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NATIONHOOD

Feminist approaches, emancipatory processes and intersecting identities

Maria Rodó-Zárate

Introduction

Feminist geopolitics, since its inception in early 2000s, has provided an analytical lens that has redefined what counts as geopolitics and has considered the effects of power at multiple scales: from the body to home and nation state (Massaro and Williams 2013). This field of inquiry, as Dixon (2015) argues, draws attention to how the conditions of people’s lives across the globe are shaped by political, economic, cultural and environmental factors. Despite the relevance of feminist perspectives in fields such as social, cultural or economic geography, their impacts on political geography have been ‘surprisingly few’ (Hyndman 2003), influencing the lack of feminist perspectives on geopolitics in general and specifically on issues such as nationhood and nationalism.

Feminist geographers have explored the gendering of nations in a variety of contexts, showing different perspectives built upon work that is empirically grounded. Some examples include the exploration of gendering of cultural nationalism in South Sudan (Faria 2013), the analysis of how a gendered spatiality underlies discourses of nationhood in Ecuador (Radcliffe 1996), how nation state and diaspora are interdependent and shaped by gender ideologies in Singapore and China (Yeoh and Willis 1999), the practice of identity and the Irish nationalist sense of place (Martin 1997), militarism and the ‘culture of war’ as productive of gendered national identities in Uzbekistan (Koch 2011), hierarchical domains of nation and masculinity as builders of gendered national subjects in India (Sabhlok 2017) and how family reunification redefines the relation of kinship to nation through cross-border marriages between Chinese and Taiwanese (Friedman 2017). Beyond geographical studies, even though ‘all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender’ (McClintock 1993, 61), it was not until the 1990s that feminist perspectives were incorporated to studies on nations, nationhood and nationalism (Palau 2015). Since then, feminist approaches have been central to understanding the configurations of nations.

In the following sections, I present some feminist perspectives on nation and nationalism, pointing to the sexual and gender dimension of their construction, representation and configuration. Next, I analyse the relations between feminist movements and national projects. Finally,
I focus on the Catalan case in order to show how feminist pro-independence groups can offer new frameworks for thinking about nations and nationalism.

**Gendering the nation**

Feminist authors have largely analysed the gendering of the nation and of nationalism, showing how women's bodies and movements are controlled, policed and regulated in the nation's interests and maintenance (Rodó-de-Zárate 2019). Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, in their work *Women-Nation-State* (1989), focus on five ways in which women are placed in relation to nations, which are generally described as an imagined, socially constructed, political communities that create bonds of belonging and use a wide range of symbols to project a national past and present (Anderson 1983). As the authors contend, first, women have been seen as biological reproducers of the nation. This idea has been materialized in the form of pronatalist policies to force the sterilization of certain groups and also systematic rape and sexual enslavement, where women's bodies are taken as a battleground in wars. Thus, being the biological reproducers of nations implies direct regulations and restrictions of their sexual and reproductive rights. Second, women have also been conceived as social reproducers of group members and cultural forms, including cultural transmission. Usually, this aspect takes the form of legislation on property inheritance, marriage or the 'battle of the nursery' (Peterson 1994), which also involves the ideological reproduction of group members. Third, women have been conceptualized as symbolic markers of the nation, portraying the nation-as-woman metaphor and implying that their bodies are the battleground for group struggles and group identity. Fourth, and beyond the idea of being mere symbols, women are active in conflicts that belong to their communities and are also seen as participants in political identity struggles. Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) note in this way that women have had relevant roles in their participation in public and political activities, even though they have traditionally been denied participation in them. Fifth, and finally, women are viewed as members of society in general. However, nationalist projects treat different groups of women differently, incorporating some of them and excluding others (Yuval-Davis 1993). This makes it also evident that women are not a homogeneous category, given the interrelations of gender with other social divisions such as ethnicity, religion, class, age and sexual orientation. The intersection of these multiple axes of oppression should also be seen as mutually constitutive, not as additive layers of inequality, in order to understand the various positionings of women in every context (Crenshaw 1991).

Feminists have also largely analysed the gendering of the state and of nationalism, rendering visible how women's bodies and movements are controlled, policed and regulated for the nation's interests and maintenance. Nationalism is problematic in relation to conflict between groups in general but also for those within the nation who share least in elite privileges and political representation (Peterson 1994, 77). In this sense, control over access to the benefits of belonging to a nation is invariably gendered (Mayer 2000). As Peterson (2014) argues, nations constitute heteropatriarchal family and household formations as the foundational socio-economic unit of the state and the basis of inheriting property and citizenship claims, showing that modern state-making processes normalize binaries of gender, sexuality and race, and that the regulation of sexuality, property, membership and intimacy has been key to imperial projects.

The places in which women have been situated in relation to nationhood are symptoms of a more profound distinction between the public and private spheres. Nation and nationalism are normally discussed as part of the public political sphere, from which women are excluded (Yuval-Davis 1993). This distinction is grounded on the social contract and the idea that women are located in the private domain, which is not seen as political (Pateman 1988).
conceptualization has relevant implications for the role of women in the different dimensions of public and political action, and thus the dynamics of nationhood, and also for conducting research on this question.

It is also important to notice that the relation between gender and nation is not expressed only through women's situations but in relation to the positioning of masculinity and heteronormativity. As Cynthia Enloe (1990, 45) argues, 'nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope'. Nagel (1998) also shows the strong links that relate nationalism to masculinity, patriotism, militarism and imperialism, and explores the gender gap regarding men and women's different goals and agendas for the nation. Usually, the imagined community has been based on the notion of 'brotherhood' (Anderson 1983), which in turn is fundamental to the symbolic construction of the idealized mother and the rejection of homosexuality, thus allowing the creation of fraternal relations (Ugalde 1996). Actually, as Peterson (1999) defends, the process of state-making and its centralization of political authority and coercive power is inextricably linked to a heterosexist ideology. The author defends the view that heterosexism and gender binary are constitutive of the early and modern Western state-making, given that the heterosexist state denies male homosocial sexuality in favour of male homosocial politics while it denies women's homosexual and political bonding through the public-private dichotomy (Peterson 1999).

Sexuality plays a central role in nation-building and national identity, making it impossible to think about nation as sexless (Mayer 2000). This axis of sexuality is not only fundamental to the creation of national identity as the reinforcement of the heteronormative state but also to the creation of certain dynamics of inclusion of groups of sexual dissidents. While sexual dissidents have not been portrayed as symbols of the nation, there have been movements of an assimilation of their claims. In this sense, there has been a growing body of work that shows how LGBT claims are accommodated in a process of integration and acceptance of the ‘proper homosexuals’ into neoliberal citizenship, at the expenses of rising Islamophobia and exclusion of the racial ‘others’. Jasbir Puar (2007) has defined these dynamics as homonationalism, and it has proved a crucial notion for understanding the relation between the LGBT community, citizenship and the construction of the nation state. The approach from homonationalism allows an analysis of inclusion and exclusion from the nation in relation to LGBT discourses, identifying that Whiteness is reinforced in national projects through the assimilation of the LGBT collective. Puar (2007) also puts forward the idea of sexual exceptionalism as the construction of the nation as better than others in relation to LGBT rights, thus putting in opposition any given nation as Other, often represented as ‘Arab’ and uncivilized.

Feminisms and national projects

We have seen how nationhood and nationalist projects have used women’s bodies and work for their interest, situating women and other minoritized groups in very specific imaginaries, directly excluding them or instrumentalizing these groups for further national purposes. However, nationalism, beyond being state-led when there is assimilation of all within a state, can be state-seeking when there is mobilization for recognition as an independent state (Peterson 1999). In a context of ‘globalization, changing sovereignties, proliferation of actors, deterritorialization and space/time compression’ (Peterson 1999, 57), the definition of nationalism from a state-centric perspective appears to be problematic. Regarding this, Smith’s (1971, 1986) influential typology distinguishes between ‘ethnic-genealogical’ and ‘civic-territorial’ nationalisms, as well as between ‘ethnocentric’ and ‘polycentric’ nationalism. Ethnocentric nationalists would consider their own nation as superior to that of others, associated with imperialism and the
desire to conquer and dominate other nations. Polycentric nationalism does not regard its own nation as superior and would be associated with nationalist movements of colonized nations. Gregory Gleason (1991), in turn, identifies three faces of nationalism: liberation (related to self-determination and democratization); exclusivity (promotion of group homogeneity); and domination (suppressing difference within the group).

The relation between nationalism and feminism is generally seen as problematic with respect to a broader debate in the social sciences regarding the nature of individual as opposed to collective rights and identities within nation state formations (Jacoby 1999). To be concrete, most feminists consider nationalism as detrimental to women and feminism (Seodu Herr 2003). It has been argued by Enloe (1990) that, in nationalist movements and conflict, women are relegated to minor or symbolic roles, and this can be seen as a way of rendering invisible women’s actions and contributions to the field. Moreover, the complexity between feminism and nationalism has been obscured by the tendency to subordinate gender justice to national priorities (Vickers 2006). The main tensions and conflicts that have been identified are a permanent accusation that they generate division in the nationalist struggle, the problems facing patriarchal assumptions of male colleagues in such movements or ‘now is not the time’ as a way of not incorporating feminist demands in the agenda (Vickers 2000).

In a globalized context, Western feminists have generally rejected the potential of nationalism as an emancipatory framework and regarded women participating in nationalist projects as not following the ‘authentic’ feminist parameters (Hasso 1998, in Jacoby 1999). This results in a situation in which ‘[f]eminism and nationalism are almost always incompatible ideological positions within the European context’ (Kaplan 1997, 3). However, this tendency has been contested by feminist nationalist movements in a variety of socio-economic and political contexts that simultaneously seek rights for women and for nationalists, thus reconstructing the meanings of both nationalism and feminism from their perspective (West 1997). Another way in which feminism and nationalism might approach is through women being more likely to organize to insert feminist goals into national projects is if the project is open, pluralistic and advocates a more ‘positive’ sex/gender regime than if it is committed to militarism/fascism (Walby 1997). Moreover, women of minority nations experience a greater sense of responsibility to reproduce their national identity. This may predispose them to struggle to liberate ‘their’ nations and to join such national projects, even if women may support a different national project from that of men (Walby 1997). Along the same lines, Amurrio Vélez (2002) argues that the structuring of gender is influenced by nation and shows that women who participate in national projects often direct their commitments in a different way. On the other side of the coin, Lee and Cardinal (1998) argue that those who are part of majority nations cannot see themselves as ‘nationalistic’, precisely because members of dominant nations within a nation state understand their nationality in terms of common citizenship – a logic that McRoberts (2004) describes as collective amnesia.

In relation to ‘Third World feminists’, Ranjoo Seodu Herr (2003) states that, even if most of them also consider nationalism as detrimental to their goals, there have also been collaborations between feminists and nationalists in their pursuit of nation independence from a colonial power. In this sense, Jayawardena (1986) shows that in Asia and in other colonized nations feminism was compatible with the modernizing dynamic of anti-imperialist national liberation movements. Jacoby (1999) argues that nationalist women in non-Western contexts become politically active through their participation and collaboration with their male counterparts in struggles against colonial/post-colonial power or external threat (Jacoby 1999). The possibility of such collaboration in political mobilization is more probable when ‘nation’ is understood as a ‘large community whose members differentiate themselves from others through their...
possession of a common “pervasive” or “societal” culture’ (Seodu Herr 2003, 148). In this definition, there is no reified essence of a nation; it can accommodate foreign ideas and people to create a ‘hybrid’ culture. In this respect, Seodu Herr (2003) argues that ‘polycentric’ nationalism has potential for advocating feminist causes, as they may consider women’s liberation to be possible only when the sovereignty of their nation is achieved. The author defends that grassroots, bottom-up nationalism in the Third World, reconceptualized in a nonessentialist way, may have genuine potential for promoting democracy and feminist causes. Also, nationalism should be conceived in this sense as involving an external goal (self-determination and recognition) and an internal one (equality among members of the nation). In this sense, the goal of ‘polycentric’ nationalism is the attainment and maintenance of national self-determination.

Finally, in relation to certain compatibility between gender and nation yet going beyond this dyad, Yuval-Davis (2011) has developed the concept of ‘politics of belonging’ to comprise specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies, within specified boundaries, and tightly related to the question of citizenship. The author defends that, while solidarity based on shared history, language and culture can be an important tool of mobilization, self-determination and liberation, any political project of belonging that uses the boundaries of the collectivity to exclude or delegitimize the full individual and collective rights of all other members of society can end up constructing its own version of racialized autochthony, which reproduces exclusion and discrimination.

The Catalan case: feminist perspectives on independence

As shown above, feminism has tended to regard nationalism from a distance, mostly due to the negative consequences that nationalism and the state have had for women in relation to sexual, reproductive, civic and political rights and the violence suffered in the name of national projects. Moreover, the recent rise of far-right and supremacist movements and politicians, especially in the US and in some countries in Europe and South America that function under explicit expressions of xenophobia and mobilizing around hate-centred nationalist frames, reinforces the idea that nationalism is dangerous, ethnicist and racist. However, Third World feminists have criticized Western feminists for the Eurocentrism that goes unnoticed in their claims and that reproduces the discrimination of colonized women, thus making visible that nationalistic expressions are not only materialized as xenophobia but that these can also be expressed through liberatory frameworks.

In this section, I want to show how, within the context of the intense struggle for independence in Catalonia, there are pro-independence leftist feminists who have been working for national liberation from critical perspectives. I argue that it is important to focus on feminist movements’ discourses and practices to understand why some feminists join the struggle for independence and how they challenge hegemonic conceptualizations of what national identity is and how independence could favour women’s and other minoritized group’s interests. The current shifting situation makes it impossible to analyse the Catalan case from a distant perspective, as this chapter has been written during autumn 2017, even as events are radically changed the known frameworks. My own participation in Catalan feminist politics situates my perspective as an insider, a position I do not consider as a limitation but one with potential to render visible other perspectives that are generally misrepresented. Given that situated knowledge is also part of feminist epistemologies, in the following section I want to provide a reflection of the current situation with the aim of highlighting feminist proposals on the Catalan situation.

It is important to note that the Catalan case has specifics worth highlighting. Even though the national issue has been present in Catalan politics since the eighteenth century, it was during the
later years of Francoism (1939–1976) when the Catalan nationalist movement began to re-emerge after the defeat of the legitimate government of the Second Republic in 1939 (see Guibernau 2004). However, the pro-independence will was not a majority until a few years ago. Huge uprisings started in 2010 due to Spanish government’s limitation of sovereignty through cuts to the *Estatut de Catalunya* (the ‘Catalan Constitution’, approved by a vast majority in the Catalan Parliament). Since then, on 11 September (National Day in Catalonia) massive demonstrations demanding independence have been held in Barcelona and other towns. In the 2015 elections, pro-independence parties won the elections with a majority in the Catalan Parliament, with the objective of celebrating a referendum of self-determination that the Spanish government had never agreed to negotiate. The referendum was organized and celebrated on 1 October 2017, with the participation of more than two million voters: more than 90 per cent voted for independence. The images of repression by the Spanish police were seen around the world, showing the anti-democratic and violent response by the Spanish government that caused more than a thousand people to be injured. The declaration of independence took place on 27 October and, after that, part of the elected Catalan government was imprisoned. The president and other members of the executive were exiled to Belgium (2 November 2017). Two activists of cultural and political associations, who had been organizing the demonstrations, were also imprisoned. The Spanish government subsequently applied Article 155 of the constitution, which gives the power to intervene in Catalan institutions, to relieve the government and also to call for elections.

The role of the Catalan feminist movement in this process has been made invisible by general media and is absent from academic work. However, feminist developments on the Catalan nation were already present in the 1970s. One of the main contributions that relate the feminist developments to the Catalan situation was actually the conception of the interrelation of oppressions. The following text, written by feminist pro-independence radical leftist activists, shows a different perspective on nation and gender that is rarely taken into account:

> if feminism and nationalism have a separate space in everybody’s minds, the area in which both fields interact is a kind of no one’s land … We should give all alternative as women, being conscious that feminism must be a tool for global freedom, one that will break the chain of interrelated and inseparable oppressions in which our society is built upon … Our specific experience as women that feel oppressed because of being members of the feminine sex and because of belonging to a dominated nation, objects of a cultural and linguistic genocide, has also been very complex.

*Olivares et al. 1982, 99*

The authors argue that, even though in any political struggle there is a tendency to separate various oppressions, what causes the constant tension and discomfort is the experience of oppression; they argue that, for women, there must be a project of total liberation against gender, class and national oppression. They argue the necessity of struggling from the space where oppressions are interrelated and against those political groups that ‘deny that one and the other [oppressions] intersect’ (Olivares et al. 1982, 99).

These kinds of statements resonate directly with the intersectional theorizations that were developed during the 1980s and 1990s in the US by authors such as hooks (1981), Collins (1990) and Crenshaw (1991) in relation to the ‘inseparability of oppressions’, the ‘specific experience’ of women crossed by different oppressions or the ‘space where oppressions intersect’ as the starting point for transformative reflection and practice (see Rodó-de-Zárate 2019).

The first challenge for the conceptualization of gender and nation is therefore the intersectional perspective, one that is based on the lived experience of oppression and on the national
and gender identities as sources of this experience and also of knowledge production. This relates to what Yuval-Davis (2011) has called situated intersectionality, a perspective that acknowledges the role of context and particular social and historical configurations in order to examine the complexity of social relations. For the authors, national identity is seen as a source of oppression because of the belonging to a dominated nation, so ‘nation’ and ‘gender’ do not appear as contradictory but as constituting the intersectional experience, a perspective that is generally missing from accounts on women and nation. It is rare to find ‘nationality’ as an oppressive intersectional oppression (at least in the European context), yet conceptualizing it in this way helps to show why feminists engage in national struggles: not only as a strategy to pursue gender justice but as an aim in itself, to end lived oppression.

This experience of oppression is based on cultural, linguistic and political dimensions, and this is what feminists relate to national struggle. Such claims have historically been labelled as nationalistic, obscuring that the position of Spanish identity was also nationalistic. For instance, as Palau (2015) explains, the programme of the Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas (National Association of Spanish Women), founded in 1918 by Maria Espinosa with the aim of struggling for women’s civil and political rights, stated from the outset that it opposed ‘by all means at the disposal of the association, any purpose, act, or event which might jeopardize the integrity of the national territory’. The association worked to ‘ensure that all Spanish mothers work in perfect harmony with teachers to instil in their children love of one indivisible fatherland from the earliest childhood’. This Spanish nationalism, found in a feminist group linked to Spanish colonialism and an imperialist past, shows that feminism and nationalism are different axes to which people are variously oriented, as intersectional theory rightly points out. Even if nowadays feminists develop their position in other terms, this quote relates to the current collective amnesia (McRoberts 2004) that hides Spanish nationalism as ‘nationalistic’, situating the national identity only in relation to those that struggle for secession and not to those that want to maintain, also through physical violence, the unity of the nation state.

Violence, here, is also an important issue, as the Catalonia struggle for independence has been peaceful, with massive and permanent non-violent mobilizations. It is a rare case, given that secessionist claims have historically escalated into violence and war (Duffy Toft 2012), with exceptions such as Gandhi’s policy of non-violence and civil disobedience in the Indian independence movement. The anti-militarist tradition in Catalonia and the feminist pacifist groups have contributed to situate non-violence as a central element in the struggle for independence, which has promoted the creation of organizations like En peu de pau (www.enpeudepau.cat), which seeks to extend and promote pacifist civil and non-violent resistance in the current situation.

Intersectionality and a non-violent strategy are both important elements that may challenge conceptualizations of nationalism from a feminist perspective. However, at the centre of the debate is the question of identity. As has been shown, there are multiple interpretations and classifications of types of nationalism. The celebration of the 1 October referendum, the defence of the ballot boxes, the popular organization the days before and during the referendum, the general strike on 3 October and the demonstrations against the gaoling of political prisoners showed that the popular struggle was constructed around something other than national identity. The leftist pro-independence party in the Catalan Parliament (Candidatura d’Unitat Popular – CUP), which identifies itself as feminist, has been explicit to avoid ethnicist discourse. One of its members of parliament, during his speech in the Chamber, said: ‘It is not about taking out a flag to rise another one. What we want is a Republic to be able to build everything … we will never defend an ethnic or identitarian project’ (Benet Salellas, MP). The arguments to defend the right to hold a referendum have been articulated in relation to the right of self-determination,
the right of peoples to determine freely their own political status. As Hacket (1995) argues, self-determination has important connotations for feminists in relation to the right to decide about women’s rights, which relates to the right to decide what kind of society people want. This claim is also strongly related to the demand of sovereignty and the ability of the legitimate institutions to legislate. An example of this is the denouncement of the suspension by the Constitutional Court in Madrid of the laws approved by the Catalan Parliament, like the law on banks taxes, against evictions, the agency for social protection, against energetic poverty, for gender equality and against fracking, among others.

These kinds of cuts to sovereignty, together with police brutality and the imprisonment of the elected government, have shifted from an articulation based on self-determination and national claims to a struggle against the anti-democratic, authoritarian and violent nature of the Spanish state. This relation might be well illustrated by the popular quote from a musician and poet, Ovidi Montllor: ‘There’s people who don’t like people to speak, write or think in Catalan. It’s the same people who don’t like people to speak, write or think.’ The repression of Catalan has historically been linked to a repression of political freedom and democracy, and this is nowadays evidence that turns the struggle for independence into a democratic struggle, framing a national struggle beyond identities and culture. The creation of Republic Defence Committees, a network that coordinates assemblies in every neighbourhood, village and city, which has been crucial in the organization of strikes and demonstrations, is an example of the popular organization to defend the institutions beyond national discourses. Feminists have also organized themselves within these groups in order to promote gender equality in the organization, actions and discourses of these horizontal assemblies.

This coincides with what Walby (1997) argues in relation to the probability that women engage in national projects if they are open and pluralistic. Much evidence may be found in the Catalan case of feminist activists being active in various fields, raising their voices to situated gender and LGBT issues in the political agenda and organizing through different levels in order to develop strategies to build the Feminist Catalan Republic (see Feministes per la Independència).

However, although important efforts have been made by different social movements and political parties in order to break with ethnic discourses on Catalan identity, there have also been important critiques from feminist and post-colonial activists in relation to citizenship policies in Catalonia. For instance, as both Ortiz (2017) and Aatar (2017) denounce in their chapters in the recently published book *No One’s Land: Feminist Perspectives on Independence* (Gatamaula 2017), the Law for Juridical Transitory (a foundational law for the Catalan Republic, approved on September 2017). This specifies that children of migrant parents will not have the right to Catalan nationality, even if they are born in Catalonia. This implies the maintenance of Spanish (and European) current migratory laws and has been seen as a racist policy that excludes people from Catalan citizenship on the basis on origin. This is also an alert regarding the possibilities for a radical change if a supposed Catalan Republic was part of the European Union, with its racist and capitalist policies. In the same edited-collection there are various views from feminists and LGBT activists that alert us to homonationalist discourses in Catalonia (Sadurní 2017). Others propose to build a queer Catalan identity based on diversity and fluidity (Olid 2017), that nationalism and belonging can be constructed as an idea of community against individualism (Forcades 2017) or that the transition to a republic could be thought as the transition to a gender identity, from a trans position (Preciado 2017). Internationalist perspectives on independence that highlight the historical feminist solidarities between Catalonia and Kurdistan (Çiçek 2017) and the Basque Country (Eizaguirre 2017) also show a tendency towards ‘polycentric’ nationalism, in this case through feminist organizations from several nations. All these contributions show how feminists engage with the national struggle with innovative perspectives that link...
gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nation from a situated point of view. Nation and nationalism can be approached from various perspectives, and organized feminist movements in the struggle for national liberation provide new views that may contest the hegemonic conceptions.

The role of place in recent mobilizations has also been crucial, and feminist geographies could certainly provide new insights on the political processes of democratization, as in the Catalan case. For instance, the body as a site of resistance against state violence has been a central issue in relation to the 1 October referendum. Pro-independence politicians, such as the Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, to defend the legitimacy of the referendum referred to ‘people who used their bodies to defend democracy’. The defence of the polling stations as symbols of resistance or the squares and streets as the permanent way of expressing political opinions have also been central spatial metaphors.

Concluding remarks

The feminist perspective on nation and nationalism shows that there is a complex relation between gender and nation that has been central to understanding women’s experiences and geopolitics in general. There is a tendency to focus on nation states when analysing nationalism, and there is also an invisibilization of feminist voices engaged in national projects that comes from different sides: invisibilization by feminist state-nationalists, by national liberation movements that silence women’s voices, and by academia and mass media, which tend to focus on the hegemonic positions and hide actions and proposals that come from social movements and women and LGBT groups. This obscures the theories and practices developed by feminists in various contexts to understand the national struggle from perspectives that may challenge definitions of nation or nationalism. There is a great diversity of examples, and here I have tried to show how feminist groups have been engaged in the struggle for independence, in the Catalan context, from an intersectional and critical perspective that works for national freedom while it criticizes and contradicts the patriarchal discourses that persist in national movements. Feminist geographies could shed light on such processes of democratization from a situated perspective that renders visible that place matters, and feminist activists are voices to take into account when researching geopolitics.

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