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Disentangling Gender, Peace and Democratization: The importance of militarized masculinity¹

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Abstract:

This article investigates, both theoretically and empirically, the relationships between democratization, gender equality and peace. We argue that there is a need to scrutinize both the level of democracy as well as the level of masculine hegemony in societies. Methodologically, we use a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses to support our argument. We employ regression analysis to show that the relationship between the extent of democracy and the representation of women in politics appears, at first glance, to be non-existent but turns out to be a curvilinear one. We also show that democracy can facilitate peace, but only in interaction with the level of political gender equality, so that more democratic societies are more peaceful only if there have been moves to gender equality. Our interpretation of these findings is illustrated by the contemporary politics of Thailand. Recent political violence in southern Thailand can be accounted for in the context of it being only partly democratized, where a culture of militarized masculinity persists alongside with, and even within, democratic institutions. Such a culture makes it both difficult for women to enter the political sphere, despite democratic elections, and fosters political violence.

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Introduction

On October 25 2004, 85 young Thai Muslims in Tak Bai, Southern Thailand died as a direct result of having participated in an anti-government protest. In the midst of Ramadan, military officers violently rounded up over 1000 demonstrators and packed hundreds of them into trucks for transport to an army camp a couple of hours away. When they arrived, 78 of the men had died from suffocation because the trucks were so heavily loaded and because the men were shackled and could not move. Another seven died from injuries resulting from beatings. None of the subsequent governments have brought any charges against the officers involved and in May 2009 the military forces were exonerated of responsibility

The violence-ridden Muslim South has become a contentious issue in Thai politics – and one that none of the many governments of past years have managed to handle peacefully, be they democratic or military-led. In this article we argue that the Tak Bai incident, the violence in the Thai Muslim South and conflicts more generally should be studied through a gendered lens to allow the complex underlying patterns to emerge. The context in terms of regime type also matters, but perhaps not in the way we had believed previously as there is no linear relationship between democracy, peace and gender equality. It seems instead that some political regimes leave more room for a militarized masculinity to influence the country's political development.

Democratic rule brings with it countless expectations. Some of these expectations are theoretically grounded whereas others are based on empirical experience. Taken together, these expectations of democracy create a tangled web, where it is difficult to distinguish one expectation from another, and where relationships are oversimplified. Two of the fundamental expectations of democracy include seeing it as a quick solution to the pervasive problem of

gender inequality and viewing it as a vital factor in reducing the likelihood of violent civil conflict. The introduction of a democratic political system brings with it the anticipation of gender equality (particularly in politics) and peace.

In this article we take a closer look at these assumptions and propose a way for disentangling the relationships between democratization, political gender equality and peace. We investigate this both theoretically and empirically and argue that the expectations of democracy are unrealistic and need to be more nuanced. To fully understand and explain political outcomes we need to pay more attention to the actual level of democracy as well as to the potential detrimental effects of political cultures dominated by masculinist norms.

Methodologically, we use a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses to support our argument. We employ regression analysis and report empirical findings that show that the relationship between the level of democracy and the political representation of women turns out to be a curvilinear one. We also show that democracy might facilitate peace but only in interaction with the level of political gender equality. This means that democratic societies are more peaceful only if they enjoy some minimum level of gender equality. Our interpretation of the relationships between gender, democratization and peace will be illustrated by contemporary politics in Thailand. We argue that the recent political violence in southern Thailand can be explained by the fact that Thailand is only partially democratized where a militarized masculinity persists alongside with, and even within, democratic institutions. Such a culture makes it both difficult for women to enter the political sphere, despite democratic elections, and foments political violence.

In the next section we discuss the theoretical links between democracy and gender equality on the one hand and those between democracy and peace on the other. We go on to discuss the importance of studying democracy as a continuous variable instead of as a dichotomy. We then show the empirical importance of this in relation to gender equality and

peace. Finally we tie these relationships together and show how we believe that our understanding of the links between gender equality, democratization and peace can be illustrated by a brief discussion of recent political violence in Thailand.

Expectations of democracy

The aspirations for democracy are high - it is expected to bring about a more equal and peaceful society.

Democracy and Political Gender Equality

It is true that democracy and equality are theoretically linked. Most definitions of democracy include equality as one of its main principles along with government by consensus (Beetham 1993). Philips (1991) argues that both democratic and feminist ideology place emphasis on equality as a tool to negate arbitrary power systems. It is therefore not surprising that democracy has been invested in as a quick and easy solution to political gender inequality (Clark and Lee 2000).

Empirical studies covering a large number of countries have supported this optimistic view of democratization and its immediate consequences (see for instance Inglehart *et al.* 2002). Inglehart and Norris (2003) have also indicated that the level of democratization is likely to be correlated with an increase in women's participation in politics through the introduction of civil liberties and institutionalized political recruitment procedures. Smaller n-studies have also produced similar results such as that by Foster (1993) who claims that while the pre-democratic rule in Africa effectively excluded women by relying on "old-boy networks", democracy renders new opportunities for women's entry into the political sphere (Foster 1993). Theoretically, it does seem plausible that representation would become more diverse with the opening up of the political space to previously excluded groups.

However, there are also many, more pessimistic, views of democracy's relationship to gender equality. Razavi (2000) claims that the latest democratization wave has had no feminizing impact on politics in new democracies. Yoon (2001) echoes this view with support from empirical findings from sub-Saharan Africa that show that democratization lowered, rather than increased, women's parliamentary representation. Studies of post-communist countries show a similar pattern (Jaquette and Wolchik 1999). These studies suggest that the pre-democratic representation of women as well as the informal participation of women's movements during the transition phase are rather poor predictors of women's subsequent formal representation in government (Jaquette and Wolchik 1999, Waylen 2003, 2007). Nor does democracy automatically bring about more gender-friendly policies (Htun 2003, Waylen 2003, 2007). The argument that is perhaps the most persuasive when it comes to showing that democracy is no panacea for political gender equality is that despite the significant democratic gains that have been made over the last century, more than 81 percentⁱ of the world's political representatives are still men.

Democracy and Civil Peace

Like democracy, peace is a concept that can be defined in different ways. Empirically we will be concerned with the most basic definition of peace, which is also the least difficult to measure, namely peace as the absence of war. This concept of peace is negative in the sense that it emphasizes the absence of the other phenomenon. In peace research, the qualifier 'negative' is therefore often inserted before the word 'peace' to refer specifically to peace in this sense. Thus, 'negative peace' refers to the absence of war. However, since the pioneering works of Quincy Wright (1942), peace researchers have stressed that it is fruitful to think of peace as something more than merely the absence of war. Wright defines peace as "the condition of a community in which order and justice prevail, internally among its members and externally in its relations with other communities" (1942, p.864), while he also notes that

“the positive aspect of peace – justice – cannot be separated from the negative aspects – elimination of violence” (1942, p.1305). Johan Galtung (1964,1969) later developed the distinction between negative and positive peace, putting particular emphasis on social justice as the additional requirement of positive peace. Clearly, a positive definition of peace must also include gender equality. For our purposes here however, the focus is on negative peace.

The relationship between democracy and civil peace is considerably more complex than might be expected. Studies on the causes of civil conflict typically suggest a curvilinear relationship between the level of institutional democracy and the risk of conflict in the shape of an inverted U, so the danger of civil war is at its greatest in semi-democracies. The most common theoretical interpretation of this relationship is that democracies provide greater opportunity for peaceful persuasion, while autocracies, where there will be greater incentives to rebel and less opportunity for peaceful influence, exercise effective control which represses rebellion. Regimes with inconsistent political institutions (mixtures of democratic and autocratic) tend to be less stable and more prone to civil conflict (Gates *et al.* 2001, Przeworski *et al.* 2000). In these states we typically find stronger incentives for rebellion and fewer opportunities to influence policy than is found in democracies, while there is less effective control and repression than in autocracies (Hegre *et al.* 2001). Whereas political participation is often high in semi-democracies these societies tend to lack strong institutions, such as political parties committed to the democratic process, and a free media, that can channel participation (Huntington 1968, Gurr 1993, van Evera 1994, Snyder 2000).

Political Gender Equality and Civil Peace

In addition to arguments and findings regarding the association between democracy and gender equality, and between democracy and peace, there are two other perspectives that suggest measures of gender equality to be associated with less collective violence, thus complicating the nexus of democracy, gender equality and peace even further. Basically, more

equitable societies may be more peaceful because women have a say over matters of war and peace in such societies, and women are believed to be more averse to war than men. Alternatively, more equitable societies may be more peaceful because the norms of inviolability and respect that define equal relations between women and men are universalized – for example with regard to ethnic minorities or political opponents. The first explanation is based on the assumption that female aversion to violence is innate and is therefore referred to as the essentialist argument. The second argument emphasizes that gender roles and their accompanying attitudes are socially constructed and is referred to as the constructivist argument. These two explanations are not mutually contradictory and each may account for part of any relationship that is observed between gender equality and peace. Never-the-less, scholars in the field generally find the constructivist explanation more compelling. Indeed, a strong and recurrent viewpoint prevails that boys and men are more or less overtly prepared for the potential function of warrior, whereas women are predisposed to the roles of caring and nursing. These gender roles glorify and reinforce militarism and legitimize the subordination of women. Boys and men are made aware that acting tough is the test of manhood, and those who fail to measure up will be shamed by both sexes in terms that imply demotion to the lowly standing of girls and women. Femininity is a subordinated contrast category and defined in terms of submission and empathy. In this context, girls and women assume the role of the audience in front of whom the men must prove themselves. They provide material and emotional support for men and shame and ridicule those deemed unmanly.

This type of militarized masculinity is consistent with chauvinism and oppressive behavior towards other groups besides women such as homosexuals, ethnic minorities and political opponents. Moreover, when militarized masculinity is strongly present it is likely that violence is viewed as an acceptable means of imposing and maintaining domination. The

more widespread and pervasive militarized masculinity is, the more likely it is that conflict will be dealt with violently (Pin-Fat and Stern 1992, 2004, 2005, Enloe 1993, Gibson 1994, Gill 1997, Kimmel 1997, Fone 2000, Hooper 2000, Caprioli 2000, 2005, Goldstein 2001, Tickner 2001, Micheler 2002, Kimmel and Mahler 2003, Melander 2005a, 2005b)ⁱⁱ.

Democracy and its different levels

The relationships between democracy and gender equality, democracy and peace, and gender equality and peace, are complex, and expectations often in conflict. One problem with the above theoretical discussion is that the demands put on democracy depend on the theoretical definition of this concept. Feminist researchers have directed some heavy blows to democratic theory, that challenge the way we view democracy and democratization. Pateman (1989, p210) and other feminist scholars (such as Grugel 2002) have claimed that *all* liberal democracies of today are systematically undemocratic because they treat women as inferior to men. Such high demands on fulfilling the equality principle at every societal level might be a theoretically useful stance, but it renders us unable to analyze the empirical differences that do exist between the political systems of today and the patterns of equality shown, as by these standards, all existing societies would be considered non-democratic. When democratization is defined, we can begin to investigate how it interacts with other societal processes and disentangle this further. For our purposes, then, it is more useful to use a purely procedural definition of democracy as a political system that guarantees a number of fundamental electoral and associational rightsⁱⁱⁱ (Dahl 1989) that ensure people's participation in, and influence over, the political process. A political system fulfilling such basic democratic criteria might or might not evolve into a system that, for instance, better represents marginalized groups. So-called qualitative criteria of democracy can also be assessed, but the main point here is that they should not be confused with the basic criteria (O'Donnell 1994, Hadenius and Teorell 2005). In our view, increased participation by different social groups,

including women, should be assessed as a qualitative aspect of democracy, as should decreased levels of violent conflict. From a methodological viewpoint, it is also necessary to make this distinction clear. Without this distinction – if gender equality or peace is part and parcel of the definition of democracy - it is impossible to map out the relationship between democracy on the one hand and gender equality and peace on the other.

The data on political institutions that best match these theoretical demands is Polity IV. The combined Polity Index measures autocratic as well as democratic characteristics. The democratic characteristics focus on basic criteria such as existing institutions and procedures, constraints on the executive and basic civil liberties. They leave aside rule of law, freedom of the press, equality of representation etc. (Marshall and Jaggers 2002). Another advantage of this measurement of democracy is that it ranges from -10 (most autocratic) to +10 (most democratic) and so is continuous, rather than dichotomous.

We tend to view ‘democracy’ both in dichotomous and continuous terms, but as Hadenius and Teorell (2005) argue, dichotomous measurements imply a loss of information. Democratization is a process that takes place in stages, and when comparing regimes around the world, the level of democracy should be taken into account. In particular, we expect the strength of democratic institutions to differ at different levels of the democracy scale, and we expect this to impact on the range of representation, as well as on conflict levels. As Hadenius and Bäck (2008) note, advanced democracies often have well-institutionalized organs for steering, implementation and control from above, and they also have open channels for participation from below. Autocracies also sometimes have strong institutions and well-functioning bureaucratic apparatuses that work from above but participation from below is generally severely restricted (Herb 1999, Bellin 2004). Semi-democracies tend to have a lower administrative capacity. During relative liberalization, institutions are in question and in constant flux as the political sphere is opened up to new agents. Control from above is

rendered more difficult than in either autocratic systems or in democratic systems (Bäck and Hadenius 2008). Where formal institutions are ineffective, ample room is left for substitutive or competing informal institutions that impact on policy (Helmke and Levitsky 2004). It seems reasonable to assume, as others have done, that formal political institutions are the strongest in autocracies and democracies, and considerably weaker, or even in constant flux, in semi-democracies. This implies that it is easier to implement policies in autocracies and democracies than it is in semi-democracies. Equal opportunity measures, such as gender quotas or appointments, are more easily implemented in autocracies or democracies where power is invested in strong individuals or institutions. In semi-democracies, weak institutions facilitate the influence of already established informal networks. With the restrictions on the right of association that exist in autocratic states, it will take time for women's movements to mobilize. The existing networks will be of greater importance, and it seems safe to assume that these will be predominantly male, for instance through the military or business associations.

In other words, where formal political institutions falter or are inefficient, space opens up for informal institutions to affect political outcomes more strongly. Helmke and Levitsky (2004, p.725) forcefully argue that comparative politics need to take informal institutions into account. In their opinion "many 'rules of the game' that structure political life are *informal*—created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels". Informal institutions, they argue, coexist and interact with formal political institutions. When formal institutions are ineffective, informal institutions can become either substitutive (if their aims largely converge with formal institutions) or competing (if they are incompatible) (Helmke and Levitsky 2004). In the next section, we will discuss the impact of such informal rules and what they might mean for political gender equality and the representation of women.

Representation of women and what it means

When investigating political gender equality, we have two main concerns. The first is that we do not wish to equate political gender equality with studying women in politics. The second is that we seek to measure political gender equality in order to compare this between countries. Ironically, these two concerns are somewhat at odds with one another.

The measurement that is most often used to measure political gender equality is the percentage of women in parliament in a given country. This is a rather crude measurement and its empirical value can be questioned. For one, we may not know to what extent parliament is actually effective, or whether representation is mere tokenism. Second, with this measurement follows a focus on women as agents of change, and the fact that gender equality is about men and women and about structures enabling or constraining women from entering the political sphere as well as about the structures enabling or constraining men from maintaining male dominance in the political landscape is easily ignored. To what extent the numbers of women in politics translates into substantive representation, or to what extent male networks function to effectively exclude the political participation of women, is very difficult to measure statistically. It might be argued that the representation of women signifies something else, that it is, indeed, a measurement of the strength of the parliamentary domination of men. In this case, the percentage of men in parliament can serve as an indicator for describing how masculine culture dominates political parties, making it difficult for women to become candidates or to successfully launch their own political campaign. Studies of nomination procedures, for instance, have pointed out that it seems likely that women run a greater risk of being discriminated against in political parties where nomination procedures are informal and patronage-based compared to when they are formal and bureaucratic (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). To reiterate, we argue that such informal institutions probably have more influence in semi-democratic political contexts where formal institutions are weaker and

political parties are less institutionalized. Thus, the political sphere in semi-democratic settings runs a greater risk of being influenced by informal male-dominated political practices such as military masculinity, which will, indirectly, lead to a lower number of women in politics. Since it is impossible to measure the influence of informal male networks on a large scale, our operationalization of this is the proportion of men in parliament.

Democracy and male dominance as a curvilinear process

At first glance, the research seems to confirm the confusion regarding democracy and its covariation with the numerical dominance of parliament by men. With a Pearson's R of $-0,172$, we see that, to a certain extent, high levels of democracy are associated with election results that produce slightly less men in parliament. On the other hand, such a weak correlation does not tell us much about this relationship, other than that it needs to be further scrutinized. A bivariate OLS regression analysis tells us that, in general, an election held in country A, which lies one step above country B on the democracy scale, will produce 0.2 percentage units less men in parliament than will an election in country B. The difference between an entirely autocratic country and an entirely democratic one is approximately 5 percentage units in this model.

Although it has often been argued that this relationship is due to the fact that socialist countries rank low on the democracy scale but usually have a relatively high proportion of women in parliament, such arguments have not been taken into account. Instead of being viewed as anomalies, we argue that elections in such countries should be incorporated into the theoretical evaluation of political systems to help us better understand the relationship between democratization and political gender equality.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

As Table 1 shows, the weak relationship between increased democracy and decreased male dominance is not significant, when looking at regions of the world separately. The only significant relationship is found in Asia, but there it goes in the opposite direction: the more democratic a state, the more male dominance is found.

Regression diagnostics reveal that the relationship in question is complex and that methods that assume linearity will conceal the true relationship. There is a relationship between democratization and political gender equality, but it is far from a linear one. Instead, the relationship between democracy and the proportion of women in parliament is fairly close to being perfectly curvilinear.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

When looking at a scatter plot of the relationship between the democracy variable (x) and the percentage of seats in parliament held by men (y) we identify a curvilinear relationship that regular OLS regression cannot cope with (since one of its assumptions is linearity). This plot suggests a clear U-shaped relationship: when democratization takes place at lower levels of the democracy scale, the numbers of men in parliament increases, rather than decreases. At a certain level, however, democratization starts to be conducive to the participation of women.

In order to establish how the descriptive association between the level of democracy and the gendered outcome of an election looks, two separate analyses have been made here. The bivariate model I in Table 2 indicates that for a one unit increase in democracy, the percentage of men in parliament will decrease by 0.2 percentage units. In the second trivariate model, we have induced linearity by performing a polynomial (squared) function on the democracy measurement. Together, the democracy measure and the squared democracy measure can capture a curvilinear relationship. This measurement *is* significant and the R square is somewhat larger in the second model. Even more importantly, the linear function of

democracy is rendered completely insignificant and is so close to 0 that the results look exactly the same whether or not it is included in the model. The best description for the worldwide relationship between democracy levels and the representation of women in politics after an election seems to be curvilinear in the shape of an upside-down U which is symmetric around the middle of the democracy scale.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

In order to interpret curvilinear relationships however, we need to calculate predicted values. It is illuminating to see the different substantial impact of democracy, as estimated by the equation comprising the squared term, compared to the first equation with the linear democracy term.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

The expected values presented in Table 3 prove the point. If the democracy scale is divided in three parts, we see that at the lower end of the scale more democratic elections actually produce a higher male dominance than do the most undemocratic elections. At the middle level of the scale, more or less democratic elections produce approximately similar compositions of parliament. It is not until the high end of the scale that very democratic elections are empirically associated with a decrease in male dominance of parliament, compared to less democratic elections.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Descriptively, as Table 4 shows, this curvilinearity implies that semi-democratic countries have the highest male dominance in their parliaments – higher than the most autocratic countries. Whereas the maximum value is total male dominance in all three regimes, the minimum value varies somewhat. Rwanda, being a semi-democracy with an almost equal

distribution of gender in parliament, makes the minimum for the semi-democratic group lower than what is expected. With a look at the scatter plot it is also easy to identify Rwanda as a typical outlier that does not fit the overall pattern. Without Rwanda, the lowest score in this group is 77.8, considerably higher than the lowest male dominance in the autocracy group, at 63.1 (Guyana). Similar interpretations can be made from the mean. Although autocracies in general have a slightly higher mean percentage of men in parliament than democracies, semi-democracies fare the worst, with a mean of 92.9% men in parliament.

This curvilinear pattern implies that, in some respects, all the above theories about democracy and representation were true but that they failed to acknowledge that it matters where on the democracy scale a state is found. Higher levels of democracy are associated with a higher representation of women, *but only at already high levels of democracy*. However, the curvilinear relationship also confirms the view of the democratic pessimists - autocratic elections produce a higher percentage of women than semi-democratic elections. This implies, as counter-intuitive as it might seem, that an initial liberalization of politics in general diminishes the inclusiveness of the political sphere with regards to gender.

Adding Civil War to the Equation

Previously we noted that in societies located around the middle of the democracy scale provide an environment more accepting of politicians who fit traditional notions of strength (through masculinity) than alternative leader figures, such as women. Another finding that becomes relevant here is that any type of regime that has undergone a recent major change in its political institutions faces a higher risk of civil war. Moreover, among semi-democracies, states with a larger dominance of men in parliament are more likely to be involved in intrastate armed conflict. This tendency (that less equitable societies are more beset by intrastate armed conflict and other forms of collective violence) is a widespread phenomenon

(Caprioli 2000, 2005, Melander 2005a, 2005b). As illustrated in the top half of Table 5 (below), less equitable societies are more involved in intrastate armed conflict than authoritarian states, and than full democracies. The entries in each cell report first the number of conflict years, i.e., the total number of years in which a country experienced intrastate armed conflict. For example, in the leftmost cell in the upper row, the conflict in Djibouti 1991-1994 contributes four of the 67 conflict years. The second number reported is the total number of country years with this particular combination of values on the democracy scale and the scale representing the percent men in parliament. For example, Spain in the years 1946-1970 contributes 25 country years to the total of 48 country years with the combination non-democracy and high male representation. The third number reported is the ratio of conflict years to all years. This number represents the average risk that a country of this type will experience intrastate armed conflict in a year.^{iv}

[INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

The relationship between gender inequality and civil conflict evident in Table 5 is not spurious. Instead it is borne out when controlling, e.g., for the level of democracy, as in Table 5 above, or for the level of economic development, as in the bottom half of Table 5.

These results have been shown to hold in multivariate regressions controlling for a host of possibly confounding factors. When multivariate regression techniques are used, an interaction between the levels of democracy and male dominance stands out. This interaction means that the pacifying effect of democracy is present only when the level of gender equality is relatively high, and vice versa, that gender equality requires a relatively high level of democracy to operate its pacifying effect.^v

The statistics give a convincing empirical picture, but in order to interpret the statistical results correctly we need to think closely about what these relationships signify. In our

models, semi-democracy signals weak political institutions. Weak political institutions, in turn, are more prone to allow a persistent masculinist influence, something which can be measured by the dominance of men in parliament. In as far as it “is an understatement to say that men, militarism, and the military are historically, profoundly, and blatantly interconnected” (Hearn 2003, p.xi) and where the military can be seen as a central informal institution with great influence on political culture, men will be more likely than women to achieve either nomination in a political party or political influence. Where institutions are weak and informal, and the political culture is influenced by militarized masculinity, political violence and civil war is more common.

Democratization, Gender Equality and Recent Political Violence in Thailand

Our arguments about the relationship between democratization, gender equality and political violence are illustrated by recent developments in Thailand. The conflict in Southern Thailand has gone on for a long time. Ever since the beginning of the 1900’s there have been, by and large unsuccessful, attempts to assimilate the largely Muslim population with Thai culture through the appointment of Thai Buddhist local officials and the imposition of Thai education. Concurrently, there has been an unprecedented surge of violence in recent years, partially as a result, many claim, of insensitive and callous policies by successive governments. Heavy-handed government policy and excessive brutality led to cycles of violence and increased polarization (Horachaikul 2003). The Thaksin government, in particular, was criticized for this, but the military government in place from 2006 also had little success in alleviating the violence. Srisompob and Panyasak (2006) also claim that much of the violence can be attributed to aggressive and ruthless militants rather than to structural explanations. Moreover, the conflict level in other parts of Thailand has also remained high. A UNESCO decision to put the 11th century Preah Vihear temple on the World Heritage list led to disputes and the escalation of military activity on the Cambodian border, rather than to a

dialogue between the two countries. The Preah Vihear temple sits on a Cambodian cliff, but is most accessible from Thai territory and both countries lay claim to it. The recent demonstrations on the streets of Bangkok have also led to military intervention and to civil casualties.

Thailand was considered a democracy by most dichotomous measures at the time that the violence in the South escalated. All the formal democratic institutions were in place, but this democracy turned out to be incapable of managing the situation in the South peacefully, and failed to prevent the military coup that at least temporarily ended Thai democracy in November 2006. Co-existing with this basic democracy, however, were a number of practices that can be said to lower the quality of democracy. The regime was often accused of having a lack of respect for human rights. Corruption and vote buying were still widespread. Furthermore, the political sphere was still marked by its relatively recent military past, allowing for a continued military logic to permeate politics, and thereby largely excluding other potential political groupings from the arena of politics. The real legitimacy was still with informal networks formed around local notables or people with military influence – and in either case it was difficult for women to enter the political sphere (Bjarnegård 2008). Most observers agree that even though the military was officially sidelined, it was imperative for any politician to have good connections to influential generals, and to be able to appoint people that they trusted to key positions within the military. This trust is most often achieved by appointing someone from the same class at the Chulachomklao Military Academy, as members of these classes are known to be close and loyal to each other throughout life (McCargo and Pathmanand 2005). It is only recently that the Military Academy started accepting women cadets (GDRI 1996). So, this path to power and influence has not been open to women for long. Thaksin followed this strategy of appointing class-mates to key positions, and tried to keep good informal contacts within the military both for business purposes and in

order to protect his own political longevity (McCargo and Pathmanand 2005). Even at the local political level, a sort of militarized masculinity is considered imperative for political success. The post of village headman, for instance, is seen as being almost synonymous to being a “strong man”. Empirically, there are very few women on these positions in Thailand, and an interviewed woman politician explains this as follows:

This is because you have to deal with robberies and things like that: and what can you do if you are a woman? Women cannot do anything. (Respondent #95).

Thus, despite the existence of a multiparty system, political parties with internal regulations for candidate selection and democratic elections, these democratic institutions are driven by other, less democratic, principles. This democratic power struggle left little room for a new political approach, less influenced by militarized masculinity, to enter the Thai political landscape. Since militarized masculinity as a political ideal permeated Thai democracy, it is perhaps not so strange that the conflict in the South was dealt with so violently.

Applying our arguments to a hypothetical alternative scenario would suggest that had Thailand’s democratization been more thorough, had democratic institutions and political parties been reformed to the extent that old boys’ networks were shattered, with the military restricted as a political power, and had mechanisms been introduced to let new groups enter the political sphere, the old persistent logic of using military means to solve the conflict in the South might have been abandoned. To reiterate, this assumption is not based on the fact that the greater inclusion of Thai women in parliament necessarily would imply the empowerment of an essentially more peaceful group of politicians, but rather to say that as new political groups are included, new political roads are likely to be trod. In addition, a democratic political regime that recognizes the importance and value of the inclusion of different groups in politics, rather than ruthlessly working to preserve and maintain their own influential

situation, are also more likely to consider different points of view, and less likely to suppress opposing views violently.

Summary and conclusion

In this article we set out to accomplish several things. First we showed that, contrary to widely held expectations, there is no uniformly positive relationship between the level of democracy and the representation of women in politics across the range of the democracy scale. Instead the relationship turns out to be curvilinear so that the political dominance of men is strongest in semi-democracies. Then we discussed theoretically and showed empirically how gender equality is related to peace. Next we argued that these relationships need to be brought together into one analysis, and we discussed some of the insights that follow. Finally we illustrated our reasoning with a short discussion of contemporary political turmoil in Thailand. On a general level, this article underlines that in order to understand complex social and political relationships and to be able to come up with good policy advice it is imperative to question, and subject to empirical test, ingrained assumptions and purely theoretical deductions. It becomes important to consider how one set of relationships over several intermediate effects may impact on another set of relationships. Many of the arguments about a militarized masculinity presented here are not new as such, but they have never before been incorporated with the wider empirical picture of the curvilinear relationship between democracy and political gender equality.

We believe that the analysis presented in this article has noteworthy policy implications. The complexity of the relationship around an incomplete or immature democracy, militarized masculinity and political violence is noteworthy. For example, in post-conflict situations the promotion of democratization is often among the top priorities on the peace-building agenda whereas the promotion of gender equality typically plays a decidedly lesser role. Although the

importance of gender issues is increasingly recognized among policy makers we provide a stronger rationale for why donors and practitioners in the fields of development cooperation and peace-building need to promote gender equality and democratization hand in hand. We also highlight some of the complexities and risks involved. Structures of male political and societal dominance take time to reduce and ill-considered measures may backfire. Nevertheless, the potential of a combination of strong democracy and high gender equality to support societal peace, calls for further research and policy discussion.

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Table 1. Correlation between democracy and male dominance in parliament, different regions, Election years 1980-2004

	North America, Europe, Australia and the Pacific	Latin America and the Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	North Africa and the Mideast	Asia
Pearson's R	-0,08	0,05	-0,15	-0,13	0,48 **
N	257	140	176	82	127

Figure 1. Scatterplot of the relationship between men in parliament and level of democracy, Election years 1980-2004

Table 2. Regression statistics comparing a linear function of democracy with a curvilinear one, Election years 1980-2004

Men in parliament, %					
	I			II	
(Intercept)	89.5	***		93.7	
Democracy, linear	-	0.2	***	0	
Democracy, squared				-	0.1 ***
N	782			782	
R Square	0,03			0,09	
Std. Error	8,9			8,6	
*** significant at the 99% security level					
** significant at the 95% security level					
* significant at the 90% security level					

Table 3. Interpretation of curvilinear effect of democracy on male dominance in parliament (Model II), Election years 1980-2004

As democracy changes from	to	Male dominance in parliament changes from	to	A change in Y of
-10	-4	83,7	92,1	8,4
-3	3	92,8	92,8	0
4	10	92,1	83,7	-8,4

Table 4. Representation levels by type of regime, Election years 1980-2004

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation.
Autocracies	231	63.1	100.0	89.7	9.0
Semi-democracies	87	77.8*	100.0	92.9	6.3
Democracies	464	54.7	100.0	87.7	9.2

***with Rwanda 51.3**

Table 5. Number of conflict years/country years, 1946-2002

PERCENT MEN IN PARLIAMENT	Non-democracies	Semi-democracies	Full-democracies
Nearly total male dominance: 99-100% (1st to 20th percentile)	67/468= 0.14	92/517= 0.18	25/208= 0.12
Lower male dominance: <86.6% (above 80th percentile)	24/533= 0.04	18/503= 0.04	11/492= 0.02
	Poor countries GDP per capita <=959 dollars	Semi-developed counties GDP per capita 960-3247 dollars	Rich countries GDP per capita >3247 dollars
Nearly total male dominance: 99-100% (1st to 20th percentile)	109/643= 0.17	65/345= 0.19	12/163= 0.07
Lower male dominance: <86.6% (above 80th percentile)	27/244= 0.11	45/353= 0.13	8/562= 0.01

i Information from the homepage of IPU <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm> 2010-02-03

ii The examples given above relate to how militarized masculinity is expressed in a Western cultural context and the English language. Extant research demonstrates, however, that militarized masculinity recurs in otherwise widely different cultural contexts, e.g., in Bolivia (Gill 1997), Uganda (Dolan 2003) and Indonesia (Boellstorff 2004). Indeed, the tendencies described above appear to be nearly universal.

iii Elected decision-makers, free and fair elections, the right to vote, eligibility for public office, the freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and freedom of association.

iv The data on armed conflict comes from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (www.ucdp.uu.se), presented in Gleditsch *et al.* 2002.

v This interaction effect was theoretically deduced and empirically corroborated by Melander (2005a).