NIRA YUVAL-DAVIS
University of Greenwich, London

NATIONALIST PROJECTS AND GENDER RELATIONS[1]

Nationalist projects are multiplex, multi-dimensional and historically specific. The main aspects looked at in this article are those relating to genealogy and origin, those related to culture and tradition and those related to citizenship and state. In all of them gender relations play crucial roles, constructing notions of femininity and masculinity, naturalize power relations and reproduce biologically, culturally and symbolically national collectivities. Feminist politics, aimed at the promotion of women's position and power in all societies has had to confront the reality that their positions, as that of the men in their national collectivities, are constructed by a myriad of social divisions and other historical forces. Only by acknowledging and confronting differences among women as well as among men, can there be any process of political dialogue which could transcend and bridge these differences.

Keywords: theory of nationalism, feminist interpretation

There is an inherent paradox in the ways theories of nationalism have treated gender relations in general and women in particular. On the one hand nations have been imagined as 'natural' extensions of the family and kinship relations, especially among the primordialists (Shils 1957; Geertz 1963; Van der Berghe 1979). In such constructions and in nationalist rhetorics in which the homeland is constructed as a woman/mother and in which wars are fought to defend the 'womenandchildren' (Enloe 1991), gender relations are perceived to be at the heart of the discourse on nations and nationalism. On the other hand, most theorizations of nations and nationalisms and political theory have tended to ignore women completely, even when discussing the reproduction of nations, which was being attributed to intellectuals (Gellner 1983; Smith 1986) and/or state bureaucrats (Amin 1978; Zubaida 1989). As Carol Pateman (1988) has argued, the classical theories of 'the social contract' which are widely

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[1] The ideas presented in this essay have been further developed in my book *Gender and Nation* (Sage, 1997).

influential and have laid the foundation for common sense understanding of western social and political order, located women in the private domain, which is not seen as politically relevant. As nationalism and nations have usually been discussed as part of the public political sphere, the exclusion of women from that arena has affected their exclusion from that discourse as well.

Some notable exceptions to the gender-blind theorizations of nationalism have been Balibar (1990), Chatterjee (1990) and Mosse (1985). Their insights were influenced and nurtured by a small but growing group of feminist scholars who have been working in this area (eg Enloe 1989; Kandiyoti 1991; Jayawardena 1982; Parker & al. 1992; Pateman 1989; Yuval-Davis 1980, 1993, 1997; Yuval-Davis & Anthias 1989). This essay will explore some of the ways gender relations affect and are affected by nationalist projects in the major facets.

Theorizing nations and states

The notion of 'the nation' has to be analysed and related to nationalist ideologies and movements on the one hand and the institutions of the state on the other. Nations are situated in specific historical moments and are constructed by shifting nationalist discourses promoted by different groupings competing for hegemony. Their gendered character should be understood only within such a contextualization. The concept of the 'nation-state' assumes a complete overlap between the boundaries of the nation and the boundaries of those who live in a specific state. This, of course, is virtually everywhere a fiction. There are always people living in particular societies and states who are not considered to be (nor often consider themselves to be) members of the hegemonic nation, there are members of national collectivities who live in other countries, and there are nations which never had a state (like the Palestinians), or which are divided across several states (like the Kurds). However, this fiction has been at the basis of nationalist ideologies (Gellner 1983).

The effect of this fiction is to naturalize the hegemony of one collectivity and its access to ideological apparatuses of both state and civil society. This naturalization constructs minorities into assumed deviants from the 'normal' and excludes them from important power resources. It can also lead the way to an eventual 'ethnic cleansing'. Deconstructing this is crucial to tackling racism on the one hand and to understanding the state itself on the other hand.

If 'nations' are not to be identified with 'nation-states', one questions if there are any 'objective' characteristics according to which nations can be recognized. This question is not purely theoretical, given the wide consensus, affirmed by the United Nations, regarding 'the right of nations to self determination'.

There have been many definitions of 'the nation'. Some of them sound like a shopping list, defining nations as those which have their own history, language, territory, economic life and culture (Stalin [1913]1972:13). Other definitions dispense with this shopping list altogether. Greenfeld, for example (1992:7) argues that the only common principle which lies at the basis of all nations is that their members feel that their nation is of superior quality. A vital ingredient emphasised by Otto Bauer (1940; Yuval-Davis 1987a) is that of 'common destiny'. It is oriented towards the future, rather than just the past, and can explain the subjective sense of commitment of people to collectivities and nations, such as in settler societies, or in post-colonial states, in which there is no shared myth of common origin (Stasiulis & Yuval-Davis 1995). At the same time it can also explain the dynamic nature of any national collectivity and the perpetual processes of reconstruction of boundaries which take place within them, via immigration, naturalization, conversion and other similar social and political processes.

'The United States of the World" which Greenfeld sees as a possible nation would have to gain this sense of shared destiny which would differ from other (intergalactic?) collective destinies before it could evolve into a national collectivity, as collectivities are organized around boundaries which divide the world into 'us' and 'them'.

National projects are usually multiplex and different dimensions would be emphasized in particular historical moments or by particular segment within the national collectivity. For this reason, one cannot simply [and historically] divide nations and nationalist projects into 'types', as so many who have written on nationalism do. Instead, this essay differentiates between three major dimensions of nationalist projects which tend to relate in somewhat different ways to gender relations. One such major dimension of nationalist projects is the genealogical dimension which is constructed around the specific origin of the people (or their race). The myth of common origin or shared blood/genes tends to construct the most exclusionary/homogenous visions of 'the nation'. Another major dimension of nationalist projects is the cultural dimension in which the symbolic heritage provided by language and/or religion and/or other customs and traditions are constructed as the 'essence' of 'the nation' and although such a construction allows for assimilation, it tends to have little tolerance of 'non-organic' diversity. Constructions of the 'Other' – the stranger, the enemy, are crucial in that respect. The third dimension of nationalist projects discussed in the essay focuses on citizenship as determining the boundaries of the nation, and thus relates it directly to notions of state sovereignty and specific territoriality.

Blood, belonging and women
as the biological reproducers of the nation

A variety of cultural, legal and political discourses are used in constructing boundaries of nations, as will be discussed later on in the essay. However, these boundaries are constructed in order to sort people into 'us' and 'them' and stretch from generation to generation. As the biological 'producers' of children/people, women are also, therefore, 'bearers of the collective' within these boundaries (Yuval-Davis 1980).

The central importance of women's reproductive roles in ethnic and national discourses becomes apparent when one considers that one usually joins the collectivity by being born into it. In some cases, especially when nationalist and racist ideologies are very closely interwoven, this might be the only way to join the collectivity, as those who are not born into it are excluded. The only way 'outsiders' can conceivably join the national collectivity in such cases might be by intermarriage. But even then, as for example was the case in Nazi law, the 'pure blood' can be 'contaminated' even if one 1/8 or 1/16 is of the Other's (Jewish, Black) blood. And James Davis (1993), in his book *Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition* describes the 'one drop rule' which has operated in the construction of the definition of 'who is Black' in the USA.

It is not incidental, therefore, that those who are preoccupied with the 'purity' of the race would be also preoccupied with the sexual relationships between members of different collectivities. Legal permission for people from different 'races' to have sex and to marry has been one of the first significant steps that the South African government took in its journey towards the abolition of Apartheid.

The inclusion of a new baby in a national collectivity is far from being, of course, purely a biological issue. In different religious and customary laws, the membership of a child might depend exclusively on the father's membership (as in Islam), the mother's membership (as in Judaism), or it might be open for a dual, or voluntary choice membership. There exist a variety of rules and regulations which govern when children born to 'mixed parenthood' would become part of the collectivity and the cases when they would not; they could be considered a separate social category, as was the case in South Africa; part of the 'inferior' collectivity, as during slavery; or – although this is rarer – part of the 'superior' collectivity, as was the case in marriages between Spanish settlers and aristocratic Indians in Mexico (Gutiérrez 1995). Social, religious as well as legal conventions are of crucial importance here.

Depending on the hegemonic discourses which construct nationalist projects at specific historical moments, women might be encouraged, discouraged, or sometimes forced to have or not to have children or – – especially since the development of the appropriate pre-natal tests – to have children of a particular sex. One or more of three major discourses

tend to dominate nationalist policies of population control. They are – the discourse of 'people as power'; the Eugenicist discourse and the Malthusian discourse.

'People as Power':
The Eugenicist discourse and the Malthusian discourse

In this discourse, the future of 'the nation' is seen to depend on its continuous growth. Sometimes this growth can be based also on immigration. At other times, it depends almost exclusively on the reproductive powers of women who are called upon to have more children. The need for people – often primarily for men, can be for a variety of nationalist purposes, civil and military. They can be needed as workers, as settlers, as soldiers. For example, in Japan the government is offering a monetary reward for each child under school age and twice as much for third children. They are worried as the birth rate in Japan is now the lowest in its history. The official reason for this campaign is the welfare of 'the nation' – if Japan's population declines it will cause 'labour shortages, sluggish economic growth and higher tax burdens to support social services for the elderly.' For some of its critiques, however, the campaign has raised echoes of the coercive 1930s campaign to 'breed and multiply' for the good of the Japanese empire... (*Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights* (WGNRR) 1991).

Eugenics, a pseudo-science, concerned itself not with the size of the nation but with its 'quality'. Concerns about the 'quality' of 'the nation' have been shared, of course, by much wider circles than by self declared eugenicists. It was concern for the 'British Race' which Beveridge describes in his famous report as the motivation for establishing the British welfare state system (Beveridge 1942). Better health, education and housing for the poor have been promoted as necessary for improving the quality of the welfare nations. Eugenics, however, did not concern itself with better nurturing of children, but attempted to pre-determine the quality of the nation via 'nature' in the way of selective breeding.

Genetic laws, said racial scientists, would determine the future of the human race; policymakers' only option was whether to use genetic knowledge to advance humankind or to refuse to allow racial degeneration to destroy the *volk* (Koontz 1986:150).

But eugenistic constructions of national reproduction concern much more than the physical 'health' of the next generation, and concern notions of 'national stock' and the biologization of cultural traits.

The country in which today population policies are formulated in the strongest eugenistic terms is Singapore, where Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew demanded that highly educated women as their patriotic duty produce children who would be genetically superior, while poor uneducated mothers were given a cash award of $10,000 if they agreed to

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be sterilized rather than continue to produce their genetically inferior children (Heng & Devan 1992). Although not always evident and not seen everywhere to the same extent, differential policies of encouragement and discouragement of childbearing towards different segments of the population (based on class, ethnicity, 'race' and often all of the above), exist in many countries.

Thomas Malthus, the British clergyman-turned economist predicted already in the 1800's that the planet would not be able to support for long the growing human population which grows much faster than global food resources. As Hartman comments, however, (1987:13-14) Malthus was wrong on two basic counts. Firstly, population growth can be slowed down and eventually be stabilized by voluntary choices of individuals and not just by 'natural' disasters. Secondly, Malthus greatly underestimated the capacity of the planet to feed its growing human population and the consequent very different relations between human production and reproduction rates.

However, Malthusian-type prophesies continued periodically to be heard, although they became increasingly more focused on Third World countries. A very influential book in that respect was *The Population Bomb* which came out in 1968, written by the Stanford University biologist Paul Eherlich. Focusing on the rate of population growth in the Third World combined a racist fear of being 'swamped' by the non-western Others with an easy let-out explanation for guilty western liberal consciences for the persistence of poverty and low standard of life in Third World countries in the post-colonial period. Most importantly, however, Malthusian discourse has not been just an ideological discourse but has become a cornerstone of population policies in many Third World countries themselves, as a major strategy to try and solve the countries' economic and social problems. There is a fear of the destabilization of the economic and political system if the balance between the supply and demand for labour power is seriously threatened as a result of 'uncontrollable' growth in the population.

The effect of Malthusian policies is often highly gendered. Where there is a strong pressure to limit the number of children, and where male children are more highly valued for social and economic reasons, practices of abortions and infanticide are mainly directed towards baby girls.

The social context

It is important to note that often there is a serious conflict between collective national and individual interest in terms of the number of children one has. When there are no welfare structures to look after the elderly and the ill, it is crucial for people to have enough healthy children to support them. Moreover, when there are no developed public health services and the rate of infant mortality is high, there is a real interest for

the women to become pregnant as many times as possible. As Hartman (1987:8) has pointed out, there has never been a case where the rate of population growth has gone down where the rate of infant mortality has not gone down as well. This is especially important to remember in the times of the structural adjustment policies, because at the same time as creating pressures to cut down the rate of population growth, they also cut down funds for public health care and the support required for women to bear and rear healthy babies. As Sonia Correa reports (1994:7) a massive international campaign by the reproductive health and rights movement has succeeded in shifting the political agenda for the UN conference for Population and Development policies in Cairo (September, 1994), so that its resolutions speak no more just about family planning and contraceptive services but about reproductive health. This would also encompass maternal and child care and prevention of cancer and sexually transmitted diseases. And although there is a great distance between formal UN declarations and their implementations, this shift in the public political discourse is all for the good.

The absence of public health and welfare infrastructure is not, however, the only social factor which needs to be taken into consideration, as the fierce resistance to women's reproductive rights by the Vatican/Iran's fundamentalist alliance during the Cairo conference can attest to. For them and other religious leaders the ability of women to control their own bodies is seen as a direct threat to their authority and very many women would hesitate to take any act which would be interpreted as betrayal of sacred religious and customary laws. It is important to stress in this context, however, (as will be elaborated in ch. 3) that rather than being a result of 'intrinsic' and 'essential' religious imperatives, religious authority is being invoked in order to legitimate conflicting positions concerning women and their reproductive options.

Moreover, in social and cultural systems where the social value of women (as well as, usually, their ability to exercise some social power especially when old) depends on whether or not they have sons, the number of children women would bear can depend on much more thorough and all-encompassing processes of social transformation, especially in relation to what Sonia Correa and Ros Petchesky (1994) have called women's social rights. Processes of globalizaton – economic political and social, would also create contradictory pressures on women's fertility. On the one hand, there would be more pressure on women to go out to work, and often through international aid organizations there would be more contraceptives available. On the other hand, rising ethnic and religious fundamentalist identity and political movements would tighten control over women and increase opposition to any reproductive rights in the name of 'custom and tradition'.

It is important to remember that it can also be non-governmental formal and informal groupings, both religious (like the Catholic Church) and national which would exert pressure and sometimes force on women

to have or not to have children. For example, there has been strong pressure on Palestinian women to bear more children for the national struggle, as a Palestinian woman told me:

> We need to have one son to fight and get killed, one son to go to prison, one son to go to the oil countries to make money and one son to look after us when we are old.

Yasser Arafat is reported to have said that:

> The Palestinian woman who bears yet another Palestinian every ten months... is a biological time bomb threatening to blow up Israel from within (Portuguese 1996:311).

On the other hand, the prospect of children born out of wedlock, and even worse, outside the 'proper' religious and national boundaries, can be considered as bringing shame on the family and women who are suspected of 'fraternizing' with 'the enemy' might be severely punished. The reports on Bosnian children born of war rapes who have been abandoned in hospitals and orphanages because of the shame to the family/ethnic group is another case in point.

Population policies and women's reproductive rights are, therefore, closely interrelated, and both of them affect and are affected by the ways various nationalist projects view the size and quality of the 'pool of genes' in the national collectivity and how these should be controlled and reproduced.

Cultural reproduction and gender relations

'Culture' has come to play a central role in both analyses and ideologies of national and other collectivities. Carl-Ulrik Schierup (1995:2) has even claimed that

> a general 'culturization' of the political language has taken place. Here, strategies of dominance as well as those of rebellion become increasingly phrased in the culturized terms of ethnic particularity.

In this culturalized discourse, gendered bodies and sexuality play pivotal roles, as territories, markers and reproducers of the narratives of nations and other collectivities. Gender relations are at the heart of cultural constructions of social identities and collectivities as well as in most cultural conflicts and contestations.

Although analytically the discourse of religion and culture is distinct from that of power relations (Assad 1993), concretely and historically it is always embedded in them. This is true not only in relation to hierarchies of power within the religious and cultural institutions and their relations to more general structures of class and power within the society, but also in relation to the religious and cultural imagination and their hierarchies of

desirability as well as constructions of inclusions and exclusions. Sexuality and gender are central in this (King 1995).

Also, because of the central importance of social reproduction to culture, gender relations often come to be seen as constituting the 'essence' of cultures as ways of life to be passed from generation to generation. The construction of 'home' is of particular importance here, including relations between adults and between adults and children in the family, ways of cooking and eating, domestic labour, play and bed time stories, out of which a whole worldview, ethical and aesthetic, can become naturalized and reproduced. However, as Floya Anthias and I (1989:7-8) have pointed out, one can hold on to the problematic notion of reproduction, only if processes of growth, decline and transformation are included in it.

Cultures operate within both social and spatial contexts (Dwyer in Gunew & Yateman 1993) which cannot be understood separately from the time dimension (Doreen Massey 1994). Different positionings, both socially and geographically, would affect the ways cultures are articulated and used, both inside and outside collectivities. Gerd Bauman (1994) has pointed out that while dominant discourse assumes the congruence of culture and community, demotic (of the people) discourse tends to deny this. A clear example of such a 'demotic' discourse has been the slogan of Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism when they chanted in anti domestic violence demonstrations in Southall and in countering the Islamist anti-Rushdie demonstration:

Women's tradition – resistance, not submission!

Rather than a fixed and homogenous body of tradition and custom, 'cultural stuff', therefore, needs to be described as a rich resource, usually full of internal contradictions, which is used selectively by different social agents in various social projects within specific power relations and political discourse in and outside the collectivity. Gender, class, membership in a collectivity, stage in the life cycle, ability – all affect the access and availability of these resources and the specific positionings from which they are being used.

Defining culture in this way pre-empts debates on the notion of 'authenticity'. Authenticity assumes fixed, essential and unitary constructs of cultures, identities and groupings. 'Authenticity' can become a political and economic resource in itself in particular ethnic projects. It can also give rise to what Kubena Mercer (1990) has called 'the burden of representation' and Amrita Chhachhi (1991), in a somewhat different context, has called 'forced identities'.

Women especially are often required to carry this 'burden of representation', as they are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour, both personally and collectively. Claudia Koontz (1986:196) quotes the different mottos which were given to girls and boys in the Hitler youth movement. For girls the motto was – 'be

faithful; be pure; be German'. For boys it was – 'live faithfully; fight bravely; die laughing'. The national duties of the boys were to live and die for the nation; girls did not need to act – they had to become the national embodiment.

A figure of a woman, often a mother, symbolizes in many cultures the spirit of the collectivity, whether it is Mother Russia, Mother Ireland or Mother India. In the French revolution its symbol was 'La Patrie', a figure of a woman giving birth to a baby, and in Cyprus, a crying woman refugee on roadside posters was the embodiment of the pain and anger of the Greek Cypriote collectivity after the Turkish invasion. In peasant societies, the dependence of the people on the fertility of 'Mother Earth', has no doubt contributed to this close association between collective territory, collective identity and womanhood. However, women symbolize the collectivity also in other ways. As Cynthia Enloe (1990) has pointed out, it is supposedly for the sake of the 'womenandchildren' that men go to war. Women are associated in the collective imagination with children and therefore with the collective, as well as the familial, future. But this does not only happen during wars. Recently, for instance, in the riots which flared among Muslim youth in Bradford, one of the participants clarified the motivation behind their actions to the Guardian reporter (Travis 18/6/95):

> It's not about prostitution or unemployment or about all that nonsense of the Chief Constable. It's about the way two police officers treated one of our women.

The 'burden of representation' on women of the collectivity's identity and future destiny, has also brought about the construction of women as the bearers of the collectivity's honour.

Women, in their 'proper' behaviour, their 'proper' clothing, embody the line which signifies the collectivity's boundaries. Other women in many other societies are also tortured or murdered by their relatives because of adultery, flight from home, and other cultural breaches of conduct which are perceived as bringing dishonour and shame on their male relatives and community (see, for example, Chhachhi, 1991 & Rozario 1991). A weaker version of retaliation against women who betrayed the collective honour was the mass shaving of women's heads, in different European countries after WW2, who were accused of befriending the occupying Nazi armies during the war (Warring 1996).

Even when things do not reach these extreme and often exceptional circumstances, cultural traditions and often the (re)invention of traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) are often used as ways of legitimizing the control and oppression of women. In situations in which individual men as well as whole collectivities feel threatened by 'Others' this phenomenon may intensify.

In his book on postmodern morality, *Life in Fragments*, Zygmunt Bauman (1995) claims that unlike the conventional outlook which sees

morality as a result of an internalization of specific cultural moral codes, morality needs to be seen as pre-social. It emerges once the individual becomes conscious that an 'Other' exists and a choice arises concerning the way in which that Other should be treated. Bauman hastens to clarify that this does not mean that everyone is moral, but that the need for human morality precedes rather than follows specific religious and other cultural systems.

Bauman's definition of morality puts management and control of boundary construction at the heart of the various cultural moral systems. All societies have a pool of cultural traditions, collective memories and 'common sense' in which the image of the 'Others' and the 'rules' about how they should be handled are to be found. Of course, as in any other cultural production, cultural constructions of 'Otherness' are dynamic, full of contradictions and are differentially available to different social categories and groupings. Although usually the national and ethnic 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983) are supposed to transcend gender, class, regional and other differences, very often they can become signifiers, at least partially, of otherness, constructed as having come from a different 'stock'.

Women usually have an ambivalent position within the collectivity. On the one hand, as mentioned above, they often symbolize the collectivity unity, honour and the raison d'etre of specific national and ethnic projects, like going to war. On the other hand, however, they are often excluded from the collective 'we' of the body politic, and retain an object rather than a subject position. In this sense the construction of womanhood has a property of Otherness. Strict cultural codes of what it is to be a 'proper woman' are often developed to keep women in this inferior power position. At the same time there is a close link between notions of sexuality and other forms of construction of 'otherness' such as racism.

Racism and sexuality

Similar sexualized demonologies which combine fear and envy towards racialized objects have existed not only in relation to Blacks but also in most other racialized images of the Other, as Siboni (1983) and Gilman (1991) have shown concerning the Jews, and Edward Said (1978) and others (see, for instance, Lutz 1991 & Lewis 1996) have shown concerning the orientalist cultural tradition which has racialized the 'exotic' people of the Middle and Far East. The embodiment dimension of the racialized Other puts sexuality at the heart of the racialized imagery which projects into the Other dreams of forbidden pleasures and fears of impotency.

These dreams, of course are always highly gendered, although not always heterosexual (Kosofsky Sedgwick 1992). In different social and political contexts the combination of sexuality and differential power relations manifest themselves in a variety of ways – physical, political

and/or economic. The interplay of the power relations between women and men as well as those between masters and slaves, the colonizers and the colonized, the locals and 'the strangers' has tended to create some common scenarios that have played themselves in more than one context. A common literary theme, for instance, (see, for example Doris Lessing's novel (*The Grass is Singing* 1950) on Southern Africa; Amos Oz' *My Michael*, 1958 on Israel; and Harper Lee's, *To Kill a Mocking Bird,* 1960. on the USA) is that of the disempowered and isolated woman of the hegemonic collectivity fantasizing and sometimes actually daring to develop sexual relationships with the available men of the racialized collectivity who are there as servants or as labourers. The men of the hegemonic collectivity in that narrative, while viewing the Other as inferior and uncivilized, would also fear and envy him, attributing to him omnipotent sexuality and lust. A common rationalization for lynching black men has been their actual, more often mythical sexual intercourse with white women which could only be constructed as a rape within this discourse. The myth of the Other as a rapist is a common tale in many racialized contexts. As Theresa Wobbe (1995:92) argues, the gendered challenge that the stranger presents constitutes a physical-affective dimension which is central to the understanding of racist violence. It is structured around the common stereotype of the male stranger harassing, threatening or actually raping 'our women', whose honour has to be defended.

The prevalence of the myth of 'the Stranger' as a rapist, however, should not prevent us from the realization that rape is a common violent practice aimed at women (and sometimes men) from other racialized collectivities. As Theresa Wobbe (1995:94) also points out, the constructed collectivity boundaries 'between "us" and "them" also indicates the limits and intersections of social obligations and social norms'. She sees this as a central dimension in the understanding of racist violence and violence against women in everyday life, as the absence of social responsibilities towards the Others often implies the freedom to violate and attack. The targets for such attacks could be not only 'their' women, but also 'traitors' such as wives of mixed marriages.

Relationships between racialized Others, however, are not always embedded just in violence. Cynthia Enloe (1989:ch. 2) has described the elaborated industries of sex tourism in which male orientalist dreams of inexhaustible pools of sexual pleasures and 'exotic' sexual objects become the major source of economic survival for impoverished post-colonial individuals and communities in locations, incidentally, which have tended to be sites reserved for the 'rest and recreation' of the American military, such as Thailand, South Korea and the Philippines (Enloe 1989:36). Sometimes these relationships go beyond the mere sexual. 'Mail-order brides' firms have been flourishing because of the construction of oriental women as the 'perfect wives' – beautiful, docile, hard working and dependent – for isolated and timid western men. Such marriages can be

seen to be the only opportunity for those women (and often their families) to escape from lives of incredible hardships in their societies of origin. Recently, the location of the 'mail-order brides' market has been shifting to Eastern Europe, for a combination of economic and racist considerations.

The 'Shirley Valentine' phenomenon where women are the tourists is somewhat similar to that of men, although here formal prostitution, in the form of male gigoloism, is less common than just consenting casual or not so casual sex. The exchange here is more on the basis of mutual pleasure rather than money for pleasure. The western women tourists are in search of sexual adventures and experimentation while away from home, and the local men get free sex not available to them from the local women who are under strict social control. Sometimes these sexual relationships develop into love relationships and marriages in which one of the spouses immigrate. However, at times other motivations would be more important. There have been studies which indicate (Cohen 1971) that the motivation of the men could often be similar to the 'mail order bride' syndrome – the opportunity to gain a visa or a 'green card' and immigrate. Another study (Glenn Bauman 1989) carried out among shop keepers in East Jerusalem has pointed to another motivation of the local men – as an outlet of their generalized senses of frustration and disempowerment.

Bauman analysed the sexual relationships between the shop keepers and the tourists as between feminized men and women who have taken upon themselves the classical male roles, as they are the ones who are the mobile, the rich, the powerful. However, this framework of analysis is too simplistic. Firstly, although the women tourists are the powerful, relatively rich and mobile, the initiators of the sexual liaison are usually the men, whose 'machoism' – but in a non threatening because limited context, is one of their main sources of attraction to the women (as was revealed in a TV program on this question – 'Esther', BBC2, 21/8/1995). Secondly, Bauman equates feminization with emasculinization and disempowerment. This is a model in which the feminine is the negative passive mirror image of the masculine, which of course (and 'even' Freud recognized this) femininity never is, even in the most constricting social systems.

Other authors (such as Nandy 1983; Meaney 1993) have attributed a more generalized feminized image to colonial societies:

> A history of colonisation is a history of feminisation. Colonial powers identify their subject people as passive, in need of guidance, incapable of self-government, romantic, passionate, unruly, barbarous – all of those things for which the Irish and women have been traditionally praised and scorned (Meaney 1993:233).

Again, in this imagery, feminization and disempowerment are being equated. No wonder Fanon (1986[1952])) (and even more so many of his followers) have equated liberation with machoism – and it is in this conjecture that paradoxically the 'liberated' women can become disempowered.

Gender and war

Wars can affect the lives of the people on the 'home front' in many different ways. On the one extreme, the war can have little or hardly any effect, if the war is taking place away from the home front, the military involved is professional, and there are very few casualties. A lot of the experience of the colonial countries has been of that nature. While some women have had husband soldiers, especially officers, who have visited them from time to time, most of the gendered support network has been composed from local people and a few colonial women, in or outside the military.

On the other extreme, war becomes a total experience which completely transforms and often destroys the lives of the people in the country. Most or even all of the determinants of one's daily life and personal identity before the war came can disappear in a few hours – place of work, properties, homes, personal artifacts, and worst of all – friends, relatives and members of one's family. Even if one is not injured, abused or tortured by the enemy, the brutal stripping of all that has been nearest and dearest have devastating long term if not permanent effects on people's lives. Life becomes solely about survival.

Becoming a refugee is a gendered experience. Up to 80% of the total refugee population is composed from women and children. As Adam Jones has pointed out (1994) this is a result of the fact that being killed, as well as killing, is gendered in war. It is not that women and children do not get killed – but when a selective killing does take place – such as during ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia, then it is the men who are being selected, taken away, and then 'disappear' – sometimes to reemerge from a detention camp, but often in a mass grave (as has been the case in Srebrenica).

Even when men are not selectively arrested and/or murdered (I almost wrote 'executed', falling into the formal discourse of 'legitimate wars'...), they are often absent, even when the war is local, as they are attached to fighting units and/or hiding in order not to be caught (Jones 1994:120-129). Women and old men are left in villages to look after the house and children, to work the land, and to keep the social fabric of the community going.

The women left become vulnerable to rape by the enemy soldiers. A lot has been written in the last few years about rape in war, especially since the systematic rape of women by Bosnian Serbs has been exposed by the media (eg Amnesty 1995; Pettman 1996; Zajović 1994) Similar reports were heard about Rwanda (Bonnet 1995) and the war in Bangaladesh in 1981 (Gita Sahgal's film, *The War Crimes Files*, shown on the 3/5/95 in Channel 4). Significantly, as feminist human rights activists like Rhonda Kopelon have pointed out in debates at the NGO Forum of the UN conference on Human Rights in 1995 in Vienna, rape has been defined by

the Geneva convention as 'a crime against honour' rather than as a mode of torture. Honour – of the men and the community, rather than necessarily that of the women themselves.

It has to be recognized, nevertheless, as the Women In Black in former Yugoslavia have pointed out (Zajović 1994), that although rape in war is an extreme example of its gendered effects, often the rape has not been the most devastating experience of the war of the women involved, but losing the entire basis of their former lives. However, in cases of pregnancies resulting from these rapes, the effects could become much more devastating, because paradoxically, once it is public knowledge, these women may lose the respect and support of their surviving families and communities as a result of traditional notions of honour and shame. This is the reason that the overwhelming majority of the reported cases of systematic rape have been of widowed or single women rather than married ones who have often preferred to keep their experiences to themselves.

The experience of becoming a displaced person can vary a lot. Being left with some material resources, or having a family elsewhere in the country or overseas who are prepared to receive and sponsor the refugee and her surviving family, can make the transition to rehabilitated new life much easier than becoming stranded in a refugee camp without any extra resources than the charity of international aid organizations, and having most of one's emotional and physical resources spent on the daily struggle for survival (Forbes Martin 1992). A common phenomenon among most refugees, whatever their personal circumstances come to be, however, is a state of 'permanent temporariness' in which life and identity before the war and the displacement, gain a status of validity and permanence, which any new life constructed for however many years, can never replace. Being a permanent 'outsider' in the new place of living sustains such a feeling. Often this is a sentiment which can be transferred to the second generation. Thus, for example, children born in Palestinian refugee camps in the Lebanon, might identify their place of origin as the village from which their parents were exiled. Although that village might not exist for thirty or forty years, the dream of 'Return' is still be a passionate sentiment around which one's identity has been constructed.

When discussing war and its aftermath, it is important to remember what a gendered and class-based experience this usually is. A study comparing the experiences of sisters and brothers in WW1, for example, has very much highlighted this factor (Woollacott 1993; see also Accad 1990 on the gendered character of the war in Lebanon).

But it is not just experiences of war which are different between men and women. As Cynthia Enloe (1989, 1993) and others have pointed out, militarized images of femininity at war – whether they call women to stay at home and be good wives and mothers, or when they call women to volunteer to the military industry and become 'Rosy the Riveter' – are

highly necessary for the militarized images of masculinity, which themselves can vary. Wars are seen to be fought for the sake of the 'womenandchildren', and the fighting men are comforted and reassured by the knowledge that 'their women' are keeping the hearth fires going and are waiting for them to come home...

Women as soldiers

In spite of the fact that women have always constituted integral part of military life, the formal incorporation of women into the military as soldiers has encountered a lot of prejudice and male fear, although the overwhelming majority of women soldiers are positioned in roles which largely reflect the gendered civil labour market – ie they are usually secretaries, nurses, teachers, and only very few (although the computer revolution, if not the feminist one, is slowly changing this) fulfil roles which are specifically military and/or which directly relate to the military's main 'business' – ie fighting and killing (Enloe 1983, 1989, 1993; Yuval--Davis 1985, 1991).

It is not incidental that in the celebrated novel *Portnoy's Complaint* by Philip Roth, the American Jewish hero, who is continuously randy, becomes impotent when he tries to have sex with an Israeli woman soldier. If the experience of the military is supposed 'to make men from the boys', womanhood cannot be easily incorporated within such imagery. Jacky Cock, who studied military women on both sides of the South African war against apartheid (1992), describes (WREI:65) how, in the South African army, woman hating and homophobia have been an active part of the male soldier's training.

Recruits who do not perform – who are not up to standard – are often labelled 'faggots' or 'homos' or 'murphies'; they are told to "go back to your mothers and play with the girls".

Sandra Gilbert (Signs 1983:436) describes how, in WW1, the military women nurses evoked images of omnipotence and sinistry ('Does male death turn women nurses on?'), as well as being portrayed as ministering angels.

These dichotomous images of women soldiers have been central to the ways in which women have usually been incorporated into the military. They are threatening unless controlled and distinguished from male soldiers by emphasizing their femininity. In Israel, for instance, the only state in which women have been regularly recruited to the military in a national draft, the Women's Corps has been called by its initials 'Khen' which in Hebrew means 'Charm'. One of the formal duties of the members of Khen, as described by an Israeli military spokesperson, has been 'in the areas of crystallizing the morale of the units and taking care of the soldiers of the units.' (Yuval-Davis 1985:661). It is arguable that the high rate of rape and sexual harassment of women in the American military (recent

reports in the press put the rate of rape as high as a third of women soldiers), in which separate women's corps and tasks have been abolished to a large extent, is intended to distance and secure the male soldiers' fears from the omnipotent woman soldier, once women have become incorporated – albeit as a small minority – into the previously male-only units.

In national liberation armies, where the hierarchical and organizational framework of the forces is much less formal, a strong common ideological stance might help to transcend some of these tensions, especially where women's emancipation is seen to symbolize the emancipation of the people as a whole. Still, strict rules of non fraternization or execution of soldiers who are found guilty of rape, might be found to be necessary components to enhance the ideological elements of 'political correctness', as has been the case, for instance, in the Eritrean national liberation army (Zarai 1994).

Any contemplation of gender relations in the military, however, should not lose sight of the fact that it is never all men and all women in the society who fill particular roles within the military or outside it. Ethnic membership, class, age and ability play crucial roles in determining who is included and who is excluded from these roles. Of course, as mentioned above, these differentiations become blurred when the war takes place on the 'home front'. Reports from the Russian army's attack on Cechnia in 1994/5, for example, point to the fact that although the operation was directed against the Chechnians demanding national autonomy, local Russians did not escape the systematic destruction directed towards the whole of the local population.

One of the pioneering studies of Cynthia Enloe has been *Ethnic Soldiers* (1980). In this book she shows how specific ethnic and racial minorities are used in specific ways by the militaries. And different minorities can be used in very different ways. Alison Bernstein, for example, has shown how Native Americans have had one of the highest rate of combat fighting in WW2 (next to American Japanese), more than any other ethnic or racial grouping in the USA. This is in complete opposition from the American Blacks who were virtually excluded at this war from the Front (WREI 1992:86). Also in Israel, soldiers from the Druze ethnic community, often belong to the low status but highly dangerous units of the Border Guards, the Bedouins are used as trackers, while at the same time Palestinians from other ethnic/religious groupings who are citizens of Israel are virtually completely excluded from the military.

Militaries of different empires were often composed from ethnically specific units. Usually these units were loyal to their specific commander with whom the emperor had a contract. These commanders could even have been part of the militaries defeated by the emperor. In the army of Alexander the Great, for example, Persian generals acquired a great deal of

influence which went against the grain of some of the Greek generals. The larger the military, the more heterogenous its units would be, a myriad of the different nationalities and groupings incorporated into it.

However, the imperial military did not just rely on voluntary participation, for ideological or monetary reasons. Often ethnic or regional collectivities had to produce certain quotas of 'cannon fodder' to the military, and where not enough volunteers existed, coercive tactics were put in place, whether it was by the Turks, the Russians, the French or the British (Peled 1994:61-78).

This historical reality is important because it goes against the grain of the ideological construction of participation in the military as giving automatic access to citizenship rights. The coupling of citizenship rights with participation in the military has existed since the French Revolution, carrying on the tradition of the Greek Polis. However, before and after the French revolution, serving in the military has never been universal, even among the citizens of the state, who virtually never encompass the whole population living in the state's territory. Citizenship rights have only very partially, if at all, corresponded with active service. On the contrary, even among citizen soldiers, a repetitive theme in the aftermath of wars is the complaint of those who come back from the front that they find that those who remained behind have managed to accumulate economic and political resources denied to them.

Military power constitutes the basis of the coercive power from which states claim and contest, inwardly and outwardly, the legitimacy of their claims to rule particular territories and people. For this reason, rulers and governments, especially in countries where the legitimacy of the state is in question, cannot afford to completely alienate the military, or they risk losing their positions either by revolutions (as happened in Russia in WW1) or, more directly, by military coups (as has happened often in post--colonial Africa and Latin America since the 50s). Establishing a 'people's army' or introducing national draft has been one major way to legitimate particular regimes and governments for a wide variety of individuals and groupings.

This said, there is still not necessarily a direct link between participation in the military and citizenship rights. What determines one's rights and position in society is not whether one participates in the military, but in what capacity, and what alternative sources of civil power one has. Sometimes the ability of groupings to avoid being recruited into the military is a sign of the rising power of their social and political resistance – for example when the British decided to avoid confrontation with the Irish and did not forcefully recruit them into their military in First World War. On the other hand, the growing number and positions of African Americans in the USA's military is not just a sign of the strengthening of their general civil position, but also of the still very limited number of options for upwardly mobile careers open to most of them in the

American civil society. Interestingly, Women In Black in Belgrade report (Zajović 1994) that the first women recruited into the Serbian army were women from the refugee camps.

The formal incorporation of women into the military can only partially be related to their social empowerment and depends on the nature of the political project which brought about this social change. Significantly, in western militaries, especially the USA, the rate and quality of participation of women has arisen just when the military service as a signifier of citizenship – i.e. the national draft – has been terminated.

Feminism and nationalism

Any discussion about the relationships between gender relations and nationalist projects needs to examine also the complex, of ten ambiguous relationships that have often developed between nationalist and feminist movements.

In 1986 Kumari Jayawardena published her book on 'Feminism and Nationalism in the 3rd World' (Jayawardena 1986). It was an important book, not only because of its considerable contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the particular movements she was discussing, but also because it constructed these two social movements as interrelated in a way that very few, if any, feminist scholars had done before.

Since the rise of second wave feminism in the West, during the 70s and 80s, there has been a recurrence of non-dialogue between women from 'first' and 'third' world at international conferences, in which one side would call for women's liberation as the primary/only goal of the feminist movement while the other side would respond that as long as their people are not free there is no sense for them to speak about women's liberation. How could they struggle to reach equality with their menfolk while their menfolk themselves were oppressed. It was a dialogue of the deaf. For Western feminists, as members of an hegemonic collectivity, their membership in the collectivity and its implications for their positionings was often rendered invisible, while 3rd world women acutely experienced their being part of a subjugated collectivity and often did not see autonomous space for themselves to organize as feminists. To the extent that the western feminists did relate to their national collectivities it was usually from an oppositional point of view. Not only did they agree with Virginia Woolf's claim that 'as a woman I have no country' but they were also often involved in anti-government political movements such as the anti-Vietnam war, civil rights and other anti-colonial and leftist movements and later on in women's peace movements such as the Greenham Common. This created in both sides very different assumptions concerning relationships between individual women and their collectivities – and their governments at the time.

Moreover, often in this non-dialogue, 3rd world women would feel that western women construct them solely in terms of what seemed to them as barbaric customs and subjugation, without taking into account the social and economic context in which they existed. 3rd world women would thus be defined in terms of their 'problems' or their 'achievements' in relation to an imagined free white liberal democracy. This had the effect of removing them (and the 'liberal democracy') from history, freezing them in time and space, and eternally constructing them as politically immature women who need to be versed and schooled in the ethos of western feminism (Amos & Parmar 1984:7).

For example, Mohanty (1991:57-58) describes the way women are 'freezed' in the writings of feminists on 3rd world women into archetypal victims when discussing issues such as genital mutilation and various forms of male violence. Lata Mani (1989) has commented on a similar phenomenon concerning Sati in India. Focusing on a certain social and cultural practices in isolation ignores some of the trade-offs that the continued existence of certain practices might have had on the lives of women in these societies. For example, in a society in which women are not allowed to live on their own, and divorce/repudiation is easy for the men, the continued existence of polygamy might be a much better option for older women who under such a system would not lose their social status and livelihood, to monogamy in which they would end up repudiated and left to the mercy of their brothers' families.

Kumari Jayawardena's book signalled a possible break in this deadlock between 'the feminists' and 'the nationalists'. It pointed out to western feminists that loyalty to one's national liberation movement does not necessarily mean that women do not fight within it for the improvement and transformation of the position of women in their societies. At the same time it also pointed out the fact that feminism has not been a specifically western phenomenon.

During the 80s and 90s the international feminist scene has undergone far reaching changes in both the West and the 3rd world, as well as in the relationship between them. Due to a large extent to the rise of the Black feminist movement in the West which challenged the ethnocentrism, often racism, of western feminists from within (eg. hooks 1981; *Feminist Review* 1984; Mohanty & al. 1991), a growing sensitivity to issues of difference and multipositionality of women has started to develop among white western feminists. This was largely aided by the development of post-structuralist and post-modernist deconstructionist critical theories which reached hegemonic positions within cultural, literary and social academia (Weed 1989; Nicholson 1990).

The sensitivity to issues of difference, however, has raised the question of cultural relativism. There is an ongoing debate among feminists, especially from the 'South', as well as between feminists and others, about the extent to which their discourse should be constructed by

their particular society's 'customs and traditions'. On the one hand of the debate stand those who feel that unless feminists talk and legitimate their struggles using the popular religious traditions, they would never have any chance of progressing beyond a limited urban educated middle class groupings. A leading voice in this camp is, for instance, Riffat Hassan, the Muslim feminist liberation theologist (1993). She claims that no equality for muslim women is possible until the constitutive myth that women were created inferior to men, from crooked ribs, will be challenged. According to her, the myth about Eve being made of Adam's rib is not included in the Kor'an, and Adam is used in it as a generic concept for humanity, which is related both as male and as female, because it was originally undifferentiated. The prejudice against women in Islam comes from the Hadith which is not always considered authentic and can be fought against once the Kor'an is understood properly.

Another example is the South African lawyer who suggested a way of getting rid of polygamy without explicitly coming out against it. She was speaking at a women's conference organized by some activists in the ANC in 1993, a short time before the South African constitution was to be finalized, when they realized that equal weight was promised to the principle of 'non-sexist South Africa' and 'respect for customs and tradition' and were afraid that the first principle would be sacrificed to the second one. The lawyer suggested that the traditional custom of polygamy (about which many women participants in the conference, especially from the 'homelands', bitterly complained in terms of its exploitative and degrading effects on the women) should not be forcibly or legally abolished. However, there should be an adoption of the law that in marriage, the wife becomes entitled to 50% of the property of the couple. If the man marries again, he can share only his 50% with the new wife and so on.

Similar strategies of struggle in Iran, where Muslim feminists, for instance, have been arguing for women's more equal participation in public offices, such as becoming judges, have been called by Afsane Najmabadi (1995) 'post-modern feminism'. Najmabadi's argument is, somewhat different to that of Riffat Hassan, that between what she calls 'modern feminism' and 'Islamism' there are no overlapping points for even tactical cooperation. On the other hand, the 'piece-meal' approach of 'post--modern feminism' enables cooperation around specific issues without making generalized claims for women's equality or women's rights:

> I want to propose that the Islamicist onslaught cannot be resisted by defensibly hanging onto a competing set of foundational truths, but by a willingness to suspend such groundings, and to risk the impurity of pragmatism for the possibility of an often elusive conversation, a conversation centred, for instance, on the effects of the Enlightenment rather than on its claims to a superior Truth (Najmabadi 1995:7).

An important motivation for this 'post-modernist' approach is the tendency, mentioned above, of labelling feminism as an off-shoot of western cultural imperialism. However, many feminists from the South, such as those who belong to the international network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), do not agree with this approach. Although anti-imperialist and anti-racists themselves, fighting against ethnocentrism and racism of western feminists, they feel that giving up feminism as a secular discourse results in accepting that there is an essential homogenous 'Islamic' position on women in which women's difference is essentially constructed in their primary social roles as wives and mothers (Helie-Lucas 1993). This, they fear, can delegitimate a lot of the important work that feminists in their societies have accomplished during the last century and more. Moreover, many also feel that constructing women's struggles within the boundaries of their communities' religion and culture, creates racialized exclusions towards women who are not part of those collectivities, but are part of their pluralist societies. Some Egyptian feminists, for example (from the organization The New Woman), have refused to formally associate themselves with WLUML, although they generally support their politics, because they felt that association with any organization in whose title the word 'muslim' appears would have the effect of excluding Copt and other Egyptian women from-non-Muslim origin from becoming full members of the organization. Gita Sahgal (1992) discusses the need for 'secular spaces' (which Homi Bhabha (1995) has titled 'sub-altern secularism'), in which women from different communities can co-exist and struggle together while having the space and the autonomy to choose which elements of their traditions (and what interpretation of these traditions) to keep and which to cast aside.

There is probably no one 'right' tactical answer to this debate, in the sense that in different societies, states and communities, the possibility of women to enter such 'secular spaces' is highly variable. While in Egypt, for instance, a crucial struggle is taking place these days on the principle possibility of the continued existence of secular spaces, as small and threatened as they may be, in Iran this struggle for the moment, at least, has been lost. Specific historical conditions should dictate the form and substance of particular feminist struggles. Co-operation and solidarity among feminists positioned differentially in different societies and in the same society should be informed by these differences. A growing number of feminists call this dialogue-based politics transversal politics (Yuval--Davis 1994, 1997).

To conclude, nationalist projects are multiplex, multi-dimensional and historically specific. The main dimensions looked at this essay are those relating to genealogy and origin, those related to culture and tradition and those related to citizenship and state. In all of them gender relations play crucial roles, constructing notions of femininity and masculinity, naturalize power relations and reproduce biologically, culturally and symbolically national collectivities. Feminist politics, aimed

at the promotion of women's position and power in all societies have had to confront the reality that their positions, as that of the men in their national collectivities are constructed by a myriad of social divisions and other historical forces, and that only by acknowledging and confronting differences among women as well as among men, can there be any process of political dialogue which could transcend and bridge these differences.

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NACIONALISTIČKI PROJEKTI I RODNI ODNOSI

SAŽETAK

Nacionalistički su projekti mnogostruki, višedimenzionalni i povijesno specifični. Među njihovim glavnim aspektima – koje razmatra ovaj članak – nalaze se oni vezani uz genealogiju i podrijetlo, kulturu i tradiciju, te uz građansko pravo i državu. U svima njima rodni odnosi imaju presudnu ulogu jer konstruiraju pojmove ženskosti i muškosti, naturaliziraju odnose moći i reproduciraju nacionalne kolektive biološki, kulturno i simbolički. Feministička politika, s ciljem promocije položaja i moći žena u svim društvima, mora se suprotstaviti stvarnosti u kojoj je njihov položaj, kao i onaj muškaraca u istim nacionalnim kolektivima, konstruiran mnoštvom društvenih podjela i drugih povijesnih silnica. Samo priznajući i suprotstavljajući se razlikama među ženama, kao i među muškarcima, može se uspostaviti proces političkog dijaloga kojim se mogu transcendirati i premostiti ove razlike.

Ključne riječi: teorija nacionalizma, feministička interpretacija