



The fate of nations is tied to the status of women. WomenStats makes this linkage visible and demonstrable.

Peace and the security of nations are powerfully linked with the equality of women, though the rare power broker – be he diplomat or military - acknowledges this.

Excerpt from “No Nukes, No Weapons, No Fists, No Violence Against Women”

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A team of researchers, including security studies experts and statisticians, has created the largest global database on the status of women, WomanStats (www.womanstats.org/), and compared the security and level of conflict within 175 countries to the overall security of women in those countries. Their findings are profoundly illuminating for global security and world peace.

The degree of equality of women within countries of the world predicts best – better than degree of democracy, better than level of wealth or ethno-religious identity - how peaceful or conflict-ridden their countries are.

Further, democracies with higher levels of violence against women are less stable and are more likely to choose force rather than diplomacy to resolve conflict.

Violence against women is an invisible foundation underlying local, national and international politics and security and “has a causal impact on intra and interstate conflict,” Womanstats researcher, Dr. Mary Caprioli, told me.

Conversely, responded her colleague Dr. Valerie Hudson, “increasing gender equality is expected to have cascading effects on security, stability and resilience” within a country.

What are the universal indicators that manifest the equality and inequality of women in a country, as compiled in WomanStats? On a personal level, they comprise the multifarious forms of violence against women, including sexual violence, sex trafficking and prostitution; genital mutilation; sex-selective abortion, female infanticide and neglect of girls because of son preference; and preventable maternal mortality.

Consider this staggering finding calculated by the creators of this comprehensive database. *More lives were lost in the 20th century through violence against women in all its forms than during all 20th century wars and civil strife.* Yet, while thousands of monuments throughout the United States honor those who gave their lives for their country in war, only one exists for women who lost their lives giving birth to the country's children.

Personal and family status law further adds to women's and girls' inequality and mortality when women cannot divorce or are impoverished by divorce and stay in stultifying and violent relationships and when girls are forced into child marriage through tradition and coercion. The major cause of death globally for teenage girls aged 15-19 is complications from pregnancy and childbirth.

Inheritance and property laws that deprive women of resources, (including land and other forms of wealth,) comparable to those inherited by their brothers and husbands ultimately impoverish women, a form of economic violence included in the WomenStats database.

Because women's reproduction and care for children and extended family are not compensated, women are cheated of savings, pension and Social Security. Consequently, *the greatest risk factor for being poor in old age is having been a mother.* Rampant discriminatory workplace policies that deny women equal pay for equal work and merited promotions are workplace and societal forms of legal and economic violence against women.

At the structural level of governance, the glaring absence of women in government and business as well as international bodies such as the UN at every echelon, particularly the highest, is another form of discriminatory violence that robs women of power and, consequently, the world of security. Currently 10 women hold the highest office in their country, a mere 5.6 percent against 94.4 percent male leaders.

What difference do women bring to issues of power and national security? Nearly 200 women in politics surveyed in 65 countries agreed, "women's presence in politics increases the amount of attention given to social welfare, legal protection, and transparency in government and business." Four-fifths of them expressed that women in government restore citizens' trust in government....

Please go to www.womenstats.org/ to explore this worldwide database, maps, and overview of the project that was started in 2001. This Database is the largest cross-national compilation of data on the status of women worldwide organized by country.