparison with the rational, potent

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38 Amin Saikal (2006), 'The Iran Nuclear Dispute', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60(2), p. 195.

39 Cohn, 'Sex and Death', p. 697.

40 Polina Sinovets (2014), 'Women and Weapons: Redressing the Gender Gap', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 70(5), p. 21.

41 Cohn, 'Sex and Death', p. 692.

42 Sinovets, 'Women and Weapons', p. 21.

43 Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p. 163.

44 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 130.



and security-centric West. It is clear that a lack of nuclear weapons is, on many levels, considered feminine. By linking nuclear weapons so closely with masculine potency, the security and nuclear weapons regimes become structured along similar lines. Nuclear weapons states remain at the head of these agendas, dictating power structures by virtue of masculine domination.

India's and Pakistan's nuclear rivalry is built upon gendered grounds and is justified in regard to protecting the 'nation and women'.<sup>45</sup> During the 1947 partition riots between India and Pakistan, a number of women were sexually assaulted in a violent and targeted manner. Due to the sanctity of women in both of these societies, this treatment of women was seen as the ultimate disrespect by both sides.<sup>46</sup> This conflict and the raping of women is still used as justification for both Pakistan's and India's nuclear posture. In this way, nuclear weapons become a tool for protecting women, rather than as an irrational and unnecessary military measure. Pakistan, while referring to its desire for nuclear weapons, discusses how 'blood is spilled to keep blood pure'.<sup>47</sup> This particular quote was used in reference to Pakistan protecting their women from unwarranted attention and sexual violence from India. To further the connection made between women and their nuclear posture, Pakistan consistently talks of 'the nation and women'.<sup>48</sup> Failing to separate the two attempts to provide rational justification for their nuclear weapons in the form of protecting their women. When questioned about their posture, they asked: 'Should we not uphold our tradition of protecting the dignity, honour, and security of our nation and women?'<sup>49</sup> Further referral to Pakistan as the 'motherland' works to cement the notions of protecting femininity and protecting the nation.<sup>50</sup> In response to these beliefs, India stated: 'We need to be armed and equipped with nuclear weapons so that they [Pakistan] learn to respect us, our sisters, and our nation.'<sup>51</sup> Both of these states, particularly in opposition of one another, adopt highly gendered narratives. This works to create an inseparable link between fulfilling masculine obligations to protect women and protecting the state. In this way, women are used as a justification for nuclear weapons leading to an inherent gendering of the regime and the power structures it produces.

45 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 727.

46 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 719.

47 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 725.

48 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 727.

49 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 727.

50 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 725.

51 Das, 'Colonial Legacies, (In)Securities & Gender(ed) Representations', p. 734.

## Nuclear weapons as an example of gendered colonisation

In various areas of postcolonial feminist scholarship, strong connections are made between security issues, such as international conflict, and gendered and colonial reflections of power. In particular, postcolonial feminists have discussed at length the strategic feminisation of colonised bodies, especially ‘Third World’ countries. In an example of this scholarship, Melanie Richter-Montpetit addresses the treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison, arguing that US torture of Iraqi detainees was a strategically gendered incident aimed at colonising the detainees through feminisation.<sup>52</sup> While various issues such as these have been discussed as examples of this ‘gendered colonisation’, literature in relation to nuclear weapons in this field is scarce. The final part of this article will therefore attempt to highlight the links between colonisation and gender in the nuclear weapons regime.

Masculine discourses of power surrounding nuclear weapons work to colonise lands and people. As mentioned, nuclear weapons states have often justified their interference in other states’ politics due to a patriarchal need to enforce the non-proliferation agenda.<sup>53</sup> Furthering this, there is a highly masculinised discourse that accompanies nuclear weapons and their possession by nuclear weapons states. This was alluded to in the discussion of ‘emasculatation’ in regards to disarmament. The masculine rhetoric of nuclear weapons states works to discursively colonise states and people. By virtue of nuclear weapons representing state virility, those who possess them wield a masculinised colonial power over all others.<sup>54</sup> Due to the fact that imperial colonisation is no longer fashionable, the colonisation to which this article eludes comes in a variety of forms. One could attribute the P5’s domination of the UN Security Council as an example of political colonisation, whereby access to veto works as a colonising tool to pursue personal interests. This has significant implications for security as it is the interests of masculine states that define referent objects and issues of importance within the security agenda. Additionally, the association drawn between the masculinised and patriarchal considerations of nuclear weapons states as responsible, mature and rational works to cement colonised notions in global politics.<sup>55</sup> The simple existence and use of terms such as ‘Third World’ refers directly to this discursive colonisation, whereby masculine patriarchal states, such as the P5 are able to mould the language and considerations of the security agenda.<sup>56</sup> The feminised ‘Third World’ is considered

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52 Melanie Richter-Montpetit (2014), ‘Beyond the Erotics of Orientalism: Lawfare, Torture and the Racial-Sexual Grammars of Legitimate Suffering’, *Security Dialogue*, 45(1), pp. 43.

53 Smith, *Deterring America*, p. 6.

54 Sinovets, ‘Women and Weapons’, p. 21.

55 Cohn, ‘Sex and Death’, p. 697.

56 Mohanty, ‘Under Western Eyes’, p. 30.

in opposition to the masculine, rational, responsible and politically mature 'First World'. Putting emphasis on masculinised discourse in regard to nuclear weapons has assured the security agenda remains colonised by seemingly 'masculine' states.

The feminising of 'rogue states' in an enactment of colonial superiority is commonplace within the nuclear weapons regime. Richter-Montpetit claims that the feminising nature of torture at Abu Ghraib was aimed at colonising the citizens of apparent 'rogue states'.<sup>57</sup> By using female interrogators to feminise Iraqi men, the US military enacted colonial and masculine authority over them.<sup>58</sup> Enactments of colonial power are therefore tied closely to notions of race and gender. Identifying the ways in which this example of torture is a form of masculinised colonisation, nuclear weapons can be seen to work in similar ways. This is particularly evident when one considers the feminised and racialised ways in which 'rogue states' are characterised. Attributing 'rogue states' with seemingly 'feminine' qualities such as having a 'yearning', 'longing', or 'passion' for nuclear weapons, works to delegitimise their interests in favour of the masculine nuclear weapons states.<sup>59</sup> 'Rogue states' are treated this way in an attempt to justify the colonially driven, 'strong male and adult hand of America'.<sup>60</sup> These apparent 'feminine' traits do extensive work to delegitimise the security concerns of these 'rogue states'. Their emphasis on certain security concerns are deemed irrational, or deceptive as they are considered to be fabricated in an attempt to justify nuclear weapons development. Many states deemed 'rogue' by the US identify Western power and US political interference as among their top security concerns.<sup>61</sup> While this is characteristic of a variety of states, especially those that have found themselves war-ravaged due to US intervention, or were previous subjects of imperial rule, such concerns are not given voice within the security agenda. Instead, concerns about the irrationality and volatility of apparent 'rogue states' come to the fore, often leading to Western intervention of some form.<sup>62</sup> The colonial way 'rogue states' are deemed feminine by the West has large implications for the power dynamics found within the security agenda. The feminisation of 'rogue states' ensures the domination of Western security concerns on a world stage.

The pursuit of non-proliferation by the US can be seen as an enactment of their patriarchal power, yet their inability to disarm highlights their colonial desires. Aforementioned was the notion that the US, and other nuclear weapons states, are involved heavily in the non-proliferation regime by virtue of a patriarchal obligation.

57 Richter-Montpetit, 'Beyond the Erotics of Orientalism', p. 43.

58 Melanie Richter-Montpetit (2007), 'Empire, Desire and Violence: A Queer Transnational Feminist Reading of the "Abuse" in Abu Ghraib and the Question of "Gender Equality"', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 9(1), p. 38.

59 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 130.

60 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 130.

61 Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent*, p. 2.

62 Gusterson, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Other', p. 115.

By encouraging states to comply with the NPT and its various proliferation prevention measures, the US can be seen to fulfil their role as a global father figure, providing guidance for less mature states. In conjunction with this, many non-nuclear weapons states have criticised the US for their involvement in the non-proliferation regime, irrespective of their possession of the world's largest nuclear arsenal.<sup>63</sup> Especially prevalent in the discourses of states such as India, the US's inability to disarm is considered highly hypocritical in light of their interference in 'rogue states'. One Indian reporter in *The Hindu* captured this sentiment:

No one has asked the US, which claims that it has worked tirelessly for global peace for the past 50 years or so, how many global resources were wasted in building the enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons, missiles, submarines, aircraft etc.<sup>64</sup>

This captures the discussed notion that the US's pursuit of non-proliferation as a 'father figure' has been seen to overshadow and conceal the fact that the US is yet to dramatically reduce their arms under Article VI of the NPT.<sup>65</sup> The retention of nuclear weapons by the US ensures they remain dominant on the world stage, able to colonise 'lesser' states through political and institutional manipulation. The fact that the US's colonial desires remain largely unchallenged by the international security agenda means that they are able to continue dominating this arena through patriarchal means.

By addressing how security highlights gendered and colonial dynamics within the nuclear weapons regime, this article has worked to problematise the current security agenda and the issues it deems important. Security matters in the way that it demonstrates the political world order, especially in regard to the patriarchal and colonial domination of nuclear weapons states over the wider regime. Masculinity and colonial power are given pre-eminence in the nuclear regime, and this carries through to the international security agenda. Additionally, the ostracising and feminising of 'rogue states' has ensured the interests of these states remain illegitimate while strengthening the power and influence of nuclear weapons states. Colonial and gendered relations between India and Pakistan demonstrate how these dynamics work outside of the Western world, reiterating the fact that patriarchal and colonial discourses remain pertinent to nuclear politics. While nuclear weapons states currently dictate what security issues are deemed legitimate and illegitimate, a postcolonial feminist framework complicates this power dynamic and poses the question: *whose* security matters?

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63 Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p. 144.

64 Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p. 157.

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