

class # 21: gender and citizenship

today I want to expand the parameters of our analysis to think about how nationalism and the interests of state governments help to construct gender, make sexuality meaningful in particular ways

juxtapose two articles by anthropologist Rhoda Kanaaneh (who grew up in a Palestinian family in Israel)

1) “Boys or Men?” — discusses how masculinity is informed by state citizenship, nationalism; there’s a common analysis of the militarization of masculinity BUT the case of Palestinian Israelis presents interesting complication — here, where there’s popular *opposition* to the state, a critique of state collaborators (Arab soldiers volunteering to serve in the Israeli army) is carried out in a gendered idiom — militarism does not represent a *valued* masculinity

2) in previous work, culminating in *Birth of the Nation* (2002), Kanaaneh presents an analysis, again from case study of Palestinian Israelis, of how state interests concerning population issues have been forwarded through the control of women’s bodies, through regulating their sexuality and reproductive capacity — a case of population policy being played out through reproductive politics (we’ll see another example next week, Greece)

let me talk generally, and then get into specifics of case of Arab citizens of Israel

first, what do I mean by gendered citizenship?

citizenship entails the rights and obligations of a member of a nation in return for protection by a state

what those rights/obligations have been has historically been marked by gender

example of gendered difference in citizenship?

suffrage — women got vote in US in 1920

military service has been expected of men but not women (exception of Jewish citizens of Israel)

gendered citizenship plays out more subtly, too

human reproduction — family size, how desired family size is achieved (birth control), etc. — is of great political interest

It’s through being born into families that citizens are most often made

case study: Israel, state of majority immigrant Jewish population (any Jew can apply for automatic citizenship), plus indigenous Arab minority population — state borders do not map neatly onto national ones: meant to be state for entire Jewish diasporic nation.

Maintaining a fairly consistent RATIO, 20 Arab/80 Jewish is important to the very notion of “Israel” as a Jewish state — otherwise, would have to be recognized as a “binational” state

**women have served states in two senses as symbolic “bearers” of the Nation:
quantitative bearers of the nation’s children, and qualitative bearers of tradition**

1) quantitative: birthing citizens, carry the perpetuity of the nation in their wombs

here, women’s civic duty is about producing numbers through reproducing, birthing, new citizens — new workers, new soldiers for security (if mandatory military service, size of army direct reflection of size of population)

pronatalism v. antenatalism (China’s one child policy)

Israel (Greece, Romania): pronatalist
these states have presented women with awards for the patriotic duty of producing very large families — Mothers of the Nation— in Israel, awards to “Heroine Mothers” (10 kids) was stopped after it became clear that Arab women were winning most of the awards

Clearly, national projects are invested not just in sheer numbers of a population, but in generating the right SORTS of numbers, people, citizens

2) qualitative — reproducing the cultural traditions and values that bind together the nation, keep them unique, which women do by *socializing* children — nurturing specific cultural values — and by setting the good example

August Comte (writing in the early years of the French Republic) — said women should serve as the repository of moral values, which will be preserved in them if they stay out of politics and business. The image of Woman on a pedestal.

when public/private spheres separated, also gendered — had to do with rise of nation-state, as well as wage labor and capitalism

Kanaaneh’s work: Palestinian citizens of Israel have adopted this dual outlook: 2 reproductive strategies, both of which ideologically related to women’s reproduction of Palestinian nationalism

- 1) birth more babies to overwhelm the Jewish Israelis, just as they fear (quantitative)
- 2) have fewer children, educate them well, and present a stronger front in that way (qualitative)

Kanaaneh calls this “the reproductive measure” — family size used as indicator of how “modern”/“traditional” you are — not just economic class, but social outlook in global context

Now let’s think about additional LEGACIES and CONSEQUENCES of these ideas
In particular, real-life repercussions of women’s “role” as bearers of the nation’s children and traditions.

Kanaaneh: “women are considered markers of national boundaries, not only symbolically, but physically as well”

If women are charged with guaranteeing the perpetuation of the homeland, its people and culture, there’s the problem that female bodies are permeable — in the same way the national territory in war is vulnerable

physically:

female bodies are permeable just as the national territory in war is vulnerable

this equation makes women particularly vulnerable to **sexual violence** during and following war

symbolically:

women, like the land/nation, mark borders of “a people” and also seen as the property of men that, like land, must be defended

military recruitment posters — nation as female

problem of gay men in the military? lacking wife/kids?

clearly, reproduction is politics

Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (*The Politics of Gender After Socialism*) argue that “public debates about reproduction make politics”

e.g., Kanaaneh’s “reproductive measure” — how “traditional” or “modern”?
abortion debate in the U.S. — for some, a political “litmus test”

what about MASCULINITY and state citizenship?

if *women’s* ultimate service to nation, civic duty, is to give birth to male citizens and sacrifice them as soldiers, *men’s* ultimate civic duty has been depicted as willingness to die for their country

military service = masculine citizenship

what’s the twist in Kanaaneh’s study of Palestinian soldiers in Israeli army?

masculinity is crucial to self-identity and labeling by others, but not the standard soldier masculinity — as member of minority population, joining the state army is seen as traitorous — figured as “immature” masculinity (“boys” seduced by guns)

role of state in framing rhetoric?

parallels in US history?

assimilation v. selling out — civil rights in US

RACE: African American military service during WWII (segregated regiments) sparked 1950s civil rights movement (and anti-assimilationist movement of Malcolm X)— grounds for contesting second-class citizenship

SO: gender is forged not only within economic relations, but within conditions set by states; government policies and nationalist rhetoric