

## **abstract**

The last fifteen years have been a time of upheaval for Iraq: the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War, a twelve-year sanctions regime, a repressive government, and the United States-led takeover have been sources social, political, and economic distress. This project seeks a *moral framework* for the analysis of the *international relations* of the crises surrounding Iraq. Towards this end, it performs a theoretical marriage of age-old theories of just war and recent feminist theories of International Relations (IR).

I begin by laying out epistemological and ontological assumptions carried by feminisms in IR. I then engage in a feminist theoretical journey of observation, critique, revealing, and reformulation just war theories. I identify and critique the gendered biases of traditional notions of just war. I propose that feminisms rely on empathetic cooperation as a *motivating morality* for a new theory of ethics in war; a foundation that revises the meanings of security, power, and justice. I outline feminist reinterpretations of the principles of *jus ad bellum* (just war-making) and *jus in bello* (just war-fighting). I contend that these *new* just war principles, now ‘chastened by feminisms,’ provide a more comprehensive, focused, and *just* formulation of the ethics of war.

I proceed to apply this reformulated just war framework to the wars in Iraq since the end of the Cold War. After introducing the context of the wars in Iraq, I analyze three continuous conflicts involving Iraq: the Gulf War in 1990-1991, the United Nations (UN) sanctions regime of Iraq from 1990-2003, and the United States-led takeover of Iraq which began in 2003.

Through this empirical application, I contend that a feminist ethics of war provides unique insights, offers productive reformulative suggestions, carves a path for international

*gender justice* in war, and begins a process of deconstructing international cycles of violence. I suggest that feminist just war theory be promoted as a *weak ontology* of the ethics of war: certain of its benefits, but not a definitive statement on the issues that it addresses; confident in its contributions, but always looking for theoretical dialogue to broaden its horizons.