Full Length Research

HOMONORMATIVITY & THE NATIONAL FRAY

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In the early stages of nation building the US identified itself through patriarchal ideologies of masculinist "strength," racial purity, and a heteronormative gender order solidified through monogamous marriage. It was these core values that not only differentiated the US from other countries, but defined it as superior. Hence, the national security imaginary naturalizes heterosexuality as the only normal mode of sexual identity, sexual practice, and social relation. Therefore, this article suggests that marriage functions as a normalizing mechanism of the nation to police the gendered, racial, and sexual configurations of its citizenry which constructs not only homosexuality, but any non-traditional family or relationship as deviant.

Key Words: security, nation, Gay-Marriage, heteropatriarchy, homonormativity, sex, gender, feminist, queer, IR

INTRODUCTION

In 2012 there were seven states that had legalized same-sex marriage. By 2014 there were seventeen states in the US, as well as DC, which have legalized same-sex marriage along with tribal nations including the Coquille, and the Suquamish. In addition, there are now over ten countries that have also legalized gay marriage and well over twenty others that have adopted same-sex civil unions and registered partnerships. In December of 2013, New Mexico became the 17th state to allow gay marriage (The New York Times, Dec. 19, 2013). On February 14, 2014 a "Federal Judge Overturns Virginia's Same-Sex Marriage Ban," possibly making it the 18th state, or it could be Utah where marriage also became legal December, 2013. However, the US Supreme Court

has put a stay on both pending the state's appeals. In Kentucky and Oklahoma a federal judge ruled in 2013 that their ban was unconstitutional and that Kentucky must recognize gay marriage legally performed in other states – however, it is still illegal in both states pending appeal (New York Times, 2014; CNN, 2014; ProCon.org, 2014). Even though there are still 33 states that have bans on same-sex marriage, the overall *feeling* or assumption in the national consciousness is that homosexuality is becoming more and more the norm, part of the "national family," not only in the US but in many countries around the world.

 The struggle to push against same-sex marriage in the majority of states and nations has demonstrated the

intensity of the threat it posed to the ideological security of the state. However, now in the current political climate, could the legalizing of gay marriage across the United States and other countries be functioning as a normalizing mechanism of the nation-state to assimilate only *certain* gays into the national fray? Or, will the changes that the married LGBT community bring to society such as in the legal system, health care, and education for example, be powerful enough to outweigh the normalizing function of the state marriage? In addition, is this emerging homonormativity- often normalized through American pop culture (Walters, 2001)and what Jasbir Puar refers to as a "homonationalism" (2007),be further evidence of the ways in which the institution of marriage functions as a normalizing mechanism of the state to police, maintain and reproduce the gendered, sexual, and racial configurations of the citizenry?

Theoretical Framework, Literature and Methodology

The theoretical framework for this project is grounded feminist (political and IR) critical theory, as it challenges the tenets and assumptions of positivist scientific methods and invites observers to reflect upon the social construction and effects of knowledge. The scholarship on the intersecting literatures of international relations and its conceptualization of the security imaginary, feminist and queer political theory on same-sex marriage and citizenship, as well as feminist literature on the institution of marriage homonationalism, and heteropatriarchy, provide the foundation of what I draw upon to frame this research. According to the relevant literature, the nation's demarcation of good citizen bodies (married, heterosexual, reproductive, and white) is drawn in direct opposition to noncitizen bodies (homosexual, non-reproductive, engaging in sex for pleasure, and nonwhite). However, with the growing acceptance of gay marriage and of *certain* gays, there is an emerging homonormativity within the US and Western/European cultures in particular. This project explores if these implied and actual changes to the ideological security of nations could actually transform the heteropatriarchal foundations of society or will the power of marriage as an institution continue to function as normalizing mechanism of the state?

  The methodology utilized in this project relies heavily on interpretive/discourse analysis. IR theory/discourse narrates a particular view of the world from the perspective of various IR traditions and an IR myth is what helps make a particular view of the world appear to be true. For example, creation myths of IR, on which realist assumptions about states' behavior are built reveals stories constructed upon representations of how individuals function in society. For example, the parable

of man's amoral, self-interested behavior in the state of nature is also taken by realists to be a universal model for explaining states' behavior in an international anarchical system (Tickner, 2001, p. 51). Assumptions/myths/stories such as these play a central role in creating an IR's "imaginary." The function that these myths perform in constructing the IR imaginary is, "the transformation of what is particular, cultural, and ideological (like a story told by IR tradition) into what *appears* to be universal, natural, and purely empirical" (C. Weber, 2001, p. 6). It naturalizes meanings – making them into common sense and into the products of cultural practices (C. Weber, 2001). Put another way, the myth function in the IR imaginary is making a 'fact' out of an interpretation. This process of making what is cultural and disputed into what is natural and therefore goes without saying (fact), is the work or function IR assumptions perform in IR theory and thus the ways security imagined – both materially and ideologically.

  Relevant scholarship suggests that within global definitions of a nation's security imaginary, homosexuality has been interpreted as a "danger" or threat to the ways in which we imagine security. The construction of nation and national identity with its exclusions and inclusions determines the ways in which threats to the nation-state are constructed. Therefore, danger is not an objective condition, it is an effect of interpretation (Campbell, 1998). This understanding of the necessarily interpretive basis of danger has important implications when analyzing the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage on security, ideological notions in particular. According to the relevant literature, nationalism assigns everyone a place, and a whether there is a real or perceived confusion between categories of man and woman, this confusion threatens the order and indicates a loss of control/security. Therefore, the aspiration to rethink security, such as the current discussions of human security, is a desire most often expressed in terms of how to expand the "old register of hazards" to incorporate what are perceived as the *newly emergent dangers* that threaten traditional modes of life (Campbell, 1998, p. IX), suggesting that a discursive analysis is crucial for interpreting newly emergent dangers, such as same-sex marriage, to the nation and its security or legalizing gay marriage as an crucial aspect of a movement toward assimilation and a form of homonationalism.

  Will the new data demonstrate that gay marriage continues to threaten the nation or will the research on the impact of legalizing gay marriage suggest that a shift is taking place in our national identity to a less gendered and hence less hierarchized state? And, as national ideologies and practices shift, is legalizing same-sex marriage allowing certain members of the LGBTQ community to be interpreted as less "dangerous" to the security of the nation, while "others" who do not fit in, continue to not be allowed entrance into full citizenship?

With the recent discussions concerning international relations and changes to the international system being compelled through the process of globalization, it is more crucial than ever to examine the ways in which nations and national identity have been constructed, how they have been reproduced, and what naturalized ideologies continue to be perpetuated through the process of globalization.

Overview

To be able to more clearly understand how gender and racial hierarchies are an intrinsic aspect of American society it is crucial to first highlight some of the ways that historically the institution of marriage has functioned to create sexist and racially discriminatory national ideologies and practices.   An historical examination provides the evidentiary foundations for the claim that the LGBT community and specifically the legalizing of same-sex marriage, threatens the ideological security imaginary. Second, despite the ideological threats to security, gay marriage and the LGBT community in general are becoming more accepted as time passes. Therefore, exploring the current data from the impact of legalizing gay marriage will be examined. Massachusetts, being the state in the US with the longest history and hence the most data on the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage, is the focus and highlights some of the improvements in the lives of some LBGT individuals and families, while at the same time threatening the security of others. The final portion of the essay is devoted to exploring the question of whether the new data still suggests that same-sex marriage continues to be perceived as a threat or if a homonormativity is being created within the national family and what effects and affects it has on the ways security is imagined and imagined for whom.

US History and the Emerging National Security Imaginary

Securing the homeland means to protect the nation as an "imagined community" from any threats to its identity (Anderson, 1991). Consequently, the national security imaginary suggests that the challenges to heterosexual marriage have been interpreted as dangers which threaten the security of an internal and domestic society (Campbell, 1998). Much of the IR feminist literature on nation and security suggests that the US has been imagined as a white heteronormative nation. Marriage and the 'legitimate family's' central function then, is to reproduce heteronormative patriarchal relations; and is also intended to work as a normalizing mechanism to 'reflect the identity of the nation' (Foucault 1978; Mosse,

1980: Pinion, 2010). Therefore, exploring the history of the mutual construction of marriage and the newly developing nation of the US can illuminate many of the ways challenges to the heterosexual imperative of marriage constitute a danger to the national security imaginary.

As part of the shift from kinship systems to the heteronormative nuclear family, all colonies in the early U.S. placed in their statutes laws regulating marriage. This reflected a concern that marriage be celebrated publicly in order to guard against bigamy., polygamy, etc., and to publicly identify legitimate/acceptable forms of marriage and family and one's that properly reflected the patriarchal structure and ideologies of the emerging nation (Cott, 2000).   Just as important as constructing these marriage and family ideals, was the resulting construction of the deviant and unacceptable relationships. For example, from the perspective of the American public, stark contrasts between monogamy and polygamy not only illustrated the superiority of Christian morality over the "heathen" Orient or *Eastern* ways, it reassured Christian monogamists in their minority position (when compared to non-western cultures). In addition, it staked a political and ideological claim for the newly developing nation.   In stark contrast to the developing US security imaginary, the harem stood for tyrannical rule, political corruption, coercion, elevation of the passions over reason, selfishness, and hypocrisy – all the evils that the newly emerging nation wanted to avoid and be protected from imaginary – while monogamy, in contrast, stood for a government based on consent, moderation, and political liberty (Cott, 2000, p. 22); practices which connect traditional marriage and the nation to their common origins and purpose.

As a result, the publication of 'intent to marry' is one of the earliest passed in the colonies – 1640 in Connecticut (Hartford, 1808, p. 525), and most colonies followed the British practice of treating marriage as a moral obligation for life. Colonial Connecticut was unusual in treating marriage as a civil contract, which might be broken if its terms were not carried out. For example, Connecticut enacted the earliest divorce law in the colonies. It made divorce available after a simple petition to the superior court under certain circumstances (Hartford, 1808).

> If any man shall hereafter marry or have carnal copulation with any woman – every such marriage will be null and void; and all children that shall hereafter be born of such incestuous marriage or copulation, shall be forever disabled to inherit by descent. (An Act for Regulating and Orderly Celebrating of Marriages, 1640, Cott, 2000)

Inheritance by descent reflects another important aspect of the emerging security imaginary and the

nation's dependence on paternal hierarchies and patriarchal structure.

It was not until the nineteenth century that new divorce laws reflected the character of marriage as a unique *contract* in which husband and wife consented to terms set by a third party, the state.

The two histories of nationalism and marriage intersect, merge, and become enmeshed through the doctrine of Victorian morality and "respectability." At this time for the developing nation, respectability referred not simple to deportment, but to moral, values, and attitudes toward the body and sexuality. "Nationalism employed marriage as a tool to control new and emerging ideas of modern sexuality, where changing sexual attitudes were absorbed and tamed into respectability" (Mosse, 1985, p. 10). The distinction between normal and abnormal was basic to modern ideas and practices of respectability, and provided the "mechanism" that enforced control and ensured security and was inextricably tied to marriage. If one couldn't control/master their sexual urges they were in conflict with the demands of the nation and society, and the consequence was that the very foundations of the moral and legal order of the nation would cease to exist (Mosse, 1985, p. 11). The triumph of the heteronormative nuclear family went along with nationalism and respectability – superseding older ideas of kinship and defining it as antithetical to the newly developing nation. The family functioned as one of society's policeman of sexuality – geared to teaching virtue and avoidance of vice. This type of character building was considered at the time, more important than school. Any threat to the family endangered the nation's survival as the nation imposes from above that which the family supports from below (Mosse 1985, Foucault 1978).

The nation was not only constructed as manly, virile, violent, dominant, and tough, it was also racially bound. The separate states have the power to regulate marital institutions as part of the authority over the local health, safety, and welfare, and as such, determine who gains admittance and who does not. Consequently, marriage has also been instrumental in articulating and structuring racial hierarchy and discrimination (Olson, 2005). In slaveholding states before the Civil War, slaves had no access to legal marriage, just as they had no other civil rights; this deprivation was one the things that made them "racially" different. Hence, marriage law constructed racial difference and punished (or in some cases simply refused to legitimize) "race mixture" (Cott 2000). Prohibiting divergent marriages has been as important in public policy as sustaining the chosen model. Research strongly suggests that marital regulations have drawn lines among the citizenry and defined what kinds of sexual relations, and which kinds of families, will be legitimate. Excluded or policed groups such as same-sex couples have always understood that historically, as minorities, they have to struggle for equal status when it

comes to the terrain of marital regulation (Pinion, 2010).

One theme that has been pervasive in U.S. history and literature and that has been accompanied by a 300-year-long tradition of legislation, jurisdiction, protest, and defiance is the deep concern about, and the attempt to prohibit, contain, or deny, the presence of black-white interracial sexual relations, interracial marriage and interracial descent, and other family relations across the powerful back-white divide. While many countries have practiced brutal forms of ethnic discrimination, accompanied by hate literature and inhumane laws (including marriage prohibitions), few people around the world have shared the peculiar ways in which *black-white marital* relations were prohibited since the beginning of the seventeenth century in America. Many experts and historians consider the fear of miscegenation the strongest reason for the desire of whites to keep the negro permanently segregated (Sollors, 2000, p. 4). For example, this Maryland statute of 1661 is generally considered the first miscegenation law in America,

> And forasmuch as freeborn English women do intermarry with negro slaves by which a great damage doth befall the master of such negroes, the Maryland statute was passed to stop such marriages by making the female 'miscegenator' a slave for the lifetime of her husband and all children of such marriages "slaves as their fathers were." (Zabel, 1965, p. 76)

Children of interracial couples were consequently, also deemed illegitimate. This focus on marriage, children, legitimacy, property, and family created a paradox in the American society, idealizing one concept of family while destroying others. Imagining the nation as white and heterosexual created certain marriages as legitimate and "others" as not. Anti-miscegenation laws came to include, in various states, American Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians, Filipinos, and other groups – but all such laws restricted marriage choices of blacks and whites, making the black-white divide the deepest and historically most pervasive of all American color lines (Sollors, 2000; Olson, 2005).

Although states were more in the position of exerting power over such vast spaces, the federal government could exert an impact on marriage through some policy pronouncements. American Indian policy was one. Groups practicing other marital systems on American soil might threaten the polity's soundness (Cott, 2000, p. 25). However, the Iroquois and other American Indian tribes such as the Hopi, Havasupai, and Dene (Navaho) tribes did not see the nuclear family as fundamental – heterosexual couples were important, but they married within complex kinship systems that accepted
Premarital sex, expected wives to be economic actors, often embraced matrilocal residence and matrilineal

descent, and easily allowed both polygamy and divorce with remarriage – and most dramatically, their sexual division of labor greatly differed from what white heteronormative Americans expected and were accustomed to. Consequently, these differences were interpreted as a threat to the security of the developing nation, and indigenous kinship structures, etc., were drawn in direct opposition to the nation – antithetical to the newly emerging empire.

To Christian settlers, missionaries, puritans, and government officials, Indian practices amounted to promiscuity and were in direct conflict with civilized marriage practices. If natives were to be regarded as trustworthy in negotiation over lands and trade, then their behaviors could not be in direct contradiction to American morality. Prohibiting polygamy, valuing premarital chastity, reorienting the sexual division of labor and property-ownership and consequent inheritance patterns – all these behaviors, and their reproduction, depended on the institution of marriage and forced the indigenous peoples to adopt Christian models of gender and monogamy (Cott 2000). The institution of marriage, in its "purity," would serve as a vehicle of civilization and would function to create the national imaginary as manly, heteronormative and white.

As immigration swelled in the U.S. between 1890 and 1920, it put new pressures on the relation between marriage and the polity and it caused the nation to develop changes in its immigration policy dramatically. The earliest legislation directly linking the citizenship of immigrants to marriage was an act of congress in 1855. Hence, it was immigrants' achievements in marriage and domesticity that were taken to measure their ability to adapt to Western ideals and practices. However, those who were unfree, or who did not understand the value of the marriage contract, did not fully belong – were not considered full citizens. After all, imperialist glory required warlike, aggressive and violent manliness, and civilized advancement implied the creation of a white heteronormative citizenry. An effeminate race was considered soft, antithetical to nation building and too weak to advance civilization (Bederman, 1995). In general, it was feared that the choice and consent embodied in marital union, as well as its legality and monogamous morality – all of these could be corrupted, which would compromise civic participation and governance. If marriages produce the polity, then it was considered that wrongfully joined marriages could be fatal to the nation.

Conquering of the American West was a crucial component to the early development and construction of the US and the ways it was imagined. According to Theodore Roosevelt, whose actions and the actions of those he influenced, helped produce modern ideologies of powerful American manhood, imperialism, and nation – claimed that the establishment of a new empire was an extended act of racial conquest (Bederman, 1995, p. 215). According to Roosevelt, this was an act of "manly" conquest which established the American race as apart from the rest of the world because it occurred during the act of winning a new and virgin continent. Consequently, imperialism was construed as a manly duty for both man and race. "In its imperial glory, the virile American race would embody a warlike manliness. If any Americans were scared by this, they would show themselves, as Roosevelt put it, to be weaklings" (Bederman, 1995, p. 188). Racial health and civilized advancement implied both manhood and imperialism. An effeminate race was a decadent race; and a decadent race was too weak to advance civilization. Imperialism was considered a question of both racial and individual manhood through discourses of civilization (Bederman, 1995, p. 214).

Therefore, through an historical examination of the mutual construction of marriage and the nation, it is revealed how both are constructed on notions of "manly" virtues, and that virile masculinity under-girds the very foundations of not only the nation and heteronormative marriage, but also of the ways security is imagined. What is illuminated through an historical feminist analysis is how not only gay marriage, but homosexuality in general – is considered a weakness, and hence as a danger to the security and strength of the nation. This fear is also expressed through the historical discrimination against gays in the military – later known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and recently rescinded by President Obama. Consequently, challenges to heteronormativity and traditional marriage, such as same-sex marriage, threaten the nation as it strikes at the very heart of American manliness – and hence the strength of the nation.

In IR, the state is taken as a given rather than understood as a product of historical changes, and its security imaginary represents boundaries and borders designed to keep certain individuals and families in and others out. Consequently, prohibiting divergent marriages has been as important in public policy as sustaining the chosen model. Thus historically, marital regulations have drawn lines among the citizenry and defined what kinds of sexual relations and which kinds of families well be considered deviant or abnormal, and which ones will be accepted into the national fray. Legalizing same-sex marriage greatly contributes to the acceptance of the LGBT community by mainstream society. Therefore, this next section explores some of the central impacts of legal marriage for gays and lesbians.

Impacts of Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage

While most are aware that in general the arguments against same-sex marriage are based on procreation and

the one man and one woman argument; where on the other hand, the argument for gay marriage is grounded in a civil rights argument that marriage is a constitutional right of citizenship. Yet, according to a March 2013 Survey, One-in-Seven have changed their minds in support of gay marriage. Of those in favor 14% of 49% have become supporters and 2% of 44% of those opposed also say their views on same-sex marriage have changed (Pew Research Center March 13-17, 2013. Q62-63). At this point however, in the US it is possible to now to observe the impact of legalizing gay marriage rather than just speculating on people's hopes and fears. The newly emerging data suggests that there are four central areas of analysis that are pertinent for studying the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage: education; religious liberty; health; and economics. It appears that the central concerns that continue to threaten certain people's security are centered around parental rights and education as well as religious liberties. However, the evidence of the impact on married gay couples and their families, economics and health are reported as having a positive impact, increasing their security in certain areas. For example, the subject of how the legalization of same-sex marriage affects public education is a main source of controversy. An argument often used by supporters is that including homosexuals and same-sex marriage/families in the curriculum in public schools will help children to be more open minded by exposing them to different types of families. Yet, there is concern from opponents that it will undermine parental rights over their children's education.

Education

In Massachusetts, opponents of same-sex marriage argue that it's become a hammer to force the acceptance and normalization of homosexuality on everyone (Cemenker, 2008, p. 1). According to MassResistance.org "the homosexual marriage onslaught in public schools across the state started soon after the November 2003 court decision when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that it was unconstitutional not to allow same-sex "marriage." The data shows that shortly after the decision there were schools that had assemblies to celebrate gay marriage and by September of 2004 literature was being disseminated on same-sex marriage as a normal part of society, first to high schools and then middle school students. By 2005 in was part of the curriculum in elementary schools where "kindergartners were given picture books telling them that same-sex couples are just another kind of family, like their own parents" (Camenker, 2008, p. 1). In 2006 the Parkers and Wirthlins filed a federal Civil Rights lawsuit to force the schools to notify parents and allow them to opt-out their children when

homosexual subjects were taught. However, federal judges dismissed the case and ruled that because same-sex marriage is legal in Massachusetts, the school actually had a duty to normalize homosexual relationships to children, and that schools are under no obligation to notify parents (massresistance.org, 2008; National Organization for Marriage, 2011). For opponents, the acceptance of homosexuality as a matter of good citizenship in Massachusetts is interpreted as a negative consequence, a threat to the ways they have imagined their security. For others, the acceptance of gay marriage in school curriculum is a means of feeling more secure.

Religious Liberty

Tied to these arguments concerning the negative impacts of gay marriage in education and parental rights in Massachusetts are issues of religious liberty.   For example, the "truth is at stake" argument poses that: the "essential nature and truth of marriage is between male and female, the biological truth of which leads to procreation, and the truth that children require and need both mothers and fathers to grow into responsible adults" (chooselife.org/same-sex marriage/consequences-for-our-future, 2011). In a statement published by *Focus on the Family* in 2011, religious liberties and parental rights are threatened by public schools. Parents heed to be made aware the schools could be the first place you experience some of the effects of the legalization of same-sex marriage, and as such could impact your religious liberties and parental rights.   Redefining marriage, it is explained, will interfere with parents' rights to teach their children that women and men are different, and that both are necessary for marriage and for children. Based on recent events, state law and public school education will undermine these ideas and spin them as old-fashioned and narrow-minded. In addition, redefining marriage in law means that religious freedoms are threatened because the state must promote and uphold the new definition of marriage (Focus on the Family Issue Analysts, December 3, 2011).   The "Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life" states that 56% of Americans believe that allowing gay and lesbian couples to legally marry would undermine the traditional American family, and 62% say that gay marriage would go against their religious beliefs (http://pewforum.org/PublicationPage.aspx?id=64735). However, only a minority classify gay parents as unfit. Although the impact of legal same-sex marriage on families is a concern, overall, an analysis of

   the beliefs, perceptions and values that shape
   support and opposition to gay marriage fins that
   while religion is very important, other views

about diversity, parenting, and the nature of homosexuality itself have a strong impact on opinions about gay marriage as well. This balance is also reflected in the fact that 45% of those opposed to gay marriage mentioned religious reasons while about the same number gave other justifications. (http://pewforum.org/PublicationPage.aspx?id=64735)

Health

In regards to health, findings suggest that marriage equality may produce broad public health benefits by reducing the occurrence of stress-related health condition in gay and bisexual men. According to USA TODAY, evidence on the impact of legalizing gay marriage in Massachusetts shows that during the 12 months after the 2003 legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, there was a significant decrease in medical care visits, mental health visits and mental health care costs among gay and bisexual men, compared to the 12 months before the law changed. This led to a 13% reduction in health-care visits and a 14% reduction in health-care costs. The health benefits were similar for single gay men and those with partners (USA Today December 7, 2011). To support this data on improvements in gay men's health, a study links gay marriage bans to a rise in the rate of HIV infection. In the first study of the impact of social tolerance levels toward gays in the US on the HIV transmission rate, the researchers estimated that a constitutional ban on gay marriage raises the rate by our cases per 1,000 people (Emory University,www.emory.edu/esciencecommons). In addition, lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals are at an increased risk of psychiatric disorders stemming from discriminatory policies. The study refers to the specifically to the impact of institutional discrimination – characterized by "societal-level conditions that limit the opportunities and access to resources by socially-disadvantaged groups – including the institution of marriage" (Haskin,http://www.mailman.columbia.edu). The study highlights the importance of abolishing institutional forms of discrimination, including those leading to disparities in the mental health and well-being of LGB individuals. The study found that psychiatric disorders, defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV, increased significantly among LGB respondents living in states that banned gay marriage for the following outcomes: increased mood disorders, generalized anxiety, alcohol use disorder, and psychiatric comorbidity. In other words, the studies suggest that institutional discrimination contributed to more than a doubling in anxiety disorders among LGB people in states that passed anti-gay marriage laws.

Economics

Economic impacts on Massachusetts since passing gay-marriage laws, in general, have been favorable as was expected. For example, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the potential effects on the federal budget of recognizing same-sex marriages are numerous (http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=5559&type=0   ). Marriage can affect a person's eligibility for federal benefits such as Social Security. Married couples may incur higher or lower federal tax liabilities than they would as single individuals. In all, the General Accounting Officehas counted 1,138 statutory provisions – ranging from the obvious cases just mentioned to the obscure – in which marital status is a factor in determining or receiving benefits, rights, and privileges. In some cases, recognizing same-sex marriages would increase outlays and revenues; in other cases, it would have the opposite effect.   The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that on net, those impacts would improve the budget's bottom line to a small extent: by less than $1billion in each of the next 10 years.   That result assumes that same-sex marriages are legalized in all 50 states and recognized by the federal government (http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=5559&type=0).

Nevertheless, when considering taxes, depending on the division of income between spouses, marriage can lead to either higher income tax liability (a marriage penalty) or lower liability (a marriage bonus). The greater the similarity in the two spouses' earning, the more likely the couple is to incur a marriage penalty. Conversely, the greater the disparity in earning, the more likely the couple is to receive a marriage bonus. When one spouse earns all of a couple's income, the couple always gets a bonus. The conclusion by the CBO assumes that same-sex married couples would behave similarly to heterosexual married couples (http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=5559&type=0).

However, Federal law does not recognize same-sex civil marriage, and same-sex spouses will remain individual filers for federal purposes. "Bowe-Shulman, a staff attorney at the Massachusetts Court of Appeals, said she loses $7,800 a year to federal taxes on health insurance for her wife of 6 years, money she would rather be putting in a college fund for the couple's two children (huffingtonpost.com Cambridge, Massachusetts 12/11). Massachusetts construes the term civil marriage "to mean the voluntary union of two persons as spouses." Thus the term "marriage" includes same-sex marriage, and the term "spouse" includes partners in a same-sex marriage. Federal law however, the word marriage mean only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the term spouse refers only to a person of the opposite sex (cpa-services.com, Gay marriage in Massachusetts – The Tax Perspective). Of the thousands of legally married gay and lesbian couples

in Massachusetts, none can receive the federal benefits offered to heterosexual married couples because the federal benefits automatically offered to heterosexual married couples. The data suggests that legalizing gay marriage has the potential to benefit some gays and also help fill the coffers of the state.

   The evidence presented by Gary Gates and Lee Badgett, from the UCLA School of Law on "The Effect of Marriage Equality and Domestic Partnership on Business and the Economy" states that there are several benefits of equal treatment for same-sex couples such as current employees will be healthier, more satisfied, and less likely to leave their jobs if they get partner benefits. Also, partner or spousal benefits increase the competitiveness of employers in recruiting and retaining talented and committed employees (Badgett, Gates, 2006).   But, nothing is boosting the Massachusetts economy like the dollars being spent on weddings of same-sex couples. America's annual $70 billion wedding industry expects to get a $16.8 billion boost if gay marriage rights were granted nation-wide. As of 2009, it is estimated that "marriage equality has led to a positive impact to the Massachusetts economy of approximately $11 million over the last four and a half years" (Goldberg, Steinberger, Badgett, UCLA, 2009, p. 1).

Experience of Same-sex Couples

The last point in this section on the effects of marriage equality in Massachusetts is a survey of the experiences and impact of marriage on actual same-sex couples. The survey done by the Williams Institute of UCLA provides answers to several key questions that arise as other states consider whether to extend marriage to same-sex couples. As to the question, who is getting married?, over 61% are women, most are in their forties, and most are highly educated, and 85% have finished college and have high median incomes of $110,000 - $129,000. Why are they getting married? The vast majority, 93% stated that they married for love and commitment, and 85% listed legal recognition as one of their three main motivations for marrying. What is the impact of marriage on their relationships? Over 72% felt more committed to their partners and almost 70% felt more accepted by their communities.   Respondents also reported legal and economic benefits. And lastly, what impact has marriage had on the children of same-sex couples? More than one-quarter of couples are raising children, and of those with children, nearly all respondents agreed that their children are happier and better off as a result of their marriage. Many reported that their children felt more secure and protected, gained a since of stability, and saw their families validated by society as a result of marriage (williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu, 2009). It has also been reported by US news that divorce rates are lower in

states with same-sex marriage (June 6, 2011).

   When looking at the recent data concerning the effects of same-sex marriage on Canadian culture, the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance feel that granting marriage rights to those same-sex couples who want to marry would strengthen the institution of marriage. They believe marriage in North America has been suffering as increased numbers of couples decide to live together rather than marry, but legalizing gay marriage has made enthusiastic supporters of marriage who may not have been before.   The Religious Tolerance organization in Ontario claims that the legalization of same-sex marriage across Canada on July 20, 2005 did not have a significant effect on existing and future marriage of opposite-sex couples.   No existing or future couples, whether same-sex or opposite-sex, lost any of their marriage rights. They also cite many case studies which they argue have proved that married spouses are happier, have better mental health, have better physical health, and live longer than singles. They assume that these findings will apply to same-sex married couples as well (www.religoustolerance.org/hom_marb53.htm). The American Anthropological Association concludes that

> The results of more than a century of anthropological research on households, kinship relationships, and families across cultures and through time, provide no support whatsoever for the view that either civilization or viable social orders depend upon marriage as an exclusively heterosexual institution. (2005)

Regardless of the many benefits for gay and lesbians and their families, as well as the economy and overall improvement in health in Massachusetts, there is still a large portion of the citizenry that feels that legalizing marriage for homosexuals is not only an intrusion on their rights as citizens but a threat to their way of life, to their security.   Although there is evidence of some improvements for gays and lesbians through legal marriage, what about all those who are not married, who are single, transgender, or just choose not be married? Must one assimilate and agree to the conditions of the state in order to be accepted into the national fray and receive the benefits that should already be available through rights of citizenship?

Homonormativity and the National Fray

The emergence of "gay life" in the public view can aid in the process of liberation because, as Suzanna Danuta Walters argues, "surely liberation cannot be won from the space of the closet. Yet the glare of commercial culture can often produce a new kind of invisibility, itself supported by a relentless march toward assimilation"

(2001, p. 340). Since the debates about assimilation are as old as the movement itself, it leads Walters to question, "in reducing homophobia through assimilation, is there a danger of making homosexuality itself invisible again? – straight with a twist" (Walters, 2006, p. 292). But whether it is marriage or parenting, a noticeable percentage of both well-meaning (liberal) hetero and mainstream gays seem to stress gay sameness to straights.   Gay relationships, gay desires, and gay parenting are all presented as replicas of heterosexual patterns. With respect to this question, Butler (2004) raises the post-structuralist concern that the discourse of gay marriage is another way of disciplining the queer community so as to create a new hierarchy – the socially acceptable gay marrieds v. the queer abjected *others*, whose chosen kin and sexual practices continue to be despised.   This national recognition and inclusion, according to scholar Jasbir K. Puar, is "contingent upon the segregation and disqualification of racial and sexual others from the national imaginary" (Puar, 2007, p. 2). She argues this practice is a form of sexual exceptionalism, the emergence of national homosexuality, or what Puar terms "homonationalism," that corresponds with the coming out of the exceptionalism of American empire.   This brand of homosexuality operates as a regulatory script not only of normative gayness, queerness, or homosexuality, but also of the racial and national norms that reinforce these sexual subjects (Puar, 2007). This suggests that instead of challenging institutions which support the status quo, participation in marriage contributes to a new form of homophobia – homonationalism, which quiets if not silences the more radical voices that support counter narratives.

On the other hand, there are many gays and lesbians that are in favor of same-sex marriage specifically because is thought to be very pro-family, pro-stability, pro-monogamy, and pro-responsibility (Sullivan, 2004), thereby reinforcing, according to Walters, the centrality and dominance of marriage as the primary social unit (2006, p. 289). Participation in this institution not only assimilates lesbians and gays into the dominant hetero way of relating but leads to homonormativity, perpetuating along with it hierarchies of race, class, sexuality, and gender - leading to a "homonationalism" where only certain gays are accepted into the national fray, and all the 'others' are denied access and rendered second class citizens. The radical argument claims however, that the movement to legalize same-sex marriage is a profoundly conservative one. It is a movement that looks to dated social conventions as a means to acceptance and seeks a static solution to social evolution (Howley, 2003). The liberal/equality argument is persuasive and important – that marriage rights would confer benefits, both social and economic, to many lesbians and gays is undeniable. Given the structure of

our social and legal system (including our tax structure, inheritance laws, health benefits and responsibilities, as well as childcare, custody, and parenting issues – to name just a few), it is certainly understandable that many gay couples would desire access to the same rights and responsibilities, benefits and assumptions that married heterosexuals receive as a matter of course (Walters, 2001, 2006).

Yet, the "gay rights argument for marriage equality ignores and downplays the relationship between the institution of marriage to the institutions of male dominance, patriarchy, and gender hierarchies" (Walters, 2001, p. 291).   The evidence suggests that there are important elements to both liberal and radical arguments that challenge the status quo and as such are interpreted as a "danger" to the nation's security imaginary.

In addition, understanding the history of marriage law and citizenship rights and policies, highlights the fact that marriage has been a primary site for the production and maintenance of a white heteronormative citizenry, and if possible, according to Brandzel, LGBTQ individuals "should refuse citizenship and actively subvert the normalization, legitimization, and regulation that it requires" (2005, p. 20). Citizenship and marriage are deeply tied in U.S. political practice. Unfortunately, the focus on marriage and citizenship, by all parties, has shifted too much attention away from the role of the state in marriage and not to the details of the institution. The feminist critique of marriage suggests that there are reasons to be circumspect. In her essay on citizenship, Judith Shklar argues that the discourse on full citizenship equality focuses on what is denied to certain groups as a means of maintaining their out-group status (Shklar, 1991). Whether one argues for the normalcy of same-sex couples or for the inherently disruptive quality of queer identity, both arguments accept the existing framework for thinking about marriage and kinship. This framework yields a non-egalitarian understanding of citizenship by providing those who are in (supposedly) long-term, committed, and state-sanctioned relationships with greater recognition and status than those who are not (Josephson, 2005, p. 277).

Uma Narayan argues that feminist visions of equal representation and substantive equal citizenship for women and members of other marginalized groups needs to focus not only on "promoting their political participation and representation, but on their access to and voice within a variety of public institutions within which interests are articulated and promoted" (Narayan, 1997, p. 49). However, despite legal and social changes to the institution, marriage is still a central instrument in the denial of women's status as full citizens. If anti-same-sex marriage is based on the assumption that "man and woman" are discrete, natural and identifiable categories, then the courts desire to declare gender unquestionable clearly demonstrates the courts and society's

unwillingness or general refusal to acknowledge the social construction of gender hierarchies as well as ideologies and practices of heteropatriarchy.   For Narayan, citizenship, in its most general sense, refers to the relationships that those who inhabit a nation have to the state, and to the various aspects of collective national life.   Given the gendered and racialized histories of marriage and citizenship, Brandzel suggests that "citizenship itself is necessarily exclusive, privileged, and normative – and that advocacy for same-sex marriage reifies and reproduces these effects" (2005, 2). Again the evidence suggests, as a site of citizenship production, the institution of marriage is critical to the formation of a properly gendered, racialized, and heteronormative America. From a radical gay/feminist standpoint: If gay marriage succeeds in sanctifying the couple as the primary social unit, the one that gets financial and legal benefits, would it not follow that this would set up a hierarchy of intimacy that replicates the heteronormative one rather than challenging or altering it? Is it not also logical then, that marriage will continue to function as a tool of the state as a normalizing mechanism just as the historical evidence has suggested?

In contrast, Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University argues that marriage has undergone a process of deinstitutionalization – a weakening of the social norms that define partners' behavior (Cherlin, 2004). He argues that in times of social stability, the taken-for-granted nature of norms allows people to go about their lives without having to question their actions or the actions of others.   But when social change produces situations outside the reach of established norms, individuals can no longer rely on shared understandings of how to act (Cherlin, 2004, p. 848). This creates insecurities in the nation.   Consequently, in an effort to deal with these "dangers" they must negotiate new ways of acting. Cherlin contemplates that the breakdown of the old rules of a gendered institution such as marriage could lead to the creation of a more egalitarian relationship between spouses. For example, there are three possible future directions for marriage in the West according to Cherlin's research found in the *Journal of Marriage and Family.* First, is a return to a more dominant, institutionalized form of marriage which would require a "decrease in women's labor force participation and a return to more gender-typed family roles" (Cherlin, 2004, p. 857), although he sees this as very unlikely. The second alternative is a continuation of the current situation, in which marriage remains deinstitutionalized but is common and distinctive. "It is not just one type of family relationship among many; rather, it is the most prestigious form. It still confers its traditional benefits, such as enforceable trust, but it is increasingly a mark of prestige, a display of distinction, an individualistic achievement" (Cherlin, 2004, p. 858), inextricably tying it to neoliberal practices, the global economy, and the spreading of what Puar calls the

American empire.   Marriage in this scenario remains important, but not as dominant, and retains its high symbolic status.

There is an interesting third alternative however, where marriage fades into just one of many kinds of interpersonal romantic relationships.   For example, "A non-marital relationship can provide much intimacy and love, can place both partners on an equal footing, and can allow them to develop their independent senses of self" (Cherlin, 2004, p. 858). Cherlin argues that although people may still commit morally to a relationship, they increasingly prefer to commit voluntarily rather than to be obligated to commit by law or social norms. It is possible to see how this model of relationship provides the social space for "queerness" as well as traditional marriage whether gay or straight. Yet it still begs the question if the nation's notions of security will be affected or destabilized by changes like these to the dominant/subordinate binaries that are anchored in and reproduced by the institution of marriage? Or is the nation's heteropatriarchal structure flexible in ways which allow for some change while the core foundations remain intact?

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the early twentieth century, homosexuals have gone from being considered a national security risk, to the movement for equal rights and opportunities to participate in basic American institutions such a marriage. In *Loving v Virginia* in 1967, the Supreme Court struck down anti-miscegenation laws stating that marriage is fundamental right of citizenship. The prohibition of racial intermarriage was to the cultural construction of racism what the prohibition of same-sex marriage is to sexism and homophobia.   "Just as miscegenation was threatening because it called into question the distinctive and superior status of being white, homosexuality is threatening because it calls into question the distinctive and superior status of being male" (Richardson, 1998, pp. 159-60). After Stonewall the gay rights movement and its drive for equality in marriage for same-sex couples presented such a threat to the stability of the national security imaginary that in the 1990s there was a backlash from the conservative right, including DOMA – The Defense of Marriage Act (1994). However by 2004, Massachusetts, and then Connecticut in 2008, have both claimed bans on gay marriage to be unconstitutional.   The need to re-stabilize the security imaginary by protecting traditional marriage reflects on the construction of the state and how crucial the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology, structure, and practice is to the security of the nation and why same-sex marriage is interpreted as threat or danger to its stability. The Defense of Marriage Act, the Healthy Marriage

Initiative, the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment, and the Marriage Movement all insist that children's welfare is at the heart of their mission. However, is a married heterosexual mother and father the only way for a child to benefit? Or, could the presence of consistent, loving caregiver(s) be more important to a child's welfare than the numbers, sex, or marital status of the caregiver(s)? As Leslie J. Brett suggests, "We can seek to change and broaden the systems to support more types of families, rather than seeking to change families themselves" (Connecticut's Commission on the Status of Women 2004).

The challenging of long established and institutionalized social norms is at the center of the ways in which the marriage equality of same-sex couples threatens the nation's security imaginary. The new data on the effects of gay marriage in Massachusetts repeatedly refers to normalizing gay life, same-sex marriage – particularly through changes in school curriculum. This suggests that there is a move toward assimilation through gay marriage and that marriage functions as a normalizing mechanism of the nation. Yet, it is not as simple as that, according to Puar "gay marriage is not simply a demand for equality with heterosexual norms, but more importantly a demand for reinstatement of white privileges and rights – rights of property and inheritance in particular" (Puar, 2007, p. 29). Puar argues that there is an "ascendancy of heteronormativity where there are implicit and increasingly explicit interests in the ascendancy to whiteness and attendant citizenship privileges (gay marriage is the most pertinent example of this), a variant of which Heidi Nast terms 'queer white patriarchy'" (2007, p. 30). Nast maintains that "there is substantial room for discussion about white patriarchal privilege outside heterosexual confines" and that the displacement of white heterosexual male beneficiaries of capitalism by white gay males who "hold a competitive edge: With no necessary ideological-material ties to biologically based house-holding and the attendant mobility frictions these entail, they share the potential for considerable, if ironic, patriarchal advantage that is relational and cuts across lines of class" (Puar, 2007, p. 30).

Related to this and the assimilation or normalization of homosexuality is the notion of how white American lesbians with capital are an emerging consumer niche group – and the respectable lesbian couple with money is being positioned as the idealized inhabitants of an increasingly acceptable gay version of the nuclear family (Puar, 2007, p. 31). The ascendancy of whiteness argues Puar, is not strictly bound to heterosexuality, though it is bound to heteronormativity. That is to say, "we can indeed mark a specific historical shift: the project of whiteness is assisted and benefited by homosexual populations that participate in the same identitarian and economic hegemonies as those hetero subjects complicit

with this ascendancy" (Puar, 2007, p. 31). In other words, participating in the institution of marriage by gays and lesbians is participation in the same practices and ideologies that claimed and categorized homosexuals as deviant and abnormal in the first place.

Questions to ways in which challenging traditional marriage can threaten the systemic sexist, racial and classist ideologies are highlighted by the current data on same- sex marriage. The effect of assimilating the "good" gays into the national fray seems to lessen the threat to security and makes homosexuals more acceptable – but which ones, and at what cost? The evidence from Massachusetts suggests that heterosexual couples marry for basically the same reasons as gays. And a main argument for marriage equality is that is tames men (and wild women) into respectability, although enforced monogamy and trust has not been shown to be very effective according to divorce rates. And Cherlin's idea of marriage as prestigious, as an individual accomplishment, appears to lead to a homonormativity that would perpetuate along with it all the hierarchies and systems of oppression, i.e. race, gender, class, and so forth. As many critical scholars argue (including Nast, 2002; 2007; Howley, 2003; Butler, 2004; Walters, 2006;, Brandzel, 2005; Pinion, 2010; Puar, 2007; Narayan, 1997), legalizing same-sex marriage contributes to the social construction of homonormativity and acceptance into the national fray. But, also may lead to the perpetuating of systems of oppression just as heteronormativity passes on the status-quo to generation after generation.

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