Gendering the Nation and Empire: Anthropological Investigations in Retrospect

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Revealing the gendered dimensions of national experience is indispensible to any scholarly undertaking of nations and nationalism. Grand theories of nationalism often fail to speak to the specific and multiple discourses of nationhood, the intimacies of experience, and the symbolic imageries that undergird national endeavors. An anthropological cognizance of the gendered aspects of nationhood allows for analytic acuity and insight into the complexities of nationhood as it is imagined and experienced from below. A gendered analysis of nations alone, however, does not suffice. I contend that—in addition to gender—anthropologists must also acknowledge the intersection of 'race' and ethnicity, class, religion, and other categories of difference, for they are holistic to national experiences. Refracting the nation through prisms of gender, 'race', class, and religion better reflects the depth and intricacies of the interdependence of the nation and the subject. Secondly, I also argue that the politics of women have certainly challenged masculinist national dominance, but they have not substantially transfigured the patriarchal understructure of national projects.

Introduction

Nation-states have become the foremost institutions for social organization. In contemporary narratives of belonging and non-belonging, few identitary bonds appear as robust and ancestral as those between the nationalist and her nation. Anthropologists and theorists alike have long pondered the practical and metaphysical hallmarks of nationhood, but many classic texts lent little credence to gendered perceptions, expressions, aspirations, and experiences of nationhood.

Revealing the gendered dimensions of national experience is indispensible to any scholarly undertaking of nations and nationalism. Grand theories of nationalism often fail to speak to the specific and multiple discourses of nationhood, the intimacies of experience, and the symbolic imageries that undergird national endeavours. An anthropological cognizance of the gendered aspects of nationhood allows for analytic acuity and insight into the complexities of nationhood as it is imagined and experienced from below. A gendered analysis of nations alone, however, does not suffice. McClintock (1997) intimates that nations produce discursive spaces where differences are invented, performed, and crystalized. As such, nationalism is predicated on powerful ventures of inclusion and exclusion.

Firstly, I contend anthropologists should acknowledge the intersection of gender, 'race' and ethnicity, class, religion, and other categories of difference, for they are holistic to national experiences. Intersectional analyses, as Ahmed, Castaneda, Fortie, and Sheller (2003) have argued, are imperative to exegeses of transnational experiences, but they are equally important in mapping more sedentary forms of national experiences. Refracting the nation through prisms of gender, 'race', class, *and* religion better reflects the depth and intricacies of the interdependence of the nation and the subject.

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Secondly, I argue that the politics of women have certainly challenged masculinist national dominance, but they have not substantially transfigured the patriarchal understructure of national projects.

As a point of departure, I will consult the seminal concepts of nationhood theory to provide a framework from which we can proceed. I will then appraise feminist scholarship's advancement of the concept of gendering the nation, and its analytic utility for providing evidence that men and women experience nationality differently. Finally, I will discuss ways in which intersectionality informed emergent nations in the contexts of Ireland, South Africa, and Palestine. All three cases recount narratives of anti-colonial nation building. The Irish account informs us of the conceptualization of feminized territoriality, the allegorical relationship between political frontiers and gendered differences, and the implausibility of a trans-ethnoreligious feminist solidarity. South Africa's long and tortuous path towards democracy was shaped by competing gendered and racialized discourses of nationhood, and female techniques of resistance rested on powerful formulations of militant motherhood. Irish and South African national endeavours—though far from complete—exemplify intersectional experiences of nationhood through the transition from coloniality to post-coloniality. Palestinian nationhood, however, continues to linger in a purgatory of disillusionment and conflict. Nationalist imaginings in exile, and divergent notions of femininity and religiosity, proffer insight into intersectional experiences of a nation pursuing statehood.

Nation and Nationalism

Nationalism conjures imageries of time-honored communities bound by social or juridical convention, shared experience and memory, and blood. Yet despite the depiction of contemporary nations' purported geneses in hallowed antiquity, they are relatively recent phenomena. Most theoreticians of nationalism, like Gellner (1964, 1983) and Smith (1986, 2001), regard the late 18th century as the modern nation's age of inception. Nationalism emerged within the paradigm of Enlightenment thought and amidst the conflicts that ensued from two epoch-making revolutions—the American war for independence from British imperialism and France's plebeian revolt against the Second Estate (Eriksen, 1993). What distinguished nationalism from earlier forms of collectivist consciousness was its inherent capacity for leveling the hierarchical structures that had long stratified European societies. Nationalism occasioned the abolition of Feudalism, and its fervor forged solidarity across deeply entrenched class divisions. The nascent nations of the United States and the French Republic rallied around bywords such as *we the people*, and *all men are created equal*, and *liberté, egalité, fraternité*, each denoting the novel notion of belonging. Multitudes of nationalisms and national projects arose in the wake, and often in the image, of these revolutions (Gellner, 1983).

Nationalism, as Gellner (1983) argues, depends on the aspiration to make the boundaries of the nation coterminous with the limits of state sovereignty. Although the nation and the nation-state are not selfsame categories, nationalists do endeavor to facilitate the merger of the nation with the state, or else they seek to sustain an existing nation-state's political integrity and autonomy. Anthropologists have often taken the nexus of the state and the nation for granted (Das & Poole, 2004). What *has* captivated anthropologists, however, is nationalism's steadfast insistence on difference. For nationalists, the longevity of nations and nation-states depends on their ideological facilities for reproducing an 'us versus them' mentality—one that reifies a national culture, a character, and a dogma (Eriksen, 1993).

Some anthropologists opined that kinship networks inevitably flourished into nations (Geertz, 1963). The kinship-like characteristics of nations, argues Eriksen (1993), foster stability and perceptions of continuity; nationalism, then, is the emotive force that proffers meaning, solace, and refuge from the vagaries of life. Despite the

comforts and the sense of stability that nationality affords, a nation is not an ontological fact; nations are volatile, negotiated, and continuously renegotiated. The relationship between nationalism and nations is commonly misunderstood. As Gellner asserts, "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (1964, p. 169).

For instance, no veritable Pakistani nation existed before the early 20th century, and Pakistan did not truly achieve nationhood until it became a nation-state in 1947, after the abrogation of British rule and its partition from India. Similarly, Wallerstein (2001) establishes that an Indian Nation did not exist prior to the subcontinent's colonization by the British Empire. The 'imagined' origin of nations, however, does not imply that nations are fictitious or fraudulent (Anderson, 1991). According to Spinoza (2001), an entity comes into being through its own endeavour towards self-affirmation and self-preservation. The invention and performance of a nation, therefore, fosters its coming into existence. The nation, according to Anderson, is a specific manifestation of an "imagined community" which emerged as an intentional and pragmatic response to the sociopolitical conditions of the early modern European period; the nation is forged, "consciously exploited in a Machiavellian spirit" (1991, p. 45). Despite imagined origins, the performativity of nations often generates a tangible realism for those who belong and those who do not.

Nationalists tend to reproduce narratives of the nations' genesis in yore, but these narratives belie the true origins of nations and the contemporary nationalisms that engendered them. A national culture and character rest on notions of shared folkways and traditions. Tradition connotes invariance, fixity, and antiquity, but these characteristics, argues Hobsbawm, are "invented" (1983, pp. 1-2). Inventing tradition is a formalization and ritualization of overtly or tacitly accepted symbolisms that seek to sear certain norms and values into the minds and hearts of a people. Traditions, like nations, are often presented as immemorial and sacred, whilst they are recent of origin and invented for latter-day purposes (Hobsbawm, 1983). Tradition, Hobsbawm (1983) continues, indicates continuity, which in turn affords moral authority to its practitioners.

The theoretical contributions of scholars like Hobsbawm, Anderson, Gellner, and Eriksen greatly enrich our understanding of nations and nationalism, and their contributions are indispensible to the anthropology of nationalist sentiment and consciousness. Their influential works, however, are written from within andro-normative frameworks. Gender, both as a heuristic to the question of nationalism and as an object of study, is patently absent from their analyses. Studies of nationhood that disregard gendered perspectives cannot adequately represent the intricate narratives and ideologies that give form and meaning to the experiences of persons that live within the contexts of emerging or established nations.

The Gendered Nation

National memory has systematically disregarded gender, and theorists of the nation have generally failed to appreciate gendered dimensions of nationhood. Masculine perceptions of nationhood were often considered to be self-evident; *the masculine nation* became concordant with *the nation as such*. Meanwhile, the feminine dimension was ignored because women were seen as peripheral to the national project (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Much feminist literature on nationalism conflated gender with femininity—since the feminine perspective has so often been overlooked—but the 'masculine' is equally important to consider. The omission of masculine perspectives tends to lead to andro-normative and solipsistic analysis (Nagel, 1998). Despite the yawning lacunae within nationalist narratives, "all nationalisms are gendered, all are invented, and all are dangerous" contends McClintock (1991, p. 104).

Gender, as Moore (1994) argues, is considered the foremost category of identity in western discursive tradition, and thus gender constitutes the axis around which other forms of identity gyrate. However, gender should not be seen as *real* differences between men and women. Womanhood and manhood are relational categories, for the former gains identitary salience in its opposition to the latter, and vice versa (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Identities are not so much defined by their additive characteristics, but rather by their negation of, and divergence from, Otherness. Difference is essential to both gendered and national identities (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

National projects, therefore, are gendered projects. They are constituted through a matrix of competing and contrastive nationalist discourses, including gender discourses (Walby, 2000). Nationalist narratives are frequently dominated by a few preeminent discourses at any given time, but their hierarchical structure is constantly renegotiated (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Similarly, gender categories are predicated on multiple discourses of gender. Discursive renderings of gender differ across cultural and temporal divides, but competing gender discourses also exist within specific sociocultural contexts (Moore, 1994). Within any social context there exist multiple discourses of femininity and masculinity, and numerous gender discourses that transcend the limitations of either (Moore, 1994).

The institutions of nations, states, and religions inspire gendered differences and conversely, national boundaries can be reified by the discernible differences between gender discourses or "gender regimes" (Walby, 2000, pp. 525-6). For instance, the virtual boundary between Afghanistan and the United States is crystalized by divergent conceptions of femininity and masculinity between both nation-states (see Abu-Lughod, 2002). Nations promote ideals regarding the proper place and position of women and men in society. Masculine narratives often promote nationalism as a public discourse, whilst it relegates women to the private realm of

domesticity, ostensibly removed from masculine politics (Ortner, 1972; Walby, 2000). Thus, matters of nations and nationalism, decidedly political discourses, are often subsumed by the aegis of masculinity. According to Nagel (1998), nationalist narratives and the study of nations, nationalism, revolution, and democracy are masculine projects; they involve masculine institutions, processes, and activities. Moreover, as Enloe maintains, "nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope" (1990, p. 45). Nationalism might predominately be a "masculinist enterprise" (Enloe, 1990, p. 45), but what then of women's contributions to national discourse? Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992), posit that women's contributions to nations are myriad: as biological reproducers of subsequent generations, as subjects involved in the transmission of norms and values, as signifiers of boundaries between nations, and as active participants in national struggle. Thus, the dominance of masculine narratives, and the purported origin of nations in the imaginaries of manhood ought not obscure the truism that women played, and continue to play, critical roles in all national projects (Nagel, 1998).

A common characteristic of nationalisms is that they tend to be conservative; they are bent on promoting national interests by proclaiming their cultural roots, gender roles, and ancient and august origins as indubitable facts. And conservatism, argues Yuval-Davis (1997), often indicates patriarchy. Patriarchy, nevertheless, is not a monolithic system, and it should not be regarded as distinct or autonomous from social systems like imperialism, capitalism, or racism (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). The distribution of power according to gender is enmeshed with power structures more generally. Gender, ethnicity, class, and 'race' are different constructs but they correspond in complicated ways, and due to their interrelatedness, these various categories of advantage and disadvantage should not be abstractly prioritized (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). Gendered perspectives in the study of

nationalism and nations are of great import, but gender as a category of analysis is not sufficient without intersecting categories like 'race' and class and the power disparities that they represent. 'Race', gender, and class are not distinct experiential realms, rather they arise in and through intimate interchanges (McClintock, 1995).

Gendering the Post-colonial Nation

European colonial enterprises were largely predicated on racist doctrines that professed the cultural supremacy of Europe. Debasing other peoples was regarded as a moral, economic, and political imperative to European nation-imperial enterprises. Ideologies of nationalism and imperialism were co-emergent with incipient standards of western masculinity (Nagel, 1998). Men dominated the institutions of nation and empire and imperialist discourse abounded with imageries of sexual conquest. The Spanish navy's defeat by the United States during the Battle of Manila Bay marked both the end of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines and the dawn of what Henry Luce (1941) christened the American Century. Theodore Roosevelt, who gained infamy for his sexualized and racialized rhetoric, called upon his compatriots to expand the nationalist paradigm of Manifest Destiny into the western Pacific, saying "we of America…we, the sons of a nation yet in the pride of its lusty youth…know its future is ours if we have the manhood to grasp it, and we enter the new century girding our loins for the contest before us" (1908, p. 108). The rapport between nationalism, imperialism, and masculinity shaped the trajectory of the 20th century nation-state system, including those of nations that were invented in response to western colonial projects and international commercial hegemony.

All nationalisms hinge on powerful formulations of gender difference, and all nationalisms are consonant with gendered discourses of power. The relations between men and women, as the Spanish-American poet George Santayana remarked, often compelled nationalist sentiments: "our nationalism is like our relationship to women: too implicated in our moral nature to be changed honorably, and too accidental to be worth changing" (Santayana quoted in Gellner, 1983, p. iiv). Santayana alluded to a conviction that male citizens relate to the nation as men accord with women. This notion presumes not only that nations are masculinist endeavors, but also that political agency is inherently situated within the province of men.

Ireland

Historians contend whether the subjugation of Ireland could rightfully be considered a colonial ordeal (Aretxaga, 1997). This debate, however, is embedded in a discourse that presupposes the colonial relationship as one between the First and Third Worlds, the Occident and the Orient, the white and brown; this rendering of colonialism is overly simplistic, for it controverts the vast power disparities in other colonial relationships elsewhere and throughout history—of which British imperialism in Ireland is exemplary.

The discordant relationship between Britain and Ireland was long envisaged in and through gendered abstractions. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, English intellectuals and statesmen proclaimed the Irish as "an essentially feminine race," characterized by fickleness, emotional instability, and political impotence (Aretxaga, 1998, pp. 17-18). The feminine temperament of the Irish, according to English imperialists, legitimized British conquest and dominion of Irish soil and souls. Indeed, the effeminization of an entire people was crucial to imperialism (Aretxaga, 1998). Accordingly, Irish nationalism emerged, in part, as a response to the emasculation of Irish men. For instance, from 1884 onwards, Irish leaders maintained that the standardization and popularization of sport was crucial to the "Gaelic Renaissance" and the resurrection of Irish manliness (McDevitt, 1997, pp. 262-3). Widespread efforts to revive Gaelic football and hurling were part of a strategy to reinvigorate the physical stature and warrior ethos

of Irish manhood, and to engender a "Muscular Catholicism" to counter the doctrine of English "Muscular Christianity" that was cultivated on the rugby pitches of Eton and Harrow (McDevvit, 1997, p. 263). Sport, then, became a public forum where divergent metaphors of masculinity and Irishness could be produced, contested, and affirmed (McDevitt, 1997).

Allegories of Irish femininity were not only deployed by colonizers, for they were also paramount to the ways in which Irish nationalists perceived their motherland. Men imagined the Irish nation as the female object of love and adoration, and the nation-as-woman trope was a potent regulator of the body politic of nationalism (McMullen, 1996). Consequently, the domination of a feminine Ireland by a masculine foreign aggressor was an affront to Irish virile pride (Aretxaga, 1998). In the dominant narratives of nationhood, Irish masculine dignity rested on the complete and unequivocal independence of the Irish nation—an objection that was never completed due to the 1921 partition of Ireland and the prolongation of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland (Aretxaga, 1997). Although the frontier was provisional at the outset, foundering negotiations between British authorities, Loyalists, and the IRA resulted in the fixation of the border in 1925 (Aretxaga, 1998). The border, subsequently, became one of the most surveyed and militarized frontier zones in Western Europe (Aretxaga, 1998). The boundary between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, in the eyes of nationalists, represented the suspension of the Irish national project in a state of incompleteness, and the "symbolic castration" of Irish manhood (Aretxaga, 1998, p. 17).

The border, argues Aretxaga, is a "site of troubled and troubling national imaginings" (1998, p. 17). Boundaries are historical products of particular manifestations of territorial conceptions, and they are spaces where national imaginings become precarious (Anderson, 1983; Aretxaga, 1998). The boundary, for Loyalists, indicated a locus of discontinuity, whilst it

remained "unrecognized" by nationalists on both sides of palisade (Aretxaga, 1998, p. 17).

Borders, whether ethno-national or gendered, are liminal spaces that demarcate difference. Gender difference was deployed to naturalize ethnic boundaries that rendered Irish nationalism perceptible and powerful, and the naturalization of gender identities and gender roles contributed greatly towards sustaining ethnic loyalties and boundaries that constituted the difference between the Irish and the English. Thus, ethno-national conflicts, like the struggle for Irish national emancipation, are deeply gendered (Racioppi & O'Sullivan See, 2006). Irish nationalists sought to overcome the ambivalence of partition by representing the nation through idioms of femininity. As metaphors, women were restricted within a discourse of their own, far removed from the public and political sphere of masculine nationalism (Racioppi & O'Sullivan See, 2006). As agents, however, women were pivotal in the nationalist struggle.

Dominant narratives of nationalism often depict women as the "non-combatant many" even though women actively participated in liberation struggles (Elshtain, 1987, p. 163). The popular discourses of conflict in Northern Ireland, amongst nationalists and loyalists, were replete with visualizations of violent men and victimized women. Aretxaga's (1997) ethnographic account of Catholic West Belfast from the 1990s refutes that polarizing narrative of gendered conflict. According to one female informant, women are "the backbone of the struggle; they are the ones carrying the war here and they are not receiving the recognition they deserve" (quoted in Aretxaga, 1997, p. ix). Moreover, unilaterally portraying women as victims of a masculine conflict belies the divergent and contraposed political, ethnic, religious, and class positions taken by Northern Irish women (Aretxaga, 1997).

Northern Irish feminist organizations in the 1970s made numerous overtures to cast ethnic, class, and religious differences aside in the hope of fostering a united feminist movement. All such

attempts, regrettably, failed because a "feminine identity" or a category of "Irish women" was far too finite an axis for the consolidation of feminist politics (Aretxaga, 1997, p. 10). Feminism, in war-torn Belfast, could not exist outside of individual experiences of subjugation, the prevailing structures of power, or the deep rancor that cleaved communities asunder (Aretxaga, 1997).

Nationalist women were mostly debarred from formal politics; their roles were deemed immaterial to the struggle. Still and all, women traversed the interstices of political life, which rendered their agencies inherently political. During the 1970s, for instance, women in Catholic sectors of Belfast organized popular forms of resistance in the face of the violence debasement tactics deployed by British and loyalist police and military personnel (Aretxaga, 1997). Yet in the nationalist imagination, women were thought to belong to the domestic sphere, whilst men navigated the public arena of politics and warfare. This public-private binary, however, ceased to exist amidst violent conflict, "internment and the widespread raids of people's homes blurred the boundaries between household and communal space and at certain moments practically erased them" (Aretxaga, 1997, p. 69).

The notion that women were categorically victims of enduring conflict was problematized by the reluctance that many women voiced when masculine powers convened to draft a peace accord in the 1990s. Most women certainly longed for peace, but they deemed their exclusion from the peace negotiations as unacceptable. Embittered women maintained that lasting peace could not be achieved if *peace* was considered the prerogative and privilege of men. Many women were born and reared into adulthood within a context of conflict and they labored, bled, and died alongside men, and so, a true peace accord ought not forego the council or participation of women (Aretxaga, 1997). Peace and war are not oppositional realities, but rather they are "mutually imbricated arenas of struggle" (Aretxaga, 1997, p. 5). Women activists in

Northern Ireland were cognizant of the fact that armistices and peace did not necessitate the resolution of violence. They also understood that the perpetuation of political exclusion, predicated on both ethnicity and gender, was intimately entwined with the violence that marred Ireland's history (Aretxaga, 1997).

South Africa

The imagined nation is a locus of enduring contestation; it is a conceptual space where multiple narratives of nationhood, most of which are gendered and ethnicized, vie for discursive primacy (Bhabha, 1990; McClintock, 1991). The road to merging a South African 'nation' with the state was particularly tortuous, and women's relationships to contesting national narratives were especially salient in regard to sketching the contours of the Rainbow Nation. The southern tip of Africa has long harbored a multitude of peoples, languages, cultural cosmologies, and imaginaries of nationhood. Women, amongst Afrikaners and Africans alike, were integral to sundry struggles of national actualization (McClintock, 1991).

Afrikaner nationalism was first conceived at the end of the 19th century, as a response to the encroachments of British imperialism. Nationalist sentiment amongst Afrikaners of the *veld* was a "doctrine of crisis," for British military and commercial might had forced disparate communities of non-English speaking European settlers to the margins of political relevance (McClintock, 1991, p. 106). The rout of the Afrikaner republics during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) left Afrikaner political power in shambles, but it also consolidated the Afrikaner community (Giliomee, 2003; McClintock, 1991). Afrikaans, hitherto an unofficial dialect of Dutch, became one of the two official languages of the Union of South Africa in 1925, and the elevated prestige of Afrikaans, argues McClintock, was decisive for "inventing the community of Afrikaners" (1991, p. 107). Moreover, the secretive but influential *Broederbond* (Brotherhood) utilized propaganda

to further reify Afrikanerdom. The nationalist narrative of the *Broederbond*, much like Irish masculinist nationalism, adorned the Afrikaner nation with idioms of feminine vulnerability and motherhood. Constructing the nation as feminine was both a mechanism for legitimizing masculine gallantry and a ruse to shirk the disgrace of defeat (McClintock, 1991).

Masculine shame contributed greatly to the racialization of Afrikanerdom. 'Race', argues Hall (1992), is often equated with blackness and the colonized 'other', but the conception of racial difference was constitutive to Afrikaner identity. Afrikaner nationalism was, therefore, established through the interplay of powerful imageries of racialized and gendered differences (McClintock, 1991). The anxieties of racialized and gendered vulnerability implicit in Afrikaner nationalism occasioned the newly empowered *Nasionale Party* to transform *de facto* racial segregationist practices of the pre-1948 period into a juridical system of Grand *Apartheid* (separateness). Apartheid fragmented South African society into discrete, insular, and invented Homelands—each designed to facilitate nation-building according to ethno-linguistic and racialized distinctions (Beinart, 2001). The nationalist interplay between dynamics of gender and 'race' was profound in that it ruptured classical discourses of patriarchy, since 'race' placed white women in positions of power over African men. White men certainly were the architects of colonialism, but European women were embroiled in the colonial project (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986).

The South African case characterizes a colonial paradox; in much the same manner as Afrikanerdom, African nationalism was "forged in the crucible of imperial thuggery" (McClintock, 1991, p. 114). It was precisely the divide-and-rule techniques of the Apartheid state that allowed African malcontents to fashion a nationalism of their own. By the mid-1950s, anti-apartheid politics began to manifest itself as a nationalist struggle—one that asserted that African women were vital to the struggle. In 1955, Oliver Tambo, the newly appointed Secretary General of the

ANC, proclaimed that women's emancipation was a prerequisite for the attainment of victory (McClintock, 1991). Subsequent spokesmen of the ANC reiterated Tambo's declaration that "the mothers of the nation, the womenfolk as a whole are the titans of our struggle" (McClintock, 1991, p. 16). Winnie Mandela, the wife of the incarcerated revolutionary who would become South Africa's first democratically elected president, exemplified the maternal symbolism deployed by the anti-apartheid movement. Winnie Mandela came into prominence because of her husband, but she later became a torchbearer for the struggle in her own right. Her activism earned her the honorific title "mother of the nation" (Bridger, 2013, p. 2).

African women's relationship to nationalism, however, was not limited to maternal and moral symbolism. Women's roles in the struggle shifted significantly over the years. Symbolic motherhood, by the 1950s, gave way to active demonstrations of disaffection. The ranks of the ANC Women's League swelled in membership, and in 1956 thousands of women marched on Pretoria to demonstrate against compulsory identity passes (McClintock, 1991). Despite the increased mobilization of women, nationalists—including many women—were reluctant to discuss issues concerning women's emancipation and gender equality outside of the framework of national liberation. The feminist struggle, then, was rendered secondary to the nationalist endeavor. African women were vigilant against feminists' attempts to divert women's revolutionary energy towards rectifying gender inequities within African society. Feminism, according to many African nationalists, was a white imperial undertaking—one that sought to undermine the struggle through the assertion of a universal feminist politic (McClintock, 1991). White feminist insistence on a universal feminine solidarity was gainsaid by African women's racialized confrontations. Nationalists maintained that a lack of housing, political disenfranchisement, "influx control" (McClintock, 1991, p. 118), and children's brutalization, were

both nationalist *and* women's issues.

During the tumult of the 1980s, ANC leaders enjoined women to take up the armed struggle—a cause that Winnie Mandela came to champion as well, stating: "I will tell you why we are violent. It is because those who oppress us are violent…The *white man* will not hand over power in talks around the table…Therefore, all that is left to us is this painful process of violence" (quoted in Bridger, 2013, p. 5). Winnie Mandela's polemical rhetoric, however, retained facets of the maternal nationalist discourse; her bellicosity became exemplary of African women's newfound appeal to a "maternal militancy" (Bridger, 2013, p. 2).

Women and men experienced Apartheid differently and women's exposure to the specific dimensions of South African colonialism gave them greater political agency than women in other postcolonial nation-states (Seidman, 1993). Mass industrialization, urbanization, and migrant labor transmuted the organization of home and work, and they blurred the boundaries between the political and the non-political, the domestic and the public (Seidman, 1993). The last formal vestiges of Apartheid crumbled in the early 1990s, and both racial and gender equality were written into law. However, gender and racial disparities continue to be vast.

Palestine

Like other anti-colonial endeavors, Palestinian nationalism developed as a response to western imperialism. Yet anti-western nationalist projects are predicated on the same Enlightenment postulations that aroused European nationalism and subsequent imperial systems of exploitation (Chatterjee, 1986; Massad, 1995). Nationalism in Palestine, however, is not merely a replication of European or Zionist imperial principles; it emerged in the confluence of both local and Western discourses of territorial sovereignty, personal agency, and gender norms. Palestinian nationalist narratives conceived political agency in and through idioms of manhood (Massad, 1995). Nationalist notions of manhood became dominant variants of

masculinity in Palestine and amongst Palestinian refugee populations dispersed across the Levant. Masculine nationalism evoked a sense of connectedness with a remote past. It is, however, a fairly recent invention, for it connotes configurations of power that are temporally and culturally specific (Massad, 1995).

Nationalism first appeared on the Palestinian political landscape amongst university students and resistance fighters in the late 1950s—shortly after the inaugural Israeli state compelled the expulsion of nearly eight hundred thousands Palestinian Arabs from their homes (Massad, 1995). Much of the Palestinian population was forced to seek sanctuary in refugee camps across contiguous Arab states (Mason, 2007). It was within the deep disquietude of exile where Palestinian nationalism was first conceived. The Palestinian nation was largely imagined from within diaspora communities far afield, but "place," posits Kibreab, "still remains a major repository of rights and membership" (1999, p. 385). Therefore, nationalists maintained that the fate of a disempowered and dispossessed people hinged on the prospect of returning home.

Palestine, as a physical place, has often been expressed in Palestinian poetic tradition by way of a phraseology that evokes the somatic Self (Ankori, 2003). Mahmoud Darwish, one of Palestine's foremost poets, contended that "our country is flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone" (quoted in Ankori, 2003, p. 59). Thus, in the nationalist imaginary, *an-Nakbah* (Palestinian exodus) represents the rape of Palestine and the emblematic Palestinian subject by Zionist assailants. The portrayal of Palestine's ravishment is permeated by gendered metaphors of feminine vulnerability and masculine aggression (Massad, 1995). Palestinians imagine themselves as the children of a feminized Palestine, which depicts a gendered space that elicits local and European intimacies between soil and subjects, but it also embraces Eurocentric renderings of the Orient as feminine, fertile, and sensual (Massad, 1995; Said, 1978).

Palestinian nationalism, as a discourse of aggrieved masculinity, consolidated a vast brotherhood that was willing to kill and perish in a struggle to safeguard Palestinian feminine virtue and to wrest the physicality of Palestine from the clutches of institutionalized and militarized Zionism (Anderson, 1991; Massad, 1995). Nationalism and masculinity are reciprocally reinforcing ideologies; resisting Israel is both an affirmation of nationalist agency and a performance of masculinity (Massad, 1995).

Despite the imagined femininity of Palestine, contemporary Palestinian national identity is determined by agnatic lineage. According to Article 5 of the Palestinian National Charter (1968), "everyone who is born of an Arab Palestinian father" is deemed a member of the Palestinian nation. *An-Nakbah*, as Massad (1995) avers, was so transformative that it diverted the nationalist imaginary away from a narrative of motherland and towards one that foregrounded paternal and fraternal solidarity.

Women occupy a vexed position within the framework of Palestinian nationalism, for they are symbolically charged with the task of cultivating and nurturing the fecund pasture where "manhood, respect and dignity" can flourish (Massad, 1995, p. 475). Women were relatively independent prior to 1948, but the fragmentation of communities and exile augmented the exigency of women's domestic and reproductive roles (Gluck, 1995). Palestinian women, much like their Algerian counterparts, were construed as the "bearers of the nation" (Fanon, 1965, p. 164); they demarcated the symbolic boundaries of masculine nationalist expectations, but their own national hopes and ambitions were generally disregarded (McClintock, 1991).

Dominant nationalist narratives ascribed symbolic importance to women, but their political and subversive agencies were also indispensible to the engendering of the nation (Jacoby, 1996). Various women's organizations emerged in the 1960s and 1970s; they challenged both the Israeli occupation and gender inequality within Palestinian society. Their activism, however,

failed to radically transform the way men and women envisaged gender roles, and their efforts to establish women's issues as a pillar of the national project did not come to fruition (Gluck, 1995). The masculine nationalist establishment assured women activists that their concerns would be addressed once liberation was achieved, but since the struggle persisted, the appraisal of women's roles in society was postponed indefinitely (Gluck, 1995).

The *First Intifada* of the late 1980s temporarily distorted the gender hierarchies in Palestinian refugee camps, Gaza, and the West Bank. The uprising not only animated women's nationalist sentiments, it also devised a discursive space where dominant conceptions of political agency were deconstructed and disputed (Massad, 1995). Social boundaries were blurred and recalcitrant young women took to the streets to join their male comrades in the fray. Women of the *Intifada* performed their nationalist ardor in ways that had hitherto been inadmissible, but they were circumspect of patriarchal nationalism's tendency to re-domesticize women activists once the storm had been weathered. "We will not be another Algeria," proclaimed Palestinian feminists (Gluck, 1995, p. 5); they would not submit to the primacy of nationalist struggle only to have their interests subverted, as was the case in North Africa following the departure of colonialist France. However, feminist voices were muffled once again when the dust of the *Intifada* settled (Gluck, 1995).

Despite recurring comparisons with women's movements across the Middle East and northern Africa, Jacoby (1996) asserts that such movements should not be homogenized. The struggles of Palestinian women and Egyptian women are perhaps similar, but they are also distinct. Moreover, there exists within Palestinian society a wide array of perspectives and subject positions (Jacoby, 1996). Palestinian femininity is experienced differently across spectra of political, religious, class, generational, and community affiliations. Palestinian women have both been mobilizers and victims of conflicting discourses of

citizenship (Jacoby, 1996), but mobilization and victimization were experienced diversely. Various forms of feminist consciousness increased public awareness of institutional gender inequalities, domestic violence, and other gender-related contradictions that afflicted Palestinian society (Jacoby, 1996).

Jacoby (1996) discerns three main categories of women's movements in Palestinian society. These categories are not mutually exclusive or unproblematic, but they do illume ways in which women deploy different strategies towards contrastive objectives. They also elucidate how various relationships with feminism and Islam inform divergent notions of the "rightful position" of women in the nation-building process (Jacoby, 1996, p. 14). Palestinian secular feminists seek alliances with international women's movements in order to better advocate for gender equality in employment, education, and political representation. Secondly, "fundamentalist" Islamic women endorse *shari'ah* law, the suppression of religious pluralism, and the consolidation of traditional gender norms (Jacoby, 1996, p. 15). And finally, Muslim feminists occupy an intermediary position. They contend that Islam is not necessarily the mainspring of women's subjugation. For Muslim feminists, women's liberation is not contingent on the repudiation of Islam, nor is it wholly beholden to western ideas. Women of various inclinations renegotiate the boundaries of nation and gender, but the dominant representations of nationhood continue to stifle women's voices (Jacoby, 1996). Nevertheless, women's demands for increased participation and recognition will undoubtedly continue to inform the trajectory of Palestinian nationalism as it labors towards statehood.

Conclusion

Gendering the nation is analytically imperative to the anthropology of nations and nationalism, for nationalisms are inscribed by gendered metaphors of belonging and non-belonging, naturalness and reproduction, shared pasts and futures. Moreover, women and men conceive, perceive, and live nationality in oft contradicting ways. Studies that eschewed gender often conflated nationalism with masculinity, and they insinuated that feminine voices were irrelevant to national politics. This perspective is fraught with patriarchic bias, and it is ethnographically unwarranted. It is, therefore, incumbent on anthropologists to reflect on the gendered dimensions of the nation. Nonetheless, case studies of anti-colonial nationalisms in Ireland, South Africa, and Palestine inform us that gendered analyses alone cannot adequately illuminate the intricacies of national experiences. Nationhood is a powerful venture of discerning difference; studies of nations that do not remark salient categories of difference like 'race' or ethnicity, religion, class or caste—in *addition* to gender—proffer little to anthropological knowledge. Gender, ethnic, religious, and class differences framed Irish nationalist defiance in the face of British imperialism. Racialized, classed, and gendered narratives informed both Afrikaner and African nationalisms en route to the invention of the Rainbow Nation. Furthermore, Palestinian nationalism continues to hinge on narratives of motherhood and fatherhood, and religious ethno-cultural opposition to Israeli encroachment. Yet, despite female industry in service of their nations, women continue to struggle to attain due recognition and equal consideration. Nationalism, as Gellner (1983) posits, endures because national projects can never be completed. Nations cease to exist when nationalists stop creating and performing them, and national imaginaries remain contingent on the conservation of difference. Audre Lorde, a black American feminist, declared that the "master's tools' would never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 1984, pp. 110-11). Gendered experiences of nationhood in Ireland, South Africa, and Palestine bear testimony to these profound words. Until we conceive human differences in ways that do not connote hierarchies in life-value, and until narratives of sociality desist from foregrounding the experiences of the powerful, subaltern voices will remain subaltern voices.

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