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State Policies and Practices

Racialized, Class-Based, and Gendered Oppression

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Much of the lively debate in political sociology concerning state theory has tended to be centered on stark claims and counterclaims of which of these models is “correct” and which ones so flawed as to be useless (see, e.g., the exchanges between Miliband, 1973, and Poulantzas, 1978; and between Skocpol, 1988, and Domhoff, 1991a, 1991b). Notably, all of these models have found some support in empirical research, if not completely vindicated. Further, analyses examining the same policy arenas, particularly the New Deal legislation, have drawn very different conclusions concerning each of these models. How is it possible for so many researchers to look at the same policy arena and draw different theoretical conclusions?

For example, what is the role of the state in the byplay between labor and capital? How does the state relate to the political economy and the processes and relationships of work and production? How do state projects of economic intervention affect class relations and the system of class oppression? Similarly, what is the role of the state in gendering, racial formation, and sexuality relations and processes? How does the state’s relationship to society affect the processes of gender, racial formation, and sexuality? How do gendering, racial formation, and sexuality state projects

affect systems of gendered, racialized, and heteronormative oppression? How do social movements affect the relationship between the state, society, and oppression?

In addition, class, gendered, racialized, and heteronormative systems of oppression do not operate in isolation of one another but rather intersect and resonate in significant ways to produce a “matrix of domination” (Collins, 1990). What is the relationship between the state and social relations that affect and are affected by this intersectionality? How does the matrix of domination affect resistance, and how might that resistance affect the state?

Many sociologists have increasingly called for an analytical framework for reconciling the strengths that each perspective of the state–society relationship might have to offer (Gilbert & Howe, 1991; Hooks, 1991; Jenkins & Brents, 1989; McCammon, 1994; Prechel, 1990, 2000). We argue that we also need an analytical framework that provides the ability to understand multiple oppressions and the role of the state in that relationship. And we need to incorporate how resistance might affect that relationship. This calls for a reconceptualization of state theory.

The models described so far (with the exception of anarchist theory) have dominated political sociology for at least 5 decades, and, with the exception of state-centered structuralism, tend to revolve around questions concerning how or why business interests seem to dominate the political landscape and policy making in the state. While class dialectic analyses introduce the working class into the dynamics affecting the relationship between the state and society, it still suggests that corporate interests manage to thwart outright challenges to its preeminence and advantage in the political economy or at least succeed in co-opting any changes so as to remain consistent with capital accumulation interests. And while state-centered structuralism leaves room for corporate interests to be ignored in favor of bureaucratic state managers’ interests, it does not suggest how these might be completely divorced from class-based interests or influence from these. None of the models presented so far thus adequately explains the full range of policy arenas.

In particular, there are whole areas of social and political policy making relative to oppression that are not adequately covered by these models. How do we explain the dominance of patriarchal, racialized, or heteronormative policy making with the existing theoretical frameworks these models offer? Is it sufficient to simply replace the existing concepts of class domination with concepts describing gendered, racialized, or heterosexist domination? As we will discuss in this chapter, the answer is no: While some analyses have in fact tried to do just that, the concepts do not lend themselves easily to such a simple transplant. What is needed is a model of the relationship between the state and society that allows for an analysis of multiple oppressions.

The problem may not be that any one of the models is more powerful than the others but rather that each model may simply be focusing on a different corner of the big picture; if taken together, they may actually contribute to a fuller understanding of that bigger picture. Consider an analogy to a box of 1,000 jigsaw puzzle pieces. If we select just one piece out of the box, or even work to fit together all the pieces of a small area of the puzzle, we will not be able to see the fuller picture. But if we look at the picture of the completed puzzle on the box cover, we might get a fuller understanding of the role of that single piece or that small area to the larger picture. State theory may actually be quite similar: Each model is like a smaller area of the bigger picture, and each model's central concepts are like a single piece of the puzzle. The task before political sociologists, then, is to design a theoretical framework for fitting together all of these pieces of the bigger picture in a synthesis of theoretical models. While no one has yet devised such a model, we can suggest some concepts that might facilitate its development. Let us now turn to an exploration of a model that incorporates the significant concepts of the competing models we have already examined and that might allow enough flexibility to examine the relationship of the state and society in all its realms of oppression: What are the conditions under which some interests dominate and others might challenge that domination in state policy making?

Toward a Multidimensional View of the State, Society, and Oppression

A contingency framework of the relationship between the state, society, and oppression offers one way to forge a synthesis of the strengths of existing theories as it seeks to outline the conditions under which varying interests are likely to prevail at a given interval. Bob Jessop (1990) offered some concepts that can be useful for organizing important elements of existing state theories. His concepts of *state projects*, *selectivity filters*, and *balance of class forces* are particularly helpful here (see Glasberg & Skidmore, 1997). Jessop suggested that the relationship between the state and society is not one-dimensional, nor is it necessarily the same at all points in time for all actors and participants. Instead, the relationship may change as a result of previous struggles and their resolution. In that sense, the relationship between the state and society is a dialectical one in which earlier conflict resolutions set the stage for later ones so that the relative positions and resources of participants are likely to vary from one struggle to another.

The state itself is limited in its ability to exercise power on its own. State managers can be extraordinarily significant in shaping society, but they must gain support from some sectors of civil society (including economic actors) for their initiatives. Otherwise, state managers would have to impose their will by force upon civil and economic society, a risky proposition as most dictators and fascists sooner or later discover. Jessop (1990) argued instead that the need of the state to elicit support for its interests produces more of an interactive relationship between the state and society as state managers seek to gain such support and legitimacy and other actors and interests seek to elicit state support and legitimacy for their interests. What can be accomplished simply through coercion or highly developed bureaucratic capacities is extremely limited. Does this mean that all participants have equal power? Hardly. One must look for the resources and the processes affecting the efficacy of those resources in the process of the struggle.

While Jessop (1990) offered his concepts as tools for analyzing the relationship between state and society relative to class antagonisms, we can reconceptualize them to capture the relationship built around multiple oppressions. A contingency framework highlights the importance of understanding the historical and situational conditions that exist at the time of policy formation and implementation. These shape the conditions under which various interests are more or less likely to have their needs met with policy and under which oppressions may be altered.

We do not assume that “the state” is a monolithic and unchanging structure with a coherent and compelling agenda. Rather, we view the state as both a structure and a participant in power processes. The interactive relationship between the state and society may affect not only various interest groups in society but also the state itself (Pringle & Watson, 1992). The state becomes a dynamic product of these interactions rather than a static structure that can be anticipated to always act to maintain and reproduce capitalist, patriarchal, white superiority, or heteronormative relations, even if it can be found to do so in a given society. What matters is not *whether* the state necessarily reproduces these relations of oppression by conscious purpose or by structural constraint but rather *how* that may happen *if* that is, in fact, the observed pattern. Thus, gendered, racialized, class, and heterosexist oppressions may be embedded in the state and the state embedded in the oppressions. The point is to examine the conditions under which that occurs. It is important to note, however, as we learned from anarchist theory and state-centered structuralism, the state has interests of its own and can act to reinforce its own power. Thus, as the state is a hierarchical institution, even if under certain conditions it did not reproduce structured inequalities on the basis of race, class, gender, or sexuality, it would still reproduce state power

over those citizens that it rules. And were the state organized horizontally, rather than hierarchically, it would no longer be recognizable as a “state.”

When we use the term *structure* we do not mean that the state is ossified into a rigid, unchanging, and unchallengeable entity. “Structure” indicates the organization of social relations and institutional arrangements that constitute the state. Over time these may together reproduce patterns of racialized, class, gendered, and sexualized privilege and disadvantage, but it is not presumed to necessarily be constrained to do so. The structure of the state can affect and be affected by organized resistance from below as well as from elites. This does not necessarily mean an assumption that all interests are equal. Some interests may certainly be better positioned to increase their likelihood of affecting the state. The key is to examine the conditions under which that likelihood becomes real and the conditions under which less advantaged interests may gain support from the state in policy.

Let’s look now at how Jessop’s concepts can be useful in braiding together the significant elements identified by various state theories.

State Projects

We begin with the assumption that policies are not isolated, singular initiatives but rather are part of larger *state projects*. A state project is a *set* of state policies and/or agencies unified around a particular issue or oppression. Policy is not random; more recent policies build on, are shaped by, or challenge prior policies (see Quadagno, 1992). State projects thus involve dynamic and ongoing claims processes in which social constructions (such as gender, race, class, and sexuality) may be reinforced or challenged and altered.

For example, one can analyze the social construction of race by examining the historical establishment of state policy and practice through legislation such as the Civil Rights Act, through a set of agencies built around agencies such as the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Commission on Equal Opportunities, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and so on, and through practices such as school desegregation. Similarly, one can understand patriarchy by examining the historical patterns of state policy and practices around the notion of “gender” through legislation such as the equal rights amendment (which even if not enacted demonstrates a process of the struggles over the social construction of gender) and affirmative action, through a set of agencies built around these policies and practices (such as the Commission on the Status of Women), and through practices implementing policy (such as budget decisions made to comply with or defy Title IX provisions of civil rights legislation mandating equal opportunity for females in schools). And one can understand heteronormativity by examining

the history of patterns of state policy and practices around the notion of sexuality through legislation such as the right to civil unions and same-sex marriage as well as policies in defense of traditional marriage (as defined as that between one man and one woman) and the military practice of “don’t ask, don’t tell” through a set of agencies built around these policies and practices (such as the State Department or the Department of Defense), and through practices implementing policy (such as state recognition of same-sex marriages that have occurred in other states).

Using the notion of state projects, we can see that the formation of current policy is contingent upon unified, historical state policy precedents and the state agencies and actors that implement these policies. The concept of “state projects” does not suggest a cogent, centralized state with a clearly defined goal motivating decision making. Rather, the state itself is both an arena of struggle and an actor that above all other actors has the unique authority to codify social constructions into legalized norms and to enforce these in ways that shape cultural repertoires and social behaviors. And, as the concept of state projects suggests, the state is also subject to resistance and modification from below (see Connell, 1990). State projects are not necessarily only produced and reproduced by the state but are the ongoing production of struggles between the state and political forces over the contested terrain that is state policy. Indeed, the state may at times even enact policies that contradict the interests of capital accumulation, patriarchy, white-skin privilege, and heteronormativity as a result of those struggles. What shapes the struggles themselves?

Selectivity Filters

The notion of state projects must include a mechanism through which policy and the struggles over the policy process are shaped and framed. Jessop (1990) called that mechanism *structural selectivity*: State structures “offer unequal chances to different forces within and outside the state to act for different political purposes” (p. 367). State structures and state projects are filters or lenses that frame the issues, debates, and definitions of programs by “selecting against” some policy alternatives and political organizations. For example, cultural and ideological frames such as free market, Protestant work ethic, and culture of poverty contour policy makers’ collective perceptions so as to preclude consideration of policy alternatives that are inconsistent with private capital accumulation, personal responsibility for one’s own economic fate, and competitive individualism. Cultural and ideological frames such as “anatomy is destiny,” “men are from Mars and women are from Venus,” “God intended marriage to be between one man

and one woman,” and the like contour policy makers’ collective perceptions so as to drastically reduce the probability that they will consider policy alternatives that seriously challenge male privilege and dominance and heteronormativity. And cultural and ideological frames such as “white supremacy,” “natural law,” and the like are likely to substantially shape policy makers’ collective perceptions so as to mitigate the probability that policy makers will consider policy alternatives that significantly undermine white skin privilege and dominance.

This does not suggest that the state is neutral in the mediation process. Rather, as the notion of structural selectivity implies, the state’s definitions of crisis and appropriate responses may be narrowed by a biasing or filtering process in which only some interests or points of view become part of the process while others are ignored, silenced, or never considered. The state becomes more responsive to some strategies and resources than to others; few of the possible policies and organizations surrounding a given issue receive serious political consideration. Over time, selectivity perpetuates biases in the state-society relationship.

Since the policy process selects some interests in and others out, what affects that selectivity? We turn now to the notion of the balance of forces.

Balance of Political and Institutional Forces

Jessop (1990) argued that the balance of *class* forces is a crucial factor influencing whether and when class groups are more or less likely to be selected into the policy process and gain advantageous state policies. That balance will be affected by a variety of conditions, including (1) the extent of unity or disunity with each class relative to other participants in the process, as well as the extent of unity or disunity between the various branches and agencies within the state, (2) the resources available to the classes and the state to bring to bear on struggles over policy creation and implementation, and (3) the opportunities to apply these resources to create mass disruption. Note that the concept of balance of class forces does not suggest that all classes are equally likely to gain advantageous policies; rather, it speaks to factors that may enhance or inhibit a given class’s chances of doing so relative to other classes in the political economy.

While the concept “balance of *class* forces” may help us appreciate economic and class-centered policy processes, it is less helpful for understanding other forms of oppression. That is, we would be hard-pressed to explain gendered, racialized, and heterosexist oppression in terms of class alone. However, the notion of the balance of class forces can be reconceptualized to a notion of the *balance of political and institutional forces* in order to capture

an analysis of multiple oppressions. The balance of political and institutional forces includes not only class forces but gendering, heteronormative, and racial formation forces as well. By gendering and heteronormative forces we are referring not to male interests versus female interests but rather to socially constructed sets of interests that may privilege one sex over another (in a patriarchal society, this is likely to mean male privilege relative to female oppression, and heteronormativity as a basis for privilege relative to the oppression of sexual minorities of all kinds) as opposed to those that seek to produce greater equality regardless of sex, gender, and sexual practices. It may very well be that one will find people of all genders and a whole range of sexual practices in each set of gendering forces.

Likewise, when we refer to racial formation forces, we do not mean groups or interests defined by the physical or cultural characteristics culturally constructed to have biological significance. Rather, we are referring to socially constructed sets of interests that may privilege one racially formed group over another (in a society based on white superiority, this is likely to mean white-skin privilege relative to oppression of people of color) as opposed to those who seek to produce greater equality regardless of social categorizations defined as “race.” Thus it may very well be that one will find people of color as well as whites in each set of racial formation forces.

The notion of “balance” of gendering or racial formation forces refers to the processes and dynamics of struggle between such sets of interests to redefine the social construction of gender, sexuality, and race. The conditions and dynamics affecting these forces, we argue, are similar to those affecting the balance of class forces.

How do we use the concepts of state projects, structural selectivity, and balance of political and institutional forces to frame an understanding of the state and oppression? Let’s look at what such a framework might be.

Modeling a Multidimensional View of the State, Society, and Oppression

We can organize the factors suggested as important by the prevailing theories of the state to identify the significant dimensions of the balance of political and institutional forces and of selectivity filters (see Table 7.1). In particular, such factors include (1) organization, including the extent to which classes, gendering forces, heteronormative forces, and racial formation forces are unified and the extent to which they may develop networks and coalitions, as well as these same factors within competing groups; (2) access to and ability to mobilize resources; (3) structural conditions, including the health of the economy, constitutional constraints on policy creation

Table 7.1 Dimensions of Balance of Forces and Selectivity Filters

Balance of Political and Institutional Forces	Selectivity Filters
Opportunity for disruption	Political economy structure
Organization	Party politics
Resource mobilization	Relative autonomy of state actors
Unity within groups	Past policy precedence
Unity within other groups	Ideology & culture
Unity within & between state agencies	

and implementation, existing regulations, and precedence in implementation; (4) opportunity (or perception of potential) for groups to create mass disruption or turmoil; (5) relative autonomy of state actors and agencies; and (6) and unity and organization within and between state agencies.

The interaction between the balance of political and institutional forces and selectivity filters does not end with the passage of a single policy; rather, the process reverberates through the implementation of that policy and sets the stage for later policy creation, modification, and implementation within the larger state project. Individual policy initiatives are framed by the larger state project and prior precedents set by existing policies within that project. The introduction of such initiatives triggers an interaction between the balance of political forces and selectivity filters. The process of resolving the tension between the filters and forces moves policy initiatives toward policy creation. Once policies are created, the dialectic between the balance of political forces and selectivity filters continues as policy initiatives become translated into practice. The resolution of this process shapes the policy as it becomes incorporated into the larger state project and hence part of the selectivity filters that frame subsequent policy initiatives (see Figure 7.1).

State projects are animated, then, by the balance of political and institutional forces in the claims process, producing a dialectic process of policy making and implementation, as well as social practices and repertoires over time. Dominant class, racialized, and gendered interests may be challenged, resisted, and redirected from below in this process.

Taken together the concepts of state projects, balance of political forces, and selectivity filters provide us with useful tools for developing an analytical framework for understanding the relationship between the state, society,

and oppression. The notion of “balance” of gendered, sexuality, or racial formation forces refers to the processes of struggle between such sets of interests to redefine the social construction of gender, sexuality, and race. The conditions and dynamics affecting these forces are similar to those affecting the balance of class forces as conceptualized by Jessop (1990). Furthermore, the concept of a balance of political forces expands on the class-centric focus of Jessop’s (and much of that of sociological state theory’s) conceptual framework to make room for analyses of class formation as well as gendering, sexuality, and racial formation, and the intersections of these. It also becomes possible to incorporate standpoint theory (Smith, 1990, 1999) so that analyses of state projects may begin with the points of view of those from below rather than necessarily beginning only with the state and its policies from above.

In this way, an analysis, for example, of U.S. welfare reform of the 1990s may begin from the standpoint of the poor, particularly women and children, and most particularly women and children of color. In such an approach, the central analytical question is not necessarily why welfare reform occurred in the 1990s. The driving questions instead become the following: What has happened in the lives of the poor, of poor women and children, and of poor women and children of color, since the 1990s, and what factors shaped state policy that affected their lived experiences? It then becomes important to explore the balance of political forces (of both oppression and resistance) before, during, and after the implementation of welfare reform and the selectivity filters that operated to frame public and political discourse. But here the state becomes an actor and the state project an arena of contested terrain, both of which are subject to resistance from below as well as dominance from above. The state thus can become an agent of oppression as well as an agent and object of change, albeit in often limited ways.

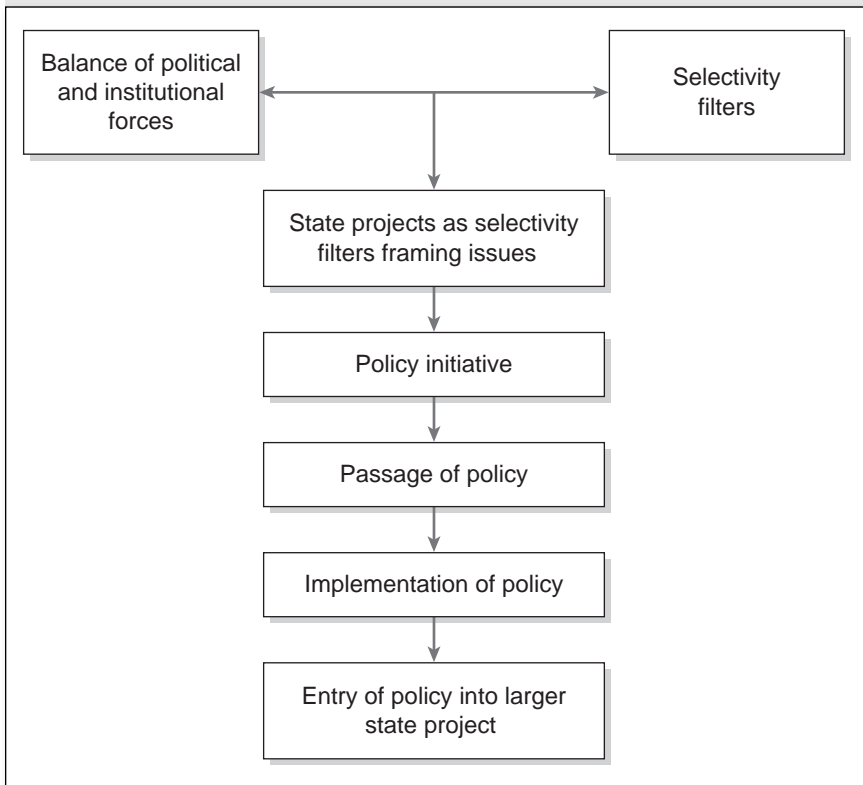
Such a reconceptualization of the balance of political forces allows an exploration of class formation, racial formation, sexuality, and gendering state projects (and the intersections of these) through other policy areas as well. For example, one can now examine abortion policy, marriage and family policy (including the struggle over civil unions, legitimacy of parental status for some, and domestic violence), and military policy (including “don’t ask, don’t tell”), labor laws (including battles over sweatshops, justice for janitors, living wages, and comparable worth), and racial policy (including census definitions of racial categories, immigration laws, racial profiling in police policy, racism in criminal justice and capital punishment, and educational segregation) by beginning from the standpoint of the lived existence of the disadvantaged and oppressed. The analysis can then build out toward the policies themselves and the relationships and processes that ebb and flow to shape them. The state

and state projects are then the shapers of notions of race, class, sexuality, and gender, and shaped by the resistance of the oppressed.

A contingency framework of the state, society, and oppression as an interactive process may be diagrammed as in Figure 7.1. Here, individual policy initiatives are framed by the larger state project and prior precedents set by existing policies within that project. The introduction of such initiatives triggers a dialectical process between the balance of political and institutional forces and selectivity filters. That dialectical process moves policy initiatives toward policy creation. Once policies are created, the continuing dialectic between the balance of political and institutional forces and selectivity filters reverberates through the process of translating de jure policy into de facto implementation. The resolution of that dialectical process shapes the policy that becomes incorporated into the larger state project and contributes to the selectivity filters that frame subsequent policy initiatives.

Let's now examine oppression and state projects.

Figure 7.1 Modeling a Contingency Perspective of the State



The State and Class-Based Oppression

The main state theories discussed in Chapter 5 largely emphasize the class character of the relationship between the state and society. Their main focus derives from questions concerning how economic and class inequality affects state policy: How or why do economic elites or capital accumulation interests gain their agendas in state policy, largely at the expense of the poor and working class members of society? And while at least some of these analyses (especially those using a class dialectic model) acknowledge that economic elites do *not* always prevail because of class struggle processes, the analysis remains focused on class relations and the state. Regardless of why the state legislates as it does, or how it does, the major state theories suggest that the predominant state project is one of economic intervention, usually defined as the state's attempts to preserve and protect the conditions that facilitate capital accumulation. They thus imply that economic-intervention state projects are essentially class-oppression state projects masquerading as neutral attempts to maintain a healthy economy in everyone's best interest.

State Projects of Economic Intervention and Class Oppression

There is ample evidence in policy processes to suggest that economic-intervention state projects may indeed be thinly disguised class oppression. Even when working-class interests appear to prevail, argue class dialectic theorists, the resulting policies are framed so as not to contradict or hinder conditions favoring capital accumulation. Look, for example, at labor laws governing the relationship between capitalists and workers. During the Industrial Revolution, the state essentially worked to maintain a *laissez-faire* approach to the economy, allowing capital the freedom to develop as capitalists saw fit. The state's neutrality meant, however, that capitalists were free to enrich themselves, if not the overall national economy, at the expense of workers. Those who toiled in the earth's deep recesses to mine the coal and oil that fueled industrial production, as well as those who labored in the factories and fields of that production, worked in highly unsafe conditions and under extremely exploitive conditions. Workers, who were often new immigrants desperate for work and unfamiliar with the language and customs of their newly adopted home, were paid starvation wages for long hours, with no control over their livelihood or their lives. Company towns emerged in the geographically isolated hills of coal towns, where a single employer provided all the jobs. That same company also owned the houses the workers and their families lived in, the shops where they bought everything they

needed to survive, the schools that educated their children, and the churches where they worshipped. Workers were often paid in company scrip rather than dollars, which meant they could not shop anywhere but the company store at any inflated prices the company chose to charge. Consider the power imbalance such a situation created: Workers were not free to dissent or to challenge the employer—to do so was to risk one's livelihood and that of one's entire family. So long as workers existed under a system of competitive individualism, the power remained firmly in the hands of employers who could pay workers as little as they wanted, under any conditions they wanted, and charge as much as they wanted for their goods and services.

By the turn of the 20th century, however, workers increasingly resented and resisted this arrangement and struggled to demand that the state guarantee them the right to collectively bargain with employers for better wages and safer working conditions. The unionization movement that blossomed throughout Europe began to spread in the United States with the help of the (largely anarcho-sindicalist) Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, or the Wobblies). They advocated an international industrial union of all workers, regardless of industry or type of work. The struggle for unionization became quite violent, as capitalists clearly recognized their monopolistic power edge was being threatened, and they fought back with everything they could. But storm clouds were gathering as the Wobblies increasingly appealed to highly exploited and impoverished workers, and capitalists soon appealed to the state for help. Capitalists were quite divided on how and why the state should respond, with big business and the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) reluctantly favoring trade unions within industries as the lesser evil to national or international industrial unions, and small business and local chambers of Congress favoring no unions at all. But they all wanted the state to step in and legislate labor and production relations to quell labor unrest. Ultimately, big business interests prevailed: In the interest of maintaining a stable, crisis-free economy, Congress intervened in 1935 and passed the National Labor Relations Act (more commonly referred to as the Wagner Act) that provided workers with the right to collective bargaining (Domhoff, 1990; Levine, 1988; Weinstein, 1968).

While this would appear to be a major victory for labor, state governance of labor relations and its endorsement of the right to collective bargaining came at a hefty price: In New York, the Taylor Law prohibits workers in essential services from striking. Among those the state defines as essential services are police, firefighters, sanitation workers, transportation workers, and teachers. So are steel, coal, and oil workers, shipyard workers, and munitions-plant workers, especially during war and other crises. Since labor strikes were the main source of collective power workers had, this antistrike

clause essentially took the teeth out of their resistance against capital. Further, the right to collectively bargain also carried provisions for binding arbitration, in which the state may force workers and employers to accept and be bound by agreements brokered by the state in order to avoid labor strife, production snags, and economic downturns. The Wagner Act thus became part of the state's economic intervention state project that was more a state project of labor control: While it provided workers with the right to collectively bargain in trade unions, it institutionalized labor relations around the boardroom table instead of the streets and legislated the terms and strategies workers could assume in the process. The power imbalance between the working class and the capitalist class remained to advantage capital accumulation interests.

After the Great Depression of the 1930s, Congress again moved to expand the state project of economic intervention to ensure that monopoly capitalists did not greedily threaten the economic well-being of the nation. One of the policies put into effect was antitrust legislation that forbade corporations from developing and maintaining a monopoly that essentially posed a threat to competition and therefore a healthy economy. The sheer size and power of monopolies posed a "barrier to entry" to the industry because smaller, newer firms cannot compete with the much larger firms. Furthermore, monopolies posed a similar noncompetitive edge to workers and consumers who would be denied alternative options for employment and for goods and services and thus monopoly corporations could charge whatever the market could bear and pay as little as they could get away with. Corporations seeking to merge with or buy out their competitors were denied that right by federal legislation. That legislation ultimately led to the breakup of AT&T, the only telephone company prior to 1984, into several smaller competitive firms. Ironically, antitrust legislation has rarely been invoked against corporations since the 1980s but instead has often been called up against unions seeking to merge. So while banks, auto manufacturers, and food processing corporations have been able to merge with little or no interference by the state with its antitrust legislation, workers seeking to gain a stronger power base by merging into larger unions often face legal restrictions against noncompetition as defined by antitrust laws.

Most recently, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and efforts to expand it to Central and South America are often framed as part of the state project of economic intervention by reducing barriers to trade that hurt the United States and U.S. made products and therefore, presumably, jobs for U.S. workers. Yet analyses of the effects of NAFTA after more than a decade indicate that it has erased the political borders that inhibited trade at the expense of workers' jobs in the United States and

workers' wages everywhere (Wallach & Sforza, 1999). However, the dialectics of class relations are such that the very same state project that is depressing workers' wages, threatening the notion of a minimum wage, eroding workers' health and safety on the job, and motivating the reduction if not outright elimination of health and retirement benefits may ultimately help unions organize workers across national borders as well. Thus, the state project of economic intervention, while largely favoring capital accumulation interests at the expense of workers' interests, may actually help workers edge closer to the international industrial unions envisioned by the Wobblies after all.

Taken together, then, the dominant state theories frame analyses of the relationship between the state and society as one rooted primarily in economic and class relations. How and why the state legislates in favor of capital accumulation interests are at issue among the various theorists, but they generally agree that the state's role is the continued oppression of the working class. However, sociologists are increasingly aware that class is but one system of oppression. State projects may also be arranged around gendered, heterosexist, and racialized oppression as well.

The State and Gendered Oppression

Feminist theories of the state shift the focus of the analysis from one of class relations to one exploring the role of the state in gendered oppression processes. In particular, much of the focus here is on how the state created and reinforced women's subordinated status as an inferior gender and how differentiated states participate in a dynamic process to produce gender regimes (Brush, 2003; Haney, 2000). Let's examine feminist models of the state to see how this shift in focus helps us to see the hand of the state beyond economic and class relations.

Patriarchal state theorists investigate how the state reproduces patriarchal relations that privilege men and subordinate women, particularly (but not only) through welfare and family policy (MacKinnon, 1989). According to these analysts, welfare policy and the concept of the family wage (with the presumption of males as family breadwinners) buttressed the nuclear family and its gendered hierarchy of male dominance and female dependence on individual men to protect them from poverty (Abramovitz, 1996; Connell, 1990; Hartmann, 1976). Patriarchy and class reproduction thus become linked in support of the capitalist economy where, depending on capitalist need, women's roles alternate between keeper of the home and as a low-cost reserve army of labor (McIntosh, 1978). These sometimes conflicting roles

for women highlight the tensions and conflicts of a capitalist society. But some argue that class and capitalist reproduction needs and the accompanying subjugation of women are not constant at all times in all societies and they need to be viewed in their ideological and historical context (Barrett, 1990).

There are slight variations on this theme among researchers using a patriarchal state perspective. Some argue that the welfare state extended women's dependence on individual men to a broader dependence on a male-dominated state (Boris & Bardaglio, 1983; Brown, 1981). Others disagree, noting that the dialectics of patriarchal state processes may in fact produce ample welfare state programs that can serve to actually decrease women's risk of poverty or to provide material resources to help women and children survive when there is no male source of support (Edin & Lein, 1996; Kamerman, 1984; Piven, 1990; Ruggie, 1984). But some see the economic protection these programs may offer as evidence of a patriarchal state seeking to protect women from the brutality and devastation of the male preserve of the economy. Social welfare programs operate under the assumption that women are the "natural" caretakers of children and commonly absolve individual men from any such responsibility. These differing viewpoints on the meaning of the state's patriarchal position do not obliterate what they have in common: the view of the state as a centralized, patriarchal institution that subordinates women.

Gendered state subsystem analysts reject the view of patriarchal state analysts of the state as monolithic and centralized. Instead, they argue that the state is a more complex and dynamic institution and thus so is the relationship between the state and gendering processes (Orloff, 1996). For example, some researchers found that welfare states were actually comprised of layers of institutional subsystems (Gordon, 1990). "Masculine" social insurance programs, such as workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, and Social Security, responded to the limitations of the private labor market to provide stable, secure, and gainful employment for breadwinners. These programs were based on the assumption that men were entitled to such support to help them fulfill their natural male roles as providers and breadwinners (Nelson, 1990; Sapiro, 1990). In contrast, need-based, means-tested "feminine" social assistance programs like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (now Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF), Mothers' Pensions, and Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) were based on the assumption that women needed a male breadwinner to avoid poverty and the state would step in only when such a breadwinner was absent (Mink, 1994). When the state does take over the role of the male provider, it also assumes the role of male dominator in women's lives. This often happens in the administration of the highly regulated social welfare programs,

which typically subject women to a great deal of observation, evaluation, and control as the state tries to establish women's eligibility for benefits (Nelson, 1990).

While this multilayered structure of the welfare state does indeed offer a more nuanced view than the previous conceptions of a centralized state, it remained focused on income-maintenance programs of the welfare state, particularly in the United States (Gordon, 1994; Orloff, 1996). In contrast, *gendered welfare regime* analysts broadened their focus to examine a wider array of the kinds of policies pursued by welfare states. They found that policies dealing with issues such as citizenship, care for family members, women's employment, and reproduction also affected women's material well-being and contributed to gendering processes and gendered oppression. Furthermore, their expanded view, as well as a more cross-national comparison of welfare state types, revealed wide variations of gendered regimes in welfare states (Borchorst, 1994; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Gustafsson, 1994; Hobson, 1994; Huber & Stephens, 2000; Korpi, 2000; Leira, 1992; Lewis, 1992; O'Connor, 1993; O'Connor, Orloff, & Shaver, 1999; Orloff, 1993; Sainsbury, 1994, 1996; Shaver, 1993). This research suggests that welfare states are not only not monolithic in structure or single-minded in their patriarchal allegiances but there are wide variations on this theme of gendered welfare states.

Gendered state process analysts focus less on redistributive policy and more on processes and relations of discourse and gendered meaning in welfare states. In these analyses, the welfare state is not only a policy-making institution but also an arena of struggles over the contested terrain of the social construction of gender, including the reproductive role of women (Curran & Abrams, 2000; Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Zylan, 2000). Here, claims processes involve shifting the line between the natural and the artificial or political definitions of gender, which then frames the discourse concerning the identification of needs and appropriate policies to address these (Peattie & Rein, 1983; Pringle & Watson, 1992). The struggle therefore becomes one of defining what is biological or natural and therefore immutable and unchangeable with policy and what is really more a social construction of gender and therefore amenable to policies that redistribute resources, redefine roles and responsibilities, and establish rights. These analyses introduced the notion that the welfare state is not just a masculine structural creation imposing patriarchal gendered meanings and oppressions; it is also an arena in which those social constructions are challenged and resisted, where the very meanings of motherhood and dependency could be fought over and where these contested terrains could affect not just notions of gendering but also the formation of the welfare state itself

(Abramovitz, 2000; Bock & Thane, 1991; Goodwin, 1997; Koven & Michel, 1993; Muncy, 1991; Sklar, 1993; Skocpol, 1992).

Some analysts criticize the overemphasis of this literature on issues of maternalism and welfare and family policies. The state can also be seen to play a powerful role in gendering processes in policy domains such as militarism (Enloe, 1989, 2000), abortion (Luker, 1984; Petchesky, 1984), sexuality (Luker, 1998), and violence against women (Brown, 1995; Elman, 2001). For example, Luker's (1998) analysis of the state's regulation of women's sexuality illustrates how social reform policy concerning social hygiene served to allow the state to regulate women's sexuality. Where women in the reform movement supported greater equality in gender relations, male physicians in the movement militated for the criminalization of prostitution requiring greater scrutiny and regulation of women's private sexual lives that reinforced sexual inequality.

Enloe's (1989, 2000) work pointed out that militaries work to confine women to limited and clearly defined roles such as military wives, prostitutes, nurses, and rape targets and to socialize women in these groups to view each other with suspicion and animosity. But she also noted that the military is not always successful in its gendering mission: The resistance, for example, of military wives cast into the role of bitter and disregarded widows and abused wives, or of men as military "wives" whose partners are the soldiers, often means that the military must confront serious challenges and conflicts. Thus, the work of Enloe, Luker, and others identify what is missing from much of the literature on gendering and the state: the question of the state's use of violence and control in reproducing systems of gendered oppression in a patriarchal state, as well as resistance to that use of violence and control.

Taken together, the abundance of feminist state theory scholarship suggests that the state plays a role in far more than just the management of class relations and the reproduction of conditions that reinforce capital accumulation and systems of class oppression. It is also an active participant in power processes and struggles (including resistance and the state's response to that resistance) of gendered oppression. It is, in short, a patriarchal state, but one subject to alterations prompted by challenges from below (see Connell, 1990).

Gendering State Projects

State projects of gender formation include policy initiatives and issue areas articulated by the executive, policies and budgetary decisions passed by the legislature, constitutional provisions, determinations and rulings by the

judiciary (including the Supreme Court), and implementation of policies directly and indirectly affecting the social construction of gender by administrative agencies. Such policies include marriage and family law (including divorce, child custody, adoption, and domestic violence laws), social services (such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children), affirmative action and equal rights laws (such as Title IX and the enfranchisement of women in the political process), reproduction (including abortion laws), and sexual assault laws. These policies, as entries into the state project of gendering, affect the social construction of gender insofar as they participate in shaping and defining the meaning and social significance of sex and sexualities, thereby affecting the life chances of both men and women.

Much of the gendering state project has served to create and reinforce a social construction of gender in a patriarchal society, such that women remain subordinate to men politically, socially, and economically. However, there clearly are policies enacted and implemented by the state that alter the social constructions of gender such that women's social, political, and economic positions in a patriarchal society and thus their life chances are improved. What, then, are the dynamics of oppression and resistance, and how do these affect state policies that perpetuate gendering state projects enhancing patriarchy as well as expand women's empowerment and thus challenging and mitigating patriarchal dominance? What are the lived experiences of women, and how are these enforced from above and resisted from below?

Cultural and ideological frames, as well as prior legislative precedence, act as selectivity filters biasing policy creation and implementation, although these may be challenged by the processes and dynamics of the balance of gendering forces. Unlike cultural and ideological frames that dominate class-based or economic state projects, those that frame the claims processes of gendering state projects commonly include an underlying assumption of biological determinism. For example, the structure of language and its usage contain hidden assumptions about gender, such that males are reinforced as the norm of human existence and are appropriately superior and dominant; women are represented as the other, the invisible, or the inferior and subordinate gender (Sorrels, 1983) and thus symbolically annihilated (Tuchman, Daniels, & Benet, 1978). Language acts as a cultural selectivity filter reinforcing patriarchal assumptions that undergird policy initiatives and the state gendering project. Other cultural selectivity filters that may contribute to the reinforcing of patriarchy include gendered definitions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior and aspirations, such as motherhood norms (Schur, 1984; Zylan, 2000), father-as-breadwinner norms (Curran & Abrams, 2000), appearance norms (Barthel, 1988; Ehrenreich, 1992;

Sutton, 1992; Wolf, 1991), and sexual orientation norms (Blumenfeld, 1992; Duberman, 1993). Such norms and language assumptions often find their way into policy, as we will see shortly.

Cultural frames also include institutional traditions that become routinized as “normal.” These include practices that privilege the nuclear, heterosexual, middle-class family form wherein the male adult is rewarded as the dominant force and the breadwinner and the female adult is subordinated as the primary caretaker and unpaid domestic laborer; in cases where the female adult participates in the paid labor market, the cultural expectation is that she remain the primary caretaker with the responsibility of domestic labor (see Hochschild & Machung, 1997). Notably, this gendered frame shifts when it intersects with class, so that welfare reform and workfare policies frame poor women with children as responsible only if they work outside the home in the paid labor market, while cultural norms simultaneously frame middle-class and affluent women with children as responsible only if they remain full-time homemakers and mothers and eschew the paid labor market. The state penalizes women (and their children) who do not conform to the norm of poor mothers as breadwinners by denying them welfare benefits beyond a maximum of 2 years.

Economic institutions reiterate this cultural framing of family structures and roles by maintaining gendered definitions of “men’s jobs” and “women’s jobs” in segmented labor markets, defined by vague extensions of perceptions of each gender’s natural abilities: women as helpers and caretakers and men as leaders and physical and mental laborers (Kessler-Harris, 1980; Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Reskin & Hartmann, 1986; Reskin & Roos, 1990). Economic institutions also reinforce the notion of male superiority and privilege by maintaining differential wages for men and women, even when they do the same work (see U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

Taken together, institutional patterns frame a biased policy creation and implementation process. Witness the difficulty of introducing or passing and ratifying an equal rights amendment (Mansbridge, 1986) and pay equity or comparable worth policies (Greenberger, 1980; McCann, 1994; Padavic & Reskin, 2002). These patterns of gendering in cultural institutions, which act as frames biasing policy creation and implementation, are further supported by the ideological underpinnings of patriarchy, particularly through notions like “anatomy is destiny.” This ideological prism identifying sexism as natural itself becomes a contested terrain in the dynamics and processes in the balance of gendering forces.

Past legislative policies and implementations tend to have the overall effect of acting as selectivity filters biasing the framing of newer policies so as to reproduce previous gendering patterns. Examples include legislative

policies and court determinations reinforcing heterosexual marriage as the only legitimate relationships, no-fault divorce laws that impoverish women by routinely denying the need for alimony because of the courts' failure to acknowledge the reality of discrimination in the labor market, and family wage policies based on the assumption of the male as the breadwinner.

The ability of women in a patriarchal society to struggle against the social construction of gender as it appears in gendering state projects and in institutions, and the ability of men to reassert their dominance, is conditioned by the balance of gendering forces. That is, women are more likely to gain passage and implementation of advantageous state policy when there is greater unity of perspective among a large number of women (and often aided and abetted with the support and participation of men in coalitions with women) who are organized in formal organizations and networks. They are more likely to become organized when faced with (or they perceive) an imminent threat to their life chances. For example, increasing participation of women in the paid labor market (either by choice or by economic necessity) is more likely to prompt greater demands for pay equity; family leave policy; legal protection from sexual harassment; equal opportunity and access to education, training, and jobs; enforcement of child support awards; etc. This is especially so when women are their own sole source of income and benefits or when they are the sole or primary source of such support for their families.

Such efforts to gain advantageous legislation and implementation of policies and programs are more likely to succeed when men are less unified in their opposition to challenges to patriarchy or when crises in other institutions increase the legitimacy of women's demands. For example, periods of severe economic downsizing and deindustrialization force increasing numbers of men out of work, thereby necessitating more women to participate in the paid labor market in order to provide income for their families. Other examples of the enhancement of women's power in the balance of gendering forces have occurred when men's dominant cultural or institutional position became diminished. Such was the case during the 1983 copper mine labor strikes in Arizona, when court injunctions forbade men from picketing, thus necessitating the activism of women to continue the strike efforts (see Kingsolver, 1989). Similar processes became apparent during World War II, when men were increasingly pulled from assembly lines to fight overseas, at precisely the point in time when dramatic increases in industrial production were necessary to support the war effort. Women's participation in munitions factories, tank and submarine factories, and other industrial settings became increasingly vital. That new productive role for women shifted the line between the natural and the artificial and altered the claims process and thereby altered the ideological selectivity filters biasing policy.

Supreme Court decisions have also played a role in the dialectics of gendering state projects. For example, the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision gave women greater control over their bodies by granting women the right to an abortion anywhere in the United States. That decision has been the object of fierce struggles in Congress and in individual states' legislatures ever since. These struggles have been animated by the dialectical push and pull of the balance of gendering forces between those framing the issue in an ideology of "anatomy is destiny" defining women's proper, biologically determined role as mothers and those framing the issue as a matter of women's individual civil rights (Klatch, 1988; Luker, 1984; Petchesky, 1984). Both sides of the struggle are well organized and networked, with anti-abortionists represented by Right to Life, Operation Rescue, and the Christian Coalition, among others and pro-choice proponents represented by the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), the National Organization for Women (NOW), and others. These organizations have been variably effective in accessing and mobilizing resources, raising considerable funds, lobbying legislators, organizing PACs and petition drives, buying advertising space in print and broadcasting media, and organizing widely viewed rallies and demonstrations. Such mobilized resources within the gendered group opens up access to new ideological frames and state actors, forcing legislators to frame and influence the creation of abortion and other gendering policies in ways that might benefit women.

Furthermore, each of the gendered interest groups has created opportunities or invoked the threat of the potential to create mass turmoil. Pro-choice proponents have frequently organized massive demonstrations in major cities, and in Washington, D.C., in particular, drawing hundreds of thousands of participants and suggesting to legislators that there is widespread support for the right to abortion access and the failure to uphold that access could result in political disaster for members of Congress (witness, for example, the popular bumper sticker, "I support *Roe v. Wade* . . . and I vote!"). On the other hand, the Christian right emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as such an organized and influential force in the Republican Party that the party adopted an anti-abortion plank in its electoral platform. In addition, members of Operation Rescue and other similar organizations have engaged in demonstrations blocking the entrance to abortion clinics, harassing patients and doctors entering clinics. Moreover, there have been increasing attacks against abortion clinics, such as bombings, shootings, murders, and harassment of clinic employees at their homes and other public places. These actions produce or threaten to produce mass turmoil at sites where abortions are performed, making access to the right to abortion increasingly difficult (Mason, 2002).

Anti-abortion proponents have also become relatively adept at accessing the judicial system to chip away at the implementation of the right to abortion access. The result thus far is that although *Roe v. Wade* remains a powerful force in defining women's rights, it has undergone increasing restrictions. In its 1989 *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* decision, the Supreme Court allowed individual states the right to determine their own abortion policy restrictions, a move that has focused much of the struggle at the individual state level. Each state essentially produces its own set of restrictions, including requirements to secure the permission of the parents or guardians of a minor seeking abortion, refusals to allow Medicaid to pay for the abortions of poor women, and the banning of certain abortion procedures. Such restrictions contribute to the state gendering project in that women who cannot afford to pay to end unwanted pregnancies or women who live in states that restrict access to abortions may find themselves unlikely to be able to access educational or employment opportunities because of the high cost of child care, health care insurance costs, and the expense of child rearing. The result at both the state and federal levels is a gendering that reiterates the subordination of women, particularly women of color and poor women, as more become increasingly dependent either on the state itself or on their husbands or partners for economic security.

Although there has clearly been a shifting of the policy line between the natural and the social construction of gender in the United States, the dialectical process of that shifting has been characterized by both progress and setback. One condition affecting the balance of gendering forces in that process has been the relative unity within gendered interest groups. While "the feminist movement" is often depicted as a unified, monolithic movement, the fact is that it is actually splintered along several dimensions (see Andersen, 1993; Ferree & Hess, 1994). The liberal feminist faction, most visibly organized into NOW, is largely a white, middle-class interest group focused on increasing the opportunities for participation of women in the political, economic, and social institutions of society. They thus accept the existing social structures as a given and seek to reform these, so as to end gendered discrimination. This is in contrast to the smaller "radical feminist" interest group, which defines patriarchy as *the* enemy and seeks to end all institutional structures and roles reinforcing male dominance. Thus, marriage, for example, is seen as a highly oppressive, patriarchal institution that needs to be transcended by a redefined notion of family in which adult women and children create new roles apart from men. Marxist or socialist feminists define capitalism as the root of gendered inequality in which women are the reproducers of the reserve army of workers (Mies, 1998; Millett, 1969; Rich, 1995; Rothman, 1982). They therefore seek the abolition of capitalism as

the means to eliminating patriarchy (although those who identify as socialist feminists sometimes frame patriarchy and capitalism as “dual systems” that are often not easily distinguishable from one another). Finally, anarcho-feminists argue against all forms of domination, seeing the state as a fundamentally dominating institution that is illegitimate in itself. Thus, anarcho-feminists tend to argue for direct action tactics, increasing the autonomy of women (and all genders) rather than relying on the state for social improvement.

In addition, there are other rifts within gendered interest groups, including class, racially defined, sexual identity, and religious interests, among others. These different factions and interests within the “feminist movement” mean that gendered interest groups seeking greater empowerment of women as the subordinated group are not necessarily unified in their goals, their strategies, or their framing of the issues. Those schisms become a condition affecting the balance of gendering forces in the gendering state project.

On the other hand, there have been times when these schisms have been transcended to produce greater unity and therefore a greater opportunity to affect the gendering state project. Such a moment in time could be seen in the struggle for the right of women to vote, resulting in 1920 with the passage and implementation of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. While those who fought for over 70 years for this right differed over other important issues defining the role of women in other institutions (such as marriage and the labor market), most agreed on the goal of women’s suffrage. That coalescence evaporated after passage of the amendment, producing a 4-decade period of abeyance (Cott, 1987; Flexner, 1973; Taylor, 1989). There followed a reiteration of male dominance and patriarchal privilege that largely remained unchallenged until the demand for female labor during World War II created the economic conditions that mitigated the ideological frame defining women as biologically unsuited for industrial labor. This ebb and flow of challenge and changes in gendering illustrates how the weakening of selectivity filters greatly affected the balance of gendered forces and thus set the stage for the challenges and alterations in the state project from the 1940s onward.

Similar dynamics can be seen at work in heteronormative and racial formation state projects.

The State and Heteronormative Oppression

Queer theory, in contrast to race and feminist theory, puts poststructuralism rigorously to use in its attempts to outline the ways that people come to be

placed into identity categories and the historical ways identities have been constructed, as well as what gets left out when we rely on these simple identity models for discussing nonnormative sexual and gender practices. Since we have organized this idea of “sexual orientation” around gender practices (hetero, homo, and bi categories assume that sexual orientation can be reduced to the gender of the identified person and the object[s] of their affection), queer theorists stress that we cannot isolate oppression around sexuality from gender. Further, people are disciplined and identities are constructed in often similar ways due to nonnormative sexual *and* gender practices. This opens up queer investigations beyond lesbian, bisexual, and gay identity models to include the experiences of nonnormative gender practices and performances like transgender people, drag queens/kings, gender queers, and so on, as well as sexual practices that are not necessarily organized around gender at all (e.g., polyamory; bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadism and masochism or BDSM; sex work).

One of the ways that investigations into state projects and heteronormative oppression have been articulated by researchers is through the concept of *sexual citizenship* (see, e.g., Evans, 1993). Sexual citizenship troubles the assumed divide between the public and private spheres, which typically relegates the sexual to the private sphere—thus outside of the purview of public policy and state initiatives. This functions as a selectivity filter that can serve as a barrier to sexual minorities having their grievances heard in the formation of public policy. But public policy, as researchers have demonstrated, can curtail access to full citizenship rights for sexual minorities.

Perhaps one of the most obvious examples of this is in state projects around kinship—especially marriage. Indeed, access to marriage and the state benefits that come with it seem, at the outset, to be a very basic requirement for full citizenship—particularly where kinship intersects with state policy. Married partners have access to over one thousand legal rights that are denied to non-married persons/partnerships (e.g., immigration and residency for partners from other countries; joint parenting and adopting; benefits such as Social Security and Medicare; joint insurance policies for home, auto, and health; wrongful death benefits for a surviving partner and children). Yet, marriage laws in most countries restrict the institution to opposite sex partnerships.

Further, in the United States, one can see how state projects around kinship and marriage have historically been shaped by oppressions that become embedded in governing structures. For example, anti-miscegenation laws prohibited marriage between whites and blacks. Likewise, before the Civil War, slaves were not allowed to marry at all. And before the year 2000, no gay or lesbian couples were legally recognized in any state in the United States. Slowly, however, this has been changing as a result of changes in the

balance of political and institutional forces around gay and lesbian struggles for access to marriage.

Many states began seeing large mobilizations in support of same-sex marriage, challenging the state's right to limit these legal partnerships. For example, in Connecticut, *Love Makes a Family* mobilized community resources around this support, staging protests, organizing letter-writing campaigns, and holding educational and community events to teach the public about the concerns of lesbians and gays who wanted access to marriage rights (*Love Makes a Family*, 2009). The state, in turn, under Bill Clinton, signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law to roll back some of these efforts. DOMA defined marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman for the purpose of all federal law. Thus, while individual states could allow legal marriages within their state's borders, other states did not need to recognize these unions, and federal laws and benefits were denied to same-sex marriages (see DOMA Watch, 2008).

As we see with racialized and gendered discrimination, cultural and ideological frames of "normalcy" come into play in these public policy debates. That is, opponents of same-sex marriage mobilize arguments that same-sex relationships are "abnormal" or "unnatural" in order to frame the debate in ways that fundamentally alter the lens of the debate from discrimination and exclusion to "natural" and "normal" cultural and ideological frames of reference that exclude same-sex partnerships. This becomes further complexified by queer theoretical models that argue for the legitimacy of all nonnormative sexual practices.

Indeed, even the legalization of same-sex marriages would continue to exclude multipartnered (non-monogamous) relationships or families of choice that may not be based on romantic involvement and/or relationships. This is because of the assumption that dyadic, monogamous relationships are natural and normal despite the existence of many different kinds of multiple partnerships that fall outside of this normative, patterned expectation. Thus, queer theorists often point to the concept of "normal" itself to critique how we have come to police the sexual and gender practices of others, as well as ourselves (see, especially, Warner, 1999).

This has led to research into the ways in which the state creates legal barriers to free sexual expression of all kinds. Again, since queer theoretical perspectives include investigations into all sexual minorities, then sexual and/or gender practices that fall outside of our heteronormative assumptions but may not necessarily be organized around gender (as in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, or LGBTQ, models) are included in queer research. This allows us to look into the ways that the state legislates against practices such as BDSM, sex work, non-monogamy, and so on.

For example, in the United Kingdom, it is not legally possible to consent to bodily harm. Thus, any consensual sexual act involving bodily harm is an actionable offense according to the state. This policy led, in one case, to a man being convicted of aiding and abetting in his own assault (see Sadist, 2006, p. 180). Similarly, in Italy, anyone willingly causing “injury” to another is subject to legal penalty. Likewise, in Austria, the law allows for consent in bodily injury except where it offends “moral sensibilities.” In the United States, laws surrounding sexual practices differ widely depending on the state and sometimes even the county and/or city in which they occur.

As we saw in the debate over same-sex marriage, cultural and ideological frames of “normalcy” are often employed in the disciplining of consensual sexual practices such as BDSM. As well, ideas of moral rightness and correctness are mobilized to defend normative assumptions about sexual and/or gender practices from cultural as well as legal change. And these frames are used to keep attempts to limit state involvement in nonnormative sexual practices out of public debate.

While there has been a rise in BDSM community organization (sometimes referred to as the “leather community”) and attempts have been made to mobilize political and economic resources around changing the legal status of various BDSM practices, this particular struggle has not made much inroad into public debate. Part of this might be due to the ways that sexual identity has been constructed in our society. Indeed, BDSM is typically not even considered a “sexual orientation” due to the fact that it is not organized around gender. This can lead to the mistaken assumption that people who engage in BDSM practices are not actually sexual minorities because there is not a culturally available identity category for them. Thus, the discursive frames that have been historically created in the history of sexuality can also serve as selectivity filters for what gets discussed and what gets ignored in state policy.

As well, notions surrounding equality and domination can preclude some communities from involving themselves in a given struggle, such as the fight for the legal right to free sexual expression as it relates to BDSM practices. Because of this, BDSM has caused a split in feminist theorizing and organizing about the nature of the claims surrounding these practices. Some feminists, for example, have claimed that BDSM represents the internalization and eroticization of a culture based on coercion and control. Therefore, to these feminists, BDSM itself is a practice that reinforces the structured domination so common in patriarchal societies. However, other feminists, often referring to themselves as “pro-sex” feminists, argue that power is not so simple and that consensual sexual practices that “play” with power can actually lead to a deeper appreciation for, and understanding of, the complex

ways that power operates in our world. These internal disagreements also have effects on the ability of communities to seek support from other social movements in their attempts to effect changes in state policies as they change the balance of institutional political forces.

Similar processes can be seen at work in struggles over social viability for people who transgress our binary understanding of gender. Indeed, notions of “normalcy” and “naturalness” are mobilized to delegitimize the demands of transgender people, intersex people (people born with male and female sexual organs), and genderqueers (those who completely fall outside of our binary construction of gender). Similarly, some feminists have rejected claims made by transgender people based on essentialist notions of what it means to be a “real” woman (see, e.g., Raymond, 1979), while many feminists accept that if gender is a social construction, then “womanhood” is a social category available to people who might be born biologically “male” or intersex.

While many of the legal claims made by gender-variant people have been centered around simple social viability (e.g., access to public bathrooms, personal gender assignment on legal identifications), the gender-variant community has also struggled to get protections under nondiscrimination laws. Such laws have successfully been passed in 13 states in the United States, and there are proposals for such bills in 20 states. These have come as a result of successful challenges to state policy by the gender-variant community and their allies.

An interesting feature of these debates has been the ways that medicalizing discourses have served as selectivity filters within policy discussions. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (or *DSM*, which is utilized by psychologists and psychiatrists) lists “gender identity disorder” as a mental illness. This effectively frames the problem around those notions of “mental illness” rather than questioning the utility of our binary construction of gender in most modern societies (despite evidence of societies with much more flexible notions around gender and many different available categories for gender than just “woman” and “man”).

At play here, then, are the selectivity filters used to frame gender-variant people as “mentally ill” as well as the balance of institutional and political forces being affected by ruptures in progressive movements, such as feminism, which might be seen as natural allies in the fight for transgender rights. Thus, the medicalizing discourses used to treat gender variance as an “illness” that might be “cured” limit the ability of social movements to pressure the state to protect gender-variant people from discrimination. Likewise, ruptures in movement alliances can weaken the ability of gender-variant people to mobilize resources in order to struggle for social viability and protection from discriminatory practices.

Like feminism, part of the struggle of queer movements is toward weakening the selectivity filters that create barriers to inclusion in state policy. Similar objectives are at work in movements that attempt to affect state policy around racialized oppression.

The State and Racialized Oppression

Research in race theory parallels many of the issues raised in feminist state theory and suggests a similar challenge to state theory that focuses exclusively on economic and class relations and oppression. For example, analysts using *racial formation theory* (Haney Lopez, 1996; Ignatiev, 1995; Omi & Winant, 1990; Winant, 1994, 2000) emphasize that conceptualizations of race as a matter of biology have no meaning. Instead, they argue, “race” is *socially* constructed, the product of ongoing political struggles over its very meaning and its implications for people’s political, social, and economic rights (Stevens, 1999; Yanow, 2003). This analysis implies a role of the state in the process of socially constructing race, since the state is involved in much policy making and political maneuvering relative to racialized issues. As such, the state is a *racial state* (Calavita, 2005; Goldberg, 2002). Other observers are more explicit: Rather than a racial state in society, the state is a *racist state*, in which racialized inequalities are embedded in the very structure of the state (Feagin, 2001).

At the very least, the state has clearly been an arena for battles over rights, sparked by a claims process challenge posed by civil rights movements. Much like the gendering claims process described by Peattie and Rein (1983), the racial formation claims process involves a struggle over shifting the line between the natural or biological and the artificial or political. How much of racialized inequality and oppression is simply a matter of biology, wherein one race (whites) is inherently genetically superior and all others genetically inferior (see, e.g., Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) and therefore immutable and nonresponsive to reform policy? How much of racialized inequality and oppression is more a matter of social constructions that therefore can be challenged and altered with political struggle and legislation? Historically, civil rights movements around the world have set such claims processes in motion and challenged the racial regimes that are “steeped in discriminatory or exclusionist traditions” (Winant, 2000, pp. 177–178), much like feminist claims processes have challenged gender regimes.

Contemporary racial theory has had difficulty explaining persistent racial inequality and oppression that legislative reform by the state should have been expected to eliminate. For example, *ethnicity-based theories*

(see Smith, 2001) of race, which view race as a culturally rooted notion of identity, expect integration, equal opportunity, and assimilation to be the antidotes to prejudice and discrimination: The more contact we all have with one another, the more we will understand, appreciate, and accept one another as equals. However, ethnicity-based theories of race are limited by the fact that despite civil rights legislation, serious structural obstacles persist to limit the success of legislation, which may have mandated the social and political rights of individuals to be included but did not mandate the substantive economic resources necessary for accessing those rights (Lipsitz, 1998; Massey & Denton, 1993). Furthermore, the notion of assimilation was predicated on people of color willingly assimilating to white dominant cultural norms, a prospect that was less than appealing to many. The result of this limitation of ethnicity-based theory is the production of analyses that blame people of color themselves for adhering to a race consciousness that harms their ability to assimilate (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997) or that reasserts the importance of defending a “national culture” threatened by immigration and integration (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991; Taguieff, 2001).

Class-based analyses of race saw racial conflict as an arena in which class-based struggles were played out: Limited resources and opportunities drove a wedge between members of the same class who were differentiated by their membership in different racial groups and pitted them one against the other (Bonacich, 1972, 1976; Frymer, 2008; Gordon, Reich, & Edwards, 1982; Reich, 1981; C. A. Wilson, 1996). These analysts expected class consciousness to override the racial divide and legislation like affirmative action to correct the effects of prior discrimination. However, that class consciousness has not evolved to transplant race consciousness; indeed, as gainful employment opportunities become scarcer, growing competition causes whites to increasingly seek to protect the invisible privileges of whiteness (McIntosh, 1992) and to resist affirmative action programs, making it more difficult to recognize their common class position with people of color.

Where ethnicity-based and class-based analyses of race and racial inequality focus on individuals in racial groups or the groups themselves, *racial formation theory* focuses on the state and political processes that socially construct the meaning of race. Rather than being an immutable, stable construct of clearly defined categories and dimensions, race becomes an ongoing, shifting process in which meanings, identities, dimensions, rights, and oppression are constantly contested and reformulated politically. Racial formation processes are subject to the discursive and interpretational perspectives and actions of a wide range of actors, from individuals to groups and social movements as well as to structures and institutions, history and politics—both

national and international. Here, the state is both an arena and an actor, engaged in these struggles over legislation and meaning.

Like much of the gender and state literature, the literature of race and the state tends to de-emphasize the state's use and sanction of violence in the reproduction of systems of racial inequality and oppression in the racial state (see, e.g., James, 1996, 2000). The state frequently uses racial profiling against people of color in policing, for example, and has historically tolerated lynching of African Americans at the hands of white vigilantes, allowing acquittals of lynchers by all-white juries. Jury selection processes that routinely reject the seating of jurists of color have been challenged in many states as racist and therefore unconstitutional in denying people of color the right to due process and a trial by a jury of peers. This practice of jury selection continues today, contributing in no small way to the overrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos in jail and on death row. In essence, when the state sanctions racism in court proceedings and in policing, it is in fact participating in an institutionalized lynching. And when state policy denies convicted felons the right to vote for life, it is compounding the violence by disenfranchising a substantial segment of the population of color, ensuring a hardening of systems of racial inequality that reinforces white privilege (Uggen & Manza, 2002).

Yet, as powerful as the racial state is, it is nonetheless like the patriarchal state, not inexorable. It is subject to pressures from below to alter and change the form and content of racial formation processes. This becomes evident in the ebb and flow of racial formation state projects.

Racial Formation State Projects

State projects of racial formation contribute to the social construction of race through legislation, policy implementation, and judicial determinations governing such issues as slavery, segregation and integration, civil rights (including enfranchisement of African Americans in the political process), affirmative action, multilingualism, immigration, and census definitions and redefinitions of racialized categories. These policies, as entries into the state project of racial formation, affect the social construction of race insofar as they participate in redefining the meaning and social significance of race, thereby affecting the life chances of both whites and people of color.

Much of the racial formation state project has served to create and reinforce a social construction of race in a society based on white superiority, such that people of color remain oppressed and subordinate to whites politically, socially, and economically (Brown, 1995; Marable, 1983; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Quadagno, 2000; Reese, 2005). However, there clearly are policies enacted and

implemented by the state that alter the social constructions of race such that the social, political, and economic positions of people of color in a racialized society, and thus their life chances, may be improved (see Fording, 2001). What are the dynamics of oppression and resistance? How do these affect the state policies that both perpetuate racial formation state projects enhancing racism and white supremacy and expand the empowerment of people of color, thus challenging and mitigating white dominance?

Several researchers have pointed to the role of the state in reinforcing racist stereotypes that reproduce racial inequality. For example, Marable (1983) has forcefully argued that the racist state has served to underdevelop African Americans in the United States through a combination of constitutional amendments, Supreme Court decisions, and institutionalized cultural practices. These include Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution defining slaves as three-fifths of a human being, voting restrictions based on race, chattel slavery, sharecropping, segregated educational institutions, and so on (see also Omi & Winant, 1990; C. A. Wilson, 1996). More recently, welfare reform, with its provisions concerning workfare, has reproduced racist social constructions in that its implementation has primarily harmed women and children of color. This is because women of color face far more limited opportunities than white women in the labor market as a result of institutionalized racist assumptions about work ethic, intelligence, and ability. The state refused to acknowledge racism in the economic institutions as it aggressively enacted and implemented a Draconian welfare system of benefit denial and short eligibility definitions. The state thus contributed to and reinforced racially constructed (and gendered) inequality and oppression (Lieberman, 1998; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Quadagno, 2000). And most recently, predatory lending practices among banks as standard operating procedures have been found to routinely target populations of color such that home ownership, a central element of the American Dream, is denied people of color through foreclosure and thus racialized wealth inequality is reinforced (Beeman, Glasberg, & Casey, 2010).

Taken together, these policy implementations and interpretations serve to reiterate a social construction of race in a society based on white superiority, such that people of color generally remain subordinate to Euro-Americans politically, economically, and socially. Yet, as we saw in the gendering state project, there are obviously policies enacted and Supreme Court determinations handed down that alter the content of the social construction of race so that the life chances of people of color are improved. The question, then, is as follows: What are the dynamics and the conditions under which the racial state participates in the perpetuation of racial formation state projects that enhance white privilege and racism but that may also produce policies expanding the empowerment of people of color to successfully challenge that privilege?

Cultural and ideological frames form institutional selectivity filters biasing and shaping the racial formation state project. For example, language functions to reinforce white superiority by privileging whiteness as the standard of normal. The very word *race* is defined as a biological category defining human differences, such that physical attributes such as color of skin, texture of hair, or shape of lips or eyes, or socially constructed attributes such as language (i.e., Spanish) or geographical location (particularly Asia, Africa, and Latin America) are presumed to indicate different subspecies of humans. These “subspecies” are then hierarchically arranged with whites at the top of the hierarchy and all others arranged below (see, e.g., Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). Pejorative racial epithets and stereotypes used to describe people of color thus underscore assumptions of biological inferiority. While such pejoratives and stereotypes describing white ethnics clearly exist, these are not based on immutable biological characteristics but rather on perceptions of ethnicity as changeable cultural choices (Moore, 1995; C. A. Wilson, 1996).

Racist stereotypes describing people of color as less intelligent, less educated, more violence prone, and less hardworking than whites become institutionalized in the labor market, where people of color are far more likely than whites to be unemployed and poverty stricken (W. J. Wilson, 1987, 1996). Most pointedly, a recent study compared white with African American and Latino job applicants and found that applicants of color were half as likely as white applicants to be called back for another interview or a job offer, even when white applicants had recent criminal records and jail time (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009). In addition, people of color are also more likely to be underemployed in menial, lower-autonomy, lower-paying, dead-end jobs in the service sector or in nonmanagerial blue-collar jobs. Even when people of color do find employment in managerial jobs, they face a glass ceiling beyond which it is extremely difficult to rise (Benjamin, 1991; Cose, 1992; Feagin, 1991; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993; Turner, Fix, & Struyk, 1991; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Racist cultural stereotypes are reiterated in educational institutions, where children of color are highly likely to be segregated into school systems with inadequate budgets and facilities (Kozol, 1991). African American children are disproportionately tracked into classes for the “educable mentally retarded,” and white children are far more likely to be tracked into programs for the gifted and talented or college bound (Edelman, 1988). Textbooks and other materials tend to be written for a predominantly white Anglo student body, with the historical and cultural contributions of people of color largely ignored or accorded such brief coverage as to imply that

these are unimportant and that only whites have done anything significant and positive (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993), thus symbolically annihilating people of color.

White superiority ideologies and culture together act as selectivity filters reinforcing a framing of racial formation biasing policy formation and implementation. This prism interacts with the balance of raced forces in a dialectical process producing policy creation and implementation. The ability of people of color to gain advantageous policy is shaped by a claims process similar to that in gendering processes in which the line between the biological or natural and the socially constructed notions of race are shifted. This process is conditioned by the balance of raced forces. People of color are more likely to gain passage and implementation of advantageous state policy when there is greater unity of perspective among a large number of people of color (and often with the support of whites, an indication of a lack of unity among whites) who are organized in formal organizations and networks to address racism and racial inequality. They are more likely to become organized when faced with (or when they perceive) an imminent threat to their life chances. For example, increased incidents of police brutality and violent hate crimes targeting people of color have elicited organized protests and demands for legal and legislative action, as has mounting evidence of continued segregation and discrimination in schools (Kozol, 1991), labor markets (Kirschenman & Neckerman, 1991; Wilson, 1987), credit access (Glasberg, 1992; Squires, 1994), housing (Beeman, Glasberg, & Casey, 2010), and the location of toxic waste sites (Bryant & Mohai, 1992; Bullard, 1983, 1993).

Such efforts to gain advantageous legislation and implementation of policies and programs are more likely to succeed when whites are less unified in their opposition to challenges to white superiority, when there is disunity between state branches or agencies, or when crises in other institutions increase the legitimacy of the demands of people of color. For example, the Constitution's usage of *freedom from* (as opposed to *freedom to*) supports a notion of negative freedom rather than positive freedom: "Positive freedom involves the creation of conditions conducive to human growth and the development and realization of human potentials. . . . Negative freedom is freedom from restraints and from government intrusion" (C. A. Wilson, 1996, p. 29; see also Dollard, 1949; Myrdal, 1948/1975).

The emphasis on freedom creates a cultural filter protecting slavery, discrimination, and racism rather than equality of life chances. This cultural filter remained intact until the Supreme Court altered its patterns of decision making from an emphasis on equal treatment to one of fair and equitable outcomes, signaling disunity between state branches and agencies.

That disunity created an opportunity for an alteration in the balance of racially formed forces, such that an organized civil rights movement could become more empowered to press an agenda of resistance and challenge to racism in the state and society. Civil rights organizations also became highly sophisticated at networking, such that black churches, student organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), labor unions, and other organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) commonly operated together in developing strategies to challenge institutional racialized practices and traditions (Morris, 1984). Moreover, the balance of political and institutional forces was further affected by the ability of civil rights groups to create mass disruption through boycotts, sit-ins, marches, and other demonstrations and organized protests (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984) as well as riots.

In the 1980s and 1990s, with the civil rights movement in a more quiescent, less militant period of abeyance than in the 1950s to 1970s, backlashes and challenges to the shift in the balance of racially formed forces have intensified and redeployed into seemingly nonracial (i.e., class or economic) policy arenas such as welfare reform and attempts to repeal or undermine affirmative action (see Lieberman, 1998; Quadagno, 1994). The effect of the return to unbiased or neutral concepts like “freedom from Big Government” in a context of a less active and vigilant civil rights movement and a more organized, resource-rich, and motivated backlash movement has been a perpetuation of racism.

Cultural assumptions that people of color (particularly African Americans and Latinos/Latinas) are violent and less intelligent than whites are additionally perpetuated by the disproportionate representation of people of color under the control of the criminal justice system, including those on death row (Culver, 1992; Radelet, 1981); police brutality of people of color on the streets, which is frequently condoned by the failure of courts and police review boards to punish such unequal and brutal misapplication of the law (Cashmore & McLaughlin, 1991); differential treatment of people of color relative to whites in bail settings (Houston & Ewing, 1992); political disenfranchisement of significant proportions of populations of color through criminal justice policies permanently denying voting rights to convicted felons (Manza & Uggen, 2008; Uggen & Manza, 2002); underrepresentation of people of color on juries; and the differential treatment of immigrants and the granting of visas based on racist stereotypes (Cose, 1992), including the notion of Asians as “model minorities” (Chou & Feagin, 2008) in contrast to immigrants from Latin America and Africa who are largely considered undesirables (Haney Lopez, 1996; Rose, 1997; Takaki, 1982; van Dijk, 1993; Zolberg, 1990).

This discussion of the ebb and flow of the social construction of race as the result of the dynamics of racial formation processes informed by cultural frames as selectivity filters and the balance of raced forces suggests the usefulness of an expanded use of Peattie and Rein's (1983) notion of the claims process (see also Koopmans & Statham, 1999). Insofar as race is culturally conceptualized around assumptions regarding the biological bases of human differences, there is a claims process marked by struggles over shifting the line between the natural (biological) and the artificial (socially constructed) meaning of race.

Intersectionality of Racialized, Class-Based, and Gendered Oppression and State Projects

Some observers have begun working on questions concerning the intersectionality of race, class, sexuality, and gender and the state. For example, McCall (2001) found that configurations of inequality are indeed not simply dimensionalized inexorably along gender, racial, and class lines but that the intersection of these along with variations in geographic place has a significant effect on inequalities. She argued that this insight must have an effect on the formulation of anti-inequality policies enacted by the state. While her approach is indeed a refreshing departure from literature that focuses on one or the other of the crucial organizing principles in isolation of the others, her analysis treats these as independent variables whose patterns should enter into the formulation of state policy to address them. What remains to be examined is the interaction between these organizing principles, their intersections, and the interaction between these and state policy. That is, the state may affect as well as be affected by the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender.

Nakano Glenn (2002) explored the intersections of racialized, class, and gendered oppressions in the state's development of immigration and labor policy between the end of Reconstruction and the beginning of World War II. The state wrestled with the meaning of free labor and citizenship at a time when the abolition of slavery deeply altered the nation's social construction of labor and huge waves of immigrants fueled the Industrial Revolution and challenged the notion of who was a rightful citizen. The struggles over the redefinition of these twin state projects pitted blacks against whites in the southern United States, Mexicans against Anglos in the Southwest, and Asians against white planters in Hawaii and produced what she termed "unequal freedom" among workers based on their gender and their varying racialized categories and framed the shape and scope of worker resistance to that oppression.

In contrast, other analyses recognize the need to place race, class, sexuality, and gender at the center of the analysis within the context of the society in which they occur as well as in the larger, global context. For example, studies of colonialism highlight the powerful role of military action and economic practices and sanctions in control of nations (Ferdnace, 1998; Sharma & Kumar, 2003). This required the subjugation of women, people of color, and labor on a grand, global scale. Connell (1997) noted that racial and sexual issues were intertwined in the North Atlantic expansion and immigration policies that gave rise to “a growing fear of miscegenation, a hardening color line, contempt of the colonizers for the sexuality or masculinity of the colonized, and fears of racial swamping . . .” (p. 1523). The contemporary imperialism is more subtle but just as powerful as the internal and external colonialism of Europe and the United States. It takes the guise of humanitarian and economic aid—what some have come to call “neo-liberalism.” But the end result continues to be power and control over indigenous populations and reproduction of systems of inequality and oppression.

The intersections of state projects and multiple systems of oppression can also be seen in the United States’ “war on terror.” This state project affects and is affected by the everyday lived experiences of the working class and the poor and people of color, who are most likely to populate the “all-volunteer” military used to wage war and to pay most dearly for it. Increasingly, reports of the daily oppression of women as soldiers in that same military (through sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination in training and in service) and women left behind who are expected to juggle work and family with little institutional or financial support continue to mount. Gays and lesbians in the military are subjected to unequal treatment and consequences through the application of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy that has allowed various military branches to discharge thousands of otherwise highly valued and critical personnel (including many with the crucial ability to speak Arabic and Farsi when the United States is involved in armed conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan). And people of color are most likely to be subject to enhanced scrutiny and profiling, compromised civil liberties and rights, and possible loss of rights indefinitely. Moreover, revised and new policies resulting in restricted immigration, reallocation of budget funds in support of war and away from programs that benefit women, children, and the poor (while promoting tax cuts benefitting the wealthy) are ostensibly aimed at containing terrorism but become entries into racialized, patriarchal, and classist state projects of oppression (see War Times, 2010).

Finally, a contingency analysis of the state and state projects framed in the intersections of systems of oppression must include an analysis of the role of communities of the oppressed in resistance and relationship between them

and state projects and policies (Cazenave, 2007; Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; McBride, 2001). When resistance and social movements are included in the analysis of the process, the state no longer remains a monolithic, overriding force; it takes its place, instead, as an actor as well as a structure and an arena of struggle. Social movements of the oppressed commonly incorporate challenges to dominant ideologies and cultural prisms in state projects and thus may affect the framing of policies and practices. The ebb and flow of these intersecting systems of oppression and of the actors within the state as well as among the oppressed contours the process of state projects and the relationship of the state and society.

Summing Up

Literatures in state theory, feminist state theory, queer theory, and race theory share some parallel notions of the relationship between the state and society and the state's role in the production and maintenance of systems of oppression. State projects are dynamic processes of both oppression from above and resistance from below.

The state is a multidimensional structure that includes not only the legislature but also the judiciary, the executive, and administrative state agencies vested with the power to implement and interpret policy on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, the state is also an actor, subject to the same forces and conditions affecting other groups engaged in policy formation and implementation processes, including unity and disunity between and within agencies and institutional organizations, resource mobilization processes, and access to opportunities to create disruption. In addition, cultural lenses and practices operate as selectivity filters that shape and define perceptions leading to policy and implementation. When we consider that systems of oppression and the selectivity filters they help create do not operate one at a time or in isolation of the others, it alerts us that a multidimensional approach will help us to explain class-based as well as gender-based, sexuality-based, and racially based policy by using Jessop's concepts as organizing conceptual tools. These concepts allow us to identify the relationship between the state and class relations as well as that between the state and gendering, sexuality, and racial formation. We can then begin to articulate the conditions under which some policies are more or less likely to develop at particular points in time and some interests are more or less likely to gain power and have their interests addressed.

State projects are not discrete, individual projects that are isolated from each other. Indeed, there are many places where economic state projects intersect with racial formation state projects (such as immigration policy) or

gendering state projects intersect with racial formation projects (as in affirmative action policy) or heteronormative projects intersect with gendering state projects (as in marriage laws). Additionally, there are policy arenas where multiple state projects may intersect, as is the case in the welfare “reform” of the 1990s and warfare and homeland security policy in 2003. In the case of welfare reform, what appeared to be an economic issue (work as the antidote to poverty) operates as an entry into gendering state projects where gender is socially constructed relative to class: Poor women are socially constructed as good mothers only if they work in the paid labor force and leave the care of their young children to others; middle-class and affluent mothers, in contrast, are socially constructed as good mothers only if they remain dependent on their male partners and stay at home to care for their own young children. Moreover, such welfare reforms are also part of the racial formation state project since they largely affect women and children of color more harshly than whites and imply that the problems besetting welfare are somehow a function of a racially related culture of poverty. Thus, state projects themselves are not isolated one from the other. Rather, they articulate common and intersecting agendas that contribute to intersecting systems of multiple oppressions. A holistic state theory must account for these multiple systems, where they intersect, and how—as well as recognize that the state is an institution that often has interests of its own.

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