

# The Gendered Reproduction of the State in International Relations

Johanna Kantola

*This article focuses on feminist debates about the state in International Relations (IR). I develop an argument about the gendered reproduction of the state that is based on a Foucauldian notion of power and a Butlerian deconstruction of gender. This approach challenges the unity of the state, power and gender, and the state becomes the gendered effect of discursive and structural processes. I critically discuss recent arguments for the need to move 'beyond the state' and to abandon the category of the state altogether, arguing that rather than abandoning the state, their contribution is to draw attention to the need to focus on the intersections of local, national and global levels when analysing states. The article focuses then on the ways in which feminist debates challenge the IR notion of 'sovereign states'. Feminist scholars problematise three issues in particular: sovereignty, the inside/outside dichotomy and the fiction of the state as a person. I suggest that these debates fundamentally refute the unity of the state upon which some of IR theory continues to rely. Finally, I discuss the state as an effect of discursive and structural processes, which shifts the focus to the gendered reproduction of the state.*

---

**Keywords:** feminist International Relations (IR); state; sovereignty; performative

## Introduction

'The state' figures in most of the articles of this special issue on gender and International Relations (IR) in Britain. It is present in discussions on security, economy and popular culture. It lurks behind the anti-globalisation movements and the representations of Muslim masculinity in India. The articles contain examples of gendered reproductions of the state and its boundaries through discourses on violence, development and neo-liberalism. The state, thus, is 'everywhere' and, yet, definitions, theories and discussions of it are increasingly rare. One could argue that the state remains under-theorised in feminist IR. Since V. Spike Peterson's (1992) explicit focus on the state, not much has been written about the concept. This mirrors feminist debates in politics, where debates stop with Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson's (1992) influential account of the post-structural state (Kantola 2006, 15). My article speaks to this void by providing a reading of the feminist IR literature on the state and by addressing questions around definitions and theories of the state in feminist IR.

Paralleling Laura Shepherd's (2007) discussion in this issue on feminist literatures on 'violence against women', 'gender violence' and 'the violent reproduction of gender', we can discern similar feminist bodies of literature on the state. It is useful



to unpack the notion of gender, power and the state underpinning these approaches. First, the literature on *women and the state* focuses on women's exclusion from political, economic and military state power (see Caprioli 2000; Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Chenoy and Vanaik 2001; Regan and Paskeviciute 2003). Its aim is to expose and explain women's inferior positions in the decision-making processes when compared to men. Similarly to the 'violence against women' literature, the notion of 'women' here assumes stable and coherent subjects. The state policies can be beneficial or detrimental to these women and the overall goal is to add women into the existing (state) institutions. The notion of power is based on a top-down relationship between those who have power and those who do not. Power is thus something to possess, and it is given qualities such as 'political', 'economic' or 'military'. The state is also fairly unitary and well defined. It consists of an easily identifiable set of institutions where those powers are located. An example of this type of analysis is the argument that women threaten the key values of states, including autonomy, rationality and even aggressiveness, because they represent dependency, irrationality, emotions and peacefulness (Steans 1998, 48). The analysis of the exclusion of women from the state and women's opposition to the state are based on clear boundaries defining both women and the state.

Most feminist IR scholars write about gender as opposed to women (see Zalewski 1998). The *gender and the state* literature moves from analysing sexist states to patriarchal and later to gendered states. Gender is not a variable in such analyses but rather an analytical category that conceives of gender as a social construct. The focus shifts from women's exclusion from state institutions to understanding the gendered structures of these institutions and to transforming them. Definitions of power are not unidirectional but multifaceted. The notion of *gendered states* points to the subtle reproduction of a certain gender system and gender power orders (Peterson 1992; Pettman 1996b; True 2001). Not only do states construct gender, but gender constitutes the state. The state is a process rather than an easily defined set of institutions as above. This calls for a focus on the complex relations between gender and the state and on the processes that continue to reproduce gender hierarchies in states. Marianne Marchand and Ann Sisson Runyan give an example of the neo-liberal discourse on globalisation, in which the state is typically 'feminised' in relation to the more robust market by being represented as a drag on the global economy that must be subordinated and minimised (Marchand and Runyan 2000, 14). However, the state also paradoxically takes on a new role by becoming more akin to the private sector and is thus remasculinised as it is internationalised to assist global capital and as its coercive and surveillance capacities are being enhanced (Marchand and Runyan 2000, 14). Gender is thus fundamental to the construction of the state.

Both literatures are important and have influenced feminist debates about the state in IR. They have generated knowledge about the ways in which gender and the state intersect, interact and constitute one another. Nevertheless, I argue that there is a further step to take. In this third approach gender is not taken as the first premise but as something to be deconstructed. There is no *a priori* assumption of gender difference but rather a focus on both the gendered and the gendering character of the state. I develop this below with the notion of *the gendered reproduction of the state* (with a debt to Shepherd, this issue). This argument is based on a

Foucauldian notion of power and a Butlerian deconstruction of gender, challenging the unity of the state, power and gender. The state becomes the gendered effect of discursive and structural processes.

The argument is developed below. First, however, I discuss arguments for the need to move 'beyond the state' and to abandon the category. The calls to move away from the state stem from feminist and IR literatures and from changing world politics. I argue, in contrast, that their contribution draws attention to the need not to abandon the state but instead to focus on the intersections of local, national and global levels when analysing states. Second, I focus on the ways in which feminist debates challenge the IR notion of 'sovereign states'. Feminist scholars problematise three issues in particular: sovereignty, the inside/outside dichotomy and the fiction of the state as a person. I suggest that these debates fundamentally refute the unity of the state on which some of IR theory continues to rely. Third, I argue for a notion of the state as an effect of discursive and structural processes, which shifts analytical focus to the gendered reproduction of the state.

## Beyond the State

The centrality of the state in the gender-blind realist and neo-realist approaches to IR has led feminists to take issue with both the concept and its role in theory building and empirical studies. For realists and neo-realists, the sovereign state is a single unproblematic actor striving to ensure its own existence in the anarchical world. *International* relations famously become *inter-state* relations—relations between different state units. Accounts of power, identities and struggle revolve around the category of a unified state. Over the past decades critical theorists, post-modern theorists and feminists have been asking: what don't we see when we just look at the state? And, is the concept that well theorised after all?

There is a strong sense in feminist IR that IR theory needs to focus beyond the state, studying actors, identities and sites other than the state. There are several potential explanations for this, three of which are discussed here: those relating to (i) feminist theory; (ii) IR theory; and (iii) changing world politics. In feminist theory, big social science concepts, such as the state and the market, have been somewhat unfashionable since the 1990s. In relation to the state, the argument has been best formulated by Judith Allen, who argues that 'the "state" is a category of abstraction that is too aggregate, too unitary and too unspecific to be of much use in addressing the disaggregated, diverse and specific sites that must be of most pressing concern to feminists' (Allen 1990, 22). Allen's argument reflects the post-modern or cultural turn in feminism where issues of bodies, representations, images and culture become more important than the 'state', 'economy' or 'labour market'.

The worry that a focus on states masks women's agency and concerns has also been articulated in feminist IR. It amounts to an understanding that scholars need to study, first, other *actors* than the state, such as social movements, individuals and corporations, and, second, other *sites* than the state, such as the household, economy, cities and civil society. In answering 'where are the women?', Cynthia Enloe (1989) famously looked to tourism, trade and processes of militarisation, each of which takes place across and beyond state boundaries. She looked at

diplomatic wives and military base women, at women workers in factories, in direct contrast to IR's interest in states and structural processes rather than individuals (Enloe 2004). Finally, feminist IR scholars argue that there is a need to look at other *identities* than the state, which entails a move beyond the problematic idea that the state is the primary locus of identity. Jill Steans argues indeed for the need to 'move beyond the territorial and conceptual boundaries of state and nation' by focusing on 'issues of gender and identity in global perspective' (Steans 1998, 7).

Some of this reflects a broader trend in IR theory. Dependence and interdependence theories called for an incorporation of important non-state actors like multinational corporations and international organisations into the analysis of international phenomena (Wallerstein 1974; Keohane and Nye 1977; Falk et al. 1980; Keohane 1986). This pointed to states' coexistence with transnational actors in situations of complex interdependence and to hierarchical dependency relations. It also highlighted the need to understand the power exercised by actors other than the state, thus challenging realists' notions of power as concentrated in states. Furthermore, both approaches have been interested in understanding transnational phenomena as agents that exist independent of the state and economic globalisation has been called 'intensified interdependence' (Jackson and Sørensen 2007, 211). The arguments have been strengthened by critical theories keen to expose the costs of the realist and neo-realist emphasis on the state (e.g. Walker 1994 and 1995; Biersteker and Weber 1996, 11).

The insights from feminist and IR theory coincide with debates about the ways in which globalisation is or is not changing world politics. Globalisation has been theorised as a reality, a myth and a discourse (Hay and Marsh 2000) and some authors prefer 'global restructuring' to globalisation to give a more precise account of the current changes (Marchand and Runyan 2000). These debates result in heightened calls to direct attention beyond the state and range from crude (Mishra 1999) to more nuanced analyses (Strange 1996) about states' reduced powers and capabilities. More specifically, globalisation is argued to challenge the two key concepts that lie at the heart of the idea of the nation state: territoriality and sovereignty. Border-transgressing circulations of people, images, money and goods challenge the territorial boundaries of nation states. State sovereignty is further contested by the rise of quasi-state-like institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the European Union (EU) (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 6). Political power and regulatory mechanisms are being reorganised at a transnational level. In other words, sovereignty can no longer be seen as the right of the modern state but is, instead, partially disentangled from the state and mapped on to supranational and non-governmental organisations (Sassen 1996 and 1998). As a result, one can ask whether it still even makes sense to study the state.

Feminist IR scholars have mapped the gendered effects of globalisation both empirically (Pettman 1996a and 1999; Jacobs 2000; Kelly et al. 2001) and theoretically (Rai 2004; Waylen 2004). Feminist literature is concerned with exploring the practical impact of globalisation on women's lives and the roles of women in the processes of globalisation. Women in their domestic or reproductive roles have had to compensate for state retreat and state failure to provide social infrastructure and support. Arguments are also made about the impact of globalisation and the

emerging multi-level governance on women's relationship to the state. Some scholars argue that women's movements need to shift away from their focus and reliance on the state (Briskin 1999, 29; Banaszak et al. 2003). Theoretical and empirical attention focuses on transnational networks that transcend boundaries of the nation state and lobby for international human rights (e.g. Keck and Sikkink 1998).

The argument that globalisation signifies the demise of the state has been challenged by a number of authors who argue that states retain important powers and that globalisation is a political process that is not inevitable and that agents can effect (e.g. Weiss 2003; Hay 2005). On this view, globalisation and global governance do not mean the demise of the state and feminists should continue to focus their energies on it (e.g. Youngs 2000; Rai 2004). One conclusion from these debates is the need to be wary about the limits of any analysis that focuses solely on the state. The debate about the changing nature of world politics makes it increasingly clear that the once-rigid demarcation of the domestic and the international has become blurred (Hay 2002, 11). Instead of moving beyond the state, there is a need to focus on the ways in which the different levels—local, national, regional and global—constitute and impact on one another. Moreover, these relations are both gendered and gendering (Freeman 2001). For instance, Dibyesh Anand's (2007) article in this issue illustrates how local actions reproduce the state with potential repercussions for international politics. The notion of the state developed below—with its deconstruction of sovereignty, the inside/outside dichotomy and the state as a unified actor—enables us to account for these developments.

## **Sovereign States**

The unity of the state is reproduced through three key ideas that still dominate IR debates about the state: (i) sovereignty; (ii) the distinction between domestic and international politics; and (iii) the fiction of the state as a person. This section explores feminist insights into these three theoretical debates in IR. It synthesises the critiques of the two literatures mentioned above—women and the state and gender and the state—and builds towards the third approach—the gendered reproduction of the state. I argue, first, that the contributions help to refute state unity in ways that continue not to be accounted for in mainstream IR theory. I suggest, second, that the three notions are not just problematic but also that appeal to them is part of the gendered reproduction of the state, as the feminist critique convincingly illustrates.

Much of IR theory is based on the idea of state sovereignty. States' claims to sovereignty construct a social environment in which they can interact as in an international society of states, while at the same time the mutual recognition of claims to sovereignty is an important element in the construction of states themselves (Biersteker and Weber 1996, 1–2). Sovereignty thus refers to those social rules and practices that the state must follow to enact the characteristics of a state. Internally the state must have authority in relation to its population; externally a sovereign state has the right to represent this population in world politics. IR continues to be interested in the latter, while feminism makes key contributions to

the former as well. Neo-realists' conflation of state and sovereignty enables them to abstract from or simply ignore problems in the domestic domain and to leave the assessment of problems of internal sovereignty to others (*ibid.*, 5). Sovereignty gives the state the right to speak for its entire people although not all of these people would recognise its legitimacy. In other words, sovereignty is about the state's political authority in relation to both internal and external competition. The state's right to govern is based on an expectation of loyalty and lawfulness and it is supported by the state's monopoly on legitimate violence. The four key aspects of sovereignty thus are territory, population, recognition and authority (*ibid.*, 2). The notion of 'quasi-states' describes the status of states whose sovereignty is more juridical than empirical (Jackson 1990).

Feminist theories have analysed the ways in which gender is central in the construction of sovereignty. I argue in this article that appealing to sovereignty is often part of the gendered reproduction of the state. States support a certain gender order to uphold their own authority, a key aspect of sovereignty. Sovereign states require 'others' to establish their very existence: men and states stand against anarchy 'outside', and are distinguished from women and feminised others 'inside' (True 2001, 252). Cynthia Weber stresses that sovereignty is to be understood as a discursive or cultural way by which the state is reproduced as the natural actor in world politics (Weber 1998, 90–91). The significance of this is at least twofold. First, issues, phenomena and processes that threaten the sovereignty of states become problematic. Thus, the gendered processes of the state are not legitimately discussed. Sovereignty signifies emphasising the state's unity and consolidating and effectively reproducing centralised authority (Peterson 1992, 4–5).

Second, the four dimensions of sovereignty—population, territory, authority and recognition—result in the conclusion that the state need not be theorised because it unproblematically consists of these four categories. The state becomes depoliticised and it is not seen as an arena for power struggles (Youngs 2000, 46). Yet all four aspects have been deconstructed from feminist (and other) perspectives. Boundaries are drawn around and through populations in a process that entails exclusionary and highly gendered practices. Women are often given specific roles as reproducers of the nation and they symbolise the purity of the nation, which results in tight controls over their sexuality and reproductive rights (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989, 7–9). The production of a national identity is an ongoing activity. Immigration debates are constitutive both of an internal/external boundary that might contain a political community and of a particular understanding of citizens located within this boundary who might be referred to as the foundation of the state's sovereignty (Doty 1996a, 171). Feminist scholars also highlight the gendered patterns of territory and migration: the different reasons, skills and employment between women and men and different sorts of women's migration (Kofman 2000, 130), the ways in which a refugee status is based on male norms and women fleeing from female circumcision, for instance, are not granted refugee status (Bhabha 1999, 187).

IR theory is still characterised by a dichotomy between states understood primarily in terms of internal dynamics and states understood in terms of external relations. The inside of states is relegated to other disciplines, such as sociology and political

science, and the outside of states, misnamed international, but usually meaning inter-state relations, becomes the preserve of 'IR'. This distinction between the 'domestic' and the 'international' is used to construct a particular understanding of the world (Doty 1996b, 122–123; Pettman 1996b, 4). International politics becomes qualitatively different from other kinds of politics and the divide between domestic politics and international relations remains the principal justification for the existence of a separate discipline of IR (Hooper 2001, 90).

Feminist theory has shown such divisions to be problematic and to distort reality. My article argues that they also contribute to the gendered reproduction of the state. They are shot through with power and certain issues are kept out of the agenda. For Roxanne Doty, statecraft is not primarily about relations between different state units, but about the construction and reconstruction of the units themselves (Doty 1996b, 141). Thus, a construction of the inside versus the outside of nations is a function of a state's discursive authority and power, that is, its ability to fix meaning and identity in relatively stable ways (*ibid.*). Within the domestic politics and international relations divide, there is another powerful dichotomy, that between international relations and the private or personal sphere. As a result of this second dichotomy underpinning the first, IR symbolically becomes a wholly masculine sphere of war and diplomacy, at the furthest extreme from the domestic sphere of families, women and reproduction (Hooper 2001, 92). A key feminist contribution has been to deconstruct these distinctions and show them to be untenable (Youngs 2000); the radical feminist slogan the 'personal is political' has been rephrased in feminist IR as the 'private is global' (Enloe 1989; Steans 1999).

These problematic divisions are not characteristic of the discipline of IR exclusively, but have antecedents in the history of political theory. Liberal political theory separated the state from civil society and politics was associated with the state and its powers. Freedom is the absence of constraint imposed by the state and civil society is private in the sense that it is not governed by the public power of the state (Squires 1999, 25). In addition to civil society there was a third private sphere: personal life. Civil society becomes public and political in relation to this sphere. Feminist critique has in particular discussed the ways in which the public and the political are naturally associated with men and the private sphere with women. Furthermore, none of these definitions of public and private includes the family or home. Notably, the public/private distinction does not reproduce only gender but also racial, sexual and class hierarchies. For example, in the United States, the public sphere increasingly becomes associated with lack of privacy and overcrowding. It is devalued as it is perceived to be populated by the underclass and made dangerous by black men. New definitions of public and private spaces emerge through highly classed and racialised processes, resulting in an increased subjection of racialised minorities to public scrutiny (Uguris 2000, 59–60).

The power of these distinctions can be seen in recent explorations of the boundaries of the state in political theory. These continue to be discussed in terms of state–society and state–economy relations (e.g. Mitchell 2006), although feminism has long ago indicated the pertinence of state–family, state–personal, state–private relations in answering questions about the boundaries of the state. Feminist analysis illustrates that the state–society distinction is also blurred and context specific.

A good example comes from 'state feminism'—feminist activism within the state. Most commonly, state feminism is used to denote the efforts by women's policy machineries within the state to pursue social and economic policies beneficial to women. What state feminists 'actually do', that is, their different practices and activities (see Kantola and Outshoorn (forthcoming)), is very similar to the activities of the feminist anti-globalisation movement actors analysed by Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca (2007, this issue) and includes 'advocacy, education, networking, facilitation, service provision and mutual support'. What distinguishes state feminists and anti-globalisation activists is only one point: direct action. This suggests that the state and society share some important features as acting grounds for feminist activists, be they social movement actors or bureaucrats.

In addition to sovereignty and the distinction between domestic and international politics, feminists have questioned the fiction of the 'state as person', which has the most important identity in international relations (Pettman 1996b, 4). When states are discussed as actors or persons, they are often given human characteristics: rationality, identity, interests and beliefs. Alexander Wendt (2004, 291) argues that 'states as persons' are real because they are intentional purposeful actors. In IR, states are indeed more than their territories and institutions. The state has an identity, the defence of which is in the national interest.

Feminists argue that the state as person is a masculine actor. The masculine identity of states is built upon the values of rationality and aggressiveness (Steans 1998, 48). The values attached to masculinity and femininity can be seen in the words used to describe states: 'rogue states' are uncontrollable masculine problem cases, 'night-watchman states' are minimalist masculine states. Feminine epithets are used to delegitimise states: 'nanny states' are feminine welfare states that result in problematic dependency relations and inhibit competition and market values (Sawer 1996, 124). For example, the fighting, active and hyper-masculine identity of the state of Israel is argued to be constructed on the distinction from the passive feminised Jewish diaspora (Lentin 2000, 94).

Feminists have also emphasised the problems related to the tendency to see the state as the key identity category in international relations. This results in the exclusion of such identity categories as gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality and renders them invisible. States homogenise political identities in ways that disguise differences within the state—including gender differences—and create differences between states (Pettman 1996b, 4). An expectation that the state is the embodiment of a collective identity reduces all other dimensions impacting on identities, such as violence and conflicts, to relations between states. This is based on the idea that citizens identify first and foremost with the state and that the relations between citizens are defined through the state (Steans 1998, 62–63).

Although much of IR theory no longer operates with simplistic notions of the state, understandings of sovereignty, the division between domestic and international politics and the fiction of the state as a person still hold strong in the theory and practice of I/international R/relations. Feminism deconstructs these three assumptions and questions them by exposing the gender hierarchies underpinning them. Continuing to appeal to these assumptions is part of the gendered reproduction of the state.



## The State: A Discursive and Structural Effect

The focus on the gendered reproduction of the state is based on a Foucauldian notion of power and a Butlerian definition of gender. According to Michel Foucault (1980), power is exercised rather than possessed. It operates by structuring the field of available choices, decisions and practices. This departs from the notion of power underpinning the women and the state literature. Instead of being repressive, power on this view is productive in that power relations constitute subjects. Control and dominance work more successfully by creating certain possibilities rather than simply by denying others (Sawicki 1991). The question of how power operates becomes more important than the question 'who has power?'. Furthermore, power is widely dispersed. People's experiences of domination and subordination are effects of power rather than proceeding from a specific source of power, such as 'the state'. In contrast to the top-down view of power evident in the women and politics literature, here power is depicted in a bottom-up fashion. By utilising an ascending analysis Foucault shows how mechanisms of power at the micro level of society have become part of dominant networks of power relations. The effects of power may entail inequality and oppression but they do not entail solely inequality and oppression. Thus, discourses of power's ubiquity lose their inherent pessimism and outcomes remain open for change. Whether power operates in a progressive or reactionary way depends on its form, the terrain on which it operates and on the nature of those exercising and subject to power within a given social and historical moment (Sawicki 1991; Cooper 1994, 452).

Judith Butler used Foucault's theories to deconstruct the category of gender. According to Butler (1990), gender is performative. The 'unity' of gender is the effect of regulatory practices that seek to render gender identity uniform through compulsory heterosexuality. The insight that gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true gender identity are constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character. In terms of the identity of women, this means that there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender. That identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results. Furthermore, the performative possibilities for alternative gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality are hidden (Butler 1990, 180). Feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of 'women' is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought (*ibid.*, 2).

When the concept of the state is looked at in light of these notions, one can argue that particular discourses construct state boundaries, identities and agency and the state is a *discursive effect* of these processes. The state is not a unified entity but rather a differentiated set of institutions, agencies and discourses and has to be studied as such (Pringle and Watson 1992, 54; Cooper 1995, 61). The focus on this view shifts from gendered states to the gendered reproduction of the state and to the gendering through the state. The relations between gender and the state cannot be studied in general terms (as in the gender and the state literature); instead, attention must be on the construction of gender within specific state discourses and practices. This

allows for the complex, multidimensional and differentiated relations between the state and gender to come to the fore.

Some feminist scholars see the overemphasis on discursive processes as dangerous because it shifts attention away from the material and institutional conditions that powerfully shape state gender relations (Fraser 1995, 163–165). I suggest that the state is to be theorised not only as a discursive but also as a *structural process*. Mundane governmental practices related to national frontiers such as border patrols, passport checks and immigration laws help make abstract entities such as the state a very real presence in people's lives (Mitchell 2006, 180). The state is thus an effect of everyday practices, representational discourses and multiple modalities of power (Brown 1995; Gupta 2006; Mitchell 2006). It becomes the discursive and structural effect of these processes.

Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (2006, 13) call for a focus on everyday practices of the state, its 'official procedures' and 'authorless strategies' through which power is exercised and inequalities institutionalised. A focus on everyday practices makes it possible to study the ways in which state institutions are recognised and reproduced through the daily workings of its bureaucracies. These iterative practices are performative in that rather than being an outward reflection of a coherent and bounded state core they actually constitute that core itself. It is through these re-enactments that the coherence and continuity of state institutions is constituted and sometimes destabilised. The authors argue further that it is through such 'mundane activities' that the privileged position of the state is reproduced and its superiority over other social institutions established. It is also through the daily routines of proceduralism that social inequalities based on class, race and gender are reproduced and sustained (*ibid.*). For IR scholars this signifies focusing on the state's performative character both internally and externally.

If the state is a structural and discursive effect of these processes, what analytical strategies are we to adopt when studying it? Hanne Marlene Dahl and I have suggested elsewhere that feminist scholars could use the notions hegemony, contradictory effects and boundaries to make sense of states (Kantola and Dahl 2005, 61–64). This analytical strategy sheds light on the state as a discursive and structural effect of hegemonic projects and the boundary creation mechanisms whose effects on genders are contradictory, as explained below.

An overall state *hegemonic* project shapes the different sites of struggle in important, historically and contextually specific ways. One example is the political hegemony of ideas stemming from new public management (NPM), defined as a rising body of managerial thought (*ibid.*, 61–62). In world politics, the attempts to appear democratic by different leaders and officials, reorganisation of civil society institutions, streamlining state agencies and rhetoric of efficiency point to 'the hegemonic global circulation of neoliberal discourses of good governance, the strengthening of civil society, privatization, and the roll back of welfare programs' (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 21). In other words, the state is reproduced through these hegemonic projects, which operate both discursively and structurally, and are gendered.

A discursive approach to the state calls for an understanding of its heterogeneity: states mean different things to different people. As Dahl and I have argued

elsewhere (Kantola and Dahl 2005, 62), the notion of heterogeneity needs to be extended with the notion of *contradictory effects*. States can have both empowering effects, such as an increased visibility and recognition of women's work, as well as disempowering effects, such as an increased disciplining of the subjects. For example, women's (often unpaid or poorly paid) work at home can be recognised but also further regulated by the state. The notion of contradictory effects accounts theoretically for the issues discussed above in relation to feminist IR's notion of the gendered state.

Finally, the issue of *boundaries* of the state is crucial. Previously, this notion has been neglected in feminist analyses or mainly studied in terms of the public/private distinction. The public/private distinction can be used to consider the effects of contracting out often advocated by NPM, but the boundaries can be redrawn in more subtle ways as well (*ibid.*, 63). The discussion of contradictory effects, in turn, shows that boundary drawing can be both empowering and disempowering. On the one hand, women entering the public sphere can be empowered as it resulted in increased visibility and in all the benefits that professionalisation brings. On the other hand, extending the politics of the public sphere into the home facilitates state-led constructions of domestic subject positions. In sum, we suggest that there is a need for a renewed focus on boundaries and boundary-drawing mechanisms within states and a need to focus on the plurality of boundaries in the politico-administrative discourses at various levels.

A further issue to note is that the boundaries of the state, and redrawing them, can be silenced. The promotion of the NPM concepts of marketisation, 'doing more with less' and ideas of a 'management of change' also impact on the boundaries of the state (Ferlie et al. 1996; Clarke and Newman 1997). These concepts redefine the field of legitimate state action by bringing market-based ideas of economic and political liberalism to the field of social policy. Services within social policy become managed by the methods of NPM, left to production in the marketplace or in a market-like situation. As a result, there is an increased need for feminists to focus on the various ways that boundaries of the state are redrawn, since they are likely to have significant impacts on the state's policies that influence gender relations (Kantola and Dahl 2005, 63).

## Conclusion

This article has developed an analysis of the gendered reproduction of the state. The approach builds on a Foucauldian notion of power and a Butlerian deconstruction of gender. Power is understood as productive, gender as performative and the state as a discursive and structural effect of gendered processes. Discursive power is needed to keep the state identity and unity fixed. However, the article has stressed that the state is not just an effect of discursive power, but is reproduced in structural processes as well. Gendered patterns are central to the reproduction of the state. Other articles in this issue show empirically how violence is central to the reproduction of the state and how violence and gender are tied together.

## About the Author

**Johanna Kantola**, Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki, PO Box 54, 00014 Helsinki, Finland, email: [johanna.kantola@helsinki.fi](mailto:johanna.kantola@helsinki.fi)

## Bibliography

- Allen, J. (1990) 'Does feminism need a theory of "the state"?', in S. Watson (ed.), *Playing the State* (London: Verso), 21–37.
- Anand, D. (2007) 'Anxious sexualities: Masculinity, nationalism and violence', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 9:2, 257–269.
- Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N. (eds) (1989) *Woman-Nation-State* (London: Macmillan Press).
- Banaszak, L. A., Beckwith, K. and Rucht, D. (2003) 'When power relocates: Interactive changes in women's movements and states', in L. A. Banaszak, K. Beckwith and D. Rucht (eds), *Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1–29.
- Bhabha, J. (1999) 'Embodied rights: Gender persecution, state sovereignty and refugees', in N. Yuval-Davis and P. Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference* (London and New York: Zed Books), 178–191.
- Biersteker, T. and Weber, C. (1996) 'The social construction of state sovereignty', in T. Biersteker and C. Weber (eds), *State Sovereignty as a Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1–21.
- Briskin, L. (1999) 'Mapping women's organizing in Sweden and Canada: Some thematic considerations', in L. Briskin and M. Eliasson (eds), *Women's Organizing and Public Policy in Canada and Sweden* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press), 3–47.
- Brown, W. (1995) *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge).
- Caprioli, M. (2000) 'Gendered conflict', *Journal of Peace Research*, 37:4, 51–68.
- Caprioli, M. and Boyer, M. (2001) 'Gender violence and international crisis', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45:4, 503–518.
- Chenoy, A. and Vanaik, A. (2001) 'Promoting peace, security and conflict resolution: Gender balance in decisionmaking', in T. I. Skjelsbaek and D. Smith (eds), *Gender, Peace and Conflict* (London: Sage), 122–138.
- Clarke, J. and Newman, J. (1997) *The Managerial State* (London: Sage).
- Cooper, D. (1994) *Sexing the City* (London: Rivers Oram Press).
- Cooper, D. (1995) *Power in Struggle: Feminism, Sexuality and the State* (Buckingham: Open University Press).
- Doty, R. L. (1996a) 'The double-writing of statecraft: Exploring state responses to illegal immigration', *Alternatives*, 21, 171–189.
- Doty, R. L. (1996b) 'Sovereignty and the nation: Constructing the boundaries of national identity', in T. Biersteker and C. Weber (eds), *State Sovereignty as a Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 121–147.
- Enloe, C. (1989) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).
- Enloe, C. (2004) *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in the New Age of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).
- Eschle, C. and Maignushca, B. (2007) 'Rethinking Globalised Resistance: Feminist Activism and Critical Theorising in International Relations', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 9:2, 284–301.
- Falk, R. A., Kim, S. and Mendolovitz, S. H. (eds) (1980) *Towards a Just World Order* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press).
- Ferlie, E., Ashburner, L., Fitzgerald, L. and Pettigrew, A. (1996) *The New Public Management in Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977 by Michel Foucault* (London: Prentice Hall).
- Fraser, N. (1995) 'False antitheses: A response to Seyla Benhabib and Judith Butler', in S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell and N. Fraser (eds), *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange* (London: Routledge), 59–74.
- Freeman, C. (2001) 'Is local/global as feminine/masculine? Rethinking the gender of globalization', *Signs*, 26:4, 1007–1039.
- Gupta, A. (2006) 'Blurred boundaries: The discourse of corruption, the cultures of politics, and the imagined state', in A. Sharma and A. Gupta (eds), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 211–240.

- Hay, C. (2002) *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
- Hay, C. (2005) 'The impact of globalization on states', in J. Ravenhill (ed.), *Global Political Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Hay, C. and Marsh, D. (2000) 'Introduction: Demystifying globalisation', in C. Hay and D. Marsh (eds), *Demystifying Globalisation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), 1–17.
- Hooper, C. (2001) *Manly States: Masculinities, International Relations and Gender Politics* (New York: University of Columbia Press).
- Jackson, R. (1990) *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Jackson, R. and Sørensen, G. (2007) *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (3rd edn) (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Jacobs, S. (2000) 'Globalisation, states and women's agency: Possibilities and pitfalls', in S. Jacobs, R. Jacobson and J. Marchbank (eds), *States of Conflict: Gender, Violence and Resistance* (London and New York: Zed Books).
- Kantola, J. (2006) *Feminists Theorize the State* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Kantola, J. and Dahl, H. M. (2005) 'Feminist understandings of the state: From differences between to differences within', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7:1, 49–70.
- Kantola, J. and Outhoorn, J. (forthcoming) 'Changing state feminism', in J. Outhoorn and J. Kantola (eds), *Changing State Feminism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. (1998) *Activists beyond Borders: Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Kelly, R. M., Bayes, J. H., Hawkesworth, M. E. and Young, B. (2001) *Gender, Globalisation and Democratization* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers).
- Keohane, R. O. (ed.) (1986) *Neo-realism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press).
- Keohane, R. O. and Nye, J. S. (1977) *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co).
- Kofman, E. (2000) 'Beyond a reductionist analysis of female migrants in global European cities: The unskilled, deskilled, and professional', in M. Marchand and A. S. Runyan (eds), *Gender and Global Restructuring* (London and New York: Routledge), 129–139.
- Lentin, R. (2000) 'The feminisation of catastrophe: Narrating women's silences', in S. Ali, K. Coate and W. Wa Goro (eds), *Global Feminist Politics* (London: Routledge), 92–106.
- Marchand, M. and Runyan, A. S. (2000) 'Introduction: Feminist sightings of global restructuring: Conceptualizations and reconceptualizations', in M. Marchand and A. S. Runyan (eds), *Gender and Global Restructuring* (London and New York: Routledge), 1–22.
- Mishra, R. (1999) *Globalization and the Welfare State* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar).
- Mitchell, T. (2006) 'Society, economy and the state effect', in A. Sharma and A. Gupta (eds), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 167–186.
- Peterson, V. S. (ed.) (1992) *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)visions of IR Theory* (Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers).
- Pettman, J. J. (1996a) 'An international political economy of sex?', in E. Kofman and G. Youngs (eds), *Globalization—Theory and Practice* (London and New York: A Cassel Imprint), 191–208.
- Pettman, J. J. (1996b) *Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics* (London: Routledge).
- Pettman, J. J. (1999) 'Globalization and the gendered politics of citizenship', in N. Yuval-Davis and P. Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference* (London and New York: Zed Books), 207–220.
- Pringle, R. and Watson, S. (1992) '“Women's interests” and the post-structuralist state', in M. Barrett and A. Phillips (eds), *Destabilizing Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press), 53–73.
- Rai, S. (2004) 'Gendering global governance', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6:4, 579–601.
- Regan, P. and Paskeviciute, A. (2003) 'Women's access to politics and peaceful states', *Journal of Peace Research*, 40:3, 287–302.
- Sassen, S. (1996) 'New employment regimes in cities: The impact on immigrant workers', *New Community*, 22:4, 579–594.
- Sassen, S. (1998) *Globalization and its Discontents* (New York: The New Press).
- Sawer, M. (1996) 'Gender, metaphor and the state', *Feminist Review*, 52, 118–134.

- Sawicki, J. (1991) *Disciplining Foucault* (London: Routledge).
- Sharma, A. and Gupta, A. (2006) 'Introduction: Rethinking theories of the state in an age of globalization', in A. Sharma and A. Gupta (eds), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 1–41.
- Shepherd, L. J. (2007) "'Victims, Perpetrators and Actors" Revisited: Exploring the Potential for a Feminist Reconceptualisation of (International) Security and (Gender) Violence', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 9:2, 239–256.
- Squires, J. (1999) *Gender in Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Steans, J. (1998) *Gender and International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Steans, J. (1999) 'The private is global: Feminism, politics and global economy', *New Political Economy*, 4:1, 113–128.
- Strange, S. (1996) *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- True, J. (2001) 'Feminism', in S. Burchill, A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True (eds), *Theories of International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 231–276.
- Uguris, T. (2000) 'Gender, ethnicity and the "community": Locations with multiple identities', in S. Ali, K. Coate and W. Wa Goro (eds), *Global Feminist Politics* (London: Routledge), 49–68.
- Walker, R. B. J. (1994) *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Walker, R. B. J. (1995) 'From international relations to world politics', in J. Commilleri, A. Jarvis and A. Paolini (eds), *The State in Transition: Reimagining Political Space* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), 21–38.
- Wallerstein, I. (1974) *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press).
- Waylen, G. (2004) 'Putting governance into the gendered political economy of globalization', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6:4, 557–578.
- Weber, C. (1998) 'Performative states', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 27:1, 77–95.
- Weiss, L. (ed.) (2003) *States in the Global Economy: Bringing Domestic Institutions Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Wendt, A. (2004) 'The state as person in international theory', *Review of International Studies*, 30:2, 289–316.
- Youngs, G. (2000) 'Breaking patriarchal bonds: Demythologising the public/private', in M. Marchand and A. S. Runyan (eds), *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, Sites and Resistances* (London: Routledge), 44–58.
- Zalewski, M. (1998) 'Where is woman in International Relations? "To return as a woman and be heard" ', *Millennium*, 27:4, 847–867.