

Sexing Political Identities/ Nationalism as Heterosexism

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Abstract

In the past decade, feminists have produced a considerable and important literature that critically analyses the gendering of the state and state-centric nationalism. This article draws from and shifts the focus of these studies to examine nationalism not simply as gendered but as heterosexist. I first locate nationalism as a subset of political identities and identification processes, then take (heterosexist) gender identities as an indispensable starting point in the study of political identities. I next turn to early western state making and its writing technologies to materialize the normalization of (hetero)gender binaries in thought (western metaphysics/phallogocentrism) and practice (divisions of power, authority, labor). Finally, I chart five gender-differentiated dimensions of state-centric nationalism that expose the latter's heterosexist presumptions – and enduring problems.

Keywords

gender, sexuality, identity, nationalism, politics, states

A great deal of analytic work has been done by feminists in different parts of the world on demystifying the state's will to represent itself as disinterested, neutered, and otherwise benign. [note deleted] . . . Much less work has been done, however, on elaborating the processes of heterosexualization at work within the state apparatus and charting the ways in which they are constitutively paradoxical: that is, how heterosexuality is at once necessary to the state's ability to constitute and imagine itself, while simultaneously marking a site of its own instability.

(Alexander 1997: 65 citing Hart 1994: 8)



Because the logic of the sexual order is so deeply embedded by now in an indescribably wide range of social institutions, and is embedded in the most standard accounts of the world, queer struggles aim not just at toleration or equal status but at challenging those institutions and accounts. The dawning realization that themes of homophobia and heterosexism may be read in almost any document of our culture means that we are only beginning to have an idea of how widespread those institutions and accounts are.

(Warner 1993: xiii)

As the quotation from Jacqui Alexander suggests, feminists have critically analysed the gendering of the state, and are currently engaged in gendering nationalism. This article draws from and shifts the focus of these studies. I first locate nationalism as a subset of political identities and identification processes, then take (heterosexist) gender identities as an indispensable starting point in the study of political identities. I next turn to early western state making and its writing technologies to materialize the *normalization* of (hetero)gender binaries in thought (western metaphysics/phallogocentrism) and practice (divisions of power, authority, labor). Finally, I chart five gender-differentiated dimensions of state-centric nationalism that expose the latter's heterosexist presumptions – and enduring problems.

LOCATING NATIONALISM

Nationalism is a particular – and particularly potent – manifestation of political identification.¹ Political identities associated with subnational, international or transnational groups take a variety of forms (social movements, religious communities, non-governmental organizations) but typically do not seek a territorially bounded political status. Nationalism then becomes the territorially based *subset* of political identity that takes one of two related forms: state-led (assimilation of all within a state to the state's preferred cultural forms) and state-seeking (mobilization of group identification in pursuit of recognition as an independent state).² As Charles Tilly (1992: 709) argues, 'state-led nationalism stimulates state-seeking nationalism' as the homogenizing project of the former threatens the viability of non-state identities. To ensure the latter, subgroups seek the sovereignty afforded by state status – and if successful, tend to impose their own homogenizing project.

Analysts have always recognized that nationalism is problematic from the vantage point of conflict between nations: sameness within the state is purchased at the price of institutionalizing difference – and too often, conflict – among states. But nationalism has also been problematic from the vantage point of those within the nation who share least in elite privilege and political representation, especially those whose identity is at odds with the projected image of homogenous national identity.³ Gregory Gleason (1991: 223–8) clarifies these relationships by identifying three 'faces' of nationalism: liberation (the

positive association of nationalism with self-determination and democratization), exclusivity (the promotion of group homogeneity and 'difference' from 'others'), and domination (the negative effects of suppressing difference within the group and/or domination of 'outsiders' in the name of the group). Hence, whether construed as 'imagining' (Anderson 1991) or 'inventing' (Gellner 1983) a national identity, or in terms of privileging a particular 'natural' community (Smith 1991), the promotion of uniformity within the group – by persuasive and coercive means – threatens some more than others, even as differences *between* groups fuel conflict.

Nationalism looms large today, both in embodied politics and political analysis. But it is the conflict *between* (state-centric) nationalist groups that dominates conventional discussions. How nationalism is a subset of political identifications more generally, and how it relates to other identities – within and beyond the nation – are less developed inquiries. To a significant extent, this neglect is due to knowledge regimes that privilege positivist binaries and mono-disciplinary investigations. As one consequence, conventional vantage points yield impoverished and politically suspect accounts of not only nationalism, but of the production and effects of identities/identifications more generally.

This is particularly apparent in international relations (IR), the discipline now haunted by nationalist conflicts. Constrained by its positivist and modernist commitments, IR theorists typically assume a Euro-centric model of the agent (subject) as unitary, autonomous, interest-maximizing and rational. IR's realist commitments additionally cast subjects as inherently competitive. So too with states. The latter are understood as the primary (unified, rational, self-interested and competitive) actors in international relations, and a collective political identity is assumed rather than interrogated.⁴ Positivist/modernist binaries reign in IR and, as feminists have persuasively argued, these binaries are gendered (e.g. Lloyd 1984; Hekman 1990; Haraway 1998; Peterson 1992a). Through conventional IR lenses, the dichotomy of public-private locates political action in the former but not the latter sphere; the dichotomy of internal-external distinguishes citizens and order within from 'others' and anarchy without; and the dichotomy of culture-nature (civilized-primitive, advanced-backward, developed-undeveloped) 'naturalizes' global hierarchies of power. Most telling for the study of nationalism, positivist dichotomies that favor instrumental reason and public sphere activities fuel a neglect of emotion, desire, sexuality, culture and – hence – identity and identification processes.

IR's conventional accounts, however, are increasingly challenged by empirical and epistemological transformations. In terms of empirical transformations, post-Cold War nationalisms have forced IR theorists to acknowledge new actors and even new rules (e.g. Ferguson and Mansbach 1996; Krause and Renwick 1996; Lapid and Kratochwill 1996). Similarly, state-centric political identity is no longer the exclusive focus of IR studies. Sub and transnational social movements transgress territorial boundaries in favor of

identities based on ecological, race/ethnic, feminist, religious, and other non-state-based commitments. Moreover, the globalization of production and finance undercuts national economic planning, eroding state sovereignty and the political identities it presupposes (e.g. Mittelman 1996; Scholte 1997). And even as supra-national forces alter state power, subnational conflicts expose the illusion of homogeneity promoted in nationalist narratives.

In terms of epistemological transformations, critiques of positivism, modernism, and masculinism have altered our understanding of agents and subjectivity. Challenging conventional models of subjects – and states – as unitary rational actors, contemporary social theory illuminates the multiplicity of subject locations (implying multiple identifications) and their dynamic interaction 'within' the 'self' and in relation to the 'self's' environment. That is, identities are socially constructed as on-going processes: they are embedded in and interact with historically specific social contexts composed of intersubjective meaning systems (discourses), material conditions, social practices, and institutional structures. Moreover, feminists argue that conventional models of the agent/subject assume male sex and masculine identity. From a postmodernist feminist perspective, the study of identities must be historical, contextual, and dynamic: asking not only how identities are located in time and space but also how they are (re)produced, resisted, and reconfigured.

GENDERING THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION

Identities are politically important because they inform self-other representations, embed subjects in meaning systems and collective agency (Bloom 1990), and mobilize purposive, politically significant actions. They are important windows on 'reality' because 'internal subjective self-change and external objective social change' are inextricable (Bologh 1987: 147). In this sense, identifications 'bridge' agency and structure, are multiple and sometimes contradictory, and can be understood as strategies.⁵

Feminists have a number of reasons for attending to political identity and the politics of identification.⁶ First, constructions of femininity and masculinity that inform our identification as women and men have pervasive implications for the lives we lead and the world(s) in which we live. Wendy Brown summarizes a decade of feminist philosophy in stating that 'there has been no ungendered *human* experience' (Brown 1988: 190). If all experience is gendered, analysis of gender identities is an imperative starting point in the study of political identities and practice. Bound up with constructions of sexuality and desire, the implications of gender extend from the most intimate to the most global social dynamics (e.g. Peterson and Parisi 1998).

Second, to the extent that personal gender identities constitute a 'core' sense of 'self,' they fundamentally condition our self-esteem and psychosociological security. This means that challenges to gender ordering may

appear to threaten a personal identity in which we are deeply invested (Lorraine 1990). A fear of loss or destabilization may then fuel resistance to deconstruction of gender identities and ideologies, with many – and mostly negative – implications for feminist movement and the production of less hierarchical relations of 'difference.'

Third, given the significance of gender identities in every domain of human endeavor, feminists have criticized biological explanations that essentialize maleness and femaleness and developed alternative explanations of gender identity formation and its effects (e.g. Rubin 1984; Keller 1985; Fausto-Sterling 1992). Exposing the social construction of binary male and female identities involves a parallel deconstruction of western dichotomies as gendered, culminating in feminist critiques of masculinist science and the development of alternative epistemologies (e.g. Hekman 1990; Alcoff and Potter 1993).

Fourth, feminist studies have established that the identity of the modern subject – in models of human nature, citizenship, the rational actor, the knowing subject, economic man, and political agency – is not gender-neutral but masculine (and typically European and heterosexual). The unacknowledged privileging of elite male experience and perspective – androcentrism – has profoundly structured our conceptual categories and concrete activities. There is now a vast literature exploring the many ways that androcentrism marginalizes women and all that is denigrated by association with 'femininity,' which includes nature, 'effeminate men,' and subordinated 'others.'

Fifth, feminist identity itself is a problem for feminism. If a universal category of 'woman' is a necessary condition of feminist movement, then the actual diversity among women contravenes that condition (Mohanty *et al.* 1991). Essentialist characterizations of 'woman' and homogenizing effects within feminist movements have been irrevocably disrupted by the realities of 'difference.' Contemporary feminisms are both challenged and enriched by struggles to address diversity without abandoning solidarities enabled by shared experience and/or shared objectives (Gunew and Yeatman 1993; Grewal and Kaplan 1994). That is, differences among women have compelled feminists to take a politics of difference seriously, including a politics of accountability even in the context of postmodernist theorizing.

Finally, identity groups (whether based on race/ethnicity, religion or nationality) that have been most closely associated with (state-centric) political power have also been based on (heterosexist) gender inequality. As members of state-centric groups, women have interests in their group's 'success,' including the group's acquisition of political power *vis-à-vis* competitors. But, insofar as these groups reproduce gendered hierarchies (social hierarchies linked by denigration of the feminine), identification with and support for them is problematic for feminists and all who seek non-oppressive social relations. Here, the heteropatriarchy⁷ of state orders is key.

For all of these reasons, and more, feminists have taken the lead in multi-disciplinary and wide-ranging studies of identity, identification processes, and their relationships to power at local, national, and global 'levels.'

NATIONALIST POLITICS/HETEROSEXIST PRACTICE

In spite of its current potency, the analysis of nationalism is notoriously inadequate. Jill Vickers observes that 'this difficulty of understanding nationalism as a form of self-identification and of group organization reflects the profound difficulty that male-stream thought, in general, has had in understanding the public manifestations of the process of identity construction' (Vickers 1990: 480). For Vickers, the public-private dichotomy codifies a false separation between the public sphere of reason and power and the private sphere of emotion and social reproduction, where identity construction – which enables group reproduction – presumably takes place.

Group reproduction – both biological and social – is fundamental to nationalist practice, process, and politics. While virtually all feminist treatments of nationalism recognize this fact, they typically take for granted that group reproduction is heterosexist. I refer here to the assumption – institutionalized in state-based orders through legal and ideological codifications and naturalized by reference to the binary of male-female sex difference – that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' mode of sexual identity, sexual practice, and social relations. Heterosexism presupposes a binary coding of polarized and hierarchical male/masculine and female/feminine identities (ostensibly based on a dichotomy of bio-physical features) and denies all but heterosexual coupling as the basis of sexual intimacy, family life, and group reproduction. And heterosexism is key to nationalism because today's state-centric nationalisms (the focus in this article) engage not only in sexist practices that are now well documented by feminists, but also take for granted heterosexist sex/gender identities and forms of group reproduction that underpin sexism but which are not typically interrogated even in feminist critiques.⁸ Because a critique of heterosexism is central to this article, and relatively undeveloped in treatments of nationalism, I briefly summarize the underlying argumentation before addressing gendered nationalism more directly.

MAKING STATES/MAKING SEX

Whereas heterosexuality refers to sex/affective relations between people of the 'opposite' sex, heterosexism refers to the institutionalization and *normalization* of heterosexuality and the corollary exclusion of non-heterosexual identities and practices.⁹ For analytical simplicity, I make reference to interactive dimensions of heterosexism: as conceptual system, gender identities, sex/affective relations, and social institutions. Briefly here, and elsewhere at length, I argue that the conjuncture of heterosexist ideology and practice is inextricable from the centralization of political authority/coercive power that we refer to as state-making.¹⁰ The argument is expanded in the discussion of gendered nationalism that follows.

Heterosexist ideology involves a symbolic order/intersubjective meaning system of hierarchical dichotomies that codify sex as male-female biological difference, gender as masculine-feminine subjectivity, and sexuality as heterosexual-homosexual identification.¹¹ Heterosexism is 'naturalized' through multiple discourses, especially western political theory and religious dogma, and by reification of the (patriarchal) 'family' as 'pre-political' – as 'natural' and non-contractual. The binary of male-female difference is exemplified and well documented in western metaphysics (hence, political theory/practice) but evident in all collective meaning systems where the *hierarchical* dichotomy of gender is foundational to symbolic ordering and discursive practice. This symbolic ordering produces the binary of male-female bodies as well as a binary of masculine-feminine identities. The conceptual ordering of masculine over feminine is inextricable from political ordering imposed in state-making and reproduced through masculinist discourse (political theory, religious dogma) that legitimizes the state's hierarchical relations. Insofar as (hegemonic) masculinity is constituted as reason, order, and control, masculine domination is reproduced through conceptual systems that privilege male entitlement – to authority, power, property, nature. Central to this ideology is male entitlement to women's sexuality, bodies, and labor.

Heterosexism as sex/affect involves the normalization of exclusively heterosexual desire, intimacy, and family life. Historically, this normalization is inextricable from the state's interest in regulating sexual reproduction, undertaken primarily through controlling women's bodies, policing sexual activities, and instituting the heteropatriarchal family/household as the basic socio-economic unit. This normalization entails constructions of gender identity and hegemonic masculinity as heterosexual, with corollary interests in women's bodies as objects of (male) sexual gratification and the means of ensuring group continuity. In complex – and even contradictory – ways, masculinity as entitlement and control is here linked to heterosexual practice as an expression of power and violence. In short, and as feminists relentlessly document, the hegemonic masculinity constituted by heterosexist practice normalizes the subordination of women and naturalizes rape as an expression of male power against women and 'insufficiently masculine' men.

The argument here is that rape is not reducible to but is inextricable from heterosexism. To clarify briefly, the objectification of women and forced penile penetration as an expression of power requires for its intelligibility the polarized identities and objectification of the feminine that is constituted by heterosexist ideology, identities, and practice. In this framing, women/the feminine are passive and denigrated by definition and it is the definitively masculine role of agency and penetration that exemplifies heterosexism, whether the denigrated *object* of that agency is female or male. Hence, male-male rape exemplifies heterosexism's objectification of the feminine even though no females are involved. Stated differently, the willingness/desire to rape is not established by the presence of a (normally flaccid) penis but by the

internalization of a masculinist/heterosexist identity that promotes aggressive male penetration as an expression of sexuality, power, and dominance. It is, presumably, the mobilization of some version of such an identity and ideology that renders rape a viable strategy for social control. On this view, heterosexist masculinity is mobilized to sustain gender hierarchy *within* groups (e.g. domestic violence in 'private' and the threat/reality of rape in 'public') and to enact masculinist violence *between* groups (e.g. castration of 'Other' males, forced prostitution, and mass rapes in war).

Heterosexism as social institution is inexplicable without reference to state-making in two senses: early state-making (as the pre-modern transition from kin-based to centralized political orders) and subsequent state-based orders (modern states and state-centric nationalisms). *Early* state-making (the urban revolution, the emergence of civilization) marks the convergence of centralized power/authority, the exploitation of re/productive labor, and the technology of writing such that, once established, centralized authority was able to turn coercive power to historically novel effect through enhanced systemic control (e.g. Cohen and Service 1978). In the western tradition, this involved 'normalizing' definitive dichotomies (public-private, reason-affect, mind-body, culture-nature, civilized-barbarian, masculine-feminine) both materially, in divisions of authority, power, labor, and resources, as well as conceptually, in western metaphysics, language, philosophy, political theory. Not least because early state-making marked the invention of writing, these systemic transformations were codified and that codification (in western philosophy, political theory, and classical texts) has profoundly shaped subsequent theory/practice. These codifications of language/thought are inextricable from the disciplinary regime of heterosexist *practice* institutionalized in early state-making.

To recapitulate the argument, I am suggesting that the following are conceptually and structurally linked in early western state-making: the codification of sex/gender binaries (male-female bodies, masculine-feminine gender identities, gendered dichotomies) as foundational symbolic order, the production of oppositional gender identities in service to state-centric heterosexist reproduction and hierarchical relations (patriarchal families/households; state regulation of reproductive sexual activities); the conceptual *and* material constitution of gendered spheres of social activity (not least, the public-private) that structure hierarchical divisions of authority, power, labor, and resources; and state centralization of authority, power, accumulation and reproduction ideologically (through heterosexist language, philosophy, religion, political theory) and concretely (through the juridical and coercive powers of the state).

I believe that the development of writing – specific to early state-making – is of singular importance to critical analyses of 'power' and, especially, feminist critiques of the gendered symbolic order. Writing made possible economic, political, military, and socio-cultural coordination not possible with the limitations of face-to-face communication. Through the materiality

– hence durability – of the written word, *masculinist* élites were able to extend their authority and power across time and space, and this authority and power entailed élite conceptions of how the world works and who should be authoritatively in charge. Contemporary critical social theory recognizes that *whose* representations secure authority and sedimentation is an effect of power relations. The invention of writing (in the context of early state-making and under élite male control) structurally altered power relations by *systemically* enhancing state power – and the voices of state élites. Like all technological revolutions, the development of writing had multiple and complex effects. What I emphasize here is how writing permitted state élites to ‘fix’ or stabilize a historically particular symbolic ordering (and its corollary political ordering) as ‘given.’ Not only is a heterosexist symbolic order stabilized (not least, essentializing gendered dichotomies) but the political *making* of that historically contingent order is erased. In its place, the authority of durable texts ‘grounds’ heterosexism and its gendered binaries as foundational. An important point here is that the ‘symbolic’ power of the early state, though rarely the focus of analysis, is as significant as the ‘structural’ power of the state, which commands most of the critical attention. More accurately stated, the symbolic power of the state is rendered visibly structural through writing technologies. This is particularly important for feminist theory/practice insofar as it permits us to *materialize* (historicize, politicize) the symbolic order of gendered binaries that features prominently in feminist critiques (see note 10).

Because this argumentation is unfamiliar, I attempt to further clarify it by reference to multiple ‘contracts’ that underpin western philosophy and political theory. I am arguing that the ‘heterosexual contract’ ((Wittig 1980) naturalizing binary gender identities and heterosexism), the ‘social contract’ (naturalizing centralized political authority, hierarchical social relations, and the transition from ‘pre-contractual’ relations associated with the state of ‘nature’ to contractual relations associated with ‘culture’), and language codification (the invention of writing, the articulation of western metaphysics as phallogocentric) are historically contingent and mutually constituted processes that constitute what we describe as early state-making. Moreover, this mutuality is not ‘simply’ a *conceptual* linkage (e.g. between symbolic constructions of masculinity, heterosexuality, contract, and stateness) but a historical, empirical, and ‘*structural*’ linkage that is visible through a genealogical feminist lens on early state-making, its technologies, and its interpretive productions. These linkages are structural in two interactive senses: both as historical-empirical material practices and institutions (the more conventional sense of social structures), and as signifying/meaning systems, knowledge claims, and enduring narratives that produce even as they are produced by material structures. Stated differently, in early state-making the interaction of (gendered) signifying processes and structural dynamics produces both conceptual and political codifications, with particularly powerful and durable effects.

These effects are visible in subsequent modern state-making (and

nationalism), which takes the 'heterosexual contract' as given (Pateman 1988; Coole 1993). Through the sedimentation of symbolic ordering (reproduced through writing and then printing technologies; paradigmatically, the Bible), masculine dominance and gendered binaries are taken for granted in the context of European state-making, the interstate system it constituted, and the colonial practices it imposed. A now vast feminist literature documents how (hetero) sexist symbols, identities and divisions of authority/power/labor are reproduced and rarely interrogated in modernist narratives. This is not to argue that early and modern states are identically heterosexist, conceptually and/or structurally. It is to emphasize how gender symbols/discourse/dichotomies stabilized through early state-making produced conceptual and structural effects in the modern era, and *that these effects are depoliticized by being taken as 'natural.'* Whereas the relationship of male to female, patriarchy to matriarchy, and polity to kin-based community was a focus and key contestation of early thought, in the modern period heteropatriarchal discourse is for the most part presupposed. The success of early states marginalized matrilineal principles, and monotheistic religions displaced female and androgynous deities. Moreover, both state and religious élites appropriated female procreancy: in Athenian political theory, men gave birth to immortal ideas and to the body politic (state); in religious doctrine, men gave birth to order and even to life itself. In spite of other deeply antagonistic commitments, in the modern era emerging state authorities and religious élites spoke in one voice when author(iz)ing heteropatriarchy.

In regard to nationalism, the modern state's juridical and productive power denies male homosocial sexuality in favor of male homosocial politics.¹² In the fraternal state, what men have in common is masculine privilege and entitlement *vis-à-vis* women, which promotes male bonding across age, class and race/ethnic differences within the state/nation. Ideologically (symbolically), the coding of public sphere activities as masculine allows all men to identify with state power/authority. And in practice, militarization as a male rite of passage encourages men to bond politically and militarily as they play out the us/them script of protecting 'their own' women and violating the enemy's men/women.

At the same time, differences among men ensure that the privilege of male domination is not homogeneously experienced but differentiated by multiple hierarchies (of age, class, ability, culture, race/ethnicity, etc.). Bonding across these differences must be continuously secured, lest loyalties be redirected. Not least, (male) homosexual desire and practice threatens to redefine fraternity in ways potentially subversive of state-centric interests.

While men are expected to bond politically with other men of the state/nation, the heterosexist state denies women's homosexual bonding, and the public-private dichotomy denies women's political bonding. Rather, as an effect of patriarchal households and the family wage model, women are linked to the state *through* their fathers/husbands; women are expected to bond only through and with 'their men.' Jacqui Alexander argues that:

women's sexual agency . . . and erotic autonomy have always been troublesome for the state . . . pos[ing] a challenge to the ideological anchor of an originary nuclear family, . . . which perpetuates the fiction that the family is the cornerstone of society. Erotic autonomy signals danger to the heterosexual family and to the nation.

(1997: 64)

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GENDERING NATIONALISM/NATIONALISM AS HETEROSEXISM

The remainder of this article develops a framework for analysing gender in nationalist politics. More specifically, I identify five overlapping and interactive ways in which women and men are differently situated in relation to nationalist processes: as biological reproducers of group members; as social reproducers of group members and cultural forms; as signifiers; as embodied agents in nationalist struggles; and as societal members generally.¹³ In presenting the five dimensions, I attempt to illuminate how attention to heterosexism deepens our understanding of (patriarchal) group reproduction and hierarchical social relations within and between groups.

Women as Heterosexual/Biological Reproducers of Group Members

What Vickers (1990: 485) calls the 'battle of the cradle' is about regulating under what conditions, when, how many, and whose children women will bear. The forms it takes are historically specific, shaped by socio-religious norms, technological developments, economic pressures, and political priorities. But all groups seeking multi-generational continuity have a stake in biological reproduction. Pro-natalist policies may include restriction of contraceptive knowledge and techniques, denial of access to abortions, and provision of material rewards for bearing children. From Sparta, where a mother 'reared her sons to be sacrificed on the alter of civic necessity' (Elshtain 1992: 142) to South Africa, where white women were exhorted to bear 'babies for Botha' (McClintock 1991: 110-11), to financial incentives for child-bearing in contemporary France, women have been admonished to fulfill their 'duty' to the state/nation by bearing children in the service of group reproduction.

Particularly chilling examples of decrying abortion as treason are quoted in Julie Mostov's discussion of nationalism in the Balkans. She writes

Croatian President Franjo Tudman blamed the tragedy of the Croatia nation on 'women, pornography, and abortion.' Women who have abortions are 'mortal enemies of the nation,' . . . Women who have not given birth to at least four children are scolded as 'female exhibitionists' who have not fulfilled their 'unique sacred duty.' [citing Renata Salecl 1992: 59] . . . Hungarian nationalists have also

tied abortion to the 'death of the nation.' Abortion is described as a 'national catastrophe.' According to one article, 'Four million Hungarians . . . had been killed by abortion [during] the liberal abortion policy of the Communists.

(Mostov 1995: 518-19)

Of course, not all reproduction is equally desirable to state/nation élites: 'some breeders and "breeds" are more acceptable than others' (de Lepervanche 1989: 176). To limit the size of 'undesirable' groups, immigration controls, expulsion, sterilization, and even extermination have been – and are being – practiced. Thus, 'while "our" women are to be revered as mothers, all women's bodies must be controlled' (Mostov 1995: 519). Women's bodies become the battleground of men's wars, with rape as a potent weapon. For example, in nationalist conflicts, systematic rape and sexual enslavement not only violate countless women of particular group identities (e.g. Jews in Germany, Muslims in Bosnia) but sabotage the underpinnings and therefore continuity of their communities. These are not epiphenomena of war or displays of innate male aggression: they are politically driven strategies in the context of group conflict.

The battle of the cradle is also a battle of sexualities and bedrooms. Pro-natalist policies are threatened by non-reproductive sex. Hence, the latter is disciplined by insisting that the bedroom is heterosexual and that a (the?) primary purpose of 'family life' is sexual reproduction in the service of élite-driven collective interests. Moreover, as argued above, rape as a weapon of war is unintelligible in the absence of heterosexist ideology and sexual objectification of the 'Other.' By mobilizing nationalist sentiments, the state promotes homosocial bonding within the group which simultaneously obscures differences among in-group men while it magnifies differences across groups. State/nationalist élites manipulate political homosociality and prevent sexual homosociality and bonding with 'different' men. In this regime, women are cast as baby-makers requiring protection to ensure group reproduction while men are encouraged to violate 'others' and risk violation themselves to ensure hierarchical relations within and between imagined communities.

Women as Social Reproducers of Group Members and Cultural Forms

What Vickers (1990: 485) labels the 'battle of the nursery' is about ensuring that children born are bred in culturally appropriate ways. This may involve the regulation – through religious dogma, legislation, social norms, and coercion – of sexual liaisons so that religious, ethnic, class, and citizenship boundaries are maintained. By enforcing legislation regarding marriage, child custody, and property and citizenship inheritance, the state controls the reproduction of membership claims.

For example, under British nationality laws, until 1948 a British woman was deemed an 'alien' if she married a non-British subject and until 1981 she could not pass on her nationality (in her own right) to children born abroad (Klug 1989: 21-2). Roxana Ng notes the discriminatory effects of 'independent class' or 'family class' specification of landed immigrant status in Canada. The 'family class' category tends to disadvantage married women, who are assumed to be dependent. 'Furthermore, once categorized as "family class" immigrants, these women are ineligible for social assistance and ... programs available to their "independent class" counterparts and other Canadians' (Ng 1993: 56). In Australia, de Lepervanche notes that:

aboriginal people were not even counted in the census until 1967. Some non-European men were allowed to reside in Australia after 1901, but non-European women particularly were usually excluded or, if permitted entry ... the permission depended on satisfactory [evidence of] their husbands' or fathers' capacity to support them.

(1989: 167)

Insofar as states assume responsibility for provision of basic needs, claims to citizenship assume life-sustaining importance, determining not only one's obligations but also one's rights – to work, stable residency, legal protections, educational, health and welfare benefits. Hence, the denial of same-sex marriage prevents homosexuals from enjoying the membership privileges available to heterosexual couples. In regard to immigration and citizenship rights, this discrimination works across state/nation borders. But it also works within communities in the form of (heterosexist) family law and homophobic policies.

The battle of the nursery also involves the ideological reproduction of group members. Under heteropatriarchal conditions, women not only bear children but are expected to rear them. Especially within the family, women are assigned the primary responsibility for inculcating beliefs, behaviors, and loyalties that are culturally appropriate and ensure intergenerational continuity. This cultural transmission includes learning the 'mother tongue' – the codified meaning system – as well as the group's identity, symbols, rituals, divisions of labor, and worldviews. Research indicates that from an early age, children are aware of and identify specifically with a 'homeland.' Robert Coles studied the 'political life of children' on five continents and concluded that everywhere, 'nationalism works its way into just about every corner of the mind's life,' fostering children's recognition of their nation's flag, music, slogans, history, and who counts as 'us' and 'them' (1986: 60, 63 as quoted in Elshtain 1992: 149).

Of course, ideological reproduction implies reproduction of the community's beliefs about sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age, class, religion, and other axes of 'difference.' Repression of non-heterosexual identities and ideologies reduces their potential to disrupt state-centric hierarchical scripts, either conceptually

or structurally. Reproduction of the symbolic order sustains gendered dichotomies and oppositional gender identities, while exclusively heterosexual family life ensures that heterosexual practice and gendered divisions of labor/power/authority are the only apparent options. Moreover, heterosexist beliefs are inextricable from multiple social hierarchies, as the subordination of 'others' is fueled and legitimated by castigations of them as inappropriately masculine or feminine.

Because of their assigned roles in social reproduction, women are often stereotyped as 'cultural carriers.' When minority groups feel threatened, they may increase the isolation of 'their' women from exposure to other groups or the legislative reach of the state. Tress writes that in Israel, 'Zionist ideology considered women to be the embodiment of the home front' (Tress 1994: 313). While political transformations might require a 'new Jewish man,' the Jewish woman was to remain domesticated. In Lebanon, competing indigenous groups insisted that marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, etc., were matters under the exclusive control of the community rather than subject to central authorities. In cases where the state promotes a more progressive agenda than patriarchal communities, this kind of agreement among men to 'leave each other's women alone,' may be at the expense of women gaining formal rights. If the private sphere constitutes the 'inner sanctum' of group identity and reproduction, nationalist men have an incentive to oppose those who would either interfere with it or encourage women's movements outside of it (Kandiyoti 1991).

Heterosexism demonizes and even criminalizes non-reproductive sex and denies all but heterosexist families as a basis of group reproduction. As one consequence, it is extremely difficult for non-heterosexuals to engage in parenting, even though many desire to do so. At the same time, heterosexist divisions of labor ensure that heterosexual men are expected to participate in family life, but not as the primary parent or care-giver. Worldwide, male parenting and care-giving take many forms, but nowhere are men encouraged (or commanded) to parent and care for dependents to the same extent and in the same way that women are. Hence, some men who want to parent are denied this option, and most men who have the option do not engage it fully.

Of course this leaves women with far too great a burden of responsibility for social reproduction. But it also deeply impoverishes men. One does not have to be a Freudian or romanticize care-giving to make the argument that men's systemic exclusion from primary parenting and care-giving has profound effects – on experience, identity, and worldview. It locks women and men into patterns that serve both poorly (Johnson 1997). Of particular importance in the present discussion, it circumscribes too narrowly the forms of bonding that men may experience – with children, dependents, women, and significantly, with other men.

This division of labor powerfully shapes both the early – and psycho-socially formative – experience of the infant (who interacts primarily with

women) and the 'reproductive' years of men and women, whose lives differ systematically as a result of this division and who reproduce the division by assuming heterosexist parenting and care-giving roles. In short, the division of labor that structures social reproduction is a lynchpin of heterosexist ideology, identities and practice – and their depoliticized reproduction.

Women as Signifiers of (Heterosexist) Group Identities and Differences

As biological and social reproducers, it is women's capacities and activities that are 'privatized' in the name of heterosexist collectivities. But women also serve as symbolic markers of the nation and of the group's cultural identity. Shared images, symbols, rituals, myths, and a 'mother tongue' are essential to the continuity of social groups that are based on abstract bonds between men, understood here as political homosociality. Men appropriate a 'familial' model of reproductive ties but their distancing from reproductive activities compels them to privilege 'imagined' relations wherein 'identity, loyalty and cohesion centre around male bonds to other men' (Vickers 1990: 484). In this context, the symbolic realm is elevated to strategic importance: symbols become what is worth fighting – even dying – for and cultural metaphors become weapons in the war. The metaphors of nation-as-woman and woman-as-nation suggest how women – as bodies and cultural repositories – become the battleground of group struggles.

The personification of nature-as-female transmutes easily to *nation-as-woman*, where the Motherland is a woman's body and as such is ever in danger of violation – by 'foreign' males/sperm. To defend her frontiers and her honor requires relentless vigilance and the sacrifice of countless citizen-warriors (Elshtain 1992). Nation-as-woman expresses a spatial, embodied femaleness: the land's fecundity, upon which the people depend, must be protected by defending the body/nation's boundaries against invasion and violation.¹⁴ But nation-as-woman is also a temporal metaphor: the rape of the body/nation not only violates frontiers but disrupts – by planting alien seed or destroying reproductive viability – the maintenance of the community through time. Also implicit in the patriarchal metaphor is a tacit agreement that men who cannot defend their woman/nation against rape have lost their 'claim' to that body, that land.

Hence, 'rape' becomes a metaphor of national or state humiliation (Pettman 1996: 49).¹⁵ To engender support for its war on Iraq, the United States made frequent reference to the 'rape of Kuwait.' Regarding India, Amrita Basu argues that while 'the realities of economic and political life' preclude Hindu claims of Muslim domination, the Hindu nationalist party justifies 'Hindu violence by pointing to the sexually predatory Muslim male and the vulnerable Hindu woman'; it 'has made the raped Hindu woman symbolic of the victimization of the entire Hindu community' (1993: 28, 29; also Bacchetta

1993). Here, as in countless other nationalist conflicts, the metaphor of rape triggers deeply gendered feelings and identities, mobilizing fear in most women and aggressor/protector responses in many men.

Heterosexism underpins both the rape and the nation-as-woman metaphor. As suggested above, rape as a social strategy relies upon (and reproduces) rigid binaries of male-female, masculine-feminine, and self-other in which the domination by the first over the second term is 'justified' by reference to the latter's threatening or destabilizing potential. Rape 'makes sense' as a political-military strategy only under the assumption that men are willing – even eager? – to violate women/the feminine in this way.¹⁶ Similarly, the nation-as-woman trope only 'works' if the imagined body/woman is assumed to be (heterosexually) fertile. Imagining the 'beloved country' as a female child, a lesbian, a prostitute, or a post-menopausal wise woman generates quite different pictures, which enable quite different understandings of community.

In nationalist rhetoric, the territory/woman is in effect denied agency. Rather, 'she' is man's possession, and like other enabling vessels (boats, planes) is valued as a means for achieving male-defined ends: the sovereign/man drives the ship of state. Thus, the motherland is female but the state and its citizen-warriors are male and must prove (its) their political manhood through conflict: 'The state is free that can defend itself, gain the recognition of others, and shore up an acknowledged identity' (Elshtain 1992: 143). In Cynthia Enloe's words: 'If a state is a vertical creature of authority, a nation is a horizontal creature of identity' (Enloe 1990: 46). In political theory and practice, this horizontal identity is distinctively *fraternal* (Pateman 1988), cast here as homosocial politics among men. Excluded intentionally from the public domain, women are not agents in their own right but instruments for the realization of male-defined agendas.

Woman-as-nation signifies the boundaries of group identity, marking its difference from alien 'others.' Assigned responsibility for reproducing the group through time, women are singled out as 'custodians of cultural particularisms' and 'the symbolic repository of group identity' (Kandiyoti 1991: 434). Because symbols of cultural authenticity are jealously guarded, actual women face a variety of pressures to conform to idealized models of behavior. In Jan Jindy Pettman's words:

Women's use in symbolically marking the boundary of the group makes them particularly susceptible to control in strategies to maintain and defend the boundaries. Here women's movements and bodies are policed, in terms of their sexuality, fertility, and relations with 'others,' especially with other men. This suggests why (some) men attach such political significance to women's 'outward attire and sexual purity,' seeing women as their possessions, as those responsible for the transmission of culture and through it political identity; and also as those most vulnerable to abuse, violation or seduction by 'other' men.

(1992: 5–6)

In the context of Iran's nationalist movement against 'Westoxification,' Nayereh Tohidi notes (1994: 127) that a 'woman's failure to conform to the traditional norms could be labeled as renunciation of indigenous values and loss of cultural identity. She could be seen as complying with the forces of "Western imperialists".' Gender issues were also central to political struggles in Afghanistan, which additionally illuminates geopolitical alignments. Valentine Moghadam observes that the Saur Revolution in 1978 was committed to transforming patriarchal and tribal authority but encountered especially fierce resistance in relation to improving the lives of women, who were denied even literacy. In the civil war that followed, mujahidin forces (supported not least by the United States) unabashedly proclaimed patriarchal power. Although mujahidin factions fought among themselves, 'the men all agreed on the question of women. Thus the very first order of the new government [in 1992] was that all women should wear veils' (Moghadam 1994a: 105).

We observe manipulation of gender ideology whenever external intervention is justified by reference to a 'civilizing mission' that involves 'saving' women from the oppression of their 'own' men. As an extensive literature now documents, European colonizers drew upon notions of bourgeois respectability to legitimate their global domination of 'others.' This respectability relied upon heterosexist as well as racist and classist commitments (especially, Mosse 1985; McClintock 1995). Identities and practices at variance with Victorian codes of feminine respectability and masculine decency were singled out as demonstrating the 'backwardness' of indigenous peoples. Lacking respectability, these peoples had no claim to respect and the equality of relations it entails: foreign domination is then not only justified but re-presented as a project of liberation.

As Partha Chatterjee notes in regard to India:

By assuming a position of sympathy with the unfree and oppressed womanhood of India, the colonial mind was able to transform this figure of the Indian woman into a sign of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire cultural tradition of a country.

(1989: 622)

More recently, during the Gulf War the 'oppression' of Arab women (veiled, confined, unable to drive cars) was contrasted with the 'independence' of United States women (armed, at large, able to drive tanks), thus suggesting a 'civilizing' tone to the war against Iraq.¹⁷

Women as Agents and Heterosexism as Ideology in Political Identity Struggles

In reality, women are not only symbols and their activities extend well beyond the private sphere. In contrast to the stereotype of women as passive

and peace-loving, women have throughout history supported and participated in conflicts involving their communities (Jones 1997). They have provided essential support in their servicing roles (feeding, clothing, and nursing combatants), worked in underground movements, passed information and weapons, organized their communities for military action, taken up arms themselves, and occasionally led troops into battle. In short, women must be recognized not only as symbols and victims, but also and significantly, as agents in nationalisms and wars. As both agents and victims (not mutually exclusive categories), women are increasingly visible in processes of political conflict.

As agents, women have slowly but steadily increased their presence in formal and informal political arenas. Always the primary activists at the grassroots level, women are now more visible as these movements themselves acquire visibility. But women's agency in service to heterosexist nationalisms is inherently problematic, as it necessarily entails the reproduction of hierarchical difference, both within and between groups.¹⁸ To be effective, women are drawn toward masculinist strategies, including the denigration of 'others.' Hence, even as political agency transgresses gender 'givens' and may empower particular women, in the context of heterosexism it also reproduces difference and hierarchy. The complexity is captured in Basu's description of 'the three most powerful orators of Hindu nationalism':

At their most benign, [Vijayraje] Scindia, [Uma] Bharati, and [Sadhvi] Rithambara render Muslim women invisible; more often they seek to annihilate Muslim women. Yet all three women have found within Hindu nationalism a vehicle for redressing their experiences of gender inequality and for transgressing sex-typed roles.¹⁹

(1993: 31)

As victims, moreover, women have suffered new levels of violence in recent wars. In the first place, in contrast to earlier wars fought with different technologies, women and children have become those most likely to lose their lives in militarized conflicts.²⁰ More generally, insofar as women are responsible for maintaining homes, families, and their well-being, when societies are militarized, the costs – economic, environmental, emotional – are borne disproportionately by women. Finally, while rape has long been a weapon of war, it has recently been deployed as a weapon of genocide. Here women's bodies are the battlefield.

For reasons alluded to earlier, women have historically been denied the homosocial political bonding of public sphere activities. Although this is slowly changing, women rarely appear in combatant or leadership roles and in the top echelons of political power. Because conventional accounts of nationalism and war focus on these activities, it is not surprising that women appear only as 'an off-stage chorus to a basically male drama' (Enloe 1987: 529). Contemporary analysts continue to understand war as a 'basically male

drama' but they recognize that battlefield action is only the tip of the iceberg. Leadership personalities, gender expectations, popular sentiments, historical animosities, political alignments, diplomatic protocols, media politics, and normative principles are some of the multiple variables upon which battlefield outcomes depend. There is no fixed pattern in how gender shapes the most pertinent variables and their interaction in a specific case. But we can no longer pretend that heterosexist identities and ideology are irrelevant to these practices and the reproduction of identity-driven conflicts.

Historically, and in most countries today, women and homosexuals have been excluded from military service. Recent challenges to this exclusion have exposed how heterosexist premises underpin hegemonic masculinity. As a site of celebrated (because non-sexual) homosocial bonding, the military affords men a unique opportunity to experience intimacy and interdependence with men, in ways that heterosexist identities and divisions of labor otherwise preclude. These points are central to Carol Cohn's recent article on 'gays in the military,' where she brilliantly reveals and analyses the 'chain of signification: military, real man, heterosexual' and how uncloseted homosexuality disrupts this foundational chain (Cohn 1998: 146). Her conclusion captures a variety of points and echoes arguments from this article:

An important attraction of the military to many of its members is a guarantee of heterosexual masculinity. That guarantee is especially important because the military provides a situation of intense bonds between men, a much more homosocial and homoerotically charged environment than most men otherwise have the opportunity to be in. In that the military guarantees their manhood, men are allowed to experience erotic, sexual, and emotional impulses that they would otherwise have to censor in themselves for fear of being seen (by others or themselves) as homosexual and therefore not real men. They are not only escaping a negative – imputations of homosexuality – but gaining a positive, the ability to be with other men in ways that transcend the limitations on male relationships that most men live under in civilian life.

(1998: 145)

Women as Societal Members of Heterosexist Groups

This category extends our mapping of gender beyond the immediate context of nationalist struggles. It reminds us that women are not homogeneous or typically united, but are multiply located and participate in heterosexist hierarchies that oppress 'other' women. Heterosexism insists that women bond not with each other but with men and that women place their childbearing capacity under the control of male-dominated élites, in service to group reproduction through heteropatriarchal family forms and social relations. States structure family forms and policies, but these are also influenced by the beliefs and practices of individuals. At the same time, individuals, families

and states shape and are shaped by trans- and supra-national dynamics that are also embedded in heterosexual ideology and practice (e.g. Peterson 1996a).

Structural axes of differentiation – race/ethnicity, class, age, ability, sexuality, religion – are intermeshed, such that gender is always racialized and race genderized.²¹ Heterosexual practice promotes women's loyalty to male-led (reproductive) groups at the expense of loyalty among women *qua* women. Located within 'different' hierarchical groups, women are differently located in relation to axes of power. The 'success' of elite groups typically involves benefits for women within these groups, and in this (limited) sense it is 'rational' for women to pursue objectives that often have the additional effect of exacerbating hierarchical relations among groups, and among women. What these insights suggest – and contemporary feminist literature confirms – is that there can be no simple or single 'feminist' project. In the words of Alexander and Mohanty (1997: xxii): 'There are no fixed prescriptions by which one might determine in advance the specific counter-hegemonic histories which will be most useful.' How and to what extent feminisms realize their 'positive' (transforming social hierarchies linked by denigration of the feminine) rather than their 'negative' (enabling some women but leaving hierarchies in place) potential cannot be discerned independent of historically specific contexts.

Hence, allegiance to particular causes may complement, coexist with, or contradict allegiance to other group objectives. How and to what extent feminist and nationalist projects converge depends on contextual specifics. Kumara Jayawardena found that at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, feminism was compatible with the modernizing dynamic of anti-imperialist national liberation movements in Asia and a number of other colonized countries (Jayawardena 1986). In contrast, Val Moghadam examines contemporary movements and concludes that 'feminists and nationalists view each other with suspicion, if not hostility, and nationalism is no longer assumed to be a progressive force for change' (1994b: 3). Nationalisms in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union exemplify how women's lives/interests are subordinated to the pursuit of nation-building that continues to fuel intergroup conflicts and ensures the reproduction of heterosexism (e.g. Moghadam 1992; Einhorn 1993; Funk and Mueller 1993). In other instances, nationalism has been recast from a secular, modernizing project to one that emphasizes 'the nation as an extended family writ large' or 'a religious entity' wherein 'women become the revered objects of the collective act of redemption, and the role models for the new nationalist, patriarchal family' (Moghadam 1994b: 4). Whether secular or religious, the heterosexual commitments underpinning states and monotheisms ensure that feminist, gay, lesbian, and queer agendas are at best marginalized in today's nationalisms. In all nationalist contexts, women – as symbols and child-bearers – face a variety of pressures to support nationalist objectives even, or especially, when these conflict with feminist objectives.²²

In short, women are situated differently than men, and differently among themselves, in regard to divisions of power, violence, labor, and resources. Especially important is the paid, underpaid, and unpaid work that women do and how individual women are situated in relation to labor markets and entrepreneurial opportunities. In the context of nationalism, these various locations shape – but do not readily predict! – the allegiance various women, or women in concert, will have toward group identity and objectives. How the tradeoffs are played out may have international consequences. For example, Denmark's initial rejection of the Maastricht Treaty – a 'no' vote that threatened to undermine Community solidarity – was significantly shaped by gender issues. Danish feminists campaigned against the Treaty because work and welfare provisions in the Community structure are less progressive than those obtaining already in Denmark (True 1993: 84). Different tradeoffs pertained in the United Kingdom. There, lack of equal opportunity legislation meant that British women had a political interest in seeing their country adopt more progressive Community policies, even though this represented a loss of traditional sovereignty (Walby 1992: 95).

Yet another form of gendered nationalism is discernible in the political economy of migrant workers. Women employed to clean households and tend children reproduce gendered divisions of labor but now often far away from 'home,' in 'other' national contexts. (At the same time, their 'independent' life-styles and economic contributions to family households disrupt traditional gender stereotypes.) Tourism is one of the world's most lucrative enterprises and it too relies upon heterosexist images and ideologies to seduce individuals away from home to 'exotic' sites. International patterns in sex tourism and bride markets also are shaped by nationalist stereotypes and histories. In sum, heterosexism and nationalism intersect as employers, pleasure seekers, and bride-buyers employ nationalist images to distinguish reliable workers, exotic lovers, and beautiful but dutiful wives.

CONCLUSION

By drawing upon but shifting the focus of feminist studies of nationalism, this article has considered heterosexism as historical project and contemporary presumption. I have argued that heterosexism entails the gendered binaries epitomized in western metaphysics but present more generally in codifications based on binary sex difference. The either/or thinking that this imposes fuels hierarchical constructions of difference and social relations of domination. Heterosexist identities produce and are the effect of heterosexist symbols embodied in subject formation, ensuring that there is no 'un-gendered' identity or experience. Hence, gender is an imperative starting point in the study of identities, identification processes and their multiple effects, and heterosexism is an imperative starting for critiques of gender (as well as heterosexist classist and racist) domination.

Because gender identities are contingent constructions. They must be continuously re-created and demonstrated. Heterosexist regimes ensure that the costs of non-compliance are high. Moreover, like all oppositional dichotomies, gender emphasizes either/or difference rather than shared attributes more conducive to solidarity. And *hierarchical* privileging of the masculine – in symbolic and political ordering – puts particular pressure on males to constantly 'prove' their manhood, which entails denigrating the feminine, within and beyond the identity group.

Heterosexism as practice involves gendered divisions of activity and entitlement, naturalized by reference to binary sex and its corollary production of masculine and feminine identities and appropriate 'roles.' Though also a site of potential resistance, the heterosexual family is decisive in these arrangements, exemplifying, naturalizing, and reproducing the heterosexist symbolic order, binary gender identities, and heterosexist practice.

I draw two related conclusions from my research on heterosexism as historical project and contemporary presumption. The first informs studies of political identities and their conflictual effects, as exemplified in nationalism. In fundamental ways (e.g. polarized gender identities, heterosexist families, masculinist ideology, patriarchal power and authority), heterosexist collectivities/societies achieve group coherence and continuity through hierarchical (sex/gender) relations *within* the group. As the binary and corollary inequality that is most naturalized, gender difference is simultaneously invoked to justify *between group* hierarchies. As a consequence, the gender hierarchy of masculine over feminine and the nationalist domination of insiders over outsiders are doubly linked. That is, nationalism reproduces heterosexist privilege and oppression within the group (at the expense of women and feminized males), regardless of the political identity (race/ethnicity, religion, etc.) by which it differs from other groups. At the same time, nationalism is also gendered in terms of how the *naturalization* of domination between groups (through denigration of the feminine) invokes and reproduces the 'foundational' binary of sex difference and depoliticized masculine dominance. In this important sense, feminist and queer critiques of heterosexism are central to *all* critiques of social hierarchy, including those responding to conflicts among local, subnational, national and transnational identities.

The second conclusion informs debates in critical theory/practice regarding 'difference' and how sex/gender is structurally related to 'other' axes of oppression (race/ethnicity, nation, class). Shifting our focus from sexism to heterosexism extends feminist theorization of social hierarchies beyond male versus female identity politics and masculine over feminine cultural projects. That is, feminists are better able to theorize domination between as well as within groups. I can only note briefly here how separating gender from, for example, race is a problematic claim. On the one hand, gender, in practice, is inextricable from manifestations of race/ethnicity, religion, class, etc., and a claim suggesting otherwise is both ontologically and politically suspect. On

the other hand, I want to distinguish 'within group' and 'between group' hierarchies analytically in order to clarify how feminism (as a critique of heterosexism) is differently but significantly relevant to both.²³

Consider that *within* heterosexist groups, the dominant empirical register of hierarchy/oppression is that of sex difference, generalized to gender. Hence, and conventionally, feminist critique here speaks both to the empirical/material and symbolic/cultural registers of oppression: to the identities and practices of those privileged (men, hegemonic masculinity) and subordinated (women, the feminine) as well as to the ideology that depoliticizes that oppression.

Between heterosexist groups, the dominant empirical register of hierarchy/oppression is that of 'group' rather than sex difference, in the sense of race/ethnicity, religious, or class difference as a 'group' identification. Feminist critique here assumes a different relevance. It still speaks to the empirical register of oppression but in a circumscribed sense: only insofar as women constitute a proportion of those who are subordinated – and those who are privileged. But it continues to speak, I believe indispensably (but not exhaustively), to the symbolic register of conflicts between (heterosexist) identity groups. That is, even though the empirical 'mark' of oppression and group conflict is not that of sex difference, the naturalization – read, *depoliticization* – of that oppression is inextricable from heterosexist ideology and its denigration of the feminine.²⁴ Specifically feminist critique is imperative for deconstructing this – all too effective – naturalization of intergroup conflict, a point which is especially salient to students of IR.

Through conventional – and even many critical – lenses, heterosexism is *not* the most visible or apparently salient aspect of political identities and their potential conflicts. I have argued, however, that its foundational binary is relentlessly productive of hierarchical difference and, especially, the naturalization of hierarchies through denigration of the feminine/Other. Hence, in the context of systemic violence (within and between groups), heterosexism may be the historically constructed 'difference' we most need to see – and to deconstruct.

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Notes

- 1 In this article I employ the concept of political identity as a way of referring to identification with a particular group – whether that group is bounded by race/ethnicity, kinship, culture, territory, or shared purpose – and actions on behalf of that group as they influence and are influenced by power relations broadly conceived. For elaboration see Peterson 1995a, 1995b, 1996a.
- 2 As many critical theorists argue, this state-centric definition of nationalism is inadequate. It is especially problematic in the context of today's globalization, changing sovereignties, proliferating actors, deterritorialization and space/time compression. I also emphasize here that generalizations about states, nationalisms, women and men always oversimplify and obscure significant particularities. My *focus* in this article, however, is nationalism understood as state-centric and I indulge such generalizations in order to pursue the less familiar discussion of heterosexism.
- 3 For an early and compelling account, see Corrigan and Sayer (1985). Of course, recent feminist and other critical interrogations of nationalism address the internal effects of nationalist projects.
- 4 Jill Steans (1998: 62) writes: 'It is perhaps because the nation-state continues to function as the irreducible component of identity that gender, along with class, race or other facets of identity, continues to be rendered invisible in International Relations.' Other feminist treatments of identity in IR include Sharoni 1995; Zalewski and Enloe 1995; Pettman 1996; Tickner 1996; Zalewski and Parpart 1998.
- 5 If social theories bring agency, order and change into intelligible relation, then identifications offer *one* way of 'bridging' agency (subjectivity, identities, micro-level) and order (structure, institutions, macro-level) and change (transformations – of agency and order – as effects of action mobilized by variance in identity salience and shifting identifications).
- 6 The following six points are adapted from Peterson (1996b).
- 7 M. Jacqui Alexander credits Lynda Hart (1994) as the originator of this term and uses it to 'combine the twin processes of heterosexualization and patriarchy' (1997: 65). In this article, I use heteropatriarchy to refer to sex/gender systems that naturalize masculinist domination and institutionalize/normalize heterosexual family forms and corollary heterosexist identities and practices.
- 8 While sex and gender feature in feminist work on nationalism, relatively few authors *explicitly* problematize and/or investigate how sex and gender presuppose heterosexism/homophobia. Exceptions include the pioneering analysis of Mosse (1985) and subsequent work on sexualities in the context of nationalisms: e.g. Parker *et al.* 1992; Alexander 1994, 1997; McClintock 1995.
- 9 To clarify: a critique of heterosexism is no more (or less) an objection to heterosexuality 'per se' than a critique of sexism is an objection to sex 'per se.' It is the meaning of 'sex' (especially insofar as it reproduces the heterosexist binary) that is problematic; and it is heterosexism's refusal of other expressions of identity, intimacy, and 'family' life that is politically objectionable. Discussion of sex/ualities is complicated by the historical contingency and therefore instability of discursive

concepts. Contemporary sexualities literature cautions against retrospectively reading, for example, 'homosexuality' into history, especially prior to modernist discourse on sexualities in these terms (e.g. Butler 1990; Halperin 1990). Hence, in this article my references to heterosexism and sex/gender identities in early state-making (below) should be read as focusing on the regulation of reproductive sexual activities that is a dominant feature of the state-making conjuncture (thus leaving aside expressions of non-reproductive sexual activity). I would argue, however, that this regulation necessarily had effects on non-reproductive expressions of sexuality and is deeply implicated in the instantiation of sex/gender *binaries* more generally. In this article, I use homosexual and non-heterosexual (identities, practices, persons) as terms encompassing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (transvestite, transsexual) expressions of sexuality.

The relationship between sexism (associated with feminist studies) and heterosexism (associated with queer studies) is complex and contested, not least because the meaning and relationships of key concepts are so contested. This is in part an unavoidable consequence of challenging the binary and essentialist terms that have traditionally demarcated spheres of activities and corollary studies of them. In brief, I intend this work as a contribution to both feminist and queer theories, which seek to deconstruct conventional binaries of sex, gender, and sexuality. Queer theorists quite rightly argue that 'the study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender' (Sedgwick 1993: 27) and that acritical reliance on the latter – which characterizes some feminisms – fuels heterosexist bias (Sedgwick 1993: 31). This article attempts to deconstruct gender as a binary that is symbolically and structurally *inextricable* from the heterosexism of states/nations and to argue, by implication, that feminist theory is not coextensive with but cannot be separate from, or indifferent to, queer theory. In this I follow Butler (1994) and Martin (1994) in arguing that critical analyses of sex and sexualities are inextricable and feminist and queer studies should avoid reproducing any dichotomization of their relationship. Rather, as Butler (1994: 15) suggests, it is conceptually more productive and politically more appropriate 'for feminism to offer a critique of gender hierarchy that might be incorporated into a radical theory of sex [gay, lesbian, and queer studies], and for radical sexual theory to challenge and enrich feminism.' I return to these issues in the conclusion.

- 10 My enduring interest in state-making springs from two convictions. First, although the state is a key category in IR, it remains poorly theorized, due to inadequate historical attention and disciplinary blinders. Hence, my own theorization of states draws on research in archeology, anthropology, classical studies, western philosophy, political economy, state theories, and feminist scholarship (for elaboration and citations see Peterson 1988, 1992b, 1997). Second, with other critical postmodernists, I wish to move beyond arguments *for* postmodernist understanding (necessary in the face of obdurate modernist/masculinist commitments) *to* postmodernist theorizing that more readily (though never simply or innocently) informs political practice. Cast as challenges to reigning approaches, the former tend to emphasize the symbolic and cultural (signification, inter-subjective meaning systems, language, discourse, representation, interpretation,

identities), apparently – but not necessarily intentionally – at the expense of the concrete and structural (material conditions, political economy, institutions, social hierarchies, coercion, direct violence). Rather than this paralyzing (and polemical) polarization, critical postmodernism seeks to illuminate the *interaction* of signs and structures; that is, to analyse how culture and power, discourse and dominance, identity and political economy are inextricably linked – mutually constituted – in historically specific contexts. I intend my subsequent argumentation to demonstrate that political centralization affords not only a paradigmatic example of this interaction (thereby illustrating the appropriateness and productiveness of a critical postmodern orientation) but also a politically significant example for understanding contemporary power dynamics.

11 In Judith Butler's words:

The heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between 'feminine' and 'masculine,' where these are understood as expressive attributes of 'male' and 'female.' The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of 'identities' cannot 'exist' – that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not 'follow' from either sex or gender.

(1990: 17)

See also Bem (1993) for an especially clear and comprehensive discussion linking androcentrism, gender polarization, biological essentialism, and (hetero)sexual inequalities.

12 'Typically represented as a passionate brotherhood, the nation finds itself compelled to distinguish its 'proper' homosociality from more explicitly sexualized male-male relations, a compulsion that requires the identification, isolation, and containment of male homosexuality' (Parker *et al.* 1992: 6). On homosocial forms of domination in relation to denial of homoerotic bonding, see also Sedgwick (1985, 1990).

13 The five dimensions are drawn from Peterson (1994, 1995a) and are indebted to, but different from, the framework introduced in the singularly important work of Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989); see also Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) and Yuval-Davis (1997).

14 Beverly Allen notes that the cultural specificity of Italian nationalism is:

first, that the gendering of 'terrorism' as male insures the gendering of the victim as female, and second, and more importantly as far as Italian cultural specificity is concerned, this gendering of the victim as female insures an 'identification' – based on centuries of literary precedents – of that female victim as the Italian nation 'herself'.

(Allen 1992: 166)

15 Significantly, Pettman notes how the metaphor 'also confuses the rape of actual women with the outrage of political attack or defeat, and in the process women's pain and rights are appropriated into a masculinist power politics' (1996: 49).

- 16 The fact that rape is not present in all societies and that many men resist rape practices (even under wartime pressures to commit rape) confirms the *social* construction – not givenness – of this heterosexual objectification of the feminine.
- 17 The principle of gender equality was not an objective but a pawn in these conflicts: European colonizers oppressed women at home and abroad, and the United States was ostensibly defending Kuwait, where women cannot even vote. Enloe argues that these apparent contradictions make sense if viewed not as strategies of liberation but of justification: legitimating the domination by some men over 'other' men and their communities (Enloe 1990: 49).
- 18 This is not to argue that nationalist struggles are never worth fighting, but that they are implicated in larger and problematic dynamics that must also be contested, and not simply relegated in importance.
- 19 Bacchetta writes similarly of a militant Hindu woman she refers to as Kamlabehn, who defies stereotypes of passive femininity and decries sexual harassment by Hindu men, while displacing her resentment of this onto Muslim men.

Indeed, by projecting such characteristics onto Muslim men, Kamlabehn is able to discharge emotion that might otherwise accumulate into an impossible and unacceptable rebellion against the macho Hindu men in her environment. Instead, her representation of Muslim men only concretizes her solidarity with Hindu men by rendering even the most offensive of the latter as less offensive than the former. Such an attitude functions to confine Hindu nationalist women within a Hindu community whose boundaries and landscape are determined essentially by Hindu nationalist men.

(Bacchetta 1993: 50)

- 20 Pettman (1996: 89) writes: 'In World War 1, 80 per cent of casualties were soldiers; in World War 2, only 50 per cent. In the Vietnam War some 80 per cent of casualties were civilian, and in current conflicts the estimate is 90 per cent – mainly women and children.'
- 21 I regret that my focus on heterosexism in this article has been at the expense of attending to race/ethnicity and class. Analysing how these 'come into existence *in and through* relation to each other' (McClintock 1995: 5) is central to critical theory/practice. In this regard, I especially commend the work of post-colonial feminists more generally, and the following authors in particular: Jacqui Alexander, Ana Alonso, Zillah Eisenstein, Cynthia Enloe, bell hooks, Lily Ling, Anne McClintock, Val Moghadam, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Roxana Ng, Jindy Pettman, Gayatri Spivak, Ann Stoler, Jacqui True, Brackette Williams, Anna Yeatman, Nira Yuval-Davis.
- 22 The tremendous variety in nationalist struggles, in women's roles and in women's resistances must be emphasized, but cannot be addressed here.
- 23 I intend these arguments as a contribution to feminist theory/practice: enabling us to address the embodied 'realities' of women's lives (e.g. women as strategic empirical referent) while honoring/invoking gender as an analytical category (e.g. denigration of the feminine as pivotal dynamic within and between groups).

As clarified in note 9, I also intend this work as a contribution to queer theory: enabling 'a more expansive, mobile mapping of power' (Butler 1994: 21) by situating sex/gender as inextricable from heterosexism. In both instances, I am attempting to deconstruct binary rigidities through a critical genealogy of both historical-empirical processes (e.g. early state-making) and conceptual/symbolic developments (e.g. western metaphysics, political theory). As intimated in note 10, I intend these efforts as a contribution to depolarizing – without 'resolving' – the tension between material/structural/modernist and symbolic/discursive/postmodernist orientations.

- 24 Similarly, even though male-male rape is not apparently *heterosexual*, the naturalization of expressing domination in this form is inextricable from heterosexist ideology and its denigration of the feminine.

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