

TRANSNATIONAL ANALYSES OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND STATE/NATION

Gender & Society (Austin)

General information:

Special Issue of *Gender & Society* on Transnational Analyses of Gender, Sexuality, and State/Nation.

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Length of manuscript submissions: 25-30 pages

Deadline for submission: January 31, 2004.

Submit papers, including \$10.00 (US) submission fee payable to *Gender & Society*, to: Prof. Christine Williams, Editor *Gender & Society*, Dept. of Sociology, 1 University Station A1700, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712.

This special issue of *Gender & Society* centers on transnational feminist analyses of gender, sexuality, and state/nation. There are salient and urgent reasons for this focus. In the past decade, feminist scholars have been at the forefront of drawing attention to the gendered and sexual ramifications of globalization. Indeed, feminist scholars have encouraged others to move away from a domestic, insular focus toward locating analyses of gender and sexuality within a more global context. But in many cases, analyses that place gender and sexuality in global contexts are theoretically and conceptually limited. Globalization is typically seen as the inevitable outcome of Euro-American economic and cultural hegemony that radiates to »local« contexts. Not only does this approach reproduce the dualities of West and East, of First and Third World, but also such understandings of gender and sexuality remain embedded in the vantage point of the West. Further, we widely continue to extrapolate Euro-American conceptualizations of gender and sexuality and notions of »universal patriarchy« to other cultural contexts. This tendency is common, despite commitments to contextualized understandings of gender, sexuality, and their dynamic interactions with race, class, age, ethnicity, and other salient social factors.

Furthermore, as some feminist scholars have pointed out, the power of the national state is growing in areas such as citizenship, immigration, cultural nationalism, militarism, and religious and secular fundamentalisms. Rather than facing a decline as a result of globalization, the roles of states and nations are being revised and reinvigorated. There is, for example, greater pressure to ensure political stability, regulate the deregulation of labor laws, manage the rise of ethnic conflicts, and facilitate international commerce and investment. The daily evidence includes: the current »war on terrorism«, surge in cultural nationalisms across a wide range of national contexts, marginalizations of sexual minorities, and the widening reaches of state power and state-sponsored violence. Nonetheless, regional and transnational social, economic, political, and cultural flows raise questions of how to retheorize nations and states in new and useful ways; it cannot be »business as usual« with respect to feminist considerations of gender and sexual politics of states/nations.

We initiate this special issue to invite feminist scholars to reconsider the sexual and gendered politics of states/nations and to critically analyze how states wield and realign their power. We are especially interested in articles that are empirically based while deepening and diversifying our theories of gender, sexuality, state, and nation. We encourage authors to broaden our understanding of the nuances, tensions, contradictions, and inconsistencies of state power and cultural and political nationalisms in relation to regional and transnational social, economic, and political processes.

Secondly, we seek to identify a critical feminist alternative to the predominant domestic versus globalization analyses of gender and sexuality. For this, we call for unsettling divisions between disciplines and methodologies. We solicit analyses of the interplay between gender, sexuality, nation, and state that are contextualized in cultural and spatial (or geographical) crossings, so that their linkages are re-theorized and reflected upon in new ways. Our emphasis is on establishing and challenging links between power inequalities from the vantage point of marginalized groups and their changing relations to the state/nation in different cultural and geographical settings.

Thirdly, our purpose is to encourage transnational dialogues between feminists. Thus far, US feminist scholarship has not sufficiently engaged with research on gender and sexuality produced by non-Anglo European scholars. Aside from the obvious problems of not taking seriously other cultural and geographical contexts into consideration, this neglect has also resulted in an impoverishment of theoretical insights on issues of gender and sexuality within the US. We think such dialogues could be fruitful not only within the US but also for a wide range of feminists concerned about the gendered and sexual politics of states and nations.

This issue intends to initiate a platform for dialogue among feminist scholars working in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America so that we may collabo-

ratively respond to the problems, limits, contradictions, and possibilities forged by (trans-)national socio-economic, cultural and state structures. Toward that end, this special issue on transnational feminist analyses of gender, sexuality, and state/nation would highlight the following theoretical questions:

1. How do critical feminists understand and theorize key aspects of nations and states in a transnational context – for example, struggles around citizenship, fundamentalist movements, rights language, war, violence, civil liberties, ethnicities, sexual minorities, racial politics, and social identities?
2. How do we encourage critical feminist contributions that move us away from monolithic, Euro-American centered conceptions of state, nation, gender, and sexuality toward culturally situated, pluralistic understandings of these categories?
3. What kinds of feminist dialogues on aspects of gender, sexuality, nation, or state are necessary and need to be fostered across cultural and geographical borders?
4. How do we rethink key aspects of the concepts of gender and sexuality away from primarily textual discursive methodologies and, instead, ground them in political economic, cultural, and spatial contexts of state power?

These questions serve as a statement of our field of interest and are not prescriptive. We hope that these questions can generate submissions that address the following and related issues:

- Creative rethinking and reconsideration of the state and its changing role in the regulation of gendered and racial citizenship, sexual orientations, ethnic communities, and social identities, in various spatial and cultural contexts.
- Research on expressions of desire, meanings of sexual identities, or sexual politics that locate these concerns at the cross-sections of state structures, cultural and political nationalisms, or transnational circuits.
- Analyses of (neo)nationalisms and how they shape, control, define and limit genders, sexualities, classes, and ethnic and racial groups.
- New understandings of the rise of national, religious, and secular fundamentalisms and their impact on, or relations to, gender, sexual, ethnic, and racial subjectivities.
- Studies on the formation of gendered, sexual, racial, class, ethnic, and national identities in alternative modernities and the role of political economy-for example, the Caribbean, China, Vietnam, India, the Philippines, and South Africa.
- Conceptual and methodological considerations of the limits, or the significance, of globalization, local-global, inter-national, and nationalist approaches to gender and sexuality.
- New approaches to analyzing genders and sexualities within the contexts of transnational resistance, social movements, globalization processes, and »rights« discourses and politics.
- Analyses of neo-colonial and neo-liberal policies and practices of the state/nation, the realignment of state power, and their implications on genders and sexualities.
- Analyses of gender and sexuality in ethnic conflicts, wars of partition, political violence, neo-imperial dominance, and »war on terrorism«.