

Natividad Gutiérrez Chong, ed., *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalisms in Latin America*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, 235 pp., ISBN 9780754649250

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Nationalism is a multifaceted phenomenon that has recently become a focus of redefinition through new multidisciplinary and multi-method approaches. The links among gender, ethnicity and nationalism, neglected for a long time in academic research, are increasingly receiving coverage in the scholarly literature. With case studies covering Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico, this book systematically explores these links in the context of Latin America. Contributions are by leading Latin American scholars from diverse academic fields who share the aim of overcoming the limitations of the Eurocentric and androcentric framework that characterizes the main approaches to nationalism. The book addresses the main corpus of the gender/ethnicity/nationalism intersections relying on recent bibliographic sources and case studies.

In a 'Preface', Gutiérrez explains her aims in proposing a typology of nationalisms: to establish conceptual differences between different processes often labelled as nationalism; to highlight the importance of historical research done on the making of the Latin American nations; and to provide a methodological tool to examine the roles of women in nationalisms. Gutiérrez outlines four axes for the analysis of the relationship between gender and nationalism. The first axis addresses the contribution of women to nation-building against European colonialism, and identifies the processes by which the state and its institutions have excluded women. The second discusses the active role of women in contemporary ethnic and nationalist movements. The third analyses the place of the female body in national myths and the way it has been portrayed as the symbol of homeland, belongingness and mother-patria. Finally, the fourth axis explores the role of women in developing intellectual, academic and artistic contributions to create new visions of the nation.

In Chapter 1, 'Women and Nationalisms', Gutiérrez offers a theoretical and methodological proposal for studying the roles played by women in different types of nationalism. She distinguishes three historical types in Latin America, from the early 19th century up to the new millennium. The first type refers to planning and fighting for independence from colonial rule; the second concerns nation-building processes; and the third type addresses the political expressions that challenge the basis of the homogeneous, monocultural project of nationhood

in favour of a multicultural nation. This methodological tool, which interacts with the typology of gender and nationalism proposed by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989), introduces and guides the discussion throughout the three parts of the book, each dedicated to one type of nationalism.

Part 1, 'Struggle and Independence', includes two empirical cases illustrating collective efforts of women to create emancipated ideas about the nation and gain access to economic and symbolic resources in order to overcome social and political exclusion. In Chapter 2 ('Dolores Cacuango and the Origin of the Mother Country'), Bernal analyses the written discourses of a Quechua heroine, including her ideas about reconciliation between classes and factions, her call for unity and pride of belongingness, challenging the nationalist discourse of the political and intellectual elites in this Andean region that made it difficult to integrate poor classes and indigenous peoples.

Lazos Chaver in Chapter 3 ('Nahua Women's Struggle: Small Spaces, Enormous Restrictions') examines the construction of an empowering process among Nahua women of the Santa Marta Sierra. She discusses the limitations and opportunities for constructing sustainable processes to enable the poorest and most marginalized sectors of the rural women to participate in decision-making concerning the development of their communities.

Part 2, 'Nation Building and Identity', addresses the ways in which culture and national identity have constructed and used feminine stereotypes. Different kinds of visual narratives are analysed opening new and fruitful lines of research. This part also explores situations in which women have actively transformed nationalism (as a doctrine, theory or movement).

In Chapter 4 ('Fashioning Indians or Beautiful Savages: The Case of Gaby Herbstein's *Huellas*'), Arnd Schneider examines photographs on a calendar of the year 2000, illustrating an idealization of the body of the *mestiza* woman. Schneider denounces attempts to reinstate an 'authentic origin' by exploiting the female body to portray stereotypes of European beauty and glamour in rustic and wildly exotic settings, recreating romanticized scenarios of indigenous life. These cases illustrate the pervasiveness of 'Eurocentric stereotypes' and the persistence of the old dichotomy nature-culture (see Amâncio and Oliveira, 2006; Deschamps et al., 2005). As Schneider points out, in this calendar women 'become objects of desire for a white public', corresponding to the stereotype of the 'indigenous women as more sensual, closer to nature and sexually less inhibited than their European counterparts' (p. 92).

In Chapter 5 ('Mimí Derba and Azteca Films: The Rise of Nationalism and the First Mexican Woman Film-Maker'), Garcia discusses Derba's ideas of 'Mexicanness'. She considers Derba's cinematographic discourse a pioneering act in creating a nationalistic aesthetic, which was later to be consolidated during the so-called golden age of Mexican cinema. The case of Derba, who lived in the post-revolutionary ambience and contributed to its construction, illustrates the processes by which women are able to elaborate their own visions, symbols and artefacts of Mexican 'originality'.

Offering a new reading of the stereotypes associated with women and heroism, Chapter 6 (Ramirez Barreto, 'Eréndira on Horseback: Variations on a Tale of Conquest and Resistance') refers to a fictitious anti-colonialist heroine,

examining the visual narratives (paintings and murals) about an Indian woman resisting the impact of the Spanish conquest on horseback. Paredes Guerrero (Chapter 7, 'The Role of the Mayan Woman inside the Revolutionary Institutional Party [PRI]') examines the political involvement of the rural Maya women of the Yucatan in political parties as members and leaders. Paredes discusses power, ethnic subalternity, social dynamics, exterior pressure and indigenous dynamics, all of which are useful to explain the structural context of the relationship between the Mayan group and the dominant culture. The extraordinary life story of Doña Emiliana, a Mayan leader, from a peasant family illustrates the survival mechanisms and strategies used to change the subaltern condition imposed on Mayan women.

Part 3, 'Multiculturalism and the Revival of Ethnicity', offers theoretical platforms for debate on gender and multiculturalism. In Chapter 8 ('Women Who Know How to Talk: Gender, Women, Political Participation and Multiculturalism in Mexico'), Zaráte examines the structural and legal challenges of the politics of recognition towards indigenous peoples and women. Such double recognition adds complexity to the debate (see Kymlicka, 1999; Taylor, 1994). She discusses the controversial meaning of multiculturalism and the challenges involved in the transformation of the old nation-states into new forms of post-national states. Raising issues such as 'group rights' and 'strategic essentialism', Zaráte stresses that the naturalization of social inequalities through sex and 'race' differences 'have been and continue to be ideologically marked as socially significant biological facts in class society . . . thereby perpetuating class and in a related way, gender inequality' (Stolcke, 1994: 30). Education and access to information are crucial for deconstructing the oppression embedded in the social system.

María Eugenia Choque and Guillermo Delgado (Chapter 9, 'Indigenous Women, Transnationality and Re/narrativized Social Memory') contribute to the 'ethnic feminisms' that inspired the new leadership of indigenous women through the revisited analysis of collective mythologies in the Quechua language aimed at questioning the Bolivian official nationalism. In their analysis of the so-called 'triple struggle' (Bronstein, 1983) of indigenous women – gender, ethnicity and poverty – they added a fourth element: lack of information ('quadruple struggle', p. 181). In the last chapter, Maylei Blackwell ('Engendering the "Right to Have Rights"') discusses how indigenous women have participated in political movements in Chiapas since 1994. Blackwell shows how indigenous women 'began to decolonize knowledge by moving within their own indigenous epistemologies and forms of knowing while engaging and reworking official state discourses' (p. 194).

As Gutiérrez points out, the construction of the nation-state poses a paradox related to processes of social inclusion and exclusion: 'Every type of nationalism works in contradiction: it strives to create inclusive national unity, but in the process it excludes ethnic groups and women' (p. 226).

This book offers an understanding of nationalisms outside western debates. Deep gender and ethnic inequalities still prevail in our societies and our visions of world history continue to be shaped by a Eurocentric and 'masculinized' social memory (see Enloe, 1989; Liu et al., in press). Moreover, women are often perceived as a 'homogeneous whole' (p. 55), without consideration of the intersections with generational, class and ethnic groups.

By focusing on people who, from the western view, are 'people without history' (Wolf, 1982), this book renders visible the creativity and the active role played by women, with special attention to indigenous women. By depicting people who have been rendered 'invisible' for a long time and by deconstructing the dominant discourse on gender and ethnicity, the book contributes to the *decolonization* of knowledge and to amplifying the voices of indigenous people, especially of women, opening fruitful lines of research on the complex phenomenon related to old-fashioned and new forms of nationalism.

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