

and masculinities" within existing feminist studies/history of gender studies, their belief that this embedding is a prerequisite for complementing gender studies, and the implicit accusation that omissions of any kind are politically motivated. It would be a simple task to find other examples within more traditional gender studies, which could be blamed for distorting or omitting earlier views. And these tendencies might also simply characterize new approaches and interpretations.

## Chapter 2

# Men, Gender and the State

R. W. CONNELL

### **Men, gender and the state**

Almost every state in the world is controlled by men, and almost all states of which we have historical records have been controlled by men. Yet in a few cases women have gained high political power, and of course most men never exercise state power. In this paper I want to explore how we should understand the relationship of masculinity to the state, in a way consistent with a sophisticated contemporary understanding of gender. Wishing to move toward a dynamic, not just a static, analysis, and to make the argument relevant to practice, I will conclude with some remarks on the arms trade as a case in point.

The overwhelming predominance of men in positions of state power has always been a practical problem for feminism. Indeed, the modern movement for women's emancipation began with a struggle for the right to vote, that is for women's entry into the institutions of the liberal state. Contemporary feminism has a close practical engagement with the state, as Eisenstein (1991) wittily shows.

A theory of the state, however, has been slower in coming. This has been difficult to produce, because it requires a radical shift in the perception of gender. In everyday discussion, gender (or "sex") is always taken to be the attribute of an individual. In social science too, reference to "masculinity" or "femininity" is usually taken as reference to differences in personal traits, temperament or desire, produced by interpersonal interaction along the lines of "sex roles." With such a conception of gender, there can only be an incidental connection with the institutional system we call the state.

It has gradually come to be recognized that this view of gender is inadequate; gender is also an aspect of institutions and large-scale cultural

processes (Connell, 1987). This can be seen clearly in the case of education. Schools have a gendered division of labor, and a curriculum marked by a history of gender division and patriarchal control of knowledge. Schools are settings for the drawing (and erasing) of gender lines in everyday interaction, for the creation of a hierarchy of masculinities, as well as for the contestation of gender subordination. To understand gender in public education it is necessary to "think institutionally," as Hansot and Tyack (1988) put it. And what is true for public education is true for other sectors of the state.

Seeing gender as a social structure, one of the ways collective social processes are shaped, makes it possible to analyze the state as a gendered institution and inherently a site of gender politics. During the 1980s such a view spread among thinkers influenced by socialist and radical feminism, resulting in a series of attempts to define a feminist theory of the state, the best-known being the work of MacKinnon (1989) in the United States. A few years ago I suggested (Connell, 1990) that the perspective could be summarized in six theses about the gender-state:

(1) The state is the central institutionalization of the power relations of gender (power relations being one of the major sub-structures of gender relations). Conversely the state is, at a fundamental level, constituted by gender relations. The state appears "masculine" because it is a condensation of men's gender power over women. Traditional state theory cannot see gender where only men are present. But where only men are present, we are dealing with a powerful gender effect (more powerful, indeed, than most effects discussed in social theory).

(2) The state is a gendered institution, marked by its internal gender regime. The social relations within the state are ordered in terms of gender through: (A) a gender division of labor among state personnel, (B) gendered power relations, for instance in the social definition of legitimate authority, (C) a structure of emotional relations, including the social construction of sexuality. It is typical of modern state structures that the centers of state power, such as the centers of military and economic decision-making, are heavily masculinized. Though women are not categorically excluded from the state, their interests tend to be represented in more peripheral state agencies, as Grant and Tancred (1992) point out.

(3) Through its position in gender relations, and its internal gender regime, the state has the capacity to "do" gender (as ethnomethodologists put it), and also has reasons to do gender. Put more conventionally, the state develops agencies and policies concerned with gender issues, and acts to regulate gender relations in the society as a whole. Recent research on

the welfare state, such as Quadagno and Fobes's (1995) study of the U.S. "Job Corps," shows in detail how state agencies reproduce the gender division of labor and promote gender ideologies. This is not a marginal aspect of state operations. It involves a whole range of policy areas, from housing through education to criminal justice and the military (Franzway *et al.*, 1989).

(4) State activity not only regulates existing gender relations. It also helps to constitute gender relations and the social categories they define. The best-analyzed example is the role of repressive laws and state-backed medicine in constituting the category of "the homosexual" in the late nineteenth century (Greenberg, 1988). "The prostitute" was a category constituted by similar processes; "the pedophile" is a category, once medical, now being constituted by law and electoral politics. In somewhat less dramatic form, the categories of "husband" and "wife" are also constituted by state actions ranging from the legal definition of marriage to the design of tax policy and income security systems (Shaver, 1989).

(5) Because of these activities and capacities, the state is the key stake in gender politics. It is the focus of most political mobilization on gender issues. Indeed, the rise of the liberal state, with its characteristic legitimization through citizenship, was the focus of a historic change in the form of gender politics. Gender politics, formerly almost entirely local, became mass politics for the first time through the woman suffrage movement.

(6) Since gender relations are historically dynamic, marked by crisis tendencies and structural change, the state as a gendered institution is liable to crisis and transformation. Current crisis tendencies center on problems of legitimization (often to do with violence), and on the tensions arising from the gender division of labor and the accumulation of wealth.

The above points are drawn from the first wave of feminist theorizing on the state. Broadly speaking, that research took as its model the Marxist analysis of the state as a condensation of class relations. It identified men as a kind of ruling class, with a common interest somehow embodied in the institutions of the state. This gave the analysis of the gender-state a certain solidity and toughness.

But that approach also had limitations, and has come under criticism. Watson (1990) questioned whether feminism needs a theory of the state at all; this is a category of patriarchal social theory, and feminism may be better suited by a more fluid understanding of power. There has been increasing recognition in sociology of the multiple forms of gender (Lorber, 1994), and feminist postmodernism has emphasized the shifting

character of gender meanings and the lack of fixed gender identities. The attempts to construct a theory of the state have almost all been conducted in rich metropolitan countries; in developing countries, both gender issues and state structures may take very different shapes (Stromquist, 1995).

In this essay I will reconsider the gendered character of states in the light of these arguments, focusing on issues about masculinity, power, and globalization. I think the initial feminist critique of gender-blind social theory was entirely justified. The feminist theorizing of the 1980s provided a good first approximation to the problem, but not a complete analysis. We can now move on to develop a more sophisticated alternative to gender-blind theory.

### Powers and genders

Mainstream theories of the state tend to erase other powers. For instance, the famous Weberian definition of the state as the holder of the monopoly of legitimate force in a given territory ignores the force used by husbands toward wives. This is a widespread social pattern, whose legitimacy is only now being widely contested (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

Can we regard husbands as a *power*? To do so flies in the face of conventional political analysis. But in the context of gender relations, husbands may well be a group with definable interests and the capacity to enforce them. Where family structure is patriarchal, husbands' interests in their wives' sexual and domestic services are institutionalized on a society-wide basis. As shown by Hollway's (1994) study of employment practice in the Tanzanian civil service, state agencies may accommodate themselves to this power, to the extent of disrupting explicit equal-opportunity policy. Domestic violence commonly expresses husbands' claim to power over their wives. But as Segal (1990) observes, interpersonal violence is not usually the basis of power; rather, it is often a sign of its contestation or breakdown.

Gender-blind political theory has recognized limits to state power mainly in economic institutions – in corporations and markets, especially multinational corporations and international markets. There has been, without doubt, an erosion of state power over the economy in the last two decades, in the face of capital flight, global sourcing (in manufacturing), and currency deregulation. Discussions of these issues almost never register the fact that global capital is gendered.

International corporations are overwhelmingly controlled by men.

They are institutionally gendered in the same ways as the state, and depend on gender divisions of labor in their workforce, for instance in "offshore" manufacturing plants with female workers and male supervisors (Enloe, 1990). World capitalism involves a gendered accumulation process, whose dimensions have been shown with great clarity by Mies (1986). Most of the documentation of these facts has come from research on "women and development"; we are in dire need of research on "men and development," that is research on the masculinity of world economic elites.

Within the metropolitan countries, another power is emerging which might be called private states. There are said to be more private "security" employees in the United States than there are police. Corporations run surveillance programs to control their own employees, commonly using computer technology. Increasing numbers of the ruling class live in "gated communities," housing complexes with fences patrolled by security employees and designed to keep out the poor, the black and the card-less. These private states are gendered: controlled by men, mostly employing men, and in the case of the gated communities, en-gating women. (The motivating "threat" has its sexual dimension.) Because their legitimacy depends on property rather than citizenship, private states escape the political pressure of women which the public state encounters as demands for equal opportunity and affirmative action.

The gender-state, then, operates in a complex field of powers. This helps explain the phenomenon so forcibly brought to our attention in the 1990s, the disintegration of state structures – even apparently well developed ones such as the USSR.

Seeing the interplay of states with other gendered powers also gives some grip on what has surprised many people, the emergence of *ethnicity* as a basis of successor states. Given the importance of patriarchy in state legitimization, it is relatively easy to ground a new state on patriarchal local powers. Ethnicity is constituted in large measure through gender relations. The notion of extended "kinship" is central to the rhetoric of ethnicity – "our kith and kin" in the old language of British racism. As Vickers (1994) notes, ethnic politics lay heavy emphasis on women's reproductive powers. Gender relations thus provide a vehicle for new claims to authority (all the leaders of the warring successor states in the former Yugoslavia and the former USSR are men), and define boundaries of the group to which loyalty is demanded.

If we thus develop a more complicated picture of power, we must also recognize more complexity in the picture of gender. It has become common, in research on men and gender, to speak of "masculinities" rather

than "masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 1993). In most situations there is a culturally dominant gender pattern for men; but this is a *dominant* pattern, not a universal one. Only a minority of men may actually live an exemplary masculinity, as defined, say, by Brahmin codes in India, or by Hollywood action-hero codes in the United States. Therefore we speak of "hegemonic masculinity," which means precisely that there are also subordinated masculinities (such as found among gay men), marginalized masculinities (for example in marginalized ethnic groups), and complicit masculinities, supporting the hegemonic code but not living rigorously by it (Connell, 1995).

In the overall structure of gender relations, men are on top; but many men are not on top in terms of sexuality and gender, let alone class and race. This introduces important complexities into gender relations within and around the state. The men of oppressed ethnic groups may develop aggressive versions of hegemonic masculinity, which are criminalized when state elites perceive a problem of order — note, for instance, the very high rates of violence and imprisonment among African-American men in the United States. They may also be tapped for the purposes of the state: the same group has a high level of recruitment to the U.S. Army.

The masculinization of the state identified in feminist theory is principally a relationship between state institutions and hegemonic masculinity. This relationship is a two-way street. While hegemonic masculinity is a resource in the struggle for state power, state power is a resource in the struggle for hegemony in gender (a fact clearly apparent to both Christian and Islamic fundamentalists in current struggles).

Where some earlier formulations saw the link between masculinity and state power as a constant throughout history, we must see this as a historical relationship, which has taken different forms in the past and is open to further change now. The pattern of hegemonic masculinity altered, in the North Atlantic world, during the transition from Ancien Regime states controlled by a landowning gentry to liberal imperialist states controlled by alliances of capitalists and technocrats. Metropolitan states in the twentieth century have seen struggles between forms of masculinity whose claim to hegemony rested on expertise, and forms whose claim to hegemony rested on qualities of toughness and fitness to command (liberals versus hard-liners, professionals versus managers, and so on). Specific forms of masculinity, often exceptionally violent, emerged in the process of imperial conquest: the conquistador, the brawling frontiersman or miner, the pastoral worker (cowboys, *guachos*), posing changing issues for the colonial states concerned (Phillips, 1987).

With increasing integration of world markets and mass communications, local gender orders are increasingly under pressure from a global culture centered in the North Atlantic countries. To some extent this makes for a standardization of gender categories. For instance, research on sexuality has shown, in countries as far apart as Brazil and Indonesia, diverse forms of same-gender sexual relationship among men being replaced by a "gay identity" patterned on the urban culture of the United States. Yet globalization is not flat-out homogenization. As Altman (1996) observes, the emerging homosexual identities of Asia are not all of one pattern; indeed the interplay between local and imported patterns creates a very complex array of sexualities and definitions of gender.

Clearly, not all gender phenomena follow a masculine versus feminine polarity. There is also a colorful variety of inter-gender and cross-gender identities and practices (Epstein and Straub, 1991). These can pose difficulties for the state. If the police arrest someone of mixed or intermediate gender, where is she/he to be imprisoned: in the men's jail or the women's jail? Lawsuits have already been fought over this issue. Wherever the state attempts gender segregation, in fact, difficulties arise about policing the boundaries.

### States

Much of the writing in this area (including my own) uses the singular universal, "the state." Recognizing the plurality of powers and genders suggests that we should also call this habit of thought into question. What is true of one state is not necessarily true of another, nor of the same state at another point of time. We need to speak of "states," and think plurally.

As with genders, this does not mean that we have to think chaotically. The multiplicity of states in history is very definitely structured. In recent world history there are two over-arching structures of relations between states. The first is the competition and alliance of independent states, originating in the European system of sovereignty. This is the pattern analyzed by the academic discipline of "international relations." The second is the pattern of imperialism — the colonial empires, the successor system of neo-colonialism, and the world markets dominated by major states and giant corporations.

Both structures have a gender dimension. This is documented for the first structure by feminist critiques of international relations theory (Peterson, 1992); for the second, by feminist critiques of development

theory and world-systems theory (Mies, 1986; Ward, 1993). Let us consider the gender dynamics that arise from different situations in the history of these structures.

### *Colonial states*

Colonial conquest often involved a direct assault on the gender orders of indigenous societies. The Portuguese conquerors of Brazil forced indigenous "Indians" into slavery on plantations, or into village settlements rigidly controlled by the church, in which their pagan ways (and languages) would be lost (Burns, 1980). The Spanish conquerors of Mexico and neighboring central and north America did similar things, including a violent attack on "sodomy," nearly obliterating the intermediate gender category (the so-called "berdache") of indigenous society (Williams, 1986).

Economic exploitation under settler colonialism in Africa also involved the "pulverization" of indigenous society, as Good (1976) put it. A major disruption of gender relations was required to produce labor forces for plantations and mines. The resulting pattern of poverty, labor migration, male labor forces living in barracks, family separation, urban sex work and long-distance travel, has provided ideal conditions for the HIV/AIDS epidemic, now a major disaster in central, western and southern Africa (Barnett and Blaikie, 1992).

In constructing a social order after conquest, the colonizers produced racialized gender orders. Though initial conquest often meant widespread interracial sex (rape, concubinage, and sometimes marriage), by the high tide of colonialism in the late nineteenth century all the major empires were operating color bars connected to a gender division of labor. The colonial states were controlled by men, for whom wives were imported from the metropolis. The interpersonal relations of colonial society revolved around "white women" who directed labor forces of domestic servants but were forbidden political expression. (The resulting experience in Papua New Guinea is documented in a remarkable oral history by Butbeck, 1988.)

### *Post-colonial states*

The process of decolonization necessarily challenged the imperial gender order. Some anti-colonial movements mobilized women's support and contested traditional forms of patriarchy, the Chinese communist

movement being the best known case (Stacey, 1983).

It is common, however, for the establishment of a post-colonial or post-revolutionary regime to involve the reinstallation of patriarchy. Mies's (1986) sardonic observations on the cults of Marxist Founding Fathers are all too apt. The intimidation of women by Islamic revival movements in Iran and some Arab countries is a current example, where feminist attitudes among women are seen as evidence of the Western corruption of religion and culture (Tohid, 1991).

Yet the current is not all one way. Women have achieved a considerable level of influence within the Islamic republic of Iran. The post-colonial state in India has provided a political environment in which a feminist movement could develop, known internationally through the journal *Mamushi* (Kishwar and Vanita, 1984). Of the five successor states to the British Indian Empire, three have had women Prime Ministers and a fourth nearly did.

### *Metropolitan states*

Imperialism impacts society in the metropolis as well as in the colonies. The tremendous scale of the social surplus concentrated in the imperial centers, and now in the financial centers of the global economy, changes the conditions of gender politics. It supports, for instance, the rising expectation of life and the drastic drop in birth rate that has transformed the experience of married women. But global empire also raised the size of the patriarchal dividend, the volume of social assets controlled by men. This raised the stake of gender politics for men, and helped expand the public realm in which public masculinities were constructed (Hearn, 1992).

Women's political citizenship developed first on the frontier of European settler colonialism (in North America and Australasia), next in the metropolis. Citizenship, however, has been progressively emptied of political content and replaced by the status of consumer, as the commercialization of everyday life and culture intensifies. This has involved an extensive commodification of sexuality, constituting heterosexual men as collective consumers of women's sexual services (for example through advertising and pornography).

Thus women's increased presence in the public realm has been counterbalanced by a decline of the public realm itself, and a relocation of power into market mechanisms dominated by men. The old form of state patriarchy, with masculine authority embedded in bureaucratic hierarchies, was vulnerable to challenge through equal rights campaigns. New forms of

management which commodify state services (privatization, corporatization, program budgeting), and neo-liberal administrative reform agendas (Yeatman, 1990), have reconstituted state power in forms less open to feminist challenge. It is no accident that these organizational reforms coincided with a "taxpayers' revolt" and tax concessions to business, budgetary attacks on social services (which tend to benefit women), and higher military expenditure in major powers (benefiting mostly men).

#### *The international state*

A striking feature of twentieth-century political history is the attempt to overcome the anarchy of the system of sovereign states through permanent international institutions. Some of these agencies link territorial states without themselves having a territorial base. The International Labour Organization is one of the oldest, followed by the League of Nations, the United Nations and its various agencies, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and the more selective club of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Other agencies follow the more traditional pattern of regional customs unions or trading blocs, gradually developing into federal states. The most important of these at present is the European Union.

These agencies too are gendered, and have gender effects. For the most part their gender regimes replicate those of the territorial states that gave rise to them. The international agencies have, however, a specific importance in gender politics as means for the globalization of gender relations. As Stromquist (1995) notes, gender policies at the international level may be more progressive than their local realizations.

In other respects international agencies have reinforced rather than challenged local patriarchy. The "male bias" in most development aid is familiar — so scandalous, eventually, that aid agencies such as the World Bank were persuaded to set up special programs for women. But the general economic policies pursued by international financial agencies since the debt crisis of the 1980s has disadvantaged women, since the austerity programs forced on debtor governments have squeezed the welfare sector, on which women are generally more dependent than men, and has favored market mechanisms, which are mostly controlled by men.

Realism demands that we should also acknowledge the size and importance of intergovernmental links in the realm of violence and espionage. Military aid is the largest single component of international aid.

The resources transferred go overwhelmingly into the hands of men. In many cases the armed forces supported by these links became the main political power; these cases include Indonesia, the largest Islamic country in the world; Brazil and Argentina, the largest countries in South America; Afghanistan, where rival military forces are currently fighting for control. Military dictatorships are, without exception, patriarchal dictatorships.

#### **A case in point: the arms trade**

The gender meaning of weapons is familiar, and has deep historical roots. Fernbach (1981) speaks of the "masculine specialization in violence" that can be traced from the first armies, in the first urban societies. Armed forces are overwhelmingly composed of men today. Recent research on civilians in the United States, which has probably the most heavily armed population in the world, shows gun ownership about four times as high among men as among women (Smith and Smith, 1994).

The masculinization of weapons is not a natural fact, but a cultural pattern. (So far as natural difference goes, guns are aptly called, in Damon Runyon stories, "equalizers.") It must be constantly regenerated and reproduced. A recent study by Gibson (1994) provides a striking illustration. Gibson traces the hypermasculine cult of weaponry in "paramilitary culture" in the United States, the cult of the "new war" developed in the period since the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. This was dramatically brought to public attention by the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

What is worked out culturally in gun cults and violent "action movies" is also an economic reality in the form of the arms trade. This ranges from government-to-government sales of high-technology weapons systems, to the private circulation of small arms in countries whose governments officially permit arms sales, or cannot prevent them. The largest part of the arms trade is the legal equipping of military and paramilitary forces. This is no small industry. United States arms exports in 1993 totalled \$32 billion.

The metal does not come naked: it comes clothed in social forms. The army is a patriarchal institution. It is no accident that civil wars, from Bangladesh (at its separation from Pakistan) to the current conflict in Bosnia, include rape in the spectrum of military operations; this is a familiar form in which armies assert dominance over conquered peoples. Recent social research inside armed forces in the United States (Barrett,



1996) reveals an oppressive but efficient regime designed to produce a narrowly defined hegemonic masculinity. It is hardly surprising that institutions with such gender regimes have difficulty incorporating women under equal opportunity rules, and difficulty with the concept (though not the reality) of gay soldiers.

Because of the social forms in which armaments are embedded, the arms trade is a vector of the globalization of gender, much as the international state is. Indeed, the two overlap, since the arms trade is connected to the globally linked military and intelligence apparatuses of the major powers. The social forms of military masculinity are exported to post-colonial states by military aid and advice programs (the mechanism by which the United States became involved in the Vietnamese war in the 1960s, with U.S. advisers constantly urging greater aggressiveness on officers of the Saigon regime), and by the training of officers in the military schools of the metropolis. In a world perspective, the modest gains of women's representation in parliaments and bureaucracies at a national level may well be outweighed by the growth of the apparatuses of patriarchal violence at an international level.

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## Chapter 3

# A Theory of Gender, Patriarchy and Capitalism

ØYSTEIN GULLVAG-HOLTEN

The present essay was originally written for my doctoral thesis (Holten, 1997). It does not deal with men as such, but rather with the frameworks that we use for interpreting gender, masculinities included. It especially addresses the long-standing questions of the relationship between capital and patriarchy, asking whether capital is genderless, or whether male dominance is reproduced through economic relations "by design."

I shall first briefly outline some common views of capital and gender, and recent research on the capital/gender connection. Next I present a critical gender theory that builds on this research. Finally, I discuss how a social forms view of gender and capital may extend and nuance such a theory.

### Some common approaches

The conventional view of gender and capitalism in sociology has been of two phenomena that are fairly distant, or even separate. It is an "isolationist" view since it tends to isolate gender from other issues. For example, one can first discuss "the constitution of society" without reference to gender or feminist theory, as Anthony Giddens (1993) does in a recent work, and then eventually turn to gender as a separate phenomenon. This is still a fairly common approach in sociology, and one which I question. Capitalism, in this view, may have some impact on gender (or vice versa), yet this is not a central relation in order to understand modern society.

A second approach may be called "externalist," since the impact of capitalism on gender is seen as something external, coming from without; it is a relation crossing a great gap or distance. Gender, usually conceived as something which is there already, is among all those "peripheral" and partly "traditional" phenomena that are changed with the new age of capital. This is also fairly common in sociology. Both the "isolationist" and the "externalist"