GENDER AND NATIONALISM IN FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "Gender and Nationalism in Feminist International Relations Theory: A Conceptual Study" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.
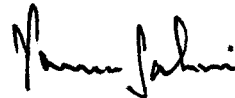
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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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CONTENTS

Chapter I

Introduction

Feminist scholarship made its entry into the discipline of International Relations (IR) in the early 1980s, initially as a critique of the false assumption of gender-neutrality that the dominant theoretical paradigms of International Relations, neorealism and neoliberalism, are based on. Feminist International Relations can be seen as an extension to the sphere of international relations of the one overriding imperative that feminists of all schools of thought share – the redefinition of the boundaries between the public and the private, the personal and the political (Elshtain 1981). The United Nations Decade for Women (1975-85) served the purpose of internationalising feminist concerns and at the same time, feminists began to realise that international relations do in fact have gendered consequences and that mainstream/*male*stream IR theories are deeply embedded in masculinist assumptions. Simultaneously, the third debate in IR opened up intellectual spaces within the discipline that feminist scholars could inhabit[1] (Zalewski 1993: 15).

Mainstream IR theorists of different strands have shown a constant reluctance to accept the importance of gender as a category of analysis in their theorisations. In so far as they accept the category of gender, they tend to view it as an intra-national problem, irrelevant to international relations, which has traditionally been about the 'high politics' between states, as opposed to the 'low politics' within states. IR scholars may accept that gender is important in determining the interpersonal relations between women and men, but they do not consider it as having any relevance to international politics. This perception has

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[1] The discipline of IR has periodically witnessed a series of debates about what constitutes its subject matter and central concerns. The first debate that occurred in the 1930s and 1940s was between idealism and realism and it resulted in realism gaining precedence as the more accurate theory of international relations. The second debate in the 1960s was between the behavioural and the classical approaches within realism and it was decided in favour of the behaviouralists who called for scientific research methods and positivist modes of analysis. The term 'third debate' has been used by different sets of scholars to signify two distinct developments: a) the inter-paradigm debate of the 1970s between realism/neorealism, liberalism/pluralism and neo-Marxism/structuralism and b) the positivism vs. postpositivism debate of the 1980s that threw up fundamental questions about the epistemological and ontological foundations of IR (Vasquez 1995). Here, 'third debate' has been used to denote the latter, in keeping with Marysia Zalewski's scheme (Zalewski 1993).

been fostered by the fact that the institutions of 'high politics' like ministries of foreign affairs and militaries have been male-dominated preserves. The most important reason for the absence of gender from IR is the prevalent belief that international relations are 'gender neutral' i.e. IR is a world in which neither men nor women figure *per se*, the emphasis being on impersonal actors, structures and processes. Thus international relations are assumed to affect neither the position nor the roles of women and men in society. It is also presumed that issues pertaining to women, the domestic and the private spheres do not affect international relations. As Christine Sylvester points out, 'women and their association with the private sphere of domesticity, morality, subjectivity, passion and femininity, stand for all that the IR field is not.' (Sylvester 1994: 102)

Feminist IR scholars argue that mainstream IR is based on the assumption that the masculinist way of 'knowing the world' is the only scientific, objective and rational perspective through which one can understand international politics. Therefore, as Jill Steans observes,

> One of the major aims of feminist critique has been to expose the masculinist bias in neorealist/realist concepts and categories and to show how, consequently, 'claims to know' in IR have been partial and particular. (Steans 2006: 25)

Hence, the first task that feminist IR scholars set for themselves was to make gender visible in the conduct of international politics. They sought to establish the relevance of gender as an analytical category in international relations by revealing the omnipresence of gendered operations in a wide range of sites – in nuclear weapons design and security discourse, in the Foreign Service of the US, in Israeli-Palestinian relations in the occupied territories, in Thai export processing zones and in post-communist Eastern European states. Cynthia Enloe's claim that the 'personal is international' and that 'the political exists internationally and not just at one's doorsteps' represents the crux of the feminist IR discourse (Enloe 1990: 196). Enloe pioneered and perfected the strategy of analysing the lives of women 'from below', which would be the least likely place to look for 'high politics', but could yield rich insights about how ordinary women were involved in and were affected by the conduct of international politics. For instance, Enloe considers the withdrawal of Russian mothers' support for the Soviet army, due to the

gross and unaccountable sacrifice of their sons in the USSR-Afghanistan war, as one of the many personal expressions of gendered power that led to the delegitimisation of the Soviet regime and its ultimate collapse. Further, in her analysis of the first Persian Gulf war from a feminist perspective, Enloe focusses on women's war stories and experiences, sexual abuse and harassment by US soldiers, the rape of Filipino servants by their Kuwaiti employers, the rape of Kuwaiti women by Iraqi soldiers and so on (Enloe 1990, 1993).

Feminist IR has expanded and built on the work of feminist political and economic theory to examine how the masculinist conduct of international politics and economics differentially affects men and women. Feminist IR scholars have been making critical interventions in the field of International Political Economy through studies on globalisation, structural adjustment policies, development strategies and so on (Marchand and Runyan 2000; Whitworth 1994). The feminist IR critique also extends to the state and its key military and governmental components. Furthermore, key concepts of IR like security, sovereignty, anarchy and power have also been critically analysed, redefined and challenged (Cohn 1988; Peterson 1992; Tickner 1992). The implication of the feminist IR analysis is that theorisations of the state, anarchy or the struggle for power and security are inadequate unless it addresses what Gillian Youngs calls 'the complex of gendered and other power relations' which not only sustain power but explain it (Youngs 2004: 82).

Feminist IR scholars have had to face consistent opposition from mainstream theorists, resulting in what J.Ann Tickner refers to as a 'troubled engagement' between the two (Tickner 1997: 611). This 'troubled engagement' is characterised by the following features:

1) *The divergence in their conceptualisations of the role of gender in International Relations*: Some mainstream IR scholars like Robert Keohane have accepted the relevance of gender in IR theory but tend to see it as one more variable that can be added onto existing theoretical frameworks to enhance the explanatory power of IR (Keohane

3

1998). However, feminist scholars perceive the role of gender analysis in International Relations as less benign; they believe that it challenges the androcentric nature of the central categories and assumptions of mainstream IR theories. Feminist IR scholars are suspicious of mainstream attempts to add gender as a variable, as they believe that it is a ploy to co-opt and 'discipline' feminism. They insist that all feminist theories, in one way or the other, act as 'subversive strategies' (Gross 1986). It is in terms of this subversive power that feminist International Relations throws up a fundamental challenge to the mainstream/*male*stream discourses in International Relations. The goal of feminist IR theorising is not 'disciplining' feminism to make it acceptable to a particular dominant discourse but to call for a radical re-thinking of given notions and theoretical frameworks in international politics. Hence, the value of feminist IR lies in its attempts to subvert the received understanding of states, sovereignty and the international system.

2) *The divergence in their understandings of the purpose of theory and research*: While mainstream IR theorists see theory as an explanatory tool that causally explains significant events in international politics, feminist IR scholars tend to think of theory not only as a heuristic device but, more importantly, as a means of critique and reconceptualisation of existing ways of knowledge construction and dissemination. Mainstream and feminist scholars also disagree on what is 'scientific' and what is 'real', when it comes to theorising international politics. This disagreement stems from the different epistemologies and ontologies that inform mainstream and feminist theoretical enquiries. Mainstream IR generally poses international relations in abstract and unitary terms, while feminists are mostly attuned to the social relations of the international, which Sylvester refers to as 'relations international' (Sylvester 1994). With an ontology based on unitary, autonomous states operating in an asocial, anarchical international environment, there is little in realist and other mainstream IR theories that provide an entry point for feminist theories. Positivist methods in IR subordinate questions of ontology and take a predominantly male-constructed reality as a given, and as the beginning and end of theorising and knowledge building. Feminist IR, therefore, calls for an ontological revisionism – a recognition of the need to go behind the apparent 'reality'

of international politics and examine how gendered power constructs the social relations that form that reality.

Feminists claim that the dominant epistemology in political science as well as IR is based on positivism. It reflects a particularly masculine and western set of experiences that systematically excludes the possibility that women could be 'knowers' or agents of knowledge. The mainstream IR theories like realism, neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism are all rigidly rooted in such a positivist epistemology. Feminist post-positivists argue that epistemological stances depend upon the ontological position from which to know; the positivist pursuit of objectivity, for instance, is dependent upon a particular masculine subject position. This has led to feminist IR scholars developing alternative epistemologies.[2]

Feminist IR has evolved over the years, both in terms of the range of research topics and the innovativeness of methods employed. J. Ann Tickner and Jacqui True have identified a turn towards second-generation feminist scholarship (Tickner 2005b; True 2002). The defining characteristic of second-generation feminist IR is its empirical content. In fact, the second-generation can be seen as a response to the criticism often made by mainstream scholars that feminist IR is incapable of substantiating its theoretical claims with empirical evidence. While some first-generation feminists were also engaged in empirical work, it is only with the second-generation that this trend has taken a definitive shape. One major limitation of the first-generation was that its arguments were often made at the meta-theoretical level. It is this limitation that the second-generation is trying to overcome by presenting substantive studies and revealing what a feminist perspective on IR will actually entail. Thus, second-generation feminist IR employs empirical research to bolster and carry forward the earlier theoretical claims made by the first-

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[2] Applying the three-fold categorisation of feminist theorising made by Sandra Harding to feminist IR, one can identify three distinct epistemological frameworks: Feminist Empiricist, Feminist Standpoint and Feminist Postmodernist (Harding 1986). Feminist empiricists attempt to demonstrate that gender as a variable must be included in existing research agendas to eliminate androcentric biases; feminist standpoint perspectives in IR argue that knowledge which emerges from women's experiences 'on the margins' of world politics is more critical because it is not as complicit with, or blinded by existing institutions and power relations and feminist postmodernists critique the possibility of any objective stance from which to examine 'reality', be it masculine or feminine.

generation. It looks at concrete historical, social and political contexts to make gender visible in the conduct of international relations. Two examples of such second-generation feminist IR are the works of Katharine Moon and Christine Chin, who employ ethnographic studies at the local level and try to integrate it with foreign and economic policies to bring out the gender dynamics at both the domestic and international levels (Moon 1997; Chin 1998).[3] Jacqui True identifies another distinctive feature of second-generation feminist IR; while, most of the first-generation of scholars belonged to Western countries, the second-generation has a significant presence of feminists from the post-colonial, Third World countries, mostly working and teaching in the West. To quote True, these scholars 'are simultaneously drawing on and transforming knowledge produced in First World contexts to illuminate post-colonial contexts and multiple intersections of social differentiation and oppression.' (True 2002: 3) Another new direction taken by second-generation feminist IR is towards the study of masculinities in international relations. The pioneering work in this respect was that of Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (Zalewski and Parpart 1998). Charlotte Hooper also examines the role of masculinities in international relations, specifically in terms of the two categories of 'hegemonic' and 'subordinate' masculinities (Hooper 2001).

Feminist scholars have by now clearly established the relevance of gender as an analytical category in IR. They have repeatedly emphasised the need to bring issues of identity to the centre of academic discourse in IR. They have also examined the centrality of gender in the construction of nationalist identity and in the definition of women's 'proper places' within the national order. Feminist IR scholars as well as feminists from other disciplines have specifically looked at women's experiences in the context of violent nationalist conflicts and wars in order to challenge the invisibility of women in the mainstream discourse on war and conflict. They have attempted to unravel the gendered manifestations and consequences of nationalist projects and the deeply

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[3] Katharine Moon analyses military prostitution in American military bases in South Korea and makes the interesting observation that the unequal sexual alliances between Korean prostitutes and American soldiers defined and supported the similarly unequal, interstate alliance between the United States and South Korea in the post-war era. Christine Chin tries to locate gendered processes in the international political economy, by looking at the lives of female domestic servants imported from the Philippines and Indonesia to Malaysia and the state policies that regulate their work from the 1970s onwards. She argues that the labour of these women supported the Malaysian modernisation project and its export-led development model.

embedded connection between notions of femininity, masculinity and nationality. Their work has brought out the salience of gender in the construction of the national identity and in the demarcation of roles for the members of the national community.

Engendering Nationalism: Feminist Perspectives

The post-Cold War era has witnessed a rapid growth in the academic interest in nations and nationalisms. The resurgence of ethnic and nationalist movements around the world has forced the discipline of IR to take note of nationalism as one of the predominant causes of violent conflict and not just as a domestic level variable that properly belongs to the realm of intra-state politics. However, the gender dimension is conspicuous by its absence in the mainstream literature on nationalism, across disciplines. The primary reason underlying this neglect in the discipline of IR is the public-private and the inside-outside dichotomy that is implicit in mainstream IR theory. The domestic politics of identity within the states is defined as being outside the purview of IR. As a result, both conventional 'problem-solving' (realist, neorealist and neoliberal) theories and 'critical' non-feminist (constructivist, Marxist) theories of IR overlook the private sphere of the family or the household in their analysis of the nation-state or nationalism – the primary sites of the nationalist construction of 'proper' masculine and feminine roles.[4]

The two most influential mainstream works on nationalism are Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* and Anthony D. Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. While the former is representive of the modernist or social constructionist approach to nationalism, the latter exemplifies the primordialist position. Anderson and other modernists claim that modern capitalism, industry and communications have been the most crucial factors that have created the 'imagined community' of the nation. Anderson calls the nation an 'imagined community'

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[4] The distinction between 'problem-solving' theories and 'critical' theories of IR was introduced by Robert W. Cox. According to Cox, problem-solving theories are those that accept the prevailing social relations, power equations and institutions and try to resolve problems that come up within that framework. As a result, they legitimise and reproduce hierarchical structures by making the current configuration of IR appear natural and immutable. In contrast, critical theories do not take existing power relations and institutions for granted but subject them to critical appraisal. They seek to understand the dimension of change in international relations and to envisage possibilities of different world orders that could come into existence in the future (Cox 1981).

– 'imagined' because 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' and 'community' because 'regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings' (Anderson 1991: 15, 16). Nationalism, then, is an identity like kinship or religion, rather than an ideology like liberalism or fascism (Anderson 1991: 15, 16).

For Anderson, nations are cultural artifacts that are based on 'print-communities' and a conception of 'empty, homogeneous time', while nationalism is a type of discourse that facilitates the imagination of the nation as a community. These developments emerged in early modern history with larger social changes taking place in the background, like the decline of sacred script communities (the great religions) and of sacred monarchical centres (the great empires). Together, they created the political and cultural space for the subsequent rise of nations. Thus, Anderson pays special attention to the cultural roots of nationalism. However, he overlooks how national cultures are invariably based on important constructions of masculinity and femininity. For instance, even while acknowledging that nationalist imaginings construe the nation in terms of either the vocabulary of kinship or home to which the members owe selfless attachment and sacrifice, Anderson fails to see the gendered implications of such an imagination of the nation (Anderson 1991: 131).

Anthony D. Smith disputes the modernist argument that nations are imagined into existence and claims that shared ethnic histories are the foundations of nationalism without which it would be impossible to conceive the modern nation-state. He challenges the social constructionists with the question – if nationalism is all about imagination and invention, then why does it continue to strike such a deep chord in diverse cultural and social settings? (Smith 1989). Smith focuses on the *ethnie*, or pre-modern ethnic community, with its notions of collective descent, shared memories, common culture and

affiliation to a homeland. Smith does not believe in the authentic primordial essence of national communities as claimed by ethnic and racial nationalists; nevertheless, he does think that there are certain pre-existing experiences of shared ethnicity which nationalist projects draw upon to establish modern nation states. Out of the five categories of social identity that he enumerates – ethnicity, religion, class, space and gender – Smith privileges the ethnic identity as the most important force behind nationalism. Even while recognising that gender is a universal and pervasive marker of identity that 'stands at the origins of other differences and subordinations', he does not consider gender to be a potent force in collective mobilisation along nationalist lines (Smith 1991: 4). Smith also recognises the family as being central to the creation of the nation because it is through the generational narrative of families that myths of common ancestry play a crucial role in the transformation of ethnic identity into a national identity. To quote Smith:

> The metaphor of family is indispensable to nationalism. The nation is depicted as one great family, the members as brothers and sisters of the motherland or fatherland, speaking their mother tongue... The family of the nation overrides and replaces the individual's family but evokes similarly strong loyalties and vivid attachments. (Smith 1991: 79)

The gender blindness of Smith's theorisations is accentuated by the fact that he completely overlooks the centrality of gender in constituting the national identity, despite his focus on the linkages between the metaphor of the family and the nation (Racioppi and See 2000).

Neither Anderson nor Smith refers in any substantial manner to the crucial role that gender plays in constructions of national identity. It is to address this serious gap in mainstream understandings of nationalism that feminist researchers started looking at the gendered nature of nations and nationalism. A rich body of literature has subsequently come up, which tries to examine the ways in which the discourse of nationalism is deeply rooted in constructions of masculine and feminine gender roles.

From a feminist perspective, Anne McClintock has critiqued mainstream scholars of nationalism for their striking neglect of gender. She makes the powerful assertion that 'all nationalisms are gendered' (McClintock 1995: 104). Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias

can be credited with a rich body of feminist scholarship on the relationship between gender and nationalism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Yuval-Davis 1997). In her book *Gender and Nation*, Yuval-Davis explores the mutually constitutive relationship between gender and nation and the gendered character of nationalist struggles and war. She draws upon a wide range of cases and experiences of women to illustrate the way women's roles are gendered to suit the needs of nationalist projects. She also problematises the seemingly natural connections that are made between men and war on one hand and women and peace on the other. Among feminist IR scholars, there has been an abiding interest in questions pertaining to the gendered nature of national identities as well as the impact of nationalist conflict and war on women. In her pioneering works on feminist IR, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* and *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*, Enloe unravels the multiple ways that women are affected by war as wartime casualties, war refugees, victims of sexual violence and wartime prostitutes (Enloe 1990, 1993). She urges IR scholars to look at the lives of real men and women and not at abstract states in order to understand the dynamics of identity construction and reproduction. By claiming that the personal is international and the international is personal, she questions the foundational dichotomies of public/private and inside/outside in IR theory. Ann Tickner re-conceptualises conventional notions of war, peace and security from a feminist standpoint. Tickner argues that images of motherland, fatherland and homeland are employed by nation-states in their domestic and foreign policies. She asserts that 'the gendered identities of states and the construction of national ideologies should be examined in order to better understand their security-seeking behaviour' (Tickner 2001: 53). Jill Steans discusses the relevance of gender in understanding aspects of nationalist struggle and nationalist articulations of identity. Her specific focus is on the ways in which power operates in nationalist struggles and influences the construction and ascription of identity. Through such an enquiry, she challenges the mainstream IR assumption of the nation-state as a homogeneous, unitary actor (Steans 2006).

While feminist IR scholars have engaged with the interaction between gender and nationalism, a number of limitations in their conceptualisations can be noticed. First,

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there has hardly been an attempt to focus solely on the issue of gender and nationalism; feminist IR scholars have more or less been satisfied with devoting a chapter or so to this issue in their works and moving on to look at other areas like security, political economy and militarisation. Second, the interconnections between gender and nationalism have not been explicitly formulated by feminist scholars as a medium through which one can question the public-private and inside-outside dichotomies in IR. Third, they have not theorised about the multiplicity of ways in which women engage with nationalism. Women are mostly projected as victims of nationalist agendas and violent conflicts guided by nationalist ideologies; the possibility of women asserting their agency in resistance to militaristic nationalisms is left unexplored. Nationalism is almost always projected as something that is bad for the feminist cause of women's emancipation.

This study intends to take the feminist IR discourses on gender and nationalism forward by applying their insights to a fundamental theoretical issue - the public/private and inside/outside dichotomies that underlie all mainstream IR theories. It will look at political motherhood as a specific instance of how a so-called 'private' role assumes political and international significance in the context of nationalist projects. The term 'political motherhood' was coined by Jennifer Schirmer to refer to ways in which women utilise their biological and cultural role as mothers as a medium for political mobilisation (Schirmer 1993). Thus, examining political motherhood more closely will be a fruitful and engaging way in which to look at the intersections between gender and nationalism. Through a study of political motherhood as a specific manifestation of the interaction between gender and nationalism, this dissertation intends to address some of the gaps in the existing feminist IR literature and take forward the agenda of revealing the 'international' in the 'personal' and the 'personal' in the 'international. The conceptual framework of political motherhood is particularly relevant in this context because nationalist projects inevitably involve gendered constructions of motherhood. In addition, an examination of concepts like 'feminist nationalism' and 'transversal feminist politics' will be undertaken with the aim of challenging the predominant feminist conception that identity politics revolving around nationalism is always detrimental to feminist struggles.

Thus, it is envisaged that this dissertation will bring out the diversity of ways in which gender interacts with nationalism.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

The hypothesis that this dissertation will work with is that a feminist International Relations analysis of the interplay of gender and nationalism fundamentally challenges the public/private and inside/outside dichotomies of mainstream International Relations theory. To examine this hypothesis, the following research questions will be raised:

a) Why and in what different ways do ideals of masculinity and femininity inform all nationalist projects?

b) How does a feminist IR conceptualisation of the interaction between gender and nationalism challenge the public-private and inside-outside dichotomies in mainstream IR theory?

c) How does political motherhood as one specific way in which women respond to nationalism contribute to the feminist IR project of interrogating the public/private dichotomy?

Research Methods

The method employed for this research will be inductive. It will proceed from an examination of particular roles that are imposed on or taken up by women in relation to nationalism, to a general conceptualisation of how gender is always implicated in nationalism. It will also examine the instances of women challenging the passive roles attributed to them in specific contexts and use these as a basis to conceptualise women's subversions of the public/private and inside/outside divides. This research will predominantly rely on an analytical study of secondary sources on gender and nationalism in general and on political motherhood in particular.

Chapterisation

The dissertation is organised around five chapters. The chapter following this introductory chapter is titled *Gendering The Nation: Nationalist Constructions of the Masculine and The Feminine*. It will attempt to see why gendered identities are so crucial

to the construction of nationalist ideologies and how nationalist projects try to utilise the masculine and feminine roles to further their agendas. This chapter will begin by examining how notions of hegemonic masculinity guide nationalism and how nationalist constructions of masculine roles propagate militarism and aggressiveness as the ideal masculine qualities. It will then contrast such constructions of masculinity with parallel notions of femininity that inhabit nationalist imaginations. Using a typology of four roles, each of which highlights a different aspect of women's incorporation into the nationalist framework, the patriarchal and masculinist assumptions that underlie nationalist projects will be critically examined. This chapter will demonstrate the feminist argument that any comprehensive understanding of nationalism must necessarily look at its omnipresent gendered foundations.

The third chapter, *Encountering Identity in International Relations: Feminist Insights*, will critically examine the absence of identity as a category of analysis from mainstream IR theory and the feminist responses to this. Using feminist IR arguments, the category of the 'nation-state' that occupies centre stage in mainstream IR theory will be critically scrutinised. This will create the background against which conventional IR's exclusion of identity related issues in general and nationalism in particular can be understood. This chapter will include an exposition of the public/private and inside/outside dichotomies that are implicit in mainstream IR theory. It will apply feminist IR insights on identity and difference and the gendered nature of nationalism to challenge the public/private and inside/outside dualities. It will trace the line of argument that feminist IR scholars employ to assert the crucial need to incorporate the concepts of identity and difference into IR theorising. The centrality of conceptions of 'self' and 'other' in determining the boundaries between the public and the private and the inside and the outside will be demonstrated and the need to refocus on issues of identity will be established. The inherently gendered nature of processes of identification and differentiation will also be revealed. The chapter will then proceed to look at the complex but interesting relationship between feminism and nationalism. Feminist scholars often face the dilemma as to how they must respond to the essentially gendered politics of nationalism. Both sets of arguments, those that oppose feminist involvement in nationalist projects and those that

support feminist engagements with nationalism, will be brought out and the division between Western and Non-Western feminists on this issue will be dealt with. In this light, Louis A. West's conception of 'feminist nationalism', an original way of examining the relationship between feminism and nationalism, will be discussed by employing instances drawn from several national contexts like the Philippines, Catalonia in Spain, Québec in Canada, and South Korea. Nira Yuval-Davis' paradigm of 'transversal feminist politics' will be studied as a creative and constructive way in which feminists can respond to situations in which nationalist struggles become virulent. The Women in Black movement in Israel and the Women's Support Network in Belfast, Northern Ireland, will be described as examples of transversal feminist politics in practice.

While the third chapter will look at feminist responses to nationalism, the fourth chapter titled *Political Motherhood: Subversion and Resistance* will look at the possibility of women trying to subvert and resist violent nationalist projects not through conventional feminist means of action but by redefining the traditional roles ascribed to them by those very nationalist ideologies. The role of the mother is of central significance in the nationalist imagination and by converting this apparently private, apolitical role into one that has immense potential for political mobilisation, the practice of political motherhood demonstrates how the boundaries between the public and the private are far from immutable. This chapter will explore the concept of political motherhood and develop a typology of the different themes that animate its practice in various socio-cultural contexts. Examples of political motherhood drawn from Latin America, Africa, South Asia, Northern Ireland and the US will be utilised to elaborate on these themes. The objective of this chapter will be to probe as to how the political use of a 'private' identity of motherhood can create spaces for women's assertion of agency by subverting existing nationalist stereotypes about women's 'proper' roles in the national community. In this way, it will open up spaces to contest both mainstream nationalist literature's neglect of women's roles and feminist assumptions about motherhood as a non-agentive, patriarchal role.

The concluding chapter will recapitulate the main arguments of the preceding chapters and sum up the main findings of the study.

Chapter II

Gendering The Nation: Nationalist Constructions of The Masculine And The Feminine

The nation as a particularly potent marker of identity has come to attract the attention of International Relations theorists only in the post-Cold War era, when conflicting nationalist aspirations in several parts of the world began to trigger off serious international crises, like the breakup of Yugoslavia. Scholars from different theoretical and disciplinary vantage points have contributed to the growing debate on the resurgence of nationalism and nationalist movements, the two ends of the spectrum being represented by the constructionists and the primordialists. However, feminists have critiqued mainstream social science scholarship on nationalism for its gender-blindness. For instance, Nira Yuval-Davis notes that 'most of the hegemonic theorizations about nations and nationalism, including, sometimes those written by women, have ignored gender relations as irrelevant', notwithstanding the fact that women have an indispensable role in reproducing nations, biologically, culturally and symbolically (Yuval-Davis 1997: 1). The social constructions of masculinity and femininity are extensively put to use by nationalist movements all over the world, in order to create an imagery of 'women reproducing the nation physically and symbolically and men protecting, defending and avenging the nation.' (Ivekovic and Mostov 2004: 10) Thus, gender blind approaches to nationalism are at best partial, as they leave out of their purview, the 'complex material, political and symbolic processes involved in the articulation of various national projects' (Kandiyoti 2000: 491). This is why feminist scholars have taken up the task of unraveling the gendered constructions of masculine and feminine roles that inform nationalism.

Nationalism and Constructions of the 'Masculine'

The focus of much of the work so far on the interplay between gender and nationalism has almost exclusively been on feminine roles and the way it constructs and is

constructed by nationalisms. In other words, most studies have had a 'woman-centric' rather than a 'gender-centric' perspective, gender being rightly 'understood as the total ensemble of relationships that regulate the production of masculine and feminine identities and their relationships to the distribution of societal power' (Kandiyoti 2000: 491). Thus, feminist perspectives on nationalism have often resulted in an obsession with studying women – 'women revolutionists, women leaders, women's hidden labour, women's exploitation, women's resistance to domination' (Nagel 1998: 243). This has had the unintended consequence of reducing gender to the 'woman question' and making men invisible; these narratives end up treating 'men and masculinity as stable undifferentiated categories' and positing 'a straightforward equation between male interests, masculinities and nationalism' (Bracewell 2000: 566). There is a perceived need today within IR and other disciplines to problematise the relations between men, masculinity and nationalism. This is particularly significant in the context of a gender-sensitive analysis of nationalism because nationalist politics are crucial sites for the formulation and contestation of masculinities. Recognising this, some scholars have engaged in the past with questions like how nationalist projects promote or proscribe particular forms of masculinities and how changing ideas of masculinity have influenced nationalisms (Connell 1995; Dawson 1994; Mosse 1985, 1996). Feminist scholars have begun to take these studies into account to enrich their own analysis of the gendered nature of nationalisms in particular and IR in general (Bracewell 2000; Enloe 1998; Nagel 1998; Pettman 1996; Zalewski and Parpart 1998). For instance, Cynthia Enloe observes that 'nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope' (Enloe 1990: 45). She argues that women are relegated to minor, often symbolic, roles in nationalist movements and conflicts, either as icons of nationhood, to be elevated and defended, or as the booty or spoils of war, to be denigrated and disgraced. In either case, the real actors are men who are defending their freedom, their honour, their homeland and their women. The construction of 'patriotic manhood' and 'exalted motherhood' by nationalist ideologies inextricably links masculinity with nationhood (Nagel 2005: 397). Thus, nationalism is almost always conceived in male-centric terms. Based on her analysis of nationalist projects in former Yugoslavia, Žarana Papić concludes:

All nationalist ideologies in their political and military strategies are constructed and based on purposefully provoked, dominantly aggressive, openly violent and deadly oriented types of masculinity... Every aggressive, war-oriented nationalism is, as a rule, based and primarily functions on the specific form of an undignified, violent patriarchal system, and strictly gendered order, in which men and women are separated into opposite zones: battle fields and shelter fields. (Papić 1993)

Joanne Nagel highlights the importance of studying the interactions between masculinities and nationalist projects by asserting that

[I]f nations and states are indeed gendered institutions.... then to limit the examination of gender in politics to an investigation of women only, misses a major, perhaps *the* major way in which gender shapes politics – through men and their interests, their notions of manliness, and masculine micro and macro cultures. (Nagel 1998: 243)

Nagel draws on the work of George Mosse (1985) to argue that there is an intrinsic link between the emergence of the predominant Western notions of masculinity and modern nationalism. Mosse demonstrates how nationalism legitimises male domination over women by reinforcing the 'importance of fixed and unchanged sex roles as part of the fabric of society and the nation' (Mosse 1985: 17). Masculine microcultures of everyday life that are embedded in concepts like honour, patriotism, bravery and service perpetuate the needs of nationalist projects, especially in the context of militaristic national cultures. Thus, 'modern masculinity from the very first was co-opted by the new nationalist movements of the nineteenth century' (Mosse 1996: 7).

However, just as it is important to avoid essentialist definitions of femininity that link up women with passivity, peace and nurturing, it is crucial to avoid essentialist interpretations of men as uniformly violent and naturally aggressive, like that offered by Francis Fukuyama, who links these qualities to men's biology (Fukuyama 1998). Fukuyama argues that 'the basic social problem that any society faces is to control the aggressive tendencies of its young men', which can be solved only 'by directing them toward enemies outside the community' (Fukuyama 1998: 34).

18

A more sophisticated and less simplistic assessment of masculinities is offered by scholars like George Mosse and R.W Connell (Connell 1995; Mosse 1985, 1996). Connell's idea of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities has been greatly useful in analyses of nationalism, because it opens up the space for looking at the multiplicity and fluidity of constructions of masculinity in different historical national contexts, without overlooking the link between masculinity, nationalist power and women's subordination (Hooper 1998: 34, 35). Connell argues that in any given societal context at a given time, there are many masculinities in existence which are arranged along a hierarchy, but hegemonic masculinity refers to that construction of masculinity which is overarching and is defined in relation to a range of subordinate masculinities, such as those associated with gay men, men of colour or men of different classes, as well as in opposition to femininity (Connell 1987). Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as

> [T]he configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (Connell 1987: 77)

Thus, hegemonic masculinity is that particular manifestation of masculine roles that is 'culturally exalted' as the ideal (Connell 1987: 76, 77). To this definition, Mike Donaldson adds the subordination of women, heterosexuality and homophobia as three bedrock features of hegemonic masculinity (Donaldson 1993: 646).

Nagel links up this concept of hegemonic masculinity with nationalism by arguing that 'the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism' (Nagel 1998: 248, 249). This symbiotic relationship can be examined in the light of one of the defining features of modern hegemonic masculinity in almost every national community – militarism and war fighting. As David Morgan notes,

> Of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct. Despite far-reaching political, social and technological changes, the warrior still seems to be a key symbol of masculinity... The stance, the facial expressions and the weapons clearly connote aggression, courage, a capacity for violence, and sometimes, a willingness to sacrifice. The uniform absorbs individualities into a

generalized and timeless masculinity while also connoting a control of emotion and a subordination to a larger rationality. (Morgan 1994: 165)

Thus, military service is an important element of socialisation into hegemonic masculinity. For instance, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) continues to inculcate ideal notions of masculinity and femininity, even though it is the only conscript army with compulsory service for women.[1] The organisational culture of the IDF is based on a glorification of physical ability, aggressiveness and heterosexuality and its substructure is shaped by the Zionist ideology of reclaiming the masculinity of the Jewish man, who has historically been subjected to persecution and humiliation (Kaplan 2000: 127, 128). Thus, defending the Israeli territorial possessions and defending it through military power is the manifest destiny of the true Israeli man. As Myron J. Aronoff notes, service in the IDF is 'the primary rite of passage that initiates one into full membership in the Zionist civil religion.' (Aronoff 1989: 132) Paul Higate and John Hopton demonstrate what they call the 'reciprocal relationship between militarism and masculinity' by using the illustration of the earlier part of the World War I, when recruitment of voluntary soldiers depended crucially on the glorification of 'Victorian ideologies that defined masculinity in terms of strength, courage, determination and patriotism' and war time propaganda reinforced this form of hegemonic masculinity by exalting military culture and military success (Higate and Hopton 2005: 434).

The notion that young males fight to protect vulnerable groups like 'womenandchildren' who cannot protect themselves has been an important motivator for the recruitment of military forces and support for war.[2] Jean Elshtain traces the gendered identities of 'just warriors' and 'beautiful souls' as the leading masculine and feminine roles respectively in narratives of war and peace throughout international history (Elshtain 1987). While the image of the 'just warrior' refers to the soldier protector who is active, courageous and

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[1] Though both men and women are conscripted to the Israeli Defense Forces, men are recruited for three years whereas the women are discharged after a year and nine months or less. Only men can participate in combat-related activity and are called upon annually for varying periods of reserve duty throughout much of their adult life (Kaplan 2000).

[2] The term 'womenandchildren' was coined by Cynthia Enloe to depict the widely prevalent stereotype in IR discourse and practice that women are as defenceless and vulnerable as children and therefore need to be protected within the safe confines of the domestic arena and kept away from the brutality of the war front (Enloe 1993: 166).

dedicated to the cause of defending the nation, the image of the 'beautiful soul' pertains to the pure, innocent and passive women who need to be protected (Elshtain 1987: 4, 5). Elshtain brings out how such ideas of militarised masculinity and domesticated femininity authorise violence in defence of national boundaries:

> The young man goes to war not so much to kill as to die, to forfeit his particular body for that of the larger body, the body politic, a body most often presented and re-presented as feminine : a mother country... (Elshtain 1992: 142).

In this way, war fighting becomes 'the means to attain recognition, to pass, in a sense, the definitive test of political manhood' (Elshtain 1992: 143). For instance, the recruitment campaign to the US army hinges on its proclaimed ability to transform male sexuality by 'making men out of boys' (Cohn 1998: 142). Using examples from Nicaragua and Turkey, Cynthia Enloe argues that young men join military service not just because of conscription but also because they see it as the best opportunity available to prove their manliness and to be recognised as heroic members who protect the national community (Enloe 2000: 246, 251). Hence, 'nationalism... grease[s] the wheels of militarization, a process that ultimately marginalizes women.' (Enloe 1993: 229)

The linkage drawn here between hegemonic masculinity and militarism is not to say that all men are implicated equally in the violence of war, whereas all women are innocent. As Joanne Nagel points out, there are instances of wars that men resist and of men who resist all wars (Nagel 1998: 260). All men do not respond in the same way to militaristic propaganda, since they are divided along lines of race, class, age, sexuality and so on (Pettman 1996: 94, 95). Many men are critical of hegemonic masculinity and nationalism and there are historical moments like the resistance against the American involvement in the Vietnam war when hegemonies of all sort are challenged (Nagel 1998: 260). Cynthia Enloe gives the telling example of how, when Serbia's war with Croatia began in 1990, many young Serbian men were assisted by their mothers to flee the country to escape the dangerous compulsory military service that lay in store for them (Enloe 1998: 55). Wendy Bracewell points out the suicide of Miroslav Milenkovic, a reservist in the Serbian Army who shot himself dead in the front of his unit using the gun issued to him, as a symbolic act of resistance against the official nationalist demand for masculine

21

action (Bracewell 2000: 579). Moreover, though all men stand to benefit to a certain extent from the associations between masculinity and patriarchal power, they do not share equally in this privilege and being male does not automatically imply being powerful (Hooper 1998: 32; Niva 1998: 114). Thus, men are as much the victims of dominant constructions of masculinities as women and 'often, in a world of war, they are literally victims' (Smith 1998: 69).

Nationalism and Constructions of the 'Feminine'

There are a diversity of ways in which women located in different social, political and historical contexts perform roles in the making of nations. However, as Joanne Nagel asserts, 'the scripts in which these roles are embedded are written primarily by men, for men, and about men, and women are, by design, supporting actors' (Nagel 2005: 397). Thus, different gendered places and positions are allocated to men and women by nationalist ideologies; while the rightful place of men is in the military and the public sphere, that of women is the family and the private sphere. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias have identified five ways in which women are part of the process of creating and shaping national identities: (a) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities; (b) as reproducers of the [normative] boundaries of ethnic/national groups by enacting proper feminine behaviour; (c) as central participants in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture (d) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences; and (e) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles[3] (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989: 6, 7). This is a useful conceptual framework to approach the complex interaction between gender and nationalism, as it takes into account the fact that women are simultaneously 'both actors in and hostages to nationalist projects' (Kandiyoti 1991: 431). Drawing equally from the Yuval-Davis and Anthias framework and from V. Spike Peterson's modification of the former, this section

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[3] Yuval-Davis and Anthias acknowledge that 'different historical contexts will construct these roles not only in different ways but also the centrality of these roles will differ.' (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989: 6) This underlines the sensitivity of their five-fold formulation to cultural and historical specificities.

seeks to examine four distinct ways in which women's gendered identity is integral to the construction of national identity.[4]

1) The 'Battle of the Womb' : Women as Biological Reproducers

Women as mothers serve a crucial 'gate-keeping function' in every national community (Collins 1999: 119). This biological dimension of women's roles is especially relevant in the case of what Anthony D. Smith calls the 'ethnic-genealogical' nationalist project, i.e. those national groups in which membership is restricted by birth and direct descent (Smith 1989). Thus, it becomes imperative for nationalisms to bring women's bodies and sexualities under strict surveillance and control. Nationalist projects seek to regulate when, how many, and whose children women will bear. Jill Vickers figuratively calls this the 'battle of the cradle', but the term 'battle of the womb' seems more appropriate to denote the biological element in this gendered role (Vickers 1990: 485). Patricia Hill Collins brings out the politics behind birth control and population policies in the US and argues that American population policies are dictated by racialised and class-specific notions of the ideal American national identity (Collins 1999). Accordingly, middle-class white American women are encouraged to have more children through adequate government support, while working class Afro-American women are discouraged through a number of implicit and explicit government policies. A similar example is discussed by Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon in the context of the experiences of 'abducted women', a category that came to be employed by the Indian government to describe those women who had been separated from their families or had been taken hostage or kidnapped by men of the 'other' community during the Partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947 (Butalia 2004; Menon 2004). The Indian state launched a Central Recovery Operation to recover these women (often forcibly, since they were not given the right to refuse or choose) and return them to their 'natural' homelands, as

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[4] Spike Peterson first devised her categorisation to analyse the role of women in nationalism in 1995. The five sets of roles she identified then include – women as biological reproducers of group members; women as social reproducers of group members and cultural forms; women as signifiers of group differences; women as participants in political identity struggles and women as societal members generally (Peterson 1995). In 1999, she modified her scheme slightly to incorporate the new dimension of heterosexism in all nationalist discourses. She argues that nationalisms are not just gendered; they are gendered in a particular heterosexist fashion. Accordingly, she added on a qualifier to each of the roles, i.e. women as *heterosexual/* biological reproducers, women as signifiers of *(heterosexist)* group identities and so on (Peterson 1999).

23

defined by their religion. Accordingly, Hindu and Sikh women were brought back to India and Muslim women were sent to Pakistan. In case the women had children through a 'mixed union', 'they were separated from them, told to give them up or 'helped' to have abortions (which the State carried out on a mass scale, calling them *safaya* or cleansing) so that they could get rid of the symbols of impurity' (Butalia 2004: 109). This shocking case illustrates how women's bodies become important sites of nationalist and state control at crucial junctures in history, when it becomes imperative for the sustenance of the national identity to demarcate 'us' from 'them'.

Another manifestation of the importance of women's biological reproductive role for sustaining nationalist movements can be observed in the case of Serbian nationalism in the years immediately preceding the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991. The nationalist propaganda stressed on the low birth rates among the Serbian community as a threat to its size and strength and held women responsible for not fulfilling their duty to reproduce the nation. This resulted in a situation where 'women are valued primarily for their reproductive potential... the main crusade for a Serbian national rebirth has been on women. She had to create "little Serbs" and bear not just babies, but "fighters".' (Bracewell 1996: 27, 29) Thus, the role of women in having more children was linked to the needs of increasing the numbers in the military (Turpin 1998: 11).

Women are often exhorted to marry and bear children as a patriotic duty that is akin to the military service that men perform in order to defend the nation. In the context of Chinese majority nationalism as represented by the Singaporean state in the 1980s, Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan argue that 'a sexualized, separate species of nationalism... was being advocated for women' and 'as patriotic duty for men grew out of the barrel of a gun (phallic nationalism...), so would it grow, for women, out of the recesses of the womb (uterine nationalism...).' (Heng and Devan 1992: 348, 349) The fear was that if the ethnic Chinese women did not perform their biological 'duties', Singapore would be swamped by the minority Indian and Malay nationalities, whose women were reproducing at a much faster rate. Thus, women are called upon to serve the nation biologically with their bodies through 'the public reproduction of nationalism in

24

the most private medium possible' (Heng and Devan 1992: 349). 'Uterine nationalism' lay at the core of the Fascist and Nazi ultra-nationalist ideologies in the 1930s, which glorified the role of women as mothers. Benito Mussolini's famous remark, 'War is to a man what maternity is to a woman', highlights how Fascism held that the proper duty of women to the nation is to bear children, just as it is the duty of men to defend their nation through fighting wars. In Nazi Germany, motherhood was exalted as the most important service to the nation because it was through mothers that a pure Aryan race could be perpetuated.

The role that women are urged to play in upholding the distinctiveness of the national community is evident from the case of the abortion debate in the Republic of Ireland since the mid 1980s. Access to abortion is projected as a challenge to the moral, political and economic boundaries of the Irish nation that demarcate it from the rest of the nation-states in the European Union, of which Ireland became a member in 1973. This is in response to the increasing surveillance and control that the European Union exercises over social and economic policies in Ireland, which has generated fears that the Irish nation itself is dissolving (Martin 2000). Abortion continues to be illegal in Ireland and thereby, 'anxieties over the nation's boundaries have been projected onto the bodies of Irish women and have been materially manifested in constitutional attempts to define the limits of women's bodies.' (Martin 2000: 71)

2) The 'Battle of the Nursery' : Women as Cultural Reproducers

Within patriarchal familial orders, women have the primary responsibility of rearing the children in culturally appropriate ways. They are expected to inculcate the 'right' beliefs, conduct and loyalties in their children, which conform to the societal and communal norms. Jill Vickers refers to this as the 'battle of the nursery' (Vickers 1990: 485). Cultural transmission plays an important role in the construction of national identities; it is through this process that the young members of the national communities are initiated into 'imagining' themselves as part of a larger national entity. It is because of women's role as cultural reproducers that they are seen as representing the 'private sphere' that

25

upholds the true essence of national identity. According to Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner,

> Familial relations thus seem to constitute the 'essence' of national culture, a way of life to be passed from generation to generation. Equally, however, training to be a citizen, to respect the rights of others, begins at home. Women thus bear a double burden of representation as national cultural icons and as mothers of citizens. (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999: 14)

This is particularly evident in the case of anti-colonial struggles, as Partha Chatterjee's excellent analysis of the colonial construction of Indian femininity and the nationalist response demonstrates (Chatterjee 1990). He argues that Indian nationalist leaders made a distinction between the spiritual and material and inner and outer space (*ghar* and *bahir* or the home and the world); while the material or outer domain (*bahir*) included economics and statecraft – spheres in which the Western colonisers had established their superiority – , the inviolable spiritual or inner domain (*ghar*) encapsulated the cultural identity and the essence of Indian civilization. As Chatterjee observes,

> The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world – and woman is its representation. And so we get an identification of social roles by gender to correspond with the separation of the social sphere into *ghar* and *bahir*. (Chatterjee 1989: 238-239)

The sanctity of the 'home' or the inner, spiritual domain of Indian national identity thus came to be defined as the preserve of the domesticated, ideal woman. This explains why leaders like Gandhi were anxious to relegate women back to the private sphere, after political objectives were won with the participation of female volunteers (Bald 2000; Kishwar 1986; Katrak 1992).

Militant nationalist movements also propagate the idea of a gendered division of labour. As an instance, it is interesting to see what the Hamas Charter has to say about the role of women:

> Muslim women have a no lesser role than that of men in the war of liberation; they manufacture men and play a great role in guiding and educating the new generations... (Article 17)

The women in the houses and in the families of the Jihad fighters, whether they are mothers or sisters, carry out the most important duty of caring for the home and raising the children upon the moral concepts and values which derive from Islam; and of educating their sons to observe the religious tenets, in preparation for the duty of Jihad awaiting them. Therefore, we must pay attention to the schools and curricula upon which Muslim girls are educated, so as to make them righteous mothers, who are conscious of their duties in the war of liberation. (Article 18) (Hamas Charter 1988)

A similar demarcation between the roles of the militant male fighter and the nationalist women is made by Asiyah Andrabi, the leader of the separatist Kashmiri women's group, the Dukhtaran-e-Millat (Daughters of the Nation). In her description of the role of the group in the Kashmiri militant movement, she observes,

As far as the militancy was concerned, we gave a call to our men that this was their job and not ours. As far as my ideology was concerned – if the men want to fight India militarily, they could do that, we women would be with them – we would look after their houses and their children. But practical military action cannot be carried out by women. (Andrabi 2006)

Thus women as signifiers of group differences become the 'symbolic markers of the nation and of the group's cultural identity' (Peterson 1995: 44). The need to preserve and promote the nation and its cultural identity places pressures, therefore, on women to behave in a culturally approved fashion (1995: 49). This pressure is all the more in times when the national identity is perceived as being threatened by rival nationalities and in times of serious national crises. It has been observed that 'one of the most important and enduring byproducts of the disintegration of Yugoslavia was the end of a single multiethnic state to be replaced by the creation of and desire for ethnically "pure" states.' (Kaufman and Williams 2004: 424) The nationalist discourse in the new states focused specifically on redefining women's roles away from the socialist 'working women' model to the new 'mother of the nation' model (Andjelkovic 1998: 240, 241; Bracewell 1996). In Serbia, attempts to redefine Serbian nationalism were intrinsically linked to reconfiguring the 'proper' role of the Serb woman. Similarly, in Croatia, which had broken away from Yugoslavia in 1991, the 'Program of Demographic and Spiritual Renewal' was launched to consolidate the ethnic majority of Croats and curb the growth of the non-Croat ethnic groups. Women's role in this programme was to be that of the

'Mother-Nurturer', while men were to be the 'guarantors of the family's and nation's well being' (Kesić 2004: 63). Earlier, when the war in Yugoslavia had erupted, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman had asserted that Croatia's dire situation resulted from 'women, pornography, and abortion', and stated that those women who have abortions are the 'mortal enemies of the nation' (Mostov 1995: 518). Accordingly, after becoming independent, banning abortion was one of the first public campaigns launched by the new Croatian state; women's reproductive choice was thus considered to be a threat to the sustenance and growth of the nascent Croatian national identity.

3) Feminine Iconography: Women as symbols of the nation

Another dimension of women's cultural location in nationalist projects is the symbolic role of women as signifiers of the nation. Women as members of the national community are forced to carry the 'burden of representation', as they are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour (Yuval-Davis 2001: 127). The use of metaphors like 'Mother India', 'Mother Russia' or 'Mother Ireland' as well as symbols like 'La Patrie' – the symbol of the French Revolution that depicted a woman giving birth to a baby – all point towards the use of feminine iconography to symbolise the nation[5] (Meyer 2000: 137; Yuval-Davis 2001: 128). In an analysis of the imagery of the nation as mother in the context of nationalism, Margaret Jolly observes that

> [F]rom the start of the Bengali nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, through the era of the pan-Indian and Gandhian independence movement, to the twentieth century movements for Tamil nationalism, 'the mother' has been a salient symbol of land, language, nation. (Jolly 1994: 44)

In their discussion of Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa, Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter argue that Afrikaner women appear regularly in the rhetoric and imagery of the Afrikaner 'volk' (people), and that 'they have figured overwhelmingly as mothers' (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989: 60). Women thus are conceptualised as 'mothers of the nation' – 'an image that places their reproductive capacities at the center of their service to the nation' (Hall 1993: 100). Anne McClintock argues that women are

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[5] It is interesting to note that nations are not uniformly projected as 'motherlands'; there are instances where the metaphor of the 'fatherland' is used to denote the nation (Jolly 1994: 43). For instance, Singapore, like in most other Confucian societies, is never imagined as motherland; instead, the Singaporean nation-state is always symbolized as the father (Heng and Devan 1992).

constructed symbolically as 'bearers of the nation' where the nations are frequently referred to through the 'iconography of familial and domestic space' (McClintock 1993: 62). Angela K. Martin discusses how femininity is ascribed to women through a religious discourse centered on the Virgin Mary – the pure and sacrificing mother. To quote Martin, 'it is through the mimetic performance of Mary's model that individual Irish women come to embody femininity and, by extension, the Irish nation.' (Martin 2000)

Apart from being projected as mothers, women are also equated to the nation in their symbolic role as brides. For instance, Amal Amireh and Mary Layoun in their respective analyses of the Palestinian freedom struggle highlight the central role that the wedding trope plays in the Palestinian national narrative (Amireh 2003: 751, Layoun 2001: 416-417). In this narrative, Palestine is a bride and the groom is the Palestinian fighter/martyr. The Palestinian national aspiration of gaining control over their dispossessed land then is expressed in terms of the metaphor of the male fighter taking the possession of the woman through marriage (Amireh 2003). In Iran, it is not the mother, but the sexually chaste, veiled woman who is seen as representing the nation (Jolly 1994: 43). These are good illustrations of what is referred to as 'eroticized nationalism', wherein the 'nation-as -woman' becomes an object of the love and passion of its male inhabitants (Parker et al. 1992: 1).

In an incisive analysis of the gendered nature of national identities, Zillah Eisenstein argues that 'because nations are symbolized by women, ethnic cleansing directs its fears and desires onto the bodies of women. On the one hand women are idolized and revered; on the other hand they are brutalized, tortured, raped and often killed.' (Eisenstein 2000: 46) The rape and violation of individual women becomes symbolically significant in nationalist discourse and the politics of national identity as a violation of the entire nation. A woman's body thus becomes the marker of national honour or shame. The large-scale raping of Bosnian women and the perceived inability of the Bosnian men to provide protection to them were part of Serbian attempts to constitute the entire Bosnian nation as humiliated, inferior, weak and feminine (Kaufman and Williams 2004). As Jennifer Turpin notes, 'because women are viewed as symbols of the family, and the

family as the basis of society, the humiliation for women giving birth to the enemy's children symbolizes the destruction of the community.' (Turpin 1998: 5) For example, women who became pregnant as a result of rape by Serb soldiers and paramilitary troops were told that their offspring would be considered Serb. Some Croat and Muslim women who were raped were told that not only would the child be considered Serb, but so too would she (Hughes et al. 1995: 519). Similarly, rape of women and girls was extensively and systematically used as an instrument for ethnic cleansing in Rwanda in 1994 (Eisenstein 2000: 48). The widespread use of the metaphor of rape to signify national humiliation proves 'how deeply ingrained has been the depiction of the homeland as a female body whose violation by foreigners requires its citizens and allies to rush to her defence' (Parker et al. 1992: 6).[6]

As compared to this passive identification of the nation with the feminine body, there are also instances of a more active symbolic association of women members with the nation. A good example is Cuba, where the iconic figure of the female warrior, willing to sacrifice her home, family, and wealth for her nation has been omnipresent in every stage of the evolution of Cuban nationalist identity (Stoner 2003).

4) Women as participants in nationalist struggles

Women's involvement in nationalist movements is not restricted to their reproductive (biological and social) and symbolic roles; it also extends to active participation in nationalist struggles. This is especially so in the case of anti-colonial movements that took place in many parts of the Third World (Jayawardena 1986). It has been observed that whether in the form of leading troops into battle or engaged in a supportive role to feed and clothe combatants, women are involved in political struggles and conflict, thus complementing women's perceived role in the private sphere of the family with the public sphere of the nation (Peterson 1995: 45). However, feminist debate has revolved

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[6] At several historical junctures, the image of the raped woman has been utilised to conjure up nationalist fervour against the invader or coloniser. For instance, Iranian nationalists in the early twentieth century represented the nation as a beautiful woman raped by foreigners, and foreign occupation was denoted in terms of rape of the motherland during the German occupation of France in World War I (de Groot 1993, Pettman 1996). More recently, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was frequently referred to in American public discourse as 'the rape of Kuwait', with the aim of garnering support for the US war on Iraq (Pettman 1996: 49, Peterson 1999: 68).

around whether such participation is emancipatory or oppressive for women and whether feminist issues have found expression in such struggles. The predominant voice in feminist literature claims that women are always subordinated in nationalist movements and denied their agency (Enloe 1990; Kandiyoti 1991; McClintock 1993). Invariably, it is the 'nation', which represents 'male', patriarchal interests, that is prioritised over and above the issue of gender justice. Even when women are called upon to participate in nationalist struggles against the coloniser or the invader, they are soon relegated back to the safe confines of the domestic sphere, once the nationalist aims are achieved (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). One prominent example that is used to prove this point is that of the Algerian women who played an extensive role in winning the long-drawn Algerian struggle for independence in 1962 but then were forced 'back into the kitchen... forced to trade their combat fatigues for Islamic dress and the veil' (Boulding 1977: 179).

To quote Kandiyoti:

> On the one hand, nationalist movements invite women to participate more fully in collective life by interpellating them as 'national' actors... On the other hand, they reaffirm the boundaries of culturally acceptable feminine conduct and exert pressure on women to articulate their gender interest within the terms of reference set by nationalist discourse. (Kandiyoti 1991: 433)

Contrasting this body of feminist scholarship which considers feminism and nationalism as two antagonistic projects, there are other feminist scholars who link the rise of feminist movements to anti-colonial and nationalist struggles in several parts of the world (Jayawardena 1986; Molyneux 1985; Vickers 2006). The fact that many Third World countries granted suffrage to women along with men on attaining independence, as against the First World countries, where there was a huge gap of several decades between the enfranchisement of men and women, is significant to note here (Walby 1992: 84). Using the concrete case of the leftist-nationalist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and its affiliated nationalist-feminist women's organisation, the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC) in the Israeli occupied Gaza Strip, Frances Fasso demonstrates how nationalism and feminism worked hand in

31

hand in the ten years preceding the first Palestinian *Intifada* of 1987[7] (Hasso 1998). The DFLP women went beyond their symbolic roles to carve out a space for themselves within the Palestinian nationalist struggle, which they used to push both nationalist and feminist aspirations. Hasso's argument is that 'the emancipatory discourses of nationalism – which often focus on the just distribution of rights, resources and privileges – often create expectations among subalterns within a national community that are difficult to control.' (Hasso 1998: 460) Hence, she presents the possibility of a creative alliance between feminism and nationalist struggles. At the same time, there are other feminists who look at the participation of women in the Palestinian *Intifada* with a more critical perspective (Amireh 2003; Glavanis-Grantham 1996; Holt 1996). They argue that while women activists played a crucial role in the first *Intifada*, the rise of the influence of the fundamentalist Hamas led to a serious limitation of women's autonomy and agency within the movement (Amireh 2003: 758). During the first *Intifada*, women's visible and active participation, even occasionally as leaders threatened to destabilise gender roles, so much so that there was academic speculation on the 'feminisation of Palestinian society'. However, with the increasing militarisation of the *Intifada* and the rising influence of the Hamas, women were relegated to subordinate roles and the traditional Palestinian image of the national male hero bearing arms was resurrected (Amireh 2003: 758, 760).

The participation of women in the Indian national movement, especially in the Gandhian phase, has also been the subject of extensive critical study (Bald 2000; Jayawardena 1986; Katrak 1992; Kishwar 1986). Most of the studies argue that women were utilised effectively by nationalist leaders like Gandhi in their struggle against British colonialism, but without questioning the patriarchal structures of Indian society. Thus, women were forced to return to the confines of the domestic space once the aim of Indian independence was achieved. However, it has also been suggested that there were certain ways through which women were able to develop a nascent feminist awareness and subvert some of the traditional norms, even while remaining within the nationalist framework. As Bald notes,

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[7] The first Palestinian *Intifada* began in 1987, in the form of spontaneous demonstrations and occasional acts of violence against Israelis. It lasted till 1994, when the Oslo Peace Accord was signed. The second and the ongoing *Intifada* began in 2000 and is referred to as the *Al Aqsa Intifada* by Palestinians.

Despite Gandhi's glorification of women as mothers, wives and domestic 'queens', women's involvement in the Indian nationalist struggle did extend their horizons beyond the home and made them conscious of their place in Indian society. (Bald 2000: 96)

Jayawardena and Katrak point out that by emphasising on passive and non-violent forms of resistance in which both men and women were to participate, and reinterpreting traditional notions of the Indian women's submissiveness and their ability to suffer silently as their assets that made them the right participants in the national movement, Gandhi 'feminised' the struggle against the coloniser (Jayawardena 1986: 97; Katrak 1992: 395, 402).

The role of women as combatants in militant nationalist movements is another instance of women's participation in nationalist struggles. Though women are normally expected to conform to gendered stereotypes that keep them out of the battlefront in most societies, they are sometimes urged to play masculine roles in times of acute national crisis. In the context of young women combatants in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), Neloufer de Mel examines the process through which the 'feminine' lives of these women are radically transformed into the 'masculine' role of militants (de Mel 2001). Paraphrasing Homi Bhabha, de Mel argues that 'states of emergency are also states of emergence' implying that when their communities face a situation of emergency and conflict, the Tamil and Sinhala Buddhist women are encouraged to transgress traditional cultural and social values and take up arms along with their men (de Mel 2001: 17). However, she goes on to assert that 'there is a containment of women within the LTTE and JVP at the very moment of their most innovative empowerment.' (de Mel 2001: 212) The iconic status of the male leader of the LTTE, Prabhakaran, as the 'elder brother' is illustrative of the remarkable continuity of patriarchal norms within the ranks of militant organisations.

Sita Ranchod-Nilsson brings out another interesting example of women's participation as armed combatants in Zimbabwe's struggle for national liberation, led by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA) (Ranchod-Nilsson 2000). By 1977, women formed between one-quarter

and one-third of the thirty thousand ZANLA combatants (Ranchod-Nilsson 2000: 172). In the course of this struggle, the women combatants clearly articulated their own agendas for change in a new Zimbabwean nation, like access to state power and resources and restructuring of gender relations within the household. However, once independence was won, the experiences of Zimbabwean women did not live up to their expectations of gender equality.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to bring out the salience of gender as an important variable in any comprehensive exploration of nationalism. Drawing from nationalist projects located in various socio-cultural and political contexts, it demonstrates how masculine and feminine roles are constructed by gendered notions of national membership and responsibility. Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov make a crucial point about the continuous interplay between gender and national identities :

> Gender and nation are social and historical constructions, which intimately participate in the formation of one another: nations are gendered; and the topography of the nation is mapped in gendered terms (feminized soil, landscapes, and boundaries and masculine movement over these spaces). (Ivekovic and Mostov 2004: 10)

By elucidating how national identities are also gendered identities, feminist scholars prepare the ground for critical interrogations of disciplines like International Relations that are premised on masculinist assumptions, but make universal claims about historical structures like the nation and the state. Feminist IR scholars utilise feminist readings of nationalism to challenge some of the central categories of IR and to bring identity back into the purview of IR scholarship.

Chapter III

Encountering Identity in International Relations: Feminist Insights

One of the foremost contributions that feminist scholars have made to the discipline of IR is their interrogation of the 'nation-state' as the primary referent of all mainstream IR theorising. Feminist IR, along with critical IR theorists and some constructivists, challenges the ahistorical and uncritical fashion in which the orthodoxy of IR claims the nation-state to be a rational, autonomous actor that subsumes all other markers of identity within its sovereign, territorial boundaries. Feminist IR readings of nationalism have highlighted the need to take a closer look at the neglected issue of identities and their role in shaping international relations. Using their critique of the public-private and the inside-outside dichotomies, feminist IR scholars have also attempted to explain the reasons for the disciplinary exclusion of identities, including gender, from IR. However, feminist scholars who study identities also have to grapple with the question of whether identity politics is good or bad and how it impinges on the rights and position of women.

Interrogating the Nation-State

Mainstream IR theorists take for granted the idea of a rational, autonomous entity called the state, without exploring its genealogy or historical context, and then proceed to examine the relations between nation-states. Realism, the dominant school of International Relations theory, focuses exclusively on the category of the 'nation-state' and privileges it as the single most important actor in international politics. As Fred Halliday notes, 'it is indeed paradoxical that a concept so central to the whole discipline should escape explication as this one has.' (Halliday 1987) Anne Sisson Runyan and V. Spike Peterson comment that the crucial weakness of realist analysis has not been its preoccupation with the state but the way the state has not been taken seriously enough as a historically complex form of political life (Runyan and Peterson 1991). Failing to

historicise the state has permitted IR theories to ignore early state formation that preceded the Westphalian model.

Feminist political theory has actively engaged in developing a feminist critique of the state. This critique is based on the feminist understanding of the state as male. For instance Catherine MacKinnon identifies the state as masculinist in imposing a legal order that institutionalises the male point of view as the state point of view:

> The liberal state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender, through its legitimizing norms, relations to society and substantive policies... Formally, the state is male, in that objectivity is its norm. (MacKinnon 1983: 655)

This understanding of the state as male prompts feminist examinations of the state's complicity in systemic male violence, through its promotion of militarist ideology and practices and its claims of providing security.

If theories of the state in general are androcentric, the treatment of the state in IR suffers additionally from realist reification of the modern state and the inter-state system. A critique of the masculinist nature of states or what Gillian Youngs calls 'manly states' has been one of the richest and most important threads of feminist IR, building on and existing in close relationship to the insights of feminist political theory (Youngs 2004: 80). Christine Sylvester argues that if man is 'rational' and the social institutions that he creates are also 'rational', then the state itself bears a male-masculine identity (Sylvester 2002). The central assumption in *male*stream IR is that states are rational, autonomous actors and this rests on the analogous view of the individual as a rational, autonomous and independent actor. States' interests are calculated in terms of power and their behaviours are explained rationally, with reference to consistently ordered preferences and cost-benefit analysis. This rationality assumption, which figures so prominently in neorealism, Sylvester argues, derives from a deep and unexamined cultural expectation that 'men are supposed to be motivated by calculation of instrumental or other rational considerations.' (Sylvester 2002: 168) Feminists argue that this realist form of rationality and autonomy is gendered. It cannot see relationships, other than self-help relations, between people and states. This is because positivist rationality is a particularly

disembodied and detached masculine way of seeing the world out of historical context and process. Further, this rational knowledge is made possible by the gendered division of labour which holds women responsible for human relationships and the reproduction of everyday life, making co-operation for them a daily reality and relieving men of these necessities.

Crucial as feminist IR enquiries into the state are, what is more significant from the perspective of this chapter is that feminist IR scholars have also criticised the tendency in International Relations to conflate the two distinct categories of 'nation' and 'state' into the fiction of the 'nation-state' (Pettman 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997). The concept of the nation-state assumes a complete correspondence between the boundaries of the nation and the boundaries of those who live in a specific state, ignoring the fact that 'the boundaries of nations virtually never coincide with those of the so-called nation-states' (Yuval-Davis 1997: 3). Examples of members of national collectivities who do not have a state like the Palestinians, or who are divided across various states like the Kurds, throw up a fundamental challenge to the assumption that the national community and the state territory neatly overlap. However, the 'nation-state' continues to enjoy pride of place within mainstream IR theory. As Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil observe, neorealism, the dominant theory within IR, 'has historically played a key role in this disengagement of IR theory from the "national" and in reproducing realism as an exclusively statecentric discourse.' (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996: 105) Jan Aart Scholte rightly argues that both realists and liberals have inadequately distinguished nationhood (a structure of collective identity) from statehood (a structure of governance) (Scholte 1996: 47). Inter(national) relations thus gradually came to overlook its constitutive 'national' component.[1] This is not simply the result of theoretical oversight; rather, the

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[1] In recent times, some neorealists have also begun to recognise the importance of studying the nation. For instance, John Mearsheimer states: 'No discussion of the causes of peace in the 20th century would be complete without a word on nationalism' (Mearsheimer 1990: 38). Similarly, Barry Posen admits that the traditional lack of interest in nationalism has impaired the neorealist 'ability to explain our current predicament' (Posen 1993: 80). Lapid and Kratockwil acknowledge the effort made by neorealists like John Mearsheimer and Barry Posen to include nationalism as an item on their research agenda. However, they note that these attempts are far from satisfactory. Mearsheimer reduces nationalism to a 'second order' variable, a by-product of the anarchical international system, rather than treating it as a primary referent, while Posen only extends the inter-state security dilemma to the inter-ethnic level to explain the conflict between different national or ethnic groups. For details, see Lapid and Kratockwil 1996.

assumption that every state is a homogeneous political entity constituted by the presence of people belonging to the same national community is integral to the domestic/international or the inside/outside dichotomy that define the contours of the discipline of IR as conventionally understood. Feminist IR scholars go further and link this dichotomy to the public-private divide that feminist theory identifies as the primary source of all patriarchal gender constructs.

Inside/Outside and Public/Private in IR

The distinction between 'domestic' and 'international' politics is one of the fundamental ideas that inform mainstream IR theory. In many ways, this distinction is discipline defining, because it is on the basis of the notion that the logic and practice of international politics is different from that of domestic politics that IR has carved out its independent stature as a discipline, not merely a branch of Political Science. However, this has also created an existential dilemma for IR, for the two spheres of domestic and international politics are in many ways deeply interlinked. As Robert D. Putnam observes, 'domestic politics and international relations are often somehow entangled, but our theories have not yet sorted out the puzzling tangle' (Putnam 1988). This has led some contemporary IR scholars like R.B.J. Walker and Nicholas Rengger to problematise the inside/outside dichotomy and envision the movement towards an 'international political theory' (Walker 1993; Rengger 2000).

The inside/outside divide finds one of its clearest manifestations in Kenneth Waltz's exposition of the three levels of analysis – Man, the State and War (Waltz 1959).[2] This analytical typology has come to inform all mainstream theories of international politics. While it offers an elegant conceptual tool for pitching theoretical arguments, the distinction of the three levels of analysis is analytical and can barely be replicated in real political situations. However, Waltz crystallises this artificial distinction by terming the first two unit-levels as being reductionist and therefore inherently weak and prioritising the third systemic level as being the most legitimate framework for IR theory building. It is on this basis that he then continues to construct a structural realist theory. The rationale

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[2] For a discussion on the levels of analysis issue in IR, see Singer (1978).

behind Waltz's preference for structural and systemic theory lies in his argument that the purpose of theory is to provide parsimonious explanations of an otherwise complex reality. Thus, even while accepting that 'everything is related to everything else in the real world and one domain cannot be separated from others', he asserts the need to create an autonomous sphere for international politics that can facilitate theorising (Waltz 1988: 615). To quote Waltz, 'by defining the structure of international political systems, neorealism establishes the autonomy of international politics and thus makes a theory about it possible.' (Waltz 1988: 616) While he admits that 'causes at the level of the unit interact with those at the level of the structure', he nevertheless settles for structural level explanations as the more methodologically and theoretically satisfactory option (Waltz 1988: 618). According to Waltz, predictions about unit behaviour, i.e. the behaviour of states in the case of international politics, can be made by looking at the placement of units in the system and not by exploring domestic or internal politics. In this way, Waltzian structural realism made a significant departure from the unit-level analyses of classical realists like Hans Morgenthau and cemented the differentiation between the inside and the outside.

Feminist IR scholars have demonstrated how this inside/outside divide overlaps with the public-private dichotomy to exclude many important issues, including gender and national identities, from the purview of IR. The public-private dichotomy is an artificial distinction that forms the cornerstone of classical and modern Western social and political thought. Feminist scholars like Carole Pateman and Susan Moller Okin have been instrumental in demonstrating how the public-private dichotomy has been a critical organising principle for political thinkers right from Aristotle to John Rawls (Okin 1978; Pateman 1988). In the classical tradition of political thought represented by Aristotle and Plato, the public-private distinction finds expression in the binary of *oikos* (household) and *polis* (political community), while in modern liberal thought, it is characterised by the divide between the rational, political sphere governed by the social contract and the

emotive, private sphere governed by the 'sexual contract'[3] (Pateman 1988). While the public sphere is the product of rational thought and careful political organisation, the private is deemed as the site where nature governs through the institution of family. The public sphere is identified with rationality, objectivity, autonomy, order and such other 'masculine' qualities whereas the private sphere is equated with 'feminine' attributes like irrationality, subjectivity, dependence, disorder, feelings and emotions. Thus, the public sphere is prioritised over and above the private sphere as the actual subject matter of political analysis and the private sphere is depoliticised; the public-private dichotomy actually translates into a hierarchy of the public over the private. It is this gendered categorisation of public and private that lies at the core of women's exclusion from political life and relegation to the domestic sphere in malestream Western social and political thought.

If women have found it hard to assert their voices in the domestic political arena, they have had least presence and impact in the sphere of international politics. Ann Tickner explains that the identity of the modern state within IR is attributed with the characteristics of 'sovereign man', like autonomy, strength, independence and self-help (Tickner 1996: 148, 151). The political community of the nation-state is conceived by the mainstream within IR as 'a community of men whose power and autonomy is predicated upon the ability to control and/or dominate those "outside".' (Steans 2006: 35) Hence, feminist IR scholars argue that insofar as the state is considered to be the central actor in international relations, the discipline of IR also duplicates the public-private binary that informs Western political theory. V. Spike Peterson develops this argument further and identifies two distinct ways in which the public-private dichotomy works out in IR theory (Peterson 1999). First, conventional IR, as dominated by neorealism, contrasts the

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[3] According to Carole Pateman, the social contract theory that forms the basis of classical liberal thought has systematically repressed the 'sexual contract' that legitimises modern patriarchal domination. It was the sexual contract that gave rise to patriarchal right of 'the law of male sex-right', i.e. men's right of sexual access to women's bodies within the private sphere. In all social contract theories, the first, implicit step is the sexual contract that is established by the domination and subordination of women by men, by force or in exchange of obedience for protection. Thus the social contract is not a contract between free and equal individuals in the state of nature but a contract between male heads of households transforming their patriarchal authority into a political fraternity. By hiding this dimension of the contract, the contractarians deflect attention from the exclusion and subordination of women in the political sphere of liberty and rights (Pateman 1988).

important public role of the state in its interactions with other states with the conduct of domestic politics that is treated as irrelevant to the study of international relations. This tendency of neorealism to eliminate the domestic has been criticised by IR scholars from different theoretical backgrounds, including liberals and neo-classical realists. However, for non-feminist critics, the domestic is defined only in terms of economic and socio-cultural issues that are not included in the conventional IR definition of 'high politics'. As Charlotte Hooper points out, 'even liberal perspectives that emphasise transnationalism rarely transgress the public/private divide', with the effect that the link between the personal, the national and the international is completely obscured in mainstream IR.' (Hooper 1999: 487-488) Feminists extend the domestic much further to include the familial domestic sphere and issues like sexual and social reproduction, cultural socialisation and identity formation and demonstrate how such everyday practices are relevant to any comprehensive study of the state, security and political economy. The production of gendered masculine and feminine identities and roles through everyday practices of international relations thus remains neglected by mainstream IR theories that assume questions of gender identity to be private, domestic and thereby non-political issues.

The second variant of the public-private dichotomy in IR, Peterson observes, is intrinsically linked to the inside-outside divide, since the hierarchy and order within the public sphere of the state is contrasted with the anarchy and disorder of the 'international' that exists outside the territorial boundaries of the state (Peterson 1999). As Feminist IR scholars see it, the modern state in IR is simultaneously differentiated along two axes, inside-outside and public-private. Sovereignty is the formal principle that marks out the disciplinary terrain of International Relations by assuming boundaries between 'us' and 'them', order and anarchy, domestic and international, public and private. The boundaries of the discipline of International Relations are marked by the boundaries of the state and in the tendency to avoid the domestic analogy (Peterson 1999). This obscures the prior gendered division of public and private within states. One can observe a gendered identification of masculine and the feminine qualities as the demarcation between the inside and outside in IR. Jill Steans notes:

> [D]ominant discourses in IR have worked systematically to create a conception of international politics as a realm characterized by ever-present 'threat' and 'danger' and, in this way, present the world as disorderly and hostile... The realist conception of the autonomous state has been juxtapositioned against images of anarchy or a disorderly international 'state of nature'. The use of such imagery has to be seen in terms of a deeply rooted fear of the 'feminine'. (Steans 2006: 35)

Ann Tickner argues that anarchy is 'not only a metaphor for the way in which states can be expected to behave in the absence of government; it also depicts an untamed natural environment... whose wild and chaotic spaces are often described as female.' (Tickner 1996: 157) The state-as-actor, which is the central category of analysis in IR is thus defined as that which is *not* the feminised 'other' or the 'outside' (Krause 1996: 105).

In keeping with the inside/outside and public/private binaries in IR, the nation is equated to the private realm of affective ties and the feminine motherland (the domestic or the inside) while the state is seen as the sovereign, masculine realm of public life that engages in relations with other states (the international or the outside). Thus,

> [T]he 'nation' represents the horizontal kinship and naturalized blood relations that idealize group homogeneity and are essentialized by the female symbols and feminine values associated with mothering, while, the 'state' represents the vertical and hierarchical power relations based on force that idealize sovereignty and are defended by the male symbols and masculine values associated with soldiering. (Meyer 2000: 123)

The equation of the nation with the 'inside', the domestic and the private explains why mainstream IR has overlooked the 'national' part of the institution of the nation-state and has always given ontological privilege to the sovereign, autonomous state. Jill Steans argues that the conflation of the nation with the state denotes the assumption underlying IR orthodoxy that the state is not only 'the primary political community to which citizens owe their loyalty' but also 'the locus of collective identity' and it 'reinforces the idea that there are clearly demarcated boundaries between what is "inside" and what is "outside".' (Steans 2006: 37) Thus, the state subsumes within its territorial, sovereign boundaries the national community to which all its citizens belong. Questions of identity in IR are reduced to a complete identification by the individual citizens with the nation state. As Roger Tooze points out, 'the particular historical conjuncture of state and nation' that is a

product of the last two centuries of human history is universalised and naturalised over time and space by IR theory (Tooze 1996: xvii). It is only on the basis of such an assumption that mainstream IR has for so long been able to ignore the question of competing national identities within the borders of the state. The roots of this assumption can be located in the historical context of seventeenth century Europe where the demarcation of the boundaries of territorial states was closely associated with the rise of nationalism as a potent ideology. Early IR scholars did not consider the equation of the 'nation' with the 'state' as problematic because nationalism played a crucial role in laying the foundations of the modern European state-system. As Andrew Linklater notes:

> From the time of their foundation, states have sought to control the right to define political identity; since their legitimacy has constantly been threatened by the undermining power of subnational and transnational loyalties, states' survival and success have depended on the creation and maintenance of legitimating national identities. (Linklater 1990: 149)

The privileging of the nation-state as the irreducible unit of identity disguises the increasingly complex ways in which identities are formed and mapped (Krause and Renwick 1996: xiv). Feminist IR scholars, by challenging the state-centrism of conventional IR theories, draw attention to the need to look more closely at the 'nation' and the gendered ways in which national identities are constructed. This is part of the larger feminist IR agenda of bringing back the crucial issues of political identity and subjectivity into focus and unraveling the complex process through which factors that defy the public/private and the inside/outside divides come together to construct and shape identities.

Identity and Difference: Self and Other in IR

Mainstream IR theories like realism and liberalism have always shied away from questions regarding identity since they consider these to be 'personal' or 'domestic' matters that are ideally to be studied by disciplines like sociology and psychology. However, critics have pointed out that some of the central theoretical concepts in mainstream IR like war, diplomacy, security and national interest are deeply affected by identity issues (Scholte 1996; Youngs 1996; Krause 1996). This does not appear to be valid to mainstream scholars of IR, since they conceptualise international relations as a

set of interactions strictly between states; rational, autonomous states are the only legitimate actors in the international arena, not individuals. As Gillian Youngs explains, this removes 'the very notion of the individual political subject from consideration' and hence, questions regarding the political identity of the individual never occur in mainstream IR theorisations (Youngs 1996: 25). Youngs demonstrates how this state-as-actor construction has ontological, epistemological and methodological consequences. At the ontological level, the state becomes the primary referent object and the only identifiable actor. At the epistemological level, the state becomes the 'prism' through which international politics is studied; state interests and actions define the proper subject matter of IR. The methodology of the discipline also then focuses on positivist and scientific ways of observing and analysing the behaviour of states in their interactions with each other.

Feminist perspectives on IR have focused on individuals in their social, political and economic settings, rather than on decontextualised unitary states and anarchical international structures. Enloe's plea is characteristic of feminist IR: give up thinking that international relations consists of peopleless states, abstract societies and static ordering principles and instead begin looking for the people, places and activities of everyday international politics (Enloe 1990). As Ann Tickner observes, 'starting its investigations from the perspective of the lives of individuals on the margins who have never been the subject matter of IR, feminist analysis is often bottom-up rather than top-down.' (Tickner 2005: 2178) This 'people-centric' ontology that feminist IR adopts makes it particularly suited to the task of highlighting identity issues in IR. Also, as Marysia Zalewski and Cynthia Enloe observe, a feminist consciousness of women's own experiences of subordination alerts scholars to be critical of any homogenising identity that is propagated by the powerful and influential, at the cost of the marginalised and the silenced (Zalewski and Enloe 1995: 281). Since feminists are trained to question the imposition of gender identities, they extend this critique to every other form of identity as well. Feminists scholars are also more sensitive to the fluidity and multiplicity of identities and are able to identify processes through which 'the construction, ascription,

internalization, refusal or reclaiming of identities continually works behind, below and on the stage of world politics.' (Zalewski and Enloe 1995: 300)

Every identity is based on constructions of the 'self' and the 'other' that involve power relations. The construction of the rigid boundaries between the inside/domestic and outside/international in IR is premised on the differentiation of an identifiable 'self' (us) from an identifiable 'other' (them).[4] Naeem Inayatullah and David L. Blaney explain how this process unfolds within and outside the boundaries of the nation-state:

> With the emergence of the states system, the differences constituting and complicating each state as a particular political community are kept separate and managed within the territorial boundaries of the state... The bounded political community constructs (and is constructed by) the other. Beyond its boundaries, the other lurks as a perpetual threat in the form of other states, antagonistic groups, imported goods and alien ideas. The other also appears as difference within, vitiating the presumed but rarely, if ever, achieved 'sameness'. The other within the boundaries of the political community is 'managed' by some combination of hierarchy, eradication, assimilation or expulsion, and tolerance. The external other is left to suffer or prosper according to its own means; it is interdicted at border crossings, balanced and deterred; it is defeated militarily and colonized if need be. (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 7)

The nation is a very crucial component in this process of identification and differentiation. If 'nationalism is an ideology of the first person plural, which tells "us" who "we" are, then it is also an ideology of the third person. There can be no "us" without "them".' (Billig 1995: 78) Thus, 'claims to nationhood are not just internal claims to social solidarity, common descent... [t]hey are also claims to distinctiveness vis-à-vis other nations.' (Calhoun 1993: 216)

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[4] There is an ongoing debate in IR theory between liberal constructivists and critical constructivists on the question of identity and difference. Liberal constructivists are influenced by symbolic interactionism (as in the works of George H. Mead and Herbert Blumer) that posits identity formation as a process of socialisation or conditioning through which the 'self' identifies itself through the recognition accorded to it by 'others'. The 'other' does not embody difference. Taking on from symbolic interactionism, liberal constructivists like Alexander Wendt, Peter Katzenstein, Martha Finnemore and Katherine Sikkink focus on collective norms and meanings that structure state interactions. In contrast, critical constructivists like David Campbell and Iver B. Neumann who are influenced by post-structuralism argue that identities are always constructed in relation to difference; the 'other' is necessarily defined as different and often inferior to oneself, resulting in hierarchy and domination (For an elaborate discussion of the differences between liberal and critical constructivists on the issue of identity, see Rumelili 2004). Feminist IR works on identity show more affinity towards the latter kind of discourse.

The issues of identity and differentiation are extremely significant to feminist scholarship, since women have historically been constructed as the 'eternal Other' who represent all that is antithetical to privileged masculine norms and attributes (Peterson 1992: 9). Jill Krause points out that the nation is also a relational identity like gender; both are defined in opposition to a referent (Krause 1996). Just as the feminine is constructed as the polar opposite of the masculine, the very concept of a nation is not thinkable without the notion of 'others' or 'foreigners' (Zalewski and Enloe 1995: 300). Moreover, as illustrated in the first chapter, the role of women in forging nations and their identities is always conceived in terms of their position as potential 'others' within the national community, who can threaten the very existence of the national identity through their promiscuity or their vulnerability. Nationalist ideologies often project the external 'other' as the feminine – weak, effeminate and devoid of reason and agency. This is particularly visible in the use of rape in conflicts and in war, where 'rape serves both as a signifier of the "other" (the woman) as a non-subject and as a signifier of the other side as "powerless", as they (the weak males) have failed to protect their women' (Kinnvall 2004: 762). Feminist scholars also emphasise the role of the family or the private, domestic realm as the primary site where identities are biologically and culturally reproduced and transmitted through generations. Gender hierarchies are recreated through this process of group reproduction and identification. Spike Peterson brings out the crucial part played by the ostensibly 'apolitical' private sphere in reproducing political identities:

> ...[T]he power relations of reproduction fundamentally condition who we are (and who they are), how group cultures are propagated, and how groups/nations align (identify) themselves in cooperative, competing, and complementary ways. Insofar as these reproductive processes occur within the family/household, the latter is a crucial site *of politics*. Social relations within the family/household are then key to understanding the reproduction ... of groups and intergroup politics. These groups include nation-states themselves, which, in fact, depend on properly functioning family/households to ensure their reproduction. (Peterson 1996: 7)

The process of differentiating the 'self' from the 'other' becomes vicious or pathological in the face of crises like war, breakdown of a state system or rapid change. For instance, Anna Triandafyllidou and Spohn Willfriend point out that the events of 9/11 and their aftermath have shown how the Western societies (U.S.A and the European Union) readily

46

define themselves in opposition to migrants (mainly Muslims) as their most important threatening Others (Triandafyllidou and Willfriend 2003). Identifying a common enemy outside the borders of the national community, the 'other', helps in overcoming internal dissensions and rallying members behind the common cause of preserving the 'homeland'; hence 'the articulation of external dangers has been pivotal to forging and sustaining many a nation.' (Scholte 1996: 42) As Philip Schlesinger observes, 'making of basic distinctions between "us" and "them" is meat and drink for any propaganda war.' (Schlesinger 1991: 62) When the process of identification and homogenisation becomes pathological, the norms and regulations that govern behaviour within the national community are not considered to be applicable to those outside of it. Coercive activities like rape and mass murder that would be unacceptable if perpetrated against group members become justified against outsiders. Thus, 'the nation... marks the limits of belonging, the border of the moral community, beyond which organized violence becomes thinkable.' (Pettman 1992: 4)

Feminism and Nationalism: Schisms and Synergies

If the processes of identification and differentiation are inherently gendered, as explicated above, then feminist scholars necessarily have to grapple with the question – Is the politics of identity good or bad for women? From a stand-alone feminist perspective that sees gender as the only rallying point for all women to fight for their emancipation, the answer would simply be that identity politics is bad for women and therefore, feminists should keep a safe distance away from all identity based political movements including nationalist struggles. However, to take such a position would be to oversimplify the real life experiences of women who are simultaneously located in several contexts beyond their gender identity, as determined by their class, caste, race or nationality. Feminists today are, therefore, compelled to think more deeply and creatively about how to respond to identity based movements around the world. For instance, Jill Vickers and Vanaja Dhruvarajan identify two crucial factors that would determine women's position in relation to the politics of identity :

a) Whether women are part of secure majorities that dominate their state;

47

b) Whether women are part of insecure minorities that do not control the institutions in the society in which they live.

Such a contextual approach to the study of identity from a feminist perspective, Vickers and Dhruvarajan argue, can help us understand 'how women balance their identities and loyalties and how they choose which aspects of their identities to mobilize around' (Vickers and Dhruvarajan 2002: 54). Women who belong to minority communities cannot rely on the state to reproduce their identities, while majority feminists can take it for granted that their identities will be preserved by the institutions of the state. Thus, majority feminists 'can afford the luxury of an uncomplicated, stand-alone feminism' that minority women cannot (Vickers and Dhruvarajan 2002: 43).

Nationalism poses a particularly difficult dilemma for feminists, since much of the feminist literature has demonstrated how the construction of national identities revolves around clearly demarcated masculine and feminine roles that impose strict restrictions on the agency of women. Most nationalist movements also reciprocate the suspicion that feminism senses towards them. Ann McClintock observes that 'all too frequently, male nationalists have condemned feminism as divisive, bidding women hold their tongues until after the revolution' (McClintock 1997: 7). In the Third World, especially in ex-colonies, nationalist leaders see feminism as a stooge of Western neo-colonialism and cultural invasion. A common tendency among Western feminist scholars looking at nationalism, therefore, has been to see feminism and nationalism as two incompatible projects, a characteristic that can be dated back to the works of early feminists like Virginia Woolf who in her *Three Guineas* wrote: 'As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world.' (Woolf 1938: 108) However, at a global level, women are more often mobilised by national projects than any other form of politics (Bystydzienski 1992). During the first waves of decolonisation at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, many women joined anti-colonial movements and allied themselves with modernising, post-colonial national projects. This constructed special relationships between nationalist and women's movements. Kumari Jayawardena's book, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* was a pioneering effort to highlight this difference in Western and non-

Western experiences of women with nationalist struggles. On the basis of her study of twelve Asian and Middle-Eastern countries, including Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Korea and Japan, Jayawardena argues that while it cannot be disputed that the predominantly male leadership of the anti-colonial movements was never too willing to address the question of women's liberation, the women involved in these struggles did fight, within certain confines, for the improvement and transformation of the position of women in their societies and achieved positive results in terms of citizenship rights, education, access to employment and political training. Thus, 'struggles for women's emancipation were an essential and integral part of national resistance movements.' (Jayawardena 1986: 8) While most Western feminists condemn nationalism as being anti-women, it is interesting to note that in many countries, women gained rights and political awareness through their participation in nation-building and national liberation movements.[5] This is not just the case in non-Western, anti-colonial contexts; studies on the women's movements in Scotland, Catalonia in Spain and Québec in Canada demonstrate that the rise and growth of feminism happened in association with nationalist movements (Lamoureux 1987; Nash 1996; Vickers 2002). The common feminist defence that women who participate in nationalist movements labour under a 'false consciousness' is untenable in the light of such instances.

It is pertinent here to try and locate the reasons behind most Western feminists' antipathy towards nationalism. Gisela Kaplan gives a comprehensive account of the evolution of nationalism in the European context and holds the historical trajectory of European nationalisms responsible for her observation that 'feminism and nationalism are almost always incompatible ideological positions within the European context.' (Kaplan 1997: 3) Though nationalism 'began its career as a progressive, liberatory political force', closely linked to ideas of democracy and self-determination, it soon degenerated into

[5] Not all Third World feminists share Jayawardene's optimism regarding linkages between feminism and nationalism. Influential voices among Third World feminist scholars have pointed out the sense of betrayal that many Third World women involved in nationalist movements have experienced, once the chief aims of the movement are achieved. Some of them question the usefulness of the very category of the 'nation' as a discrete and homogeneous entity in a rapidly globalising world (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). These feminists advocate feminist movements that are transnational and can cut across the dichotomies of nation, class, race and so on. (Kaplan et al. 1999)

becoming 'a precondition for imperialism' and an instrument for exclusionary racism and ethno-centrism, the worst expression of which was the Holocaust (Kaplan 1997: 9, 10). As a result, European feminists began to assume positions in defiance of nationalism. Jill Vickers offers another possible reason for feminist antagonism to nationalism. In most European nation-states, the public-private dichotomy and masculine notions of citizenship saw to it that women were excluded from the political sphere, except in their role as mothers and wives. Vickers quotes Glenda Sluga's observation that 'the central event of modern European nationalism, the French Revolution, involved a differentiation of masculine from feminine forms of national citizenship.' (Vickers 2002: 251) The feminist movements in Europe thus came up as reactions to the patriarchal nature of national regimes. As for American feminist opposition to nationalism, Vickers attributes it to the fact that American feminists do not consider 'Americanism' as nationalism. Therefore, they remain unaware of their own nationalism and oppose nationalist movements elsewhere as being anti-feminist (Vickers 2002: 252).

Notwithstanding the reasons outlined above, Western feminists have to acknowledge the reality that nationalism is a very strong marker of identity for many women around the world. Though states have utilised nationalism for their own political purposes, nationalism is also an important component of individual identities. The psychological need of individuals to identify with a group is well-served by the idea of the nation, which conveys 'a unique sense of shared historical memories' (Tickner 1996: 153). For instance, Anthony Giddens argues that identity-signifiers like nationalism and religion that are based on powerful stories and beliefs are able to provide 'ontological security' to individuals, i.e. a 'person's fundamental sense of safety in the world (that) includes a basic trust of other people' (Giddens 1991: 38). Ontological security provides a sense of rooting in time and space, of arriving 'home', backed by a feeling of historical continuity. In her analysis of 'new nationalisms' that have emerged after 1989, Jean B. Elshtain contends the assertion that nationalism is a uniformly bad phenomenon. Many of these movements, like the self-determination movements in erstwhile Soviet Union, were organised around civic activism that demanded the protection of cultural autonomy and human rights. These movements were emancipatory in nature, both for men and women

(Elshtain 1997: 30-31). Thus, depending on the context, 'nationalisms can be revolutionary ideologies concerned with resisting domination, or dominant ideologies legitimizing the interests of established elites.' (Delap et al. 2006: 242)

Lois A. West's paradigm of 'feminist nationalism' is a novel way of looking at the interaction between feminism and nationalism (West 1997). Being a feminist and nationalist at once may appear to be counter-intuitive to most feminists; however, West defines feminist nationalism to include 'those social movements simultaneously seeking rights for women and rights for nationalists within a variety of social, economic and political contexts.' (West 1997: xxx) In the process of juggling competing demands of women's rights and nationalist struggles, feminist nationalists reconstruct the conventional meanings of both nationalism and feminism. Feminist nationalism thereby focuses on recovering women's agency within the framework of nationalist movements. West identifies three 'ideal types' of feminist nationalist movements – a) historical, national liberation social movements in colonial contexts b) movements against neocolonialism in contexts where national sovereignty is challenged by neocolonial political and economic relations and c) identity-rights movements that wage internal struggles in their society (West 1997: xxx; West 1992). In each of these cases, West identifies past instances of feminist nationalism. One of the best examples that she gives in support of her argument is that of the *feministas* (feminists) in the Philippines. The *feministas* were active in the national liberation struggle against Spain in the 1880s and continued their struggle when the US 'liberators' began to exert neo-colonial authority over the Philippines. Women in the Philippines were the first to win the vote in Asia, in 1937, which was partly an outcome of the active mobilisation of the *feministas* (Vickers 2006). Through a number of autonomous organisations like MAKIBAKA (Free Movement of New Women) and GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action), the *feministas* continued to involve themselves in the struggle against neo-colonialism and authoritarianism. For instance, GABRIELA played a crucial role in bringing women into the popular movement to oust the US backed Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship. All along, the goal of women's equality and empowerment remained on the agenda of the feminist nationalist movement. Thus, in

the Philippines, 'feminists... appropriated nationalist themes to argue that true liberation includes gender, race and class, as well as nations, to create a truly democratic national culture.' (Kwiatkowski and West 1997: 148)

Jill Vickers offers the example of the women's movement in Finland as a demonstration of feminist nationalism (Vickers 2006). Despite her pessimism about women's association with nationalism, Gisela Kaplan also acknowledges the Finnish case as one of the rare instances of feminist nationalism in Europe (Kaplan 1997). Finnish women were active participants in the movement for Finnish independence from Russian rule. Both men and women were granted citizenship and voting rights simultaneously, with Finnish women becoming the first in Europe to gain the franchise in 1906. The Finnish feminists were thus active participants in the construction of a 'gender interdependent' national narrative through which the Finnish state was 'domesticated', with a lot of stress laid on the nurturance and welfare of citizens (Markowitz 1996: 56). Male and female citizens were ordained to have an equal role in the progress of the welfare-state. A similar instance of feminist nationalism can be found in Catalonia in Spain, which was granted the status of an 'autonomous community' by the Spanish government in 1979. Mary Nash's study of the growth of the feminist movement in Catalonia demonstrates how it was inextricably linked to the larger Catalan nationalist movement (Nash 1996). In fact, the women's movement in Catalonia, till the 1930s, focused more on social issues like education and employment for women and it was its continued involvement with the Catalan nationalist movement that gave it a more political outlook. Nash comments that 'the politicization of Catalan feminism... came about through their rereading of feminism through the lens of political nationalism' and accordingly, their agenda was expanded to include demands for political rights, suffrage and women's participation in politics (Nash 1996: 48).

Just as the relationship between feminism and nationalism is not the same in different spatial contexts, it is also not fixed immutably in time. Sylvia Walby has pointed out that nation-states are not definitively formed when founded, but undergo 'rounds of restructuring' (Walby 2002). Such restructuring may occur in times of democratisation,

war, an increase or decrease in militarism, transitions in the economy and so on, resulting in either a widening of opportunities for women's activism or greater subordination. Urvashi Butalia makes a similar observation:

> [T]he relationship between gender and nation changes all the time and is never simple. Throughout, it is complex and fraught, for nation making does not end at the moment the nation actually comes into being. Nations are constantly being refashioned and in the particular context and circumstances of the history of that refashioning, and the moment in which it takes place, the relationship of the nation to gender also changes and is refashioned. (Butalia 2004: 106)

Walby's and Butalia's comments open up a new line of enquiry – is it possible that an anti-feminist nationalist movement gradually becomes more receptive to feminist demands or, alternatively, that an alliance between feminism and nationalism weakens over time? The case of Québec nationalism illustrates the first proposition. French-Canadian nationalism in Québec before the 1960s was deeply masculinist. It cast women in traditional reproductive and symbolic roles, thus making the nationalist ideology inaccessible to francophone feminists. However, there has been a radical shift in its orientation towards women, ever since the 'Quiet Revolution' of the late 1960s that heralded a new, democratic turn in the nationalist agenda.[6] Francophone feminists thereafter began to equate Québec's struggle for autonomy with their own struggle for emancipation from patriarchal norms. This idea was incorporated into the popular slogan of the Québécoises feminists – *'Pas de libération des femmes sans Québec libre, pas de Québec libre sans libération des femmes'* (No women's liberation without a free Québec, no free Québec without the liberation of women) (Lamoureaux 1987: 60). Though tensions still continue to emerge periodically between certain nationalist principles and different variants of feminism in Québec, there are many autonomous feminist organisations that are able to function as effective pressure groups and influence policy making.

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[6] The Quiet Revolution refers to the years between 1960 and 1966 in Quebec, when a radical but peaceful transformation occurred in the ideology of the nationalist movement, under the leadership of the Liberal Party, away from the anti-modernist rhetoric of the elite and the domination of the Catholic Church. The Quiet Revolution was thus 'a project of liberal modernization that sought political autonomy through a political culture of democracy and secular values' (Vickers 2002: 272; LeClerc and West 1997).

South Korea is an instance of a country where the interaction between feminism and nationalism took the opposite trajectory – from close association to mutual suspicion. Kyung-Ai Kim traces the historical role that women had to play in Korean nationalism, especially in the national resistance movement against Japanese imperialism in the early twentieth century (Kim 1996). Women's emancipation from the Confucian legacy of sexual discrimination was a prominent demand of the Korean nationalist leaders. Through their participation in the anti-colonial struggle, Korean women acquired a new sense of political agency and social merit. One of the prominent women's organisations of these times, *Gunwoohoe*, a coalition of women from different ideological persuasions, declared its twin aims to be 'to unite women in solidarity and to raise their consciousness in order to fulfill Korean women's historic responsibilities' and 'to pursue Korean women's political, economic, social and overall interests' (The Research Centre for Korean Women 1992: 156). The division of the Korean Peninsula in 1945 into North Korea and South Korea was followed by the tumultuous years of the Korean Civil War. The American military presence and influence in South Korea even after the War ended in 1953 led to the spread of Americanised values and beliefs, while traditional Korean culture was mostly neglected. This resulted in a kind of neo-nationalist, traditionalist backlash by dissidents of the military regime backed by the US in the late 1970s. The male neo-nationalists in South Korea began to perceive feminism as another manifestation of Western ideology. By this time, a broad-based autonomous women's movement had taken roots in South Korea under the leadership of the Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU), members of which had developed 'their own clear awareness of exploitation and oppression by patriarchal capitalists, of male domination, and of patriarchal cultural norms as well as oppression by the military regime', which clashed with the traditionalist rhetoric of neo-nationalism (Kim 1996: 72, Yun Chai 1997). While some neo-nationalists believed that South Korean feminism was nothing but an imitation of Western fads, others argued that the women's movement was divisive and was weakening the more important struggle for democratisation of South Korea. Feminists had to try hard to overcome this kind of nationalist opposition and they met with success in the 1990s when their sustained fight against militarism won recognition and their credentials as feminist nationalists were reinforced. The South Korean example

provides a very interesting case of constant re-negotiations and re-alignments between feminism and nationalism, in response to changing political, social and cultural contexts.

Feminist Transversal Politics

Having seen how nationalism and nationalist struggles are not always 'bad' and could have productive outcomes for feminism, it is also necessary to look at how feminists respond to situations where nationalism takes a virulent form and endangers the co-existence of different ethnic and national communities. There are instances of feminists coming together in the midst of violent conflict to build bridges between women of the warring communities. Often, these women do not completely jettison their national identity; instead, they choose to stress on the mutual suffering and disruption that they face in their daily lives, *as women*. Nira Yuval-Davis's idea of the transversal politics of coalition building between women from different national, racial and ethnic backgrounds is relevant here (Yuval-Davis 1997). The uniqueness of transversal politics lies in its ability to simultaneously recognise the divergent positionings of the actors involved and find a common platform for action. To quote Yuval-Davis:

> In 'transversal politics', perceived unity and homogeneity are replaced by dialogues which give recognition to the specific positionings of those who participate in them as well as to the 'unfinished knowledge' that each positioning can offer. (Yuval-Davis 1997: 88)

The two distinctive features of transversal politics are 'rooting' and 'shifting'; the actors must have a strong sense of their own political, social and cultural background while not letting that hinder them from being sensitive to the contexts of others around them. Thus

> [E]ach participant in the dialogue brings with her the rooting in her own membership and identity, but at the same time tries to shift in order to put herself in a situation of exchange with women who have different membership and identity. (Yuval-Davis 1997: 130)

One of the best examples of transversal women's activism in practice is the international Women in Black movement. This movement is a coalition of women from all around the world who are active in trying to bring peace to local and global conflict situations. The first Women in Black mobilisation happened in Israel, where the initiative of nine Jewish women to protest against the Israeli occupation of Palestine soon grew into a nation-wide

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movement. Three weeks after the outbreak of the first *Intifada*, in December 1987, the Women in Black began holding vigils each Friday at public places, wearing black and holding a sign in the shape of a hand, which read in Arabic, English and Hebrew – 'Stop the Occupation'. Erella Shadmi explains the political significance of these vigils for the women involved:

> Staging the body within a vigil challenged social norms, questioned the traditional roles prescribed for women, and expressly reflected a protest against the reduction of a woman's body to a womb, the patriarchal function prescribed for it by Israeli nationalism. (Shadmi 2000: 25)

Equally significant from the viewpoint of transversal politics was the fact that the vigils provided a common platform for Israeli and Palestinian women to unite their efforts for the common goal of peace. The activities of the Women in Black expanded over time to include 'dialogues between Israeli and Palestinian women, street theater and teach-ins, publishing a children's magazine for peace, consciousness-raising groups, documenting the words of Palestinian women' and so on (Svirsky 2003: 543). The response of the Women in Black to the *al Aqsa Intifada* in 2002 was to get together with eight other women's peace organisations to form the Coalition of Women for Peace. The Coalition adopted a set of guiding principles, which, according to Gila Svirsky, one of the founding members, reflected 'a feminist vision of peace – not just ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories but realizing a shared future of co-operation', based on anti-militarism, equal role for women in peace negotiations and greater attention to socio-economic, rather than military, issues (Svirsky 2003: 544).

Throughout the 1990s, the activities of the Women in Black inspired several local mobilisations in various parts of the world, including the US, India, Italy, Australia and so on, making it a truly global women's movement.[7] One of the most effective and sustained outgrowth of the movement was the Women in Black initiative in the strife-

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[7] In each of its manifestations, the issues taken up by the Women in Black reflected both local and global concerns. In Italy, the women protested against the violence of the Mafia and organised crime, in addition to opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestine; in Germany, they protested against the sale of chemicals by German firms to the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, neo-Nazism and nuclear arms. The first Asian Women in Black vigil took place in Bangalore in 1994, where the protest was against the demolition of the Babri Masjid (Svirsky 2003).

ridden former Yugoslavia. A Women in Black organisation was set up in Belgrade in October 1991 and meetings were held every Wednesday on the street in the heart of the city. The women also held candlelight vigils in front of the Serbian Parliament for five months, to demonstrate their solidarity with all victims of ethnic violence. In a context that was vitiated by hatred for 'the other', the Women in Black brought together Serb, Croat and Muslim women on a common platform and boldly declared that 'women's solidarity does not recognize national, confessional or state boundaries, even when the regime intentionally aggravates and divides them.' (Bracewell 1996: 30-31) Through their protests, they highlighted the way women, irrespective of their ethnic identity, were affected by the conflict: 'as refugees, as those who care for refugees, as mothers and sisters of the dead, as those raped and forced into prostitution' (Mladjenovic et al. 1993: 116).

The Women's Support Network in Belfast, Northern Ireland is another good example of transversal feminist politics. Founded in 1990, it is an umbrella organisation that brings together representatives from a number of women's community centres functioning in the poor working-class districts of Belfast. The foundations of the Network were laid when the Protestant/Unionist Shankill Women's Centre joined hands with the Catholic/Republican Falls Road Women's Centre to protest against discrimination in the Belfast City Council's funding policy.[8] An 'unusual... working alliance of women from both Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist communities', the Women's Support Network describes itself as 'a collective feminist voice of women' (Cockburn 2000: 612; Mulholland 2001: 172). It campaigns for 'better representation of the needs of women as a whole, within the political system, the peace process and funding programmes' (Cockburn 2000: 612). While most women in the Support Network were acutely conscious of their nationalist identities, they were still able to co-operate for the common cause of the improvement of their living conditions as women through a range of

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[8] The Unionist-dominated Belfast City Council was the source of funding for all the three Women's centres in Belfast. The Protestant and Catholic center lobbied collectively for the funds; however, the Council agreed to fund only the Protestant Shankill Women's Centre and Downtown Women's Centre and rejected the Catholic Falls Women's Centre's application, on the grounds that they were IRA (Irish Republican Army) sympathisers. This prompted the Protestant women to collaborate with the Catholic women's Centre in their protest (Mulholland 2001: 171).

activities that had a distinct feminist orientation. Cynthia Cockburn argues that the Women's Support Network succeeded because the members had a notion of nationalism that was very different from the exclusivist nationalism predominant in Northern Ireland. She calls this women-specific brand of nationalism 'anti-essentialist nationalism', which does not see difference as irreconcilable but as a valuable marker of identity and does not erect rigid boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (Cockburn 2000). Even while holding different national imaginations, the women in the Network were able to reach out to each other as 'women'. Viewed from Yuval-Davis' paradigm of transversal politics, this is a perfect case of 'rooting' and 'shifting'.

Conclusion

Feminist contributions to the study of identities in international relations have been immensely useful in opening up hitherto ignored aspects of the politics of identification and differentiation and its relevance in defining the contours of mainstream IR theory. By demonstrating how the public and the private, the inside and the outside are artificial, gendered constructs, feminist IR problematises some of the fundamental assumptions of the discipline of IR. However, feminists are increasingly finding it necessary to be more sensitive towards the different manifestations that identity politics, especially those centred on nationalism, can assume and its divergent impacts on women. This idea of the mutability of national identities and women's association with them is important because it warns feminist scholars not to posit a mono-causal and static relationship between gender and nationalism. As Anne McClintock asserts,

> [T]here is no single narrative of the nation. Different genders, classes, ethnicities and generations do not identify with, or experience the myriad national formations in the same way; nationalisms are invented, performed and consumed in ways that do not follow a universal blueprint. (McClintock 1993: 68)

In order to retain the sharpness of its critique of mainstream IR, feminist scholars must look at the diversity of women's experiences with nationalism. They must also try and locate women not just as mere victims of nationalist oppression but active agents who are constantly re-negotiating their equations with the national community. While some of this re-negotiation may happen through conventional feminist modes of action, others may

deviate from the script; yet, they may succeed in questioning patriarchal norms and subverting gendered nationalist beliefs.

Chapter IV

Political Motherhood: Subversion and Resistance

Constructions of women's roles as ideal mothers and maternal representations of the nation inform most nationalist discourses. While such gendered understandings of women's 'legitimate' place within the national community restricts women's agency, it also throws open the possibility for women to subvert and redefine assigned roles. Instead of being confined within the private or the domestic sphere, women in several different cultural and national contexts have used their roles as mothers to make an entry into the public sphere and engage in political struggles and social activism. Such subversive strategies constitute the core of what is referred to as 'political motherhood' (Schirmer 1993). This chapter is an attempt to look at political motherhood as a specific instance of how a so-called 'private' role assumes political significance in the context of nationalist projects.

Feminist Perspectives on Motherhood

Feminist discourses have been informed by a whole range of competing perspectives on motherhood and the question as to how feminists must approach the role of women as mothers remains unresolved in feminist theorising. On one hand, there are feminists like Adrienne Rich, Judith Butler, Shulamith Firestone and others who consider motherhood to be the foundation on which patriarchy builds up the structures of gender domination (Butler 1990; Firestone 1970; Rich 1976). To them, the family is the principal site of women's oppression and no familial role can be enabling for women. According to this view, women in their conventionally ascribed roles as mothers only perpetuate their own subordination and relegation to the restrictive private/domestic sphere. On the other hand, feminists like Carol Gilligan and Sandra Ruddick represent what Jane Flax calls the 'maternal turn' in feminist theory and celebrate the maternal instincts of care-giving and nurturing (Flax 1993). By drawing on Carol Gilligan's work on the different paths of moral development of men and women ('an ethic of justice' among men and 'an ethic of

care' among women), Ruddick argues that women who practice the tasks of mothering develop a distinct cognitive and moral orientation, which she terms 'maternal thinking'. She further links women's 'maternal thinking' to a larger argument that women can play a crucial role as peacemakers in situations of war and conflict (Gilligan 1982; Ruddick 1989). Ruddick does *not* hold that maternal thinking is biologically determined or inherent in women by virtue of their sex. However, since women are called upon as mothers to take care of and protect young lives, they develop a commitment to life preservation and peace. Thus, motherhood is a socially constructed role.

Both these opposing perspectives on motherhood have been critically scrutinised by other feminists. In response to feminist scholars who do not accept that women's roles as mothers could acquire emancipatory potential, it has been argued that this bias against motherhood is a typical Western feminist response that overlooks the differences in women's lived experiences in the non-Western world.[1] For instance, Monica Neugebauer addresses the Western feminist portrayal of women's domestic roles as non-political and poses a pertinent question: 'Is women's activism only valid when it is outside the domestic sphere?' (Neugebauer 1998: 177) Such a restricted view of women's agency, Neugebauer points out, ironically reinforces the public/private dichotomy that Western feminists have been consistently questioning. She also argues that Western feminist strategies based on separatist women's liberation may not be practical in the context of societies that are in the midst of national liberation struggles, since community ties tend to be much stronger in their case. Lila Abu-Lughod draws attention to this aspect when she writes that feminists have to come to terms with the fact that notions of gender justice are not universal but culture and context specific and therefore 'different women might want, or choose, different futures from what we envision as best' (Abu-Lughod 2002: 787-788).

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[1] Non-western feminist scholars have contrasted the historical experience of Western women with that of women in most Third World countries and have concluded that Western women have been able to achieve a level of autonomy from patriarchal structures like the family and community. This autonomous identity of the Western woman is mainly derived from the liberal-individualistic model of society, in which the individual is assumed to be primarily responsible for his/her own life choices. The nuclear family structure that is predominant in the West has also been identified as one of the reasons why Western women tend to devalue the experiences of women within the domestic sphere of the family and the home (Neugebauer 1998).

On the other hand, many feminists also find it difficult to accept the opposing perspective on motherhood as an embodiment of care and peaceful preservation. In her critical scrutiny of Ruddick's theory of maternal thinking, Nancy Scheper-Hughes makes the significant point that motherhood is not uniformly used as a medium by women to pursue peace (Scheper-Hughes 1998). She gives examples of how motherhood has alternatively been used to arouse militaristic fervour and support war in specific national and cultural contexts. She argues that '[O]nly by intentional design, rather than by any natural predisposition, do women devote the thinking and practices of motherhood to peacekeeping and world repair rather than to war making and world destruction' (Scheper-Hughes 1998: 233). Organisations like the 'Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs' in Nicaragua aimed at stimulating 'motherly patriotism' among women by urging mothers to sacrifice their children for a larger cause (de Volo 1998). Mothers have also been co-opted by state propaganda to prevent dissent against their sons' military involvement in Israel (Mazali 1998).

The Concept of Political Motherhood

Feminist scholars have increasingly been trying to redefine feminist understandings of motherhood, especially in terms of questions regarding women's political agency, while avoiding the extremes of either total denial or glorification. In her authoritative survey of feminist literature on motherhood, Ellen Ross observes a movement of such scholarship 'from the margins to the center of feminist discussion', with the 'mother' becoming 'a subject rather than a distant, looming object' (Ross 1995: 413). Feminists have begun to look afresh at the ways in which motherhood can be creatively and strategically employed to facilitate women's political participation. The concept of 'political motherhood' is a recent addition to the feminist corpus of scholarship on women's engagement with nationalism and citizenship. The term 'political motherhood' refers to ways in which women utilise their biological and cultural role as mothers as a medium for political mobilisation (Schirmer 1993). Feminist scholars who highlight the crucial importance of political motherhood do not think of motherhood in the conventional sense of the term. Though the institution of motherhood has always existed, these scholars

visualise it as a dynamic identity that is constantly 'redefined through women's practices in different socio-political moments' and as 'a product of particular historical and cultural trajectories' (Zaatari 2006: 35). Instead of looking at motherhood as a private role, they try to bring out how the role of the mother can be extended beyond the confines of the family and into the public sphere. Utilising their identity as mothers, women can thus legitimately and actively take on a political role and engage with the public realm.

Feminist scholars have also used the concept of political motherhood to dispute the public-private dichotomy that informs mainstream social science theorising. When women utilise their social locations as mothers within the 'domestic' sphere as a launching pad for their participation in public life, they fundamentally challenge the assumption that the public is separate and distinct from the private. In this way, political motherhood implies a redrawing of the boundaries between the public and the private lives of women and demonstrates that the 'personal' is indeed 'political'.

It is important here to distinguish between women's assertion of their agency in their roles as mothers from the traditionally demanded performance of motherly duties. Many feminist scholars have pointed out how nationalist discourses demand the fulfilment of certain ideal motherly duties. For instance, many nationalist movements have made very effective use of the trope of the 'mother of the martyr', by glorifying the sacrifice that a mother makes when sending her son to the battlefield to fight for the larger national cause. Vesna Nikolic Ristanovic, in her analysis of mothers in the former Yugoslavia, demonstrates how even while women were glorified as biological regenerators and 'mothers of the nation', women's reproductive rights were repeatedly abused and they were subjected to the violence of nationalistic wars. Women were thus co-opted into the ultra-nationalistic Serbian project of exterminating minorities through war (Ristanovic 1998: 235). Similarly, Lorraine Bayard de Volo uses two examples of when women were sought to be mobilised around traditional mothering roles to legitimise war – first, the United States during the two World Wars and second, Nicaragua during the Contra War – to argue that women's unprecedented entry into the public sphere as mothers of soldiers does not necessarily have transformative or emancipatory potential (de Volo 1998). She

refers to the phenomenon through which women as mothers are inducted into militaristic nationalist projects as 'combative motherhood'. While this form of mother's participation in politics can also be seen as an assertion of agency, it does not in any way challenge or subvert the nation-state's construction of ideal womanhood. As Shireen Hassim argues, 'there is an underlying tension between the power that motherhood is accorded in nationalist symbolism, and the powerlessness that women experience in society' (Hassim 1993: 20). Thus, in their prescribed roles as 'good mothers', women are yet again instrumentally used by nationalistic projects. But it is by subverting these 'given' roles and becoming 'disobedient female subjects of the state' that women acquire the agency to question accepted norms (Schirmer 1989: 4). It is this subversive potential that lies at the core of the concept of political motherhood, as it is discussed here. Even while accepting the ambivalence inherent in utilising a traditional role like motherhood as the medium for asserting women's political agency, feminist analysts of political motherhood like Maria del Carmen Feijoó and Diana Taylor have brought out the transformative potential inherent in using motherhood to transcend the traditional meanings of 'passivity' and 'submission' associated with it and to engage actively with politics (Feijoó 1994: 77; Howe 2006; Taylor 1997; Zaatari 2006). In her analysis of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo movement in Argentina, Taylor writes:

> The mother's movement did not begin when the individual mothers became acquainted in their search for their children; it originated when the women consciously decided to protest and agitate as mothers. That as marks the conceptual distance between the essentialist notion of motherhood attributed to the Madres and the self-conscious manipulation of the maternal role – understood as performative – that makes the movement the powerful and intensely dramatic spectacle that it is. (Taylor 1997: 194)

Similarly, Sara Eleanor Howe defends the *Madres* against a commonly raised feminist objection that they reinforced the traditional role of motherhood that feminists were trying hard to deconstruct, by pointing out how the Mothers subverted motherhood 'from a restrictive label to a positive... and politicised force' (Howe 2006: 43). It is the emphasis on their same role as mothers that critical feminists see as imprisoning and restrictive that allows these women the space to move out of the domestic and into the public sphere (Zaatari 2006: 36).

Literature on the concept and practice of political motherhood is so far quite limited. Jennifer Schirmer used the term for the first time in an essay in 1993, where she outlined the transformative process through which motherist movements acquire a gender consciousness in the midst of their resistance to state repression. Though the mothers did not openly challenge the roles prescribed for them by the nation-state, they used the very same roles to assert their voices against political violence. To begin with, their demands centered on the restitution of their maternal role as protectors of their families and homes that were being disrupted by state sponsored disappearances of their sons and daughters. However, their agenda and strategies underwent changes in the course of their political participation to include a whole new range of issues dealing with women's rights, education, employment and equality in the public sphere. In addition to focusing on political motherhood as a means through which mothers entered into the public sphere, Schirmer also draws attention to how motherist movements in Latin America created transnational links beyond the nation-state. She gives the specific example of how many of them are affiliated to the FEDEFAM, the Organisation of Latin American countries for Relatives of the Disappeared, an influential transnational human rights network.

Many feminist scholars have argued that the politics of motherhood is anti-feminist and anti-emancipatory, since it restricts women's agency to the private sphere. Schirmer reacts to this by questioning the distinction drawn by some feminists between 'female' consciousness as conventional and conservative and 'feminist' consciousness as radical and progressive. Women in many non-Western societies may be averse to the idea of adopting a feminist label, which is seen as undermining the family and the community and heralding a complete overthrow of the existing social order. As Amrita Basu notes, they may be urged to think of a different type of feminism that is an 'incremental, hidden form of subversion enacted to protect families and communities, rather than undermine them' (Basu 1995: 7). Schirmer also rejects the popular distinction introduced by the feminist scholar Maxine Molyneux between practical and strategic interests of women's

movements.[2] Schirmer suggests that the motherist movements, for instance, have multiple practical and strategic interests that keep evolving over time and together end up challenging accepted norms. Her argument is that women's consciousness is always contingent and contextual and is always rooted in particular places and particular historical junctures. Thus, the specific forms that women's activism takes depends on the broader national and societal context in which they are placed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes makes a similar argument about the 'embeddedness' of maternal thinking and motherhood; she observes that archetypical notions of motherhood are 'anything other than natural and instead represent a matrix of images, meanings, sentiments and practices that are everywhere socially and culturally produced' (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 341).

Pnina Werbner gives an excellent analysis of several motherist movements in the world that challenge official nationalist discourse and practice (Werbner 1999). By subverting culturally relevant practices, these women legitimised the right of women to protest even during times of war and to participate in the national debate about war. According to Werbner, political motherhood is by definition 'overt; a move into the public domain which challenges the confinement of women to domesticity' (Werbner 1999: 231). Even while subverting their prescribed roles, political mothers do not fundamentally challenge the institution of the family. While this is perceived as a serious limitation by most Western feminist scholars, Werbner and other advocates of political motherhood point out that it is precisely through such strategic manoeuvring that they manage to de-legitimise existing paradigms of women's political participation. Women's activism through the means of political motherhood thus 'defies the imaginary which regards women as the vulnerable objects of male protection, or of the "nation" as a woman to be protected from external violence' (Werbner 1999: 231).

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[2] According to Maxine Molyneux, practical gender interests are based on fulfilling the needs of women that arise from their particular location in the sexual division of labour. These interests accept the cultural gender roles and hence comply with the existing gender order. In contrast, strategic gender interests aim at fundamentally transforming gender relations and enhancing women's position within society, by explicitly questioning the gendered social order (Molyneux 1985, 2001). For a critical analysis of this scheme, see Radcliffe and Westwood (1993) and Lind (1992).

In her exploration of the political subjectivity of nationalist women in Northern Ireland, Begonia Aretxaga demonstrates how 'the strongest motivation for women's political activism arose from motherhood, from the arrest of men and boys' (Aretxaga 1997: 62). She disputes the argument made by feminist scholars like Linda Edgerton who see women's political resistance organised around their identities as mothers as non-transformative and as a form of gender false consciousness that perpetuates a patriarchal system of gender inequality by reinforcing women's role as mothers (Edgerton 1986). Aretxaga's point is that in the various acts of political resistance that they engage in, women are also constantly re-inventing and re-configuring received notions about the 'proper' place of mothers. The activism of the political mothers of Ireland and their political use of the emotions of a suffering mother were thus decisive points of departure from 'the mythical paradigm of nationalist motherhood', rather than a blind re-affirmation of the same (Aretxaga 1997: 117).

Political Motherhood in Action

It is interesting to note that almost all the historical instances of political motherhood are located in the context of nationalist conflicts or war-torn societies. Julie Peteet tries to establish a link between the fluidity of the boundaries that separate the public and the private during times of conflict and women's assertion of their agency from within the domestic space. She writes:

> The mobilization of the domestic sector during a protracted crisis disputes any facile dichotomy between formal and informal spheres, and domestic and public domains. When a community is under attack... domestic boundaries are shattered, revealing the illusory character of domesticity as the realm of private familial relations distanced from the sphere of formal politics. (Peteet 1986: 22)

This argument is supported by several examples of women's activism around the world. For instance, Aretxaga shows in her study of women's political activism in Northern Ireland, how the internment of young Catholic boys and men as well as the widespread raids of homes led to a blurring and sometimes even an erasure of the boundaries between the household and the public community space (Aretxaga 1997). Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson point out that communities that face a threat to their identity and are struggling to survive in the midst of conflict are more open to women playing hitherto

unacceptable roles that often trespass the rigid boundaries between the public and the private (Giacaman and Johnson 1989: 157). One reason for this increased acceptance is the simple fact that the men in these communities are caught up with armed struggle and are therefore absent from the scene. From their study of women's participation in the initial years of the Palestinian *Intifada*, Giacaman and Johnson conclude:

> [A]lthough it is often asserted that women's traditional domestic role in the family is an obstacle to public political action, that the world of the home and the world of the polity are sealed off from one another, these barriers seem to have become permeable for Palestinian women during the uprising. (Giacaman and Johnson 1989: 162)

The activism of both black and white women in South Africa against the repressive apartheid regime is another instance of the strength and appeal of motherhood as a call to action in times of crises. In response to the increased political violence unleashed by the government from the early 1980s, black women started organising in their capacity as mothers and actively participating in township struggles. While the male members of their families were being hunted down by the SADF (South African Defence Forces), the responsibility of defending their communities and their children fell entirely on the shoulders of the women. Once 'the site of struggle shifted to the home and community, into a sphere in which women have particular responsibility... [t]he women felt a special social obligation as mothers to all children in the neighbourhood' (Beall et al. 1989: 44). The mothers maintained all-night vigils to guard their homes from attack. What is even more fascinating about this case is how the evocation of motherhood urged the white mothers in the towns and cities, who were already organised as the Black Sash, to join the black mothers in their vigils.[3] The women of the Black Sash had earlier, in the 1960s, appealed for the protection of black mothers who were being arrested and persecuted under the draconian Pass Laws. At both these junctures, it was not a feeling of shared feminist sisterhood, but of the shared experience of motherhood that inspired them; an

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[3] The Black Sash was the name by which the Women's Defence of the Constitution League popularly came to be known. It was an organisation of middle-class white women, established in 1955 in Johannesburg, with the purpose of opposing the apartheid government's proposal to remove coloured voters from the electoral roll. It continued to be active as a voice of conscience till the abolition of apartheid in 1994, following which it has established its credentials as a human rights NGO. The movement came to be known after the black sashes that the activists wore as a mark of mourning for the demise of liberal democracy in South Africa and of protest against the unjust apartheid laws (Scanlon 2007).

empathy that was strong enough to override ethnic and racial differences (Beall et al. 1989).

While every motherist movement is foregrounded in a specific socio-historical context and has its own specific objectives and unique methods, it is interesting to observe a number of parallels between such movements. In the following section, the practice of political motherhood is analysed on the basis of certain common themes that animate its different manifestations.

Subversion of Nationalist Stereotypes of Motherhood

Motherhood is traditionally perceived as a role that inhabits the private sphere. As Diana Taylor observes in the context of Latin America, women who enter the public sphere are labeled as prostitutes or mad women; as 'nonmothers' or even 'antimothers', while 'good mothers are invisible' because they stay confined within the domestic/private sphere (Taylor 1997: 195). There is a striking recurrence of the politicisation of motherhood in the Latin American discourses on the nation and nationalism throughout the twentieth century (Molyneux 2001: 171). Motherhood was a decisive 'referent of female mobilisation' in Latin America and imparted distinctiveness to the evolution of women's movements in the region (Alvarez 1990; Molyneux 2001: 172). The popular imagination of motherhood in Latin America is closely bound up with Catholic symbolism and the image of Mother Mary, which, as Molyneux notes, 'endows it with a privileged morality that, when deployed for political ends, has an exceptional potency' (Molyneux 2003: 419). It is this 'exceptional potency' that *latina* women in countries like Argentina, El Salvador and Guatemala sought to harness in their struggles. Similarly, the image of the nation as the benevolent mother is crucial to the construction of nationalist discourses in South Asia. Women are symbolically glorified as mothers, but left practically powerless outside the domestic sphere. It is to negotiate this position of powerlessness that women employ strategies of political motherhood as the means through which they can assert their agency.

The issue around which the mothers mobilised was integral to the performance of their motherly roles – the absence of their missing sons and daughters who had become the victims of state repression and had 'disappeared'. The *madres* (mothers) of Latin America asserted their motherly right and responsibility to know the whereabouts of their children, thus 'lay[ing] claim to their part in the nation and to their rights as citizens using the language of the state by reclaiming and thereby transforming it into a series of demands', but in a way that deviated from the nation-state's prescriptions for the ideal mother (Radcliffe and Westwood 1993: 16). Thus, the official discourse of the concerned states projected an image of the *madres* as 'bad' or deviant mothers who had failed in bringing their children up as good citizens of the nation-state (Bejarano 2002: 131). For instance, the activists of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, one of the most visible and popular forces of resistance against the repressive and violent military dictatorship that was in power in Argentina during the years of the 'Dirty War' (1976-83), were collectively referred to by the Argentine state as *las locas* (the crazy women) in order to delegitimise the rationality and purpose of their struggle[4] (Schirmer 1989). The repressive state apparatus in Argentina was trying to advocate a 'return to the family' as the basic unit of society, in order to avoid the dangers of subversion and excessive politicisation of the society. This reinforced women's subordinate position because they were appealed to as wives and mothers to become the custodians of family order and strictly control their children to stop them from turning subversive. A local variant of the German 'three Ks' – *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church) – was proposed as the only legitimate goal for mothers.[5] However, the Argentine state's attempt to privatise what was public backfired when the mothers began to bring their private concerns to the public (Feijoó

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[4] It has been estimated by human rights organisations that close to 30,000 young men and women were forcefully 'disappeared' by the Argentine military dictatorship during the 'Process of National Reorganization' initiated by it in order to check any possible resistance to its socio-economic projects, which later on came to be known as the 'Dirty War' (Burchianti 2004; Howe 2006). While the official Argentine discourse in subsequent years looked at this as a civil war between the military and the leftist guerilla forces, human rights organisations in Argentina, including the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, dispute this view and claim that it was a period of outright repression by the military dictatorship not just against a small group of leftist guerillas but mainly against a much larger number of non-combatants.

[5] The terms *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* was used by Kaiser Wilhelm II, the emperor of Germany, to describe what he envisaged as the proper role of women in nineteenth century German society. This patriarchal vision was re-introduced by the Nazis in 1930s in order to highlight the need for women to perform their biological and cultural duties towards the German nation.

and Gogna 1990: 84). By drawing attention to the rampant use of violence by the state through their various public acts of protest, the *madres* of Latin America became 'inquisitors' of the state who openly challenged the legitimacy of a state that could not protect its citizen's rights (Bejarano 2002: 131). The COMADRES (*Comité de Madres y Familiares de Presos, Desaparacidos y Asesinados de El Salvador*) or the Monsignor Romero Committee of Mothers and Relatives of Political Prisoners, Disappeared and Assassinated of El Salvador, formed in 1977, was one of the first groups in El Salvador to mobilise against the repression of a militaristic state that had unleashed violence against political opponents and dissidents during the civil war that raged there between 1979 and 1992 (Stephen 2001: 55). In addition to the mothers of those who had been termed as subversives and guerillas by the government, it also included mothers of soldiers who were forcibly recruited into the Salvadoran army.

The Mothers' Front of Sri Lanka was formed in July 1990, when more than twenty five thousand mothers of persons who had 'disappeared' following state repression from the year 1987 onwards decided to join hands.[6] The vocabulary of protest that these women adopted was derived from traditional family values and motherly love and affection that could not be deemed as anti-state. In fact, these mothers built upon the glorification of the mother figure that was a prominent feature of Sinhala nationalist imagination.[7] Neloufer de Mel points out that 'the value of motherhood also gave the women moral and emotive power as victimised mothers in a culture supposedly deferential and respectful to them'

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[6] The situation in the years between 1987 and 1991 in the south of Sri Lanka was that of serious instability, with the Sinhala nationalist party, the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) attempting to capture state power through violent means like threats, intimidation and assassination targeted against the military, police, bureaucracy and politicians who were seen as being instrumental in the signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 that paved the way for Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) landing in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government led by President Ranasinghe Premadasa of the UNP (United National Party) responded with equally violent measures, including murders and forced 'disappearances', to suppress anyone who was suspected to be a subversive. Thousands of innocent men and women who were critical of the state were victimised in this process, creating a 'reign of terror' or *'bheeshana samaya'* as it is known in Sri Lankan popular discourse (de Mel 2001: 239).

[7] One such mother figure is the Vihara Mahadevi, drawn from Buddhist literature, which parallels the image of Sita in India as the exemplar of good womanhood. She is believed to have served the Sinhala nation by giving birth to the brave warrior king Duttugemunu who was the first Sinhala king to defeat the Tamil rulers in the north and bring all the territories under his sovereign power. The image of Vihara Mahadevi, as Malathi de Alwis brings out, is projected as the ideal 'Moral Mother' who is courageous and patriotic and therefore worthy of emulation by all Sri Lankan women (de Alwis 1998: 259, 260).

(de Mel 2001: 250). However, the Mothers gave motherhood an entirely new dimension by bringing it into the public sphere and using it as a tool of protest against the violent and militant national discourse. They used the 'available, familiar and emotive discourse of motherhood' to de-legitimise the actions of the Sri Lankan state, that was claiming to use strict measures to safeguard the nation and its citizens (de Alwis 1997: 186). The ultimate failure of the state was proclaimed by the Mothers to be its denial of the mother's right to protect and love her children, because these children were the victims of the state's oppression. Comparing their activism to that of the Madres of Argentina and the GAM (Mutual Support Group for our Sons, Fathers, Husbands and Brothers) of Guatemala, Malathi de Alwis notes that just as in these two cases, the Mothers' Front also was 'confronting a repressive state by revealing the contradictions between the state's own rhetoric and practices' (de Alwis 1997: 188). While on one hand, the nationalist rhetoric glorified the role of the Sri Lankan mother, on the other hand, the Sri Lankan state was denying the possibility of this role by annihilating the children who could be mothered. It was this contradiction that the Mothers' Front tried to bring out through public displays of their grief and loss. Just as in Argentina and Guatemala, where the protesting mothers were termed as deviants or 'bad' mothers who had lost their rationality, the Sri Lankan state too resorted to countering the Mothers by accusing them of having failed in their motherly duties by letting their children turn subversive and anti-government (de Alwis 1997: 188).

The mobilisation of Catholic mothers in Northern Ireland to protest against the internment and oppression of their relatives (both male and female) is another instance of the political use of motherhood. The Falls Road curfew, declared by the British Army in July 1970 and internment without trial, which the government of Northern Ireland introduced in August 1971 were the two events that triggered off the mobilisation. The Relatives Action Committee (RAC) formed in 1976 sought to consolidate the struggles of the mothers. The mothers who were members of Relatives Action Committee defied the curfew, protested publicly against the state and organised in their respective localities to protect their families from military harassment and arrests (Aretxaga 1997). With the number of men being interned increasing rapidly, women began to replace men in vital

community roles. Their immediate experience of social injustice prompted them towards what Monica McWilliams calls 'accidental activism', almost compelling them to stop their passive wait for things to get better and engage in active protest for the sake of their families (McWilliams 1995: 13-15).

It is important to understand why the women who enacted political motherhood chose to utilise their identities as mothers as the basis for their political mobilisation. Diana Taylor convincingly argues that this choice did not come naturally to the mothers but was the only option that was viable and practical. The mothers strategically chose to put their roles as mothers to political use because 'it offered the women a certain legitimacy and authority in a society that values mothers almost to the exclusion of all other women' (Taylor 1997: 193). They were able to 'perceive and literally act out the difference between motherhood as an individual identity and motherhood as a collective, political performance' (Taylor 1997: 194). Their identity as mothers was one that was legitimate and was even glorified within their respective national contexts and therefore they could create a space for themselves in the public sphere without completely rejecting socially approved gender norms. As Patricia Chuchryk points out in the context of women's opposition to the authoritarian regime in Chile, the invisibility and exclusion of mothers from the formal political sphere enabled their activism because they were considered to be less threatening to the existent structures of authority and power (Chuchryk 1989: 56). In her analysis of the Mamas' (mothers) protests in Kenya against the detention of their sons as political prisoners, Alexandra Tibbetts convincingly argues that the Mamas 'seized motherhood as a political identity as a strategic move, not an inherently female way to do politics' and used it 'as a means of accessing and using the political discourse and cultural associations with motherhood' and 'claiming a public political identity'[8] (Tibbetts 1994: 16).

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[8] The Mamas were Kikuyu women whose sons were detained by the KANU (Kenyan African National Union) government of Daniel arap Moi for criticising Section 2(a) of the Kenyan Constitution that declared Kenya to be a one party state and for advocating multi-party politics. Following protests and international pressure, this Section was repealed in December 1991, but the government refused to release the prisoners. The Mamas mobilised to protest against this and launched a campaign to demand the release of their sons that continued for a year till they were released (Tibbetts 1994).

By working through accepted roles, the women in the motherist movements were trying to make the most out of the very limited spaces that were available to them within the context of patriarchal societies. The blurring of the lines between the private and the public in times of intense nationalist conflict both necessitates and facilitates women's activism. Rita Manchanda observes a process of the opening up of the public sphere for women in the context of violent conflicts in South Asia. She links this process to the collapse of the public sphere of men in the face of terror and repression unleashed by the state's security forces or the armed groups. Women step in to 'innovate survival strategies for the family and the community' and 'use their traditional invisibility in the public sphere to create space for their activism' (Manchanda 2001: 15). Women's 'domestic activism' leads to a 'stretching' of their traditional roles as mothers and wives into the public sphere, where they then emerge as agents of political resistance and negotiators with the public institutions of power like the security forces and the administration for the security of their families and communities (Manchanda 2001: 16).

De-privatisation of Grief and Loss

The expression of emotions is often seen as inappropriate in the public sphere whereas it is permitted in the private sphere within the family. Women are considered to be 'emotional beings' who do not possess the skill of restricting public displays of emotion. However, in many of the instances of political motherhood, we see how the mothers deliberately aimed at taking their sense of grief and loss out of the private space of their homes and into the public arena. This is particularly relevant in the case of those motherist movements that were motivated by the disappearances of their sons and daughters. As Francesca Miller points out, the mothers were led by their pain and loss to organise in order to fight for their rights, rather than passively accepting the disappearance of their children (Miller 1991: 10). Thus,

> [F]rom their personal grief and fear the mothers evolved a communal strength...
> and methods of protest – carrying pictures of their loved ones, naming again and
> again those taken away – emerged directly from forms of grief that would have
> been in other circumstances, private: a woman weeping over the picture of her
> lost child, keeping vigil by a window, placing flowers on a grave. (Miller 1991:
> 10)

74

In the context of Latin America, the motherist movements engaged in a strategic subversion of the traditional Catholic image of the *Mater Dolorosa* or the 'grieving mother'. It is this image which made the mothers visible in a public sphere which otherwise excludes women. However, by harnessing their personal losses and suffering for the political purpose of resisting the nation-state, the mothers demonstrated that 'the personal is political', a fundamental feminist argument. Thus, these mothers 'transformed the passion of individual grief into the politics of collective opposition' (Gilmore 1999: 25). Sara Ruddick notes that this innovative use of the image of the *Mater Dolorosa* by the mothers

> [E]llicit the sympathies that mourning tends to elicit but in a context in which passive or sentimental witness becomes difficult. This dissonance is most politicized when the representatives of suffering are disobedient to their own state or social powers. (Ruddick 1998: 216)

For instance, the COMADRES of El Salvador channelised their individual grief and loss into raising a collective oppositional voice against the government. They evolved a new strategy of articulating their voices that became their trade-mark – testimonies. These testimonies related their personal experiences as mothers who had lost their loved ones or were relentlessly searching for them (Stephen 2001: 56). Through this method, their personal loss and grief acquired a new political dimension as a voice of protest against the ruthlessness of a repressive state apparatus.

The Mothers' Front of Sri Lanka also utilised public displays of grief as an effective political weapon. The sight of hundreds of mothers giving vent to their loss publicly by weeping and wailing moved the Sri Lankan public and ignited an interest in countering the human rights abuses of the state. As de Alwis comments, 'it was the mothers' sorrowful and seemingly apolitical rhetoric and practices that alerted a nation to the hypocrisy of the state' (de Alwis 1997: 198). This process by which mothers generate social and public pressure through public displays of their maternal feelings has been aptly characterised by Begonia Aretxaga as the 'embodiment of emotion through social action' (Aretxaga 1997: 105).

Redefinition of the 'Public', the 'Private' and the 'Political'

One of the lasting contributions of mothers' movements from a feminist theoretical viewpoint is the multiple ways in which they challenge the artificial distinction between the 'public' and the 'private'. When faced with situations where whatever was dear to them in their private spheres was being challenged by violent and repressive nation-states, including the lives of their loved ones, the mothers sensed the need to get out of the confines of the domestic spaces that were allotted to them and to claim their share in the public sphere that was hitherto denied to them. In this way, they redefined their 'traditional' and 'private' roles as mothers and gave it a unique political resonance. Thus,

> [T]raditionalism became a daring gesture, an indictment of its original meaning of passivity and submission... the task of defending life itself was forced out of the private sphere of the household and into the autonomous space of public and political expression. (Feijoó 1989: 77)

While the original aim of the various mothers' movements was limited to fight for the safety and well-being of their sons and daughters, the very logic of their activism often led many of them to pose more radical and fundamental questions about their status as women within their families and as citizens within the state. As Aretxaga observes in the case of the Catholic mothers of the Relatives Action Committee,

> Women in Northern Ireland were not unaware of gender hierarchy; it was simply taken for granted. Their involvement in popular resistance led women, however, to an increased appreciation of the political character of gender inequality. That is, gender relations came to appear as susceptible to transformation as were other social relations. (Aretxaga 1997: 78)

The struggle of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo over time also became an implicit challenge to the widely prevalent sexism or *machismo* in Argentine society. Men's public participation was unviable and dangerous during the Dirty War because they were the primary targets of the military. Many of the *Madres* resisted pressures from their husbands to withdraw from the agitation and capitalised on their relative position of strength vis-à-vis their husbands to access the public sphere (Hernandez 2002: 403). This transformative logic of political motherhood is well brought out in a statement of the *Madres*:

76

> Breaking away form the private world... is at first done in the name of preserving its order. (Women's) entrance into the public world is initially presented as temporary, its objective is a solution which will permit the return to the natural course of the sexual division of labor. But the entrance of women into these struggles creates a potentially contradictory dynamic. If women, reaffirming their family responsibilities, enter the public world invested in a role which oppresses them as women, objectively this foray into the social and political struggle can place them in contradiction, at the same time, with that oppression. (*Mujeres en Lucha*/Women in Struggle 1987)

The Madres de Plaza de Mayo became one of the most visible and popular forces of resistance against the repressive state machinery of the 'Dirty War' years, so much so that it quickly won international recognition (Howe 2006: 43). In one of the pioneering studies on the Madres movement, Marguerite Guzman-Bouvard points out the crucial importance of the *madres'* resistance to the nation-state:

> Against the military values of hierarchy, obedience and the unchecked use of physical force, the Mothers practiced pacifism, cooperation and mutual love. They developed a political organization and style which contradicted that of a culture whose politics historically had been based upon ideological fragmentation and military intervention. (Bouvard 1994: 1)

The political activism of the *Madres* subverted the conventional 'rules of the game' in Argentine politics and utilising the traditional role of motherhood made it possible for them to reject a conventional political model of participation based on the 'rational calculation of costs and benefits' and to opt for an alternative model based on 'sacrifice' (Feijoó 1989: 77). The Mothers' Front in Sri Lanka also played a decisive role at a crucial juncture in Sri Lankan politics by fundamentally challenging the legitimacy of a state that could not protect the rights of its citizens. As de Alwis observes, the 'maternalized protest' of the Mothers' Front had a 'contingent usefulness' of drawing the attention of the Sri Lankan people to the gross violations that were being justified in the name of national security and stability (de Alwis 1997: 186). By creatively re-interpreting their private roles as mothers to assume the public responsibility of protesting against a repressive regime, the Mothers' Front demonstrated how the personal is political.

When the state started responding to public pressures and popular opinion by permitting democracy to a certain extent, the motherist movements also started widening the scope

of their activism, to include several gender issues. For instance, during the years of the military dictatorship, the *Madres* succeeded in transforming the political scene by their sheer presence; in the period of transition to democracy, they created a 'new political culture' based on direct participation by citizens in the political processes (Feijoó 1989: 87). Femenia and Gil observe that despite knowing that their 'disappeared' sons and daughters will not come back, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo continue with their struggle for social justice and have begun to take stands on issues like obligatory military service, growing unemployment, economic liberalisation, women's working conditions and so on (Femenia and Gil 1987). The COMADRES also continue to engage with issues like protection of human rights, domestic violence, women's health and the economic problems of poor women. They have also begun to argue that the inclusion of women in formal decision making bodies is crucial to the ongoing democratisation process in El Salvador (Stephen 1995, 2001). Far from essentialising the role of women as mothers, the mothers of COMADRES constantly contested and expanded the meaning of motherhood to include a wide range of issues within their purview that included

> [B]earing and rearing children; defending them and oneself against state repression; having the right to free speech and being heard as a full citizen; having control over one's body and its physical integrity within marriage, within families, in prison, and in any state institution and recognizing and controlling one's sexuality. (Stephen 2001: 58)

Innovativeness of Strategies

One of the most striking features of mothers' movements around the world is the uniqueness of their modes of protest. Even while drawing on several historical, mythical and cultural tropes, these movements were able to give a new meaning to political protests. Many of them effectively used the strategy of re-signifying public spaces as arenas of protest in order to make their voices as political agents heard. The best illustration is that of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, who came to be named after the public space that they sought to appropriate for their activism. The movement of the *Madres* was launched in 1977 with a meeting of the mothers of the disappeared at the Plaza de Mayo, the historically symbolic square in front of the Presidential Palace (*Casa Rosada*) in Buenos Aires, the seat of government since the eighteenth century and the site where Argentina first declared its independence from Spanish colonialism. The mothers

chose this specific site for a re-enactment of a struggle for liberation from the repressive and violent military dictatorship that was in power in Argentina during the years of the 'Dirty War'. To this day, the *Madres* continue to march and gather at the Plaza every Thursday afternoon. The COMADRES of El Salvador also derived inspiration from the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and made effective use of public demonstrations in which all the mothers wore black dresses signifying their loss and grief, with white headscarves that represented peace. They also drew the attention of the state to their concerns by occupying buildings like cathedrals and the headquarters of the Salvadoran Red Cross (Stephen 2001: 56). The mothers of the GAM in Guatemala also tried to appropriate public space for themselves by marching every week to the Public Ministry, where they demanded the results of the enquiries that were being conducted into the disappearances of their relatives.[9]

The Madres de Plaza de Mayo adopted a wide range of strategies that had deep cultural and symbolic significance. Apart from the more conventional modes of protest like marching, writing letters and organising signature campaigns to be sent to churches, government officials and the military and putting up stickers with the question, *'¿Dondé están nuestros hijos desaparecidos?'* (Where are our disappeared children?) on buses and trains, they adopted imaginative and evocative strategies like wearing white headscarves to symbolise their children's nappies (*pañuelo*) and thereby, 'peace, life and maternal ties' (Bouvard 1994: 75, Hernandez 2002). The *Madres* also used images of pregnant women to denote a stage of permanent pregnancy as 'a stark reminder of the state's brutal interruption of maternal tasks' (Bouvard 1994: 181-82) and publicly displayed photographs of their children with their name and date of birth. In an attempt to draw international attention to the issue of the disappeared, which was hugely successful, the *Madres* organised a big procession to coincide with the inauguration of the World Cup Soccer Championship in July 1978 that was being hosted by Argentina (Hernandez 2002: 402). Another innovative strategy of the *Madres* was the representation of the

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[9] The GAM was formed by three mothers in 1984, against the repressive regimes of successive military dictatorships that resorted to using government sponsored death squads to quell voices of dissent. By 1985, the GAM had a thousand members, two-thirds of whom were poor, indigenous women who had no previous political experience of any nature (Schirmer 1989: 14).

disappeared in empty life-size silhouettes drawn on or pasted to the walls and the walks and streets of Buenos Aires and bearing a name, age and date of disappearance. As Miller points out, 'like the mothers' persistent presence in the Plaza de Mayo, the silhouettes insisted on the reality of the disappeared and on the need to remember their life' (Miller 1991: 10). The *Madres* also make effective use of modern means of communication by publishing a newspaper and hosting a website and as recently as in November 2006, the *Madres* have also started their own radio station in Argentina.

The Mamas of Kenya drew inspiration from a culturally specific, pre-colonial practice of *Guturamira ng'ania* (to curse a person by stripping) according to which Kikuyu women, individually or collectively, expose their genitalia toward the person or thing cursed, in order to ward off violence. It can be legitimately used only by older women who are known or presumed to be mothers. In an act of defiance that woke up the entire nation to the atrocities of the state, the Mamas who were nonviolently protesting at the Uhuru (Freedom) Park in Nairobi on 28 February 1992 resorted to *Guturamira*, when the police launched a brutal attack on them. Faced with this unconventional response, the police immediately stopped the attack and withdrew. The Mamas show of resistance was not just against the repressive apparatus of the police but also against the authoritarian arap Moi government (Tibbett 1994).

Using a comparable strategy, the Mothers' Front in Sri Lanka employed 'religious ritual as resistance', which 'not only had no precedent in Sri Lanka but could circumvent emergency laws that were applicable to standard forms of political protests such as demonstrations and rallies' (de Alwis 1997: 189, 192). This included the *Dēva Kaññalawwa* (beseeching of local gods and goddesses) and invoking divine wrath against the government, organising processions to the *dēvālés* (temples) during which curses were heaped on the government officials and President Premadasa and the holding of special Catholic masses. One instance of such resistance was the two marches that the Mothers organised to the Devinuwara and Kataragama *dēvālés* in March and April 1992, where they pleaded to the gods to avenge the loss of their children by punishing the President and his government. A similar incident happened at the Kaliamma Kovil

(shrine) in Modera in June 1992, where the mothers broke coconuts and heaped curses on the President. The cultural import of these ritualised protests is evident from the fact that the superstitious President quickly initiated rituals to counter the curses of the aggrieved mothers (de Alwis 1997, de Mel 2001). The Mothers utilised indigenous practices of resistance to shame the government out of its apathy and alert the public to the government's transgressions.

Commitment to Peace and Anti-Militarism

Many mothers' movements have been in the forefront of resisting militarism that impacts the lives of women in ways that have for long been neglected. The mothers use their special status as the protectors and defenders of life to protest against wanton destruction of human life through militaristic violence. The *Madres* of Argentina joined in the protests against the Falklands/Malvinas war of 1982 that was used as a prop by the repressive military regime of the day to legitimise itself. The *Madres* called for the resumption of peace negotiations immediately after the war broke out and drawing inspiration from them, women launched a protest against conscription in Argentina that was the first of its kind in eighty years. The ability of the *Madres* to look beyond national boundaries is evident from the following statement of one of the activists:

> While the men were talking about the Exocets and how many ships had been sunk, we women were thinking 'another young boy has died, another son', and it didn't matter whether he was Argentine or English, he was still a son. (Fontan 1982)

The first public resistances to the civil war in Yugoslavia in 1991 came from mothers' organisations like the Mothers of the Soldiers of Belgrade, Mothers for Peace and so on, which drew their membership from mothers of conscripted men. Through letters to the officials and public statements, the mothers repeatedly called for an end to the war and the return of their sons. One of the most prominent anti-war voices in Russia is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers (CSM), which has been at the forefront of opposing militarism in Russian society. The CSM was formed in 1989 and its activities were expanded with the outbreak of the war in Chechnya. It organises anti-war rallies and protests against human rights violations in the armed conflicts and within the military.

The CSM has achieved significant successes like getting the Russian army to agree not to send fresh recruits to Chechnya and convincing the Chechen militants, who had hitherto refused to pass on captured soldiers or the bodies of dead soldiers to Russian military officials, to hand them over to the soldiers' mothers, with the CSM acting as the intermediary (Liborakina 1996).

One of the most recent and well-known instances of a mother protesting against war is that of Cindy Sheehan, the mother of Casey Sheehan, the 24 year old soldier who was killed in combat in the US war against Iraq. Cindy Sheehan first came to the limelight with her month long vigil in August 2005 at a make-shift camp outside President George Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, where he was vacationing. She refused to leave until President Bush agreed to meet her and explain the rationale behind the war. The site of her protest came to be called 'Camp Casey', after her deceased son, and huge numbers of Americans turned up to express their solidarity with her feeling of loss and her call for an end to the 'illegal and immoral' war (Sheehan 2006: 8). On 24 September 2005, Sheehan led a huge protest march right up to the White House and again demanded to meet President Bush. Sheehan interpreted President Bush's repeated refusals to meet her as 'cowardice' and a violation of her democratic right as an American citizen to be heard. Sheehan is one of the nine founding members of Gold Star Families for Peace, an organisation created in January 2005 that seeks to end the American military presence in Iraq and provide support for families of fallen soldiers.

The Naga Mothers Association (NMA) that is active in the north-eastern Indian state of Nagaland is an apt example of a motherist movement that has stood consistently for peace and anti-militarism, in spite of being caught up between conflicting ethnic and nationalist identities.[10] Paula Banerjee makes the crucial argument that the Naga mothers

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[10] The NMA was formed in February 1984 with the proclaimed objective of 'conscientising citizens toward more responsible living and human development through the voluntary organisation of the Naga Mothers Association' (NMA 1992). Over the years, the NMA has expanded the scope of its activities beyond preserving peace to fighting drug abuse and alcoholism, addressing the socio-economic problems of the Nagas across tribes, setting up schools for children and so on. The Naga Mothers have adopted a holistic vision of peace in the Northeast that necessarily involves development as well (Banerjee 2001: 162). They have also incorporated an explicit gender dimension to their agenda by demanding for changes in Naga women's inheritance and property rights.

are not willing to reject their tribal identities and the need for self-determination, which is evident from the fact that they do not have faith in elections organised by the Indian state, as long as its negligence of the legitimate Naga demands continues (Banerjee 2001: 165). Rather, they reject the acceptance of violence as a means to fight for their rights and the logic of revenge and retribution (Chenoy 2005: 376). This is how they position themselves as an intermediary force between the Indian state on one hand and militant organisations on the other. The NMA formed a Peace Team in October 1994 with the theme 'Shed No More Blood' when there was a sharp rise in the level of violence inflicted by the security forces and the rival militant factions and followed it up by engaging in dialogue with the underground militant factions and organising public rallies for peace. The members of the NMA articulate their protest against killings both by the Indian Army and by the militant groups. Using a typical motherist argument, they draw attention to the fact that 'the assassinated man may be a husband, a father, a son, or a brother. His whole family is shattered by his violent liquidation no matter what reasons his liquidators choose to give for snuffing out his life' (Banerjee 2001: 161). The NMA also protested vehemently against the imposition of the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act on Nagaland and demanded that any act of violence by the Army against women or children should be referred to them (Chenoy 2005: 375). They have also objected to the increasing militarisation of children and the youth that promotes violence and hatred as desirable values (Chenoy 2005: 376).

The Naga Mothers also draw inspiration from certain local traditions and customs in formulating their strategies. Manchanda highlights how the Mothers have harnessed the symbolism associated with the old Naga tradition of women peace makers during conflict (*phukhrelia*) to cover the body of every victim of violence with a shroud and give it a decent funeral irrespective of which faction or side the person belongs to (Manchanda 2001: 11; Chenoy 2005: 376). The moral authority of the mother is invoked in such practices in order to reinterpret the mothers' private role as peacemakers and extend it into the public, political discourse.

The role that the NMA has played, along with other civil society groups, in maintaining and strengthening the ceasefire agreement between the Indian government and the

dominant militant group, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) NSCN (IM), is noteworthy. Together with the other groups like the Nagaland Students Federation, the Naga Tribal Councils and other human rights bodies, the NMA is serving as a crucial link between the national government in New Delhi and the militant groups. Thus, to a certain extent, the participation of the NMA in the peace process has helped redefine the contours of the ceasefire and make it more democratic in nature (Banerjee 2001: 161, 162).

Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis of the concept and practice of political motherhood is not to reify women's roles as mothers or suggest that motherhood is inherently enabling and empowering. Nor is it to argue that women as mothers are always advocates of peace and opponents of conflict, because for every instance of mothers mobilising for peace, there is a mother urging her son to fight for the larger cause of the nation or the community. It is only to focus on one particular way in which women seek to assert their roles as rightful and agentive members of the national community. Feminist IR theorists who normally focus on the victimhood of women in situations of conflict and nationalist struggles need to look at examples of women's initiatives that do not necessarily fit into the existing frameworks of 'feminist' activism or emancipation, but nevertheless succeed in subverting and challenging the state's or the militant nationalist group's version of nationalism. The implicit and explicit ways in which political motherhood challenges the public-private dichotomy can be constructively used by Feminist IR theory to highlight the need to re-define some of the central gendered assumptions with which most mainstream IR scholars work, like the public/private and the inside/outside differentiation.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The main objectives with which this research was envisaged was to bring out the relevance of a gender-sensitive reading of nationalism and nationalist projects, to engage in a critical re-examination of the roles assigned to and taken up by women within nationalist paradigms and then to apply these findings to an interrogation of the public/private and inside/outside divides that lie at the foundations of all mainstream IR theorising. As the first chapter has demonstrated, gendered notions inform nationalist imaginations of the respective 'masculine' and 'feminine' roles of the members of the national community. Given the public/private divide that governs all such role-demarcations, it was seen why and how men are projected as the protectors and defenders of the territorial boundaries of the nation, while women are mostly relegated to the domestic and familial spaces, where they are assigned the responsibility of biologically and culturally nurturing and perpetuating the national community. The link between militarism and hegemonic masculinity was established and it was used to explain the patriarchal demarcation of masculine and feminine roles. Women's bodies are literally and metaphorically linked to the nation and therefore the burden of national representation also often falls on them. In the light of this linkage, the various 'feminine' roles that are ascribed to women by nationalist projects were outlined and substantiated using instances drawn from different national and cultural contexts.

Feminist IR scholars have tried to explore why it is difficult to accommodate issues like nationalism and identity politics within the purview of IR theory. They argue that the problem lies in the uncritical way in which mainstream IR scholars accept the central categories of analysis in IR, like the nation-state and sovereignty. This is also linked to the way in which IR defines itself as a discipline, as one that is concerned with politics that happens *outside* the territorial boundaries of the state and in the *public* sphere of relations between states. The second chapter revisited the feminist IR critique of such artificial and rigid divisions between the inside and the outside and between the public

and the private. The need to give issues of identity and difference the attention that they deserve within IR is underscored, using feminist IR arguments.

In the process of unravelling the gendered nature of national identity, most Western feminist scholars tend to ignore the strong appeal that nationalism can hold for women. The predominant feminist tendency has been to label nationalism as a bad thing for women. In an attempt to counter such a broad assumption, the concepts of 'feminist nationalism' and 'transversal feminist politics' were examined in the second chapter as ways through which the relationship between feminism and nationalism can be conceived as being other than antagonistic. The various examples described in this chapter showed how a creative alliance between feminism and nationalism could create the space for reconfiguring gender equations and reclaiming women's agency. It was also argued that far from being immutable, the relationship between feminism and nationalism is variable according to time and space. The activities of the Women in Black in Israel and the Women's Support Network in Belfast, Northern Ireland were examined as instances of how transversal feminist politics can create conditions for women's empowerment and peaceful coexistence between warring communities.

The need to interrogate the public/private and the inside/outside dichotomies, a primary objective throughout the dissertation, finds its clearest expression in the third chapter that explores the concept and practice of political motherhood. The role of the mother is conventionally regarded as a private, non-political and non-agentive one, with most feminists holding motherhood responsible for women's subordination within a patriarchal social set-up. However, the same role can be subverted and utilised, in the form of political motherhood, as a launching pad for women's political activism and resistance to masculinist nationalist projects. Thus, political motherhood fundamentally challenges the public/private divide by demonstrating how the public and the private can be subversively redefined. Political motherhood assumes maximum significance in the context of nationalism, because all nationalist projects have an ideal construction of the nurturing and caring maternal figure. By making strategic use of the idiom of motherhood in times of conflict and social disruption, women are able to carve out new spaces of

activism for themselves. As the thematic analysis of political motherhood in different contexts undertaken in the chapter demonstrates, the Mothers often utilise traditional imagery and emotions associated with motherhood to draw attention to their demands. Motherist movements in several parts of the world also stand up for peace and coexistence, underlining the need to rebut militaristic violence.

From the perspective of feminist analyses of nationalism, what is significant about both transversal feminist politics and political motherhood is that these disprove the common feminist assumption that women are always victims of nationalist conflict and cogs in the wheels of nationalist projects. Such an assumption denies the possibility of women being able to subvert and transform their assigned roles and assert their agency. It is this very possibility that emerges clearly from the practice of transversal feminist politics and political motherhood.

A creative application of the arguments that have emerged from this study of gender and nationalism can take forward the feminist IR projects of problematising the masculinist concepts that underlie mainstream IR theory and asserting the need to redefine the boundaries of the discipline such that the artificial distinctions between the public and the private and the inside and the outside are discarded. This dissertation also points towards the need for feminist scholars to challenge conventional feminist stereotypes of women as helpless victims of nationalist projects and to engage in deeper analyses of particular instances of women's engagement with nationalism that would reveal, as Frances Hasso suggests, that women are situated in relation to nationalist projects 'simultaneously as actors, symbols and authors – using, being used by and constructing nationalism on their own terms' (Hasso 1998: 442). Instead of dismissing so-called 'private' and 'domestic' roles such as motherhood as instruments of 'false-consciousness', feminists can sharpen their critique of the public/private and the inside/outside binaries by demonstrating the scope that such roles have for subversion and resistance of patriarchal norms.

Hence, the various arguments presented in this dissertation do not falsify the hypothesis that a feminist International Relations analysis of the interplay of gender and nationalism fundamentally challenges the public/private and inside/outside dichotomies of mainstream International Relations theory

However, certain important questions remain unanswered, mainly because these fall outside the scope of this particular study. One such question is: having challenged the public/private and the inside/outside dichotomies, should feminist IR redefine the discipline in such a way that it does not lose its distinctiveness from other branches of social science? If the present configuration of the discipline is unacceptable to feminist scholars, how do they envisage the future of IR? Another question would be: would nationalism continue to remain as powerful a marker of identity as it is today, especially in the light of debates on globalisation, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism? Feminist IR research must grapple with these questions and take forward the agenda of expanding the horizons of IR, even while making it increasingly gender-sensitive.

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89

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91

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