

acknowledging that conflict may interrupt gendered orders, she overlooks that interruption may take the form of absence rather than innovation. In emphasizing the “every-day” nature of wartime sexual violence, Sjöberg underemphasizes the capacity of some armed organizations to resocialize combatants to new gender norms and hierarchies—sometimes toward more frequent sexual violence against new types of victims with innovative brutality, but sometimes toward much less frequent sexual violence.

Relatedly, it is important to ask: Under what conditions does sexual violence against those *above* the perpetrator in the hierarchy occur? Upward violence to devalorize the victim is often more accessible, conceptually as well as materially, in conflict than in peacetime.

More fundamentally, this reader found that Sjöberg’s sophistication in analyzing the gendered social dynamics of perpetration would have been enhanced by a similarly sophisticated analysis of the complex variation in patterns of sexual violence in general and of rape in particular. That well-documented variation in form, frequency, and targeting raises a question not much explored by the author, whether the same gendered social dynamics drive the sexual enslavement of Yazidi girls and women by the Islamic State, rape during operations of Vietnamese girls and women by U.S. forces in Vietnam, sexual torture by the Syrian government, and forced abortion within the ranks of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC). She rarely disaggregates sexual violence into its distinct forms, which may be driven by distinct mechanisms. Similarly, Sjöberg recognizes that sexual violence is sometimes strategically deployed as a weapon and is sometimes the result of “disorder and lawlessness” (p. 177), but she does not explore the conditions under which each occurs (on these themes, see Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Rape as a Practice of War: Towards a Typology of Political Violence,” forthcoming in *Politics and Society*. My use of “practice” is narrower than Sjöberg’s: Rape occurs as a “practice” when it is tolerated but not ordered or authorized by commanders.)

These limitations notwithstanding, *Women as Wartime Rapists* advances an important argument—that gender orders are complex hierarchies that legitimize and structure sexual violence during conflict—with compelling implications. It should be read by all scholars of violence, not just those who work on gender. Readers who are not versed in the concepts of feminist theory may find some of the prose difficult, but it is well worth the effort as there is much to learn from this powerful work.

Fighting for Status: Hierarchy and Conflict in World Politics. By Jonathan Renshon. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. 328p. \$95.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.
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The idea of international “status” is often used by leaders and historians but rarely by quantitatively oriented

academics. In *Fighting for Status*, Jonathan Renshon treats the subject systematically in order to show that discontent about status generates military conflicts. He introduces techniques of network analysis, and treats the question with several methodologies meant to complement one another’s weaknesses: experiments with subjects making hypothetical decisions, statistical analyses relating a measure for status to historical conflicts, and case studies.

In Renshon’s usage, X’s *status* in a group is roughly the members’ degree of deference to X and their beliefs about their deference. The beliefs include higher-order ones—not just about one another’s deference but about their beliefs about their deference, and so on upward. My colleagues deferring to me does not give me status unless they are mutually aware of their behavior. Renshon sees status as an ordinal rather than interval scale, so that each state holds a ranking. Sometimes it is a category, for example, status as a great power or a nuclear power, but his categories are always ordered in the sense that being inside one draws more deference than being outside it.

The desire for status leads to violence in this way: Some event increases a state’s concern for its status, prompting it to judge whether its reference group is placing it as high as it deserves based on its power resources. If not, it takes corrective measures, possibly military action against some other state. The best target is an adversary against whom it expects to do better than the others predict so that the outcome will prompt them to raise their estimates of its capabilities.

In 1956, a series of events challenged the image of British power in the Middle East. When Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, Britain conspired with France and Israel to attack Egypt and reestablish Western control. Admittedly, the British wanted access to oil, but Renshon cites internal documents showing that Prime Minister Anthony Eden and others continually worried about “prestige,” a goal that the author identifies with status. Their plan failed badly. The United States, fearing that the Soviet Union would increase its regional influence, made financial threats and forced the interveners to withdraw. The episode made a point opposite to what Britain and France had intended. It showed that the United States was not their solid ally and that from then on they could not use military force without American approval. (Renshon’s other case studies involve German foreign policy from 1897 to 1911, Russia’s support of Serbia in 1914, and Nasser’s intervention in the Yemen Civil War.)

To set up his tests, the author distinguishes status from other concepts of social influence: reputation, honor, authority, and power. In contrast to power, status necessarily involves higher-order beliefs. He then presents a series of experiments to show that threats to status trigger conflictual moves. He asked some subjects to think of a professional experience that might enhance

their status, and others to think of one that might reduce it. He also measured their scores on social dominance orientation (SDO), involving their approval of social hierarchy. When they competed in a game with escalation as an option, those with a status threat fresh in their minds were more aggressive, as were those with higher SDO scores. A second study used a subject pool that included military officers and security officials, a population that in the future might be making international affairs decisions, and looked at the relation between their personal histories of holding powerful positions and their readiness to escalate. Experience with power seemed to reduce their responsiveness to status concerns.

Renshon then defines a scale for international status. In the mid-1960s, J. David Singer and Melvin Small measured it by counting the diplomatic representatives a state received, giving more weight to ones with higher titles ("The Composition and Status Ordering of the International System, 1815–1940," *World Politics*, 18(2), 1966). Renshon uses their data but puts more weight on diplomats who come from states that themselves receive more diplomats. Recognition by a higher-status country raises one's score. He validates his scale by considering just diplomats sent by the United States and calculating the correlations of status score with mentions of the country in the *New York Times* and visits by the secretary of state and the president. With further data on power resources and on international violence from 1816 to 2005, he finds, for example, that five years after a state initiates and wins a war, its expected status goes up 6.7 places more than one that did not initiate a war.

I believe that status is an interesting explanation only insofar as it is different from power. Separating the two is hard given Renshon's view, which I share, that status concerns trigger conflict for strategic reasons, not just through jealousy or anger. It is important to base our operational measures and hypotheses directly on our definitions, and it is unclear how sending diplomatic representatives shows the recipient's status rather than its power, as he defines these concepts. A country setting up a foreign embassy wants to communicate with and persuade the recipient; this motive seems to reflect the latter's power. Also, how do the author's validating variables—newspaper mentions and high-level visits—reflect status rather than power? I find his recursive conception of status innovative and plausible, but again it is important to show why the modification follows from his definition. The measure's results do not seem compelling; the top-five status countries in 1817 were #1 Bavaria (#13), #2 France (#2), #3 Saxony (#18), #4 Baden (#19), #5 Austria (#4). Singer and Small's rankings around that year are in parentheses. The orderings disagree significantly, and both put France at #2 right after it lost a catastrophic war.

In my view, status differs from power in more ways than Renshon's definition suggests, and these might be exploited for empirical tests. For one thing, it has a normative component. The group members generally feel that they really *ought to* follow the pattern of deference. The normative sense is strong in sociological and psychological treatments, including the questions used for subjects' SDO scores.

Also, unlike power, a party's status is not based only on its objective characteristics or on others' assessments of them. A status ranking is an equilibrium; it is self-referential in that members follow it in their deference because they commonly expect others to follow it. The choice among possible equilibria may be set by apparently arbitrary events, such as one's historical status ranking. States constantly try to get their way in symbolic matters that are of low innate importance. Symbolic conflicts may reflect the winner's desire to prevail but not its objective capability. Renshon (p. 130) gives examples of angry battles over precedence among diplomats. His hypothesis—that countries enter conflicts to demonstrate their capabilities—does not tap status's contrast with power. The equilibrium nature of status explains its connection to higher-order beliefs. The author admirably uses a variety of methods, but for this issue, I would propose one more, game-theoretical analysis. Our social intuition and behavior can handle higher-order beliefs, but they are confusing to talk about in natural language, and so we should use the formal system that focuses on them.

Interest in status-related explanations in international relations has grown (see Allan Dafoe et al., "Reputation and Status as Motives for War," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17, 2014). The new approach should clarify not just military moves but also diplomatic interactions of many types, and will connect international relations with sociology and psychology. Renshon has moved the discussion forward, partly by what he does and partly by the standard he sets for others. As well as his introduction of network methods to identify status communities, the group of states that each one uses for comparison, I would point to his care in defending his hypothesis against other explanations. Renshon has been prominent among those arguing that status-related variables are important, and *Fighting for Status* will surely be central.

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