

1 Feminist Conceptualisations of the State: One Major Critical 2 Paradigm

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5

6 **Abstract**

7 This paper presents a literature review of liberal feminist, Marxist feminist, radical feminist,
8 socialist feminist, all the ?other?, i.e. lesbian feminist, ecofeminist, race and ethnicity based
9 feminist and Third World feminist, and postmodern feminist accounts of the state. Keeping in
10 mind the fact that feminism, as listed under the contemporary Western critical paradigm,
11 carries the potential to transform the state, the paper ends with a brief overview of the
12 possible inheritances of the above mentioned feminisms. Choosing to use gender inequality
13 rather than patriarchy as an all-encompassing phrase, the paper concludes that in order to
14 develop a common sense on the relationship between the state(s), the market and the (civil)
15 society, finding historical data that are not contaminated by malestream knowledge remains at
16 the top of the agenda of the feminist political struggle.

17

18 **Index terms**— Nation-state, feminist theories, gender inequality, the market/the (civil) society.

19 **1 Introduction**

20 ould men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience,
21 they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable
22 mothers -in a word, better citizen. We should then love them with true affection, because we should learn to
23 respect ourselves. Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792 Feminist conceptualisations
24 of the state range from a highly militant stand point evident in the motto "The state is the greatest pimp"
25 used by the English Collective of Prostitutes in the 1980s, to a more "naive" demand of the recognition of the
26 personal as the political on the part of the radical feminists of the post World War II era. Throughout modern
27 history (both written history and the feminist praxis with its various forms within the household, or outside in
28 the "public" arena), we encounter not one but several feminist perspectives. Liberal feminist perspectives see the
29 state as a neutral arbiter between different interest groups whereas Marxist feminist perspectives theorise the
30 state as a capitalist superstructure that reproduces familial ideology, hence that also reproduces the basic source
31 of women's oppression. Radical feminist perspectives underline the state's patriarchal nature while other feminist
32 perspectives argue that a specific form of the state; i.e. the welfare state, had a woman-friendly structure through
33 which women's empowerment was signified ??Kantola, 2006: 4-8, 5-10). Postmodern feminists challenged all and
34 saw the state as a differentiated rather than a unified institution.

35 My aim in this study is to prepare a brief literature review of the conceptualisation of the state in liberal,
36 Marxist, radical, socialist, all "other" and postmodern feminist accounts. Such a literature review might
37 contribute to the future feminist political struggle. In addition, analysing how various feminist approaches
38 view the relationship between the state, the market, the (civil) society and patriarchy (or as I prefer to use
39 in my own account, gender inequality) might help us refrain from ambiguous definitions that some feminist
40 theoreticians have been making for a couple of centuries. In this regard, I will deliberately neglect the arguments
41 of culturalist, essentialist and psychoanalytic feminisms 1 Secondly, there is a commonly held view in Turkey
42 and probably among lots of peripheral or semiperipheral countries that state building process in the periphery
43 and semi-periphery had emancipating effects on women. Indeed, it is a commonly stressed argument here in
44 Turkey that the Ottoman Empire was highly misogynistic. Yet there are also Islamist feminists, who think that

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45 a different interpretation of Islam can have its part for the emancipation of women. Still the commonly since I
46 think they undermine the strength of feminism as listed under the critical paradigm in contemporary Western
47 literature.

48 First and foremost, feminist political struggle is frequently held in relation to probably the most oppressive
49 institution of the capitalist world-economy, i.e. the nation-state. If the state is an important creator and/or
50 reinforcer of gender inequality, how shall feminist political activism relate to this institution? To what extent
51 is it "emancipating" to continue the struggle in light of or by trying to change the legislations prepared by
52 governments and oppositions? How shall we then further "emancipate" ourselves by trying to change the entire
53 mentality of the legal system, by going and actually begging every single judge? What role does institutions such
54 as the UN, the EU, and civil society institutions in the national scale have to play? Clarifying and criticising
55 major feminist theories on the state is significant in order to be able to answer these questions and hold the
56 feminist struggle accordingly. held belief is that when Mustafa Kemal and the Kemalist elite founded the Turkish
57 Republic, they did not only rescue the people living in Anatolia from colonisation, but also rescued the women
58 of Turkey from oppression. Most probably, similar arguments are made in other peripheral and semi-peripheral
59 countries like Egypt, Afghanistan, Iran etc. since one of the major tools of the legitimisation of Third World
60 nationalisms was the alleged emancipation of women brought by the foundation of the nation-state. However, if
61 the state creates and/or institutionalises gender inequalities this may be quiet the opposite. So it is crucial to
62 investigate the theoretical conceptions as well as historical reality on the state and the state's attitude towards
63 women as a social group in order to clarify several popular misconceptions.

64 In addition, many feminists neglected to examine whether the state is patriarchal or not, even though they
65 linked women's oppression to capitalism (read the market). However, the state is the main producer and
66 reproducer of the market. Given the argument that capitalism and patriarchy are mutually dependent, it can
67 be suspected that the pioneer institution of capitalism, i.e. the nation-state has a role closely intertwined with
68 patriarchy too. Thus, this rather blind-spot of feminist theory has to be investigated more closely.

69 While thinking on the state, we have to keep in mind the fact that the state is not an undifferentiated
70 institution.

71 Feminist scholars as well as mainstream/malestream ones have recently begun to accept this fact thanks to the
72 contribution of postmodern social scientists. Keeping in mind the work of Foucault, this paper will recognise that
73 "rather than there being a 'unity of state power' there is a 'complex strategical situation in a particular society'"
74 ??Pringle & Watson, 1998: 206). The paper will also recognise that the state and its history differ between
75 the core, the periphery and the semi-periphery. However, due to the fact that both malestream and feminist
76 literature about the state is based on the form that the state takes in the core, I will mainly be elaborating
77 on the core section of the capitalist-world economy. One also has to keep in mind the unique characteristics
78 particular states have, based on other important factors such as religion, customs and traditions, ethnicities etc.
79 Such contingencies cause differences between various states and their relation to and attitudes towards women
80 as a social group. However, since this paper will be a theoretical discussion rather than a historical research, it
81 would be extending the limits of this paper to take into account each and every such difference.

82 2 II.

83 3 Liberal Feminist Accounts of the State

84 Yes, ye lordly, ye haughty sex, our souls are by nature equal to yours; the same breath of God animates, enlivens,
85 and invigorates us; and that we are not fallen lower than yourselves, let those witness who have greatly towered
86 above the various discouragements by which they have been so heavily oppressed. Constantia, On the Equality
87 of the Sexes, 1790

88 Liberal feminism was born roughly in the 18th century and went through some changes over the last three
89 centuries. Early liberal feminists of the Enlightenment, such as M. Wollstonecraft, J. S. Mill and H. T. Mill,
90 E. C. Stanton etc. adhered to the basic premise of the Enlightenment, as given in the Encyclopédie, that
91 underlined"?the autonomy of men, the secularisation of knowledge and thought, the natural goodness and
92 perfectibility of human nature, and belief in reason and experience, science and progress" ??Anchor, 1967:
93 69-70). Following the same line of thought but being highly critical of Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau,
94 early liberal feminists insisted that women, as well as men, have the capacity of rationality; they maintained that
95 men and women are alike, so that they should have the same rights and opportunities ??Donovan, 2006: 33). In
96 the struggle for equal rights, they saw the state as "a neutral arbiter between conflicting interests and a guarantor
97 of individual rights" ??Radtke & Stam, 1994: 141). While acknowledging that the institution was dominated by
98 men and state policies pursued male interests, they adhered to the idea of the alleged distinction between the
99 public and the private, between the state and the market and between the state and the society. Hence their
100 primary goal was to include more women in the state in order to entail more women's policies ??Kantola, 2006:
101 5). One of the greatest efforts made in this direction was the movement of suffrage, which was among the first
102 steps towards defining women as citizens whereas previously only men were accepted as citizens of the state. It
103 has to be noted that while some suffragists, like the British suffragists had a more militant political stand that
104 involved the use of legitimate violence, others did not.

105 The idea that the minimal state, which belongs to the public sphere should interfere in the matters in the

106 private domain was common in early liberal feminism. Although the most revolutionist voice of early liberal
107 feminism, M. Wollstonecraft proposed that marriage was common and legal prostitution (Wollstonecraft, 1792: 108
108 626) 2 Wollstonecraft's arguments as presented in this paper are cited from the 1995 dated book, The Portable
109 Enlightenment Reader, which is edited by Kramnick .

110 , for the majority of the early liberal feminists the main duty of the minimal state was to protect women's
111 property and inheritance rights within the "private" domain of the family. However, the liberal tone began to
112 change in the mid twentieth century in dialectical tension with other feminisms of other political stands. As
113 liberalism "came to be understood not as individualism and laissez faire but as a sense of social responsibility
114 coupled with a more activist, bureaucratic and 'efficient' government", liberal feminists began to argue that the
115 state was responsible for what is going on in the private domain via also social policies ??Gordon, 1990: 72).
116 These social policies would address to issues like male violence, child care, abortion etc. 3

117 4 III.

118 5 Marxist Feminist Accounts of the State

119 , which were assumed to be aspects of the allegedly private sphere.

120 Although the liberal feminist approach that is based on the idea that the two sexes are essentially the same
121 led to considerable improvements in especially areas like employment and divorce ??Haney, 2000: 645), it still
122 receives major criticisms, mainly from Marxist feminism.

123 One of the reasons Marx is now rejected by many feminists is because he is wrongly thought to have believed
124 in a static reality and possessed an empiricist concept of the objective. Judith Grant, Gender and Marx's Radical
125 Humanism in The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of ??844, ??005 Early liberalism and early Marxism
126 both adhered to the norms and values of the Enlightenment. However, since the birth of modern history, liberal
127 feminists have been criticised severely by Marxists feminists for not struggling for the transformation of capitalism
128 but rather for what Clara Zetkin called "the ladies'" rights 4 Early Marxist feminists of the late 19th and early
129 20th century like Alexandra Kollontai, Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg followed Engels' arguments presented
130 in the The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (1884) ??Donovan, 2006: 89) that taming of
131 cattle brought by men's acquisition of surplus value, which in turn led to the introduction of the father right
132 in order to leave heritage the private property that men now acquired, resulting in the transition to monogamy
133 ??Engels, 1972: 220-221). This asymmetric material relation between husband and wife also held in modern
134 industrial family, since it was the man, who brought food to the family by working outside the house, and the
135 woman, who engaged in the so-called non-productive ??Akal, 2003: 51). household management, which lost
136 its "public" character and became a "private" act in modern industrial society according to Marxist feminism
137 ??Donovan, 2006: 88). Hence Engels and early Marxist feminists claimed that women would be emancipated
138 under socialism by entering into the public sphere and through the socialisation of housework and childrearing
139 ??Tong, 1989: 49).

140 Following this line of thinking but changing its path throughout the 20th century mainly with the rise of
141 radical feminism, contemporary Marxist feminists do not see the capitalist state solely as an institution but as
142 a form of social relations. According to Marxist feminists, oppressive gender relations are caused by the state's
143 relation with the bourgeoisie:

144 Marxist feminists have argued that the male breadwinner family and women's dependence within it are
145 supported by capitalist states because they have to ensure the reproduction of labour power and that women's
146 unpaid domestic labour is the cheapest way of doing this ??Charles, 2000: 17).

147 It is the dependence of women on men that consolidates men's power over women and it is the alliance between
148 the state and capital that helps to produce and reproduce this dependence via the familial ideology.

149 Although such analyses focus solely on women's reproductive power, in due course came along later Marxist
150 feminists that began to include in their analysis of the state the allegedly non-political issues belonging to the
151 "private" sphere. One of those Marxists feminists was Margaret Benston, who defined women as a class of people
152 producing simple use-values, and she was the first among many Marxists to realise that even when women entered
153 into the labour force, they had to struggle with the "double day" 5 Despite all these efforts, contemporary Marxist
154 feminists too examine issues concerning the allegedly private sphere in light of the dominant conceptualisations
155 of orthodox Marxist theories and see law as an institution of the state that is constructed around the exchange
156 and commoditisation of women . Hence Benston argued that the socialisation of housework and childrearing
157 is the single factor that will end women's oppression as a group (Tong, 1989: 53-54). Benston was followed
158 by Mariarosa Della Costa and Selma James, who realised that domestic work, contrary to Engels' thesis and
159 Benston's argument, is productive; i.e. housework produces surplus value. Thus, they started a campaign to wage
160 housework rather than promoting women's entrance into the labour force in order to be emancipated ??Tong,
161 1989: 54). ??Haney, 2000: 644). Hence despite the Marxist feminist approaches that try to overcome the alleged
162 distinction between the public and the private as well as the state and the society, the fact that Marxist feminists
163 stick to Marxist categories makes them fall into the trap of reductionism and an overemphasis on economics just
164 like Marxists do ??Kantola, 2006: 9). In addition, the Marxist feminist argument that the dependentbreadwinner
165 family form serves for capital, hence for capitalist states have shown to be empirically inconsistent ??Charles,

166 2000: 18). This indicates, quite ironically, that Marxist feminism remains rather ahistorical in its approach to
 167 the state despite Marxism's own adherence to historical materialism.

168 **6 IV.**

169 Radical Feminist Accounts of the State It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking all the
 170 old hierarchies. Finally there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return
 171 for no power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically
 172 enchain, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanised to be loving and tender. So we all became
 173 mothers. Marge Piercy, Women on the Edge of Time, 1976 Radical feminism that reached its peak after World
 174 War II was critical of both liberal and Marxist feminist perspectives, and the rise of radical feminism was probably
 175 the most important factor that created this notion I have used so far, as early and later/contemporary liberal and
 176 Marxist feminist accounts of the state. The rise of radical feminism challenged both liberal and Marxist feminist
 177 accounts. In fact its rise was a "reaction against the theories, organisational structures, and personal life styles
 178 of the male 'New Left'" (Donovan, 2006: 155)". Unlike liberal feminists, radical feminists argued that men and
 179 women are essentially different. Unlike Marxist feminists, radical feminists claimed that it was patriarchy, or
 180 male-domination that cause women's oppression, not capitalism (Donovan, 2006: 156).

181 One of the most well-known radical feminists, Shulamith Firestone argued that patriarchy is the systemic
 182 subordination of women, the origins of which are based on biology, not economics as Marxist feminists claimed
 183 (Tong, 1989: 72-73). Firestone benefited from Marx and Engels' work and redefined the economic notion of class
 184 as "sex class" as a biological concept; i.e. men and women were two opposite sex classes (Eisenstein, 1990:
 185 126). Firestone argued that just as the proletariat would be liberated once they seized the means of production,
 186 women's emancipation would be possible via artificial reproduction

187 The greatest accomplishment of radical feminism for the analysis of the state was the motto "the personal is
 188 political". In her famous work, Sexual Politics (1969), Kate Millet explained that the relationship between the
 189 sexes is political Other radical feminists like Mary O'Brien, Adrienne Rich, Andrea Dworkin, Margaret Atwood,
 190 Gena Corea, Robyn Rowland etc. criticised Firestone's approach, claiming that giving up biological motherhood
 191 would not liberate women (Tong, 1989: 77-81). Such radical feminists embraced women's reproductive powers
 192 and emphasised that women's power to create life makes men so jealous that they try to control reproductive
 193 technologies. Rather than using male-dominated technologies, according to these radical feminists, women would
 194 have to embrace their reproductive powers, realising that "the source of [their] oppression is also the source of
 195 [their] liberation" (Tong, 1989: 78). The radical feminist point of view is that states are not contingently but
 196 essentially patriarchal and that patriarchy is global. "The particular forms that states take are not particularly
 197 significant as are all patriarchal states" (Kantola, 2006: 6)". Radical feminists have (Millet, 2000: 23). Millet
 198 argued that patriarchy is "a political institution built on status, temperament, and role [i.e. gender], a socially
 199 conditioned belief system presenting itself as nature or necessity" (Millet, 2000: xi). According to Millet, such
 200 an institution could be eliminated by eliminating status, temperament and role; i.e. gender as constructed under
 201 patriarchy (Tong, 1989: 96). Radical feminists like Millet and Marilyn French suggested that androgyny is a
 202 solution against patriarchy while other radical feminists like Mary Daly saw the solution in embracing genuine
 203 feminine values, and not the ones that are constructed under male domination (Tong, 1989: 98, 105).

204 In contrast to Marxist feminism that sees the state as representing class interest, radical feminist argue that
 205 the state represented "the interest of the dominant groups, that is, men" (Charles, 2000: 21). Radical feminism
 206 stresses the patriarchal nature of the state and argues that the state has an important role in perpetuating
 207 gender inequalities (Kantola, 2006: 5-6). Contrary to the popular view, radical feminism argues, state policies
 208 are related to the seemingly private issue of sexuality, which is neglected by both many liberal and Marxist
 209 feminists. Firestone praised artificial reproduction technologies since she saw biological motherhood as "the
 210 root of all evils, especially the vice of possessiveness that generates feelings of hostility and jealousy among human
 211 beings" (Tong, 1989: 76). This approach was also embraced by Marge Piercy. Millet states that "the term
 212 "politics" shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled
 213 by another" (Millet, 1970: 23). argued that "the basis of patriarchal power lies in male violence... Male control
 214 of women (and hence male dominance) is dependent on force -the state therefore supports male violence against
 215 women" (Charles, 2000: 21)". This means that as the legitimate monopoly of violence, it is the state that gives
 216 men the right to be violent against women (Charles, 2000: 21).

217 Radical feminists are hostile to state intrusion into women's lives as individuals. According to the radical
 218 feminist account, it is the civil society rather than the state, which is the sphere, where women should fight against
 219 patriarchy (Kantola, 2006: 6) since it is the state that makes it possible for patriarchy to develop as a system
 220 of repressive power (Hoffman, 2001: 103). Hence they develop consciousness groups and nongovernmental
 221 organisations to struggle against patriarchy and help support women's problems.

222 As Betty Friedan explained in her famous work, The Feminine Mystique (1963), after World War II in the
 223 West, women began to be envisaged as solely housewives and were imprisoned within their homes. In The
 224 Feminine Mystique (1963), Friedan suggested that women should participate in the labour force and spare as
 225 little time to housework as possible (Bryson, 1992: 160-161). However, two decades later Friedan recognised
 226 that this suggestion was causing "the double day" and began to speak about a Feminist Mystique, in which
 227 "Superwoman" was this time trapped within the career-marriage combination (Tong, 1989: 24-25). This

228 recognition; i.e. the recognition that equal rights are not enough to emancipate women led to what I called
229 contemporary liberal feminism. In contrast to early liberal feminists, who believed that there was nothing that
230 we can do to "emancipate" women other than struggling for equal rights and for the abolition of discriminatory
231 practices, contemporary, so-called "welfare", liberal feminists argue that it is necessary to eliminate socio-economic,
232 as well as legal, impediments to women's progress today, via policies like preferential. Although radical feminism
233 managed to overcome the dichotomy between the public and the private spheres and did not simply see the
234 state as belonging to the former sphere and the family belonging to the latter, it failed to understand that the
235 distinction between the state, the (civil) society and the market is an illusionary one. Yet by putting into the
236 analysis of the private domain the conceptualisation of sexuality, radical feminism left its heritage to feminist
237 analysis other political waves tended to ignore. As a matter of fact, through their position against the state,
238 radical feminists undermined the role of the social as the all encapsulating sphere. Still, through their slogan,
239 "personal is political" and thorough their attempts to put both private and public experiences of women into the
240 centre of the analysis of the state, radical feminists have made significant contributions to the existing feminist
241 conceptualisations of the state. Without the insights they offered, the allegedly private sphere would neither
242 enter into the theory of the state, nor would feminist activism try to address to individual problems that women
243 face in their everyday lives.

244 7 V.

245 8 Socialist Feminist Accounts of the State

246 As a socialist feminist, I argue that oppression and exploitation are not equivalent concepts, as they were for Marx
247 and Engels. Exploitation speaks to the economic reality of capitalist class relations, whereas oppression refers
248 to power as it is defined within patriarchal and capitalist relations. Zillah Eisenstein, Constructing a Theory of
249 Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism, 1990

250 In order to overcome the biological reductionism of radical feminism and the economic reductionism of Marxist
251 feminism, socialist feminists like Zillah Eisenstein analysed the society in terms of capitalism and patriarchy and
252 saw the state as a mechanism to reconcile the two systems ??Randall & Waylen, 1998: 4). Inheriting the notion of
253 patriarchy from radical feminism as a system of oppression and inheriting class oppression from Marxist feminism,
254 dualsystem theorist Eisenstein defined capitalist patriarchy as the existing mutual dependence of capitalist class
255 structure and male supremacy ??Eisenstein, 1990: 114). Within this framework, Eisenstein identified the state
256 as serving simultaneously both bourgeois and male interests. She drew attention to the fact that there is no real
257 distinction between the public and the private spheres. She argued that the liberal feminist conception of the
258 state failed to recognise that "the structural relations of women's lives -the family, the sexual division of labour,
259 sex-class oppression" was indeed a part of the political life of the society.

260 Scholars like Kate Ferguson and Barett took Eisenstein's argument a step further. Ferguson underlined
261 that "an exclusive focus on integrating women into state institutions produces a situation that perpetuates
262 dominant patriarchal discourses and norms rather than challenges them" (Kantola: 2006: 5). On the other hand,
263 Barett sought the particular channels through which the state promotes women's oppression. She argued that
264 by excluding women from certain types of work through protective legislation, by exercising control over the
265 representation of sexuality via pornography laws, by implementing housing policies that makes it rather difficult
266 to satisfy the needs of the nuclear-family, the state becomes a major factor in women's oppression ??Kantola,
267 2006: 8).

268 Like Marxist feminists, socialist feminists like Barett generally built a strong "link between the family and the
269 economy as the theoretical key to women's ??tam, 1994: 143). However, this link seems rather secondary to some
270 socialist feminists, who have claimed that the state's role in oppressing women is rather indirect. For instance
271 McIntosh argues that since the state regulates both the family and wage labour, the policies they pursue are
272 usually implemented under contradictory pressures. What she implies, as does Heidi Hartmann in her analysis
273 of the family wage ??Hartmann, 1979: 18-19), is that the interests of capital and men may be contradictory.
274 While the former might need women as cheap labourers in the work place, men might want them as unpaid
275 domestic workers at home. Thus, McIntosh claims that due to these contradictory pressures, the state's gender
276 policies are rather ambivalent ??Radke & Stam, 1994: 143). Though her analysis is certainly different from that
277 of Eisenstein or Barett, McIntosh shares a common view that all socialist feminists share: though state policies'
278 may have ambivalent results in terms of oppressing women or though they may seem like indirect or secondary,
279 the state legitimises itself via the claim that it is a genderneutral institution when in fact it is not ??Radke &
280 Stam, 1994: 144).(D D D D) C oppression" (Radke &

281 In her well-known article "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex" another important socialist
282 feminist 8 Hartmann basically claims that social-male authority that was present in tribal customs turned into
283 public-male authority through the political structure imposed by the state. "Since the state is interested in the
284 alienation of the tribal resource base-its land and its , Heidi Hartmann tried to make a more historical analysis of
285 the interrelation between the state, capitalism and patriarchy. She suggested that men's interests begin to alter
286 as a non-statist society transforms into a statist society:

287 With the advent of public-private separations such as those created by the emergence of state apparatus
288 and economic systems based on wider exchange and larger production units, the problem for men became one of

289 maintaining their control over the labour power of women. In other words, a direct personal system of control was
290 translated into an indirect, impersonal system of control, mediated by society-wide institutions. The mechanisms
291 available to men were (1) the traditional division of labour between the sexes, and (2) techniques of hierarchical
292 organization and control. These mechanisms were crucial in the second process, the extension of a sex-ordered
293 division of labour to the wage-labour system, during the period of the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe
294 and the United States ??Hartmann, 1976: 138). labour power -it finds it convenient to use the traditional gender
295 division of labour and resources in tribal society and places them in a hierarchical relationship both internally
296 (husband over wife and children) and externally (lords over peasants and serfs) ??Hartmann, 1976: 145)". She
297 gives some historical examples to show how the promotions of the state served male interests. For instance, she
298 indicates that the men of the medical profession could only forestall midwifery through the state's assistance. If
299 it was not for the state's promotion of "scientific" skills that are presumably gender-neutral, medical profession
300 could not find a legitimate base for replacing midwifery ??Hartmann, 1976: 151); undermining a very important
301 occupation for women that did not only provide them economic independence but also a high social status.

302 Probably the greatest contribution made to feminist conceptualisations of the state came from Catherine
303 MacKinnon in her 1989 dated book, Toward A Feminist Theory of the State (1989). MacKinnon argues that
304 the state is a male institution. It institutionalises its power in its male form ??Hoffman, 2001: 95). The
305 state is assumed to be and acknowledged as rational, which is popularly considered as essentially a male trait.
306 Its rationality translates into point-of-viewlessness, which is accepted as a norm and it is this objectivity and
307 rationality that makes the state a male institution (MacKinnon, 2003: 189). In this framework, the law is a crucial
308 element as it "perfects the state as the mirror of the society" (MacKinnon, 2003: 189). It is seen as the most
309 important institution of the state that is the basic tool and symbol of male power that distorts "social reality in
310 the interest of men and [is] thus integral to patriarchal culture" ??Haney, 2000: 644). Thus, MacKinnon stresses
311 that "even if the laws on rape, abortion and pornography are formally there, they are never fully enforced" 9 All
312 of the above mentioned waves of feminisms have been criticised by all the "others": lesbian ??Kantola, 2006: 6).
313 Despite the fact that socialist feminist theories on the state are more comprehensive and include aspects that
314 are underlined both by Marxist and radical feminists, they have been subjected to certain criticisms, mainly by
315 black and Third World feminists. Despite the criticisms that it faces, socialist feminism has managed to analyse
316 capitalism, the state and patriarchy in relation to each other. It has filled various gaps that neither radical nor
317 Marxist feminists had not been able to fill for decades.

318 All the "others": Lesbian Feminism, Ecofeminism, Race and Ethnicity, Third World Impacts 9 In fact, due
319 to her efforts to integrate the "private" issues into the analysis of the state, some authors like Johanna Kantola
320 regard MacKinnon as a radical feminist. However, she will be regarded as a socialist feminist in this paper since
321 her theory of the state is based on the analogy between work in a Marxist sense and sexuality in a feminist sense.
322 See MacKinnon, 2003. Year 2012 feminists, ecofeminists, feminists of different colours and ethnicities, and
323 feminists of the Third World.

324 One of the strongest attacks that feminisms of all sorts in the Western world had to encounter came from
325 black feminists, who claimed that both Marxist and radical feminist analyses of the state fail to address the fact
326 that state policies are shaped also in the light of race and ethnicity, not solely in accordance with class interests
327 as Marxists claim or not solely in accordance with gendered interests as radical feminists claim ??Charles, 2000:
328 21). Third World feminists have also criticised both radical and liberal feminisms with regard to the fact that
329 they do not take into account the experiences of Third World women under post-colonial states ??Kantola, 2006:
330 7). To the feminists of the Third World, feminist theories seemed to address only to the problems of white,
331 middle class, First World women: Third World feminists and feminists of colour began to talk about race, class
332 and gender as intrinsic to each other, as social constructions, realities, identities emerging in particular social
333 moments and local places, but shaped by processes such as colonialist capital expansion, nation building, and
334 war ??Acker, 1999: 51).

335 Roughly starting from the 1960s and the 1970s, lesbian feminist accounts also began to criticise other Western
336 feminist branches for being homophobic and heteronormative. For instance Charlotte Bunch criticised the
337 socialist feminist concept, family-wage, for not taking into account lesbian workers ??Donovan, 2006: 177).

338 In 1971, a group of lesbian feminists called Radicalesbians set the grounds of lesbian feminist theory. "Trying to
339 get away from the concept of lesbianism as a strictly sexual identity, the Radicalesbians argue[d] that the lesbian
340 [was] really a natural, 'unconscious' feminist, a woman who devote ??d] her energies to other women, who
341 refuse[d] to be identified in terms of a man (Donovan, 2006: 174)". They refused "male-identified" categories and
342 argued that "only women ??could] give to each other a new sense of self", calling for "woman identified" women
343 ??Donovan, 2006: 175). Among the most important contributions of lesbian feminists to feminist literature was
344 the attempt to define heterosexuality. For instance Adrienne Rich saw compulsory heterosexuality as a political
345 institution that was a beachhead of male dominance ??Rich, 1980: 633, 637). According to Rich, this institution
346 curtails womanidentification, which is a potential springhead of female power ??Rich, 1980: 657).

347 Lesbian feminists' suggestion for women's emancipation was lesbian separatism; i.e. nonparticipation in the
348 institution of heterosexuality ??Tong, 1989: 125). Lesbian feminists like Martha Shelley and Elsa Gidlow saw
349 "the lesbian" as a model for an independent strong woman ??Donovan, 2006: 176) and others like Sydney Abbott
350 and Barbara Love argued that lesbianism was a model for egalitarian bonds ??Donovan, 2006: 177).

351 Ecofeminism, which began to emerge roughly in the 1990s, was also critical of mainstream feminist accounts.

352 Although feminists of various branches had also taken into account animal rights, it was not until the rise of
353 ecofeminism that ecological issues began to be an integral part of feminist theory and practice:

354 One of the main theoretical projects of ecofeminism is to construct new ways of thinking about the relationship
355 between human and nature, including animal, replacing the dualistic, objectifying mode characteristic of Western
356 science ??Donovan, 2006: 219).

357 Many ecofeminists establish a positive identification between women and nature ??Donovan, 2006: 217).

358 Ecofeminists argue that "the domination of women and the domination of nature are integral. ??Donovan, 2006:
359 218".

360 The problem with all these forms of "otherness" is that it carries contemporary feminist literature to
361 postmodernism as a unifying social theory. While the ecofeminist cherish of the nature may sound lovely, it
362 can not escape from the Enlightenment dichotomy between the natural and the rational as has been used to
363 further marginalise women in various feminist accounts. Lesbian feminists' attempt to build "the lesbian" as
364 the role model is also problematic. Quiet ironically, such a viewpoint becomes highly biphobic and transphobic,
365 further ignoring the differences between women arising from sexual orientation and gender identity.

366 9 VI.

367 10 Postmodern Feminist Accounts of the State

368 Postmodernism challenges the metanarratives of Western civilisation, particularly the Enlightenment idea of the
369 presence of a historically progressive science ??Donovan, 2006: 213). Hence postmodernists "make us sceptical
370 about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language that are often taken for granted within
371 and serve as legitimisation for contemporary Western culture (Flax, 1990: 41)". Postmodernists like Foucault also
372 reject the grand institutions of Western civilisation, which reify dominative practices ??Donovan, 2006: 213).

373 Contrary to all the above examined waves of feminism, postmodern10 10 Kantola prefers to use the term
374 post-structuralism instead. I used to think in line with Kantola on this manner, yet in the 21st century, it
375 seems that what we name as post-structuralism is actually postmodernism. Hence I would like to associate,
376 from here onwards, structuralism with Marxist conceptualisations instead. discourses" rather than a unitary
377 body ??Kantola, 2006: 12). Hence, postmodern feminists focus on state policies and discourses rather than state
378 institutions per se. In this analysis, the state is not essentially patriarchal but "was historically constructed as
379 patriarchal in a political process whose outcome is open" ??Kantola, 2006: 12). In such an analysis, neither the
380 state nor masculinity appears as singular sources of power ??Kantola, 2006: 7). Postmodern feminists claim that
381 all of the above mentioned theories analyse the state as if it was a unified, singular institution. They claim that
382 the state is indeed composed of "a set of arenas that lack coherence" ??Kantola, 2006: 12), thus that we cannot
383 conceptualise it as a unified body. Drawing attention to the differences between and within states, postmodern
384 feminism examines how states and state institutions like municipalities, home care centres etc. pursue various
385 policies and discourses while constructing gender ??Kantola, 2006: 137).

386 The most important criticisms that postmodernist feminists direct towards previous feminist theories are the
387 conceptualisations, "woman" and "patriarchy" ??Walby, 1992: 33). Postmodernist feminists argue that such
388 concepts are essentialist, and are unable to deal with questions of difference: ?Not only is there no unity to the
389 category of "woman", but an analyses based on a dichotomy between "women" and "men" necessarily suffer from
390 the flaw of essentialism. Instead, there are considered to be a number of overlapping, crosscutting discourses of
391 femininities and masculinities which are historically and culturally variable ??Walby, 1992: 34).

392 In Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory, Jane Flax defines "gender relations" as a category
393 meant to capture a complex set of social processes that are constituted by and through interrelated parts ??Flax,
394 1990: 44):

395 Through gender relations two types of persons are created: man and women? Nevertheless, gender relations
396 so far as we have been able to understand them have been (more or less) relations of domination. That is,
397 gender relations have been (more) defined and (imperfectly) controlled by one of their interrelated aspects-the
398 man ??Flax, 1990: 45).

399 Flax adds that "to the extent that feminist discourse defines its problematic as "woman", it also ironically
400 privileges the man as unproblematic or exempted from determination by gender relations ??Flax, 1990: 45)"
401 when in fact men too are prisoners of gender, "although in highly differentiated but interrelated ways" ??Flax,
402 1990: 45).

403 Despite acknowledging the differences between and within states in constructing gender, postmodernism faces
404 severe criticisms. Some poststructuralist feminists like Chris Weedon stick to the argument that the state has
405 a hegemonic language in reproducing both the fundamentals of capitalist mode of production and patriarchy
406 ??Weedon, 1987: 29). However, since they see language as a "site of disunity and conflict" in which social actors
407 are active agents in interpreting and reinterpreting discourses, they believe that language carries the potential
408 for feminist political struggle as well as the preservation of the status quo ??Weedon, 1987: 12-29).

409 **11 VII.**410 **12 Instead of Conclusion: One Major Critical Paradigm**

411 Bir yandan "kay?t dü?mek" i?in, di?er yandan, hareketten kad?nlar?n kendileri ve birbirleri ?zerine
412 dü?ünmelerinin, bu dü?ünelerini payla?malar?n?n de?erine olan inanc?m?z?n bir ifadesi. Bizce ancak böyle
413 bir dü?ünme/tart??ma süreci yap?p etti?klerimizle birlikte bizi bir "hareket" haline getirebilir. Aksu Bora-Asena
414 Günal, 90'larda Türkiye' ??e Feminizm, 2002 It is obvious that existing feminist theories on the state provide
415 important insights regarding the relationship between the state and the asymmetrical social relations. Though
416 eclectic approaches are usually criticised for having inherited the flaws in the theories that are taken into account,
417 I think that within the limits of this paper, it may still be meaningful to combine the strongest emphases of
418 the theories that are elaborated. Another criticism that postmodernist feminism receives is that while analysing
419 the state, they focus too much on discourses and undermine the role of institutions and policies ??Kantola,
420 2006: 13). I think that the emphasis on discourses and the conceptualisation of the state as differentiated and
421 constantly changing are meaningful contributions to a feminist theory of the state. Yet the political implication
422 of postmodernism is that it blocks the possibility of generic political identity and political action ??Donovan,
423 2006: 214). In addition, as Walby argues, postmodernist feminism not only neglects the social context of power
424 relations, but also that "woman" and "man" as signifiers still have sufficient cross-cultural continuity ??Walby,
425 1992: 36).

426 The liberal idea that the state is a neutral arbiter should be abandoned. Socialist and radical feminisms
427 express that historically, this is not the case and that all states have favoured the interests of the powerful.
428 The socialist feminist argument that despite the interests of men and capital are at times contradictory, mostly
429 through its allegedly neutral and rational institution, the law, state pursues policies that produce and reproduce
430 the dominance of men over women, makes it easier for capital to benefit from women's cheap labour while How
431 should the feminist political struggle approach the state is the important question to be answered after this
432 literature review. I think that the radical feminist argument, which offers an anti-statist political struggle might
433 appear fascinating in the first glance, but it has its own limitations. Although Marxist and socialist feminisms
434 envisage that state policies, institutions and discourses are oppressive against women, none of them realise, as do
435 radical feminists that it is the civil society rather than the state, which is the sphere, where women should fight
436 against gender inequalities. Historically, no nation-state has ever struggled against unequal gendered relations.
437 Anthropologic work has even shown that non-patriarchal societies were turned into patriarchal ones through
438 divide and rule policies between men and women pursued by nation-states. The fact that historical socialisms
439 have failed to emancipate women and other minority groups despite their theoretical claim to do so initially
440 leaves a room for women to organise in their own right. Feminism, as one critical paradigm and various women's
441 struggles all over the world indicate that active involvement in state policies may carry a potential to change how
442 the state functions. In order to develop a common sense on the relationship between the state(s), the market
443 and the (civil) society, finding historical data that are not contaminated by malestream knowledge remains at
444 the top of the agenda of the feminist political struggle.

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446 Y e ar the labour force gratis, creates a potential for further analyses. At the same time, the state is an active
447 agent in the commoditisation of bodies and sexualities through the legislations on pornography, prostitution/sex
448 work etc.

449 simultaneously defining women as housewives so that both men and capital benefit from women reproducing
450 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

¹For a more detailed discussion of these feminisms, seeDonovan, 2006.

²For a more detailed elaboration, seeCharles, 2000. 4 Zetkin used this term to refer to the struggle for suffrage, which was the main motive of the feminists supported by social democrat leaders in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. For a more detailed discussion, seeAkal, 2003.

³"Double-day" is the term used to indicate that women working outside the house have to deal with the double burden of both housework and their work outside the house.

⁴© 2012 Global Journals Inc. (US) Y e ar 2 0 1 2

⁵© 2012 Global Journals Inc. (US) hiring or reverse discrimination (Tong, 1989: 29).

⁶Some authors prefer to list Heidi Hartmann as a Marxist feminist because unlike Eisenstein, she was a single system theorist. I chose to list her under socialist feminism.

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Figure 1: Feminist

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