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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses the feminist debates about state and nation, naming them “feminist theories of the state” and “gender and nation” debates. It shows how feminists have moved away from essentialist notions of women and men and state and nation. Instead of seeing state and nation being real essentialized objects, feminist theories tend to explore them as relational entities that perpetually need to be reproduced through discourses, practices, or material circuits. Feminist scholars explore the power relations behind these constructions, the femininities and masculinities they rely on and reproduce, and their differentiated gender impacts—concepts now theorized as highly context specific rather than universal. A cross-cutting theme in current feminist research is the manifold impacts of neoliberalism in states and nations, and in feminist engagements with them. Feminist scholars explore how neoliberalism is combined with other ideologies, such as conservatism, radical-right populism, or homonationalism, and the gendered outcomes of this.

Keywords: feminist theories of the state, nation, nationalism, neoliberalism, homonationalism

Introduction

THE state and nation are closely intertwined in everyday language and usage. Yet theoretically and conceptually, distinct literatures have developed around the two concepts, also in feminist theory, and are covered in this chapter as *feminist theories of the state* and *gender and nation* debates. What unites feminist debates on these two concepts is a deep uneasiness about them. Feminists often quote Virginia Woolf, who wrote, “As a woman I have no country, as a woman I want no country,” which reflects the suspicions toward the state as a patriarchal institution that co-opts women’s movement demands, and toward nationalism as a patriarchal ideology that often fails the equality claims of women who have joined nationalist struggles. At the same time, feminist scholars

have been quick to point out women's active roles in these institutions and ideologies, as well as women's resistance to their traditional roles and appropriations of them.

Despite the distinct nature and profile of the feminist debates on the state and the nation, they share some key concerns that reflect the shifts in feminist theory. Traditionally, the key feminist questions in relation to the state and nation have included analyses of the paradoxes and dichotomies, such as the public-private, in and out of the state and relationships of the state and nation to feminist politics and struggles. Feminist debates on these two concepts have, first, moved away from *essentialist* notions about women and men and the state and nation. Black feminist theorizing about gender, race, ethnicity, sexism, and racism (hooks 1984; Hill Collins 1991; Lorde 1997) has become more mainstream with the popularity of the notion of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991), which highlights how gender intersects with race and ethnicity, sexuality, disability, class, and other inequality categories (e.g., Yuval-Davis 2011). Second, instead of the state and nation being real essentialized objects, feminist theories tend to explore them as relational entities that need to be perpetually *reproduced* through discourses, practices, or material circuits. Feminist scholars explore the power relations behind these constructions, the femininities and masculinities they rely on and reproduce, and their (p. 916) differentiated gender impacts. State processes, policies, institutions, discourses, practices, and norms are shown to be gendered and gendering and constitutive of gender orders. States and nations are also racialized and sexualized in that they use norms around heterosexuality to reproduce the state and nation. Feminist scholars have coined the terms *homonationalism* and *homoprotectionism* to illustrate how the states and nations draw new boundaries between "us" and "them," the Others (Lind and Keating 2013; Puar 2007). In these approaches, state interests are constructed in the very processes whereby they are represented or articulated (Kantola 2007).

Third, these concepts are now theorized as highly *context specific* rather than universal. Context-specific states are termed abusive, women-friendly, developmental, fragile, coercive, postmodern, central, or postcolonial in feminist debates to reflect the differences both between and within states and state institutions (Bumiller 2008; Prügl 2010; Kantola and Dahl 2005). Nationalism and nations mean very different things in different contexts too. Despite general trends toward using women as symbols of nations (as in Mother India or Mother Russia) or as biological and cultural reproducers of nations (Yuval Davis 1997), nations appropriate women and men, femininities and masculinities, and sexualities and race and ethnicity in different ways. The "affective turn" in feminist theory, in turn, points to the role of emotions in holding nations and states together (Ahmed 2004). Finally, the *changing political and societal context* is reflected in the feminist debates about the state and nation. What was first discussed as "globalization" has now been specified as neoliberalization that takes different forms in different parts of the world. Neoliberal governmentality reflects the infiltration of market-driven truths and calculations into the domain of politics (Ong 2007, 4). A cross-cutting theme in current feminist research is the manifold impacts of neoliberalism in states and nations and the feminist engagements

with them to the extent that we can talk about a move toward “market feminism” (Kantola and Squires 2012). Feminist scholars explore, in particular, the ways in which neoliberalism is often combined with other ideologies, such as conservatism, radical-right populism, or homonationalism, and the gendered outcomes of this.

Feminist Theories about the State

Feminist theories were long dominated by a deep uneasiness about the state, which was seen as patriarchal and therefore beyond feminist politics. This discomfort culminated in arguments that feminists did not have a theory of the state (Mackinnon 1989) and that it was not a feminist concern to theorize the state (Allen 1990). Judith Butler (1997), too, whose gender theory has been so influential among poststructural feminists and beyond, has conceptualized the state in a strongly anti-statist way—in contradiction with her other anti-essentialist thinking (Lloyd 2007). Despite these tendencies, a variety of feminist perspectives on the state exists. The “canon” includes liberal, radical, Marxist/socialist, Nordic, and poststructural feminist perspectives (see e.g., Chappell (p. 917) 2013; Kantola 2006; Waylen 1998) and, most recently, new materialist and postcolonial feminist perspectives on the state. Feminist stories and the citing practices that go with them often inflate differences between approaches, for example, between poststructural and new materialist feminisms, and rejecting what comes before relates to a need “to authorize a new terrain” (Ahmed 2008, 33; Hemmings 2011). In this chapter, I take this critique seriously, and rather than present a coherent narrative, discuss different feminist answers to some key questions. These include feminist theories’ answers to such questions as, what is the state? how is it gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized? what do the states do and with what effects? and what roles do states play in advancing equalities/ perpetuating inequalities?

For some feminist scholars, the state represents a neutral institution that can be targeted and lobbied to achieve progressive gender-equality legislation. The state is an institution that is a source of potentially women-friendly legislation and policies. For example, in the liberal feminist classic *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan 1962), equality of opportunity for women is to be achieved by changing the legislation on equal pay, working hours and outlawing discrimination in the workplace. Women’s access to the state in terms of political institutions (parliaments, governments, bureaucracies) becomes an important political question and goal.

While liberal feminists recognize that state institutions are dominated by men and that policies reflect masculine interests, they argue that the state is to be “captured back” from the interest group of men. In other words, the state is a reflection of the interest groups that control its institutions, a notion that resembles pluralist state theories in political science (Dahl 1961). The notion of the state put forward by liberal feminists is

symptomatic of liberal feminist appropriation of key concepts in general: they take the existing ideas and apply them to the case of women (cf. about power, Lloyd 2013, 113). More women in the state would entail more women's policy, a presumption that has since been challenged in the debate about women's substantive representation (Celis et al. 2008, 2014).

The benign notion of the liberal state also informs the work of Susan Moller Okin (1989), who argues that the liberal models of justice are to be extended from the sphere of the benign state to the sphere of family, and criticizes the state's indirect role in the reproduction of inequalities in families. For Okin, the solution to these problems lies within the liberal state: in its public policies and reforms of family law. The arguments about the benign liberal state surface in recent debates about feminism and multiculturalism. Okin (1999) argues that the liberal state should set boundaries to multicultural group rights when these rights harm women.

A similar benign notion of the state can be discerned from a different feminist tradition—namely, Nordic theorizing of the women-friendly welfare states. Helga Maria Hernes (1987) defines Nordic states as potentially women-friendly societies, which signifies that women's political and social empowerment happens through the state and with the support of state social policy. The social democratic citizenship tradition results in an optimistic acceptance of the state as an instrument of social change. For Hernes (1988, 210), Nordic women act in accordance with their own culture in turning to the (p. 918) state, even in those instances when they wish to build alternative institutions. Studies of the Nordic women-friendly welfare states argue that women become empowered as political subjects through the institutionalization of gender equality. This draws attention to women's contributions and roles in both maintaining and changing gender relations (Siim 1988).

Nordic feminism is more pessimistic than liberal feminism is in its analysis of gender and the state. The private dependency of women on individual men is transformed into public dependency on the state in the women-friendly welfare states (Dahlerup 1987). The expansion of the public sector, even if it benefits women, is planned and executed by a male-dominated establishment. The parameters for distribution and redistribution policies are still determined within the framework of the corporate system, where women have an even more marginal role to play than in the parliamentary system. Thus, women are the objects of policies. The tendency is exacerbated by the observation that women's lives are more dependent and determined by state policies than men's (Hernes 1987, 77) and that the Nordic welfare states are based on a gendered system of power and hierarchies.

A number of theoretical traditions in feminist theory indeed view the state less optimistically or positively. In these, the state is theorized as patriarchal, abusive, or capitalist. These critiques come from very different theoretical traditions, ranging from Catharine MacKinnon's radical feminism to Marxist and socialist feminism to Judith Butler. The state is theorized to work together with ideologies or modes of governance such as

neoliberalism or capitalism to appropriate feminist movement goals, for example, in relation to sexual violence (Bumiller 2008).

Radical feminists stress the patriarchal nature of the state, which requires analyzing its role in perpetuating gender inequalities. The state is not an isolated, neutral, and narrow institution but rather is embedded in broader gendered societal structures that in turn shape women's engagement with the state and the policies that emanate from it (Eisenstein 1986, 181). With Kate Millett, the concept of patriarchy acquired a new meaning (1970). Until her *Sexual Politics*, patriarchy had signified the rule of the father or the rule of the head of the household. Millett argues that patriarchy is actually about the rule of men—male supremacy—the most fundamental form of oppression. The concept of patriarchy captures the insight that the oppression of women is not haphazard or piecemeal; rather, the diverse forms of oppression are interconnected and mutually sustained. The radical nature of this feminist analysis stems from the claim that the state is not contingently patriarchal, but essentially so. Furthermore, patriarchy is global and universal. The particular forms that states take matter less than the fact that all are patriarchal states.

Catharine MacKinnon (1987, 1989) articulates a radical feminist stance on the state:

> The state is male in the feminist sense: the law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women. The liberal state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender—through its legitimating norms, forms, relations to society, and substantive policies.
>
> (MacKinnon 1989, 161–162)

(p. 919) Feminists cannot expect the state to liberate women because it is impossible to separate state power from male power. MacKinnon directs her critique at the liberal state in particular and criticizes its laws and policies. Even if the laws on rape, abortion, and pornography are formally there, they are never fully enforced. At the same time, states enforce the equation of women with sexuality, which adds to their oppression. For Carole Pateman (1988), the origins of patriarchy lie in the social-sexual contract that gives men the political right over women and access to their bodies. An exclusive focus on integrating women into state institutions produces a situation that perpetuates dominant patriarchal discourses and norms rather than challenge them. Important questions are not asked, critical arguments are not formulated, and alternatives are not envisioned (Ferguson 1984, 29, 193).

While liberal feminists understand the state in terms of its political institutions, radical feminists extend their focus to the wider structures of the state and society. Radical feminist work shows the patriarchal nature of the formal and informal practices of politics and connects this to the "personal"—families, sexuality, intimate relations, violence—which significantly expands the scope of what is studied as politics and the political. The

concept of patriarchy informs feminist strategies and political goals: the entire structure of male domination must be dismantled if women's liberation is to be achieved (Acker 1989, 235). Civil society, rather than the state, is the sphere in which women should concentrate their energies in order to challenge patriarchy. Via consciousness raising it becomes possible to rediscover what is truly female and to struggle to speak with women's own voice.

Whereas for radical feminists, the state is patriarchal, for Marxist feminists, the state is essentially capitalist (McIntosh 1978, 259). The state is not just an institution but also a form of social relations. Women's subordination plays a role in sustaining capitalism through the reproduction of the labor force within the family. Women are oppressed in work and excluded from it, and Marxist feminists argue that the familial ideology is to blame. When criticizing welfare states, Marxist feminists argue that the state helps to reproduce and maintain the familial ideology primarily through welfare state policies. In contrast to radical feminism, Marxist feminists argue that women are important in the struggle against capitalism as workers, not as women (McIntosh 1978) and the category of women is employed in reproductive terms (Sargent 1981, xxi).

Socialist feminists attempt to combine the insights of both Marxist and radical feminism. From radical feminists socialist feminists derive the understanding of the system of oppression called patriarchy; and from Marxist feminists, the importance of the class oppression defining the situation of all workers. The two approaches are combined in analyses of this "dual system" of capitalism and patriarchy. For Zillah Eisenstein (1979, 17), the notion of capitalist patriarchy captures the "mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchal sexual structuring." Michele Barrett, in turn, identifies a number of ways in which the state promotes women's oppression: women are excluded from certain sorts of work by protective legislation, the state exercises control over the ways sexuality is represented through pornography laws, and the state's housing policy is resistant to the needs of nonnuclear families (p. 920) (1980, 231–237). The socialist feminist debates revolve around the relative autonomy of the two systems. Some theorists argue that patriarchy has causal priority over capitalism (Hartmann 1981; Harding 1981); and others, that capitalism is more autonomous (Young 1981). For Eisenstein (1984), the capitalist class does not rule the state or government directly but instead exercises hegemony. A large part of the mystificatory role of the state is in this seeming identification of male interests and bourgeois interests.

More recently, the work of Judith Butler (1997) evidences a strong anti-state account that is critical of deflection of political battles into the courts and is based on the belief that democratization works best through civil society. In *Excitable Speech*, Butler (1997, 23) is critical of feminists who want to criminalize hate speech and argues instead that other forms of politics are more effective: "Nonjuridical forms of opposition, ways of restaging and resignifying speech in contexts that exceed those determined by the courts." Butler is suspicious about the arbitrary nature of the state power, and for her, the regulation of hate speech is an example of a means by which the state can extend its power (Lloyd 2007, 127). As Moya Lloyd (2007) explains in her interpretation of Butler, constructs such as hate speech become legal mechanisms for the state to "extend its own racial and sexualized discourses," which in turn result in inclusions and exclusions (129). These forms of state

regulation curtail the opportunities of resignification in civil society. In sum, Butler's position stresses the productivity of state discourse and calls for understanding the ways in which laws can be misappropriated and used in anti-progressive ways (129).

Critical commentators have suggested that Butler assumes that legal protection is necessarily reactionary and hence dismisses the ways in which states may promote progressive equality politics (Jenkins 2001; Mills 2003; Lloyd 2007; Passavant and Dean 2001). Butler's notion of the state is also contradictory, signifying at times a very narrow judicial institution and, at other times, a broader set of conflicting institutions, practices and discourses. In her later work, Butler offers a qualified definition of the state and suggests that the state "is not reducible to law," and that it comprises plural institutions whose interests do not always coincide and where there are, consequently, multiple sites for political resistance (see Lloyd 2007, 131). However, Lloyd suggests that Butler's skepticism toward the state remains. Lloyd (2007, 132) argues that there is indeed a fundamental paradox in Butler's account of the state: she implies that "hate-speech and pornography can be radically recited but denies this possibility to state speech, or rather she allows that it can be recited but only in anti-progressive directions."

The above theorizing often comes from specific contexts that are not always made explicit. There is a strong body of feminist work on the state that stresses the importance of different contexts where states are theorized and the linkages between theory and this practice. Development scholars point to the fundamentally different meaning of the state in non-Western countries (Afshar 1996; Alvarez 1990; Dore and Molyneux 2000; Rai and Lievesley 1996; Visvanathan et al. 1997). Like Western debates, these literatures are concerned to examine the processes of state institutions in exercises of power in various areas of public and private lives of women and women's resistance to these intrusions (Rai and Lievesley 1996, 1). However, there are important differences. (p. 921) Postcolonialism, nationalism, economic modernization, and state capacity emerge as key issues in the Third World literature; whereas Western feminists often take these issues for granted, focusing instead on how best to engage with the state (Chappell 2000, 246). For example, in Indonesia, the colonial state introduced the emphasis on motherhood and the domesticity of women that was characteristic of Victorian European societies (Wieringa 2002, 47). During the process of decolonization, women were first urged to join the battle against the colonizers but later their rights were forgotten or put aside, leading even to more conservative construction of women's roles in the state (Wieringa 2002, 47).

When exploring women's activism, for example, in Africa, the ways in which patriarchy is combined with the (neo)patrimonialism in the state becomes central (Tripp 2001; Njagi 2013). In neopatrimonial states, "claims to authority are based on personal relations of loyalty and dependence that stand above the law" (Tripp 2001, 106). When combined with patriarchy, they can exacerbate women's positions and chances in the states (Njagi 2013). Hence, questions of women's autonomy acquire a different significance from those of Western states. For example, the Ugandan women's movement has been able to claim a

greater degree of autonomy from the state, which has been critical to its success (Tripp 2001, 105). Again, these practices vary greatly between the states and need to be studied contextually.

Poststructural feminists have sought to deconstruct the internal unity of the state and to theorize the differentiated state as a diverse set of institutions. Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson (1990, 1992) challenge the unity of the state and argue that the state consists of a set of arenas that lacked coherence and Elisabeth Prügl (2010, 448) defines the postmodern state as "a decentered state in which authority is shared by multiple levels of government." In poststructural analyses then, the state is a differentiated set of institutions, practices, agencies, and discourses. The state is depicted as a discursive process, and politics and the state are conceptualized in broad terms. The state unity is reproduced discursively (see e.g., Kantola 2007; Kantola, Norocel, and Repo 2011). The state is not inherently patriarchal but was historically constructed as patriarchal in a political process whose outcome is open. The patriarchal state can be seen, then, not as the manifestation of patriarchal essence, but as the center of a reverberating set of power relations and political processes in which patriarchy is both constructed and contested (Connell 1987, 1994). Particular discourses and histories construct state boundaries, identities and agency (Kantola 2006, 2007). Masculinity is central for understanding "the multiple modes of power circulating through the domain called the state" (Brown 1995, 177). German feminists, such as Birgit Sauer (2001) and Marion Löffler (2001), use the Weberian notion "rule" (*Herrschaft*) to describe attempts to create order that operate in state institutions and society (Prügl 2010). The state emerges from this work as a set of legal rules that reinforce social practices of masculine domination (Prügl 2010).

Wendy Brown's poststructuralist approach attends to the constitutive character of state's gender orders, the contradictions inherent in them, and the ways in which state processes occur across very different sites (Brown 1995, 167). Elisabeth Prügl (2010), although inspired by Brown's work, critiques her for giving insufficient attention to (p. 922) feminist struggles and to the ways in which these have been institutionalized in state based laws and policies. A number of other poststructural feminists have asked what the most effective strategies are for empowering women in their engagements with the state (Randall 1998, 200). In other words, feminists aim to make sense not only of the state's impact on gender, but also of the ways in which the state can be made use of and changed through feminist struggles (Kantola 2006). The analyses allow the complex, multidimensional and differentiated relations between the state and gender to be taken into account. They recognize that the state can be a positive as well as a negative resource for feminists, thus deconstructing the dichotomy between "in" and "out" of the state. Within a framework of diverse discourses and power relations, gender diversity and differences in women's experiences come to the fore (Kantola and Dahl 2005).

"Renewed materialist feminism" conceptualizes the state as differentiated too. However, the state and its effects cannot be understood merely in terms of discourses but are embedded in the material phenomena and processes (Coole and Frost 2010, 2–3). The renewed material feminism accepts social constructionism but conceptualizes the material realm as irreducible to culture and discourse (Coole and Frost 2010, 27; for debates about feminist new materialism, see Ahmed 2008; Davis 2009; Irni 2013). In terms of the state,

this signifies combining the “Weberian insights of critical theory regarding the bureaucratic state, whose tentacles reach increasingly deeply to control ordinary lives through governance and governmentality, and aspects of Foucauldian genealogy that describe how the minutiae of power develop and practically manage embodied subjectivities” (Coole and Frost 2010, 27).

When explaining the renewed scholarly interest in materialism, Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (2010) single out not only the advances in natural sciences and biopolitical and bioethical issues but also the global political economy and understanding its structural conditions such as neoliberalism (6–7). From the point of the view of theorizing the state, what becomes important is the biopolitical interest of the modern state: the state’s role in managing the life, health, and death of its populations through management of “fertility rates, marriage and funeral rites, epidemics, food hygiene, and the nation’s health” (23). Seemingly technical questions about biological life processes enter the political order because the state must make decisions about the worthiness of different lives (23). In this way, states exert powers in shaping, constraining, and constituting life chances and existential opportunities. The exercise of these powers take place in complex circuits “whereby discursive and material forms are inextricable yet irreducible and material structures are simultaneously over- and undermined” (27). While economic factors and capitalism become central, the capitalist system is not understood in a narrowly economistic way but, rather, “as a detotalized totality that includes a multitude of interconnected phenomena and processes” (29). This view encourages scholars to take Foucauldian analysis of governmentality, biopolitics, and the role of discourse in maintaining social order seriously, and to incorporate the state’s role in maintaining the conditions of capital accumulation into the analyses (30).

Empirical research on gender and the state has used these feminist theories in different ways. For example, the so-called comparative state feminist literature has studied (p. 923) the ways in which women’s movements engage with one branch of the state—women’s policy agencies—and evaluated the factors that effect the successes and failures of these engagements for overall gender policy in the state (see Stetson McBride, and Mazur 1995; McBride and Mazur 2010). Lee Ann Banaszak (2010) conceptualizes the state in terms of its organization and bureaucracy and explores the favorable locations for gender activists and the impact of changes in these for feminist struggles. An important shift in Europe has been states’ engagements with political intersectionality that have expanded state policies on different inequality categories, from gender and race to, for example, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, and belief, in a contested political process that has been termed by feminist scholars “institutionalizing intersectionality” (Kantola 2010; Krizsan, Skjeie, and Squires 2012). Feminist new institutionalists, in turn, study the state as a variety of separate institutions that include both formal and informal institutions, such as norms and rules (Chappell 2013, 607; 2003; see also Krook and Mackay 2011). The body of work draws attention to the importance of

institutional legacies, path dependencies, and possibilities for change (Chappell 2013, 608).

Neoliberalism has become an important theme for feminists seeking to understand contemporary states. Neoliberal logics of governance have resulted in changes in state powers that have been described as state power evaporating upward, downward, sideways, and laterally to international organizations, substate organizations, nonelected state bodies, private enterprises, public-private partnerships, and civil societies, with manifold consequences for feminist politics and engagements with the state (Banaszak, Beckwith, and Rucht 2003, 4–7; Kantola and Outshoorn 2007, 8–14). The European Union (EU) is an example of a suprastate actor whose powers result in fundamental changes in member states through processes of Europeanization, challenging conventional notions of state sovereignty (Kantola 2010; Lombardo and Forest 2012). For Elisabeth Prügl, the EU "epitomizes the decentered postmodern state and the loss of nation-state autonomy in the context of globalisation," which engages actors beyond and below the nation-state (Prügl 2010, 448). Neoliberalism has also been conceptualized as a new relationship between government and knowledge through which governing activities are recast as nonpolitical and nonideological problems that need technical solutions (Ong 2007, 3). These changes in states are also transforming state-based feminist strategies and practices from previous "state feminism" to "market feminism" (Kantola and Squires 2012) or governance feminism (Prügl 2011; Woehl 2008), where feminist knowledge is appropriated and transformed to the service of neoliberal states.

Gender and Nation

While the state is conceptualized in a wide variety of ways, its connotations point to institutions and bureaucracy, their processes and legitimacy. The nation, in contrast, relates to the people. Inclusion and exclusion, the politics of belonging and of drawing boundaries are some of the key questions that the relation to people gives rise to. (p. 924) For feminist scholars, the gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized constructions of people in relation to nations are of central interest.

Nira Yuval-Davis (2011, 82) calls answers to the "what is a nation" question "shopping lists." They are political lists of required characteristics for certain purposes of inclusion and exclusion. Theoretically, understandings of the nation have evolved from primordial "natural nations"—that is, extensions of family and kinship units—to modernist notions in which nations are constructed in specific historic times, yet have a "concrete objective reality" (as explained by Yuval-Davis 2011, 84) to imagined communities (Anderson 1983) and nations as narrations (Bhabba 1994). Billig (1995) coined the influential term "banal nationalism" to describe the need of nations to be reproduced all the time, not just at times of crises and conflict. Nationalism, in turn, can be seen variously as (i) as a discourse that produces the idea of the nation, (ii) a project pursued by specific social movements, or (iii) an evaluation where political and cultural ideologies claim superiority of particular nations (Calhoun 1997, 6). The role of the state is oftentimes central in reproducing nations. The "nation-state" is an example of a powerful political construct as the boundaries of nations rarely coincide with those of the states (Yuval-Davis 1997, 11). Rather, the political world is characterized by stateless nations, such as the Roma or Sami in Europe, or multination states.

Nations are constructed on different lines which effects their inclusiveness and exclusiveness. Nira Yuval-Davis (1997; 2011, 20) differentiates between lines of *Volknation* (based on the myth of common descent), the *Kulturnation* (based on common culture, religion, or language), and *Staatnation* (based on loyalty and solidarity based on common values). Nations based on the myth of common descent tend to be most racialized and least permeable to those coming from outside or deemed as the nation's Others. Nations based on common identities and common culture, religion, or language result in national identities that are more open to voluntary, often assimilatory, identification. Finally, those nations based on loyalty and solidarity based on common political values have the most permeable boundaries (Yuval-Davis 2011, 20–21). Yuval-Davis (2011, 10) now speaks of "the politics of belonging" to analyze the specific political projects aimed at "constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies which are themselves being constructed in these projects in very specific ways and in very specific boundaries." Importantly, the politics of belonging involves both a hegemonic project of the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging and also "their contestation, challenge and resistance by other political agents" (20).

Feminist scholarship has explored the different gendered relations that underpin the constructions of nations and nationalisms: the roles of the women as reproducers of the nation *biologically, culturally*, and *symbolically* (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Yuval-Davis 1997, 2). The gendered constructions have been closely intertwined with race and ethnicity, and class. Lately, feminist scholarship has paid increasing attention to masculinities (Norocel 2013) and sexualities (Puar 2007; Nagel 2000; Peterson 1999) in the constructions of nations. Constructing and upholding nations requires constant doing by the nation: nations constitute their subjects, and their existence requires the (p. 925) subjects' repetitive acts and performances in which different parts of their identities play a central role.

Women's roles as the biological reproducers of the nation bring clearly to the fore the gendered roles attributed to women and men in relation to the nation and nationalism (Yuval-Davis 1997, 22). This makes a number of biopolitical questions directly relevant to debates on gender and nation: women's reproductive roles and struggles for reproductive rights, forced sterilization, abortion, contraception, population growth, population control, eugenicist discourse, and the regulation of who should have children (22). Racism has always been a strong theme because, for example, the forced sterilization of Roma women still happens in Europe today (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Kantola 2010).

Constructions of nations have tended to rely on essentialized gendered roles: women act as the mothers and biological reproducers of the nation; men as the soldiers, leaders, and protectors of the nation. The public-private distinction relegates women to the private sphere and reserves the public for property-owning men. Normative motherhood represents an ideal type of femininity, combined with normative heterosexuality (Norocel 2013, 64–66), proper gender roles, and sexual behaviors (Nagel 2000, 113), and the institutionalization of heterosexuality (Peterson 1999, 39). These roles take on different manifestations in different contexts. For example, in Serbia, from the 1980s onward with the growth of nationalism, the "reproductive potential of women" was stressed and women were to reproduce not just new citizens but also soldiers for the nation. Women's heroism, then, was determined by her willingness to sacrifice her children for the nation (Bracewell 1996, 29). The heightened role of Serbian women as biological reproducers of the nation can be compared to that of women in in India, where the nationalist movement privileged the symbolic category of women as mothers of the nation whose role was to maintain a specific national identity (Thapar-Björkert 2013, 814). In Indonesia, in contrast, during the anticolonial struggle, women had combined the roles of actors in the political arena and "good" mothers and wives but were disappointed after the national liberation was won and their roles were reduced to the domestic sphere (Wieringa 2002, 97–99).

Women have also used this maternal role for political activism, as in the case of Argentina's Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, who claimed justice from the repressive government and demanded the return of their disappeared children. In this process, the women politicized their roles as mothers and reclaimed public spaces through demonstrations (Alvarez 1990). Women's resistance to these roles of biological and cultural reproducers of the nation and the expectations that nationalism places on them is captured by Athena Athanasiou's (2005) analysis of the Women in Black. Standing silently in black these women resist the constructions of "Others" that cannot be mourned:

“performing an alternative feminist politics which involves being radically disloyal, instead of unconditionally supportive, to ‘their’ men in time of war” and “non-exclusionary notion of who counts as a ‘woman’: people of all genders and sexualities are welcomed to participate as women in their actions of ritual mourning” (41). Women’s active support for nationalist struggles was a key contribution of feminist scholarship outside (p. 926) the West (Jayawardena 1986). Women were shown to take up arms, to refuse the role of the protected in violent conflicts in national struggles as for example in Peru (Romero Delgado). Yet, the role of the mother still haunts the descriptions of women’s roles in violent conflicts, and “the mother narrative” is used a key explanation to women resorting to violence and arms (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

Gender is central to the cultural and symbolic reproduction of nations, too. The cultural production of the nation signifies the “cultural codes of style of dress and behavior as well as more elaborate bodies of customs, religion, literary and artistic modes of production, and, of course, language” (Yuval-Davis 1997, 23). Here, nations and nationalism are based on gender symbols and constructions of femininity and masculinity and women act as “symbolic border guards of the nation and as embodiments of the collectivity” (23). This entails strict norms about how women behave or dress (Chatterjee 1990). It also entails forms of normative masculinity based on fatherhood, honor, patriotism, bravery, duty, and heterosexism (Nagel 2000, 252; Norocel 2013, 70–71).

The norms constitute hierarchies between nations, as in the case of colonialism and postcolonialism and the role of oriental women and men in this process (Enloe 1989). “Native women” and their oppression were used to justify European civilizing missions. Colonialism, gender, and power hierarchies are tied together in a number of ways historically. Colonized nations are feminized, which entails the subordination of whole nations (Thapar-Björkert 2013, 810). Colonized men are feminized too to stress their inferiority to colonial men. In a highly sexualized process, sexuality and nation intersect to produce notions about other nationalities’ sexual character and potential threats related to this (Thapar-Björkert 2013, 811). Women’s bodies have also become concrete battle grounds through rape as a weapon of war and militarized prostitution and entertainment businesses. Freeing oppressed women is an imaginary still in use as in the case of US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000s.

These gendered nationalist hierarchies are also highly pertinent within countries. For example, in the Nordic countries in Europe, gender inequality is increasingly identified with the culture of the “Others”—namely, the immigrant populations or other national minorities. Their harmful gendered practices, such as female circumcision, forced marriage, and honor killings, are contrasted with the presumably gender-equal majority culture (Keskinen et al. 2009). The political consequences of this process include both homogenized and essentialized notions of gender inequalities in minority cultures and avoiding tackling gender equality problems in the majority culture.

The populism of the radical right draws on these gender hierarchies and binaries in contemporary Europe. A central feature of these ideologies is to equate nations with families based on very traditional heterosexual gender roles for women and men (Norocel 2013). Exploring the cases of Romania and Sweden, Norocel shows how radical-right populist parties construct their respective national families as vulnerable, in the hands of a remote and detached elite, and where the constructed *people* represents the most vulnerable classed part of the society, at mercy of globalization. Men are constructed as idealized working-class breadwinners, and the constructions of women draw on normative motherhood or are "reduced to merely decorative positions of (p. 927) sexual objects for the masculine heterosexual competition and reward for the people's men and their (male) Others" (Norocel 2013, 173). Unsurprisingly, radical-right populist parties in these countries have had problems with women's political participation, which is interesting considering Sweden's long history as a women-friendly welfare state and high numbers in politics. Norocel argues that being a woman and a politician went against the radical right's populist ideology, indicating that their constructions of nation as a family rely on constructing women's emancipation as a threat to the dominance of men in the public sphere and to women's motherly instincts, which, in turn, sets the very survival of the people under threat (Norocel 2013, 174).

The conservative politics of radical-right populism can take different forms too. Jasbir Puar (2008) has famously studied the "reintensification of racialization through queerness." The rise of the global gay right wing in Europe divides the world into "gay-friendly and not gay-friendly nations" (Puar 2007, xiv) to draw distinctions between certain European and Muslim countries and nations.

Puar's notion of homonationalism is based on Lisa Duggan's notion of homonormativity, the new neoliberal sexual politics in which "the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized depoliticized gay culture are anchored in domesticity and consumption" (quoted in Puar 2007, 38).

This has signified a transition in the relations of queer subjects and nation-states "from being figures of death (i.e., the AIDS epidemic) to becoming tied to ideas of life and productivity (i.e., gay marriage and families)" (Puar 2007, xii). The ways in which homonationalism appropriates homosexuality and queer subjects challenges dichotomous portrayals of nations as only "supportive and productive of heteronormativity and always repressive and disallowing of homosexuality" (39). Homoprotectionist policies can serve to consolidate national identity and legitimate the centralization of state authority. State officials seek to create a more positive image of their government, nation, human rights record, economic policy framework, or foreign policy agenda by promoting or speaking about LGBT rights (Lind and Keating 2013, 519). Lind and Keating (2013) illustrate how homoprotectionist policies were combined with a very ambivalent stance toward gender and women's rights, including reproductive rights in the case of Ecuador.

When seeking to understand the complex relations between gender and the nation, the “affective turn” has signified a shift away from text and discourse to understanding emotions, affects, and the body. In other words, the emotional politics of contemporary constructions of nation are based on power circulating not just through discourses but also through feelings, emotions, bodies, and affects (Ahmed 2004; Pedwell and Whitehead 2012, 116). As Carolyn Pedwell (2012) argues, “Emotions are conceptualized most productively ‘not as affective lenses on ‘truth’ or ‘reality’ but, rather, as one important (embodied) circuit through which power is felt, imagined, mediated, negotiated, and/or contested.” Power works through affect to shape individual and social bodies in a gendered process whereby subjects learn emotional rules that help to maintain the hierarchies of gender, race, and class that exist in nations (Boler 1999). One of Sara Ahmed’s (2004, 12) central insights is that “emotions can attach us to the very conditions of our (p. 928) subordination.” This “affective attachment to social norms” explains the difficulties in achieving change in unequal power relations (11–12).

Conclusion

The state and nation continue to play key roles in challenging gendered, racialized, and sexualized hierarchies in contemporary societies. Feminist scholarship theorizes them as powerful constructs in which gender, race, class, and sexuality occupy a central position. Feminist answers to the “where are the women” question (Enloe 1989) exposed the power of the public-private distinction that had traditionally kept women outside the state in the private sphere and in the role of the biological reproducers of the nation. At the same time, this research showed women’s active roles in the states and nations. A fundamental shift in feminist theory from the study women to the study of gender transformed the feminist study of states and nations too. Theoretically, it required focusing on both femininities and masculinities, on the broader power relationships in the societies, and on structural and institutionalized hierarchies in states and nations. The power relations between gender and the state and nation were no longer theorized as either top-down or bottom-up but as co-constitutive and complex. The relations that shape gendered nations and states also go beyond traditional state boundaries, to the supranational, international, and local levels and spheres. Later Judith Butler’s (1990) influential work on the performativity of gender impacted on feminist theories about the state and the nation too. Gender, the state, and nation were now theorized in terms of doing rather than being: they need constant repetitive acts by subjects to uphold them. The states and nations are discursively produced in processes where gender, race and ethnicity, and sexuality and class play a central role. The new materialist turn in feminist theorizing suggests that these processes are not just discursive but are material and bodily as well, and affects and emotions strengthen the ties between them and make change harder.

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