

PUERTO RICAN WOMEN'S ROLES IN INDEPENDENCE NATIONALISM:

UNWAVERING WOMEN

By

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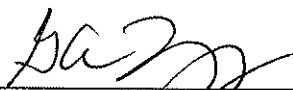
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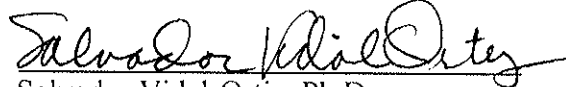
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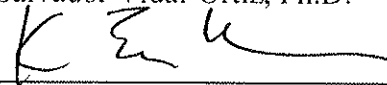
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DEDICATION

To all the “Others” of the Nation

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the construction of women and feminism in the Puerto Rican nationalist project as presented in *Claridad*, “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation.” This study relies on an interpretive approach to methodology which weaves together several strands of sociological analysis. The research method is content analysis to study the newspaper *Claridad* as a social artifact for analysis. The sample of articles for analysis consists of 769 newspaper articles using content analysis to code and interpret the textual material from *Claridad* in the period 1980 to 2006. I also consult a range of other materials and observations as background for analysis.

The analysis concentrates on women's roles in independence nationalism in Puerto Rico. The work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) offer tools for inquiry into the roles or frames for women as heuristic devices to conduct the analysis of gender and nationalism. This study finds that the coverage of women's roles and feminism in independence nationalism in Puerto Rico is minimal or only 1.5 percent of the coverage, and that for the notion that *Claridad* is “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation,” women's roles in this independence project are marginal. My study

affirms Anthias and Yuval-Davis' (1989), Yuval-Davis' (1997), Enloe's (1990) and Nagel's (1998) assertions that nationalism relegates women to certain frames and roles and consequently, gender as social relation of power is reproduced through men's interests, notions of masculinity, and by the discourses that use women to mediate the relationship between gender and nation.

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as our version of the “nation.” My sister, Eileen Serrano Mercado, has clarified many questions about the Puerto Rican experience and also helped me locate resources at local libraries in Puerto Rico and provided me with transportation. She is an engineer with a sociological eye.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2010, Lolita Lebrón and Juan Mari Brás, two of the most important icons of the Puerto Rican independence nationalist movement died after complications associated with long-term illnesses. Commemorated by the entire island, Lolita Lebrón became the symbol of the Puerto Rican nation, a woman who embodied all things Puerto Rican after her daring and unrepentant attack in 1954 against the U.S. Congress that sought the independence of the Puerto Rican nation. As a nationalist woman, Lolita became the symbol of the nation, a martyr seen by some as a freedom fighter, while despised by others as a terrorist.

Later on September 10, 2010, Juan Mari Brás passed away and once more the nation lost another one of its foremost and fervent supporters and advocates for the independence of Puerto Rico. Mari Brás was also the co-founder of *Claridad*, the pro-independence nationalist newspaper. Juan Mari Brás, like Lolita Lebrón, was loved and simultaneously feared by many for his relentless conviction that one day Puerto Rico will become free from U.S. colonial rule. Both of these icons saw the use of armed conflict as a tool for the liberation of the nation. While later in life Lolita renounced violence, but remained an avid activist, Juan Mari Brás continued his crusade to liberate Puerto Rico using any means necessary, but he particularly saw the rule of law and the rights granted to all nations of the world by virtue of the provisions of international law and human

rights as necessary tools for the liberation of Puerto Rico. Thus the death of these two revolutionaries underscores the role of imprescindibles (essential) women and men from the perspective of the situated knowledge of independentismos (independence movements). As avid supporters of the independence of Puerto Rico and their daring contributions challenging U.S. hegemony, both have passed to immortality as the most important icons of the Puerto Rican independence movement of the second-half of the twentieth-century. Bridging gender and nation, Lolita and Juan have been exalted as the symbols of the nation, fearless, full of valor and conviction, becoming memorialized and commemorated martyrs of the nation. The death of these two iconic symbols of independence nationalism has brought to the forefront the polymorphous relationship between feminism and nationalism, two central discourses informing the life-world of social movements in Puerto Rico and throughout the world.

Both feminist and nationalist movements emphasize the character of collective identity; and in sociology, “the study of identity forms a critical cornerstone within modern sociological thought” (Cerulo 1997:385). Collective identities of gender and nation have political implications for group agency and political action (Cerulo 1997). It is in this context of the sociological study of collective identity that this dissertation examines the assertion that all nationalisms are gendered via a detailed content analysis of the discourses of feminism and nationalism in a sample of newspaper articles from the pro-independence movement newspaper called *Claridad*.

Using *Claridad* as a case study of Puerto Rican nationalist thought during the time period of 1980 to March 2006, this research aims to reveal how the pro-independence newspaper depicts and informs the relationship between feminism and

nationalism in Puerto Rico and the roles of women in nationalism. Beginning in 1980, a number of important demographic changes in Puerto Rico took place as the decade saw an increase in the number of women heads of household (Azize-Vargas 1987), while also marking the creation of various university intellectual centers for the study of Puerto Rican women. By the middle of the decade, the second edition of *The Puerto Rican Woman* by Edna Acosta-Belén (1986) was released, a pioneering text known for its contributions to the study of Puerto Rican women's culture, history, and society (see also Acosta-Belén and Bose 1993).

To supplement the content analysis of newspaper articles, I completed an extensive literature review of the Puerto Rican historical record along with a feminist critique of the literature on nations and nationalisms. I also identified published materials with prominent Puerto Rican intellectuals that I treated as expert informants that offer insight into the preoccupations of Puerto Rican society. I visited research centers in Puerto Rico, conducted research in various university libraries in Puerto Rico, and examined multiple historical sources to provide the most accurate picture of the construction of Puerto Rican feminism and nationalism during the historical period under study. I also visited the historical sites associated with nationalism and observed firsthand the setting and its context as currently represented today.

The history of Puerto Rican society suggests an ongoing preoccupation with the political status of Puerto Rico as the society remains a territory of the United States. The civic life of the society is enmeshed in debates about the present and future political status of Puerto Rico. Conquered in 1898 by the United States after the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico inhabits an ambiguous relationship with the United States.

The debate about political sovereignty has important implications for how the Puerto Rican nation is constructed and everything that is defined as Puerto Rican often emerges in clear contrast with what is “foreign” or not Puerto Rican. Similarly, discussions about gender and women focus on the role of women in producing, reproducing, and birthing the nation; yet the literature on nation and nationalisms in Puerto Rico has often followed a generic notion of nationalism that is oblivious to the discourses about women as producers and/or reproducers of the nation. The discourses of women in nationalism have remained relatively unexamined in the context of Puerto Rican discourses about nationalism. When women have been constructed as embodying the nation by the discourses of nationalism, women have been asked to avoid bringing the issue of gender inequality to the forefront because any feminist discourse is often dismissed as foreign, detracting and/or obfuscating the important issues of national liberation.

As a member of the Puerto Rican nation, I have noticed an ever present cultural nationalism on the island coupled with daily concerns about violence against women that raises questions about the status of women in an increasingly globalized society. Even though I view the feminist movement in Puerto Rico as a small yet invisible movement driven by feminist intellectuals in the academy and a few women activists on the ground, it seemed to me that everything in Puerto Rico, like elsewhere, uses the discourses of nationalism and nation for sales and consumption. The discourse and iconography about Puerto Rico as a nation have had a gendered component including a reference to the “La Isla Bonita” (the beautiful Island). I also noticed that the sales of “Puerto Rican” mementos increasingly stamped made in China embody a green “coquí” or toad that although not really green, it is depicted as such to sell Puerto Rican culture; T-shirts often

depicted the Island as a woman and in my many trips to the interior of the Island I often visited a negocio or small tavern/restaurant called *El Patriota* (*The Patriot*) located in a rural road, bordering the *Inabón* River in the *Barrio Real Anón* of *Ponce*, Puerto Rico where there is a dramatic focus on everything national – the flag, the music, the food, the pitorro, and everything Puerto Rican shape how the nation is celebrated. The tavern was also known for its hoisted flag urging Puerto Ricans to “Wake up Boricua” or in Spanish it demanded: “Coño Despierta Boricua.”

Over the years I have collected many clippings from the independence newspaper *Claridad*, and as I entered graduate school I discovered the feminist literature about the gendered character of nationalism. This had been a preoccupation I had that facilitated the use of an outsider-within perspective (Collins 1986; 1990) to study the national reality that I had experienced for many years. As a Puerto Rican woman, I discovered I was not one or the other, but both; everyday interactions made it very clear that there is a complex relationship between nationalism and gender. If in fact nationalism is gendered phenomenon, then I began to wonder how the nationalist discourse and feminist discourse operated in the cultural artifacts of the Puerto Rican experience, namely the newspaper *Claridad* whose motto is “el periódico de la nación Puertorriqueña” (the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation).

Several themes recurred throughout this investigation: the meaning of nationalism and feminism; the notion of nationalism as a monolithic construct defined as independence nationalism; the representation of the Puerto Rican nation as gendered; and the role of commemoration in reproducing the nation and gender discourses. Indeed, after migrating to the United States in 1983, and travelling back and forth over the past

decades, these themes in the discourses of feminism and nationalism helped me to structure the research questions posed in this study.

Research Questions

This dissertation investigates how Puerto Rican cultural artifacts (i.e., newspaper articles from the foremost nationalist newspaper of Puerto Rico) construct the discourses of nationalism and feminism and women's roles in nationalism. Specifically, this study asks three interrelated questions. The questions are listed as follows:

1. How has the discourse of independence nationalism (in *Claridad*) constructed women's roles in that project?
2. How have the discourses of nationalism and feminism (in *Claridad*) constructed the relationship between feminism and nationalism?
3. How have the discourses of nationalism and feminism constructed women in society, that is, in relation to social institutions and social issues?

These research questions steer this inquiry and given the qualitative nature of the study, other questions may arise that will help to guide the process of uncovering the depiction of Puerto Rican feminist and nationalist projects in Puerto Rico. Answering these questions revealed the key historical and cultural frames of events of the discourses of feminism and nationalism in Puerto Rico and the roles of women in Puerto Rican nationalism. The data for analysis consisted of 769 articles published during the 1980 to 2006 time frame; the articles were identified after carefully reviewing the microfilms containing the newspaper files and by coding the amount of coverage, the geography of coverage, and the representation of coverage as outlined in the methodology section of

this dissertation. Specifically, I studied *Claridad*'s coverage of women's roles in nationalism. I identified key themes and topics about where and when women were included to reveal the roles of women in nationalism drawing from the insights of the feminist critique of nations and nationalism, especially the work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) who identified the main ways in which women and nationalism are related (see Chapter 3 for the literature review).

Significance of the Study and Key Terms

Given the exclusion of Puerto Rican women from most sociological research in the United States and the growing efforts to document feminism and feminist studies in Puerto Rico, this investigation is an effort to remedy the exclusion of Puerto Rican feminist thought by empirically exploring the discourses of feminism and nationalism. It is unfortunate that investigations of the link between nationalism and feminism remain few, and that they seldom examine or include the voices of feminist and/or non-feminist Puerto Rican women.

Previous research on *Claridad*, the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation, examined the first twenty-five years of the newspaper (Paláu Suárez 1992) and provided an overview of the newspaper, including a detailed account of the independence movement and its role in shaping the newspaper. Paláu Suárez's study, however, did not examine the themes and discourses of nationalism and how these intersect with feminism and the representation of women although it provided a cursory view of key topics.

My research had a different focus and goal than this previous study of *Claridad*. The significance of my study is that I examined the theoretical claim that all nationalisms

are gendered and used *Claridad* as a case study to show how that operates in the Puerto Rican context. Since *Claridad* uses the motto that they are “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation,” I wanted to demonstrate whether the feminist claim that all nationalisms are gendered actually appeared in a case study of a society that has generally been neglected by North American studies of nationalism and Latin American studies of nationalism. I wanted to understand how the nation gets constructed as woman, as symbol of the Puerto Rican community in Puerto Rico.

Recognizing that ambivalence and conflicts in feminism (Hirsch and Keller 1990; Thorne and Yalom 1992) remain a central feature of feminist theorizing about the meaning of feminism, feminist, and nationalism, I have selected the following working definitions to guide the structuring of this research. Feminism is understood as a social movement that seeks to challenge gender inequality by increasing access to societal resources for women (i.e., wealth, power, prestige, and education), and it is also an ideology for the liberation of women. Feminists may organize collectively to promote “women’s equal rights” (West 1997: xii).

Nationalism refers to the processes associated with “territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereignty” (West 1997: xii). Nationalism often suggests an attachment to the land or territory, yielding a sense of identity and feelings of belonging that may direct those who identify with the island to describe it as a patria (motherland or fatherland).

Puerto Rican feminist thought is defined as the discourse, activities and issues connected with the collective struggle for improvement of Puerto Rican women’s social status in the Puerto Rican national context. By examining the link between feminism and

nationalism in Puerto Rico, this study may correct the absence of Puerto Rican women in most academic discussions of nationalism and feminism. West (1997: xiv) succinctly stated: “Not only must we begin with the women’s standpoint on nationalism and feminism, we must move to an understanding of the construction of nationalism as an inherently ‘gendered’ phenomenon.” The examination of Puerto Rican feminist thought could shed light on how the social categories of feminism and nationalism are socially produced and reproduced, not immutable categories of social analysis. Specifically, the analysis of Puerto Rican feminist thought provided a case study to determine if and under what circumstances “all nationalisms are gendered” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; McClintock, 1997; Yuval-Davis 1997; see also West 1992, 1997; Wilford and Miller, 1998).

Nationalism and feminism emerge in specific historical contexts and are socially constructed, produced and reproduced by specific cultural practices and power relations. Multiple theoretical explanations based on an empirical research are needed to understand the struggles for Puerto Rican national and feminist liberation using a sociological perspective. Both feminism and nationalism are ideologies that support a specific notion of membership, and they are also organized social movements aimed at the liberation of women and the liberation of the nation respectively.

In addition, I defined discourse as a way of speaking about nations and nationalisms that assumes and prescribes certain roles for women in nationalism. Discourse refers to a way of speaking or rhetoric that shapes how nationalism, women’s roles in nationalism and feminism are shaped, challenged, and questioned (Calhoun 1997:3; Foucault 1969, 1977; Greenfield 1992). The discourses of nationalism may frame women and gender in

ways that shape what is thought about nationalism, keeps the discussion structure by the rhetoric of independence from U.S. rule in Puerto Rico, and reproduces the conversation about independence and how to imagine and think about the independence struggle.

Claridad has framed a way of speaking about women in nationalism that continues to generate questions and answers, while opening new problematic areas for further discussion and action, always from the perspective of independence and national sovereignty, while also foreclosing or disabling certain ways of speaking or acting that do not support independence nationalism, feminist nationalism, nor acknowledges other forms of nationalisms.

This is a dissertation about the discourses of nationalism in the independence newspaper *Claridad* with a specific attention to gender and gender roles to clarify what roles, if any, women have played in the newspaper's representation of the nation. Examining the discursive formation of nationalism and nation in *Claridad* may reveal the ways in which the nation is "an imagined community" (Anderson 1983), and to what extent and in what way Puerto Rican women figure in the independence rhetoric of nations and nationalism. *Claridad's* notion of the nation is bundled in a call for the liberation of the Puerto Rican nation that was invaded by the United States, denied freedom, constantly repressed and deprived of the human rights to which all nations are entitled by international law. This claim represented a particular discourse, a particular way of speaking of an imagined community that has not achieved its full potential as a result of colonialism. Via content analysis of the coverage of the Puerto Rican nation, I shall clarify how the rhetoric and manner of speaking about the nation and the manner of how the Puerto Rican nation constructs and includes or excludes women. The nation

includes women and women too may imagine collective identity based on a sense of territory and population that has an aspiration to sovereignty and equality with other nations; and women may also wish to participate in the collective affairs of the nation as members, sharing a sense of culture supported by shared values, beliefs, and the importance of language where women are or can be central nationalist actors.

This study examines how nationalism views women and as Grosby (2005:5) suggested, if nationalism is “a set of beliefs about the nation,” then the nationalist standpoint of the newspaper is a situated knowledge and an incomplete set of beliefs about the nation if women do not figure prominently in its depictions of the nation. Nationalist beliefs are always partial, historically specific, and changing because “the nation is a social relation of collective self-consciousness” (Grosby 2005:10). *Claridad* and its writers provide a sense of nationhood bundled in an understanding of the colonial and the national and its desire for splitting from the U.S. colonial rule, clamoring for a sense of solidarity based on nationality as a shared collective identity in the context of a shared colonial history. By exploring the national question in Puerto Rico, I aimed to detail insights into how nations and nationalism have been represented and studied in the island, including an evaluation of how women and gender have appeared in the scientific and historical study of nationalism in Puerto Rico and whether or not women’s roles in nationalism reflect the important insights provided by the literature review included in this dissertation.

The interpretive methodology will assist in documenting feminist nationalism in Puerto Rico drawing from the insights of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) about the roles of women in nationalism. Both nationalism and feminism articulated a critique of

universal rights and equality based on binary categories and essentialism. On the one hand, feminists urged citizenship and equality based on universal rights that should include women, remedying the exclusions and inequalities between women and men. Nationalisms claimed the universal right to autodeterminación/self-determination to remedy the inequalities between metropolis and colony. The feminist critique of nations and nationalism underscored that feminism and nationalism operate with a shared understanding of social relations, but they each privilege either gender or nation, or both as a social relation of domination or liberation depending on the historical context. Social relations impact how Yuval-Davis' (1997) definition of gender is framed as a discourse. For Yuval-Davis (1997), gender is also framed “not as a real social difference between men and women, but as a *mode of discourse* which relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference as opposed to their economic positions or their membership in ethnic and racial collectivities” (P. 9; emphasis added). This qualification is important because it allows us to identify the discourses and roles of women in nationalism. In short, I hope to reveal when and under what circumstances feminism and nationalism intersect to challenge and undermine gender inequality and to ascertain the roles of Puerto Rican women in Puerto Rican nationalism.

Limitations of Qualitative Research

A case study of the discourses of nationalism and feminism in the newspaper of Puerto Rican nation presents certain limitations. Content analysis poses various limitations for the study of social life. Content analysis can tell us about the cultural reality of the time, but it cannot reveal with certainty the intentions of those who wrote

the articles. A few of the articles included in *Claridad* consisted of brief interviews with prominent feminists about feminism and nation in Puerto Rico; these are a small sample from which to offer generalizations about the topic of feminism and nationalism. I have made a concerted effort to address the limitations of both methods by using them in a complementary fashion, while also reviewing documentaries in DVD format about the history of independence and *Claridad* (Brown 2005; Rodríguez 2005, 2010). My research focuses on women and question of nationalism and feminism. It highlights the Puerto Rican women's roles in the independence coverage of the nation.

Cresswell (1998) asserts that carefully selected informants for the purposes of developing a theoretical understanding of a topic can be central to revealing key factors in the development of feminism and nationalism. Moreover, the use of the *Claridad* newspaper and documentaries reflect certain presumptions about what is considered newsworthy in Puerto Rico by other types of "informants", the writers of newspaper articles. The ideological angle of the pro-independence movement already excludes those who do not necessarily support the perspective of those in the *Claridad* collective. Given the specifically nationalist orientation of the newspaper, I assumed that the content reflects the range of preoccupations in Puerto Rican society on the topic of study from the perspective of independence nationalism, and my generalizations and analysis will keep this angle in mind. In addition, the use of published interviews with prominent intellectuals that were published in the newspaper (*Palabras en Libertad*) and other documents afford insight into the nationalist and feminist problematic in contemporary Puerto Rican society.

The limitations posed by content analysis as a research method have been minimized by a thorough review of the history of nationalism and nations from the independence perspective (see Chapter 2) and by a detailed overview and analysis of the feminist critique of nations and nationalism to show women's roles in nationalism (see Chapter 3). Also by triangulating content analysis with the historical record and the sociological theory I was able to ascertain how the nationalism of *Claridad* represents the roles of women in nationalism. In addition, some of the articles utilized in this dissertation represented transcribed interviews with prominent feminist intellectuals who navigated both feminism and nationalism, and often engaged in double militancy in both feminism and nationalism. Drawing from the insights of these informants helped strengthen the validity and reliability of the content analysis of newspaper articles.

My study did not examine all articles about nationalism; instead I focused on the articles that made a reference to feminism, gender, and specifically to women in the newspaper. By focusing on these articles I assumed that the articles would assist me in revealing the roles of women in nationalism and how the nationalist discourse embodied and shaped the role of Puerto Rican women in nationalist project of *Claridad*. My study focused on the story about women and feminism in the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation.

Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized as follows:

Chapter 2 contextualizes Puerto Rican feminism and nationalism in the history of Puerto Rican society by providing a historical overview of the rise of feminism and

nationalism tracing key historical events and figures. By providing a detailed historical overview of the cultural, social, and historical forces shaping feminism and nationalism in Puerto Rico I offer the reader a nuanced contextualization of how the Puerto Rican nation commemorates the past from the perspective of independence nationalism and women's history.

Chapter 3 examines the theoretical frameworks informing this study, particularly a selective overview of the sociological literature on nations and nationalism, the feminist critique of nations and nationalism, while also contextualizing the literature of nations and nationalism from the perspective of the national question in Puerto Rico. I also underscore a detailed rationale for the use of theory as a central tool to guide the methodological choices made by this study in order to reveal Puerto Rican women's roles in nationalism.

Chapter 4 delves into the methodology, method, and materials that I used to investigate the discourses of feminism and nationalism in Puerto Rico. I also include two Appendixes to document the data I examined to conduct the analysis.

Chapter 5 analyzes the discourse of independence nationalism tracing its key features, while also asking questions about the women's roles in nationalism. The focus of the chapter is how nationalism is constructed and what its central tenets are as a discourse for independence.

Chapter 6 presents the frame for the commemoration of women which consists of women's history and the women worthies from the nation and abroad for the commemoration of the nation.

Chapter 7 elucidates the discourse of feminist nationalism as an emergent counter-hegemonic discourse that is redefining the independence nationalist project.

Chapter 8 reports the nationalist construction of women and social issues in institutions with a focus on how women's roles in social institution are used for the nationalist cause.

Chapter 9 synthesizes the findings, draws conclusions and evaluates the extent to which the Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) framework applies to the study of nation and gender in Puerto Rico, to the construction of Puerto Rican feminist nationalism, and to understanding the intersection of gender and nation in Puerto Rico. The chapter also makes recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF NATIONALISM AND FEMINISM

Competing perspectives on the national question in Puerto Rico shared a focus on commemoration as a tool for revealing the temporal depth of the nation. Specifically, commemoration consists of a series of devices and a politics of time that depends on a selective reading of historical events and dates. Commemoration illuminates about who, what, when, where, and how the nation is defined, but also underscores who belongs and/or belongs or forms part of the nationalist project. Charles Turner (2006) put it succinctly when he defined commemoration as:

All of those devices through which a nation recalls, marks, embodies, discusses or argues about its past, and to all those devices which are intended to create or sustain a sense of belonging or 'we feeling' in the individuals who belong to it, a sense of belonging which may or may provide for a means of addressing future tasks and possibilities. (P. 206)

The purpose of this chapter is to place Puerto Rican women's roles in the context of independence nationalism. Based on the available literature that I reviewed, I examine the historical context of nationalism and feminism and how women's roles in nationalism are commemorated by framing them in the context of the situated knowledge of the specificities of independence nationalism. Thus I situate this review in the social and historical context of Puerto Rican society. This chapter is an attempt to chronicle the history of the independence struggle by using gender and women's roles as a heuristic device to highlight facts, themes, feminism and nationalism, historical figures, and

women's deeds in that project. I draw from the framework advanced by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) to frame the roles of women's in nationalism. This social construction of independence nationalism follows a primarily insular (Puerto Rico based) perspective, informed by a transnational perspective on the diasporic movement of figures such as Segundo Ruiz Belvis, Eugenio María de Hostos, Ramón Emeterio Betances, Marianna Bracetti, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, and eventually deeds of Pedro Albizu Campos and Lolita Lebrón among countless others.

The label of being “insular” is a widespread epithet against historical knowledge and evidence using the island-based experience of Puerto Ricans and its intellectual heritage as a point of departure. I am aware of the consequences of such claim, but I inherited an educational background that erased the experience of those of us living in the island, while presenting everything from the “states” as generally better. The history classes I took in public schools never told us about the history of Puerto Rico and for the most part emphasized the history of the United States with all its complexities. Being insular need not be a value judgment or a normative judgment for why I proceed this way. I have found myself oriented, even in the diaspora, to the island and for the most part, I don't necessarily believe the connections available to those living in predominantly ethnic enclaves are the same across the board for those of us who do not live in the “community.” My community is still imagined in Puerto Rico, but I live in the “belly of the beast.”

Thus, following the insights of Flores (1993), who has provided extensive critiques of insularism as embodied in the writings of Antonio S. Pedreira, my chapter

does look at the period before and after the conquest and colonization by Spain, a brief review of the economic changes that attended after colonization, and then an overview of the Spanish-American War and the U.S. invasion. However, my dissertation moves beyond that period by examining the rise of feminism, the nationalist activism during the twentieth century focusing on the 1930s and 1950s revolts, the repression of nationalists, the activism of the 1960s at the university along with the rise of feminist and socialist activism in Puerto Rico and in the diaspora. I re-read this complex history to trace, with my limited eye, how independence nationalism that has permeated the Puerto Rican experience by shaping and representing women's roles in nationalism as a discourse. I then use this historical angle to examine and contextualize my research findings in the chapters that follow and to inform my theoretical analysis.

Later on in the findings chapters I address the role of the diaspora in independence nationalism to show their contributions to the independence effort and present their experience via an analysis of their depiction as found in *Claridad*. I stress the significance of women's roles to show their involvement in the independence movement by making women and the nation visible as part of independence nationalism in Puerto Rico. Most official histories, nationalists or not, have often relegated the contributions of women to a list of "women worthies" or those women who have contributed to the independence nationalism of the newspaper or ignored them altogether.

I assumed that the project of the newspaper *Claridad* narrates the story of the nation by tracing events that have had a significant impact in the emergence of the independence movement in Puerto Rico. I use the heuristic device of women's roles to

reveal women's position in that discourse. The story of independence is always latent, waiting to be mobilized, reconstructed, and retold. Any event at any given time, a topic, a person, a movement, or topic can be deployed and inscribed with meaning of independence; in this sense, this nationalism follows the structure of what Billig (1995) called "banal nationalism." This banality offers an imagined and invented tradition of the nationalist story for independence that is always there to be expressed or mobilized to generate support for the liberation of the nation. This nationalist project is grounded in historical events and devices that commemorate, produce, and reproduce Puerto Rico as a nation among nations. For this nationalist project, when women are included, the nation of women is narrated through the contributions of women, feminist or not, who have supported the pro-independence cause. The historical context of nationalism and feminism that follows highlights and frames the key events that have marked Puerto Rican nationalist history and the status of women in that history.

The overview is framed following the history of colonization of Puerto Rico by two colonial superpowers, Spain and the United States. The review then moves to a discussion of the rise of nationalism and the rise of women's movements and feminism as responses and/or consequences to colonization and exploitation. By discussing the colonial history, this inquiry explores the consequences of colonialism in Puerto Rico for the development of specifically nationalist and feminist responses to the women question in nationalism or perhaps both nationalist and feminist responses to the rise of colonialism. The causation or correlation between feminism, nationalism, and colonialism remains an empirical question to be addressed in some form in the chapters

to come, but a full study of this question is still a work in progress beyond the scope of my modest attempt to track women's roles in nationalism in Puerto Rico during the period of 1980 to 2006.

In the chapter, I will contextualize Puerto Rican history from the perspective of women and Puerto Rican independence nationalism. Specifically, this chapter focuses on central historical events that frame the historical context of Puerto Rican feminism and the question of women in the nation of Puerto Rico from the perspective of the independence movement. The significance of the nationalist project in Puerto Rico is structured by a pro-independence ideology that forecloses any other interpretation of the Puerto Rican nation; thus I followed the historical record with a keen eye on the linkages between gender and nation and feminism and nationalism.

The emergence of nationalism, based on the angle provided by the newspaper *Claridad*, is rooted in the history of over 500 years of colonialism and neocolonialism experienced by Puerto Rican society. The nationalism espoused by *Claridad* requires an overview of the shaping of the independence movement in Puerto Rico, methodologically following the experience of women as the central strategy to reveal the story of the nation. For the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation, since immemorial times, Puerto Ricans have always struggled for the liberation of Puerto Rico and the story of women's roles in the nation is told following this ideology of national liberation. The story of women in the Puerto Rican nation begins prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus into the New World.

Indigenous Society before Spanish Colonization

Puerto Rican society holds a unique position in relationship to Spain and the United States and to the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean. Connected with the history of the Pre-Columbian West Indies, radiocarbon dating placed the earliest archeological remains as dating back to the first century A.D. and as a result the possibility of a land inhabited over 2,000 years ago by humans (Morales Carrión 1983:3). In the book *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, Morales Carrión (1983) noted that “it is questionable, however, whether the current American reader knows and understands who Puerto Rican are as a people, as a historical entity, within the varied ethnic and cultural canvas of the Caribbean” (P. ix). Similarly, Puerto Ricans know very little about this historical period as the studies and research are only now beginning to be reconstructed and examined, and only a few studies have reconstructed the archeological record drawing from historical documents about the indigenous experience left behind by colonial regimes.

Inhabited for centuries by various indigenous tribes, Puerto Rican historiography showed that Puerto Rico as the land of *Taíno* Indians had a distinct social organization that included women tribal chiefs who engaged in the social life of the tribe prior to 1493 when the Spaniards colonized Puerto Rico (Sued Badillo [1979] 1989; see Cook 1977). *Taína* women engaged in warfare among the many other activities associated with women in early Puerto Rican society. Jalil Sued Badillo ([1975] 1989) has documented the status of women in Puerto Rican society using archeological evidence. He showed that prior to Colon’s arrival in 1492 in the Antilles; the islands had long been inhabited

for more than 6,000 years. Puerto Rican archeology has identified numerous goddess and god-like figurines known as *cemis* connecting women to the land and to the reproduction of the nation.

Based on this reconstruction of the archeological record, it appeared that during the Taíno period women were central figures in Taíno social organization; they worked and toiled alongside with men to ensure the society's survival, and created technological devices such as hammocks and cotton items (Alegría 1983; Rouse 1992; Sued Badillo [1979] 1989). From food preparation to warfare, Taíno women worked to support the life of the community. They functioned as *caciquas*/chiefs running the affairs of the society up to the sixteenth century. Even if limited by the archeological record available, the work of Sued Badillo remains one of the most intriguing anthropological works of the role of women in indigenous society. Taíno society had a matrilineal tradition and women played a central part in the organization of society (Acosta-Belén 1986).

Archeological findings do not indicate whether or not women's roles were characterized as a necessarily feminist movement nor as indicators of a women's movement. Women's roles in pre-Spanish colonial society maintained and sustained the livelihood of the community in their roles as chiefs and fighters alongside men during moments of warfare. Additionally, the work of Puerto Rican anthropologist, Reniel Rodríguez Ramos (2010) challenges the writings of Irving Rouse (1992) by introducing a critique of the narrative of colonization because it separated the island from its already existing networks and connections with the broader geographic region of the Caribbean.

This analysis provided by Rodríguez Ramos (2010) challenges and interrogates the consequences of colonial perspectives to explain “everything” Puerto Rican and the so-called conquering of Puerto Rico by invaders. Rodríguez Ramos (2010) showed that the region had been inhabited by Archaic-age people who developed ceramics and used agriculture as a form of production prior to the Cedrosan Saladoid group commonly credited with having introduced both of those technologies. Also significant for those tracing the transnationality of precolonial Caribbean networks he found linkages between the South and Central American mainland. For our purposes here, these findings are significant in that they challenge the story of Puerto Rico as always invaded, always disjointed and separate from the rest of the world and the initial stages of a transnational interconnection among regions even when ignored in most writings about Latin America, the Caribbean, and/or the United States. Additionally, agriculture has also been a technology of women as central producers of subsistence production.

Before Spanish colonization, women participated in the life of the tribe, but with Spanish colonization in 1493, it enduringly transformed indigenous Puerto Rican society, its mode of production and social institutions. Spanish institutions have left an indelible mark throughout the island, and colonization and conquest have represented a pattern of contact that has shaped social organization, language, religion, and other traditions of the nation of Puerto Rico. The significance of colonization as a shaper of social organization and social structures is one among the many forces that have structured the Puerto Rican experience, but it was one cause among the many.

Spanish Colonization of 1493

When Spanish conquerors arrived in November 19, 1493, Puerto Rico was called by the Taínos, the island of *Borinquén*/the Land of the Brave Lord, a name that will be changed by the Spanish conquerors to *la Isla de San Juan Bautista*/the Island of Saint John the Baptist. Ruled by Spanish military power, the Spanish Crown named military governors, and Puerto Rico became a valued colony for its strategic geo-political location. Quiñonez Calderón (1992) added that beginning in 1513, the Spanish Crown authorized the introduction of Spanish slaves, and by 1517 the shipment of 4,000 slaves was authorized to Puerto Rico and other Antilles. Pirates and foreign corsairs of French, British, and Dutch origin often attacked the island during the period of 1543 to 1797.

To safeguard the island, the Spanish Crown secured the services of Miguel Enriquez, the first national hero who assisted King Felipe V to navigate and protect the coast of Puerto Rico. He was knighted by the King Felipe V, an act that generated envy and hate for his status as an “illegitimate pardo” (López Cantos 2008:1). He was a “corsario” or someone who owns a ship and put it at the disposition of the Spanish Crown. This second generation Puerto Rican consolidated the position of King Felipe V when the War of Succession ended and the Peace Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1713; King Felipe V inherited the entire Caribbean as a result of Enriquez’s efforts. This contribution in terms of the “race of the nation” has begun to be documented by the work of historian Ángel López Cantos (2008). The travels of the nation and the linkages across national borders will become more evident with the planning efforts to liberate Puerto Rico from the Spanish Crown.

This process of colonization additionally transformed the status of indigenous Taíno women and men into chattel subjects to be used at the will of colonizers, transforming the valued status of Taíno women and Taino men. “The influence and power that some women had in the island of Borinquén came to an end in the early 1500s with the Spanish conquest and colonization of what became the Isla de San Juan Bautista and later Puerto Rico” (Acosta-Belén 1986:2). Transformations in the mode of production resulted in forced labor coupled with other forms of exploitation that decimated the population, while others were said to have migrated to other islands in the Caribbean. It must also be noted that as Taíno labor had begun to dwindle, sixteenth century Spanish rule revamped its colonizing strategies and redefined the social organization of Puerto Rico through the importation of African slaves to substitute the disappearing and dying Taíno population.

Spaniards eventually entered into unions with native women and later on with slave women (Acosta-Belén 1986). Spanish women also advocated the institution of the family (Santiago-Marazzi 1974, 1984). Both women and men worked in subsistence agriculture (Rivera Quintero 1979). Puerto Rican society during Spanish colonization reflected a patriarchal, paternalistic and military-centered ideology whereby women’s subordination to men was expected (Acosta-Belén 1986). The first 350 years of Spanish colonial rule in Puerto Rico lacked a significant women’s movement, or feminist consciousness and/or feminist movement (Acosta-Belén 1986). Wagenheim (1981) argued that the context of colonialism created a myriad of societal problems (e.g., racism, stratification by social class, patriarchal domination, the supremacy of Catholicism as

religious dogma along with political intolerance, and absence of educational opportunities for all).

For Isabel Picó (1976; 1986), the societal problems described by Wagenheim (1981) formed the central correlates for the absence of an organized feminist movement and feminist consciousness similar to the one found in England, France and the United States during the same period. Even if an organized women's movement and/or feminist movement had not been born yet; Puerto Rican society under Spanish colonialism depended on women's roles in beneficence and the colonization process transformed the social and economic roles of women in society. Under colonial rule, Puerto Ricans did not gain educational rights for all given the gendered structural arrangements and attitudes of the time. Azize Vargas (1985) argued that education was relegated as unimportant by the Spanish government in Puerto Rico, and education would become an important institution for the eventual rise of emancipation movements in Puerto Rico.

After many years of Spanish colonialism, in 1812 Puerto Rico became a Spanish province and Ramón Power y Giralt was named representative of Puerto Rico in the Spanish Courts in Cádiz, an appointment that for the first time gave Puerto Ricans an opportunity for political representation. The depiction of the conquest and the colonization process has followed a problematic gendered understanding of social relations of power. Resistance was perhaps prevalent but given the technological facts of the conquest, it made it impossible to win against the colonial technology. Focusing on conquest and the taking of the "women" as concubines seems a highly patriarchal understanding of social reality, while it also raises questions about how conquest is

masculine in a very material sense. The bodies of men are sent abroad to “discover” and “conquer” the world and makes men expendable as the reproductive power of a society is in its women. Yet for Taino women and for women of African descent they were expendable for the colonial and reproductive process of society.

Transnational Bodies as the Independence Nation

The dawn of the 1800s produced figures that would become central to the history of independence and nationalism, including Ramón Emeterio Betances, Segundo Ruiz Belvis, Eugenio María de Hostos, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, and eventually Pedro Albizu Campos, Lolita Lebrón, and countless others. A shared feature among these early thinkers was their transnational movement, movement across national boundaries. This dispersion by choice or force of independence leaders to multiple destinations across Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Europe proved a useful tool for generating strategies and developing skills to challenge colonial rule.

These key figures shared a transnational experience to organize for independence and autonomy for the island. For instance, Ramón Emeterio Betances (1827-1898) traveled extensively, studied medicine in France, and used the pseudonym of “el Antillano” or the Antillean. He traveled to France, St. Thomas, New York, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Venezuela. For Betances, argued Ojeda Reyes (2006), peaceful forms to achieve reforms and liberties were possible through the work of special commissions; however, then the Spanish Crown abolished the commission for seeking an end to slavery and other reforms, Spain eradicated them. For Ojeda Reyes (2006), these

reforms shifted the focus to armed struggle, while making efforts to link all sectors who advocated a more liberal approach to reform with the independence sectors. Ramón Emeterio Betances was and is the “father of the patria” and also known as the “doctor of the poor” (Ojeda Reyes 2006). Estrade (2007) argued that he was exiled to Toulouse, France where he found less pressure from the Spanish Crown and from religious dogma (Estrade 2007). His father was a mason who through secret societies or fraternities with other men often conspired against the Spanish government. He traveled to France, St. Thomas, Santo Domingo, Haiti, New York, Venezuela, and eventually exiled to France. He fought for the abolition of slavery.

In the case of Segundo Ruiz Belvis, he is the least known of these key nationalist proponents and was described as the chief leader of nationalism of the nineteenth century and served as role model for Betances and Hostos (Cancel 2006). Ruiz Belvis was central for pioneering travels to the Southern Cone of the Americas (Cancel 2006). Among his contributions were the co-writing the project for the abolition of slavery, consider by some historians one of the most important legal documents produced by the Hispanic-America (Cancel 2006:56-7), and also his international travels that placed the independence struggle in connection with dissidents in other regions of the Southern Cone of South America.

Additionally, one of the best known sociologists from Puerto Rico was Eugenio María de Hostos. According to Villarini (2008:49), Hostos advocated a complex and holistic analysis of society. Hostos developed a theory of geography and historical development that linked the economy, society, and culture relative to the past and present

of societies (Villarini 2008:49). He traveled extensively to Chile, Santo Domingo, Spain, Argentina, Venezuela, Perú, Colombia, Panamá, and Brazil. This temporal depth of locating struggles and the nation in historical context and social location is central for commemoration and for the nationalist project, and as a sociologist, Hostos knew about the linkages between history and biography.

The experience of transnationalism leads Hostos and Betances to call for the creation of an Antillean confederation. Like Albizu later on, who also traveled extensively to the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Cuba, Peru and Venezuela, Hostos and Betances supported the Confederation of the Antilles. With the benefit of hindsight and new terminology to label the deeds of Eugenio María de Hostos, he is, in my view, the precursor to transnational studies in Puerto Rico because his theoretical analysis created a sense of linkages between past and present and social location across space and time. His experience of dispersion across many borders made him aware of the need for linkages for the success of the independence project.

Thus the transnational migration and separatist movements in Puerto Rico have been widespread, not just in the context of *Lares*, but also before *Lares*, after *Lares*, and before and after U.S. colonization. These separatist movements have also operated in transnational perspective. The insular and/or diasporic lens is not an either or choice, but I strongly believe that the discussion of nationalism as presently constituted in *Claridad* is generally insular, but evokes the diaspora at certain moments, in spite of its claims to be concerned with the diaspora.

For their revolutionary activities, Segundo Ruiz Belvis, Ramón Emeterio Betances and Eugenio María de Hostos, among others, were exiled or left Puerto Rico at different points. When they left, they often settled in places like New York as it had a revolutionary committee of Puerto Rico to direct the *Lares* Insurrection of 1869. Dissidents often went to these parts of the world seeking refuge against their repression. Venezuela, New York City, Peru and Chile were among the destinations. For rebels, both Peru and Chile were the “Republics of the South”. These regions represented the most important challenges against the Spanish Crown along with the Dominican Republic where efforts against Spain were usually organized and spearheaded there. In the case of Venezuela and other countries already mentioned, the United States was keeping an eye on the region and even Simon Bolivar feared that if he supported the independence of Puerto Rico it would jeopardize their relations with the United States geopolitics (Cancel 2006).

Betances, Ruiz Belvis, and Hostos established the tradition of independence bodies who traveled abroad to promote the ideal of independence by seeking support across national borders. The travel of these “independence bodies” (as I call them) demonstrated the transnationalism of the nation on the move beyond the dominant theoretical links made between only two countries (sending and receiving countries). The transnationalism of independence travelers reflected a dispersion into multiple destinations beyond the nation of Puerto Rico and the nation-state of Spain and beyond the nation of Puerto Rico and the nation-state of United States. The transnationalism of Betances, Ruiz Belvis, Hostos, and Rodríguez de Tió and eventually Albizu Campos,

Lolita Lebrón and others articulates the nation as a practice. Transnationalism as practice reflected the cosmopolitan and global character of our independence travelers to multiple destinations, a framework advanced by Parreñas and Siu (2007) to address the Asian diaspora. Multiple forces have impacted the process of colonization of Puerto Rico and the movement of its “activists” across borders has been to multiple destinations across time and space.

The Dawn of the Nation as a Political Entity

The most important event of social unrest orchestrated against Spanish rule and exploitation took an organized character on September 23, 1868 with *El Grito de Lares*/the Shout of *Lares*. This was a revolutionary insurrection that although small in size represented a challenge to demand sovereignty against Spaniard oppression. Puerto Ricans could not host meetings, social events, change residence, publish or read books, and the authorities refused to accept calls for the abolition of slavery, and in matters of citizenship, Spanish rule gave preferential treatment in employment to immigrants from Europe rather than to Puerto Rican natives (Fernández, Méndez Méndez and Cueto 1998).

Historians of the insurrection of *Lares*, Marisa Rosado (1999) and Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim (1999) documented that the insurrection occurred in the municipality of *Lares*, spearheaded by Ramón Emeterio Betances who is recognized in Puerto Rico as the father of the *patria*/nation or homeland. He organized the efforts via the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Committee in the Dominican Republic. This Committee sought the

creation of a constitution and plan of action for the liberation of Puerto Rico. Betances wrote “The Ten Commandments of Free Men” focusing on the abolition of slavery, the right to determine taxation, citizen’s rights, and freedom to elect public officials. On September 23, 1868 an estimated 300-400 men entered the municipality of *Lares* using the slogan: “*¡Muerte o Libertad! ¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre! ¡Año 1868!*” (“Death or Liberty! Live Free Puerto Rico! Year 1868!”), and proclaimed the Republic of Puerto Rico.

After taking over *Lares*, the rebels declared the independence of Puerto Rico and installed a provisional government in the newly declared republic. These early revolutionary efforts were defeated by October 11, 1868; most of the rebels were arrested and while amnesty was granted to those who survived, many others died in jail of yellow fever (Wagenheim 1999). The *Lares* Insurrection had widespread support from Puerto Ricans; the insurrection became the central event marking the independence sentiments of those in search of a sovereign nation. The independence movement commemorates the nation beginning with this insurrection. While the revolt has been dismissed by some as an irrelevant moment of nationalism or too small to even be counted as an insurrection, for those who support the nationalist and independence cause, this revolt defined the birth of the nation, at least from the situated knowledge of the pro-independence movement in Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico, this revolt has remained a central component of the collective consciousness of the nation, and it is still commemorated and gives temporal depth to the reconstruction and construction of the national story of Puerto Ricans in this increasingly globalized world.

This insurrection also marked the role of Puerto Rican women as members of the nation by participating in the liberation of Puerto Rico from Spanish colonialism. Women such as Mariana Bracetti, known as Brazo de Oro/ Golden Arm who sewed the Puerto Rican Flag of *Lares*, and Lola Rodríguez de Tió who wrote the national revolutionary anthem of Puerto Rico called *La Borinqueña*, have played vanguard roles in the commemoration of the nation and are remembered for their courageous acts on behalf of the nation.

The *Lares* Revolt also accentuated the role of women in national liberation; however, the first Puerto Rican freedom fighter and independence supporter was María de las Mercedes Barbudo, a figure that remained enigmatic until author Raquel Rivera Rosado wrote a biography about her life (Rosario Rivera 1997). For her pro-independence beliefs, María de las Mercedes Barbudo was incarcerated in 1824 in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico and eventually exiled to Cuba and then Venezuela. Women defended Puerto Rican nationality in response to the social and political conditions in Puerto Rico and as a reaction to widespread exploitation and poor living conditions of Puerto Ricans during Spanish rule. Like Barbudo, Bracetti was incarcerated for her revolutionary role and Rodríguez de Tió was exiled to Cuba.

Women have been involved in defending the nation, while also producing the nation through their creation of national flags and national anthems. The roles of women in nationalism reflected the traditional role of women as seamstresses, who in this case use their skill to sew revolutionary flags, and also for women who write, they embodied the feelings of the nation in its national hymns by writing the nation through songs. More

importantly, the act of sewing, a gendered activity produced by women became inscribed as a revolutionary activity. Through sewing women produced, reproduced, and represented the nation. This gender activity created the conditions for the representation of the nation through the flag, a symbol that embodies the nation, and created by women during nationalist activism seeking representation and autonomy. In addition, writing a national anthem expressed the possibilities of women showing and capturing the sounds and sights of the nation, an effort that through writing expressed the love for the nation and gave way for the imagining of the nation for women. Simultaneously, the anthem pointed to the revolutionary character of national commemoration through protest songs and cultural artifacts. The nation is not only a symbolic construct, but a project, a process of imagining a sovereign Puerto Rico that includes women.

The *Lares* revolt had latent successes later including the abolition of slavery. After the 1868 revolt, Puerto Rican society still had limited access to education. Acosta-Belén (1986) credited an early pioneer of women's education, Celestina Cordero, for founding the first schools in the 1820s and Belén Zequeira, who later founded in 1886 the Ladies' Association for Women's Instruction. Acosta-Belén (1986:6) also reported Zequeira's role in mediating "in defense of the political prisoners who had fallen to the repressive measures of the Spanish colonial government under the administration of Governor Romualdo Palacio in 1887." Palacio was notorious for his use of torture against dissidents, a legacy of repression that will reverberate later in the mid-twentieth century. Women educators defended their compatriots for their heroic acts against the oppressive government of Spain and a growing press began to report on the rhetoric of liberation.

Even though the printing press had been introduced in 1806 (Paláu Suárez 1992), it was not until the close of the nineteenth century that feminist concerns appeared in newspapers, journals, magazines, essays, and books in Puerto Rico. This historical fact is important for the story of nationalism and feminism because the dissemination of information through newspapers like *Claridad* fully acknowledges and exploits the writing of the nation of Puerto Rico. These early publications can be an occasion for those opposing any form of support for women's equality to argue that feminist ideas were really a foreign import that trampled local Puerto Rican culture. However, many Puerto Rican intellectuals who were part of the Creole class actually introduced those ideas. Their privileged position facilitated their educational access to international perspectives. If feminist ideas were a foreign import, the imports also arrived through the work of Puerto Rican men, intellectuals, who had access to education in various universities across Latin America, Europe, and the United States, and through the emerging printing press in Puerto Rico. The nation could now be imagined and consumed as free and potentially sovereign for all.

The same men would forge a separatist, independence movement first against Spain and later against the United States. For example, Colón, Mergal, and Torres (1986) observed that along with liberalism, the Spaniard feminist movement affected many early Puerto Rican writers, including Eugenio María de Hostos, Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, Alejandrina Benitez, Patria Tió, and Carmen Eulate Sanjurjo among others. Isabel Picó (1976; 1986) particularly saw the role of the male intellectual elite as central to the discourses of women's emancipation and the importance of women's education.

Among these early supporters of the rights of women were Salvador Brau and sociologist Eugenio María de Hostos. Hostos ([1873] 1993), who understood the link between personal biography and social structure, wrote in 1873 about the operation of society and its potential transformation through a focus on the “scientific education of women.” While in Chile in 1873, the period of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, Hostos presented his treatise that outlined the rationality of women as equal possessors of social and political rights. Echoing the early liberal philosophical currents of Montesquieu, Condorcet, and Voltaire, Wollstonecraft’s and the Mills, Hostos’ essay urged equal rights for women, and identified the lack of education as one of the key correlates of women’s oppression, perpetuated through oppressive socialization practices. With the exception of equal political power, the improvement of women’s status became a symbol of the social progress of the Puerto Rican nation (Acosta-Belén 1986). Similarly, intellectual Salvador Brau wrote in 1886 about the role of the peasant woman and their centrality in reproducing the nation. Women as reproducers and transmitters of the nation were said to “mold the customs of all countries” (Brau [1886] 1972: p. 104).

In 1893, Ana Roqué de Duprey founded the magazine *La mujer/The Woman*, written and published by women with a focus on preparing women to teach (Azize-Vargas 1985). These historical facts revealed that women and men were actively developing a discourse for the transformation of Puerto Rican society using women’s education for various reasons and that all class sectors brought ideas about emancipation to the conversation about the Puerto Rican nation. These conversations reflected the social milieu of Puerto Rican society. However, historical research has documented

important tensions and ambivalence about the origin of women's activism and feminism in Puerto Rico, and the definition of feminism and women's movements.

The Emergence of Feminism

Yamila Azize-Vargas (1985) linked the emergence of feminism to the period of 1870 to 1930 in her study entitled *La Mujer en la Lucha/Women in Struggle*. She contended that “the first clear signs of protest came from women who worked in the tobacco industry” (Azize-Vargas 1994:262). Her research implied a definition of feminism as a social movement where women organize to demand their rights whether through legislative reform and/or the transformation of the entire society. Since the middle of the nineteenth century in Puerto Rico, the topics about women had been discussed in publications, following debates from European liberalism and the feminist movement in Spain. These confluences resulted in a body of work from Puerto Rican intellectuals that supported women's rights for the purposes of educating the nation.

From these debates, Alice Colón, Margarita Mergal, and Nilsa Torres (1986) identified two frameworks of Puerto Rican feminism in nineteenth century Puerto Rico, one privileged-feminism and the other working-class feminism. First, privileged feminism, according to Colón et al. (1986), framed issues from a conservative ideology concerned with social reform in education and voting rights. This privileged-feminism reflected the tenets of what is generally known as liberal feminism, a focus on reforms, equal rights, and access to education, employment, and other rights using the tools of the state, without changing the basic structure of society, while excluding working class

women's grievances. The focus on education translated ideological debates into actual action with the foundation of the first women's organization, namely the *Junta de Damas de Honor de la Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País*/Ladies Honor Board whose main goal was to establish schools for girls (Colón et al. 1986; Matos Rodríguez, 1998; 1999; Matos Rodríguez and Delgado 1998; Negrón Muñoz 1935).

Matos Rodríguez (1998) argued that in 1859 the “*Junta de Damas*” represented the first documented women's organization in Puerto Rico and the *Junta de Damas* was not a derivative organization of European and U.S. influences. Matos Rodríguez (1998) research recognized that “at a time of transition from slave labor to wage labor, women's elite groups such as the *Junta de Damas* were tied to the growing efforts by urban elites to guarantee access to urban domestic labor” (P. 23). Women's groups operated in the context of beneficence to create a respectable pool of workers as the upper class reacted to economic, social, and racial dislocations resulting from societal changes, including the abolition of slavery in 1873 (Matos Rodríguez 1998:23). Furthermore, Matos Rodríguez (1999) showed that these initiatives in 1859 represented one of the first challenges explicitly supporting and advocating for the needs of women, although it encompassed an elitist feminism. Matos Rodríguez (1999:124) asserted: “In this sense, the women from the *Junta de Damas* were clearly leading the way for the turn-of-the-century efforts by bourgeois feminists.” Creating support groups to socialize poor women, women of color, and widows ensured the survival and status of the upper-classes in Puerto Rico, especially privileged women.

Another form of feminism coexisted with the bourgeois feminism described above as *feminismo obrero* (working-class feminism or proletarian feminism). Working class feminism embraced an ideology that supported the rights of the working class. Women organized as part of the labor movement to transform the plight of all workers and of society at every level, not just through piecemeal reforms that privileged elite. Working class feminism demanded all of the rights supported by privileged feminism, and advocated societal change at the level of every social institution (Colón et al. 1986:2).

Two of the first political parties to support the ideal of independence were the Independence Party founded in 1912 and the Socialist Party established in 1915; neither parties is to be confused with the parties that would emerge later in the 1970s. The Socialist Party emerged as the political arm of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores/Free Federation of Workers (FLT), a labor union that since its inception supported universal suffrage for Puerto Rican women and required that a third of the local committee membership include women (Ostolaza Bey 1989). In 1909, Nemesio Canales, a party leader, presented a bill to enfranchise women, but it was defeated by the male political elite and opposed by privileged women who felt threatened by the possibility of granting working class women the vote given working class women's affiliation with the socialist movement. Working class women's activism and militancy favored the Socialist Party founded in 1915, a party that at the time encompass the entire working class and did not resemble the party to be formed later in the 1970s. Using a socialist ideology, the party challenged poor working conditions.

Among the most important exponents of working class feminism and ideology was Luisa Capetillo who advocated the right of women to organize and struggle in all spheres of social life (Azize-Vargas 1985, 1994; Valle Ferrer 1975; 1990). Capetillo, who had been home schooled by her mother, worked as reader/*lectora* in the factory workshops, sharing ideas about anarchism, socialism, and women's liberation. Capetillo challenged the prescriptions and proscriptions of the time, foretelling changes that can be described as vanguard, ahead of her times. She did not shy away from wearing pants in public to advocating free love and advocating for women's rights.

Given the socialist orientation of the labor movement and its political party, factions of Puerto Rican society feared the implications granting universal suffrage to women. The socialist ideology of the party clashed with the liberal ideology of the privileged classes creating a built-in tension between privileged women's feminism and working-class women's feminism. In this sense, Azize Vargas (1985) concluded that it was working class women who first organized into a feminist movement that included all of the people of the nation. However, as noted earlier, the *Junta de Damas* organized in 1859 to socialize women into the manners and customs of Puerto Rican bourgeois society. By the twentieth century, privileged women organized the Liga Femenina/the Feminine League in 1917, the Asociación Panamericana de Mujeres/the Pan-American Association of Women in 1923, and the Asociación Puertorriqueña de Mujeres Sufragistas/the Puerto Rican Association of Suffragette Women in 1925. Suffragist women included Isabel Andreu Aguilar who advocated an elitist feminism that claimed to represent all Puerto Rican women; Mercedes Solá who saw feminism as Latino and

Puerto Rican, but dread working class feminism for its socialist activism and the undermining of women's role in the home (Colón et al. 1986). Similarly, Carmen Eulate Sanjurjo (1915) wanted a conservative feminism, but feared the activism of working class women as it could threaten the status of women as mothers and workers, and worried that the focus on the liberation of the *patria*/nation would jeopardize the education of women as mothers and Christian wives, a gain hailed by women of the upper class.

With the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, two frameworks of Puerto Rican "feminism" coexisted, one bourgeois or privileged and the other working-class or proletarian linked to the labor movement. Working class women saw the liberation of the nation as important for the progress of humanity; while privileged women identified with protecting femininity, socializing working class women into respectable women as mothers and spouses. Clearly this conservative feminism did not challenge the construction and expectation that women will be mothers and wives, a tenet necessary for the reproduction of the nation in the material and ideological sense. Relatively privileged women aligned with an exclusionary ideology that privileged certain versions of femininity while reacting to socialist ideology.

The specific circumstances of the time and the historical location of the women in the nation revealed a struggle for access to societal resources, competing tensions about who should have access to the resources of the nation, and the type of society one wishes to build that included and/or excluded some. In addition to these intellectual currents and competing paradigms of feminism, one bourgeois and one proletariat, intellectual efforts by both privileged and subaltern women have shown the rise of a feminist and women's

perspective that reflects the specific material conditions of women's lives. Feminism and women's activism like socialist and independence activism have emerged, not from derivative circumstances or alien influences, but from the lived experience of Puerto Rican society in a context of colonialism that systematically excluded Puerto Rican women and men from the Spanish educational institutions. These competing ideologies of the role of women in society reflected a tension between women's ideology and feminist ideology.

The shift from Spanish colonialism to American colonialism would accentuate problems of social order, social conflict, and social meaning as North American colonialism consolidated in Puerto Rico in the twentieth century and beyond. The invasion of 1898 became a symbol of colonialism in twentieth-century Puerto Rico that has continued to inform nationalist activism in all its complexity. The independence movement uses this rhetorical device to commemorate and organize the struggle for independence.

The American Colonization of 1898

On April 21, 1898 American troops commanded by General Nelson Miles invaded Puerto Rico. American troops entered via the Guánica Bay in order to capture the municipalities of *Ponce* and *Yauco* who had already attempted separatist efforts in 1895 (F. Picó 1986:226). Creoles greeted the invaders as they were promised some measure of political independence, and as municipalities were taken over, locals were assured that the war was not against Puerto Ricans. On August 12, 1898, the Treaty of

Paris ended the war between Spain and the United States, and on that occasion, France, acting on behalf of Spain, ceded Puerto Rico to the United States; Puerto Ricans were not present nor represented to witness the transfer of powers. Upon occupying the Island, the United States installed a military regime that introduced various legal and institutional reforms (Rivera Ramos 2000). At the same time, Puerto Rico also lost gains made under Spanish rule for its own self-governance (Fernández 1996). There were plenty of challenges against Spanish rule through “partidas sediciosas” or “seditious parties” a series of unrests and violence against any type of established authority as a result of the invasion (Cancel and Rosado 2004; Picó 2003).

The American invasion of 1898 consolidated the socioeconomic changes needed to transform the Puerto Rican economy from subsistence agriculture to a capitalist plantation system ran by absentee landowners. The new mode of production relied heavily on women as cheap laborers and created a growing pool of laborers and an important militant labor movement (Quintero Rivera 1974). Puerto Rican women have played a central role in the labor movement and contributed to the rise of a militant feminist movement early in the twentieth century. Yamila Azize-Vargas (1985) has labeled women’s activism, *la mujer en la lucha*/woman in the struggle. In this struggle, Picó (1986) and Valle Ferrer (1986) have characterized the feminist movement on the island as driven by two main trends, one petit bourgeois and the other, proletarian or working class.

North American rule followed a series of legal actions, including the Foraker Act of 1900 that gave the U.S. Congress power to establish a civil government without

consultating Puerto Rican leaders. The first civil governor was Charles Allen, and the political life of the country began to acquire a partidist orientation that has remained to this date. The Foraker Act also established the U.S. dollar as the currency of Puerto Rico, and it gave absolute power to the U.S. Supreme Court in all legal matters pertaining to Puerto Rico and its people. The Foraker Act also declared the island's inhabitants citizens of Puerto Rico, not the United States. The United States also renamed Puerto Rico, Porto Rico, another instance of the power of the U.S. government over Puerto Rico, a name that later was changed to its original spelling. Equally significant was the prohibition of land concentration by the Foraker Act of 1900; yet sugar cane plantations owned by U.S. interests were exempted from such requirement, and a handful of American corporations owned over 46.3% of the land used for sugar cane production (Moraza Ortiz 2001).

With the consolidation of North American colonial power in Puerto Rico, unionized activity also rose to demand better working conditions and increase political and economic autonomy for Puerto Rico. Peasants found themselves impoverished as the newly emerging economy devalued the Spanish peso and replaced it with U.S. dollar, and system of hacienda production of goods and services for wages demanded the employment of all, men, women and children. Contrary to Spaniard rule, American colonial rule saw the importance of education to ensure the Americanization and to improve the social conditions of the colony. The University of Puerto Rico was founded in 1903 and served an educational function, training women and men in the education field, while also ensuring efforts to Americanize the island. Clearly, the efforts to Americanize the island were not successful. That is, Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2004) drawing

from the insights of Flores (1993) asserted that linguistic approaches that are either assimilationist or colonizing are insufficient for understanding agency and individual and collective identity. Puerto Ricans use language as a tool of resistance. Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2004:256) indicated: “the creative potential and political use of two languages by Puerto Ricans to signify identity and their experience of being, perhaps in two cultural spheres, challenges assumptions of ‘purity’ and correctness in the language.” The debate over colonization or Americanization and the impact on language continues to permeate the experience of Puerto Rican society in the island and in the diaspora.

By the twentieth century, Puerto Rican nationalism and feminism were influenced by the colonial history and nationalist sentiments shaped by competing political parties and institutions. For instance, the Union Party emerged in 1904 as a promoter of the independence of Puerto Rico and two of its key leaders were Antonio Barceló and José de Diego. Many of the members of the Union Party became disenchanted with party politics resulting in the formation of the 1915 Socialist Party under the leadership of Santiago Iglesias Pantín, a strong advocate of the labor movement in Puerto Rico and a supporter of independence for Puerto Rico. With World War I already in progress, the Jones Act of 1917 granted American citizenship to Puerto Ricans, consequently instituting the military draft, and facilitating the migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States. World War I marked the first time Puerto Ricans participated in a war conflict to defend the United States of America. North American citizenship provided limited political rights, but ensured mandatory military service.

Similarly, the extension of certain rights to Puerto Ricans as American citizens led women to see the potential for changes in the social status of women. The suffrage movement of the early twentieth century drew privileged women to organize to obtain the vote as a tool to transform the oppressive regime of patriarchal and capitalist exploitation. Barceló Miller (1997; 1998) placed the suffragist movement in Puerto Rico in historical perspective by noting that the modernization process at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century created the conditions for the expansion of the vote to women as transmitter of the values of modernity as outlined by patriarchal capitalism. Bourgeois women's interests, however, wanted the vote as the right of one segment of society, literate women. Given the historical context of colonialism in Puerto Rico, when women in the United States gained the right to vote in 1920, Puerto Rican women expected that the vote would be extended to women of all backgrounds. Unfortunately, the vote was not granted to literate women until 1929, and in 1935 universal suffrage was granted to all Puerto Ricans of voting age.

The struggle for women's liberation and social justice involved a larger envisioning of the entire macro and micro structural levels of society. Puerto Rican society has experienced dramatic societal changes over the last 500 years of Spanish and North American conquest. Any understanding of the women's movement and the nationalist movement requires an examination of the historical context and collective experience of Puerto Rican society as a colony of Spain *and* the United States. Puerto Rican women have struggled or continue "in the struggle" for nation building in a context of colonial relations of ruling by two imperial super-powers. Furthermore, the feminist

and nationalist activisms were central undercurrents shaping the life of Puerto Ricans during the 1898 to 1970 period. Activism centered on technological forms of repression, fueled by prostitution policy, birth control technology, eugenic policies, and massive sterilization of women of childbearing age, sometimes by choice and other times by design (Briggs 2002). The activism after the consolidation of American power in the island reflected a discourse of nationalism and nation aimed at the liberation, and of women seeking inclusion and access to the resources of society.

Nationalist Activism through Party Politics

In 1922, the Nationalist Party was founded as part of a challenge against the use of English as the language of instruction in public schools and through the promotion of various symbols of Puerto Rican national identity (F. Picó 1986:250). In addition, the disastrous hurricane San Felipe that in 1928 wiped out the coffee crop, left many homeless, and severely increased the unemployment of men (see Clark 1930; Moraza Ortiz 2001). Historically, the Great Depression also loomed in the horizon, and Puerto Rico's dependent economy was further devastated by the stock market crash in the United States.

In 1930, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, a lawyer from *Ponce*, Puerto Rico and a graduate of Harvard University became the president of the Nationalist Party (Villarini 1930). Albizu Campos became the foremost figure of nationalism and its most enduring icon and "Maestro," followed by the rise of Lolita Lebrón and Juan Mari Brás later in the middle of the twentieth century along countless others. The period of 1922 to 1970

exemplified a period of heightened nationalist activism in Puerto Rico and the election of Albizu Campos as President of the Nationalist Party as its most important intellectual icon.

When Albizu became the president of the party, he adopted a political and economic strategy that confronted American hegemony in Puerto Rico. The Nationalist Party openly challenged and called for the suppression of colonialism in the island, advocated the use of Spanish in schools and challenged corporations that exploited the Puerto Rican working class. In 1932 the party radicalized even more as it lost the electoral race, and Albizu became convinced that success would be unattainable via traditional means of election. The party advocating armed struggle as another strategy to obtain the independence of Puerto Rico. The party split and Albizu retained strong support among the professional class and small business owners rather than among the working class, the segment that the party had set out to represent.

Moraza Ortiz (2001) described how the symbolism of the nation became more pronounced and militants became known as the “Cadets of the Republic [of Puerto Rico].” These cadets were young men dressed in white pants and black shirts, and they marched with wooden rifles. The cadets were then followed by the “Nurses of the Republic,” young women dressed in white who did not carry any type of medical equipment. Then musicians followed in a Parade format aimed at attracting an audience to the political speeches of Albizu. Moraza Ortiz (2001) found that Albizu’s militant rhetoric called for armed struggle “*en defensa de la patria*/in defense of the nation” (Moraza Ortiz, 2001).

In a series of protests, students, sugar cane workers, needle industry workers, and tobacco industry workers protested poor working conditions. Moraza Ortiz (2001) reported the difficulty of the governor to deal with the increasing unrest in the island, including significant confrontation during 1933 to 1936 with the police. For instance, “In an October 1935 speech at the University of Puerto Rico, Albizu had criticized students for their lack of political and cultural commitment” (Fernández 1994:41). Some students at UPR organized a protest against Albizu and declared him persona non grata. During squirmishes at the university, several nationalists were killed by the police under the command of E. Francis Riggs, the Chief of Police. In 1936, nationalists Hiram Beauchamp and Elías Rosado killed Chief Riggs, and they were later arrested and killed while under police custody. Nationalists have described the 1935 killings of their comrades as “the Massacre of Río Piedras.” The death of nationalist leaders after confrontations with the insular police has been defined by nationalists as martyrdom and sacrifice for the patria/nation. These events were immortalized in the protest song, *El Blanco*/the Target or also the White (Brown 2005).

Historically, the increasing confrontation between the nationalists and the government resulted in the support of a plebiscite in Puerto Rico to determine if independence was desired by the population. Historian Frank Otto Gatell (1958) noted that under the guidance of senator Millard Tydings, a bill was introduced to offer independence as an option, but it never reached the U.S. Congress. By 1936, Albizu’s militant defiance of the U.S. government in Puerto Rico provided special agents with sufficient evidence to charge Albizu with seditious conspiracy or treason, a charge for

which he was convicted. Consequently, the military government of Blanton Winship promised to squash any dissent and swift action against the nationalist supporters ensued. At the level of ideology, the discourse embraced by the Nationalist Party became a defiant and serious threat to the stability of the American government in the island. With the appointment of Blanton Winship, often labeled the most violent of governors of Puerto Rico (and feared for his work in Nicaragua), Blanton Winship began a systematic campaign of repression (Rosado and Acosta Lespier 2006).

The ongoing repression of nationalists through charges to oust the U.S. government in Puerto Rico resulted in the conviction of not only Albizu Campos, but also six of his associates (Paralitici 2004; 2006). Of particular significance was the arrest of long time nationalist poet, socialist, and independence activist Juan Antonio Corretjer, for refusing access to any documents and information about acts of the Nationalist Party.

The decade of 1930s marked a discernible period of repression, and the *Ponce* Massacre of 1937 one of its most violent legacies. Specifically, to commemorate the abolition of slavery and to protest the convictions of nationalist leaders, the Nationalist Party sought a permit for a peaceful demonstration in the city of *Ponce*. Permission to march was granted and on March 21, 1937, the *Ponce* Massacre resulted in death and injuries of nationalist peaceful protesters. The protestors had received permission to march peacefully, but the governor revoked the permit a few hours before the march was to go on. On that day, men, women and children were murdered by the police. A stroll by the streets of *Ponce* reminded me of the impact that day has had in the collective

consciousness of the nation, and a museum commemorating the events was erected to remember those fallen in 1937.

The systematic repression of the Nationalist Party impacted the nationalist and independence movements by further fragmenting it between those who supported armed conflict and those who supported legal strategies for obtaining independence. In 1938, these tensions facilitated the rise of the *Partido Popular Democrático*/Popular Democratic Party (PPD). The PPD leaders sought a solution to the current social, economic, political, and cultural tensions in the island of Puerto Rico. Using the motto, “Pan, Tierra y Libertad” (Bread, Land and Liberty), the PPD co-opted many of the nationalist principles and symbols, including the flag. In 1940, Luis Muñoz Marín became the first elected governor of Puerto Rico who as a former believer in the independence, but now supported the commonwealth status (Trías Monge 1997).

To curtail social unrest in 1948, the Senate of Puerto Rico under the leadership of Muñoz Marín drafted and approved a law called *la Ley de la Mordaza*/the Gag Rule based on the infamous U.S. Smith Law. Law 53 stipulated that it was illegal to display the Puerto Rican flag, to sing the national anthem or patriotic songs, to speak and/or promote the independence of Puerto Rico. Historian Ivonne Acosta Lespier (1987:61-76) has suggested that the primary purpose of the gag rule was to fatally wound the nationalist movement in Puerto Rico, safeguarding U.S. national security interests, while also expanding U.S. military presence in the Caribbean as Puerto Rico served an important geopolitical role for U.S. foreign policy in the hemisphere. With increased surveillance and repression, support for independence forces began to shift and while the

gag rule expanded, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was established and *Operación Manos a la Obra*/Operation Bootstrap became the new model of economic development.

From the disagreements with the commonwealth party and to put pressure on that party, another party emerged in 1946 named the Puerto Rican Independence Party or Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP). The PIP sought to pressure the PPD to support independence for Puerto Rico as an alternative option to the commonwealth association with the United States. In the elections of 1952, Fernández, Méndez Méndez, and Cueto (1998) reported that the PIP won almost 20 percent of the vote at a time when the 1948 Gag Rule or “La Mordaza” threatened the potential rise of militant activism.

The Nationalist Revolts of Women

With the rise of the commonwealth party to power and the authorization Law 600 granting Puerto Ricans the right to draft a constitution and the consolidation of the commonwealth status, the nationalist party saw this as an affront against Puerto Rican society and culture. For three days from October 30, 1950 to November 1, 1950 a series of uprisings occurred in Puerto Rico and the United States (see Seijo Bruno 1989). The Governor’s Mansion was attacked along with the municipalities of *Jajuya*, *San Juan*, *Utua*, *Ponce*, and *Naranjito*, and Washington, DC. The 1950 Nationalist Insurrection of *Jayuya* was directed by nationalist militant Blanca Canales. This activism of the 1950s denounced the impending status reformulation that would make Puerto Rico into a “commonwealth” or “free associated state.”

Nationalist activism resumed in 1954 when a group of four Puerto Ricans guided and organized by Lolita Lebrón, a Puerto Rican nationalist militant, carried out an attack against the U.S. Congress in Washington, DC. She befriended Albizu Campos and agreed with the strategies of militancy advocated by Albizu leading to the attack on the U.S. Congress. Lebrón saw her activism as an effort to heighten and denounce the removal of Puerto Rico from the United Nations 1953 list of non-self-governing territories; for nationalists, the commonwealth was still a colony ruled by consent. Lebrón proudly underscore her goal as she entered the capitol building in Washington, DC and announced that she came to die for the liberation of Puerto Rico. Politically, Lebrón saw armed efforts as necessary to bring world attention to the colonial situation of Puerto Rico. She was accompanied by Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores Rodríguez and Andrés Figueroa Cordero, all of who would become political prisoners, martyrs and symbols of nationalism.

After the failed attempt on Congress, they served twenty-five years in North American prisons. In 1979, most political prisoners were released after an intense national and international campaign for liberation. It must be underscored that Lolita Lebrón spent about 25 years in prison and was held longer than any other political prisoner in the western hemisphere and was released for political reasons in 1979 (Fernández 1994). In a 1978 confidential memo to President Carter, national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski informed the president that “no other woman in the hemisphere has been imprisoned on such charges for so long a period; a fact which

Communist critics of your human rights policy are fond of pointing out” (Fernández 1994:195-201).

The Modernization Project for Puerto Rico

The creation of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the eruption of nationalist revolts in the 1950s did not stop American development strategies to modernize Puerto Rico’s economy. In 1950 the Puerto Rican government began “*Operación Manos a la Obra*/Operation Bootstrap,” seeking to industrialize Puerto Rico following an industrialization program that attracted foreign investors through tax incentives and tax exemptions (Ríos 1990). This industrialization process resulted in the modernization of Puerto Rico within thirty years, a process that had taken much longer in other regions of the world. Various industries settled in Puerto Rico (e.g., textiles and apparel, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, electronics, professional, and scientific instruments). One of the key transformations associated with this industrialization process was the decline of male employment, while the Puerto Rican labor market saw increasing feminization of employment. Ríos (1990:323) stated: “Between 1950 and 1980, the labor force participation rate of Puerto Rican men declined significantly from 70.6 to 54.4 percent.”

From 1952 to 1980, an export-oriented industrialization period that demanded female labor for the manufacturing sectors and for Ríos (1990) a “disproportionate” number of women in Puerto Rico’s manufacturing labor sector contributed to the post-World War II restructuring of the world economy, incorporating Puerto Rican women

into the new international division of labor. She also suggested that Puerto Rico's Operation Bootstrap played a pioneering role in the phenomenon of the new international division of labor that has been rendered invisible and overlooked by scholars who have studied the phenomenon (see for example, Nash and Fernández-Kelly 1985).

In the 1960s, export-oriented industrialization consolidated, and "the development of U.S. petrochemical operations after 1965 marked the massive entrance of transnational capital into Puerto Rico" (Pantojas-García 1990:108-9). At the same time, Muñoz Marín's government redefined priorities focusing on domestic policy (e.g., housing, health, education, rural and urban development, and others). With the death of Pedro Albizu Campos in 1965, the nationalist and independence movements have not been eradicated. Even though the movement is small in terms of numbers, there is a constant group of committed people to the independence of Puerto Rico.

In the meantime, the decades of the 1960s and 1970s saw increased migration to of foreigners from Cuba and decreased migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States. At the same time, the *chiripeo*/informal economy boomed as unemployment and underemployment expanded. As discontent with the PPD's policy continued, the party eventually lost hegemony to the Partido Nuevo Progresista/New Progressive Party (PNP). The PNP advocated a discourse of social reform and promised the rise of a new life by focusing on statehood, the poor and the working classes, and supported a concept of Creole statehood/*estadidad jíbara* following a nationalist ideology of supporting the Spanish as the vernacular and culture (Pantojas-García 1990). The PNP also pinpointed the widespread social problems of drug abuse and criminality and blamed the PPD for the

shortcomings of the Puerto Rican society. In this context of widespread societal problems, the 1970s saw the rise of debates between socialists and feminists over issues of double militancy. At the same time, the radicalism of the diaspora becomes more pronounced.

Political Radicalism in the Diaspora

The Puerto Rican community as far back as the nineteenth century has dispersed to the United States and Cuba as the stories of some of key figures has already suggested. It is estimated that today more than half of the Puerto Rican population lives in the U.S. mainland. Clara Rodríguez (1989) indicated that the migration of Puerto Ricans was diverse and included a people from varied social locations. For instance, Eric Williams (1970:280) suggested that “the Puerto Rican situation was unique in the Caribbean, in that not only did the white population outnumber the people of color, but the slaves constituted an infinitesimal part of the total population and free labor predominated during the regime of slavery” (cited in Rodríguez 1989:9).

Once in the United States, Puerto Ricans have been treated as racial/ethnic minorities and as foreign. In the 1960s and 1970s to challenge biased representations of the community and to document the struggles of the community in the diaspora, the field of Puerto Rican Studies emerged in the context of New York City (Matos Rodríguez 1998). This marked a shift in historical and scientific research in that for the first time many Puerto Rican academics, often second generation, began to study the Puerto Rican experiences. This new scholarship challenged the social problems approached usually

used to discuss the Puerto Rican experience stemming from U.S. based analysis that followed the “culture of poverty” thesis advanced by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

In the diaspora, the complexity of social locations has placed Puerto Ricans in a tension between being a racial/ethnic minority, a nation, or both. In the twentieth century, migration increased dramatically to areas in the United States including Hawaii, Ohio, Chicago, Boston, Connecticut, Florida, and other states (Tirado Avilés 2006). Puerto Ricans had already lived in New York City, worked with the Cubans to organize support for liberation, and through the branch of the Cuban Revolutionary Party advocated the support of independence for Puerto Rico. This branch was called the Section of Puerto Rico. Additionally, the Club Borinquén among others saw gatherings of Puerto Ricans supporting the cause of independence in New York and Chicago.

According to Torres (1998), the independence movement in the diaspora was deeply influenced by mainland social conditions and was connected to organizations in the island. After years of repression during the 1930s to the 1950s, the 1960s represented a renewed cycle of militancy in the context of criticism against the United States for holding Puerto Rico as one of the world’s last colonies (Torres 1998; Trías Monge 1997). This activism was also influenced by the changing characteristics of the Puerto Rican population in the United States. By the 1970s a significant number of Puerto Ricans had been born in the mainland and English was being adopted; yet speaking English did not guarantee equal opportunity, especially when one is stigmatized with “otherness” (Torres 1998:4).

The tension between a national group vis-à-vis a racial/ethnic minority will inform activism in the independence movement during the period. Since the 1930s, the Nationalist Party had organized the communities in the diaspora and leaders such as Bernardo Vega and Jesús Colón developed connections with the political radicalism of the new generations. Among these activists in the 1950s to 1960 were included Antonia Pantoja and Gilberto Gerena Valentín and Evelina Antonnetti. Both the PIP and the MPI established offices in New York City.

Whether promoting the struggle for independence, organizing for social and economic rights in the United States, or blending all of these concerns a long thread of political activism through organized groups had been a feature of social life in the Puerto Rican community in the diaspora (Torres 1998:5). Among these core groups were the Nationalist Party, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, the Young Lords Party (YLP), the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), the Puerto Rican National Left Movement (the Comité-MINP), the Puerto Rican Student Union (PRSU), the Movement for National Liberation (MLN) and the Armed Forces for National Liberation (FALN).

Informed by some version of Marxism, each organization had a political program, objectives, and tactical proposals. These organizations lobbied on behalf of the nationalist prisoners, and the movement kept the colonial question on the U.S. Left's agenda. These groups, as it was also seen in Puerto Rico and historically, showed signs of competition and fragmentation along class line. Stereotypes about who each other were abounded and it reflected the complex social locations of the Puerto Rican community and the potential cleavages that arise from those different locations and the situated knowledge of each

faction across race, class, gender, and sexuality (Torres 1998). Tensions existed between the intellectual class and the stigma of “welfare” activism, a highly racialized system that perpetuates inequality while also fighting inequalities against the poor.

The social location of the groups and their strategies harked back to the “national question,” often creating tensions and ambivalence about class and nation. A significant number of Puerto Ricans, not all, in the diaspora were working class, a position that shaded strategies and tactics regarding the national question. The tension between nation and class and I add race/ethnicity was a driving force for “articulating” and thinking through the “appropriate relation” and the tension “between nation and class became the litmus tests for the movement” (Torres 1998:12). This tension between nationhood in the diaspora and also an ethnic minority in the United States was the “national question” at the time. If on the one hand, Puerto Ricans in the diaspora are part of the nation, then they would be expected to support the independence of Puerto Rico for residing in the mainland and from their position in the insides or the “belly of the beast.” On the other hand, if Puerto Ricans were a national minority status then could also promote the larger goal of socialism by advocating and working for radical change in the insides of United States. Andrés Torres (1998) cited a number of factors for the tension within organizations including in-fights, dogmatism, denied democratic processes that alienated members, youthful inexperience, paramilitary settings, unclear priorities, and a Leninist party structure that centralized work in a context of a democratic society.

Additionally, the party-based organizations and organizations in general lacked attention to the politics of identity, a point echoed by women, sexual minorities, and

Puerto Ricans of color. These tensions fragmented the movement, not only in terms of its politics of identity, but also in terms of the ideologies of independence advocates.

Furthermore, macro-structural forces also influenced the weakening and/or demise of the movement in the United States. Specifically, Torres (1998:16-7) saw external forces linked to being a small, stateless nation against a global superpower that made meaningful social change difficult in a context of massive repression, the collapse of socialist and communist ideologies, intimidation associated with covert programs known as COINTELPRO, and others correlates impacted the social movement. One factor remains strong and clear: the nation lives and cultural nationalism runs deep and the importance of economic populism and call for social justice and equality (Carrión 1993; 1996; Torres 1998). Tensions within party structures and autonomous organizations continue to exist and the fragmentation of groups and organizations is part and parcel of societal structures. For women activists who have traditionally been relegated to the margin of organizations this is still an issue. Women activists and activists across the matrix of domination organized into autonomous organizations removed from party politics, but the politics of identity about what aspect of liberation needed prioritization, gender or nation or both is still an open-ended question.

Feminism and Socialism as Double Militancy

Since the eighteenth century, Puerto Rico has had a complex history of separatist movements and tensions across political ideologies. The history of parties gravitated and argued about the best status option for Puerto Rico, including an independence option. In

the 1970s, two political parties centered their energies on independence and socialism, namely the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño/the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño/the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). Both the PIP and the PSP emerged from tensions associated with the Partido Popular Democrático/Popular Democratic Party (PPD) in 1940 that had initially supported the independence of Puerto Rico, but later changed its political position to spearhead support the “free associated state” framework or commonwealth status of Puerto Rico.

With the abandonment of the independence ideal, leftist leaders who had supported independence split and founded in 1946 the PIP, headed by Gilberto Concepción de Gracia. Eventually, the PIP fragmented again, and the most radical left leaders formed the Movimiento Pro Independencia/Pro Independence Movement (MPI) in 1959, guided by Juan Mari Brás. The same year, the movement founded the *Claridad* newspaper, the object of this dissertation, as an educational tool to transmit party ideologies and to connect nationalist socialist forces with other independence supporters. Later in 1976, the MPI divvied up again, and its most radical left leaders founded the PSP (see Ostolaza Bey 1989:116-27). Contrary to the early Nationalist Party of 1922 which rejected the electoral process as a colonial trap, the PIP and the PSP saw the electoral process as a legal mechanism to obtain independence.

The independence movement also had supporters at the university level. The Federación Universitaria Pro Independencia/University Pro-Independence Federation of Puerto Rico, commonly known in Puerto Rico by its Spanish acronym as “FUPI,” emerged as the university arm of the MPI that challenged military recruitment at the

University of Puerto Rico through confrontation. The confrontation resulted in the killing of student Antonia Martinez Lagares in March 4, 1970 by the police as she watched a confrontation between students and the police.

When in the elections of 1964, the MPI boycotted the polls resulting in the lack of support for the PIP in upcoming elections; Rubén Berríos and Carlos Gallisá departed from the MPI to formulate an independence project based on principles of socialist democracy. After the 1972 elections, the movement splits again and the radical leftist leaders of the MPI created the now defunct Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño/Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). The party was headed by Juan Mari Brás, using a Marxist-Leninist ideology seeking independence and the advent of socialism in Puerto Rico. From its inception in the 1960s, the Socialist Party sought the internationalization of the case of Puerto Rico in the United Nations, supported the Cuban Revolution, developed the newspaper *Claridad* as an outreach tool, affirmed all forms of struggle that included students, workers, and the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States, but not necessarily women as a constituent group.

In principle, the independence movement embodied in the MPI sought to bring all factions of the independence project together, recognizing that the independence movement involved many *independentismos*/independence movements (Rodriguez 2010). During the 1970s, the independence movement was engulfed in internal strife, often labeled *lucha fraticida*/fratricide. The representation of internal strife as fratricide underscored the construction of independence as a “brother against brother” movement that discourages, denies, excludes, and renders invisible women and their interests. As the

fratricide label suggested, in 1982 Mari Brás stepped down as Secretary General of the PSP and the demise of the party followed. During the 1970s, it must be noted that feminist autonomous organizations had already emerged to address the grievances of women, traditionally ignored and rejected by political party structures and ideologies that saw women's rights as a distraction.

This overview of the independence movements has shown that internal dissension and competing ideologies have shaped the liberation movement into competing *independentismos*/independence movements, that often disagreed on political ideology, focus and strategies for the nation of Puerto Rico. The rhetoric of liberation and self-determination rarely made reference to women or rarely addressed the question of the nation from the perspective of women. For Mattos Cintrón, argued Ostolaza Bey (1989), the internal crisis of the socialism erupted in 1976 because the party followed a vulgar Marxism that failed to consider the consequences of rule by hegemony as proposed by Althusser, Gramsci, and Poulantzas. The socialist movement analyzed Puerto Rican society using a colonial domination model structured by coercion and economic exploitation that ignored that the nation of Puerto Rico may actually participate and consent to *la presencia Norteamericana*/North American presence in the island (Mattos Cintrón cited in Ostolaza Bey 1989:123).

The vanguard position of the early Socialist Party of 1912 did not translate into the later embodiments of the independence parties, and they failed to acknowledge that North American rule (colonial rule) extended civil rights to all, including women, a practice usually rejected by socialist ideology until after the revolution. The PSP

neglected alternatives for women while acknowledging the double shift and lacked solutions to dismantle the sex/gender system that promotes binary distinctions, a gendered division of labor, and the social regulation of sexuality. Sexism and gender stratification shaped the relations of power between men and women, and the PSP separated women from the struggles of workers as a generic group, who in actuality are impacted by the matrix of domination along axis of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation. By making women responsible for their liberation until after the revolution and rehashing Engel's arguments about the origin of the family, private property and the state, the focus on socialism and national independence denied and erased the role of women in national liberation; yet *Claridad* never forgot to commemorate women as part of the "nation," a point that will become clearer in the findings chapters of this dissertation.

Additionally, Norma Valle Ferrer (1986), a feminist activist and journalist, observed that the independence and the socialist parties have supported women's rights in theory through their party platforms, but male chauvinist attitudes still permeate Puerto Rican society. In the 1970s, during party strife, many feminist women left the party structure because the party leadership believed that the feminist struggle was divisive and that the party should not be divided by sex (Valle Ferrer 1986:85). Similarly, Ostolaza Bey (1989:126) indicated that the party did not grasp women as popular subjects resulting in discrimination and marginalization based on gender within party politics and thus limiting the potential for national liberation and a nation for women.

Ostolaza Bey (1989) has suggested that the exclusion of women and a feminist agenda reflected the male power structure of the independence and socialist parties. For instance, feminists who militated in the PIP organized the Frente Femenino del Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño/Feminine Front of the Puerto Rican Independence Party in 1972, but it lasted very little as women were relegated to traditional housekeeping efforts such as fundraising and were denied any leadership positions within the party (Vélez Camacho 2008:23-4). Among the women affiliated with the Front were Isabel Picó, Margarita Mergal, Marcia Rivera, and María Dolores Fernós (Ostolaza Bey 1989:152-53), who went on to organize the first celebration of International Women's Day in Puerto Rico, and eventually left the party for its exclusionary practices.

Specifically, Rivera Lassén (2001:109) disputed the accusation that autonomous feminist organizations were assimilationist groups because they focused on women's liberation and not on national and socialist liberation. Feminists autonomous organizations emerged in part, as a response to a report that examined the status of women in Puerto Rico during the 1968 to 1970 period, a report that according to the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women found *no evidence* of discrimination against women (see Crespo Kebler 2001a, 2001b). After the release of the report in 1971, the Puerto Rican legislature questioned the claim made by the governor's report, and ordered an investigation by the Commission of Civil Rights. In 1973, it was found that there was widespread discrimination against women, and several organizations emerged to fight for social justice drawing from the multiple constituencies of civil society (e.g., students, labor, nationalist, independence, anticolonial, racial justice, and gay and lesbian

groups). Crespo Kebler (2001b) and Rivera Lassén (2001) documented the silences of social justice groups around issues of race and racism and heterosexism and heteronormativity. These varied constituencies revealed that women are not essential subjects nor objects and that their lived experiences varied by race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation. The monolithic nation is not monolithic; it encompasses multiple experiences and identities.

Indeed, *Mujer Integrate Ahora/Integrate/Women Now* (MIA) became the first autonomous feminist organization in Puerto Rico to pioneer feminist activism on behalf of women's rights and equality for women (Vélez Camacho 2008). The organization was founded by Mary Bird, Alma Méndez Rios, and Ana I. Rivera Lassén, and it addressed the women question in nationalism, independence, and socialism, while also analyzing the political platforms of political parties running for office in 1972. Later on, the tensions between party organizations and feminist ideologies facilitated the creation of the *Federación de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas*/the Federation of Puerto Rican Women (FMP) in 1975.

The FMP identified capitalism and colonialism as the key causes of women's oppression, and while it indicated that their organization was not a socialist front for a political party, during their foundational efforts, they dedicated their work to political prisoner Lolita Lebron, who was also a nationalist, independence, and socialist supporter and leader. Crespo Kebler (2001b:56) cited the FMP's words: "Si los hombres no logran la independencia la lograra la mujer/if men fail to achieve independence, women will." The blurred lines between FMP and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) resulted in the

demise of the organization in 1977 (Rivera Lassén and Crespo Kebler 2001; Vélez Camacho 2008).

An important consequence of these internal dissensions in party politics and autonomous women's organizations has been the rise of key renowned feminists whose intellectual work and scholarship has become the tool for the liberation of women. Among these scholars are: Isabel Picó, Marcia Rivera, Eneida Vazquez, Norma Valle, Margarita Mergal, Yamila Azize, Flavia Rivera, María Dolores Fernós among countless others. Feminists have documented that the independence discourse pursued an essentialist nationalism coupled with an independence and socialist ideology that aimed to return to the time of early Spanish colonization, a rejection of urban life, and a conservative ideology driven by Catholic church dogma that emphasizes women's traditional roles in patriarchal societies as mothers, daughters, and spouses (Briggs 2002; Crespo Kebler 2001a, 2001b; Ostolaza Bey 1989). Furthermore, citing Mattos Cintrón (1987:34-44), Ostolaza Bey suggested that he saw the independence, nationalist, and socialist ideology as embedded in a "Jomenismo," a political ideology of destruction and death that seeks a return to the seventh century by exalting religious dogma and those traditions of Arab life (cited in Ostolaza Bey 1989: 123).

Feminists have shown the consequences of sexual politics on women's political participation and have demanded the right to choose and control their fertility, whether or not to birth the nation, demanded divorce rights, and better working conditions. Ostolaza Bey (1989) reminded us that in the case of colonial Puerto Rican women, women have a point of comparison, white North American women who have experienced a significant

measure of emancipation. She added that a return to the past to solve the problems of present day Puerto Rico would seem an inefficient strategy, because for women, “*todo tiempo pasado siempre fue peor*/for women all past time was worse” (Ostolaza Bey 1989:126).

Feminist activists have noted that the PIP and the PSP often followed an ideology that rejected women’s organizational strategies to fight gender inequality. Nationalist, socialist, and independence parties have privileged the struggle for national liberation and relegated women and women’s and/or feminist activism to secondary status, denied autonomy by giving precedence to the patriarchal agenda of the parties. Consequently, feminists were accused of double-militancy by some of their own feminist comrades and by the political structure of party (Rivera Lassén 2001:130). Feminist autonomous organizations such as *Mujer Integrate Ahora/Integrate Women Now (MIA)*, *Alianza Feminista por la Liberación Humana/Feminist Alliance for Human Liberation (AFLH)*, and the *Federación de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas/Federation of Puerto Rican Women (FMP)*, and others, showed that feminism emerged from the social and economic conditions of Puerto Rican society. Feminists organizing sought to remedy the exclusion of women from the normative patriarchal structures of political parties grounded in the social and economic conditions of Puerto Rico for building democratic, pluralist institutions in a society shaped by increasingly global and transnational forces.

Similarly, José Luis González (1980; [1980] 1993) argued that reconstructing backwards reflected the class interests of Creole ruling class, which was being displaced by U.S. hegemony. The consequences of this independence rhetoric have been a banal

nationalism mirrored in issues of commemoration that is everywhere, but offers few, if any solutions, to the worsening economic, social, political, and cultural crises in the island. These internal struggles erased and neglected Puerto Rican women subjects as challengers of gender inequality (Ostolaza Bey 1989; Valle Ferrer 1986). At the same time, the critique of colonialialism overlooked that the relationship with the United States has facilitated certain rights for Puerto Rican women including, the right to choose, equal pay for equal work, legal remedies against sexual harassment, employment protections, and against sexual violence. These rights do not require a return to the past, and represent central changes to achieve women's equality.

Thus, the decade of the 1970s was marked by internal strife among competing independence ideologies and the rise of autonomous feminist organizations in Puerto Rico (Crespo Kebler 2001a). From the perspective of militant women, feminist activism has shown the temporal depth of struggles for women's rights within and outside party politics. Government studies, political party activism and feminist and women's activism increased dialogue about power inside and outside the public and private divide of political parties, and the intersectionality of women's lives as women militants, nationalist feminists, and as feminists and/or women activists, immersed in both nationalist or feminist politics. The focus on the tension between feminism and nationalism reproduced the binary structure of gender and nation that constructs women as "border guards" (Armstrong 1982) of both feminist and nationalit loyalties.

Feminist activism was not necessarily linked to the left, while others rejected any affiliation with political parties as they found that feminist issues were relegated to

secondary or invisible status within party politics. The complexity of feminisms in Puerto Rico revealed that feminist groups did not arise as part of the new left nor as foreign imports. Instead, Crespo Kebler (2001b) rejected Nancy Saporta Sternbach's et al. (1996) claim that in Latin America feminism emerged out of the New left; she found that in Puerto Rico feminist autonomous organizations, such as MIA, rose as a response to the civil rights commission's findings that there was discrimination against women, strategizing to remedy the situation. For instance, the Women's Alliance of the Gay Pride Community emerged out of need to redress the sexual inequality embedded in heteronormative social institutions. Political parties and feminist groups often diverged about the causes of women's inequality. The independence and socialist parties saw women's oppression as secondary, and claimed that the liberation of women will only occur after Puerto Rico becomes a socialist republic (Crespo Kebler 2001b:49).

The revolutionary party was supposed to educate women and to integrate her in the struggle, yet many of these women who militated in the party were already highly educated anyway and understood the consequences of the sex/gender system and the oppression of women. Party ideology often anchored its rejection of feminism as a foreign contagion by locating it in the 1971 visit by Gloria Steinem. The figure of Gloria Steinem became the embodiment of everything that is not part of the Puerto Rican nation. Focusing on her whiteness, blondness, and fluency in the English language, she became the symbol and antithesis of anything deemed un-Puerto Rican; yet she had already self-identified with the Young Lords, a New York based radical Puerto Rican group and with the Black Panthers (Crespo Kebler 2001b). Equating feminism as foreign,

independence and socialist ideology advanced a nationalist ideology that described Puerto Rican women as easily molded and swayed by external influences embodied in Steinhem's mystique as a single and childless woman. Her image was equated as a potential threat to women's roles in nationalism, mother and spouse – one who births the nation and one who ensures that the nation is born in Puerto Rico.

By the close of the decade of the 1970s, another crack down against nationalists occurred in 1978 in the *Cerro Maravilla* of Jayuya, where Blanca Canales had declared the republic of Puerto Rico. In this case, two men independence supporters were killed by the police as they were allegedly targeting communications towers in the mountains of Jayuya. The *Maravilla* event brought back the specter of surveillance and it was significant that during this period challenges the government was taken to task regarding its cover up to entrap and kill this independence supporters. The significance of this event is that it brought to the forefront the release of documents whereby ordinary Puerto Rican citizens had been monitored by the government for complex and mundane reasons of living such as attending funerals or even holding a flag. The possibility of surveillance does remain embedded in the collective consciousness of the nation as it is a tool used by governments using the everyday citizen to police each other or at least feel the gaze of the panopticon so eloquently documented by the work of Foucault (*Discipline and Punishment*).

Regardless of the facts of surveillance, clandestine independence groups who believed in armed revolution increased and continued their activism during the late 1970s to the middle of 1980s. *Los Macheteros*/Cane Cutters saw armed revolutionary struggle

as the key tool to end colonial domination. Several attacks were directed at military installations in Puerto Rico, including the military base in Roosevelt Roads that killed several American Marines. *Los Macheteros* have also been charged with the 1981 destruction of aircraft at the Muñiz Air Base in Isla Verde, near the International Airport.

In the U.S. mainland, the crackdown against Machetero activity occurred in 1985 when seven Macheteros were arrested in Connecticut as they were involved in armed robbery. Many of the arrested would become part of the group of political prisoners for their call to liberate Puerto Rico from colonial rule. Of those captured, none had remained more notorious and elusive as Filiberto Ojeda Martínez who escaped, remained in hiding for over twenty years, and was eventually murdered on September 23, 2005, the day of the Commemoration of the Grito of *Lares*. The repression of nationalism had now another martyr, Filiberto Ojeda Martinez who along with Mariana Bracetti, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, Pedro Albizu Campos, Antonia Martinez Lagares, Lolita Lebrón, and Juan Mari Brás has become icons of the movement for the national liberation of Puerto Rico, and particularly for their symbolism in representing and embodying the nation. These key figures and the deeds they embodied are part of the process of commemorating the nation. By emphasizing these deeds, the nation is given temporal depth and social meaning.

Collectively, this part of the history of Puerto Rico is not in the official narratives of the history. It is beginning to be written and documented, and as Luis Nieves Falcón (2002) indicated “La palabra escrita, por el contrario, es baluarte al auxilio de la memoria colectiva” (P.11). Thinking about how the history of Puerto Rico has been written I have

found very difficult telling this part of the story, the story of independence, as entries are limited, books are often out of print, usually published by native presses and perhaps told by those involved in the movement itself. The amount of publications is increasing and I see that as a central role of the academic intellectuals in becoming more public intellectuals to write the story of the nation and the history of women and feminism from the angle of women's contributions to nationalism.

Rethinking Feminism and Nationalism

Matos Rodríguez (1998) reported that the decade of the 1980s and 1990s forward saw a marked effort to document women's studies as a result of the creation of university and research projects funded via grants. Gender studies were institutionalized in the 1980s in Puerto Rico. Azize-Vargas noted that in 1981 the first Center for the Study of Women was founded in the Aguadilla Regional Campus of the University of Puerto Rico. A year later, the Inter-American University or Polytechnic founded another center of investigation called Centro de Investigación y Documentación de la Mujer (CIDOM). The year of 1982 also saw the creation of the Special Commission of Women's Affairs of the Puerto Rican Senate under the guidance of Senator Velda González. The significance of these centers is their concerted effort to reclaim the history of women in Puerto Rico, but the studies have focused less on the experience of women in their diverse experience in the diaspora. These are generic women and the question of gender; nation, race, sexuality, and class are embedded in the literature, but not explicit. I have found it difficult for me to even narrate the nation in such a way that I do justice to that

complexity given that there is so much I don't yet know about the Puerto Rican experience in Puerto Rico across the matrix of domination. Given my emphasis on women's roles in nationalism, I have also narrowed my focus as a heuristic device.

Women's activism has not been absent in the 1980s. Many organizations also emerged in the 1980s to address women's needs. For instance, working women created the Organización Puertorriqueña de la Mujer Trabajadora (OPMT) to organize against discrimination, sterilization, day care, and challenges associated with the double journey faced by women workers. By 1983, Feministas en Marcha (FEM) examined the image of women in the mass media including, journalism, radio and television. FEM's activism also created an award called el Cerdo de Oro (the Golden Pig) to denounce the use of women as sex objects in the mass media. In 1984, as a student at the University of Puerto Rico, I had the opportunity to work, as a student research assistant, with the Social Sciences Research Center and the project focused on addressing and collecting empirical evidence that documents the experience of women in various areas of social life (e.g., education, politics, Puerto Rican families, divorce, and Title IX). The University of Puerto Rico called this center Centro Coordinador de Estudios, Recursos y Servicios de la Mujer (CERES) in cooperation with the Social Sciences Research Center.

In 1985, the first Puerto Rican woman was named to the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, Lcda. Miriam Naveira Rondón and the Office of Women's Affairs are founded in the municipality of San Juan where the governor resides. Later in 1986, the Cayey Campus of the University of Puerto Rico founded the Proyecto de Estudios de la Mujer that today serves as a hub for documentation, courses, and services about the status of

women in Puerto Rican society. The Cayey Campus holds the Luisa Capetillo Room that holds documentation about women in Puerto Rico.

The new millennium has marked the rise of global activism as a result of globalization and the expansion of the global capitalist system. A central transformation of these global changes has been the massive incorporation of women into waged labor and increased global activism by women in the Third World. In the case of Puerto Rico, Vélez Camacho (2008) traced the history of women's organizations in Puerto Rico beginning in the 1970s in a mostly descriptive overview of the key organizations and their agendas. Feminist groups developed in defense of women's rights, access to the state, and key substantive issues (such as violence against women, women's health, equal pay, participation in politics, and divorce rights). Women's shelters were created to address the widespread problem of domestic violence, and beginning in 1982, the Day of No More Violence against Women has been observed.

Similarly important is the *Organización Puertorriqueña de Mujeres Trabajadoras*/the Puerto Rican Organization of Women Workers (OPMT) that organizes women workers from all sectors of Puerto Rican society (Mergal 1993). This organization struggles to transform structural inequality against women, while raising consciousness at the local, national, and international level through various informational bulletins and journals. The Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores/the Workers Socialist Movement also emerged to fight the double oppression of women at work and at home. Informed by a socialist ideology, the organization conducted seminars and consciousness raising workshops linking workers, women workers, students, and communitarian work.

Another important organization is *Feministas en Marcha* (FEM) that appeared to politicize women's issues, searching for a feminist political theory to address women's grievances at both the national and international level. They have supported legislation in areas of family reform, sexual harassment prevention, and advocated the eradication of violence against women, while also supporting the foundation of the Women's Advocate Office. In 1984, they evaluated the platforms of political parties from the point of view of feminist activism (Vélez Camacho 2008). Umbrella organizations have also begun to appear, especially the *Coordinadora Paz para la Mujer*/Peace for Women Coordinator, encompassing a united front of women's groups and feminist organizations united as a coalition of supporters to redress women's grievances.

In the 1990s, feminists and women's organizations continued their work, but the decade marked the rise of difference feminism based gender, race, sexual identity, and sexuality; the rise of network of Latin American Women against Violence was founded in 1992. It sought to connect women in the Caribbean Basin with women in Latin America. In Puerto Rico the feminist movement became a political force against domestic violence (Vélez Camacho 2008:111). Government policy, national commission, police training, along with multi-agency efforts to end domestic violence became the mantle to fight the epidemic of domestic violence in Puerto Rico. The rise of the Black Puerto Rican Women's Union in 1992 organized the concerns and needs of black Puerto Rican women with a concern for commemorating emancipation, celebrating International Black Women's Day on July 25, and the day of the discovery of Puerto Rico as the day

of the affirmation of nations. Lesbian organizations were also founded in 1992, and various reproductive rights groups emerged as well.

The dawn of the new millennium brought feminist activism to a process of evaluation of strategies and ideologies. Vélez Camacho (2008:149-150) observed, according to an interview with Ana Irma Rivera Lassen, that the feminist movement is in process of reflection that included the evaluation of political platforms beginning in the year 2000. The foundation of the Women's Advocate Office in the Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico gained in 2002 through Law 166 investigative powers to research and oversee public policy, and to authorize the imposition of fines. The office also organizes the "*Semana de La Mujer*"/Women's Week, the second week of March as outlined in Law 327 of September 16, 2004. The week has marked educational activities focusing on educational information to raise consciousness among the Puerto Rican public about the rights and responsibilities of women. By 2003, the ombudsman mandated that the police report cases of domestic violence and to provide support to victims of violence, assisting them in searching for medical services and/or legal representation. The Procuradora/ombudsman role rose out of the 1995 United Nations Conference in Beijing, China.

In all, women's activism and feminist activism began in the nineteenth century and have continued into the new millennium. A significant shift today is the focus on encounters with other societies through international networks. Many of the concerns that have mobilized women internationally have also mobilized women in Puerto Rico, particularly the issues of reproductive health and intimate partner violence. The feminist

movement has made possible the expansion of citizenship rights to women by challenging gendered inequality in all spheres of social life. In Puerto Rico, the feminist and women's movement concentrated on the eradication of violence against women. Like in other countries, feminism is not a monolithic movement of women, but it encompasses different preoccupations and ideologies, and it shares with the independence movement competing ideologies and strategies.

The rise of research centers, autonomous women's organizations, and party based organizations suggests that documenting the experience of women in Puerto Rico has now the backing of some important social institutions. However, the documentation process will be limited if it is not incorporated into the curriculum of public education. Additionally, the tensions between party based organizations and autonomous women's organizations represents a key tension between organized activism of the nationalist kind and the organized activism of the feminist kind. The consequences of these separate movements are pragmatic in some way; that is, the focus is on addressing the needs of women and the concerns associated with their social experience in society. However, the division of these two movements in separate spheres also assumes that independence and party politics is something that men do by themselves with the "assistance" of women, while feminist activism is now responsible for "women's issues" inside and outside the party. As such, feminists like nationalists run the risk of being "gender experts" as Álvarez (1999) has suggested for women. That is women are expected to create the appropriate and necessary knowledge, while at the same time I see the men now are

rendered the “nation experts.” This point will become clearer in the discussion of the findings where we find competing feminist and nationalist discourses about nationalism.

Analytic Conclusion

In Puerto Rico regardless of what name one uses, Borinquén or the island of Saint John the Baptist or Rich Port, men and women have been part of the community and have found ways to live meaningful lives. From the documented experience of the Taíno society to the process of colonization projects and struggle for independence or some form of political rule, women and men have played key roles in transforming their existence as colonial subjects but also as active agents challenging, resisting, and seeking to transform oppressive social institutions. One important example of this effort to transform Puerto Rican society have been activism on behalf of women and of the working class beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century with various efforts from both privileged and disadvantaged women. The organization of women into social movements for liberation that followed nationalist or feminist ideology showed the impact of societal forces in shaping the lived experience of women and men in society. I am unable to make a judgment as to whether these currents were “feminist enough” or “women’s activism,” I assumed that since they worked on behalf of ending oppression for women and men, they were projects in different ways to obtain the larger goal of social justice.

Puerto Rican women and men inherited Spanish colonialism, and eventually became colonial subjects of American colonialism. None of the activism can necessarily

be seen as a product of colonialism or a cause of colonial perspectives. Puerto Ricans sought alliances and coalitions across national borders to address the conditions of life in their society. The participation of women in efforts for liberation recruited women from all walks of life and organized them into various groups that today one calls non-governmental organizations or (NGOs). It is evident from this history that Puerto Rican women have organized in unions, civic organizations, and feminist groups in an effort to expand the liberal tradition of human rights as women's rights. Whether the group is recognized as feminist or not, women organized to meet their various social, economic, political, and civic needs even in the face of great opposition and great economic disparities. Women organized in feminist social movements for change as well as in women's movements that by all counts engaged in work that might be defined as feminist even if the women themselves reject the label. Additionally the focus on feminism as activism for women's rights leaves other currents of feminism out of the analysis. The economic conditions of Puerto Rican society also required that widespread poverty and various social issues including intimate partner violence be addressed to create resources and opportunities for social justice. In all the twentieth century marked a process of feminist awareness and documentation unparalleled by what newspapers seemed to cover and framed as important stories of the day.

For as long as one can remember, debates about the status of Puerto Rico in relationship to the United States have dominated political debates in the island. Unsurprisingly, since the early days of colonization there has been a steady debate among political parties and independence groups about how to gain hegemony over Puerto Rican

affairs. Of those parties, only the statehood party and the commonwealth party have obtained sufficient votes to impact the insular government's tasks, while unable to effect change at the level of the U. S. Congress.

During the elections of 2000, Puerto Ricans elected their first woman governor Doña Sila María Calderón. Plebiscites have continued to occur, but the status of Puerto Rico as a colony, a commonwealth, a nation, an independent nation, and/or an imagined sovereign country continue to plague and overwhelm discussions about the future of the Puerto Rican nation and its people. Simultaneously and parallel to the history of Puerto Rican nationalism and colonial rule by Spain and the United States, the history of Puerto Rican women's activism and feminism have also developed. Faced with dramatic economic and social crises, women began to demand access to key societal resources, including education, the vote, and various forms of birth control technology.

In the context of nationalism and feminism, commemoration in *Claridad* reported on public rituals such as protests, memorials honoring fallen heroes, the *Claridad* Festival, and even the recent display of photographs commemorating fiftieth anniversary of the newspaper reproduce the nation. Along with the fiftieth birthday celebrations, the commemoration of released and still jailed political prisoners, the death of Lolita Lebrón and Juan Mari Brás in August 2010 are all part of the commemoration of the nation, whereby important events of the nation produce, reproduce, and facilitate the public consumption of the nation of Puerto Rico as in need of liberation.

In the case of feminism, *Claridad's* coverage has narrated women's and feminist activism to a limited extent. This story of nation and nationalism in Puerto Rico focuses

in central historical events and periods. For Turner (2006), “nowhere is the thesis about the selective character of commemoration more apposite than in the commemoration of historical events” (p. 206). Days are very important to mark events deemed significant, and as I will show in the findings section on feminism and nationalism in *Claridad*, March is Women’s History Month. Yet the month of March intersects women and nation and feminism and nationalism, a commemoration time for nationalists as well as for feminists when they also celebrate many of events regarded as historically significant in independence activism. If too many articles are dedicated to women and feminism, it would detract from *Claridad’s* focus as the newspaper of the Puerto nation. It must be recalled that independence ideology has usually undervalued women’s contributions as national subjects. Thus the focus is on those events marking periods and historical events that remind the nation of the role of independence activism in seeking the nation, an ongoing search for one star.

In the type of nation constructed in *Claridad’s* discursive formation it makes sense to commemorate all of those events that remind us of the pro-independence struggle, its martyrs, deeds, trials and tribulations. Turner’s (2006) work correctly indicated that establishing the correlation between type of nation and type of event commemorated is a key task of the students of nationalism. In the case of Puerto Rico, the geopolitical realities of U.S. capitalism, empire, and colonialism showed a relatively precarious political position focused primarily on the status question. When heroic acts of resistance are celebrated and remembered, the political prisoners, party representatives, insurrection supporters or Vieques demonstrators regenerates the story of the nation and it raises

questions about membership in the nation and its liberation. The diaspora has also made its key contributions to this story and of particular relevance is what we can now call with the hindsight of history, the transnational experience of independence and of its key leaders. When repression was the order of the day in Puerto Rico or when seeking educational opportunities, Puerto Ricans of relatively privileged background, usually men went abroad to organize, mastermind, and seek support for the independence of Puerto Rico. These movements of men showed their important roles as abolitionists, bringing into focus the intersectionality of race, class, and gender, although the sexuality of the nation was made reference only by the history of those men who got married or implied sexual orientation about Julia wearing “pants” and/or Lola Rodríguez de Tió wearing short hair.

In addition, when the *Lares* insurrection is remembered, even if *Lares* did not realize its aim or potential, what matters is the heroism embodied in the event that has become part of history and can be discussed and analyzed by supporters and/or detractors. If not, take a look at the boom of books using cultural critique as a methodology of analysis. In Puerto Rico, it must also be noted that traditional American holidays (e.g., Independence Day) are celebrated along with Puerto Rican holiday’s reminding the nation of the creation of the ELA. In all, we celebrate Puerto Rican holidays, North American holidays, and a third type of commemorated events that emerge from internal and international controversies. In Puerto Rico, the killings in *Cerro Maravilla*, the Paz para Vieques movement, the death of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos brought the nation to denounce these acts as human rights violations, and as a consequence the nation

of Puerto Rico takes its position not only among nations as an imagined community, but of a nation as sovereign from colonial rule.

Besides the important historical periods of colonization and events internal and external to the nation, the nation, more specifically *Claridad's* nation, borrows a “repertoire of memorial devices” (Turner 2006:209) to create the nation. The newspaper serves as a tool or marker of the Puerto Rican nation; the plaza de *Lares* and many street names are part of this repertoire of devices. It seems, based on my travels in the Island, that every municipality has a Don Pedro Albizu Campos street, in some areas is called a boulevard, in others an avenue, a street. Furthermore, convocations to the Plaza de *Lares* on September 23 of any year is a reminder of the events of 1868, a fact that facilitates spontaneous and/or planned commemorations.

Ironically, sometimes a monument, a street name, a plaza, may be rendered invisible by the facts of living. Musil (1990) stated it best: “there is nothing as invisible as a monument” (cited in Turner 2006:210). The physicality of the monument as a permanent display of the nation’s past reproduces the nation in time; the rituals celebrated at those sites generate a sense of collective consciousness that dissipates once the event is over; yet both representation and its enactment are central aspects of national identity and nationality and of gender identity and feminism. For instance, in the municipality of Añasco I visited the tomb of Mariana Bracetti Cuevas where her remains along with her son’s are buried in the municipality’s plaza. The display and the condition of the monument seemed unkempt, dirty and in decay. If Bracetti was central to the nationalist story because she knitted or sewed the flag of *Lares* and fought for the

liberation of Puerto Rico in that very important insurrection of 1868, it does not show based on the state of the monument. The statue was dirty; there were no “nationalists” or “women” to clean it, and the rest of us who saw it offered a lamento Borincano: “Ay bendito!” The story and display of the monument in the plaza reflected its prominence; yet its invisibility in the middle of the plaza has raised questions about gender and nation in Puerto Rican nationalism.

In conclusion, feminism and nationalism have emerged from the specific historical circumstances of Puerto Rican society, and as a society with more than 500 years of colonialism it has through interaction experience ideas from Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, the United States, and from the nation of Puerto Rican men and Puerto Rican women who transmit the nation every day. In this increasingly globalized world, both movements shared an important role in the commemoration of the nation of Puerto Rico and by emphasizing the material realities of commemoration, both movements are part of the lived experience of the nation of Puerto Rico. The next chapter will focus on the theoretical literature that informs the feminist critique of nationalism to show the significance of feminist analysis for commemorating and writing women’s roles in nationalism and the story of the nation using gender as an analytic tool in order to aspire to a nation for women.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY ON NATIONS AND NATIONALISMS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT GENDER AND FEMINIST CRITIQUES

Feminist writings have critically examined the link between feminism and nationalism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Enloe 1990, 2001; Jayawardena 1996; Kandiyoti 1987, 1991; McClintock 1995, 1997; Nagel 1998; Puri 2004; Vickers 2000, 2002; Walby 1990, 1994; West 1992, 1997; Yuval-Davis 1997). Feminist scholars accentuated the under-theorizing of gender in the literature of nations and nationalisms even though women are utilized to expand the agendas of nation-states and nationalisms (Puri 2004). This scholarship using a feminist framework has uncovered the ambivalent relationship between feminism and nationalism. By implication, feminist writers have insisted that these two social movements are dialectically related: Nationalisms and feminisms are mutually constituted and inform and shape the lived experience of women (and men) as actors in everyday life.

Feminist interventions in the study of nations and nationalism have delineated a critique of the discourses of nationalism for excluding women and gender and taken to task the discourses of feminism for excluding and rendering nationalism invisible,

especially in western conceptions of feminist theory. “Gendering” has been equated with attention to women and femininity, while the implicit metaphors of nations and nationalism grappled – metaphors about men and masculinity – have been less explored. Nationalism and feminism are shaped by the specific social and historical contexts of the societies in which they emerge. The feminist critique harkens back to the theoretical work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis’ (1989) model as it has become the dominant model for analysis; yet it relies on a functional analysis of the role of women in nationalism and how gender and women’s roles are constructed by nationalist discourses. This functional analysis ignored the roles of men in nationalism, while generating a theoretical yardstick to evaluate women’s roles in nationalism and nations. The feminist inquiry into the linkages between nationalism and feminism delved primarily into theoretical reflections, offering few empirical studies to document how the growing theoretical claims outlined above can reveal the lived experience of women (and men) and their participation and/or resistance to feminism and nationalism at both the micro and macro-level.

In this chapter, I offer a selective literature review of nationalism and feminism to elucidate the link between nations and nationalisms and gender and feminisms to evaluate the proposition – in the context of Puerto Rico – that all nationalisms are gendered. Specifically, this chapter presents the relevant theoretical discussion informing the methodology of this case study. I begin with an overview of the study of nations and nationalisms in the sociological literature, which is followed by a review of the national question in Puerto Rico. I also present an assessment of the feminist critique and discuss the claim that all nationalisms are gendered. This review is intended to situate the

empirical study in the relevant sociological and feminist literature on gender and nationalism in order to explore Puerto Rican nationalism as exemplified in the discourses of the newspaper *Claridad*.

Nations and Nationalisms

Nations and nationalisms are social phenomena that have raised core sociological questions about when, how and why nations and nationalism remain so significant (Day and Thompson 2004:4). This sociological literature has also focused on the meaning of nationalism (see Anderson 1983; Billig 1995; Breuilly 1985; Gellner 1983; Renan [1882]1996); while others have focused on whether or not nations and nationalisms are ancient or modern (see Gellner 1983; Greenfeld 1991, 1992; Hastings 1997; Hobsbawm 1990; Smith 1986). Recently the debate in the field of nations and nationalisms has shifted to redefining the field drawing from the work on gender, sexuality and the expansive field of feminist social theory and the new social theory (Day and Thompson 2004) using an interpretive methodology concerned with the social construction of the *discourses* of nationalism.

Understood as a discourse informed by the scholarly work of Foucault (1969; 1977), nationalism is “a way of speaking that shapes our consciousness, but also is problematic enough that it keeps generating more issues and questions, keeps propelling us into further talk, [and] keeps producing debates over how to think about it” (Calhoun 1997:3). I use this insight about the about nationalism being a discourse to inform and trace the place of women and feminism in the nationalist project of *Claridad*. I seek to

explore the manner in which the newspaper generates discussions about women's roles in nationalism informed by the feminist critique of discourses that erase women's experiences.

The feminist critique of nations and nationalisms emerges in conversation and as a counter-hegemonic discourse about nations and nationalisms that have been said to evade gender relations (e.g., Gellner 1983; Greenfeld 1991; Hobsbawm 1990; Hutchinson and Smith 1994). Specifically, Lois West (1997) critiqued John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (1994) for ignoring and marginalizing women and gender in the anthology that placed women and gender in a section entitled "beyond nationalism." This language relegated of women and gender to the end of the work suggesting, perhaps, that feminist theory and its attendant gender analysis is an afterthought and that the ideological and structural importance of women and gender in recent sociological texts lacks a gender theory of nationalism. This relegation of women to "a footnote" or afterthought is proposition that I wish to examine to determine the extent to which women's roles are central or excluded as part of the independence project in Puerto Rico.

The exclusion of gender accentuated that all knowledge is situated in specific historical and political contexts. The situated knowledge of nationalisms and its discourses revealed that those who analyze nations as central components of kinship relations have ignored the social construction of gender and its impact on the social organization of society. Particularly, the primordialists (e.g., van den Berghe 1979), as Yuval-Davis (1997) showed, underscore "biological reproduction" constructs, and see women as relevant only as reproducers of nations. Women are or have been expected by

choice, by custom, by force or by design to biologically and culturally reproduce the nation regardless of whether they want or not to bear and/or rear children. This search for a primordial origin denies a basic insight of feminist analysis that gender is socially constructed and that as such gender is a social relation structured by unequal power between women and men. The primordial focus also overlooked the social construction of nations and nationalisms, a central feature of social constructionism as a central sociological theory that emphasizes the agentic aspects of human beings as they develop a shared sense of social reality (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Day and Thompson 2004). Nations and nationalism and gender and feminism draw from categories that are socially constructed and often these categories may take a life of their own and appear as separate from their creators (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Day and Thompson 2004). In my analysis, I drew from the social construction of discourses to examine the extent to which Puerto Rican women are viewed as the “biological reproducers” of the nation in the articles written by expert informants of the Puerto Rican milieu.

At the same time, various schools of thought in sociology have privileged the role of state bureaucrats and intellectuals (usually male) as the shapers of modernizing, nationalist projects, while overlooking and/or under-theorizing the status and roles of women (e.g., Gellner 1983; Smith 1986). For the theorizing of feminism and nationalism, it would also be important to specify under what conditions intellectuals and state bureaucrats are likely to include gender and women in discussions of nationalism. I use the newspaper articles to explore how intellectuals tell the story of women’s roles in nationalism. Certainly, it would also be important to reveal under what circumstances the

discourses of nations and nationalism make explicit the significance of gender that includes masculinity.

Examining the process of gendering of nations and nationalisms could tell us more about the societal conditions for the claim that nations and nationalisms are processes deeply structured by gender. Nations and nationalisms are also imagined and constructed and part of the sociological task is to reveal how and why these processes of construction occur, especially in the context of independence nationalism in Puerto Rico. Nationalism and feminism as social movements that shape the participants' social identity, both on the basis of nation and on the basis gender as well as race and ethnicity, and sexuality.

An intriguing and widely cited essay by McClintock (1997:89) has argued that "all nationalisms are gendered" and that nationalisms embody political relations. These political relations between the genders facilitate the creation of social difference. Nations, posited McClintock (1997:80), as "historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed" shape notions of membership and belonging. As result, drawing from Benedict Anderson's (1983) influential metaphor of the "imagined community," nationalisms and nations create social conditions that anchor the production and reproduction of women's and men's identities: These identities are both gendered and nationalist among other forms of social and individual identity. The social construction of gender and nation has underscored the contingency of historical categories of analysis, shaping moments for the imagining of nations and genders. This study is deeply concerned with women's roles in nationalism, how women are imagined

by the nationalist project, and how this process of gendering will manifest itself in the Puerto Rican case.

For Anderson (1983), nations began to be imagined sometime in the eighteenth century. This point of origin consequently structured modernity as a specifically nationalist project and the imagining facilitated the creation of the discourses of modernity through print press. Feminists Jill Vickers (2000) and Joan Nagel (1998) have challenged Anderson's metaphor of the imagined community by asking questions such as: Who does the imagining and whose imagined community? These questions have pointed to the centrality of social organization and the social construction of gender and nations. The imagined community metaphor also assumed that intellectual work is done by men, while also raising questions about what factors contribute to the imagining of the nation as woman, as "female," while at the same time underplaying the masculine metaphor in descriptions of nationhood as a fraternity of men. The stories of gender and nation and feminism and nationalism involved social, economic, cultural, political, and discourses of particular societies in their specific social milieu and historical context.

A growing body of feminist writings has also recognized the gendered construction of nationalism and its discourses, and that women are central, not peripheral, to the nationalist project. The exclusion of women from these theoretical accounts has been shaped by the social organization of intellectual work and gender assumptions. For instance, Pateman (1988), Grant and Newland (1991), and Yuval-Davis (1997) have shown how early theorists of the social contract emphasized the importance of the public sphere, assumed that the private sphere of domesticity and the home could not be

politically or power-driven to attend to nationalist efforts for liberation. However, the Latin American experience has demonstrated that women have organized in leftist revolutions seeking the liberation of their countries and nations, and that the private sphere has also become an arena of struggle as it replenishes the actors engaged in the public sphere (Gutiérrez Chong 2006). I draw from this feminist critique of the structuring of the gender system into the public sphere and the private sphere to explore the manner in which social institutions and social issues were addressed by the newspaper. By examining these two spheres of social interaction, I hoped to reveal the way in which the partitioning of women's "content and topics" into two distinct spheres reproduces gender distinctions of nation in Puerto Rico and hence exposes women's roles in the nationalist project.

For the most part, the discourses of nations and nationalisms relegate gender equality and feminist demands to the sidelines. Nationalists privilege national liberation, and view women's equality as an epiphenomenon to be addressed or resolved after the revolution. Once the nation is liberated, liberation will eventually "trickle down" to women. It has become increasingly clear that the fruits of national liberation have not always extended to women and that perhaps this is shaped by the exclusion of gender from the theorizing that challenges both femininity and masculinity in their specific historical and sociological context.

Thus feminist sociology has developed a critique of nationalism and nation. Feminist sociologists have increasingly expanded their critique of the gender blindness of nationalist discourses and engaged in what I call a critique of the feminist critique. This

critique of the gender blindness of nationalist and some feminist discourses entailed an analysis of the centrality of masculinity in the discourses of feminism and nationalism drawing from postcolonial discourses and theories. For example, McClintock's (1995) study, *Imperial Leather*, examined the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality in the context of colonialism, making explicitly obvious that western feminists had long ignored nationalism. She remarked: "If male theorists are typically indifferent to the gendering of nations, feminist analyses of nationalism have been lamentably few and far between. White feminists, in particular, have been slow to recognize nationalism as a feminist issue" (Pp. 356-7).

By focusing exclusively on gender understood as "women," many theoretical efforts have excluded nationalism as a discourse of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, 1995; Kimmel and Messner 1995; Messner 1997; Nagel 1998). Connell (1987, 1995) proposed that nationalism is an important venue for the accomplishment of masculinity (see also Nagel 1998). Thus scholars in the field of masculinity have demonstrated that the state is a masculine institution based on hierarchical authority that underscores masculine themes and values (e.g., patriotism, honor, bravery, citizenship, and duty) that are also central to nationalist projects. Nagel (1998) and Connell (1995) have elucidated important components of the microculture of nationalism as it articulates with gender and the nationalist project.

By including an analysis of masculinity in the nationalist project, Nagel (1998) warned against the conflation of gender with women. She stated: "the critique of classical literature on the nation and state as 'gender-blind' has resulted in an almost exclusive

focus on women – revolutionists, women leaders, women’s hidden labor, women’s exploitation, women’s resistance to domination” (p. 243). For Nagel (1998), a key consequence of the conflation of gender with women is that masculinity has been understudied and that an uncharted field of study poses a central question: “What is the real meaning of the masculine focus of social and political analysis of modern states?” (p.243). Invoking the work of Pateman (1989) and Connell (1987, 1995), “state power, citizenship, nationalism, militarism, revolution, political violence, dictatorship, and democracy are best understood as masculinity projects, involving masculine institutions, masculine processes, and masculine activities” (Nagel 1998:243). She also ascertained that incorporating an analysis of nationalism as gendered would involve examining the discourses and experience of women, but it would also demand an examination of what perhaps she views as “the major way in which gender shapes politics – through men and their interests, their notions of manliness, and masculine micro and macro cultures” (P. 243).

The discourses of manhood and nationhood are scripted with specific “gender frames” in mind. The discourses of nationalism were reflected when Nagel (1998) affirmed:

The intimate historical and modern connection between manhood and nationhood: through the construction of patriotic manhood and exalted motherhood as icons of nationalist ideology; through the designation of gendered ‘places’ for men and women in national politics; through the domination of masculine interests and ideology in nationalist movements; through the interplay between masculine microcultures and nationalist ideology; through sexualized militarism including the construction of simultaneously over-sexed and under-sexed ‘enemy’ men (rapists and wimps) and promiscuous “enemy” women (sluts, whores).... (P.242)

The critique of the nationalist project as a masculine project was inspired by the influential work of Cynthia Enloe (1990, 2001). For Enloe, nationalism is and has been a masculine project embedded with masculine assumptions and themes. The nationalist project has excluded women and has generally ignored how people become colonized. Enloe (1990) stated:

Yet nationalist movements have rarely taken women's experiences as the starting point for an understanding of how a people becomes colonized or how it throws off the shackles of that material and psychological domination. Rather, nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope. Anger at being 'emasculated' – or turned into a nation of busboys' – has been presumed to be the natural fuel for igniting a nationalist movement (Pp. 44-5).

The construction of nationalism as gendered required an analysis of empirical evidence to suggest how and under what circumstances this discourse is gendered as feminine, masculine and/or both. Enloe's work (1990:42-64) relied on the study of postcards by Algerian nationalists to make some of her generalizations (see also Nagel 1998). Enloe's work is informed by the intersection of globalization, colonialism, postcolonialism, and feminism. Her analysis has been particularly insightful in addressing the linkages between gender, nationalism, militarism, and cultural symbolism. Although the material relations of production cannot be discerned from the representations in the postcards and one cannot assume the psychological meaning of nation for those who created, consumed or viewed the cards, the significance of the postcards resided in the symbolic importance of the nationalist project and the use or absence of women's images and roles to tell the story of the nation.

The dominant discourses of nations and nationalisms have not evaded gendered relations in their entirety; instead the discourses have implicitly privileged certain gendered metaphors regarding femininity as a social relation, while underplaying the social construction of masculinity as a specifically situated knowledge that appears as ideology since it is never questioned, challenged, nor discussed. For Puri (2004:129), “representations of the nation through male perspectives depend on the marginalization of particular groups of men but also on specific representations of women. Maleness comes to entail preserving women’s respectability and defining what respectable womanhood means to national identity.”

For Puri (2004), this has created the “paradox of gender and nationalism.” This paradox involves the gender relations between men and the nation, always mediated through women. Women are constructed as the reproducers of the nation in both its material and symbolic sense, and men are the protectors of both external and internal boundaries of the nation and of women. Masculinity needs to be made explicit and analyzed; while at the same time, this requires the elucidation of the actual discourses of the nation as feminine, an historical construct that has often been empirically shown to reflect the gendered aspect of women’s and men’s lives, feminist or not. These discourses have created important connections for the study of what West (1997) labeled “feminist nationalism.”

Notable contributions to the study of the discourses of feminism and nationalism can be found in the work of Third World scholars who have made explicit theoretical contributions to the significance of gender for nationalist projects. Most notably, Balibar

(1990), Chatterjee (1993) and Mosse (1985) have avoided a gender blind theorization of nationalism (Yuval-Davis 1997:3; see also West 1997). These exceptions to the exclusion of gender in theorizations of nations and nationalism are noteworthy because they reflect subaltern voices as they seek to name and understand their lived experience in their specific historical, social, cultural, and colonial context. These subaltern contributions to the study of gender are significant because they challenged the frameworks and discourses of feminists in hegemonic countries, while also reexamining the implications of research agendas that reproduced intellectual stratification systems of knowledge. These voices from the Third World expand the circle of analyses to international perspectives that debunk how nations and nationalisms are gendered and what role feminism and nationalism can play to expose and challenge gender inequality at both the local and global level (Balibar 1990; Mohanty 1991; Mosse 1985; West 1997; Yuval-Davis 1997).

Of particular interest is Partha Chatterjee's (1993) examination of the social construction of Indian nationalism to show that struggles over nationalism are gendered. Chatterjee (1993) argued that women's association with the home came to represent the very essence of Indian nationalism. This association of women and the private sphere of the home have been found in other contexts as noted by Yuval-Davis' (1997) analysis. Chatterjee (1993) also accentuated the methodological strategies for revealing and locating the voices of Indian women in her examination of the autobiographies of educated women in the context of middle-class homes. Although middle-class women are not the only ones to embrace the call of nationalism, they have had societal resources to

read and write and to document in some way their lived experiences. Women in the nationalist project in India created conditions for the independence of India, linking the nationalist project to the discourses of modernity and ideas of sovereignty.

The voices of Third World women intellectuals and some Third World men have offered counter-hegemonic discourses that, according to Vickers (2002), influenced the works of several prominent writers theorizing gender and nation today (e.g., Jayawardena 1986). The classic by Kumari Jayawardena (1986) detailed the positive link between feminism and nationalism in Asia and the Middle East. Jayawardena (1986) argued that women were central to modernizing, anticolonial nationalisms in the Third World context. Women were expected to embrace “western” values in order to ensure the overthrow of colonial regimes. In that context, women organized for both gender and national citizenship rights.

The most influential contribution to the feminist critique of nations and nationalism is embodied in the work entitled *Woman-Nation-State*, by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and in Yuval-Davis’ (1997) *Gender and Nation*. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989:7) outlined the roles or frames that shape the representation of women in nations and nationalism. Frames are “principles of organization that define our experiences” and “are assumptions about what we are seeing in the social world (Ritzer and Goodman 2004:228; see Goffman 1974).” Specifically, drawing from the feminist critique of nations and nationalism, the five roles or “frames” consisted of:

- Women as biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities;

- Women as reproducers of boundaries of national groups;
- Women as transmitters and producers of national culture;
- Women as symbolic signifiers of national difference; and
- Women as active participants in national struggles.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) surmised that there is strong association between women and nation. The theoretical link between nation and gender establishes a strong link between how nations are imagined and the roles that women play in such construction of nations. For Puri (2004:114), the connection between women and nation in three key areas, including women as reproducers of nations, women as vessels of cultural nationalism, and women as markers of internal and external boundaries of nations/ethnic groups.

These frames or roles are characterized by Nagel (1998) as “women’s distinct, symbolic role in nationalist culture, discourse, and collective action, a role that reflects a masculinist definition of femininity and of women’s proper place in the nation” (p.252). These roles underplay the material realities of women’s lives in the sexual division of labor, while also focusing on the social regulation of sexuality in the context of reproduction and motherhood. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) note “different historical contexts will construct these roles not only in different ways but also the centrality of these roles will differ” (p. 7). The importance of understanding the concept of reproduction showed that reproduction involves not just the biological reproduction of the species, but the consumption and child-rearing (and adult-rearing) that takes place in the home. Interestingly, Anthias’ and Yuval-Davis’ (1989) and Yuval-Davis’ (1997) list

of roles excludes the social structural implications of the gender division of labor in the context of unequal power relations shaped, cultural norms and social relations of power as these intersect in a matrix of domination in a nationalist project.

Furthermore, Yuval-Davis (1997) has theorized that nationalist projects include three key dimensions: *Volknation*, *Kulturnation* and *Staatnation*. *Volknation* refers to the story of common origins, an important aspect that privileges a primordial origin. *Kulturnation* refers to the emphasis on a common culture, raising questions about the culture that will be emphasized, masculine culture or feminist culture, or feminine culture. *Staatnation* refers to citizenship, focusing on membership, rights, and responsibilities and issues of inclusion/exclusion. Depending on which dimension is emphasized by nationalist projects they will be more amenable to the inclusion and/or exclusion of women. If the nation is constructed as a reflection of kinship relations, then nations will be constructed as rooted in some family origin or kinship relation. For instance, Anderson's (1983) "imagined community" metaphor challenged the focus on the natural or genealogical dimension. Depending on how this community is imagined, women and men will be more likely to be the excluded than included, and it need not require an immemorial time of origin and allows for multiple ways of imagining and defining the nation.

Here the work of Homi Bhabha (1990) has been instructive as he delineated the alternative counter-hegemonic discourses about how subalterns imagine and create the community, while also providing a space for asking questions about who can speak for the excluded in nationalist projects or for pondering whether or not the subaltern can

speak (see Spivak 1988). Thus nationalism and feminism are projects that intersect and are constructed by each other. Yuval-Davis' (1997) focus on gender and the category woman and sex/gender system is important because nations must be related to nationalist ideologies, nationalist movements, and the institutions of the state, including militarism.

The theorizing of feminism and nationalism has important implications for feminist theories because feminist theorizing has focused on answering descriptive, explanatory, and qualifying questions about gender and power differences (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 2000). In the analysis of gender and nation and feminism and nationalism, Yuval-Davis (1997), argued Vickers (2002), focuses on understanding power differences in the construction of nationalism and feminism. For Yuval-Davis (1997) the literature on feminism and nationalism can reveal answers to several questions about factors contributing to women's oppression; ontological factors about how difference is constructed (e.g., biological, social, or a combination of the two); and the question of difference or as Spellman (1988) has called "the ampersand in feminist theory," gender and race. The focus on difference required understanding "how additive analyses of identity and of oppression can work against an understanding of the relations between gender and other elements of identity, between sexism and other forms of oppression" (Spellman 1988:115). The question of difference also sought an explanation using historical and empirical evidence to show how and under what circumstances feminisms and nationalisms have worked on behalf or against women from all backgrounds.

This question of difference has challenged the “ethnocentric and westocentric” perspective of most writings on gender and nation. That is, from the perspective of upper-middle-class white women, nationalism has been constructed as negative for women because it discourages feminist action on behalf of women, and it has been formulated in the tension between “bad” and “good” feminism or Janus faced assumptions. Instead, nationalism depending on the context can have positive, negative, and/or neutral consequences for women.

The rejection of nationalism as good or bad reproduces the very binary that feminist theorizing has attempted to understand and debunk: gender is a social relation of unequal power. Simultaneously, western-centered feminism has historically erased the qualifying question in feminism, the differences among women in terms of how gender, race, class, and sexuality intersect and reproduce gender inequality, racism, classism and heteronormativity as a the matrix of domination (see Flax 1987; Hill Collins 1986, 1990; hooks 1984; Spellman 1988; Spivak 1988; Yuval-Davis 1997).

The feminist critique of nations and nationalism underscored that feminism and nationalism operate with a shared understanding of social relations, but they each privilege either gender or nation, or both as a social relation of domination or liberation depending on the historical context. Social relations impact how Yuval-Davis’ (1997) definition of gender is framed as a discourse as she indicated that gender is framed “not as a real social difference between men and women, but as a mode of *discourse* which relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference as opposed to their economic positions or their membership in ethnic and

racial collectivities” (P. 9; emphasis added). This qualification is important because it allows us to identify the discourses, while at the same time, revealing when and under what circumstances feminism and nationalism cross boundaries to challenge and undermine gender inequality.

The complex relationship between feminism and nationalism was explored in Lois West’s (1997) edited collection called *Feminist Nationalism*. West (1997) offered a collection of case studies of feminist nationalist movements in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Central and East Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Americas. She contended that “feminist and nationalist movements work at the level of the national group to define the rights of women within their cultural contexts” (West 1997: xiii). She explored feminist efforts to define and conceptualize their relations to nations, social movements, the state, and as actors or activists. West (1997) characterized the role of feminist nationalists as “jugglers.” She contended that feminist nationalists “juggle the competing activists’ demands of women’s rights with civil rights and national struggles” (p. xiv). West believed that analysis must begin with the women’s standpoint on nationalism and feminism, aiming to understand the construction of nationalism as an inherently gendered phenomenon. In West’s (1997) words:

This [analysis] seeks to demonstrate the ways feminism is constructing nationalism as inherently gendered and processual. Feminist nationalist movements differ by culture, level of economic development, and political context but share characteristics of women’s lives everywhere that make us gendered beings based on the facts that we are primary caretakers and economically and politically marginalized. (P. xiv)

West argued for a “gendered cultural relativism” using women’s perspectives to understand how different cultures frame the ways of seeing of women. This cultural relativism can have implications for questioning how all projects can be feminist, and whether or not all nationalisms that had women participants can be defined as feminist.

Vickers (2002) challenged West’s (1997) argument when she pointed out that: “West confuses women’s activism in nationalist movements with feminist activism” (p. 259). Even if dominant nationalisms have opened spaces for women to create feminist nationalism (see Vickers 2002 and Dhruvarajan and Vickers 2002), cultural relativism can further obscure women’s activism and feminist activism in nationalist projects. An empirical question remains to map out under what circumstances and with what consequences feminism and/or women’s activism in nationalism will emerge in different nationalist projects.

From the review of this literature on nations and nationalism, I draw a series of insights to inform my analysis of the newspaper. That is, nationalism is a discourse, a way of speaking about women and men, and that nationalism as a gendered discourse. As such, nationalism is a way of speaking about gender that is constructed in the specific historical context of a society. I surmised that nationalism as an imagined community is also constructed as sovereign and that this sovereignty ideal likely relegates the question of women until after independence has been achieved from colonial domination. If it is the case that nationalism is gendered, then it will be likely that the discourses of nationalism create roles for women that are consistent with the independence ideology of liberation. In the process, women will play multiple roles at different moments and/or

simultaneously. At the same time, the discourse of nationalism will be challenged by women who are part of the national project, perhaps outlining a counter-hegemonic discourse of nationalism to challenge the exclusionary project of independence nationalism. Thus, I will use these theoretical insights from feminism to reveal the social construction of women and feminism in the nationalist project of *Claridad*. I will now contextualize the discussion of nations and nationalisms to the national question in Puerto Rico keeping in mind the feminist critique outlined in this section.

The National Question in Puerto Rico

The study of nations and nationalisms in Puerto Rico has centered on the colonial experience of Puerto Rico, questions of democracy and citizenship, and competing formulas for the governance of Puerto Rico. Increasingly the dominant body of work that examined nationalism and the independence movement has been challenged as an insufficient model for understanding the transformation of post-cold war Puerto Rican society and the Caribbean (e.g., Grosfoguel 1997; Negrón-Muntaner and Grosfoguel 1997; and Negrón-Portillo 1997). These competing analyses have inquired about the meaning of nation and nationalism, national identity, citizenship and membership, and to a lesser extent provided a feminist critique of nations and nationalism in Puerto Rico.

Specifically, the national question in Puerto Rico has been explored by numerous authors (see Albizu Campos 1975, 1981, 1981, 1987a, 1987b; Berríos Martínez 1983; Bothwell 1980; Carrión 1993, 1996; Crespo Kebler 2001a, 2001b; Fernós 1996; Gallisá 2010; Garzaro 1974; González 1980; Hernández Colón 1998; Maldonado Denis 1978;

[1969] 1988; Mari Brás 1993; Muntaner-Negrón 2007; Muriente Pérez 2002; Perusse 1987; Rosado 2007; and Scarano 1993). For instance, for the purpose of this study concerned with the discourses of independence nationalism in Puerto Rico, I found the book entitled “‘*La Guerra de Las Banderas: La Cuestión Nacional en Puerto Rico/The War of the Flags: The National Question in Puerto Rico*’ by Julio A. Muriente Pérez (2002) a powerful educational tool for the study of independence nationalism and nation in Puerto Rico. Muriente Pérez analysis’ is an encompassing overview of the struggle for independence to show the competing ideologies within the new *independentismos*/new independence perspectives. These perspectives provide a temporal depth of the national struggles in Puerto Rico contextualized in historical perspective. The analyses of the national question have privileged the debates over the political status of Puerto Rico (e.g., independence, commonwealth, statehood, and more recently, radical statehood, and the referendum choice of “none of the above”).

For the most part, academics preoccupied with the national question in Puerto Rico have examined the impact of the movement for independence and the notion of the Puerto Rican nation and its meaning for the “people” of Puerto Rico. These competing representations of the nation affirmed the roles of elites and intellectuals and their analyses, and what they believe to be the central issue, solving the political status of Puerto Rico vis-à-vis the United States. Independence supporters harked back to Spain and have seemed to privilege the heritage left by the Spanish colonial period to demonstrate the existence of the nation. The focus on “origin” is an important marker of the gender character of the nation, and I saw this exemplified in the work of Garzaro

(1974) for whom the nation was born with the 1868 Grito de *Lares*. This revolt resulted in the “birthing of the nation” by the *partero*/doctor or midwife), Ramón Emeterio Betances (cited in Muriente Pérez 2002:119). It seems to me that men have “given” birth to the nation and that the “mother” of this birthing was Spain, the first colonial power

Additionally, Muriente Pérez (2002) underscored the role of the American invasion of 1898 as a sign of the “acoso” or relentless pursuit or attacks against the process of formation of Puerto Rican nationality. While the process of capitalist industrialization and military hegemony secured control of the island, Puerto Ricans did find ways to respond to those attacks by organizing through a powerful labor movement that included working class feminists and bourgeois feminists concerned with the vote. During this early period of the early twentieth-century, the deeds of Nemesio Canales made him stand out as defender of Puerto Rican nationality by highlighting the contradictions of colonialism (Muriente Pérez 2002), and also for defending the rights of women. He introduced a bill for women’s suffrage that even though was defeated in the legislative chambers sought to open the door for Puerto Rican women’s participation in all spheres of social life, a fact often ignored in the nationalist project. For national rights and its expansion to all Puerto Ricans, Nemesio Canales stands as one of the advocates of legal equality for women in Puerto Rico, a fact not mentioned in Muriente Pérez’s (2002) critique even though he acknowledged the “acoso” of the nation by the invader, a threat that can also be said to be a gendered phenomenon of harassment of the nation constructed as woman. This silence about gender raises questions about the nationalist project and women’s roles in it. The accounts of an emergent national identity overlooked

the rise of the labor movement; working class Puerto Rican women were key agents in the socialist labor movement. This blind spot has underplayed women's activism and their role in claiming "a nation of women," and one of its key proponents, Luisa Capetillo (Capetillo 2004; Matos Rodríguez 2004) who actually searched for a nation for women.

I argue then that these historical facts in the context of colonialism have impacted the development of the Puerto Rican nation and privileged the Spanish heritage of Puerto Rico in order for the independence discourse to work. At the same, these analysts also underplayed and erased the racial and ethnic "origin" of the nation. To remedy this exclusion, José Luis González (1980) undertook the task in his book of essays entitled *The País de Cuatro Pisos/The Four-Storeyed Country*. González argued that in 1898 Puerto Rico was a nation in-formation that for the most part had unacknowledged the culture of those at the bottom, namely its Mestizo, Afro-Caribbean, and the Antilles regional heritage. For González, Puerto Rican culture prior to the invasion was a class-based culture of those at the top, and he criticized the erasure of the Mestizo heritage of historical figures such as Miguel Henríquez and José Campeche (González 1980:47).

For González (1980), migration movements structured the layers of the "*país de cuatro pisos/the four-storeyed country*," transforming notions and categories of frontiers/borders/diaspora in the Puerto Rican experience. Migration and diaspora challenge the centrality ascribed to national territory and blurred traditional lines of national membership by becoming "*a nación en vaivén/a nation on the move*" (Duany 2000). The nation is a transnational, trans-local nation, not only in terms of its bodily experience and physicality, but also in terms of its symbolic and cultural meaning. In the

Caribbean context, Puerto Rico is a nation with Afro-Mestizo, Hispano-American, Latin-American, and North American influences (González 1980). This concern for the racial and ethnic origin of the nation is also a gendered process that represents birthing the nation through the mixing of multiple peoples, cultural traditions and reproductive processes.

Fernós (1996) proposed the importance of Puerto Rican nationality that gives Puerto Ricans a sense of double citizenship: Puerto Rican and American citizenship. Yet the analysis has never explored whether or not the historical attachment of Puerto Rico in Spain and Spain's ruling of Puerto Rico for 400 years made Puerto Ricans Spaniard citizens. Additionally, this notion of double citizenship anticipates the roles of women in the nation as reproducers and bearers of the national collectivity. Activism on behalf of women will play a part in the struggle to achieve gender justice.

To these competing yet related analyses of the Puerto Rican nation (e.g., Fernós 1996; González 1980; and Muriente Pérez 2002); another important sociological intervention has been the work of Juan Manuel Carrión (1996). In his book entitled, *Voluntad de Nación/Will of the Nation*, Carrión elucidated a sociological analysis of the national question in historical perspective in Puerto Rico. Carrión's work critically investigated the classical Marxists and neo-Marxist definitions of nationhood, including a sustained critique of González (1980) for conflating race and culture in discussions of Puerto Rican national identity. Carrión concurred with González that in 1898 Puerto Rican nationality was still in formation, but disagreed with his focus on the ethnic origin of the nation by underscoring the process of struggle for the creation of nations. Carrión

(1996:38-43; translation mine) then listed several central issues to be considered when analyzing the national question in Puerto Rico, including:

1. *La nación como categoría social tiene raíces muy profundas en la historia humana*/The nation as a social category has very deep roots in human history.
2. *La nación es un fenómeno moderno que tiene que ver con las formas que ha asumido el dominio de clase burgués*/The nation is a modern phenomenon shaped by the hegemony of the bourgeois class.
3. *La nación es una categoría histórica de carácter contingente*/The nation is a contingent, historical category.
4. *La nación es un proyecto*/The nation is a project.
5. *La formación nacional puertorriqueña es una forma particular de la nación en el sistema mundial capitalista*/The Puerto Rican national formation is a particular form of the nation in the capitalist world system.

For Carrión, the nation is a social category rooted in human history, a modern phenomenon that has been shaped by class domination and the ideologies associated with the French Revolution. In the context of Puerto Rico, domination is achieved through neocolonial relations, and nationalism is the tool to combat domination through the independence struggle for self-determination. Nations can be a source of resistance and subversion; nationalist ideas can challenge and/or support the status quo. As such, the nation is “Janus faced” both backward looking and forward looking, both supporting and/or challenging established orders (Nairn 1997). Furthermore, in this sociological model, the nation is always a contingent historical category of analysis, a political project, and a process. Carrión (1996:41) argued that national formations emerge through political struggle and as a political project it is shaped by class interests and for the nationalist project, the ultimate goal of the nationalist struggle is to defend and construct

the nation-state. The nation, like gender, are social relations of power and the formation of the nation is a process that in the case of Puerto Rico is expected to produce a specific type of nationalism, independence driven following the insights of the socialist and nationalist movement and against the system of capitalist exploitation advanced by North American colonialism in Puerto Rico.

Carrión (1996), citing the insights of Wallerstein, saw the formation of the Puerto Rican nation as a particular form of the nation under a capitalist world system. This process of nation-building has raised questions about the importance of obtaining independence and the rationale for it. For Carrión, like labor movement leaders at the beginning of the twentieth-century, the question remained: “Liberty and independence for whom (P.42)?” All of these positions outline before do not reveal a clear sense of who these nations are, they seemed to be presumed gender-less nations, and at least they appear as genderless; yet the examples or points made reflect assumptions about gender, including unequal power social relations as nations can be relentlessly pursued.

However, history is never monolithic and assuming a shared sense of history and aspirations for the future when placed in the context of class, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and national struggle, historical memory often is one-sided, one-dimensional, often reflecting the story of male independence nationalists, their aspirations, desires, and ideas as posited by Enloe in her influential work. The aspirations described thus far have lacked a gender perspective: the generic project excludes women, which is clearly documented by the feminist critique of nations and nationalisms.

Perhaps those aspirations, desires, and ideas have reflected a narrowed perspective, the insights and assumptions of dominant groups who own the means of mental production. Marx and Engels (1845) stated it succinctly: “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas” (*The German Ideology* in Tucker 1972:136). This dichotomy incorporated a tension between national construction of all Puerto Rican cultural artifacts, such as the flag, sports, national languages, and the material realities of women and feminism, and the material realities of American ownership and hegemony and the competing loyalties to the United States expressed by many Puerto Ricans through the value attached to American citizenship and bilingualism by the Puerto Rican nation. This dichotomy made possible the emblematic song of *nueva trova*/new song group, Fiel a la Vega (2006), entitled “*Salimos de aquí /us come from here.*” The song has expressed the national origin of Puerto Ricans and that there are a series of complexities of hybridity whereby Puerto Ricans combine Coca-Cola products with a local root drink called mavi.

Thus far I have documented that the national question in the history of Puerto Rico shows temporal connections to Spain and contains, an unacknowledged Mestizo and Antillean mixture of culture and language along with a process of hybridity that borrows from nowhere and everywhere, including American culture, ideologies, and social institutions. Muriente Pérez (2002) correctly delineated that the process of assimilation occurs through multiple mechanisms, including the Spanish heritage of the nation. These multiple sources of identity revealed that Puerto Rican national identity rose through cultural interaction, interchange and appropriations that are reciprocated from various

currents, never fixed, always in flux and shaped by the historical context of Puerto Rican society (Carrión 1996; Muriente Pérez 2002). Nations are social relations shaped by ongoing interactions and meanings in historically specific moments, and the influences are colonial, postcolonial, cultural, and gendered. Nations are socially constructed and imagined; in the national question in Puerto Rico, the nation is always seeking independence from the United States, subsuming only one version of the nation although the voices of the multicultural nation are beginning to be heard.

Muriente Pérez (2002) criticized the work of the commonwealth's former governor Rafael Hernández Colón (1998) for not discussing the colonial conditions that resulted in the massive migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States. Specifically, the creation of the *Estado Libre Asociado (ELA)*/Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in 1952 and the economic development program *Operación Manos a la Obra*/Operation Bootstraps decimated subsistence agriculture in the island beginning in the 1950s, while embracing a model of industrialization by invitation of multinational corporations. By implication, the development project called "Operation Bootstrap" was constructed as another assault against the subsistence-agriculture model of Puerto Rico and as an indicator of the another assault against the Puerto Rican nation. In this case, development is seen as another form of control as it left peasants landless, while decimating agricultural production that for the most part was based anyway on the exportation of agricultural products. This account also ignored that most food in Puerto Rico is imported from the United States. Nationalists have long contended that in order to create an independent nation-state, Puerto Rican land must remain in the hands of Puerto Ricans, in the hands of

the proletariat or working class. Land is and has continued to represent a key signifier and symbol of national identity and national sovereignty.

Additionally, language debates have also permeated discussions of the nation. The Puerto Rican community in the diaspora does not necessarily speak “el Español” or “the vernacular” (i.e., Spanish and/or English depending on the angle), while others are bilingual, yet others gravitate in Spanglish. The focus on “el Español” revealed what Negrón-Muntaner (1997) called the hegemonic masculine term, furthering the feminist critique that nations are constructions of male desires, male aspirations, an argument long advanced by Enloe (1990). Furthermore, perhaps nations have “navels,” especially if they were born from “someone,” a woman. Navels are evidence that once upon a time that male or female body was connected to a woman; the imagined community is male, but its birthing is produced by females or perhaps it refers to the middle point, not quite male, not quite female, a *Berdache*. More specifically, the national subject is not quite Spanish, *Mestizo*, *Antillean*, *Taíno*, *North American*, nor Puerto Rican perhaps it is both, all of the above, and/or none of the above. The question about navels also suggested that nations and nationalisms have been difficult to pin down and require extensive examination and contemplation, a fact that characterizes the sophisticated and complex literature about nations and nationalisms.

To address these competing debates about the importance of migration, diaspora, and language and how these shaped the national question in Puerto Rico, Maldonado Denis (1978) traced the consequences of the migration of half of the Puerto Rican nation to the United States after World War II. Facts of migration, including birthing in the

United States' mainland raised important questions about who is and who is not *Puertorriqueño/Puertorriqueña*/Puerto Rican. When Puerto Rican society is located in its historical context of colonialism, then all Puerto Ricans, whether born in the island or the mainland, are, as Clara Rodríguez (1989) observed, "born in the USA." From the perspective of Anglos, whether one adopts English or not, North American notions of racial formation have shaped who and what a Puerto Rican is even if spoken in English and/or Spanish (Maldonado Denis 1978). Puerto Ricans have experienced a similar fate as members of the larger nation of people of color: even when acculturated to the English language, Puerto Ricans are still viewed as outsiders, not members of the "American" nation, often viewed as suspects, strangers and/or foreigners.

Furthermore, for those who have served as political leaders of the independence movement and have envisioned competing notions of "*independentismos*," the emergence of the Puerto Rican nationality is intimately linked to the struggle for legal and political independence "*desde Lares/since Lares*" (Berríos Martínez 1983; Gallisá 2010; Mari Brás 1993, 2007; Muriente Pérez 2002). Contextualizing the struggle for independence through the geopolitics of Puerto Rico as part of Latin American, our shared history, language, ethnicity, and anti-colonial struggles chronicled Albizu Campos's extensive engagement while in the diaspora and this distinguished himself with rebirthing Puerto Rican nationality. He drew on a conservative understanding of the nation as an expression of the unity of the Puerto Rican family by stating: "*En la unión de la familia Puertorriqueña se encuentra la libertad de la Patria y...cuando logremos esa unión, ya Lares habrá culminado*" (Albizu Campos cited in Muriente Pérez 2002:145).

However, certain factions of the independence movement, including Rubén Berríos, the president of the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP)/Puerto Rican Independence Party, had long distanced himself and his party from Albizu's combative style. Berríos supported democratic elections and formulated a socialist democratic ideology to generate support for independence and meaningful social change in Puerto Rico. In the 1978 speech in commemoration of the *Lares* insurrection, Berríos Martínez (1978) openly rejected Albizu's call for armed struggle.

Similarly, to this extensive trajectory of competing independence ideologies, Juan Mari Brás (1993; 2007), the founder of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) and founder of the newspaper *Claridad*, contended that Puerto Ricans are a nation forged during more than five centuries of colonialism, first under Spanish rule and later by the United States. Mari Brás elucidated the significance of the Puerto Rican nation naming itself as a nation in order to make claims to self-determination and independence from the United States and by implication, free to join the community of nations. These claims to self-determination and independence have been ongoing:

No ha habido un solo año en que se haya detenido la lucha de Independencia. No ha habido un solo momento histórico en que, a pesar de la represión y el encarcelamiento de dirigentes y luchadores, los independentistas hayan dejado de combatir el colonialismo y exigir la Independencia de nuestra patria/There has not been a single year that has stopped the struggle for independence. There has not been a single historical moment in the history of Puerto Rico, despite the repression and imprisonment of leaders and fighters, that the separatists have ceased to fight colonialism and to demand the independence of our country (Mari Pesquera 2007:12).

The struggle for independence and its variants of *independentismos*/independence movements have shown a remarkable resilience evidenced by an anthology of writings

that traces in a chronological structure the trajectory of Puerto Rican independence thought through time in search for the liberated Patria/nation, or “*en busca de una estrella/in search of one star*” (Mari Brás 2007). This struggle for independence or “*la lucha por la independencia*” has suffered many blows including over a 100 years of imprisonment of anti-colonial fighters and systematic repression. This repression has been systematic and well documented by José Ché Paraitici (2004, 2006) and cited by Mari Pesquera (2007).

Pro-independence leaders, including Mari Brás and Berríos Martínez, praised Albizu’s contributions and the resilience of the Puerto Rican nation even after many years of sustained oppression and repression. Carrión’s (1996) “*voluntad de nación/the will of the nation*” retains the claim to self-determination inspired by Albizu Campos’s nationalist, combative character. Albizu Campos suffered in flesh and blood the desire for a sovereign nation, a liberated *Patria/Nation* by any means necessary.

From this overview of the national question in Puerto Rico, I surmised that the nation emerges through struggle against two colonial superpowers, Spain and the United States. The birthing of the nation has occurred through struggle, especially the Shout of *Lares* and that the experience of Puerto Ricans has been deeply affected by language, migration, and the rise of the diaspora. This nation is constructed as aspiring to be sovereign by struggling against colonial domination, embracing the Spanish roots left by colonization, while underplaying the mestizo and African influences that also structured life in colonial Puerto Rico. Some of the struggles against colonialism have been deeply violent and the struggle for independence has long been repressed and curtailed by the

colonial regime embodied in the Puerto Rican government and in the policies of the United States. I now turn to a discussion of the critique of the dominant discourses of nationalism in Puerto Rico by focusing on the feminist analysis in Puerto Rico and the national question of citizenship for women.

Puerto Rican Intellectuals Critique the Nation

Academic disputes over the national question in Puerto Rico have continued with a renewed critique of dominant nationalist rhetoric discussed in the previous section. The rise of a critique of cultural nationalism in Puerto Rican society has been shaped by the cultural turn in the human sciences. This cultural turn shifts attention to the discourse of nationalism in Puerto Rico as the object of study, interrogating how the nation has been imagined, defined, and constructed, especially from the perspective of independence. This cultural turn among the Puerto Rican intelligentsia has been shaped by the forces of globalization, mass media production and reception, identity politics, postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonial and subaltern studies, and the destabilizing critiques of essentialist notions of national identity and collective identities in general. With shifting understandings of race, class, gender, and sexuality and their intersectional relationship in hierarchies of power in the multicultural nation, new intellectual currents challenge traditional analysis of the nation resulting in new questions and approaches for the study of collective identities. Puerto Rican scholarship has been submitted to similar critiques to show how nations and nationalisms get constructed and deployed.

This renewed critique of nationalist scholarship has been driven by new generations of Puerto Rican scholars who with a stateside focus study Puerto Rico, Latin America, the Caribbean, its diaspora and everything else in-between. This scholarship has transformed the national question in Puerto Rico as the object of study itself, challenging the perspectives of predominantly island-based intellectuals, especially those who have been linked to the independence movement, its ideology, and partisan party structure. These critical analyses pondered the consequences of knowledge production from situated perspectives that appeared to be innocently “national” or “telling it like it is,” while simultaneously operating as ideology by concealing the political projects of its creators and critics, whether they are located in the “states” or in the island. In this critical literature across academic fields, the destabilizing critique of dominant nationalist paradigms in Puerto Rican scholarship is perhaps best exemplified in books such as *Puerto Rican Jam: Essays on Culture and Politics* edited by Frances Negrón-Muntaner and Ramón Grosfoguel (1997), and in *None of the Above: Puerto Ricans in the Global Era* edited by Frances Negrón-Muntaner (2007). These works were preceded by a series of critical essays in a book called *Colonial Dilemma: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico* edited by Edwin Meléndez and Edgardo Meléndez (1993).

In addressing the colonial dilemma, Meléndez and Meléndez (1993) urged that the status issue coupled with issues of culture, national identity, migration, poverty, quality of life, economic and political dependency, and isolation from Latin America and the Caribbean shape Puerto Rico’s long standing relationship to the United States. However, the crises experienced by the independence movement amidst its various

incarnations and politics revealed that for all purposes, at least in the cultural sense, national identity remains strong in Puerto Rico, securing a future for Puerto Rican nationalism (Carrión 1993). The manner in which Puerto Ricans imagine themselves and how they are studied by intellectuals has undergone and continues to undergo a period of crisis and rethinking reflected in Puerto Rican scholarship at the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of the new millennium.

Negrón-Muntaner (2007) characterized this ambivalent phenomenon using a useful heuristic device and metaphor to understand culture and politics in Puerto Rico, namely “none of the above/*ninguna de las anteriores*.” This notion of none of the above was the preferred choice in a referendum aimed at deciding the status question in Puerto Rico. If the scholarship on nations and nationalism assumes a “Puerto Rican nation,” Puerto Ricans’ political voting behavior probably elucidated this complexity in a context of uncertainty associated with the economic and social crisis sweeping the island in a global context of capitalist production. In Puerto Rico, voting is a strategy of survival; one’s vote is a political act whereby the nation in Puerto Rico engages in the preferred national sport, namely politics. Since definitions, meanings, and economic dependence shaped the everyday world of the nation, the vote has granted those marginalized by history, colonial power, economic dependency, social problems, and mass consumption to make a choice from a limited set of structural options. Often Puerto Ricans have had limited options to deal with the economic crises in Puerto Rico; either they have been sent in González’s “*guagua aérea*/flying bus” to the United States or perhaps they have volunteered by choice or design to serve in the military frontlines, including the Korean

War (Silén 1980). In the case of elections and referenda, with the ambiguous vote for none of the above Puerto Ricans decide to throw themselves under the bus: “we are none of the above, we are here (in the nation, the colony, in the territory) get used to it.”

In other words, it remains an empirical question to understand what drives Puerto Ricans to vote for “none of the above,” so that the meaning of none of the above can be understood from the perspective of the agents, the nation of Puerto Rico, not via suggestive claims by cultural critics. Interviews with the “people” would help social scientists to understand how and why Puerto Ricans exercise agency as agentic subjects in the process of social interaction. Simultaneously, studying the discourses of nationalism can shed light on how the phenomenon of nationalism operates and perpetuates unequal power relations in Puerto Rico and in Latin America and the Caribbean, an area of research neglected by dominant nationalist scholarship.

Whatever happened the day of the referendum, the national question matters as a central aspect of Puerto Rican lived experience. Voting is perhaps one of most political acts that Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico engaged, and it serves as thermometer of the preoccupations of the age or what Rafael Hernández called the *Lamento Borincano*: “What will become of Borinquén, dear God, what will become of my children and my home” (cited in González [1980] 1993:87). Given the fact that the referenda was non-binding and that even the independence option had a U.S. citizenship element, Puerto Ricans perhaps chose to remain ambivalent on the issue because it is unclear what will become of Borinquén. Understanding the meaning of none of the above will necessitate

empirical research with Puerto Ricans across the matrix of domination, both here and there to appreciate the factors that shape their political behavior.

Puerto Rico and its people live under economic dependency and neoliberal policies that have had dramatic economic, social, political and cultural implications in the island and for the individual and collective understanding of “mind, self, and society” (Mead 1934). Neoliberal policies and its austerity measures have affected the poor in dramatic proportions worldwide, and in the case of Puerto Rico, women in their intersectional lived-experience and under unequal power relations have been significantly affected by these global shifts.

This ambivalence formulated a moment of reflection about the voices of colonial subjects and the envisioning of cultural meaning under colonialism whereby the nation may be defined by others and wanted here, but not there, while also realizing that political decisions under colonialism cannot be determined solely by a vote of the Puerto Rican nation. Duchesne Winter (2007) described the galvanization of a coalition of groups to remove the U.S. Navy from the island municipality of Vieques, Puerto Rico after security guard David Sanes Rodríguez was killed by an “errant” bomb. His death became a precipitating factor for activism across ideologies, drawing from multiple sectors of civil society and the political spectrum. Depending on the political ideology, the Vieques movement represented competing claims about national sovereignty and citizenship. Independence and nationalist supporters surmised that Vieques was the victim of colonial rule and invoked the right to self-determination, whereas statehood

supporters believed that the outcome would have been different if Puerto Rico had been a state of the American nation (Duchesne Winter 2007).

The case of Vieques also showed the complexity of counter-hegemonic groups that came together for a common goal. At the end of the day, Puerto Ricans were actually “all of the above.” The people of Vieques, feminists, LGBT activists, ecologists, clergy, labor members, students, politicians, and countless others, including international figures such as Rigoberta Menchú mobilized to free Vieques. The Puerto Rican nation as described by the preceding groups of civil society demonstrated the importance of resource-mobilization for the success of social movements. People, money, technology and mass media can affect change by the coalescing of interests, funding, and the activism of various supporters. Negrón-Muntaner (2007:14) asserted: “The nation is not enough.” By privileging this alliance of groups, the Peace for Vieques movement redefined the meaning of the nation as a multicultural nation of Puerto Ricans and supporters and gave rise to another competing form of nationalism, not just one based on an independence ideology.

Questioning the status quo can be done from within the limited structures of power available to the people, including nationalist discourse. Using the mass media can also benefit activists’ work as this momentary, partial, “little victories” have generated some productive work suggesting alternatives that can transform the quality of life of the people of Puerto Rico, especially in Vieques even if for Duchesne Winter (2007) these are “politics of small problems.” Furthermore, in terms of the images and sound bites generated by these protests, they become part of the people’s collective memory,

skillfully analyzed in the writings of those like Duchesne Winter (2007) who document the politics of small problems from a cultural critique standpoint. Even if Vieques is part of the society of the spectacle, the success of this movement is not its access to the media, but the removal of the navy from Vieques, while also resulting in the loss of economic opportunities for the inhabitants of Vieques in a context of polluted waters, difficult access to the island via the accepted ferry route, and even the presence of allegedly “unexploded ordinance” (see Pérez Viera 2002:246). Furthermore, this coalition of interest revealed that women are central agents seeking social change in Puerto Rico, whether they identify as nationalists, feminists, women, or something else.

The discourse of the multicultural nation has implication for how the nation is imagined, rendered invisible and often homogenized as the nation of Albizu, Betances, and the other male worthies, erasing any claims by the people or “*los de abajo*.” The nation is imagined from a narrow understanding of politics, focusing on certain aspects of commemoration that purport to remember all, but only imagines those doing the imagining. The process of commemorating the nation has revealed that there are competing ways of imagining the nation. Commemoration draws from representations of the national culture and the nation; the focus on independence nationalism overstates the understandings of the nation of men, whereby the one-sided commemoration of the nation regularly denies women and children (Enloe 1990) and those disadvantaged in the matrix of domination by race, class, gender, age, and sexuality, that is, complexities of the Puerto Rican nation. At the same time, a small, but growing body of research is

examining competing understandings of the nation that consider the role of Puerto Rican women in nations and nationalism.

Puerto Rican Women in Nationalism

Rick Wilford (1998) conceded that “in surveying the relationship between women and nationalism it is difficult to escape the conclusion that it turns on male-crafted conceptions of nation and national identity” (p. 1). Following the insights of Pettman (1996:49), Wilford (1998) observed that the women are constructed as the symbolic form of the nation and men as its chief agents and beneficiaries after the revolution.

The gender question in nationalism has been filtered through an examination of political power and citizenship in Puerto Rico. Crespo Kebler (2001a) found a tension between nation and citizenship. Any debates about this tension appeared over the reproduction of the nation; that is, debates over the discourses about abortion and sterilization used by both feminists and nationalists especially during the 1970s underscored the importance of reproducing the nation. Prior to the 1970s, Briggs (2002) found that in Puerto Rico there were at least three competing nationalisms that elucidated the relationship between nation and gender using reproduction as the key discourse. These discourses appropriated and policed women’s wombs. Drawing from the insights of Gladys Jiménez-Muñoz (1997), Briggs (2002) explained that struggles for suffrage during the 1920s relied on gender as the symbolic language of politics. This insight can be further expanded to indicate that gender is also the symbolic language of the nation seeking inclusion; in this case, the gender, read as “women,” became the symbolic

language of the nation that sought the inclusion and control of women, for women, and by women of their reproductive capacities. These reproductive capacities expanded to include not only reproduction in the sense of birthing the nation, but also in socializing and nourishing the nation of workers.

Specifically, Briggs (2002) found that the discourses of nationalism were deeply embedded in discussions of controlling women's bodies through birth control policy. Briggs (2002) studied the context of Puerto Rican women's experiences during the decades of 1920 to 1970. Her nuanced approach revealed the form and content of colonial and nationalist discourse through the prism of reproduction and sexuality using Puerto Rico as a case study. Brigg's research convincingly showed "that forms of sexuality are crucial to colonialism" (2002:4). Briggs (2002) reconstructed the nationalist ideology and discourse and showed that there were at least *three* competing frameworks of nationalism, each underscoring specific concerns about the Puerto Rican nation. Although most of the historical record has privileged the nationalism of Don Pedro Albizu Campos, Briggs' (2002) detailed investigation identified at least three competing frameworks of nationalism in Puerto Rico:

- First, *independence nationalism* saw women as mothers of the nation, a nationalism historically aligned with Pedro Albizu Campos and the Catholic Church. This nationalism identified women with motherhood and the reproduction of the nation by equating motherhood as the insides of "nationhood" in their roles as mothers and reproducers of the citizens of Puerto Rico.

- Second, *North-American nationalism* saw Puerto Rican women as destroyers through excessive fertility and historically encompassed mainland ideas aimed to protect the nation (the United States) from an increasing reproduction of dark-skinned and working class people. This nationalism relied on the tools of eugenics to limit the birth rate and fertility of those deemed unfit.
- Third, *professional class nationalism* defined women as hyper-victimized through their inability to realize and control their fertility. These ideas were embodied in the ideas of missionaries, social workers, reformers and various public health professionals from Puerto Rico *and* the United States.

These competing nationalist discourses provided the context for the support and/or opposition of the birth control movement in Puerto Rico, but also I see them as informing the nationalist project in the island, especially in its focus on independence nationalism. On the one hand, the nationalism of professionals and the nationalism of protecting the United States from a population explosion created the discourse and rhetoric of those supporting the birth control movement. On the other hand, the nationalism of Albizu (and the Catholic bishops) provided the nationalist rhetoric for the opposition to birth control policy. This position placed Albizu's in a contradictory position to women as reproducers of the nation because the notion of protecting workers by limiting their numbers to prevent future class exploitation in wage labor; yet without workers the nation of Puerto Rico would disappear (Briggs 2002).

Nationalist and feminist discourses postulated a critique of the discourse of universal rights and equality, making competing claims about citizenship, often using

binary categories yet calling for the inclusion of the excluded. For feminists, the inclusion of full citizenship rights for women was paramount and for nationalists, the right to self-determination and independence, remedying the inequalities between the metropolis and colony were central (Crespo Kebler 2001a:59). This universal discourse created other exclusions by homogenizing both, the Puerto Rican woman and the colony and by ignoring Spain as a colonial power erased from the nationalist critique that renders the nationalist claims congruent with Albizu Campos's ideology.

Beginning in the 1970s, Crespo Kebler traced these competing discourses in the debates over abortion and female sterilization in Puerto Rico. In the 1970s, feminism was criticized from all ends of the political spectrum as an external, foreign, colonial imposition, and/or a contagion influence. The extension of the provisions of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* was characterized by nationalists as a colonial imposition reflecting attempts by the metropolis to commit genocide against Puerto Rico, imposing its cultural assumptions about women, while also obtaining juridical hegemony over Puerto Rico (see Crespo Kebler 2001a, 2001b). The rupture between the values of the colonizer and the colonized established a dichotomy between us and them, nationalists and feminists, national and foreign regardless of the fact that Puerto Rican women welcome birth control technology.

In documents of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party cited by Crespo Kebler (2001b), feminists, and in my view, women more generally, were excluded from the nation, while depicting them as “pervertidoras/deviants” because they allegedly broke the traditional roles of the Puerto Rican woman as “mothers and wives.” That is, party leaders

questioned women's loyalties when women engaged in roles considered "deviant" for their gender through their dual roles as feminist activists in autonomous organizations and militants in party politics. The construction of women's roles as part of the private sphere of the family relegated women to roles as mothers, responsible for bearing, rearing, and socializing citizens for the nation (Crespo Kebler 2001a, 200b).

Based on this notion of family, the question about nations are ancient or emerge through struggle suggests that in the historical sense nations have "navels" to the extent that there are discourses about gender and nation in Puerto Rico for the reproduction of the *patria*/nation. These "navels" were constructed through struggle; perhaps, women who have followed traditional roles will be viewed as strong, firm and "soporte de la nación/the foundation of the nation." I have noticed that independence supporters and nationalists often used the adjective *imprescindibles*/essential to describe women and nationalists. Those who did not meet the national definition of the national women were defined as outsiders, stigmatized as "pervertidas/deviants" or "disobedient," denying a space for women, a room of one's own in the nation of Puerto Ricans. In this scenario, the women were seen as vulnerable to men and potentially malleable by feminist ideologies.

Rivera Lassén and Crespo Kebler (2001) and Crespo Kebler (2001a) found that in the 1970s period, the abortion debate revealed an absence of what women think about abortion, while the autonomous feminist organization *Mujer Integrate Ahora* (MIA)/Integrate Women Now supported women's rights to control their bodies even before *Roe v. Wade* became the law of the land. Prior to the 1970s, feminism and feminist

activism had “homegrown roots” in Puerto Rico, reflecting Puerto Rico’s particular historical context of women in struggle and competing definitions of feminisms (Azize-Vargas 1985; Colón Warren 2003).

By labeling feminism a foreign influence on the island, the national struggle of women in historical perspective is denied. More significantly, the selective recollection of the independence movement showed the ideological structure of their nationalist project. Birth control and reproductive rights were first supported and organized by the first Socialist Party in Puerto Rico, and it was not described nor rejected as a foreign imposition. It was with the rise of Albizu Campos and the socialist party behind “clarity,” I noticed a selective rejection of women’s agency through the discourses of reproductive rights. Later on, Puerto Rico experienced a shift from birth control technology to outright rejection of it by the independence nationalism of Albizu because it saw it as foreign imposition.

Simultaneously, the rejection of women’s national autonomy to safe and affordable abortions denied the wider political rights that have been extended to Puerto Rican women by virtue of Puerto Rico’s colonial relationship with the United States. The selective lens of the nationalist project of independence will become evident in the chapters to follow. For MIA, the posture against abortion was a patriarchal, not just anti-colonial, nationalist position that denied women’s right to decide, especially in a context of gender, race, class, and sexual stratification. The rejection and denial of women’s reproductive choices manipulated the historical record of Puerto Rican society. Puerto

Rican women have historically supported reproductive rights (Briggs 2002; Rivera Lassén and Crespo Kebler 2001).

The debate over reproductive rights has continued as I shall show in the forthcoming chapters through the analysis of Puerto Rican feminist thought and women's roles during the period of 1980 to 2006 in *Claridad*. The imagined community embraced by nationalists in their effort to name the nation and commemorate its existence remains exclusive rather than inclusive. Puerto Rican feminists have pondered what kind of society Puerto Rico may become if independence does not include a feminist project. Equality for women, according to nationalist discourse, can be said to be a manifestation of colonialism, a foreign influence, a claim that denies the very history that nationalists so carefully have crafted about the "history of Puerto Rico."

Furthermore, the debate over abortion rights went into other areas of reproductive rights, including a discussion of women as victims of sterilization, in need of protection from the invader, and foreign ideologies of proper gender roles as reproducers of the nation. Even an award winning documentary entitled *La Operación/The Operation* produced by García (1982) and cited by Briggs (2002) and Crespo Kebler (2001a) framed an overview of the use of sterilization as genocide following the nationalist discourse rhetoric. The feminist organization, MIA, investigated the policies associated with sterilization in Puerto Rico to determine if it had been used in Puerto Rico as a public policy for population reduction as it was widely alleged by nationalists. Briggs (2002:149) clarified that "the controversy in Puerto Rico was over the nature of what was happening in municipal hospitals, how voluntary the operation in fact was, but [the

controversy] was never over officially ordered, involuntary eugenic sterilization.” Crespo Kebler’s analysis showed that the nationalist discourses denounced sterilization as a mechanism for genocide, driven by misinformation and blaming the women for their ignorance. Sterilization and the discourse of genocide represented a central nationalist interpretation that foreclose options or explanations for sterilization, not just women as victims, but also women’s desire to control their fertility since women with the largest number of children were more likely to seek sterilization. Furthermore, Briggs (2002:155) in the discussion of the politics of sterilization, 1937-1974 argued that “if sterilization were principally involuntary, one would expect that working-class women, as the most socially vulnerable group, would show the highest rates, especially since this was the group whose fertility and contraceptive skill most worried physicians and administrators. However, the opposite was true.”

Portraying women as abused by external policies erased and dismissed women’s and feminists’ capacity for agency, existing within a set of structural constraints imposed by colonialism, and the capitalist patriarchy of nationalism in local political power structures. The debate over reproductive rights in Puerto Rico in the 1970s chronicled the significance of who is a citizen, what a member of the nation is, and under what circumstances nationalist discourses will be deployed at the expense of feminist discourses that demand the enfranchisement of Puerto Rican women as citizens, not victims of colonialism and of nationalism for its blind spots. Debates over reproductive rights posited central questions about the roles of women in nationalism (Yuval Davis 1997) and “birthing of the nation” (Kanaaneh 2002).

Analytic Conclusion

The study of nations and nationalisms in Puerto Rico generally excluded the status and roles of women in nationalism. Investigations linking nationalism and feminism rarely examine or include the standpoint of feminism and nationalism. Puerto Rican women as a subaltern group are increasingly objects of study in Puerto Rican social science research and historiography. When these methodologies are used, women are imagined, but they have little to say about the nationalist process. Women are often the ones who are spoken for, interpreted and reinterpreted via the discourses of historians, social scientists, political party leaders, and by a small, but a growing body of literature by Puerto Rican feminists.

Publications from Puerto Rico often excluded the growing body of research involving the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States, but the work of Negrón-Muntaner and Grosfoguel have also begun to address those exclusions by systematically critiquing the nationalist question in classical nationalist literature in Puerto Rico. When Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican nation are discussed, the imagined community is said to have begun over 500 years ago with the Spaniard colonization in 1493 and later with American colonization in 1898 (García Passalacqua 2001:19).

An important contribution to this debate was an article that surveyed the key developments in feminism and feminist studies in Puerto Rico since the 1970s by Alice Colón Warren (2003). Her article placed feminism and feminist studies in the historical context of Puerto Rican society. Contrary to nationalist rhetoric that tends to demonize everything North American, Colón Warren (2003) addressed the consequences of over

500 years of colonial history, first by Spain and then United States. This colonial legacy organized and created the social conditions for the understanding of feminist theorizing and methodological procedures for the study of Puerto Rican women today.

Focusing on the social science research in Puerto Rico, Colón Warren (2003) delineated the contributions of the social sciences to the study of Puerto Rican women. The author aimed to explore how gender, class, race, sex, and nationality operate and intersect to shape feminist theorizing from various standpoints. While acknowledging that Puerto Rico represented an important context for studying the intersection of local and global politics and transformations, Colón Warren (2003) excluded, citing space constraints, the social science literature about Puerto Rican women in the diaspora living in the United States. This seemed contradictory given her claim that issues of national identity, economic globalization and social globalization have placed Puerto Rican women on the Island in a relationship with those in the United States (see Colón Warren 2003:683).

An emerging area of interest in Puerto Rico is the problematization in Puerto Rican feminist thought of the social construction of race and ethnicity by Puerto Rican women of color (Rivera-Lassén 2001). The study of race and ethnicity in Puerto Rico is an uncharted area of study. The study of racial formations concerned the paradox that race matters, but it remains an under-theorized area of study. Like the study of sexuality and heteronormativity, the invisibility of race in scholarly research and the impact of U.S. racial categorizations in Puerto Rico are awaiting further study and critique.

At the level of theory and methodology, Colón Warren acknowledged the derivative character of Puerto Rican feminist writings. That is, Puerto Rican feminism is structured by the training of Island academics in universities in the United States. Many of these analyses retain liberal feminist frameworks by emphasizing issues around education, sexism in media, and right to vote historical accounts. Most of the studies reviewed by Colón Warren lack an empirical focus, use small or convenience samples, follow qualitative approaches, and are generally influenced by social science and historiography. Notable among the growing efforts to document and theorize the experience of Puerto Rican women and feminism in Puerto Rico have been the emergence of *centros de investigación*/research centers at the various campuses of the University of Puerto Rico, including the Social Sciences Research Center at the Rio Piedras Campus and Pro-Mujer in Cayey (Matos Rodríguez 1998:3-37). These research centers have increasingly documented women's contributions to Puerto Rican society and follow a feminist perspective that examines the exclusions and marginalization of Puerto Rican women in scholarly research.

Thus these historical accounts using archival and documentary evidence provide a glance about the preoccupations of feminist organizing in Puerto Rico during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century up to the 1930s. There appears to be a gap between 1930s to the 1970s, that is, little analysis exists during the period following the suffrage victory in 1929 up-to-1970. However, this period has had a rich history of nationalist activism, including the *Ponce* Massacre, the nationalist revolts of the 1950s, the consolidation of the commonwealth status of Puerto Rico, the repression of

nationalists by government surveillance and the student movement. In light of the historical context of the island, the claims in the feminist critique of nationalism and the charge that feminist themselves have not paid attention to this activism studies are now documenting the story of Blanca Canales, the 1950s activism of the independence movement, Lolita Lebrón and the 1954 attack of Congress, the repression of nationalists, diaspora and migration, and reproductive issues. Indeed, Briggs' (2002) thoughtful documentation of competing forms of nationalism and ideas discussed in the previous section revealed that women's activism on behalf of the nation has spanned most of the twentieth century in Puerto Rico and that these efforts have been both Puerto Rican and North American.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on analysis of nations and nationalism, the feminist critiques of analyses of nations and nationalism, and the national question in Puerto Rico as it has been framed by Puerto Rican scholars who have supported the independence struggle and some of whom are also nationalists, but do not support an independence narrative as embodied in the newspaper. The intent has been to contextualize, inform, and justify the interpretive methodology for content analysis utilized in this dissertation. A social constructionist approach to theory on nation and nationalisms informs the particular methodological choices of this study.

The analysis in this chapter has accentuated the link between nations/nationalisms and the feminist critique of nationalisms to show its relevance for the study of Puerto

Rican nationalism. This review distilled how nationalisms are gendered, although the specifics of that gendering process will reflect the particular historical context and society in which it occurs. This study of gender and feminist nationalism in Puerto Rico uses the social artifacts of the independence movement exemplified in *Claridad*. The intent is to clarify the social construction of nationalism in *Claridad* and how that specific notion of independence nationalism constructs, includes, or excludes women and gender. The feminist critique of nationalist categories provides tools for inquiry into the construction of the relationship between nation and gender during the period from 1980 to 2006. The roles or frames for women in nationalism serve as heuristic devices to guide the analysis of the presentation of Puerto Rican feminist nationalism and the extent to which it accentuates an independence nationalist standpoint seeking the liberation of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule. *Claridad* has framed a way of speaking always from the perspective of independence and national sovereignty. Speaking about nationalism in the Puerto Rican context requires explicit attention to gender to clarify what roles, if any, women (and men) have played in the newspaper's representation of the nation.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY, METHOD, AND MATERIALS

This dissertation investigates the construction of women and feminism in the Puerto Rican nationalist project as presented in *Claridad*, “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation.” This chapter presents the methodological approach and the method and materials used in the study. I begin with a discussion of the interpretive approach to methodology which weaves together several strands of sociological analysis. Next, I discuss my use of the method of content analysis; this presentation includes a discussion of the newspaper *Claridad* as a social artifact for analysis, how I chose the sample of articles for analysis, and the strategy I followed for coding and interpreting the data; that is the textual material from *Claridad* in the period 1980 to 2006. I also provide a discussion of a range of other materials and observations that provided background and context for my analysis of the construction of women and feminism in the nationalist project exemplified by *Claridad*.

The analysis concentrates specifically on women’s roles in independence nationalism in Puerto Rico. The work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) provides an initial framework for approaching this issue. This framework offers tools for inquiry into the roles or frames for women as heuristic devices to conduct the analysis of gender and nationalism (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3). I then developed

several research questions to assist me in contextualizing these theoretical ideas for the Puerto Rican context. These ideas guided my analytic process using the tools of theory and an interpretive methodology. Accordingly, the following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. How has the discourse of independence nationalism (in *Claridad*) constructed women's roles in that project?
2. How have the discourses of nationalism and feminism (in *Claridad*) constructed the relationship between feminism and nationalism?
3. How have the discourses of nationalism and feminism constructed women in society, that is, in relation to social institutions and social issues?

Methodology

There are competing approaches to social research based on the different philosophical assumptions about the goals of the sociological research and the nature of social reality (Babbie 2004; Neuman 1997; Reinharz 1992). These approaches include positivism, interpretive social science, and critical social science. Positivism follows a logical, deductive system; interpretive social science generates a description of how meaning is generated and sustained; and critical social science elucidates a critique of the social conditions aimed at effecting social change (Neuman 1997). All of these approaches to social research are varied and complex, and provide different mechanisms to obtain precise observations, to discern the process of the social construction of social reality, and to dispel and unveil ideology. For the purposes of my study, this

methodology is informed by the principles of the sociological perspective advanced by Charles Wright Mills and by the insights of a feminist methodology that uses gender as a central tool of sociological analysis.

Feminist sociologists have worked to make gender visible in order to transform gender inequality. I began this journey into “the sociology for women” informed by the work of Dorothy Smith (1979) where she addressed “the line of fault.” That is, taking my experience and the discourses of nationalism to interrogate how Puerto Rican women’s experience is “organized, how it is determined, [and] what the social relations are which generate it” (Smith 1979:135). As a college student, I read *Claridad* and I recall the rhetoric about the importance of this newspaper for documenting the story of the nation. Especially upon the arrival of International Women’s Day, this paper engendered coverage of women’s issues; thus I took for granted the notion that this was “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation” as their slogan had regularly suggested. Over the years as I gained more social experience with the inner-workings of social institutions, it became increasingly clear that as Peter Berger (1963) had long ago suggested “things are no longer what they seemed.”

Sociology has offered me tools to study the connection between social structure and individual lives, yet my experience as a Puerto Rican woman has always been relegated to the margins of society. I often find references to “my group” in footnotes and/or beyond the scope of the study. Similarly, the various social locations of women including Puerto Rican women were often outside the line of fault. Instead of speaking for the subaltern (Spivak 1988) and imposing a set of categories from without, I used the

tools of feminist methodology and sociological inquiry to guide this interpretive process of analysis into the roles or frames for women in nationalism using social artifacts chronicling aspects of the Puerto Rican experience.

Consequently, I began to wonder what happens in the context of the privileged discourse of nations and nationalisms in the context of Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican women. I aspired to use the tools of sociology, and the tools of feminist methodology in this dissertation to organized my analysis of the discourses of nationalism and women's roles in that discourse through the analysis of the newspaper *Claridad*. The critical issue in thinking about methodology is not what method I used for research. The key problematic, according to Joey Sprague (2005:27), is "how the method is used, both technically and politically" to reveal the social location and the historical context of knowledge production informed by the tools of sociological research and feminist methodology.

Drawing from the insights of feminist standpoint theory, I incorporated the notion of examining the standpoint of nationalism as embodied in the newspaper. Using the insights of Nancy Hartsock (1998) about the feminist standpoint, I focused on the material life as reflected in the produced newspaper which structures and constraints the shaping of social relations in the context of independence. Both the representation of women and the representation of the nation and women in *Claridad*, I emerged through struggle; it is not an individual standpoint, it is a collective product of struggle reflecting a specific social location and "historically specific relations among groups rather than individuals" (Hartsock 1998).

In thinking about methodology, I have also been intrigued by Sprague's notion that "standpoint epistemology implies that *crossing boundaries* dividing standpoints and addressing the differences between them is a strategy for building social knowledge" (P.74; emphasis added). The line of rupture from my experience as a Puerto Rican woman and now a member of the diaspora contrasts with the nationalist construction of women as part of the nation but as not being in it. The collective experience of nationalisms in Puerto Rico has rarely included the contributions of women to the independence movement nor have "official histories" of the nation included the independence struggle.

Therefore, I postulate that the process of "crossing boundaries" as particularly adept to study women's roles in nationalism because it allows me to "cross the pond" (*cruzar el charco*) or perhaps "brincando el charco" (Negrón-Muntaner 1994). By exploring what is on the other side or behind the scenes, I can reveal how the notion that nationalism is Janus faced both forward and backward and marks both beginnings and transitions in Puerto Rican society. Using the feminist standpoint theory advanced by Dorothy Smith (1979), the point of rupture between my experience as a woman and as member of a larger society I examined the shaping of constructions and discourses of women's roles in the nationalist newspaper.

Following also the insights of Marx and Engel's ([1845] 1972) in *The German Ideology*, I explore the manner in which the discourses of nationalism in *Claridad* may be ideological. Ideology articulated "those ideas and images though which the class which rules the society by virtue of its domination of the means of productions, orders,

organizes and sanctions the social relations which sustain its domination” (Smith 1979:140). Following, the insights of Marx and Engels, I challenge the ideas, images, and symbols that are generated, according to Smith (1979) by “specialists and by people who are part of the apparatus by which the ruling class maintains its control over society” (P. 140). I see the production of images, ideas, and symbols as social constructions that expand beyond the ruling class as they are produced by those with limited political power who through their production of newspaper discourses implicate the discourses of the nation and nationalism as a political project that often excludes women and hides their particular class interests for hegemony and control of “the ‘desired’ sovereign nation.” This emphasis on the production of ideas through newspaper coverage reiterates the significance of the production of the “nation” by asking “who produces what for whom” (Smith 1979:140). In this case, I have adopted this methodology to trace the roles women play in nationalism to explore how women are constructed and produced in the newspaper of the nation and listening for silences in the coverage through a gender analysis. That is, I also searched and will posit feminist nationalism as a counter-hegemonic discourse that explicitly focuses on the eradication of gender inequality. I will evaluate the emancipatory thrust of feminist nationalism as activism on behalf of women and nation to transform, not just resist, gender injustices.

At the same time, my standpoint and that of the newspaper are socially constructed discourses in specific historical moments. Because the “specific social location of the knower shapes what is known,” Andersen (1997:349) warned that “not all perspectives are equally valid or complete” (see also Harding 1986, 1991 and Collins

1990). The coverage of Puerto Rican women's specific location in nationalism and in Puerto Rican society more generally can be a resource for the creation of new knowledge about women. Knowledge is always situated and partial in the postmodern sense; and the theories of nations and nationalisms and the feminist critiques of those theories guided my inquiry to contextualize the particular standpoint. I see the partial standpoint as a tool for reflexive skepticism and an inherent need for all scientific theorizing that allows me to become an informed skeptic and analysts. Skepticism about existing knowledge "all nationalisms are gendered" and that *Claridad* is the "newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation" can shed light about the roles of women in relation to men in the nation. My interpretive methodology, as Rosenau (1992) suggested, draws additionally from postmodernism because it has "caused" intellectuals to rethink assumptions and categories of knowledge heretofore excluded in order to, in this case, create new ways of knowing about Puerto Rican women and nationalism and feminist nationalism.

The analysis of Puerto Rican society and women's roles in nationalism that I proposed contextualized the societal experience from the standpoint of colonialism, nationalism, and feminism in a global context to focus "on the oppressive aftermath of colonial and nationalistic policies and practices" (Tong 1998:226). The period of Spanish rule, "Puerto Rican colonial society . . . was . . . a patriarchal, paternalistic, and military-oriented society in which the subordination of women to men" was prevalent (Acosta-Belén 1986:3; see also Acosta-Belén and Bose 1993). Since the history of Puerto Rican society is structured by more than 500 years of colonialism, I have reflected on the

historical context of feminism and nationalism (see Chapter 2) and conducted a literature review to inform the methodology of this study.

Using an interpretive research methodology that locates the study of Puerto Rican feminism and nationalism in the historical, cultural, and societal context of Puerto Rican society, this study is firmly grounded in Mills (1959) sociological perspective. He contended: “No social study which does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey (P.6).” The sociological imagination provides specific tools to investigate the correlation between societal structure and individual experience. In this study, methodology refers to the all encompassing procedures utilized to complete this research study using *Claridad* as a case study for data collection and analysis.

This study used an interpretive methodology using content analysis to study this particular set of texts as outlined earlier as the 1980 to 2006 newspapers. The methodology is appropriate because it underscores the social construction of meaning, including discourses as embodied in the nationalist newspaper. The newspaper articles through the actions of its writers and editors is engaged in a particular form of social construction of reality, actively engaged in creating the story of the nation and why it needs to be liberated from colonial rule. Drawing from the insights of Berger and Luckmann (1966), the newspaper is written by active agents engaged and committed to the liberation of Puerto Rico. Nations and nationalisms and gender and nations are social relations that are imbued with symbolically constructed meaning. To understand the discourses of this particular set of texts, this interpretive methodology provided the best

tool for the analysis of women's roles in nationalism. Nations are imagined communities or cultural artifacts (Anderson 1983), thus this study sought to understand the role of women in Puerto Rican nationalism using an interpretive, social constructionist methodology.

By tracing women's roles in nationalism, I examined the assertion that all nationalisms are gendered to show the manner in which gender and nation intersects through women's roles in a specific historical context (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Yuval-Davis 1997). The study of nationalism and feminism in Puerto Rico can shed light on the study of collective identity as a central field of study within modern sociological inquiry (Cerulo 1997).

Method and Materials

Methods and materials will be discussed in this section to explain the techniques for research and the materials collected for analysis. I begin with a description of *Claridad* as a social artifact for research, and then elaborate on content analysis as the key technique for research. After discussing the rationale for conducting content analysis, I present other materials and observations that help me inform and contextualize my analysis. I then move to a discussion of the coding and analysis of the content of *Claridad*. I conclude this section with a reflection on the limitations of the technique for research.

This study is based on content analysis of 769 newspaper articles published during the 1980 to 2006 period from the *Claridad* newspaper. The data for analysis

reflects the 25.25 years of coverage from the situated-knowledge of independence nationalism. The documents for analysis consisted of newspaper articles, published interviews with public intellectuals, and historical research of primary documents of the independence movement that included speeches, documentaries about the independence struggle, and interviews with political prisoners, and visits to historical sites where monuments and museums have been built to commemorate the independence struggle.

Claridad as a Social Artifact

Claridad is a social artifact that reports the news and “disseminates information that people want, need, and should know” (Tuchman 1978). I selected this newspaper because through its process of dissemination of information, the newspaper circulates and structures the social construction of knowledge of the nationalist project. *Claridad*, “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation,” began in June 1959. Awilda Paláu Suárez (1992:83) reported that it was initially a mimeograph internal bulletin consisting of six pages and measuring 22 x 28 centimeters of the *Pro-Independence Movement* (Movement Pro-Independence). This informational artifact linked the movement members to the nation by providing an interpretation of the colonial situation of Puerto Rico. The paper also operated as an educational tool and as an instrument of patriotic organization for the liberation of Puerto Rico. Through information, education, and organizational calls, the newspaper aimed to organize the independence sectors into a global movement facilitating the independence of Puerto Rico (Paláu Suárez 1992).

Paláu Suárez's (1992) seminal analysis showed the importance of placing the newspaper in the historical context of the independence movement, its competing strands or factions, and the intense lobbying of the United Nations (UN) for the inclusion of the Puerto Rico case in the agenda of the UN General Assembly. From its inception *Claridad* has had as a specific agenda, the liberation of the Puerto Rican nation from U.S. hegemony and colonial control. Bridging the different sectors of the independence movement, the newspaper has advocated social cohesion through shared information from different sectors of the independence movement. It has also addressed the fragmentation of the movement and has generated a public discourse for the discussion of independence in Puerto Rico. The newspaper's agenda influenced the reporting of the news by turning topics into "publicly discussable events" (Tuchman 1978). In this sense, the newspaper created a context for the nation as an imagined community seeking liberation, but more importantly the imagining of the nation as sovereign (Lomnitz 2000; Miller 2006). The study of the social construction of the nation of *Claridad* required an interpretive methodology and method to describe and analyze how that process of construction has occurred in Puerto Rico and what roles women play in this type of nationalism.

My intent is to clarify the social construction of nationalism in *Claridad* and how that specific notion of independence nationalism constructs, includes and/or excludes women and gender. The feminist critique of nationalist categories provides tools for inquiry into the construction of the relationship between nation and gender during the period from 1980 to 2006. The roles or frames for women in nationalism serve as

heuristic devices to guide the analysis of the presentation of Puerto Rican feminist nationalism and the extent to which it elaborates an independence nationalist standpoint seeking the liberation of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule.

Claridad has framed a constant way of speaking – always from the perspective of independence and national sovereignty. Speaking about nationalism in the Puerto Rican context requires explicit attention to gender to clarify what roles, if any, women (and men) have played in the nation. Exploring the national question in Puerto Rico through the material in *Claridad* will detail insights into how nations and nationalism have been not only represented but also studied in the island. This coverage offers views of how women and gender have been represented in the social scientific and historical study of nationalism in Puerto Rico and the extent to which women's roles in nationalism as portrayed in *Claridad* reflect the important ideas in the account of theory I have presented. The interpretive approach to methodology using content analysis will assist my intent to document feminist nationalism in Puerto Rico drawing from the insights of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) on the roles of women in nationalism.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a widely used and well-established method in sociology for studying the significance of cultural products (Martineau [1838] 1988; Reinharz 1992; Weitz 1977). Content analysis as a strategy for examining text may involve both quantitative and qualitative procedures (Weber 1990). Texts for content analysis might include textbooks, letters, newspapers, and various other forms of communication

(Babbie 2004). The history of sociology has revealed a long-standing interest in the study of texts. For example, feminist social scientists have documented the value of studying the cultural artifacts left behind by human beings because the documents or “things” embody the ideas, themes, and values of the historical period (Reinharz 1992; Weitz 1977).

In an overview of feminist content analysis, Reinharz (1992) reminded us that content analysis was advocated by one of the founders of sociology, Harriet Martineau. In what is perhaps the first qualitative research methodology book entitled *How to Study Moral and Manners*, Martineau ([1838] 1988) stated:

To arrive at the facts of the condition of a people through the discourse of individuals, is a hopeless enterprise. . . . The grand secret of wise inquiry into Morals and Manners is to begin with the study of THINGS, using the DISCOURSE OF PERSONS as a commentary upon them” (cited in Reinharz 1992: 145; capitalization in the original).

The study of “things” or cultural artifacts is central to locating the life of a group and its cultural products in the history and social milieu of the specific society. Mills (1959) noted that biography and history intersect in society; thus, the newspaper’s articles chronicle aspects of the Puerto Rican experience.

Consequently, I applied content analysis as a procedure for systematically describing and analyzing content in the newspaper *Claridad*. As a technique, I applied it to newspaper articles to analyze the meaning of nationalism and to reveal women’s roles in nationalism. I also applied content analysis to the structure of the coverage by counting the amount of coverage, the geography of coverage, and the representation of coverage. I

then set out a strategy for coding the content of the articles by asking questions about women's roles in nationalism as advanced by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989).

The articles in the newspaper were written by what I call "public intellectuals" and defined as the authors of articles in the newspaper that portray the discourses of nationalism and women's roles in feminism and nationalism. I traced women's roles in nationalism and the shifts in the discourses of nationalism and feminism. I identified key topics and themes in the discourse that can be constructed as independence nationalism, and observed an emergent Puerto Rican feminist nationalism. More importantly, I documented women's roles in nationalism through the analysis of the depiction of the spirit of the time, its assumptions, and definitions of social reality.

Once key articles were identified over a research period spanning five years of library work, I coded each article to determine the themes associated with feminism and nationalism, and then set out to discover women's roles in nationalism. The coding scheme followed general principles associated with content analysis, especially amount of pages, location of coverage, and content of the coverage (see for example, Hall 1988 on women; Bryant-Serrano 2003; Dennick-Brecht 1993; Shaw-Taylor and Benokraitis 1995; Stone 1996 on people of color; Taub and Fanflik 2000 on persons with disabilities). Content analyses revealed that women and minorities are generally ghettoized and relegated to certain topics, areas of study, and represented in particular ways.

Thus, consistent with the sociological literature, I set out to examine: the *amount of coverage*, the *geography of coverage*, and the *representation of coverage* (Bryant-

Serrano 2003). The *amount of coverage* refers to the total number of articles addressing or covering nationalism and feminism in the newspapers. Articles were counted only once. The *geography of coverage* refers to the spatial location of the coverage across topical areas linking Puerto Rican feminism and nationalism. Topics were separated by topic and counted only once. This measure also included determining the location of the content across the newspaper by month and year.

Finally, the *representation of coverage* refers to broad categories for coding the articles and thick-description and analysis. Using a grounded in-depth reading and analysis of the articles, I identified key topical areas for each broad category. This aspect involved coding the articles for content. I then examined the five ways in which Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) see women's roles in nationalism, while bearing in mind the possibility of competing nationalisms, not just independence nationalism.

Sample of Articles

The articles for content analysis were identified by conducting numerous searches of newspaper databases in libraries in Puerto Rico and by identifying, searching, and using key words, during the period of 1980 to March 2006. Initially, I examined three specific dates around which to select articles: March 8, July 25, and September 23. First, I located articles published during the month of March. March is Women's History Month, including International Women's Day, March 8, a day long associated with the socialist movement internationally. International Women's Day was influenced by a New

York City demonstration on March 8, 1857 by women in the garment and textile industry (Zophy 1990:287). At the time, women protested low wages, the twelve-hour workday, and unpaid workloads. In Puerto Rico, International Women's Day has an established tradition since 1909 due to the involvement of Puerto Rican women in the labor movement, while in the U.S. mainland the celebration began much later in 1967 (Zophy 1990:287).

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued a Presidential Message to the American people promoting the celebration of women's historic efforts during the week of March 8. By 1987, at the request of women's organizations and various other groups, the National Women's History Project lobbied Congress and succeeded in having a resolution passed to declare March as National Women's History Month (National Women's History Project [NWHP] 2003). A Presidential Proclamation has supported the directive since 1992. Puerto Rican feminists and scholars celebrate this week with various educational and informational activities.

Second, I located articles published during the month of July. On July 25, 1952, Puerto Rico officially became a Free Associated State or Commonwealth, a marker of Puerto Rico's colonial context, highly structured by nationalist sentiments in Puerto Rico that celebrate the constitution and everything Puerto Rican – the flag, the national anthem, and local athletes. During the month of July, all political parties also voiced their views about the ambivalent relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico as a colony, a commonwealth, or as potentially independent nation-state. The celebrations leading to July 25 reminded us that Puerto Ricans are “integrated but not assimilated,

part of but not of the United States, U.S. citizens by law but Puerto Ricans first – these are the tensions and contradictions that permeate [Puerto Rican] society at all levels” (James Dietz’s *Economic History* cited in Guerra 1998:4; italics in the original).

Lastly, I searched for articles during the month of September as September 23 commemorates the *Lares* Shout, the first armed rebellion seeking the liberation of Puerto Rico from Spanish colonial rule, and considered among nationalists the point of origin of the nation. While I expected that focusing on twenty-five years of coverage and zeroing in these three key months would yield sufficient material for content analysis, I expanded the month-long sampling frames to include all articles published on feminism and nationalism during the period of 1980 to March 2006. I found that the three months yielded “insignificant” actual levels of coverage of women and gender issues. While the limited coverage identified during this period reflected the feminist critique of nations and nationalism that nationalism and its discourses rendered invisible and excluded women from the nation.

Then I created a list of topics associated with feminism and nationalism to operationalize the concepts using key words. I used these key words to find articles and also kept in mind the possibility of adding other key words as I began to identify articles. Among those key words were:

- Woman (mujer)
- Women (mujeres),
- Women’s movement (movimiento de mujeres),
- Feminist (feminista),

- Feminists (feministas),
- Feminism (feminismo),
- Nation (nación),
- Nationalism (nacionalismo),
- *Puertorriqueña* or *Puertorriqueño* (Puerto Rican woman or man),
- Sexism (sexismo),
- Citizenship (ciudadanía),
- Sovereignty (soberanía),
- Gender (género)
- Domestic violence (violencia doméstica)
- Flag (bandera)
- Vieques
- Sports
- Diaspora
- Political prisoners
- Institutions
- Hombre (man) or Hombres (men)
- Language (lenguaje)
- Sexism

I describe the sample of articles in Table 1 and summarize the amount of coverage or the total number of articles that included women during the 1980 to March 2006 period.

Table 1. *Claridad* Sample Description

Amount and Time Frame of Coverage	Expanded Information	Results
Total Number of Years	(1980 to March 2006)	25.25
Total Number of Pages for Years Covered	(48 pages per publication*)	63,024
Total Number of Articles		769**
Total Number of Pages		950
Percentage of Page Coverage		1.5%

* Palau Suárez (1992: 103)
 ** See Appendix A for complete list of all articles

This study spanned a total of 25.25 years for a grand total of 63, 024 possible pages of coverage. The figure of 63,024 pages emerged using calculations of total pages per edition provided in the seminal study of Paláu Suárez (1992). It is estimated, based on Paláu Suárez (1992) calculations, that each edition has been standardized to 48 pages. This standardization stemmed from the acquisition of a technological device, namely the printing press that structures the number of pages to 48. By technological design each edition of *Claridad* included 48 pages. After tallying the results for all the identified articles about women, *Claridad* coverage of women in nationalism consisted of only 1.5 percent of coverage after I calculated the length of each article by tallying the number of pages of each article. The sample of 769 articles yielded a total of 950 pages of coverage because some pages had more than one article in it.

If all nationalisms are gendered, then this minuscule coverage of women and gender reveals women's invisibility in matters of the Puerto Rican nation, a finding consistent with the theoretical literature that women are usually absent and/or invisible in the discourses of nationalism.

Additionally, when newspaper coverage was examined in detail, I found that the coverage of women in nationalism has increased overtime (see Figure 1).

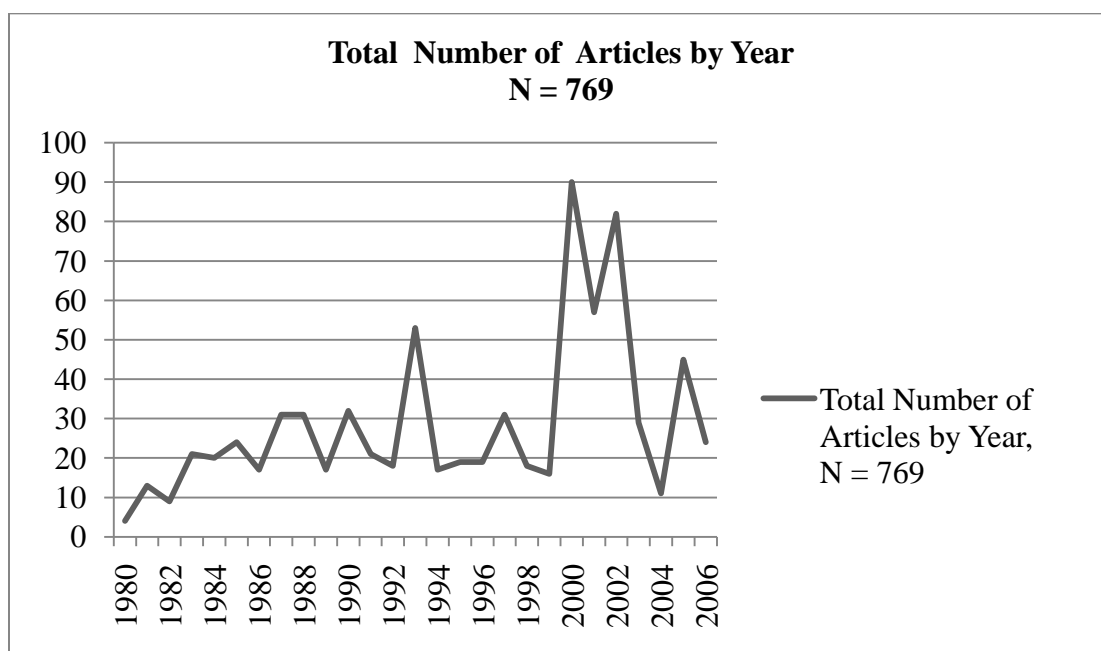


Figure 1: Total Number of Articles by Year, 1980 to 2006

Specifically, the 1980s produced the lowest level of coverage with a marked increase culminating in the new millennium. Consistent with the rise of women's movements and activism throughout the world, the case study of Puerto Rico using newspaper coverage as an indicator showed marked increases of coverage during the

years 1993, 2000, 2002, and 2005 or with the new millennium the most dramatic increase of coverage occurred. In Puerto Rico, the beginning of the twenty-first century saw a dramatic increase in coverage of women's issues and their interconnection with nationalism even if the coverage occurred in the context of a 1.5 percent of coverage for the study's time frame of 25.25 years.

Figure 2 detailed the distribution of articles by decade for the study period.

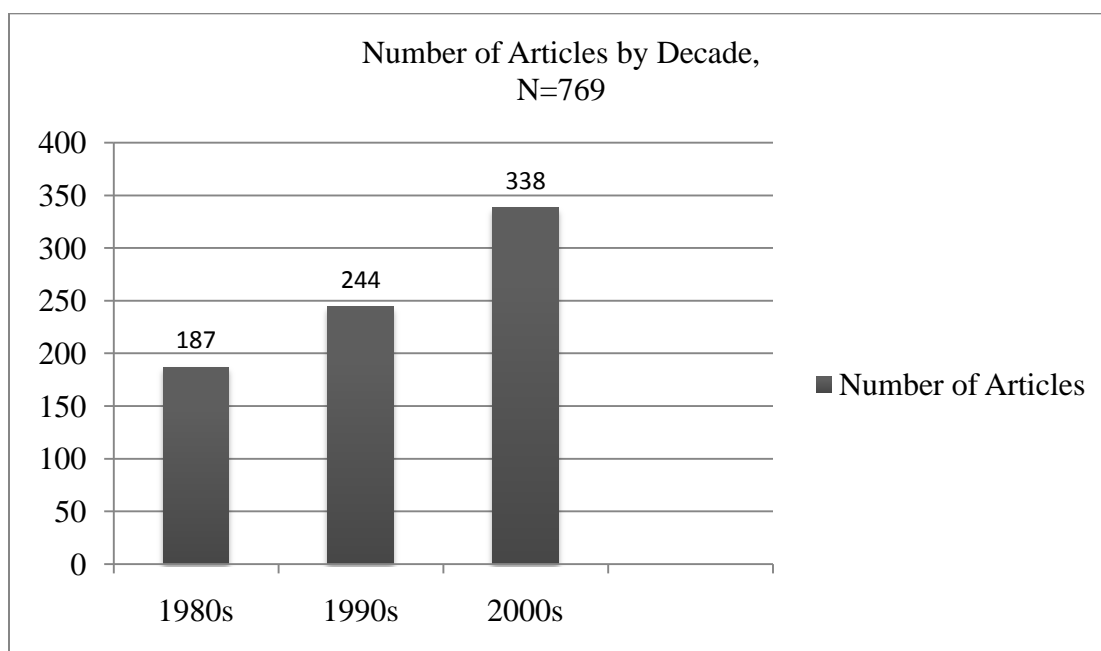


Figure 2: Total Number of Articles by Decade, 1980 to 2006

The 1980s saw the smallest amount of coverage with 187 articles, followed by a steady increase in the 1990s with 244 articles and ending in the new millennium's first six years with 338 articles. This steady increase points to the heightened significance of women's activism in Puerto Rico, Latin America and the rest of the world. The increases in

coverage beginning in the 1990s could be attributed to the international activism associated with U.N. conferences and meetings.

Claridad coverage ghettoized women to some extent in the month of March as 45 percent of the coverage occurred during that month (see Figure 3).

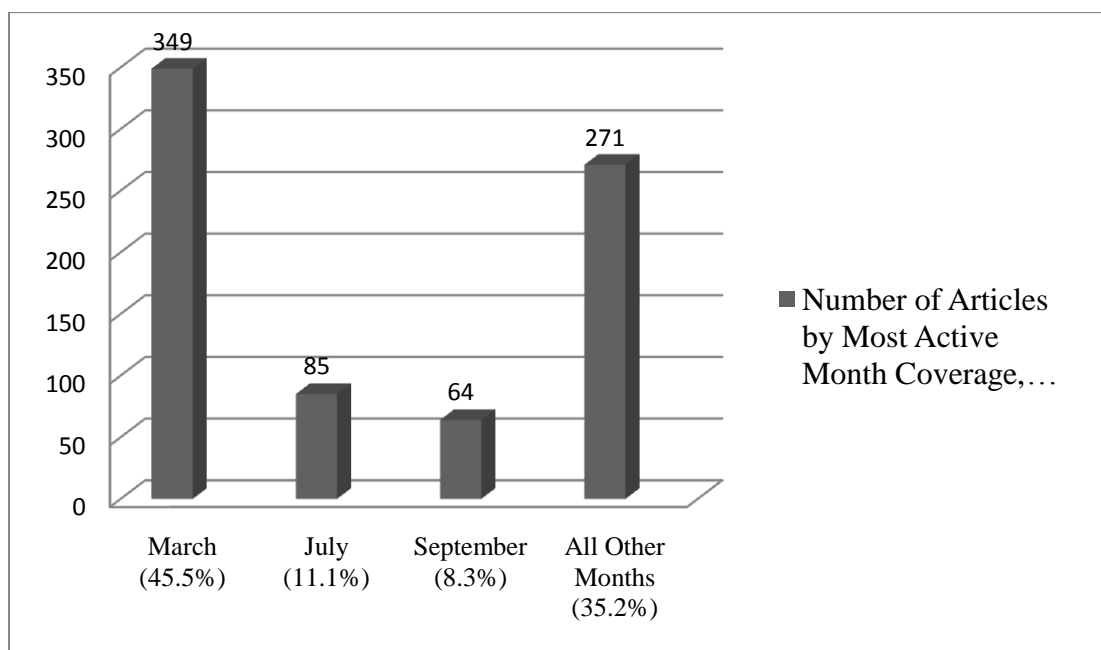


Figure 3: Number of Articles by Months of Coverage, 1980 to 2006

Literally, March is “Puerto Rican Women’s History Month” or “Puerto Rican Women’s National Month.” Specifically, the tally of articles by month found that 349 or 45 percent of the articles appeared during March. In some ways, the national and international celebration of International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month more generally is reflected in the coverage documented by this study. It was notable that most coverage clustered around the month of March and as expected yielded more

articles about women; additionally, the month of March also commemorates many of the key events associated with the nationalist movement in Puerto Rico (the *Ponce* Massacre and the attack on Congress). This month offered a context from which to remember the symbols of the nation such as Lolita Lebrón and her deeds as a martyr and as a political prisoner. Puerto Rican nationalism and women's coverage intersect during the month of March and its various important events marked the rise and commemoration of nationalist activism and history in Puerto Rico.

The month of September had coverage of women, but not as significant, 64 articles were published during that period. The month of September is central for the commemoration of nationalist activism and history because of the Shout of *Lares*, a central event marking the origin of Puerto Rican nationalist activism. This revolt embodied the first act of national liberation in the collective consciousness of Puerto Ricans demanding the liberation from Spaniard colonialism.

This section presented a description of the sample of 769 articles comprising 950 pages or 1.5 percentage of total number of possible pages (see Table 1). This sample description revealed increased coverage during the period 1980 to 2006, and especially during the years 1993, 2000, 2002, and 2005, and over time by decades (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The month of March had the highest number of articles with 45 percent of the coverage and September had the lowest amount of articles with 8.3 percent of the coverage.

Other Materials and Observations

Content analysis was triangulated with published interviews with prominent public intellectuals who are observers and commentators about the Puerto Rican experience. Often they have also participated in independence activism. The activity of public intellectuals fosters involvement in the operation of society and the nation through their commentary. I defined as public intellectuals or those members of society who either study and/or write about Puerto Rican society, and who have had first-hand experience with forms of independence and/or women's activism.

I reviewed transcripts of published interviews with public intellectuals that included political prisoners, three documentaries that interviewed the key leaders and intellectuals of the independence movement in Puerto Rico, and documentaries that traced the rise of *Claridad* and the musical festival designed for fund-raising and activism. I also reviewed interviews with feminists that were published in book format and/or interviews published in the newspaper. I also consulted interviews with prominent intellectuals that have documented the history, culture, and society in Puerto Rico. I also read the life histories of three political prisoners that were published in book form. All of these interviews are part of the public domain and the sources are fully transcribed for public consumption.

The purpose of reviewing these interviews with public intellectuals or observers of Puerto Rican society was to clarify issues about nationalism, expose any errors in my analysis of women's roles in nationalism, and to draw attention to those areas that I highlighted as central to independence nationalism and to the feminist critique of nations

and nationalisms. As shapers and creators of meaning, these public intellectuals assisted me with the clarification process of how the ideology of independence nationalism and feminist nationalism has evolved in the newspaper coverage. These interviews informed the process of revealing the discourses of independence nationalism and centrally important, women's roles in nationalism. I examined their discourses of independence to corroborate facts, to understand their ideological assumptions, and to give voice to those excluded or relegated to the sidelines of nationalism and history by making the discourses visible.

By examining these published documents, I was able to evaluate the link between independence nationalism and women's roles in nationalism. This corroborating evidence improved the validity of the content analysis by supplementing the analysis, and by enhanced reliability or the possibility of replication. These public intellectuals included women who were independence activists, feminists, and/or both. These public intellectuals followed a perspective of social, economic, cultural, and political changes in Puerto Rican society. The public intellectuals, for the most part, have completed advanced degrees in the field of social sciences, the humanities, and law. The authors of the newspaper articles were also treated as public intellectuals who write the story of the nation through their publications. Thus, I relied on the knowledge of public intellectuals to validate answers to the research questions posed by this study, to cross-check findings, and to contextualize and evaluate the theoretical model of women's roles in nationalism.

Content analysis was also supplemented through an extensive review of the historical record using the prism of independence. I visited museums, monuments,

libraries, and research centers. I read documents written by the leader of the 1950 revolt, Blanca Canales. I read a collection of documents of the independence movement, including a statement from the clandestine organization *Los Macheteros* (The Cane Cutters), and a transcript of a speech given by Carmen Rivera de Alvarado about women's roles in nationalism (See Appendix).

I supplemented the historical record with visits to the historical sites invoked in the history of independence nationalism. I visited the municipalities of *Lares*, *Añasco*, *Ponce*, *San Juan*, *Jayuya*, *Río Piedras*, and others to witness and explore the feel for the nation. Of particular significance were several visits to the *camposanto* (cemetery) where many of the patriots commemorated by the independence movement are buried. By visiting the monuments and the sites of the independence struggle, I gained a better understanding of the process of commemoration and the social construction of the nation and gender.

I also listened to the music genre known as *nueva trova* (new song), a musical form that is central to the nationalist and independence ideology of the nation. The music focuses on themes of national liberation, national identity, and traces many of the stories central to Puerto Rican nationalism. I also visited a local restaurant called, "*The Patriot*," that has an impressive collection of independence artifacts, including flags, photos of leaders, and other items.

Informed by the theory of nations and nationalism and the feminist critique of nationalisms, I have strengthened the research design for data collection by using "multiple sources, methods, perspectives, and observers" (Denzin 1989:177; see also

Denzin 1994). Using these varied sources and approaches, I set out to uncover women's roles in Puerto Rican independence nationalism. Informed by the insights of Denzin (1989), my task as a sociologist was to record the theory or explanation of those one studies and by using Martineau's called for the study of things or the artifacts that the independence movement has left behind. I assumed, drawing from the insights of Denzin (1989), that "persons in the social world already have a theory that guides and directs their behavior" (P.177). My task as a sociologist was to listen to *Claridad*, to read it, and to write and analyze the independence discourse of the Puerto Rican nation to excavate the roles of Puerto Rican women in independence nationalism and the possibility of transformation embedded in that discourse for gender justice.

Coding and Analysis

Guided by the theoretical and historical literature review, I coded the 769 newspaper articles into four broad categories and summarized in Table 2. These categories consisted of: women worthies, feminism and women's activism; nationalism and nation; social institutions; and social problems. I wanted to compare the amount of attention given to nationalism and feminism and to determine what institutions and social problems are addressed when discussing women's roles. I assumed that a focus on these two movements, nationalism and feminism and a focus on social institutions and social problems would shed light on the type of society advocated by nationalist project and of women's roles in that society. These categories operated as heuristic devices to organize

the articles into a meaningful structure informed by the literature review and history of nations and nationalisms and women's roles in the discourses.

First, the category "women worthies and activism" consisted of seven sub-categories including: activism and global encounters; feminism; profiles of Puerto Rican women; profiles of international women's issues by country; March 8; women's history; and women's rights. Second, for the broad category of "nationalism and nations," I coded articles into the following nine sub-topics: flags; Grito de *Lares* of 1868; Nationalist Revolt of 1950; *Ponce* Massacre; political prisoners; Puertorriqueñidad/nation; sports; and Vieques. Third, for the broad category "social institutions," I created nine sub-categories including: arts; films; economy and work; education; families; health; mass media; politics; and religion. Fourth and final, for the broad category of "social problems" which I later describe as "social issues," I coded articles into five sub-categories including the following topics: domestic violence; abortion, population control and birth control; sexual harassment; sexuality; and diaspora and migration.

These coded data showed that coverage of women in nationalism clustered around certain key topics and events, but overall the coverage is limited. In the category of women's worthies, feminism and women's activism the focus is on the "essential" women, famous figures and icons and coverage of international activism. In this category, profiles of Puerto Rican women and international women's issues yielded the highest coverage. The articles about international women and issues suggested that the paper used women from other regions of the world as proxies or as substitutes for Puerto Rican women's content.

Table 2. Distribution of Frequencies by Topic and Percentage	
TOPIC	NUMBER OF ARTICLES
Women Worthies and Activism (38%)	
Activism and Global Encounters	30
Feminism	24
Profiles of Puerto Rican Women	98
Profiles of International Women's Issues by Country	65
8-Mar	47
Women's History	4
Women's Rights	22
	290
Nationalism and Nation (31%)	
Flag	17
Grito de Lares of 1868	9
Language	20
Nationalist Revolt of 1950	9
Massacre of Ponce	5
Political Prisoners	52
Puertorriqueñidad/nation	65
Sports	30
Vieques	29
	236
Social Institutions (18%)	
Arts	24
Film	19
Economy and Work	37
Education	11
Families	5
Health	11
Mass Media	11
Politics	5
Religion	17
	140
Social Problems (13%)	
Domestic Violence	39
Abortion, Population Control and Birth Control	20
Sexual Harassment	6
Sexuality	15
Diaspora and Migration	23
	103
Total Number of Articles N=	769

This category of women worthies and women's activism yielded 38 percent of coverage.

For the nationalism and nation category, the articles centered on national identity or Puertorriqueñidad and political prisoners and there was limited coverage of historical events such as the massacre or the revolts. Flag, language, sports and Vieques were included in the coverage. The category nationalism and nation yielded 31 percent of the coverage. Among the key elements of nationalism, *Claridad* provided coverage of key icons of nationalism such as political prisoners and activists. These key elements represent the classification criteria for nationhood including a sense of shared territory, language, flag, heroines and martyrs plus a sense of nation as represented in the ongoing concern for Vieques, with less focus on the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States.

The coverage of the diaspora in the United States' mainland will become more prominent in the discussion of independence nationalism and women's roles in it. Interestingly, through analysis of independence nationalism, it will become evident that the focus on the nation follows a path of concern for the island with the role of women political prisoners emerging as central part of the diaspora. In turn, this apparent limited exclusion perhaps represented certain ideas about what or who constitutes a member of the Puerto Rican nation.

Other topics featured in the coverage were social institutions such as the arts, films, education, health, family, mass media, politics, and religion. Institutions represented 18 percent of the coverage. Social problems were the other category articles clustering around domestic violence, abortion and birth control, and diaspora and migration. The debate over abortion and the epidemic proportions of domestic violence in

Puerto Rico were covered. Migration and rise of the diaspora is also receiving increasing coverage along with sexuality and the rights of sexual minorities. Societal institutions and social problems are central aspects of nation-building. Social institutions have represented clusters of values, norms, and beliefs organized to meet specific needs of the society. The coverage of social institutions and social problems can be analyzed in various ways. For instance, women's roles in nationalism are not central, women's roles in nationalism occurred in the discussion of the feminist and global women's movement and that in terms of social institutions and social problems women contributed or represented a minuscule portion of the concerns of the nation. Whatever the nationalist project is about, women do not figure prominently in it. At the same time, based on the literature review women are invisible in the nationalist project of nations. However, the increasing coverage of women's issues may in fact create the social conditions for the feminist nationalist project. This feminist nationalist project will examine the 290 articles on feminism and women's activism and 243 articles on social institutions and social problems.

After coding content about women by topic, my analysis investigated women's roles in nationalism. By contextualizing women's roles in the broad categories of analysis (see Table 2), I examined women's roles in nationalism using the five roles assigned to women in nationalism according to Anthias and Yuval-Davis' (1989) typology of roles. I highlighted key issues, key figures or characters included in the coverage to provide an empirical indicator of women's roles in nationalism. First, for the 236 articles on nationalism and nation, I analyzed the coverage of independence nationalism using the

insights of the theoretical review about the meaning of nationalism. Since nationalism is a way of speaking or a rhetorical device or discourse, I traced the discourse by contextualizing nationalism and women's roles, the constructing and imagining the Nation, the commemoration of colonialism, and the axis of nationalist commemoration (creating, repressing, and revolting the nation against oppression and repression). I then moved to examining the role of martyrdom as the ultimate sacrifice for the nation and the women's roles as political prisoners and active participants in national struggles, tracing some of its key "real women" of flesh and blood, the symbols of the nation, including Blanca Canales Torresola, Lolita Lebrón, and Providencia "Pupa" Traval. I discovered that there are two waves of political prisoners, the icons of nationalism and the newer ones, who now represent a sample of Puerto-Rican identity and the centrality of the diaspora in the story of the political prisoners as the martyrs of the nation.

To weave the content analysis in a meaningful structure that uses Anthias and Yuval-Davis' (1989) heuristic device of women's roles in nationalism, I present my findings in four key chapters. I begin with Chapter 5 where I analyze the discourse of independence nationalism tracing its key features, while also asking questions about the women's roles in nationalism. In Chapter 6, I discuss women's history and women worthies for the commemoration of the nation. In Chapter 7, I examine the discourse of feminist nationalism as an emergent counter-hegemonic discourse that is redefining the independence nationalist project. I conclude with Chapter 8 where I elucidate the nationalist construction of women and social issues in institutions. In each chapter, I present the findings and cite articles and other documents to show the discourses of

nationalisms. I cite and reference articles where appropriate, but do not include all 769 articles in the narrative because as Table 2 shows, there are key themes and issues that provide theoretical insight into the construction of women's roles in nationalism.

Thus my analysis of women's roles in nationalism is guided by questions such as: What is the meaning of independence nationalism? What are women's roles in nationalism: biological reproducers of the members of the national collectivities; women as reproducers of boundaries of national groups; women as transmitters and producers of national culture; women as symbolic signifiers of national difference; and/or women as active participants in national struggles? For women's roles in nationalism, who are the key representatives or symbols? When social issues and institutions are addressed, what are women's roles in those institutions for the process of nation-building?

Limitations of the Study

Content analysis is an inexpensive, unobtrusive research method that has inherent limitations associated with the interpretive process of understanding social and cultural meaning. My interpretive approach to methodology using content analysis reiterates the problematic of meaning construction through research. Following an interpretive approach that draws from assumptions about standpoint epistemology, I am reminded of Sprague's (2005:51) assertion that "standpoint theory calls us to ask if there is something systematic and social to the nature of biases in knowledge." My perspective is always situated and partial as all forms of knowledge are situated and partial.

My emphasis on the social construction of discourse and meaning also leaves my analysis open to criticism for “constructing” knowledge using models developed in the “West.” However, for me knowledge is a resource that can be use to transform structures of power and create new projects for improving people’s lives. I only claim to have produced a dissertation from my limited social knowledge and social position as a Puerto Rican woman who also studied and understands to some extent the complexities of feminist research and sociological analysis. All experiences are open-texts for interpretations, but these interpretations are not relative as all interpretations, including mine, have consequences for people’s lives. My analysis here is partial but informed by the documents of the independence movement as exemplified in *Claridad*.

Thus, content analysis can tell us about the cultural reality of the time, but it cannot reveal with certainty the intentions of those who wrote the articles neither the editorial decisions of the publishers of the newspaper. Similarly, its unobtrusiveness facilitates the documentation of historical patterns and changes, and it enhances reliability as the content of the articles and availability cannot be changed by the researcher. All sources are readily available in the public domain or can be located at libraries that specialize in the Puerto Rican experience.

Generally, content analysis is a descriptive research method, but description can be enhanced by a careful review of the relevant theory about nations and nationalism and gender and nation. Because I focused on the documents of the independence nationalist movement in Puerto Rico as embodied in the newspaper *Claridad*, I feel confident that I have produced an account of the discourses of the nationalist movement from the

situated-knowledge of this strand of nationalism. Nationalism is not a monolithic phenomenon, and as such the independence project offers one particular version of nationalism. Independence nationalism represented one particular historical and cultural discourse about women's roles in the nation. By examining the historical and cultural discourse about women's roles in the nation, I traced emerging definitions of the nation and nationalisms and transformational forms of discourse buried in the discourse of independence nationalism.

The descriptive power of content analysis was strengthened by grounding my research in the historical context of Puerto Rican society (see Chapter 2) and the relevant sociological literature and feminist critique of nations and nationalism (see Chapter 3). By carefully reviewing the historical context and the theoretical literature, I minimized a decontextualized analysis of the independence text. By supplementing content analysis with other materials and observations, I provided a more comprehensive understanding of the newspaper as a social artifact. Specifically, historical documents of the independence movement and archival sources along with field trips to key nationalist sites helped me to corroborate the thematic analysis derived from theory and advanced through the study of the newspaper content (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

Additionally, a few published expert interviews are a small sample from which to offer generalizations about the discourses of social movements and ideologies of feminisms and nationalisms. Yet the expert interviews did address issues about the existence of feminism, nationalism and the impact of double militancy in both types of social movements. This study made a concerted effort to address the limitations of

content analysis as a research strategy by combining multiple methods, and informed by my understanding of Puerto Rico as a researcher who has lived half of my life in Puerto Rico and the other half in the United States.

My interpretive analysis was deeply informed by theory; thus my interpretation relied on the feminist critique of nations and nationalisms to reveal the Puerto Rican feminist nationalism in Puerto Rico. The inherent limitations of an interpretive methodology cannot be fixed, but they can be minimized by careful theoretical analysis and selection of documents and informants. Cresswell (1998) concurred that carefully selected “expert informants” for the purposes of developing a theoretical understanding of a topic can be central to revealing the discourses of independence nationalism and feminism. My proxy for “expert informants” was public intellectuals or the authors of newspaper articles, and the interview with feminists, nationalists, and independence supporters. These materials offered insight that included life histories, documents, songs, and documentaries available in written form; some transcribed and published as primary documents focusing on pressing issues around nationalism and feminism.

Moreover, the use of the independence nationalist newspaper *Claridad* mirrored certain presumptions and assumptions about what is considered newsworthy in Puerto Rico by other types of “informants”, the writers of newspaper articles. Given the pro-independence orientation of the newspaper, I assumed that the content reflects the range of preoccupations in Puerto Rican society on the topic of study at least from the situated knowledge of the pro-independence movement. Published interviews of “informants” that

are carefully selected can uncover the preoccupations of nationalists, feminists and other intellectuals in relation to the relevant content of nationalist discourse in the Island.

The limitations posed by the primary research procedure were minimized by the careful selection of public intellectuals who I treated as expert informants on Puerto Rican society. The insights of these “informants” strengthened the validity of the content analysis of newspaper articles. Furthermore, the empirical sources were also informed by a complex overview of the existing social science literature on feminism and nationalism, and that as far as I know, there is no systematic empirical study of the women’s roles in nationalism from an independence perspective in Puerto Rico. This study may potentially contribute to our understanding of Puerto Rican feminism and nationalism, filling a gap with empirical analysis. Simultaneously, independence nationalist activism in its multiple variants has created a history of dissent that has been repressed by the state regardless of whether individuals were intellectuals, icons, or everyday Puerto Ricans on the street. As a woman sociologist who is also Puerto Rican, I analyzed the documents left behind by the independence nationalist project and have in no way posed harm to those who have historically produced these artifacts; yet I am deeply aware of the consequences of their deeds and sacrifices for what independence supporters envisioned for Puerto Rican society. Unsurprisingly, given the political nature of the study of nationalism and feminism, I opted for content analysis, expert interviews, and historical and field visits for this investigation. An interpretive approach to methodology reiterates the importance to examining the material realities of people’s lives through the study of the artifacts that

embody a sense of transformation and hope for the future of Puerto Rican society and the women (and men) of the nation in their varied social locations in historical context.

CHAPTER 5
THE MASCULINE PROJECT
OF INDEPENDENCE NATIONALISM

The theoretical framework advanced by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) claims that women's roles in nationalism are complex and varied, and that women play roles as the biological mothers of the nation, the socializers or transmitters of national culture, the reproducers of boundaries or border guards, the symbols of the nation, and as the participants in nationalist struggles. This framework although useful for the initial stages of empirical research may actually limit analysis of women's roles in nationalism because it conflates gender with women. Instead, in the case of Puerto Rico and independence nationalism women are definitely participants in nationalist struggles and to some extent the symbols of the nation, but women in Puerto Rican independence nationalism are primarily political prisoners and combatants, who are honorary men, sacrificing their lives and freedom on behalf of the nation.

Contrary to the claim that women are the mothers, socializers, transmitters, reproducers, and to a lesser extent the symbols of the nation, independence nationalism is a masculinist project whereby women play roles as political prisoners as "women with

arms.” I argue that independence nationalism evokes a military image of women as combatants against colonial oppression, symbolically reproducing a political and militarized masculinity for women who like men, sacrifice on behalf of the nation. The representation of women as political prisoners challenges the proper for roles for women reportedly identified by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) as “mothers of the nation,” a prevalent argument in the feminist critique of nations and nationalisms.

This chapter is a feminist examination of women’s roles in independence nationalism. I begin this discussion by tracing the masculinist project of independence as both a goal of sovereignty and an ideology of a collective movement to obtain the independence of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial control. In the process, I will elucidate women’s “manly” roles in the social construction of the nation through the discussion of three national icons, Blanca Canales, Lolita Lebrón, and Providencia “Pupa” Traval. Carving the story of the nation, I will show that the discourses of *Claridad* draw from specific images of patriots, historical events, symbols and icons, to define the essential role of women as political prisoners, inscribing nationality in Puerto Rico and to a minimal extent to the diaspora. The Puerto Rican nation’s representation emerges embodied in these specific narratives about masculinity shaping the meaning of the nation and its liberation from U.S. control and rule.

By tracing the masculinist project of independence nationalism, I reveal the gender prescriptions and proscriptions about the meaning of nationalism and the proper roles of women for the symbolic commemoration and representation of the nation. Indeed, to be included in the nation, one must embrace the independence ideology as

discourse, while at the same time this discourse defines women through a masculinist hegemonic depiction of women as political prisoners and men as the mastermind of the subversive activity or as valiant martyrs killed by the brutal force of the masculine state.

The discourse of independence nationalism includes women in specific militant, masculinist gender roles and these women's roles underscore normative prescriptions for women in independence nationalism. This discourse requires that the intersection between gender and nation in the Puerto Rican nationalist project be made explicit to show that the discourse privileges a monolithic definition of nationalism as independence nationalism, expecting women to be like men. Women are expected to be sacrificial, through death and denial of liberty, and women became essential because they served extensive jail time. Emphasizing the monolithic notion of independence nationalism, the discourses of the nation consisted of specific versions of the loyalty and struggle for the manly nation. By documenting the struggles and aspirations for a sovereign nation and pointing to the injustices committed against the political prisoners, the Puerto Rican nation is given voice (Meneses 2002).¹ The national voice is always contextualized in the rhetoric and discourses of independence, and represented as indicators of women's active participation in the struggle.

¹ Appendix A lists all of the 769 articles identified in the content analysis. All topics are listed in Table 2. I cited examples in the narrative, when appropriate, to illustrate my argument and documented the articles in the references.

Contextualizing Women's Roles in *Claridad*

The context for the construction of women's roles in nationalism is the nationalist newspaper founded in 1959 called *Claridad* that defined itself as the “muro de contención” (a structural support) for the independence movement in Puerto Rico (Mari Brás 1991). The notion of structural support carries the connotation of masculine protection; while the reader is reminded that historically the newspaper has also endured and survived violent attacks to its headquarters for over fifty-years of publication (Mari Brás 1991). The newspaper's responsibility has been to urge *Boricuas* (Puerto Ricans) to defend what is rightfully theirs, the nation. The call to defend the nation and the national language has figured prominently for the production and reproduction of the nation, bringing forth certain roles for men and women in the nation. *Claridad's* role as the ideological structure of independence nationalism was corroborated in the documentary produced by Brown (1995) entitled *Yo Protesto: Roy Brown y sus Amigos (I Protest: Roy Brown and Friends)*. The paper plays a significant function in documenting dissent by systematically and consistently critiquing and inquiring about the colonial and neo-colonial status of Puerto Rico. For women who have supported the independence goal and ideology, they gained the descriptor of *mujeres imprescindibles* (“essential women”). Women and men nationalists have played a significant role in the investigative reporting of the paper. The newspaper's headquarters has been the targets of repressive attacks, bombings, surveillance, intimidation, and limited funding, but women have remained resilient and have continued to produce the newspaper. Women were said to personify the *claridad* (clarity) of *Claridad* (Monclova Vázquez 1993:33). Essentially women advocate

for the liberation of Puerto Rico from colonial rule and are resilient in their support for independence.

Once the debate over the origin of the Puerto Rican nation is established in the context of the newspaper, most of the coverage took-for-granted the national origin myth, and emphasized the process of struggle to build a nation through the acts and deeds of great patriots. Most of the coverage proceeds to show what Cerulo (1995) named the “sounds and sights” of the nation from the situated standpoint of the nationalist project: key historical events, prominent figures, the flag, territorial integrity, sports, and women’s roles in nationalism. The newspaper constructed, imagined, and commemorated the nation by contextualizing it in the context of struggle for independence and in the symbolic struggle for the meaning of the nation.

Commemorating the History of Colonization

Temporal depth structures the history of struggle and resistance of the Puerto Rican nation against both Spain and the United States. To remember and create the nation, the newspaper uses an axis of commemoration of the nation based on significant historical events about the rise of the nationalist project through revolt, the process of repression, while revolting to challenge colonial domination. These historical events included: the insurrection of 1868 known as the *Grito de Lares* (Shout of *Lares*), the repression of the nation with the 1937 *Ponce* Massacre, and the 1950s revolts against the consolidation of American power through the creation of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (see Llorens Torres 1931/2005; Rosado 2001; Ruiz Marrero 1997).

The rise of the Puerto Rican nation began with the revolt known as the 1868 Shout of *Lares* (Gallisá 2010:20). Men and women from “el movimiento libertador” (the national liberation movement) included prominent figures such as Ramón Emeterio Betances known as “the father of the nation” and Mariana Bracetti known as “Golden Arm” for sewing the revolutionary flag of *Lares*. The lives of Betances and Bracetti constituted the materials out of which the nation is structured and shaped, living human beings (Grosby 2005). From these revolutionary deeds, the struggle for independence recalls the woman patriot, Mariana Bracetti Cuevas not only because she “knitted” the flag, but became a prisoner of war. Similarly, María de las Mercedes Barbudo and Josefa Zavaleta de Arrubla, who is believed to be the “true” deserver of the accolade of being the first woman jailed for her separatist efforts (Rosario Rivera 1997), women have been political prisoners for their subversive deeds by supporting the independence of Puerto Rico. What these key women icons suggest is that women are political prisoners to merit mention and to figure prominently in defending, if not, in building the nation. Women’s deeds make them manly women who engaged in warfare.

During the 1930s there was significant combative activism resulting in the Rio Piedras Massacre where four nationalist men were killed and in 1936 their death was avenged with the murder of the police chief Riggs; this massacre was immortalized in the protest song called *El Blanco/The Target* (see Brown 2005). It is important to note that Elisha Francis Riggs was the actual name of the police chief, but the song used the name “Francis” first, perhaps rendering the name more effeminate or not manly enough for such a violent and cruel man who had worked in Nicaragua as persecutor of Sandino. In

1936 nationalist leaders Pedro Albizu Campos and Juan Antonio Corretjer were both arrested for masterminding the revolts. During that period, many Puerto Ricans had supported the independence of Puerto Rico. In 1937, Cancel Miranda (1994:24-5) reported that Chief Riggs stated that “frente a los nacionalistas disparen a matar” (against the nationalists shoot to kill), a point documented today by the historical record of the *Ponce Massacre*.

After the 1868 Grito de *Lares*, the massacres of nationalist activists in 1936 and 1937 crushed the combative activism of the nationalist movement and repressed their discourse that day. The massacre marked a violent episode against the Nationalist Party of Albizu Campos that consistently fought for the right to express views and to protest against the injustices of the colonial regime as administered by the local ruling class in Puerto Rico, under the aegis of U.S. military power. Nationalists’ deeds protested the recruitment of Puerto Rican men for military service in World War II, while for women they were expected to be armed combatants for whom jail time was assured. In the meantime Albizu Campos served jail in 1947; he was a political prisoner and the skirmishes in 1948 strike at the University of Puerto Rico protesting the imposition of English in educational institutions contributed perhaps to the rise of these revolts during the period of 1950 to 1954.

In both of these nationalist events, men’s deeds for organizing the subversive actions are understated and generally invisible, while women are remembered for their deeds as political prisoners. This fact reproduces what Puri (2004) labeled “the paradox of gender and nationalism” whereby gender relations between men and the nation are

always mediated through “women.” Instead, gender relations are mediated through masculinity. Ayoroa Santaliz (1983:14) has described the *generic* nationalists as follows: “Los nacionalistas puertorriqueños son monumentos vivos a la *hombría* de bien, la nobleza, el valor, la humildad.” (Puerto Rican nationalists are living testaments/monuments of manhood’s goodness, nobility, valor, and humility; translation and emphasis mine.) However, the figure remembered may be Mariana Bracetti to demonstrate her valor and resilience in the nationalist project, their deeds reflected masculine values and actions. In this sense, political prisoners represent women’s central roles in independence nationalism, and in the symbolic sense the nation is reproduced through the deeds of political prisoners. Hegemonic masculinity is violent; only a violent masculinity can liberate the men emasculated by colonial domination by foreign men with arms mediated through women’s roles as combatants.

Furthermore, the nationalist revolts of the 1950s declared armed struggle as the tool to combat the systematic repression of nationalists and to the transforming the political status of Puerto Rico. Ramón López (1990) described the day of October 30, 1950 as “una historia hecha pedazos” (a story in pieces). For nationalists, *guerra* (war) became the motto of nationalist activism and in this context emerged the masculinist image of women, foretold in the 1868 revolt in *Lares*. With the passage of the Law 600 in 1950, the new status of Puerto Rico as a commonwealth solidified the resolve of the nationalist independence movement to engage in armed struggle and activism through a series of revolts across the island and the mainland that relied on prominent women as its key executors and armed combatants.

The revolts of the 1950s resulted in the jailing and repression of many nationalists. The systematic violence and repression of nationalists transformed them into martyrs of the nation, and Pedro Albizu Campos along with the renowned political prisoners became the most enduring symbols and icons of nationalism. Nationalist activism generated the ultimate sacrifice for the nation, repression, torture, solitary confinement, death, and/or incarceration. Invisibility and silence foreshadow men's roles in nationalism; they are the architects, the male intellectuals behind the masculinist project of nationalism. Through the experience of martyrdom, the nation became memorialized, surrounding nationalists with an aura of fear and admiration that they have continued to inspire not for their presence, but for their absence, invisibility, and silence. Invisibility is a political, subversive act.

Martyrdom and Sacrifice for the Nation

The masculinist image of nationalism defines as the ultimate sacrifice for the nation martyrdom through repression, incarceration, and/or death. This discourse of martyrdom for nationalism emerged, according to sociologist Juan Manuel Carrión (1996), through Albizu's rhetoric and activism, giving nationalism its combative social character. This combative character aimed to mobilize the masses in Puerto Rico, not just those who supported independence party politics. This suggested that for a movement for national liberation to be successful, it must draw support from all sectors of society, including men and women through organized party politics, civil society, and other social networks and strategies.

Both women and men have made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation: they have sacrificed their bodies as they have been jailed and/or killed as a result of their nationalist actions and ideology. In death, those who have died continue to live as the martyrs of the nation. Santana (1991:16) concurred that perhaps the most nationalist, sacred act is to “*defender y morir por la causa de la independencia patria*” (to defend and died for the independence cause; translation mine). Nationalism draws people to sacrifice for the nation, a motif and quality often associated with women’s gender roles and with male military combatants called to sacrifice their bodies during war.

The nationalist revolts of the 1950s were allegedly a strategy designed by Albizu to create a national crisis in Puerto Rico, forcing the United States and the colonial administration to grant sovereignty for the nation. He focused on the entire nation, and wanted “*de todo el pueblo*” (the entire nation) to participate in its liberation. Albizu believed in all forms of struggle, especially in armed struggle because when the invader (the United States) arrived, they arrived with weapons and violence. Thus the appropriate qualification about men’s roles and women’s roles in nationalism harkens back to Enloe’s (1990:45) starting point for nationalism: “nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope.”

The Masculinized Women as Political Prisoners

It should not come as a surprise then that the most coveted of roles for women in nationalism is that of political prisoners. Puerto Rican political prisoners are valued for their sacrifices to gain the independence of Puerto Rico. Women as political prisoners or

combatants exemplified one of the highest honors of citizenship. Through their relentless efforts, women and men nationalists have denounced the colonial status of Puerto Rico and sacrificed their freedom to obtain liberation. The framing of women as political prisoners yielded support for Yuval-Davis' (1997) contention that citizenship in the nation involves rights, duties, and responsibilities and that a central right of those who are members of nations is to die and/or sacrifice on behalf of one's nation. Women have always participated in armed conflicts, whether directly or indirectly, and women have had at some points of political warfare had the right to integrate into military forces to protect the nation (Ortiz Rodríguez and Ortiz Luquis 1990).

The history of the Puerto Rican nation revealed over 100 years of imprisonments for those supporting the independence of Puerto Rico. In the seminal work of Ché Paraltici (2004), *Sentencia Impuesta: 100 Años de Encarcelamientos por the Independencia de Puerto Rico* traced the period of 1899 to 1999 to show the longstanding history of persecutions and incarcerations of Puerto Rican dissidents. The decade of the 1980s was particularly important as it witnessed the arrests and convictions of Puerto Ricans associated with the clandestine organization, *Los Macheteros* (The Cane Cutters) and the *Frente Armado de Liberación Nacional* (Armed Forces of National Liberation or FALN, the Spanish acronym). A perusal of the period under study here, 1980 to 2006, revealed that there are several prominent Puerto Rican women directing and participating in the most daring and violent acts of the independence movement.

The deeds of Blanca Canales, Lolita Lebrón, and Providencia "Pupa" Tralbal made them the "imprescindibles" (essential) women of nationalism in twentieth century

Puerto Rican independence nationalism. All three women became political prisoners for their active participation in the nationalist independence movement with prominent roles in executing armed deeds for national liberation either before or after the revolts of the 1950s. The activism of these women and their imposed sentences can be contextualized in the aftermath of Law 53, *Ley de la Mordaza* (the Gag Rule) that targeted dissidents beginning 1948. The law prohibited any form of dissent against the government of Puerto Rico and the United States, and it was modeled after the anti-communist Smith Law of the United States. In Puerto Rico, any form of nationalist activism was outlawed, including national symbols. From waving the flag to singing patriotic songs all became crimes against the state. The law sought to curb nationalist activism against the impending codification of the Puerto Rico's political status into a commonwealth in 1952. In this context, women's roles as combatants and eventual political prisoners became salient in the conceptualization of the national struggle, and women became constructed in gendered specific ways.

Masculinity and Nationalism

The discourses of nationalism depict nationalism as a goal and as an ideology that foreshadows the possibilities for the national liberation and sovereignty of Puerto Rico through militarization. The nationalist project classifies and orders the roles played by women in nationalism as armed combatants who ultimately become political prisoners to commemorate and reproduce the nation. Reading the newspaper *Claridad* reminds us of women's roles in nationalism. The salience of these women combatants in the nationalist

project stems from their inclusion in the nation because, like men, women are expected to support the independence project of liberation from the colonial arm of the United States. The newspaper never forgets the political prisoners; they are memorialized through their daring acts of war, always there as a resource to be deployed for commemoration. Thus the banality of nationalism described by Michael Billig (1995) spreads to the banality of violence through the coveted roles of women (and men) as political prisoners.

Nationalism becomes a practice, an act of violence done through the acts women political prisoners. The nationalist newspaper vested itself in documenting the banality of nationalism, especially by depicting the roles women play in independence nationalism. Through the written word of independence journalism, the collective memory of nationalism is produced, reproduced, and mediated through the roles of women. The masculinist project of the nationalist paper images the nation in a particular way, through the actions and performances of key political prisoners: Blanca Canales Torresola, Lolita Lebrón, and Providencia “Pupa” Trabal.

Blanca Canales Torresola

The centenary of Doña Blanca Canales Torresola was celebrated in 2006, restoring her to the history of Puerto Rico, but more importantly to the history of independence nationalism. She militated in the Nationalist Party and followed the ideals of Pedro Albizu Campos who was often referred to as “the Maestro.” Blanca became a fervent nationalist, a line soldier of the clandestine movement, and of the struggle for independence (Quiles 2007). On October 30, 1951, she led the Uprising of Jayuya

accompanied by other nationalist activists, declared the Republic of Puerto Rico and hoisted the Puerto Rican flag in the center of the municipality. Besides the Shout of *Lares* event that declared the republic in 1868, Blanca Canales was perhaps the first woman to declare the Republic of Puerto Rico and for a short period the nationalists controlled the municipality of *Jayuya*. After the municipality was bombed by the United States National Guard, the nationalists surrendered and Blanca was sentenced to life in federal prison (about 161 years) and pardoned in 1967.

Blanca Canales (1997) asserted her nationalist sentiments in her essay published in book format and entitled, *La Constitución es la Revolución (The Constitution is the Revolution)*. She understood the double consciousness of a revolutionary and conspirator, leading two lives, a secret one planning and preparing, while at the same time, living in public a normal life with everyday problems (Canales Torresola 2006:22). In the back cover of the book, she appeared in a photograph as an “armed woman” in a tough masculine guise, a “manly” soldier determined to declare the Republic of Puerto Rico. She triumphed by declaring the Republic in the municipality of *Jayuya*, Puerto Rico in 1950. Doña Blanca saw the struggle for independence as one between life and death (Santiago Nieves 2006:24; Santiago Nieves 2000). Doña Blanca saw the importance of the flag in nation building, and displayed it to show the flag as the national symbol of sovereignty.

Furthermore, the revolts of the 1950s challenged the notion of Puerto Rico as a commonwealth. For nationalists, the insurrections of the 1950s were a denunciation of the commonwealth status or ELA as a façade. The nationalist revolt reminded the nation

of the centrality of building a collective memory that informs the collective consciousness of the independence movement and of the nation. Women combatants have figured prominently as symbols and participants in national struggles. In addition, the double consciousness expressed by Doña Blanca also reflected the tension between the public and private spheres of work and domesticity, expected of women but represented as irrelevant for the masculinist project of independence nationalism. Women's gendered roles became inscribed with a subversive femininity that embraces violent masculinity.

The National Heroine Lolita Lebrón

Perhaps the most notorious Puerto Rican independence symbol and icon in international perspective is the figure of Lolita Lebrón. In 1954, she was arrested after an armed attack against the U.S. Congress. Immortalized by her role as a Puerto Rican woman dissident, Lolita Lebrón asserted on March 1, 1954: "I did not come to kill anyone. I came to die for my country." This armed attack resulted in the revocation of Pedro Albizu Campos' pardon that had been granted in 1947 and he was arrested as the president of the Nationalist Party for masterminding the events. In this case, the cliché that "behind every great man there is a woman" was reversed; in this case, behind every great woman there was Pedro Albizu Campos! Women mediate men's roles in nationalism, reproducing the "paradox of nationalism" (Puri 2004).

Lolita Lebrón's life as the most prominent political prisoner of Puerto Rican nationalism and as an icon for national liberation personified the symbol of the

independence movement and dissidents. Her image has remained notorious as an icon of the “*movimiento libertador*” (liberation movement); yet depending on the political standpoint, she has also been labeled a key figure of international terrorism, not just an icon for movements seeking national liberation. She was depicted and defined by the coverage of her arrest and the long prison tenure in U.S. Federal prison. Lolita Lebrón’s long sentence represented one of the harshest sentences imposed on any political prisoner for subversive activities, while others have labeled their militancy and combativeness as an accolade (Martínez 1988). This characterization of her deeds showed once more the significance of the masculinist project of nationalism through men’s interests and men’s deeds.

Lolita Lebrón’s legacy stands on the shoulders of the patriots and supporters of the independence movement that preceded her, including Mariana Bracetti. Her remains lay in the same *camposanto* (cemetery) with other national figures. When I visited the national cemetery in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico her tombstone was adorned with flowers shaped in the form of the single star flag of the *Lares*, the current Puerto Rican flag along with the nationalist flag. These flags symbolically guarded and looked over her grave, and silence encapsulated the site.

She continued her support for independence through her activism for the removal of the U.S. Navy from Vieques, where she was arrested for civil disobedience. She was fined \$30,000 for trespassing land belonging to the U.S. Navy, and the fine was said to be the highest given to anyone arrested for civil disobedience (Claridad 2002; Cotto 2001). While in court awaiting sentencing for being “*una mujer desobediente*” (a disobedient

woman), Lolita's lawyer reiterated to the judge that in front of the court was "the symbol of the nation." Lolita Lebrón was an essential woman who fought and sacrificed for the liberation of her people. As a woman who was both a political prisoner and a dissident, her life journey demanded independence for Puerto Rico. In the journey to defend the nation, she became an icon and gave meaning to the valued myths and icons of nationalism, and to the essentialist roles of women as political prisoners in the nationalist project.

Doña Providencia "Pupa" Trabal

Likewise, another essential contributor to the restructuring of the independence movement after the nationalist revolts was Doña Providencia "Pupa" Trabal. She dedicated her life, like Blanca Canales and Lolita Lebrón, to the cause for Puerto Rican independence, sovereignty, and the emancipation of women (Mari Brás 2006; Millán Ferrer 2006). She attended school with Juan Mari Brás and worked with the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (the Puerto Rican Independence Party or PIP, the Spanish acronym). Both were expelled from the party.

On January 11, 1959, they founded the *Movimiento Pro-Independencia* (Pro Independence Movement or MPI, the Spanish acronym). Pupa characterized her life as a struggle: "Toda mi vida he luchado por la independencia de mi patria representada en esa bandera" ("All of my life I have struggled for the independence of my nation represented in the flag;" Pupa Trabal cited in Quiles 2007:21; translation mine). She attributed her love for the nation to the teachings of her father where she learned by implication to be a

woman for the nation. For her lifelong nationalist beliefs and pro-independence activism, she became the target of FBI surveillance.

Beginning in 1956, Doña Pupa Trabal was persecuted, scrutinized and closely monitored and her experience gave a human face to the consequences of repression and surveillance. José Rodríguez Jiménez (2006), lawyer of Pupa and member of the Board of Directors of *Claridad*, explained the role that she played in the trial against the Commonwealth or Estado Libre Association (ELA) of Puerto Rico for the fabricated dossiers against her. From 1956 to 1986, Pupa suffered the intolerance of the repressive apparatuses of the state through a constructed dossier consisting of more than three thousand pages of fabricated information. Pupa testified about the daily surveillance of nationalist leaders even if there was no factual evidence of their so-called subversive activity. Doña Pupa noted how her family was set up by the police in a bombing where she lost her pharmacy and livelihood (Mari Brás 2006; Mari Narvaez 2006; Millán Ferrer 2006; Rodríguez Jiménez 2006).

The story reported in the newspaper about Pupa Trabal was corroborated by examining the memoir of Doña Pupa, narrated in her own words and published in book form by Carlos Quiles (2007), respected poet and educator. The book is entitled *Pupa: Mujer en Lucha*. In addition, when I visited Sala Luisa Capetillo at the University of Puerto Rico, Recinto Universitario de Cayey in 2008, I had the rare opportunity of viewing the display of *the carpetas* or dossiers that were fabricated against Doña Pupa. The coverage of her life story gives credence and leverage to her significance as a committed, nationalist and independence activist who engaged in the political and

national life of the society along with the political prisoners, Lolita Lebrón and Blanca Canales Torresola.

Together, the political prisoners are active actors and symbols of the nation that can be leveraged for the independence cause and for the existence of the Puerto Rican nation. Women political prisoners have been restored to the history of Puerto Rico, the independence movement and to women's roles in nationalism. Blanca Canales, Lolita Lebrón, and Pupa Trabal represent the central roles of women in independence nationalism; political prisoners are the essential women of independence nationalism.

The Next Wave of Prisoners from Diaspora

The iconic figures of Blanca Canales Torresola, Lolita Lebrón and Providencia Pupa Trabal underscored women's roles in independence nationalism as political prisoners. Of these prisoners, Lolita Lebrón's work was salient for her organized activism in the diaspora of New York, but after her pardon she returned to Puerto Rico in 1981. Lolita Lebrón and Pedro Albizu Campos continued to inspire a new generation of political prisoners that emerged in the 1980s as a result of clandestine activities in the United States. Their deeds further underscored the linkages between the "sending" or ancestral nation to the "receiving" transnational nation "in the United States. The colonial legacy created linkages to the imagined community of independence nationalism seeking sovereignty. The arrested included: Carlos Alberto Torres, Carmen Hilda Valentín, Ida Luz Rodríguez, Alicia Rodríguez, Dylcía Pagán, Elizam Escobar, Adolfo Matos, and Ricardo Jiménez (Seijo Bruno 1981; see Paralitici 1984, 2004, 2007). Notably, once

arrested they declared themselves prisoners of war, rejected U.S. jurisdiction as a colonial imposition, and demanded that they be tried in the international tribunal, while loudly declaring “¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!” (Live Free Puerto Rico!). Linked to the clandestine organizations *Frente Armado de Liberación Nacional* (Armed Forces of National Liberation, FALN) and the *Ejército Popular Boricua* or *Los Macheteros* (The Cane Cutters), the prisoners engaged in political and military actions inside U.S. soil, and were arrested and charged with various offenses, including seditious conspiracy, all punishable legal crimes under federal law.

The architect of these armed events and a most wanted fugitive by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) was commander-in-chief Filiberto Ojeda Ríos who managed to live underground until killed on September 23, 2005, the day nationalists commemorate the Shout of *Lares*. He along with the others arrested were linked to the armed robbery and with conspiracy to take \$7.5 million in government-insured money from a Wells Fargo armored car (Susler 2006:122).

For the political prisoners, Susler (2006:120) asserted that “perhaps the most significant aspect of the legal context is the fact that under international law, colonialism is a crime against humanity.” For Puerto Rican political prisoners, they were being repressed for fighting against colonialism and they sacrificed their lives and freedoms by the imposition of decades of prison terms for fighting for a right expressly protected by international law. Puerto Rican independentistas (independence supporters) have been punished for their beliefs and affiliations, and as poor and working class Puerto Ricans, they have received bail out offers that surpass the price paid for any other crime (Susler

1997, 2006). Colonialism is one of the significant building blocks for the creation of myths and heroes guiding the normative behavior for Puerto Rican nationalists as combatants, the other pillar is the masculinist project of violent masculinity.

From the revolutionary efforts in the 1868 Shout of *Lares* to the 1937 *Ponce* Massacre to the deeds of in the 1950s by Blanca Canales, Lolita Lebrón and Pupa Tralbal and the arrests of clandestine “cane cutters” in the United States, women and men have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their activism on behalf of the nation, life as political prisoners and as combatants seeking the liberation of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule. The discourse of independence nationalism privileged the deeds of women political prisoners during the 1980 to 2006 period covered here. The prisoners’ strength and fortitude has been remarkable and sometimes inspiring.

Women played roles as active participants in nationalism that were exemplified in the deeds of political prisoners as a fundamental image of national liberation and martyrdom. As icons and symbols of the nation are increasingly co-opted and commercialized by globalization processes, political prisoners have not been appropriated for commercial purposes. For combating and dismantling imperialism in Puerto Rico, the representations of women as political prisoners have been revered as icons and symbols that cannot be appropriated by the media, other national groups and/or capitalist business interests wishing to promote their respective agendas for commercialization, statehood, and continued commonwealth status. The image of women as political prisoners or combatants gave the nation an area of discourse that remains pristine, uninhabited by the dominant discourse of consumerism and assimilationism, but useful for the discourses of

independence and national sovereignty. These iconic depictions of women as political prisoners cannot be co-opted because they operate in contradiction to the colonial structure and challenge traditional gender prescriptions for women in the nation. The remembrance of Puerto Rican nationalist history and its political prisoners reiterated the history of martyrdom and sacrifice for the nation. The stories of surveillance, repression, dissent, incarceration, and violence challenged the imposition of becoming North American. It also created a discourse of liberation and martyrdom through the self-sacrifice for the *Patria* (the homeland), the motherland, or perhaps more appropriately a violent fatherland.

At the same time, post 9/11 it is also possible that the image of political prisoners can be reconstructed as terrorists who are enemies of the state. Women political prisoners are “border guards” who must carefully navigate political activism with an awareness that they must not cross the boundaries created by their pardon and liberation. Contrary to the flag, women’s roles as political prisoners and as combatants represented the nation and the active participation of women in the nationalist project. Political prisoners, their existence and essence, made visible their social status as vehicles for national liberation and with their release, it reminded those supporting then independence project that if the U.S. Navy was removed from Vieques and most political prisoners were released from jail, then the prospect for the liberation of Puerto Rico from colonial rule remains plausible. Since women and political prisoners were released from prison, the Puerto Rican nation can also be liberated from American control using the tools of international diplomacy and pressure without resorting to violence. Armed violence has been a tool

used by the state and by independence combatants for their respective political purposes. The masculinist project of independence is a symbolic and material war against colonialism, using violence but also drawing international support to liberate the nation.

The 1980 to 2006 period showed that women played specifically masculine roles in independence nationalism. Women can be combatants, political prisoners and actors in national liberation insurrections, sacrificing their bodies if necessary. Of all these historical prisoners, none have been more venerated than the icon and national heroine Lolita Lebrón. The increasing interest in the role of women in political struggles in Puerto Rico has also brought to the forefront the deeds of patriot Providencia “Pupa” Trabal, a woman in struggle (Quiles 2007). The figure of Dona Pupa was and is also essential because of her tireless efforts to raise funds for the committee working on the excarceration of the remaining Puerto Rican nationalists in U.S. jails (Quiles 2007).

These essential political prisoners are nationalist activists who embody the supreme call to valor and have been notable for their roles as combatants. The manner in which nations are imagined varies from society to society; and the nation is imagined as a sovereign community with notable women distinguished for their prominent sacrifices for the nation. These women personify women’s efforts in the nationalist liberation movement who under the guidance of Albizu Campos assumed the responsibility for producing, representing, defending, and protecting the nation. Political prisoners can be leveraged as both patriots and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation, while revealing inconsistencies that construct “generic” as monolithic, hegemonic nationalists as “monuments of manhood’s goodness, nobility, valor, and humility”

(Ayoroa Santaliz 1983:14). Goodness, nobility, valor, humility and sacrifice are human traits that can be found in all sorts of peoples and nations, including women. In *Claridad's* nationalist project, these traits embodied masculinity and the “real” or “essential” or “imprescindibles” roles of women in a project that imagines the national community as “a nation run by men” and where women can be honorary men.

The history of the lives of the political prisoners are also a testament to the symbolic meaning of “prison,” but also a metaphor of the colonial situation of Puerto Rico; thus the meaning of prison becomes a kaleidoscope of society and of one’s identity (Rodríguez 1990). Prison here signifies colonialism and also the structural cage of gender whereby women want to be political prisoners because by doing so they can implode the system from within, preventing the imposition of colonial rule from without.

Political Prisoners as a Sample of the Nation

In the compilation of reflections by ex-political prisoners arrested in the collection of articles entitled *Palabras en Libertad* (Editorial *Claridad* 2000), Alida Millán Ferrer (2000), the director of the paper, expressed the importance of compiling the interviews to maintain the struggle for liberation alive. Mari Brás (2000 in *Editorial Claridad* 2000) described the contributions of the prisoners as part of the “*botón de muestra de la Puertorriqueñidad*” (button of our Puerto Rican identity). This metaphor has important implications for its gendered connotation, but also for the social construction of nations, not only symbolically, but also historically through struggle. In Puerto Rico a popular cliché stated: “*para muestra con un botón basta*” (“to sample one is enough”). This

cliché can be interpreted to mean that for a sample of Puertorriqueñidad, political prisoners embodied nationality and national identity as its key central elements. Political prisoners are a sample of our people through their sense of identity and sacrifice. The national patriots voiced a commitment with the cause for independence, giving the nation a sample of national loyalties and commitment to die and sacrifice for one's own nation as an independent political entity. Yet the salience of the diaspora did not figure prominently in this depiction to the extent that the women were eventually tied to the land of Puerto Rico upon their return, but did serve their prison sentences in the diaspora and/or lived and/or were born in the mainland. While it is salient that eleven prisoners represented the Puerto Rican nation in the diaspora; most of them were born and/or raised in the continental United States, underscoring our sense of one nation (Mari Brás 2000). Nation has multiple meanings and the Puerto Rican case revealed that by birth, ancestry and through a socially constructed imagined community as sovereign, the nation of Puerto Rico is continually sustained.

While the *Claridad* project is masculinist in its depiction of the women's roles in nationalism, there was one important exception, and this was an instance that underscored the role of the mother of the nation. Specifically, women as mothers of the political prisoners were invoked to show how the incarceration of political prisoners invaded families, showing how the mothers and fathers struggled to liberate their sons and daughters from U.S. prisons. A case in point is the mothering story of Josefina Rodríguez, a woman from the Puerto Rican community in Chicago who labored for

twenty years to obtain the release from federal prison of her two daughters political prisoners, Lucy and Alicia Rodríguez.

Carlos Quiles (2005) documented the story of the mother and two daughters in his book entitled, *Memorias de Josefina (Memoirs of Josefina)*. The story narrated the life and times of the mother fighting to liberate her two daughters. In a review of the memoir, Franco (2006) described it as symbolic of the cult of the victory and struggle of the diaspora in Chicago to liberate the people, the nation. The daughters' pain of exile was captured in Juan Antonio Corretjer's poem, *Boricua en la Luna* (Puerto Rican in the Moon) that has become an important protest anthem and a call for national identity and of Puerto Rican affirmation. Regardless of place of residence, national identity is resilient, never disappears as one will always be "*Boricua*" regardless of where one lives or where one is born. Presumably whether one lives in Puerto Rico or in the continental U.S. diaspora, the Puerto Rican nation lives in this ongoing movement and collective memory of an imagined nation of Puerto Ricans in the island and in the diaspora. These identities are also socially constructed as essential by the nationalist newspaper.

The story of political prisoners demonstrated that the Puerto Rican diaspora actively sought the independence cause. This diaspora is part of the Puerto Rican nation and have voluntarily or involuntarily left the national territory and/or were born in the United States mainland from descendants from Puerto Rico. Collectively, the Puerto Rican nation is divided among those from here (*aquí* or Puerto Rico), those from there (*allá* or United States), and those from nowhere, but everywhere as a translocal or transnational people, and those of us who are "none of the above." In *Claridad's* spatial

location, the coverage of the Puerto Rican nation existed primarily, but not exclusively, in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican nation is structured primarily by a focus on the experience of Puerto Rican women on the island; yet women's roles in nationalism showed the diasporic role in the representation and sacrifice for the nation through political prisoners. If the identities of women are rendered as "essential" political prisoners through the prism of a primarily masculinist project, then it makes sense that only a minimal amount of coverage included Puerto Rican women in the nationalist project of *Claridad*.

Analytic Conclusion: Gender and Nation

This chapter discussed women's roles in independence nationalism. The structure of *Claridad*, as the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation, provides the support or wall of contention for constructing and imagining the nation. This process of commemoration begins the colonization process and then moves to commemorating the actions and deeds of the martyrs and patriots of nationalism. Women's roles in nationalism showed that women struggle in the creation of the nation in *Lares*, were repressed in the *Ponce* Massacre, and revolted in the 1950s insurrections. From these historical struggles, several prominent patriots emerged, namely Pedro Albizu Campos, Blanca Canales Torresola, Lolita Lebrón, Providencia "Pupa" Trabal, and additional political prisoners that have sacrificed for the nation have included the Rodríguez sisters and Doña Josefina who struggled to liberate her daughters from federal prison. The repression of nationalists have made them central symbols and martyrs that underscore the importance of not only the national experience, but also the transnational experience of migration as they became

a diaspora of combatants that eventually served time for their nationalist deeds and actions.

By focusing on the colonial history, icons and heroines, historical events, and more importantly, the political prisoners, the nationalist project foreshadowed the key building block and key ingredients of the “botón” (button) of national identity, political prisoners. When women are present in discussions of nations and nationalism in Puerto Rico, it is always via the lens of the independence movement in its efforts to achieve national sovereignty for Puerto Rico. Women are armed combatants and eventually political prisoners and men are the architects of the independence project. Commemorating nationalist events offers the historical material to imagine the nation. This imagined community emerges through the act of aspiring to be one’s own independent, sovereign state. The nationalist project of independence is a particular version of gender politics reflecting the discourses of what Nagel (1998:243) saw as “the major way in which gender shapes politics – through men and their interests, their notions of manliness, and masculine micro and macro cultures.” This masculinist project will encounter significant resistance to its project because it is not an inclusive nationalist project.

In sum, I have accentuated the social construction of nations and nationalisms as gendered discourses. Besides the narrative about political prisoners, these gender discourses have rendered invisible women’s lives. Independence nationalism in Puerto Rico is consistent with the projects of Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1990), and Andersen (1993) that relegates women and gender to insignificant axis of analysis; yet the field of

nations and nationalism are not gender neutral, but evade gender relations and/or when gender has been mentioned it conflated it with women. Nationalism and gender inform the structure the representation and the lived experiences of women and men in nationalist projects.

Nationalism is a discourse, a way of speaking personified as a form of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 1987); it is a site for the performance of masculinity as socially constructed and embodied in women playing roles as political prisoners. As political prisoners, women accomplished gender as a violent masculinity, a masculine project that legitimizes nationalist actions. By following women’s roles in nationalism, I have been able to discern men’s roles as the architects of armed struggle, and for women to participate in this project they can be political prisoners. In the background, men are the intellectuals, those who create the project as embodied in the prominent figure of Don Pedro Albizu Campos for whom armed struggle was a necessary condition for the resolution of the colonial experience of Puerto Rico. Independence nationalism is a project of masculine violence against colonial violence mediated through the roles of political prisoners who are also women, the symbols of the nation.

CHAPTER 6

WOMEN'S HISTORY AND WOMEN WORTHIES FOR COMMEMORATION

The discourse of the nationalist project constructs women's roles relative to how their duties, responsibilities and privileges support the independence struggle.

Independence nationalism is a hegemonic masculine project that emphasized the roles women play as political prisoners and combatants. This distinctive construction of women's roles contributed to the ideological support of the liberation of the nation. In this chapter, I explore women's roles during the commemoration of women's history and in the context of women's activism on various issues impacting women and the nation.

First, this chapter explores the commemoration of March as Women's History Month to show the relative importance of co-opting women's history for the nationalist project. The origin of the commemoration, the "length" of the celebration, and the meaning of the celebration are discussed. Second, I present an analysis of women worthies. I defined women worthies as those women who are significant for their contribution to the project of nationalist sovereignty.

To that effect, I discuss the distinctive roles of women worthies as they are constructed by the newspaper. I analyze how the roles of women functioned for what their representation contributes to the nationalist agenda. I first present the analysis of Puerto Rican worthies, followed by the prominent international women, and conclude

with an overview of profiles of countries across the globe. I will show that the key social fact shared by these two representations of women worthies is that regardless of the national and the global lens from which the global lens from which women are included, both national and global women worthies and the countries they represent make women relevant for their performances to the independence cause.

Third and last, I evaluate what I characterize as an emerging, “unfinished feminist nationalist project” that critiques the discourse of independence nationalism in its dominant, hegemonic masculine form. This unfinished feminist nationalist project has figured insignificantly in the newspaper coverage because it does not advance the hegemonic discourse of independence nationalism. The chapter concludes with remarks about the social meaning of the construction of women’s roles in independence nationalism in light of the claim that *Claridad* is “the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation.” The gender prescriptions and proscriptions embodied in women worthies regardless of national origin are discussed for the consequences for the nationalist project. I illustrate that the nationalist discourse forecloses a feminist reading of the national project, while privileging a monolithic nationalism as the only tool for societal change; yet women and their deeds are “used” to stand for the independence project.

The Nationalist Story of Women’s History

The story of women’s history is anchored around International Women’s Day in the month of March. In nationalist projects, women have been said to be the transmitters of national culture; yet before they can transmit the culture of nationalism, the nationalist

project memorializes women's deeds in a specific historical context. The inclusion of women occurs in three key areas, the origin of the celebration of women's history month, the "length" of the celebration, and a critique of the effect of "watering down" the celebration.

First, the origin of celebration spans over a hundred years of global and national history. The origin debate informs the myth of why the month of March should include women. The dates associated with the celebration included: the year 1909 when the Socialist Party and the labor movement in the United States adopted the celebration; the year of 1911 marked the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City; the 1916 Free Federation of Workers commemorated the day in Puerto Rico; the 1910 Second International Conference of Socialist Women sought to expand the celebration across nations; the 1975 to 1985 United Nations Decade for Women; and the 1976 adoption of the day in Puerto Rico as a result of the activism by autonomous feminist and women's organizations, some of which were linked to party politics. In 1978, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party created the Women's Commission within the party. These dates reflected the nationalist ideology of socialist liberation for the nation. In this context, the role of socialist and communist leaders Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai were invoked to substantiate that "socialism" is the best tool for the emancipation of women.

I inquired about the silences in the newspaper's timeline of women's history based on my review of alternate documents and the history of Puerto Rico. A review of the historical work using the research of Yamila Azize-Vargas (1987) and the work of Ana Rivera Lassén (2001) exposed gaps in the nationalist reading. For example, the

oldest and longer lasting feminist organization of the 1970s was *Mujer Integrate Ahora* (MIA) and by 1973, the Puerto Rican Civil Rights Commission issued a report about the extent of social inequality in Puerto Rico. By 1974, the Office of the Governor created the Commission for the Improvement of Women's Rights and by 1975, the Federation of Puerto Rican women emerged to organize and advocate for working women's rights. Indeed, in 1975 the United Nations declared decade long events to document the plight of women in international perspective and Puerto Rican women and organizations responded with national events, and while it was true that the Federation and MIA supported independence activism, these organizations operated as autonomous feminist organizations.

By 1976 legislation in Puerto Rico approved March 8th as International Women's Day in Puerto Rico. However, the Free Federation of Workers (*Federación Libre de Trabajadores*), one of the earliest labor unions in Puerto Rico supporting working men's and women's labor rights had observed "workers" rights since the beginning of the twentieth century, but this focus on workers' rights was not devoid of the reclaim of the civil rights of women as "mothers, wives, and daughters" (Azize Vargas 1987:41). Furthermore and beginning with the 1898 U.S. invasion, women and men have toiled to obtain rights and many of the early "patriots" who are ignored by *Claridad* such as Santiago Iglesias Pantín provided support for the cause of women including voting rights and access to party structures. Suffice to say that Puerto Rican institutions and organizations have manifested solidarity with women. The nationalist project's emphasis on "origin" forecloses certain important facts of "women's history" and "workers'

rights.” A selective reading that is invoked as patriot resulted in a co-optation of the agency of women for the purpose of underscoring the foreign importation of “one day” for women.

Second, the articles debated the appropriate “length” of the celebration, a preoccupation that has been an established masculine concern to measure one’s manhood and praiseworthiness. The articles asked whether or not, a day, a week, a month or perhaps celebrations year round were warranted because the celebration had been commercialized, watered down and devoid of its historical meaning for the socialist and communist struggle. Commercialization does not support the agenda of nationalist independence because it was believed that the project of women’s day had become “the week of privileged women” (Arias 1983), erasing the working class struggle that informed its creation. Yet the class interests of the independence project demonstrated by demonizing “privileged women” who are often feminists and/or feminist nationalists.

The fragmentation of events for commercial purposes ignored the activism for social justice and women’s equality (see Ferrer 1983). This commercialization has had negative consequences for women as it undermines the need to promote and advocate for women’s labor rights. The director of the Women’s Advocate Office, Maria Delores Fernós (2004) called for resistance to the devaluing of this day of struggle by focusing instead on the exploitative patriarchal, capitalist structures. This ambivalence about whether to focus on worker activism for socialism or women activism for gender equality placed these two discourses in an antagonistic relationship and replicated the gender binary of the sex/gender system. These two discourses, the nationalist project and the

feminist project, need not necessarily be in conflict because they both have consequences for the eradication of gender stratification in nationalist contexts. However, by emphasizing the debate over the celebration with flowers and various accolades, the independence cause is given primacy. Women's equality and the search for gender justice can be delayed until after independence arrives. This emphasis on delaying the project for gender equality resulted in the characterization of the independence movement by Celina Romany (1991) as suffering from the ailment called "the postponement syndrome." Based on the symbolic constructions of women's roles in nationalism, if and when independence arrives it will be "independence without feminism" (Romany 1991). Together the conflict between these two social movements and ideologies revealed that both gender equality and national sovereignty are opposite projects: Feminism and nationalism are thus "Janus-faced" tendencies in the "newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation." Instead of being social movements to mark beginnings and transitions, they have been deployed as opposite projects, one looking to the future and the other looking to the past. However, in the symbolic order of the newspaper of the nation, nationalism always wins.

Moreover, the connection of this day to the United Nations' agenda does serve the project of independence by marking Puerto Rico's status as a nation. By celebrating the day, we can show that Puerto Rico is "worthy" of national liberation because, like the rest of the world, it honors its women. However, the nationalist project questions women's loyalty to the nation by commemorating an event that has been commercialized and denied of its "real" socialist meaning and ideology as the "best" way to emancipate

women. In this equation, the question is for whom is independence nationalism the “best option.” This ambivalent understanding of commemoration reminded us that the Socialist Party and the Feminine Front of the Independence Party have urged the celebration; yet the paper lamented that the link between socialism and women’s activism has been erased or downplayed (Colón and Rodríguez 1994).

The commemoration of women’s history month and the inclusion of women in general became an occasion to mention a plethora of issues by correlating them with women’s activism in general. Among these issues figured prominently: the plight of political prisoners, the Vieques activism, and various feminist critiques of the wage gap, privatization, intimate partner violence, and women’s rights. This project showed that women’s roles and spatial celebration in March can be invoked to use women as a stand for independence nationalism. By rendering the occasion generic, the nationalist project disregarded women’s plight the rest of the year, always remembering that the nation must fight colonial commercialization. *Claridad* reflected on the meaning of this day because it allows to “pass balance” or to evaluate the future of liberation.

Puerto Rican women are proxies for the independence movement – women stand for independence in the newspaper *Claridad*. In spite of its transformational goals to reconstruct women’s contributions to society by calling attention to the plight of women, seeking the eradication of oppression, and struggling to achieve gender justice, the latent consequence of the depiction of women’s roles in nationalism is that both women and feminism become re-inscribed as outside the nationalist project and duped by a foreign import that rejects its “true” roots in socialism and communism. Similarly, by

emphasizing commercialization, the historical memory of the nation forgets that the struggle for gender justice is a foreign effort anyway and by challenging the commemoration, it reiterates that this is another “sales day” that fails to celebrate what it was intended to accomplish, workers activism to achieve a socialist society.

Women Worthies

Once it was established that March is women’s history month and that the “real” intent was to commemorate the advent of a socialist society, the masculine project created a framework for the inclusion of women worthies. These women worthies are those women who through their actions and deeds have supported and/or advanced the cause of and for independence. The newspaper then set out to report the “life and times” of these women worthies for the nationalist cause. Instead of emphasizing the entire life history of women worthies, I will chronicle those events or acts that support the nationalist struggle. It will become evident that worthiness is not free, and it always requires that it be filtered, marked through the nationalist project of sovereignty, imagining Puerto Rico free from colonial rule. It will become evident that the women who are included in the project are “essential” for what they contribute to the nationalist project; yet inessential if they are not the “vessels of the nation” (Puri 2004) who stand for the independence project. This ambivalence as members of the collectivity and as “outsiders” of the nationalist collectivity questions women’s loyalties to the nation, and justifies their exclusion from the collectivity and from the newspaper.

Women's roles in nationalism are contextualized in the history of the nation. The month of March is important not only for its association with international women's history, but also for independence nationalism. That is, by reconstructing the story of women, coverage restored "women worthies" that have played significant roles as reproducers, transmitters, and participants in the struggle for independence. This study has uncovered the contributions of countless women who have written the history of national liberation, whose activities have reproduced the ideal of independence for Puerto Rico and of women's roles in nationalism. From the historical record, it is clear that women have engaged in double militancy in activism on behalf of women and in independence party politics, a prospect that renders women potentially suspect for both movements.

From the perspective of the articles, I surmised two tendencies in the construction of women worthies, those from the nation of Puerto Rico and those from the global nation of international women. International women were used, I believe, as proxies or as standing for Puerto Rican women worthies who in turn stand for the project of independence nationalism. I now begin a discussion of Puerto Rican women worthies and then turn to international women worthies.

The nation of Puerto Rico produced: Lola Rodríguez de Tió, Ana Otero Hernández, Juana Colón, Laura Meneses de Albizu, Lolita Aulet, Nilita Vientos Gastón, Isabel Freire, Loida Figueroa, Consuelo Lee Tapia de Corretjer, Isabel Rosado Morales, Isolina Pérez, and Antonia Lagares Martínez. For instance, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, born in 1843, distinguished herself for writing the lyrics of the revolutionary hymn of the

Shout of *Lares* called *La Borinqueña* (Ojeda Reyes 1999). For her revolutionary ideals, Lola was persecuted and exiled to Cuba. She engaged in political activism in cooperation with the great Puerto Rican sociologist, Eugenio María de Hostos who is additionally known as the “citizen of America” and the “father of the nation.” Soto Toledo (1993:18) stated that in Cuba, she is considered a Cuban patriot, and the famous guerrilla warrior, General Antonio Maceo reportedly stated that “con Mujeres como Lola Rodríguez de Tió se pueden hacer revoluciones” (with women like Lola Rodríguez de Tió revolutions can be made). By invoking these key nationalist leaders, the status of Lola is rendered worthy of accolades and commemoration for the nation. In Puerto Rico, the strategy of solidarity among groups has been attributed to the deeds of Lola for whom the destiny of Puerto Rico and Cuba were intertwined as the “two wings of a bird.” Similarly, Ana Otero Hernández developed a new version of *La Borinqueña* that became the national hymn of Puerto Rico (Alegría Ortega 2005).

Besides the composers of national hymns, the well-known figure of Luisa Capetillo was mentioned as the precursor of feminist activism and workers activism in Puerto Rico (Roche 2001), while a newly restored figure of the labor movement was added to the history, Juana Colón (Torres Rosario 1987a, 1987b, 2005). She distinguished herself as a member of the socialist movement, a labor organizer, and one of the founders of the first Socialist Party. She was born in 1886 and as the descendant of slaves; she was denied education and became an activist in the tobacco workers’ rights movements.

Two women play the role of wives, one the “wife of Albizu” and the other the “wife of Corretjer.” First, Doña Laura Meneses de Albizu Campos was born in Perú in 1894 and once she married Albizu Campos her social status changed to support his efforts on behalf of the independence of Puerto Rico. She stated:

Ahora, dijo, me tocaba vivir junto a un hombre excepcional, cuando se vive junto a un hombre excepcional, el primer deber de la mujer es no ser, en ningún momento, un obstáculo en su trayectoria. Esa fue y es mi norma junto a Pedro Albizu Campos.” (Now, she said, I had to live with an exceptional man, when you live next to an exceptional man, the first duty of women is not, at any time, an obstacle in its path. That was and is my standard, along with Pedro Albizu Campos. (Cited in Torres 1985:17)

The “other” wife was also a patriot in her own right, Doña Consuelo Lee Tapia de Corretjer. She married Puerto Rican patriot and national poet, Juan Antonio Corretjer, and was eventually arrested and jailed as an alleged militant and sympathizer of the Puerto Rican Socialist League. Patriot and husband Juan Antonio Corretjer advised her about dealing with maximum security imprisonment; while in prison she was called “grandmother” or “*abuela*” by the prisoners. It is important to note that the nickname of *abuela*/grandmother is also relevant in how *Claridad* has depicted nationalism. Many of these worthy figures chronicled in the masculine project (see Chapter 5) and in this chapter are now deceased and some are “older” women who can be said to represent the heritage and genealogy of the nationalist movement.

Similarly, another “essential” woman was the advocate of the Spanish language as the vernacular of nationalism. The central icon here is Nilita Vientos Gastón who promoted the creation of newspapers and saw language as the core embodiment of the nation. Born in 1903, she became the first president of the Ateneo Puertorriqueño / The

Puerto Rican Athenaeum. Beginning in 1876, this institution is the oldest one charged with the defense of the arts, sciences, and letters of the nation. The name comes from the Roman Goddess Atenea who was the goddess of wisdom (Morales Coll 2006:197). In 1965, Nilita went to the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico to defend the centrality of Spanish as the mode of expression of Puerto Rico, a fact that she believed could not be altered by any law. Nilita has been characterized as the “uncomfortable voice of the [nationalist] consciousness” or “*la voz incómoda de la conciencia*” (Rodríguez Martinó 1989:6). Her life’s work helped build the Puerto Rican nation given the symbolism and reverence for the Spanish language in Puerto Rican nationalism.

Other militants have also suffered political persecution. For instance, Doña Isabel Freire advocated the liberation of Puerto Rico and was influenced by the teachings of Eugenio María de Hostos (Azize Vargas 2005). Similarly, historian and professor, Loida Figueroa wrote a decolonized history of Puerto Rico. She condemned machismo and called for a non-sexist national consciousness by denouncing machismo in her novel called *Arenales* written from a woman centered standpoint.

Likewise, Doña Isabel Rosado Morales worked as a teacher and is still called “Doña Isabelita.” Historian Juan Manuel Delgado (1996) described her as “a living symbol” who personified integrity and kindness at the service of the nation or *la patria*. Linked in the 1950s to the nationalist insurrection, she was tried under the *Mordaza* rule, jailed in 1951, and sentenced to forced labor. After serving the 1951 sentence, she was incarcerated in 1954 for attempted murder and weapons charges and remained jailed until 1965 (Paralitici 1984). In the early struggles against the U.S. Navy in the 1970s, Doña

Isabelita showed her determination to struggle for independence when she was removed from Vieques by the military police. In a well-publicized photo of the incident, she was subdued and arrested for civil disobedience by a “husky military police officer” who was also a woman. In a description of the incident, the author of the article spoke about the “man’s struggle” for “his” liberation, yet author Ramos Mimoso’s (1996) was really referring to Doña Isabelita and her struggle for her loved land or *tierruño*. She is probably the oldest nationalist icon who is still alive, living in a nursing home, and clearly remembers the consequences and the stigma of supporting the independence cause (see Ángel Collado Schwarz 2008).

Furthermore, the independence struggle has been supported by the student movement through the *Federación Universitaria Pro-Independencia (FUPI)* / University Pro-Independence Federation. From the student movement emerged the figure of Antonia Lagares Martínez when she was killed by the police following skirmishes against student protests. Muriente Pérez (1985) recalled a conversation that Antonia had with her family on November 1969. Fearing for her life, Antonia’s mother urged her to be cautious, and if she were to die, Antonia Martínez Lagares reportedly stated:

Por favor mami, pídemme que te prometa cualquier cosa menos eso. No puedo ser indiferente a lo que pasa en la Universidad. Si tú estuvieras allí, comprenderías lo que quiero decir. Si me toca morir, que sea luchando por mi patria, contra la injusticia. Cuando muera, que cubra mi cuerpo una bandera de Puerto Rico. (Please Mommy ask me to promise anything but that. I cannot be indifferent to what happens at the university. If you’re there, you would understand what I mean. If I am to die, it will be fighting for my country, against injustice. When I die that covers my body with a flag of Puerto Rico; cited in Muriente Pérez 1985:12).

On March 4, 1970, Antonia died at the age of 19; for Antonia, Vietnam was in the streets of Río Piedras, Puerto Rico as she died at the same age as most soldiers died who served in Vietnam.

During the thirty-year commemoration of her death, García Arroyo (2000:6) evoked the warning words said at the funeral by Ruben Berríos, President of the Independence Party: “*Ni todas las balas de la policía de Puerto Rico podrían detener la lucha por la independencia.*” (And all the bullets of the police of Puerto Rico could not stop the struggle for independence.) In the summer of 2010, a mural painted in remembrance of Antonia was defaced with a splash of white paint; when I visited the site, it had not been restored and news reports called to put an end to the vandalism against the mural and called for respecting her memory. Like many other women mentioned earlier, Antonia was an essential woman who along with countless others became symbols of the nation in search for social justice.

Another notable woman patriot was Doña Isolina Pérez who died recently in March 2011. Millán Ferrer (2001e) described her as a woman of strength who worked as a newspaper carrier, protested against the U.S. Navy, the incarceration of political prisoners, and the struggle for women’s rights (Hernández 1997b). For her support of the independence movement, she became the object of FBI dossiers and was labeled a communist for selling the newspaper *Claridad*. Cruz Román (2001c) reported that for Doña Isolina, independence will be closer depending on how Puerto Ricans strategize; and she saw the exit of the Navy from Vieques as a blow against foreign domination, creating the possibility of a better Puerto Rico for future generations. Cruz Román

(2001c) reported that for Doña Isolina “*la tarea no es de quien la empieza, sino de quien la termina y nosotros tenemos el deber de seguir luchando para dejarles a las generaciones futuras, un Puerto Rico mejor.*” (The task is not who starts, but who finishes it and we have a duty to continue the struggle to pass on to future generations a better Puerto Rico.)

Regardless of the contributions of these countless women worthies, what has mattered for the nationalist project is how women have contributed to the independence cause. To the previous list, another litany of names can be added: artist and union organizer Mona Marti; human rights advocate Trina Rivera de Ríos; community organizer Gloria Gerena; and poet and writer Trina Padilla de Sanz, known as the Daughter of the Caribbean (see Cotto 1985; Trina Rivera de Ríos 1998; Vientos Gastón [1957]1987). Other figures included Lydia Barreto who was one of the founders of the Puerto Rican Movement for Independence, the Socialist Party, the Nuevo Movimiento Independentista, and a founding member of *Claridad* in 1959 (see Nuevo Movimiento Independentista 2003). Additionally, Inocencia Martinez de Figueroa founded the first Feminine Club of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Toledo 1981), connecting the independence cause in Puerto Rico with the Cuban revolution.

In the new millennium, new leaders have been profiled by *Claridad*, including lawyer Wilma Reverón Collazo that was as candidate for president of the Puerto Rican Bar Association or *Colegio de Abogados* by a coalition of groups, including feminist organizations (Franco 2002). In 2006, lawyer Celina Romany ran for president hoping to transform the institution into a modern institution. The association has been lead by a

woman president Nora Rodríguez Matías once, although women have been significant number of its members (see Franco 2006; Coss 1988).

Finally, the singer-songwriter Zoraida Santiago was featured for her centrality to the *Claridad Festival*. This festival is a musical event that creates a patriotic space to celebrate the cultures of nationalism. For Zoraida Santiago, supporting *Claridad* is essential or “imprescindible” because the paper is the “*Voz de la Patria*” or “the Voice of the Nation” (López 2005:19). As a musician, her songs are vested in the land, the nation and social justice. Similarly, Cruz Román (2001) documented the rise of María de Lourdes Santiago as vice-president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP). In 2004, she became the first woman to be elected to the Senate of Puerto Rico and as a woman representative of the PIP. In 2008, the party lost its representations and legal recognition as a party after earning insufficient votes during national elections.

In conclusion, Puerto Rican women worthies are unwavering women who followed the “code and regulations” for inclusion: they supported independence nationalism. A particularly interesting nationalist figure that did not figure prominently during the 1980 to 2006 period was Carmen Rivera de Alvarado. She pioneered the profession of social work in Puerto Rico, and was recognized in the United States and in Latin America for her vision of developing social work as a discipline (Cotto 1999). I found intriguing the limited coverage of Carmen Rivera de Alvarado because in the collection of documents of the independence movement compiled by Juan Mari Brás, she offered a statement originally published in 1962 documenting and critiquing Puerto Rican women’s contribution to national identity and the independence cause (see Mari Brás

2007:221-38). Her construction of women's contributions to independence was shaped by a nationalist ideology, and even though she was not quite labeled a feminist, her emphasis was consistent with nationalist ideology and the tradition of Albizu Campos.

I observed that a growing number of articles were published at the dawn of the twenty-first century coinciding with the appointment of Alida Millán Ferrer (2002) as the first director of the section *En Rojo* (In Red). However, the increase in articles may have had nothing to do with her appointment as a "woman," and it may have been a spurious correlation related to the societal transition into a new millennium and/or perhaps the increased global activism of women. The turn of the century additionally saw the Vieques coalition of groups and their activism along with the war of the flags.

International Worthies and Country Profiles

Likewise, international women worthies are chiefly included in the coverage because to be leveraged for the independence cause and secondarily, to inform the nation about women's roles and women's issues in other countries. Women from various countries can be presented for a latent critique of feminism as a foreign import for favoring women's equality at the local level, when in fact the articles showed that internationally women really fight for national liberation. Puerto Rican women and feminists can be critiqued for not embracing nationalism; instead they have embraced a foreign import based on foreign ideas that does not even reflect the original intent of the inclusion of women in socialist nationalism.

Among the key women worthies were the precursors of feminism in Europe, Olympia de Gouges and Mary Wollstonecraft who strategized for the liberation of women, citizenship rights, and denounced male authority (Cervantes 2002). Even postmodernist writer and French intellectual Hélène Cixous was featured as she spoke of writing from the perspective of the other by combining “madness and wisdom” (Cixous 2002). From the perspective of the nation and women, both women and nation have been constructed as “other,” sometimes by the internal structure of the independence movement, sometimes for their membership in the Puerto Rican community and often ignored as other foreign import as feminist. What is important about this coverage is that it invokes *all* resources regardless of national origin. The discourse of nationalism appropriates international women through its “independence guise,” and renders all women’s issues and international icons with scripts to advance the nationalist project.

It is known that Irish women, for example, participated as homemakers and militants in the Irish Republican Movement (see Soto Dávila 2001); while Albizu Campos compared Puerto Rico and Ireland in his efforts for nationalist liberation from external domination. It seems that where ever one looks the banality of nationalism is there to be deployed because the ideology of the nationalist project is always latent, awaiting to be deployed.

Another instance was the life and death of intellectual Susan Sontag, a dissenter who opposed American foreign policy and warned that the war in Iraq will be memorialized by its photographs of torture committed by U.S. soldiers against the Iraqi people (Barradas 2005). The denouncement of the images of war and torture through the

report of Sontag's work can also be leveraged as reminder of the repression against Puerto Rican dissidents and nationalist sympathizers. Likewise, *Claridad* remembered the death of pacifist Jean Zwickel who in the 1940s supported the independence of Puerto Rico, testified in front of the U.N. Committee on Decolonization, and buttressed civil rights activism against Jim Crow practices in the United States (Aponte Vazquez 2005). Harriet Tubman's role in the abolitionist was also reported to underscore the struggle of African American women (see García Arroyo 2002) and civil rights icon, Rosa Parks, who created the spark or "chispa" for the civil rights movement in the United States (see Servicios Especiales de *Claridad* 2005). The inclusion of these notable figures echoed Albizu's call to include everyone's participation in the project for national liberation; clearly in this case it means the "entire" world.

In an independence twist, a two part article about the U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright presented a nationalist reading of U.S. foreign policy toward Palestine. Ruiz Garofalo (2000a; 2000b) examined Albright's work relative to bourgeois feminism, and described her appointment as the first woman U.S. Secretary of State as "pay-back" to the U.S. feminist movement for supporting President Clinton and the Democratic Party's ascent to power. These articles are significant because they made reference to Palestine's Intifada or "uprising" or "shaking off" (Faure 2005:186), paralleling Puerto Rico's political status as a nation without a state.

The independence project also built alliances by promoting awareness of international and global problems facing women. If the cause for independence is to succeed, then an international support can be leveraged against U.S. foreign policy. To

this effect, articles examined issues in the regions of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, especially in the countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Cuba, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and San Salvador. Women may face similar problems, but context specific solutions are required to meet the needs for social justice.

A host of issues were invoked from different countries to show the significance of the independence cause through women's activism on behalf of their nations. Issues included: the disappeared in Argentina (Arbona 1998; Fernández 1987); the burnout among service who work with survivors of intimate partner violence (Alterman Blay 2000; Corsi 2000); the fight against government corruption in Brazil (see Vianna Mello 1992); unemployment and poverty in Honduras (Troya Flores 2006); micro-enterprises in Chile (Canhuarte 1995); women activism against the repressive dictatorship of Pinochet (Timerman 1988); the feminization of poverty and the consequences of neoliberal structural adjustment policies (Calvo 2000); the condemnation using the women's plight for political gain (Navarro 2000); and the rise of democratization movements in Perú (Mogollón 2000a, 2000b).

The context of Latin America was significant because it linked independence to the international project rooted in the cultural heritage of Spain and the colonial legacies. The example of Cuba is particularly important for its reaffirmation of the socialist revolution that has been attributed to Cuban women (Olga S. Dávila 1995; Muriente Pérez 1983), particularly through the Federation of Cuban Women founded in 1959. Women represented the vanguard of the revolution, even if there is no proof other than

the assertion that they were the vanguard. Puerto Rican feminist nationalist Josefina Pantoja Oquendo (1993), the encounter with Cuba has been a solidarity encounter; and as the leader of the OPMT at the time, the organization collected taken-for-granted toiletries for Cuban women because when supplies do not arrive in Cuba, given the U.S. blockade, and the monthly cycle of women's menstrual cycle, women would suffer in sex/gender structured ways.

In the instance of Nicaragua, women were indispensably involved in the 1975 Sandinista Revolution and were militants in the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) and against the Somoza regime (Cotto 1987). In Mexico similar preoccupations were reported, with an emphasis on the demise of the Partido de la Revolución Institucional (PRI) and questions were raised about the fate of 62 women political prisoners who had critiqued neoliberal policies of the right wing government allegedly for demanding free education (Hijas del Mais 2000).

With the election in 2006 of revolutionary leader Violeta Menjívar Escalante, the nationalist aspiration to an electoral triumph was personified in her role as leader of the movement for national liberation (Martinez Martinez 2006). A member of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), Violeta Menjívar Escalante reflected a new era in San Salvador and the changing women's roles in government and the expansion of democracy in the country. Her election as a member of the nationalist movement showed that women's rights in the nation and in military politics put women in a position to do "more than grind corn and make tortillas;" women can and "should" contribute to the revolution (Martinez Martinez 2006). This point reminded me of

Carmen Rivera de Alvarado's ([1962/1972] in Mari Bras 2007:237) question: "What have you done today for the liberation of our country?"

While the coverage of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe was evident, the Middle East and the African continent received almost no coverage with the exception of Afghanistan and Nigeria. The article on Afghanistan mentioned the use of *burka* and the stoning of women in Afghanistan (Ruiz Garofalo 2002). However, the significance of the article was anchored in the point that the intervention of the Northern Alliance and its U.S. supporters had not necessarily changed the status of women. By implication, when western countries have invaded other countries by force, the outcome is not necessarily the liberation of the women or the liberation of the nation of Puerto Rico.

In sum, I surmised from this coverage of international women worthies that the representation of notable international women buttressed the independence of Puerto Rico, supported national independence in their respective countries, and/or voiced support for the independence cause in the nation of *Claridad*. Women were represented as dissenters and denouncers of the United States' colonial projects to advance national independence throughout the world. The coverage of women created proxies for the construction of the Puerto Rican nation when articles about Puerto Rican women were perhaps unavailable. The use of women from other countries served as proxies for national cause through comparative analysis demonstrated the relational structure of gender and nation. International women worthies and issues were a strategy to leverage women's roles in other countries on behalf of independence in Puerto Rico. By making distinctions between Puerto Rican women and women from other countries that

supported independence, the national boundaries were firmly established for Puerto Rican women as reproducers of the nation and legitimized the existence of the Puerto Rican nation searching for sovereignty. As research by Armstrong (1982) suggested women are the border guards of the nation.

While the depiction of international women worthies ideologically shaped the existence and reproduction of the Puerto Rican collectivity, it also marked the image of women as belonging to the nation, both here and there, in Puerto Rico and throughout the world. International women worthies created a point of comparison to draw distinctions and boundaries of belonging to the nation. Wherever the nation is found, in Puerto Rico or in the diaspora, the nation supports the independence cause. This strategy solidified the role of women in representing and producing the nation. This ideological reproduction of the collectivity of Puerto Rican women served additional functions of cultural transmission, signification of ethnic national groups and boundaries, and generated a space for the reconstruction of the history. The comparative analysis of the reality of the Puerto Rican women vis-à-vis that of women in other countries led women from other nations as *standing for* Puerto Rican women, who in turn personify independence nationalism.

Summary

This chapter discussed the nationalist construction of women roles in the area of women's issues, women's issues and feminism, primarily but not exclusively during the month of March. Regardless of where and when the article appeared women engaged in

distinctive roles as vessels of nationalism. Women worthies from around the globe and from Puerto Rico appeared for their contribution to the nationalist project.

An emerging nationalism could be detected from these social constructions of women through the tension between feminism and activism for women and nationalism. This confrontation challenges the national story of exclusion of women and their relegation to supportive roles and/or violent masculine nationalists as the previous chapter showed. *Claridad*, the newspaper paper of the Puerto Rican nation, rarely included women, but when it did include them it was for their roles as supporters or for standing for national independence. Even when the coverage included international women and women's issues, the point was to underscore women worthies in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean. The politics of inclusion of the representation of gender in the nation shows that women regardless of social location and geography were constructed as supporters of the independence cause. In sum, the articles catalogued in this section provided profiles of key international women and/or women's issues by country specific reports. The focus of the articles was broad, and it pertained to the status of women in those countries and issues of concern in those regions. *Claridad's* coverage used an international perspective with a primary focus on Latin America and the Caribbean, while also providing coverage of some European perspectives and little focus on the Middle East and Africa.

Besides the traditional focus on women during March, Women's History Month and International Women's Day, it appeared that when national stories about Puerto Rican women and gender were not "available," *Claridad outsourced* articles from other

countries and regions of the world to present women's support for the cause across national borders. This suggested that nationalism is a transnational and national movement that crosses boundaries anywhere they may articulate themselves because the cause for independence is global. The profiles of women in other countries, like the roles of Puerto Rican women, operated as *proxies* or *standing for* Puerto Rican women who really stand for independence nationalism. Independence nationalism is a woman or a man dressed in the national "drag" for the cause.

Using a comparative perspective served as a strategy to show Puerto Rico's role and its people some of whom are feminists and nationalists in the international context of nations and countries. The coverage demonstrated a clear sense of Puerto Rico as a nation in its own right with narrow concerns about feminism and women that have both national and international implications.

The coverage embodied in the articles of Puerto Rican women worthies and international women, and their international global encounters reflected a political perspective linking women and nationalism. Puerto Rican women have been immersed in the nationalist independence movement and have been covered in less than two percent of the page coverage. Often the coverage of women's involvement in nationalist activism was clearly centered on seeking equality for women, a perspective that reflected many of the claims of feminism as a movement for social change.

Based on these findings of women's roles in nationalism, I have surmised that the nationalist project has created a "tiny" crack for the inclusion of women's agency through what I labeled "the unfinished project" of feminist nationalism. By invoking national

sovereignty, feminist nationalists have created a context for the commemoration of women and gender. Similarly, the fact that the national coverage appropriates women's activism and feminism for its own cause can now be turned on its head so that women and feminists can also demand gender justice now, not until after independence. Because all women and groups are leveraged by *Claridad*, regardless of national origin and social location, those groups now have the agency to demand inclusion in the nation to build a better future based on human rights and national rights.

However, the unfinished project of nationalism remains a work-in progress because there is limited support for feminists, women nationalists, feminist nationalists, and the multicultural nation of sexual minorities, racial minorities and the rest of the nation in the hegemonic project of the newspaper documented in this dissertation. There are emerging opportunities for alliance building in Puerto Rico across social locations given the national and global realities of Puerto Rican society not only as a country of competing and divided loyalties, but also as a nation for women waiting to be emancipated for social justice. Women's roles as a heuristic device have shown that the question of what women and men contribute for the freedom of their country remains an unfinished project for social justice.

CHAPTER 7

FEMINISTS CRITIQUE OF THE NATIONALIST PROJECT

In this chapter, I trace the roles of feminists and feminism in independence nationalism. My goal is to outline the key problematic of feminist nationalism. I evaluate the prospects for the rise of a feminist nationalism as a counter-hegemonic discourse that challenges the social construction of independence nationalism as a masculine project of sovereignty. I will argue that feminist nationalism is a counter-hegemonic discourse informed by what Yuval-Davis (1997) called the civic dimension or *Staatnation*.

To make my case, I first analyze four interviews that were conducted with feminists in the mid-1980s by *Claridad*. These interviews asked broad ranging questions from feminist nationalists, Marta Elsa Fernández, Ana Irma Rivera Lassén, Emilia Rodríguez, and Josefina “Jossie” Pantojas. In these interviews, feminists had a chance to speak for themselves, and I listened to their answers to understand women’s roles and feminist roles in independence nationalism. I paid particular attention to the silences in these interviews and to how the feminist project may be used to advance and/or detract from the discourses of independence.

Second, after articulating the feminist voices and their key concerns, I analyzed the content to extract or excavate the Puerto Rican feminist critique of nationalism. I ascertained the prominent aspects of the critique as structured by the history of Puerto Rico, the structure of political parties, and the existence of Puerto Rican feminist

discourses. I examined the claim that feminism is a “foreign import” to demystify the debate from the perspective of independence nationalism and the feminist critique of this assertion. I then assessed the contributions of this Puerto Rican feminist nationalism as a counter-hegemonic discourse grounded in civic nationalism. I filtered my claims by providing two examples where I see the rise of the civic nation, the “Peace for Vieques” movement and the “war of the flags.” I discuss each of those historical events of nationalism and feminism for what they contribute to the discourses of nationalism, feminism and independence currents. I traced the ways in which *Claridad* constructs feminists and feminism for the nationalist cause and how feminism in turn implodes those arguments.

This critical analysis aims to show that women are not vessels of nationalism: feminists and nationalist women, like other women covered by *Claridad*, are agentic beings across their varied locations in the nation of independence. I show that Puerto Rican feminist nationalists also play distinctive roles in nationalism, and that in the nationalist discourse, feminists served to highlight what nationalists believe is always latent: the struggle for independence to achieve Puerto Rican sovereignty from U.S. colonial rule. Yet the discourse of “national independence is not enough” and feminism provides a more inclusive project to achieve social justice with feminism, but it ends up used to upgrade the nationalist sovereignty argument for the twenty-first century.

Feminists Speak Out for Themselves

Historically, a sense of injustice and desire to transform the status quo has generated involvement in social movements (Turner and Killian 1972). Feminism has

been one of those movements that embodied multiple frameworks or prisms to understand gender oppression. Feminist frameworks have also privileged different strategies and explanations of gender inequality and societal change. Foretelling the ideas of Chela Sandoval's (2000) "methodology of the oppressed," Romany's (1991) feminism privileged the experience of women using those experiences as the methodology of knowledge. The chronicle of women's roles in independence nationalism reiterated that women are vessels of nationalism, but feminism and nationalism in Puerto Rico have intersected in the struggle for national liberation.

Specifically, in the mid-1980s, the newspaper published interviews with feminists to "tomarle el pulso" (to measure the pulse) of the organized feminist movement in Puerto Rico. The interviews and other sources informing the present analysis are listed in the appendix. The "dialogue with feminists" inquired about the following topics: the meaning of feminism; feminist organizations; men's roles in feminist organizations; being a feminist inside or outside party politics; the link between working women and feminists as intellectuals; the stigma of lesbianism; and a brief inquiry into the existence of a "feminismo Puertorriqueño" or "Puerto Rican feminism." I now turn to an overview of each of these topics.

From the bulk of data already addressed and the added benefit of the interviews with feminists who are also nationalists, I surmised competing understandings of feminism and of the women's roles in nationalism. Feminism was defined as a struggle from different fronts to improve women's status in society and to achieve equality with men, although the coverage did not specify with which men women sought equality. For

example, Emilia Rodríguez concurred with this definition and as leader of the organization *Encuentro de Mujeres* (Encounters of Women), she advocated for the compartmentalization of women's issues. I found this significant because feminist theorizing has shown that gender structures of inequality intersect through a matrix of domination. Ana Rivera Lassén added that a historical perspective was needed to show that feminism goes back over one-hundred years of Puerto Rican history. I interpreted the historical reference to mark the colonization process and as a resource to mark the aftermath of colonization of Puerto Rico by Spain, but more importantly the United States. Feminism has been a response or consequence of the colonial process and also of the nationalist exclusion of women and not quite the cause of foreign influences in Puerto Rico.

Then, the interviews examined the role of feminist organizations against oppression in all spheres of social life. Rodríguez contended that the focus of their organization was the private sphere of the home, the double shift, and the lack of networks with other women. I know that the home can be an isolating place for women that bury women's work experiences and hides among other issues, intimate partner violence. Additionally, for Rivera Lassén, feminist organizations have redefined the personal as political to attend to those social issues impacting women in society. Jossie Pantojas underscored the intersection between gender and work, and redefined workers to encompass students, unemployed women as well as homemakers. Work and gender intersected as the cornerstone of women's oppression. Inadvertently, the coverage of feminist organizations re-inscribed women back in the sphere of the home by

emphasizing it, meanwhile also denouncing women's double shift. The latent consequence of the emphasis on the private sphere was that to be credible, feminism speaks a language that becomes consistent with the nationalist discourse. Women attend to women's issues (the private sphere of the home and women's issues within the party) and men attend to public issues (the public sphere of party politics).

I also learned about men's roles in feminist organizations. Men were described as potential "collaborators." Rivera Lassén concurred with Rodríguez regarding the exclusion of men because men's alleged presence in organizations inhibited women. The implication here is that gender is a social relation of power; but feminists noted that "some men" reportedly sought to transform their machista and sexist attitudes. Jorge Farinacci (1988) described women as "essential," that women are gaining equal footing with men, and that meetings were being organized at times when women could attend. This "change" does not transform the sexual division of labor, but it accommodates the "men's meeting times" around women's role in childcare and home life. This "change" has failed to address the lives of sexual minorities. From my analysis thus far, the newspaper coverage raised important questions about whether or not men seek change, given that their project constructs and values independence as a masculine project. Both feminist organizations and nationalist organizations have excluded women's issues and/or men depending on the strategy and goals of their activism. Autonomous feminist organizations emphasized reaching out to women to raise their consciousness; however, besides the interviewees and the interviewers, none of the women workers were asked what they thought about their so-called "lack of consciousness." By excluding men,

women may focus on reaching women, feminists may speak among themselves, and a similar argument may be leveraged against the exclusion of women's agenda from the nationalist movement until after national liberation!

Furthermore, Fernández added that feminist organizing was not anti-man, but structured to the benefit of both by empowering women. Perhaps for the development of consciousness, women were removed from the powerful "gaze" of men; yet the division of labor in party politics and at home reproduced further the sex/gender system. *Claridad* spoke with only four "gender experts" (Álvarez 1999). Additionally, in the context of independence, this is a political move because women and the feminist perspectives can be used against women. The latent consequence was boosting the primacy of the independence cause. By implication, women's roles in nationalism through feminist organizations showed that women can play the roles of "gender experts" relative to "citizen experts" (Alvarez 1999).

Thus, my excavation of women as citizens relegated them to a support role as gender experts within party politics capable of dealing with their own grievances by focusing on "their" women's issues, compartmentalized and ghettoized in their own topic. Meanwhile, the rest of the men can focus on the nationalist project of masculinity, the problematic of national liberation of the nation. This sexual division of labor foretells Pizarro's (2000b) call to work across and between independence groups, especially through the newest incarnation called the Puerto Rican New Independence Movement (NMIP). This movement was denounced by Socialist Party founder Juan Mari Brás for "not doing enough" for the independence cause. Doris Pizarro (2002b) contended that

each organization contributes in the measure that they can participate in the liberation process, while also underscoring the fragmentation of independence forces as an inherent problem of the movement. From Albizu Campos to Lolita Lebrón, based on my analysis of the data for this dissertation I also noticed this pattern as a prominent feature of the movement for independence, but also of the feminist movement. Fragmentation and tension have often generated meaningful opportunities for social change.

A related concern that pinpointed to the fragmentation of the feminist movement was the stigma of “lesbianism.” If women organized in their own groups at the exclusion of men, then the meaning of being a woman also becomes contested. If the feminist role stands for “women,” then for women, who may also have sexual desire for women, may be rendered outside the nationalist project. Rodríguez saw the labeling process as a problem *for* feminism and *of* feminism. When lesbianism was discussed by her organization *Encuentro de Mujeres*, they acknowledged that women have been sexually repressed and called for the sexual liberation of women by having alternatives about who they wish to love. Rather than privileging hegemonic heteronormativity, feminist organizations called for an understanding based on the issue of “choice.”

For Rivera Lassén, the stigma of “feminists as lesbians” is an additional “*cuco*” or “bogyman” against feminism that personifies lesbians as men. Rivera Lassén underscored that the demystification process is an aspect of the feminist struggle. The labeling of feminists as lesbians operated as antifeminist propaganda and ideology; at the same time, the masculine project of nationalism presented women as very “masculine men” through their roles as combatants and political prisoners. Fernández argued that the

organization transcended the lesbianism issue as “an affair” or “*un asunto*” that feminists must consider without discriminating based on sexual preference or sexual identity.

Fernández acknowledged the presence of a homosexual movement in Puerto Rico and that feminists must also take a position with respect to that movement.

On the question of whether one could be a feminist without being organized into autonomous feminist organizations or party organizations, feminists agreed that this was possible. Rodríguez went as far as to characterize that “any act” where women assert themselves “as women” is a feminist act, especially in “front of men.” The roles listed for men included bosses, husbands, and lovers. Given the stigma of lesbianism, it is significant that these were the key roles associated with women’s agency, always attached to a man. Resistance to feminist organizing sometimes depended on the status of women, the lack of child care services and their male partners’ objections. The challenge of reaching the everyday Puerto Rican is still paramount as the movement usually consists of intellectuals, professionals, and students. However, the message of democracy for all is inscribed into Puerto Rican society and the national body politic. The feminist movement is part of the consciousness raising process, and empirical studies are needed to measure the extent and reach of the feminist movement and the nationalist movement in Puerto Rico.

Therefore, the meaning and existence of Puerto Rican feminism were also discussed. Rodríguez and Romano (1986) reported that feminist Emilia Rodríguez acknowledged that to understand the problematic of Puerto Rican women, feminists drew from a variety of resources, including books and articles across international boundaries

contextualized in the historical, social, and colonial structure of Puerto Rican society. Puerto Rican feminism must be situated in the historical context of over five centuries of foreign influences; and independence nationalism and the struggle for liberation have also been shaped by the historical context of Puerto Rican society. Thus for Rivera Lassén “something” entirely Puerto Rican does not exist, but that any influences from other areas can mutually benefit women regardless of the national origin of human ideas. Women mediate their responses to societal conditions based on their own historically specific context and colonization does not erase the human experience of Puerto Rican women and Puerto Rican men, but it mediates the experience and challenges the rejection and dismissal of feminism as a foreign import (Rivera Quintero 1981). Instead, the empirical data here has shown that Puerto Rican women have historically organized to challenge oppression and inequality sometimes using feminism, at other times using nationalist strategies, often combining both for many reasons not just anti-colonial activism.

Together, I see the interviews with feminists creating a discourse of women’s rights that is also problematic that labels feminist discourses as “too theoretical” and “highly educated,” creating further social stigma. If feminism is equated with women’s equality, this assumes that all women start with the same scarce resources. This definition does not encompass the intersectionality of experience nor the central debates that have shaped feminist theorizing. At the same, given the context of publication, the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation, this simplistic explanation can be readily spread as “knowledge” for public consumption. Feminism, like nationalism, is not monolithic

phenomena; there are multiple feminisms and nationalisms. If women have fought for their rights for centuries, even if they never labeled themselves or were labeled by others as feminists. This concern for the “origin” of feminism can also privilege the nationalist discourse because women are fighting for something that has been around for a long time, the struggle for women’s equality, OMG!

By asking feminists to define the meaning of feminism and to discuss the specifically feminist project of Puerto Rican feminism, feminist nationalists were put in a position to “speak for the subaltern” (Spivak 1988). Yet women workers were never interviewed to see what they had to say about their lack of consciousness and only a historical account of the needle and tobacco industries actually appeared. Feminism is more than “women’s equality,” and gender justice entails rethinking a different kind of society where people’s basic needs are met through their social location in hierarchies of intersectionality. The implication of this discussion of feminism is that highly educated women who are also feminists will be expected to play roles as social experts. This expertise will be used to translate feminism for the recruitment of working women into an activism that makes the independence ideal possible, while keeping them occupied with their own deeds. For me, both feminists and nationalists have been taken to task for speaking in a language that excludes rather than includes the everyday woman or person on the street. This further reproduces the “dated” argument that “*a las mujeres no hay quien las entienda*” or “nobody understands what women want.” Thus, let the gender experts “translate” for men and for women.

Indeed, Ana Irma Rivera Lassén clearly explains that feminist theorizing is necessary to address gender oppression; I am also aware that viewing theory as an “external” influence denies the importance of social location that feminists have underscored. These exclusions also challenge whether or not women can and should do theory. These exclusions using the claim that the language of education makes it difficult to communicate raises questions about the uses of literacy against women. Latently, the language critique can be used against women to buttress the independence cause, by again making women responsible for constructing the nation by providing translation services with a language that “we” can understand.

Feminism Critiques Nationalism

I shall now chronicle the feminist critique by the feminist nationalists who have navigated the realm of feminism and nationalism in Puerto Rico. One of the early critiques of nationalism came from the extensive work of Marcia Rivera Quintero (1981). In an article about working class feminism or “feminismo obrero,” she chronicled the period of 1900 to 1920 to critique the assertion that “the advent of socialism was the panacea” to solve gender inequality and asserted that the women’s struggle for equality in Puerto Rico is not a foreign import. Rivera Quintero (1981:4) illuminated this point:

La lucha por la liberación de la mujer no es nueva ni ha sido importada, el socialismo no es una panacea que automáticamente corrige las desigualdades entre géneros, y la lucha de las mujeres por alcanzar un estado de igualdad no esta reñida con la lucha nacional. Definitivamente, el lograr armonizar estos objetivos conlleva discusiones serias en las cuales habrá discrepancias enormes y frecuentemente contradicciones insalvables. (The struggle for the liberation of women is not new or has been imported, socialism is not a panacea that will automatically correct the inequities between genders, and the struggle of women to attain a state of equality is not at odds with the national struggle. Definitely,

achieving these objectives involves harmonizing serious discussion in which disagreements will be enormous and often insurmountable contradictions.

Notwithstanding the nationalist critique of feminism as a foreign import, many of the improvements in women's status have actually occurred under U.S. capitalist rule and intervention. I have observed that women's activism in unions, access to education and later on voting rights were expanded to the benefit of the entire population without forgetting that the extension of rights also served the process of Americanizing the island.

Contradictions have existed between feminism and nationalism; yet placing feminism in the Puerto Rican social milieu revealed that women across social class groups have been prominent in their militancy for women's rights. In the worker's rights movement, women supported the socialist movement of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Rivera Quintero (1981) indicated that solidarity among workers became a strategy to gain equal pay for equal work and social justice. The labor movement venerated by the socialist tradition of the independence movement showed that the nation is "neutral" in that it belongs to all, a point echoed in the writings of labor leader Rafael López Landrón. In 1916 he described the nation as neutral and the cause of feminism as a just and global cause:

La patria no es masculina ni femenina; es sencillamente neutra: es humana. . . . La causa del feminismo es internacional, es universal, como la causa del trabajo, como la causa de la paz. (The nation [country] is not male or female, is simply neutral: it is human. . . . The cause of feminism is international, is universal, as the cause of labor as the cause of peace. (Rafael López Landrón 1916 cited in Rivera Quintero 1981:4).

Women's struggles and militancy underscored the centrality of working class women. Leader Marta Elsa Fernández (1982) asserted that beginning in 1978 the Puerto

Rican Socialist Party (PSP) accentuated and acknowledged the tactical importance of women working within and outside party politics by creating a PSP Women's Commission within the party. However, my review of a recent edited volume by Socialist Party founder Juan Mari Brás (2007), I found that the independence documents did not include any of those position papers. I also reviewed a series of documentaries by Freddie Rodríguez (2010) about the various independence movements called “*dialogando sobre independentismos*,” and women were interviewed along with numerous men intellectuals for their expertise about the history of the independence movement in all of its variants or what they called “*independentismos*.” Of course, it is likely that “in future” documentaries, women will be included or wait until after independence!

While acknowledgment of women's contributions to the independence cause is important, commemoration by itself is not enough because there is nothing more “invisible” than a “monument” (Turner 2006). Because socialist activism was informed by dated Marxist scripts, the male power structure of the party relegated women to the margins, denigrating the women's cause, and rendering invisible unequal power relations and denying the fact that hegemony can also be obtained through consent. At the same time, socialist women took it upon themselves to transform their social location in a patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist context. Fernández (1982) noted that “nos toca a nosotras” or “it is up to us” the women of the PSP to make this feminist critique part of the party; by implication women have an added shift to home and work, party politics.

My excavation of women worthies across the nationalist project chronicled the significance of Puerto Rican women in the independence struggle, and this restoration

process suggested that women have organized to advocate for their rights, not as a “foreign” idea, but deeply rooted in Puerto Rican women’s experiences in society. Consequently, in a statement by the Puerto Rican Organization of Working Women (OPMT) entitled “*Nuestra Teoría Feminista*” or “Our Feminist Theory” (1983), the organization advocated autonomous women’s organizations to remedy gender inequality and oppression. The organization clarified that the struggle was not against men, but against a social system of class and gender stratification.

The rise of feminist activism within party politics brought questions about the existence of a specifically “Puerto Rican feminism.” For instance, poet Angelamaría Dávila (1986) called for a *criollo* (Creole) feminism that is locally based and grounded in the historical context of Puerto Rican women’s experiences, yet significantly structured by an independence ideology. Feminism meant an inevitable struggle intersecting with class politics. For Dávila (1986), certain words have emerged, including *machismo* that are used by “the foreign” to make reference to women’s oppression by men in Latin American countries. These social categories have shortcomings as they are rooted in the conditions of colonization and the assumption that “everything foreign [read: U.S. based] is better” or “*todo lo de allá es mejor*.” Similarly, I reject the use of the language of independence that constantly described women as “*imprescindibles*” (“essential”) for not being better equipped to actually address unequal power relations shaped by a discourse of independence nationalism, from a male power structure that is very local but also global.

At the ideological level, national poet Angelamaría Dávila (1986: 14) invoked Ramón Emeterio Betances by stating that “to be free is to begin to be free” or “*Querer ser libre es empezar a serlo*.” I may have also cited the poem by Julia de Burgos where she makes reference to being “her own path” (*Yo misma fui mi ruta*), or perhaps “*ay, ay, ay que soy grifa y pura negra*” to show women’s linkages to race, class, and nation. These statements are highly individualist and ignore that social justice belongs to all, not just the “I.” Creative writers have liberties that social scientists do not; ultimately, the freedom and liberation of women and nation remain an empirical question. The social-psychological quest for freedom will be insufficient to eradicate social injustice. Life chances are structured by social forces and in the case of Puerto Rican society, the colonial legacy of Spain and the United States has provided the material context for the discourses of national liberation with and/or without feminism and women. However, these discourses are a consequence not a cause of colonialism, otherwise we are back to being vessels of not just nationalism, but also of colonialism and of feminism.

Additionally, on the question of “independence without feminism,” Romany (1991) pondered whether or not there is a possibility for the liberation of women without the liberation of Puerto Rico. What I have surmised thus far is that in Puerto Rico, the women’s movement and the feminist movements are actually existing movements driven by academics, intellectuals, students, autonomous women’s and feminist organizations, party based women’s organizations, and the rising multicultural nation through the globalization of civil society. The masculine project of independence showed that women have struggled for independence nationalism. Based on the claim of Emilia Rodríguez

that a feminist act is “any act where women assert themselves as women” (cited in Rodríguez and Romano 1986:31), women have fought against colonialism and sacrificed their bodies to liberate the national body of Puerto Rico as the chapter on the masculine project documented. I don’t doubt the convictions of women who have sacrificed on behalf of the Puerto Rican nation, but question the role of a discourse that constantly represents women as only vessels of nationalism. Regrettably, the sacrifices of women through incarceration, surveillance, repression, representation, and the stigma of “being a communist/feminist/lesbian/socialist/nationalist” have not generated independence of the nationalist kind, but plenty of accolades as “*imprescindibles*” or essential women (*Wepa!*).

Romany (1991) rejected the nationalist viewpoint that relegated feminism to “a manechism of the colonial regime,” for being “a condescending and patronizing ideology.” Puerto Rican women’s agency, as this case study has shown, has been consistent on behalf of many causes and issues, including women’s activism on behalf of the nationalist and feminist movements, definitely broad in scope. Feminist activism and women’s activism in both nationalist and feminist endeavors are part of the historical heritage of Puerto Rican society, and can be said to be the consequence not necessarily the cause of foreign perspectives.

To ensure independence *with* feminism, I concurred with Romany (1991) that an examination of the consequences of the colonial process is needed to assess how colonial subjects have been shaped at the level of mind/self/society (Mead 1934) using the standpoint of society. Nationalists are not exempted from the impact of colonialism and

the discourse of independence is filtered through a specific understanding of the national project of liberation, always already privileging nationalism over feminism. In fact, for as long as I can remember and based on the historical facts addressed in this dissertation, the story of the independence movement or the “movimiento libertador” is being written anew everyday by women and men in Puerto Rico and through *Claridad*’s depiction of the national story.

Interestingly, Celina Romany (1991) diagnosed that “independence without feminism” suffers from the “*síndrome de la posposición*” (“postponement syndrome”). For women, the consequences of this syndrome have been devastating, especially in the context of intimate partner violence and widespread poverty and economic exploitation. The medicalization of “independence without feminism” as a “syndrome” implied that male nationalists need “therapy,” and undermines the feminist critique of its explanatory power by turning its critique into another therapy session. Similarly, the newspaper can focus on “taking the pulse of feminism,” as if it were a patient about to perish. Part of the challenge would be to understand and recognize that women who have compromised with the struggle to liberate Puerto Rico are part and parcel of the movement for independence, and that many of these women have also engaged in double militancy in feminist and nationalist movements. Significantly, the work of Celina Romany (1991), like that of many other contributions to the nationalist project, has been sustained and created in the diaspora. By uniting forces across the transnational and national nation may further advance the struggle against colonialism as a system of exploitation, struggling through feminist nationalist models for social justice.

Notwithstanding the critique of Puerto Rican colonialism, a central tool for promoting social justice in spite of its imperfections has been the legal system of Puerto Rico and through the U.S. colonial structure. For feminist Katherine Angueira (1989), a feminist perspective in matters of legislation brings women's struggle for social justice to the forefront by using the tools of the state to protect women. The use of the state apparatus also drove women to leverage the laws of the United States for supporting legal changes in Puerto Rico. Colonial or not, nationalist or not, feminist or not: The law has been an important tool for women's emancipation, and at the same time, the law has been used to repress women, nationalists, and the lives of sexual minorities.

Legislation has transformed the struggle for women's equality by creating a framework for addressing violence in all its forms, transforming the unequal status of women in the labor market, and by challenging public policy that focuses primarily on the reproductive function of women as their only contribution or *aportación* to society. For Angueira (1989), challenging hegemonic masculinity through a revision of the "penal" code may ensure that the perspective of the victim/survivor of the crime is fully accounted and protected. Romano (1987) warned that "legislative machismo" is the "target of feminists," but called for legal protections for women. Often women must depend on the state for protection, yet the state can also be a violent institution who denies social justice and opportunities for women.

Rodríguez Martino (1987) voiced a related concern associated with how political party representatives vote on matters of concern to women. Santos Febres (1991) concurred that even when women run for political office, women's social location by

gender may not be enough to ensure that the feminist and socialist cause is advanced by the candidacy of a woman. She was referring to the candidacy of Victoria “Melo” Muñoz for governor of Puerto Rico in the 1990s. Her figure was rendered suspect for being attached to her father, Luis Muñoz Marín who renounced the independence project to support the transformation of the political status of Puerto Rico into a “free associated state.” Even feminist and nationalist Norma Valle (1992) called her candidacy “a hot potato for feminism.” The comparison of women with food has long been documented in feminist critiques, and feminists pondered about whether being a woman would be sufficient criteria for voting for Melo. She allegedly never battled for improving the status of women in Puerto Rico and voted against *Law 54*, the law passed to protect victims of domestic violence; and she supported broader goals of ending corruption and social problems facing Puerto Rican society (Valle 1992). The candidacy of a woman broke the glass ceiling, but she was also linked to “her father and the patriarch” of the commonwealth party through her roles as a “daughter, mother, spouse, and/or widow,” all important reminders of women’s roles in nationalism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989).

For Díaz Medina (1982), a fundamental principle of feminist activism and feminism is the recognition of equality and equal opportunity for all. Feminist activism on behalf of women uses multiple strategies. To build a feminist nationalist project that attends to the civic dimension of nationalism, the rights and boundaries about who is a feminist and who is a nationalist have been central, and in the case of women, they must meet multiple criteria, sometimes across social locations of gender, class, race, sexuality,

and nation and diaspora. For men, whether they are Albizu, Betances, Hostos or any other great men, being men across difference has been sufficient for their inclusion.

Pantoja Oquendo (2005:38) drew important lessons from the women's movement and feminist activism when she contended that women have followed a specific "recipe" to ensure that the "*guiso*" or "stew" (translated into feminists nationalist activism or feminist activism) turns out well: representation of diverse sectors, dialogue and continued communication, consensus building, concrete agendas and a division of labor that draws from the strengths of various women, discipline in pursuing goals, and the search for resources and power sharing within organizations. Villalba (2005) surmised that in Puerto Rico women have been determined to change and move beyond false models of masculinity and machismo that have permeated our nation:

Hace falta aun más conciencia para superar los tabúes y los arquetipos que ha impuesto la sociedad. Aún queda mucha lucha y mucho coraje de valientes Mujeres que se atreven a romper paradigmas y declarar a viva voz que tienen el mismo derecho de formar parte importante del desarrollo de la patria. (We need even more awareness to overcome the taboos and the archetypes that society has imposed. There is still a lot of struggle and courage of brave women who dare to break paradigms and declare loudly that they have the same rights to form an important part of developing the nation or the country). (P.12)

This embedded critique in the newspaper coverage shows the complexity of defining nationalism based on the discourses of "feminism" and/or "independence nationalism," while newspaper way of speaking about nationalism privileges the hegemonic project of masculine nationalism as an national sovereignty.

The emphasis on sovereignty also hinted to the role of feminist nationalists through global activism in international events. Puerto Rican women participated in global encounters associated with United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). This

international dimension “globalized” women’s participation in activism as national representatives of Puerto Rico and as markers, symbols, and border guards of the nation. I saw the roles of feminists and of women through what Álvarez (1999) called “gender experts.” This global context generated roles for feminists in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as advocates for women’s rights, and in party politics as representatives of the independence cause.

This representation of the nation is imagined as sovereign and a key tenet of party politics and of the social construction of masculine identity as well as for feminist theorizing. In this context, the interview with Rivera Lassén in a recent publication contextualized the meaning of double militancy in political parties. Her work reminded me of the challenges faced by women who are both nationalists and feminists and how women’s loyalties to the nation are often questioned if they have complex political lives. That is, as militants in political parties, as feminists advocating for women’s rights and as Puerto Rican women citizens, women play significant roles as “gender experts” (Álvarez 1999). Not only is women’s expertise relegated to commentators on gender issues translated into women’s issues, but the nationalist discourse always places women as in the newspaper project, but not in it. Women’s education is also used against them.

Additionally, activism in international events has expanded the definition of the nation by enlarging the reach of feminist and women’s activism. For instance, in the 1985 World Conference of the United Nations held in Copenhagen, Denmark, a key representative of the independence movement, Eneida Vázquez participated in the events (*Claridad* 1980). Later on, the Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American experience of

women were also addressed through global activism (Rivera Casellas 2001). Specifically, global activism in South Africa challenged racism and called for an end to xenophobia, discrimination, racism and other forms of intolerance to remedy the exclusions documented during the Beijing conference in 1995 (see CIMAC 2001).

Any problem faced by Puerto Rican women is compounded by their position in the stratified hierarchies of race, class, sexuality and nation through their intersectionality. These roles of Puerto Rican women as representatives of the independence project internationally have propelled the feminist and nationalist cause into an international dimension that favors the civic dimension of nationalism through global activism. Puerto Rican women have participated in international activism representing the nation in events structured by the 1975 United Nations Decade for Women and the follow-up meetings, conferences, and events. Puerto Rican women participated to appraise and evaluate the gains made by women throughout the world, and in the region of Latin America and Caribbean. International events structured Puerto Rican women's roles as markers and symbols of the nation, and as border guards, mirroring the symbolism and task of representing Puerto Rico as a nation among nations.

The *Movimiento Pro-Independencia* and Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño (MPI-PSP) early on created an award, named after independence leader Lolita Aulet, to be granted to a woman for her contributions to the Puerto Rican nation and culture (Coss 1984). Lolita Aulet migrated to Chicago, experienced the brunt of racial discrimination. Millán (1992) and Anaid (1993) explained how Lolita Aulet saw the struggle for liberation within competing roles as mother, militant, worker, and patriot. Once

instituted, the award was granted to historian Loida Figueroa for her excellence and sacrifice for the Puerto Rican nation (Bassat 1991).

Additionally, the transnationalization of the nation has also generated a contemporary award to recognize women who have served as women's advocates for the nation and have engaged in representing the nation both nationally and internationally. Pesquera Sevillano (2003) noted that two of those key icons are "the independence movement feminists," Ana Rivera Lassén and María Dolores Fernós. Both received the accolade of the Hostosiana Citizens Award, named after Eugenio María de Hostos, the "father of the nation" and precursor of women's rights in Puerto Rico who also advocated the scientific education of women; he would be very proud. These are two of the most distinguished scholars of the Puerto Rican nation. Pesquera Sevillano (2003) expressed regret about men being poor representatives and guarders of the community, and that voters have been able to focus on substance regardless of the political orientation of the candidates.

This excavation of feminist nationalism seems like a discovery of the feminist critique of nationalism as entrenched and buried in the coverage of *Claridad*. The feminist nationalist perspective challenges and germinates as a counter-hegemonic discourse that is both local and global in conversation with the masculinist project of independence nationalism, embedded in its discourse. There are multiple nationalisms and feminisms. Puerto Rican feminist nationalism uses strategies to address women's experiences of inequality, oppression, and difference by placing them in the social

location of Puerto Rican society, while also drawing alliances across national and global frontiers.

Alliance Building as Transnational Activism

To conclude my analysis of feminists' roles in independence nationalism and to document what I have argued is a counter-hegemonic discourse to independence nationalist discourse, I now turn to two 'nationalist' events that I will re-read from a feminist angle. I will show that the rhetoric of human rights as women's rights has been co-opted to re-inscribe the masculine discourse of independence nationalism by allying itself with the human rights discourse. I will use two examples to illustrate the power of alliance building for feminist and nationalist activism: the protests for peace in *Vieques* and "the war of the flags." First, in 1999 with the symbolic banner of "*Paz para Vieques*" (Peace for Vieques), a coalition of supporters gathered in the municipality of Vieques to demonstrate solidarity through the power of "counter-hegemonic movements" (Evans 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998). After a bomb killed a security guard and injured others, protests ensued and eventually in 2003 the U.S. Navy ceased exercises in the municipality, a significant gain for "building the nation" (Pérez 2000).

Certainly, coalitions of groups using the banner of solidarity and social justice can be leveraged as support for nationalist liberation. Carmen Valentín, the ex-political prisoner, (cited in Cotto 2005d:7) stated it clearly: "*La solidaridad nunca ha tenido nacionalidad y cruza fronteras.*" ("Solidarity has never had a nationality and crosses national borders.") This sample of nationals, including "Viequense women as rescuers for/of peace," recognized the resolve of the nation that knows neither boundaries nor

frontiers to achieve peace. Citing the words of Bertolt Brecht, Orfila Barreto (2002:32) characterized the activists as “essential” people, women (and men):

Hay personas que luchan un día y son buenas. Hay otras que luchan un año y son mejores. Hay quienes luchan muchos años y son muy buenas. Pero hay quienes luchan toda la vida: esas son las imprescindibles. (There are people who fight one day and are good. There are others who fight one year and are better. There are some who fight many years and are very good. But some people struggle all their lives: these are the essential.)

Additionally, the leveraging of the key international indigenous rights activist Rigoberta Menchú linked her survival under a military dictatorship with the people of *Vieques* (and Puerto Rico in general) living under the military occupation of the United States (see Franco 2002). Simultaneously, the coalitions of protestors may also be latently constructed as anti-government and/or leftist activists in a post-9-11 world: Repression always lurks and foreshadows the nation. The “liberation” or the halting of U.S. Navy exercises in *Vieques* did not necessarily yield the emancipation of Puerto Rico from colonial rule, but the activism globalized the struggle for liberation by “leveraging the power of social networks” at the local and global levels (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

The coalition of supporters bridged the gap between the diaspora and in the island of Puerto Rico, and drew the UN Human Rights Commission to await a report from the Puerto Rican Bar Association to determine whether or not it warranted a visit to *Vieques* (Cotto 2000). Perhaps the most important triumph of this mobilization was the 2003 halting of the U.S. Navy military exercises from the land of *Vieques* even if at the level of the material ownership the land still belongs to the United States. The networks of actors in the island and abroad had converged using the discourse of human rights to challenge colonial rule, demonstrating the inconsistency of democratic institutions. This

coalition of activists revealed that the nationalist project for independence is but one version of nationalism, and that increasingly competing versions of nationalism can generate meaningful social change in the nation of Puerto Rico by bringing together activists from all areas of civil society.

The multiple arrests of these activists also foretell the past and future of independence and feminist activism in the island (see Cotto 2001; Cruz Román 2001; González 2000). Acts of civil disobedience were met with arrests of the coalition of supporters that included independence supporters (Marta Font and Luz Nereida Vega) and countless others who are part of the multicultural nation – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Transgendered (LGBT) activists, religious group members, politicians, journalists, feminists from autonomous organizations and countless others from the diaspora such as Puerto Rican and U.S. House Representative Luis Gutiérrez. For me, these networks of activists elucidated the complexity of challenging the inconsistencies in the principles of human rights as discourse under colonial domination. Mari Narvaez (2000) indicated that the acts of civil disobedience become “a mantle of patriotism.” Civil disobedience has now been constructed and inscribed as a key strategy of independence activism informed by international strategies for coalition building using peaceful, democratic activism and strategies.

The other example of coalition building emerged through the discourses of nationalism, feminism, and statehood in the “the war of the flags.” The flag is “never an apolitical artifact” as it “possesses a history” (Muriente Pérez 1995). On June 20, 2002, a symbolic war unleashed between commonwealth and statehood supporters, using and

borrowing from the discourses of feminism and nationalism. The “*la guerra de las banderas*” (the “war of the flags”) occurred at the premises of the Women’s Advocate Office in Puerto Rico when the director, María Delores Fernós, displayed the flag of Puerto Rico by itself interpreting the law as requiring only the display of the single star flag. Carlos Pesquera, the president of the statehood party then, organized a protest against the decision of the women’s advocate, and demanded that “Old Glory” or the American Flag be displayed at the women’s office along with the Puerto Rican flag.

Carrión (2006) suggested that her loyalties were questioned because of her social status: her father was Antonio Fernós Isern, one of the founders of the commonwealth and her ex-husband was the independence socialist and *Machetero* leader Jorge Farinacci. More importantly, her social status as a woman rendered her suspect of “speaking” or even “interpreting” the law as a lawyer and a feminist activist and nationalist. What she said also carried weight because she is a “Hostosiana citizen.” Symbolically, the forceful entrance into the women’s office compared to the metaphor of intimate partner violence, echoed in the “occupation” of Puerto Rico by the United States, and more importantly, for statehood supporters, it signal the take-over of a government agency that represents women (“the nation”) by anti-statehood forces. Once “inside” the office, the statehood protestors hoisted the American flag alongside the Puerto Rican flag.

If women are said to represent the nation and must guard its representation and are expected to protect the nation through arm struggle as the political prisoners, the body of Carlos Pesquera’s surfaced as the protectors of the U.S. flag. The willingness to fight for the display of the U.S. flag demonstrated masculine constructions of nationhood that

expected men to fight for their nations as citizens and as soldiers as Yuval Davis (1997) suggested. The metaphor of war was also important because it suggested that both women and men can participate in symbolic military struggles and can represent the nation; while the coalition of supporters can struggle for “peace in Vieques.” The nation that these protestors orient to or identify with will differ depending on their ideological frameworks.

This event also raised questions about who the “real men” really are, especially when Franco (2002) described Carlos Pesquera as suffering from “*histeria*” (hysteria). The description of the behavior of the statehood leaders as a sign of *histeria* carried a gendered connotation and raised important questions about “mentally ill” men and their state of mind and the use of force in a “women’s” office. Inadvertently, the notion of being psychologically or psychiatrically ill undermined the unequal power relations between men and women, and the statistical fact that intimate partner violence is not committed by statistically “mentally ill” men. The effeminate description of men pointed to the gender character of nationalist challenges to those who support annexation or occupation of for Puerto Rico. For Mari Brás, the colonial complex impacted the constant expectation that everything Puerto Rican must be connected or linked to the “*faldeta*” (“small skirt”) of the United States (cited in Franco 2002:7). Franco described the representative of the statehood party, Pesquera, as “*débil y mongo*” (“weak and impotent”); this characterization also raised questions about the meaning of masculinity and the sexuality of the nation. Carlos Pesquera reportedly justified his actions because he was “provoked” (Franco 2002:7), a justification for violence often repeated by

perpetrators of intimate partner violence. It also underplayed the hegemonic, violent and non-conciliatory undertones of masculinity that relied on force to obtain what each wants, whether a statehood supporter or an independence nationalist.

Given that statehood supporter Carlos Pesquera was portrayed as “weak and impotent” and “hysterical,” and that the masculine project portrayed women as embodiments of a “masculine guise,” and those women who are feminists are always suspect of being “lesbians,” I wondered whether or not this was “the war of the flags.” If I had deleted the letter “l” from the word “flags,” that letter change would transform the phrase and the implied meaning of the discourse, but only in English. Interestingly, Pesquera Sevillano (2002), who at the time was the leader of the Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano (Hostosian National Independence Movement, MINH) appeared as the “voice of reason;” when he warned against confrontation among Puerto Ricans because the colonial problem cannot be solve by “violence among nationals,” the people.

Thus these two events, the war of the flags and the Peace for Vieques coalition, revealed the civic/*Staatnation* dimension of nationalism (Yuval-Davis 1997). The competing interests of groups and networks of people sought liberation, democracy, and liberation, and as such here is another occasion to postulate what we know is always latent: the discourses of independence nationalism. Competing groups saw the nation and its symbols as complex embodiments of meaning. It seemed ironic that the war of the flags occurred in a governmental institution charged with representing and safeguarding

women's rights, and that the peace for Vieques movement had to protect "an island girl/child" called Vieques.

Analytic Conclusion

These global encounters, I suggest, propelled the nationalist project into its most recent incarnation that attempts to engage the participation of all sectors of society based on the civic dimension of nationalism. The rhetoric of independence nationalism has been updated for the twenty-first century: human rights are nationalists rights and echoes Albizu's arguments to unite the nation and what I see as the "fragments of the nation." Because the discourses of independence nationalism are always latent, it can be deployed anywhere, and feminist discourse may police its boundaries and its projects.

Several lessons can be drawn from these events of alliance building. First, the banality of nationalism can be deployed anywhere using women's roles as representatives of the nation as feminist, as party militants, or all of the above who perhaps were really "none of the above" and perhaps part of the politics of small problems described and applied by Juan Duchesne Winter (2007) and influenced by the work of Jeffrey Goldfarb (2006). The independence rhetoric is brought into the twenty-first century. That is, the discourses of independence are now inscribed as a critique of not just colonialism, but also as a critique through feminist analysis of neo-liberal economic policies, structural adjustment policies, and liberal democratic theory. In translation, I see this globalization of the discourse of independence as part of the continuous critique of not just the colonial structure, but of U.S. foreign policy domestically, internationally, and transnationally. This is a central prominent shift in the independence project that uses the feminist

critique of “human’s rights are women’s rights” for the independence project. The language of social justice that feminists have advanced in global encounters takes on a new dress code, independence nationalism or “independence nationalism dressed in drag.”

The rhetoric of the critique of neoliberalism has had a devastating impact on women’s lives and the rise of global poverty, not just its feminization, rendered feminists as “gender experts” (Álvarez 1999), while antagonizing their roles as citizens of the Puerto Rican nation. The globalization of the nation of women which stands for national independence can now incorporate the mantle of human rights to structure all activism. The boundaries between social justice, feminist activism, nationalist activism, and all forms of clandestine activity become struggles against human rights violations. Yet the independence struggle is still “stuck” in a national discourse about sovereignty for the nation in an increasingly transnational world where borders, as the Puerto Rican diaspora can surely tell us, are blurred and usually shifting.

The national borders and the meaning of the nation have imploded releasing an internal struggle of multiracial, multicultural networks and groups of women who had hitherto been hidden from history; they have broken the closet or “rompiendo el closet” as (Orraca Paredes 2002a, 2002b suggested). Meanwhile, for those of us who are Puerto Rican, I/we can be asked: “Where is your grandmother?” That is, the ampersand of feminist theory (Spellman 1988) raises questions about the race of the nation; and that project still buried in the archives of the national story embedded in *Claridad*. Furthermore, the specter of age is also arising as the symbols of the nation pass to another

frontier, including Lolita, Juan, Isabel, and countless others resting somewhere in the nation without borders.

Building alliances expands the intersectionality project of feminist theory. Coalition building becomes a tool of feminism and nationalism through the activism in Vieques and the war of the flags all come alive as everyone wants a spot on the limelight. The “piece” of the nation that each one of us gets will depend on our social location in the hierarchies of domination. For women, the specificities of Puerto Rican women’s experience will be filtered through the independence ideology, while the rise of women’s movements and feminist activism can still be conflated as “foreign” contagion and delegitimizing its potential for national liberation in the home front for women.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the women’s movement and feminist activism was the rise of research institutions that wrote women back into history through curricula and documentation centers (Colón Warren 2003; Rivera Quintero 1984). To the extent that *Claridad* has covered the history of feminist nationalists and women’s roles in nationalism more generally, it has contributed to the documentation of the collective history of the independence struggle and to the reconstruction of nationalism in its complex incarnations.

As I have articulated in the previous chapter, women’s roles in nationalism have been excavated through this interpretive process and the roles of women have been restored to the collective memory of the nation of *Claridad* and hopefully to the collective history of Puerto Rican society. Women have contributed to the independence

cause and their presence and the discourses about them articulate the angle that always, already underscores the banality of independence nationalism.

Women through international activism have provided a feminist critique of neoliberal policies and its devastating consequences for women; by appropriating this discourse, *Claridad* appropriates another level of analysis necessary for understanding Puerto Rican society in the context of global power relations and transnationalism. This appropriation of the critique of neoliberalism has rendered independence nationalism ready to engage in a critique of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the globalization of markets, technology, culture, and people as commodities not just within a colonial structure, but also as a critique of neoliberal policies that place all societies in harm's way. Equally significant, the broadening of the meaning of nation and gender incorporated the mantle of human rights to further impact activism across difference. The question remains about how this language and discourse of independence nationalism will be used to advance the masculine project of independence or to really address the needs of women, men and children in search of social justice and a better world for the nation voicing and organizing through feminist activism.

CHAPTER 8

THE NATIONALIST CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN INSTITUTIONS

In this chapter, I examine the nationalist construction of women and social issues in institutions to shed light on how this depiction contributes to the nationalist discourses of independence nationalism and of feminist nationalism. Through these dimensions, women's roles are filtered and structured. Social institutions are salient for the social construction and social organization of the nation. Without institutions, the nation cannot survive. Social institutions are a definite set of interrelated norms, beliefs, and values centered on important and recurrent social needs and activities (Williams 1970). The social organization of the nation as an imagined community reflected assumptions about women's roles in nationalism. Social inequality was evidenced in the differential access to power, valued resources, and limited access to the material, symbolic, and civic resources of the nation.

The discourses about social institutions and social issues grappled with an analysis of the social issues faced by Puerto Rican women and men in those institutions. The angle on research and theories, in my view, rendered women's roles in social institutions as objects of study and accentuated the specific audience to whom the

newspaper often oriented itself, the nationalist intellectuals and/or the highly literate in the public. I will argue that the discourses of women's roles in nationalism that emerged from this construction of women were foreshadowed by institutionalized violence of all sorts that resembled the violence experienced by nationalists. The "social institution of gender" (Lorber 1994) is mutually constituted through the social institution of nation with violence being a central ingredient of the discourses of nationalism. I present my argument by analyzing the exemplary role of Virgin Mary as the mother of the nation. This depiction, I will show, creates double roles for women as reproducers and bearers of the collectivity.

I then discuss the cultural representations of women in the media and through language to show how gender ideology is reinforced through the cultural practices of representation. I then assess the role of language as the key or "*llave*" of Puerto Rican culture to delineate how language operates as part of the naming and construction of the nation. The construction of language will be analyzed to clarify how language excludes the experience of the diaspora although political prisoners are a central feature of the nation. I also review the construction of the nation through films and arts, followed by a discussion of activism in the workplace, and a discussion of the reconstruction of women's history in higher education.

I then present the impact of family policy and violence along with an analysis of intimate partner violence and violence more generally to address the politics of national reproduction. I suggest linkages about the regulation of those members of the nation who are constructed as "others." I will draw a parallel among women, nationalists, and sexual

minorities to show how all of these categories are constructed as others and as this experience intersects across difference, the “others” of the nation are not only regulated, but often denied, through symbolic violence and physical violence, membership in the nation. I conclude the chapter with an overview of my general conclusions.

“Virgin Mary” as the Mother of the Nation

Yuval-Davis (1997; 1980) asserted that women are expected to bear children, but also are the “bearers of the collectivity” (Yuval-Davis 1980). In Puerto Rico, women’s roles in nationalism have been filtered through the nationalism of Albizu Campos who embraced Catholicism as part of the national experience and the role of women in birthing the nation. The dimension of giving birth to the nation resonates with the nationalist debate that envisioned the common of origin of the nation in the Shout of *Lares*. Being born in Puerto Rico is one marker for gaining membership into the collectivity, the other one, is armed struggle to defend the nation. For political prisoners who are women this was how they joined the collectivity. Therefore, symbols epitomized the cultural dimension of the nationalist project and in the coverage of religion, two significant points were addressed: the issue of “annexation” or occupation in the Bible and the symbolism of Virgin Mary (García Ramis 1985a, 1985b, 1985c; Ramos Mattei 1985; Silva Gotay 1987).

On the issue of annexation, Ramos Mattei (1993:35) argued that the Bible has examined the national dimension through the subject of annexation of groups such as the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Assyrians, and in

the plight of the Jewish people for liberation. In the case of Puerto Rico any discussion of independence has often been framed as a “cuco” (“bogeyman”), resulting in a potential disaster for the nation. The United States’ Navy in Vieques has been constructed as the occupier of the nation. To ensure the liberation of the nation and to bring women into the national discourse, the role of the Virgin Mary became paradigmatic in Catholic religious tradition. Whereas women’s roles in nationalism have been critiqued by feminist theologians, I concur that the symbolism of Virgin Mary is paradigmatic as the reproducer and bearer of the nation.

I saw the debate about Virgin Mary as a cultural critique of women’s roles in nationalism. For instance, Magally García Ramis (1985) rejected Virgin Mary as an icon because her image represented a one-sided and oppressive image of women. The woman embodied in Virgin Mary appeared as “un ser sufrido, secundario y casero” (a passive, self-sacrificing and domestic being). *Claridad* published two articles challenging García Ramis’ feminist analysis, and suggested an alternate nationalist reading of Virgin Mary. For instance, Ramos Mattei (1985) and later Silva Gotay (1987) described the devotion to the Virgin as a representation of the hope for the liberation of nations. For García Ramis (1985), the virgin symbol is a mystical symbol that personified a being without desires, solely concerned with fulfilling the needs of men. Sociologist Silva-Gotay (1987:420) challenged that narrowed reading because it denied the revolutionary character of Mary and ended up aligning a feminist reading of Mary with right wing ideology, a critique often leveled against nationalism (see Briggs 2002).

Silva-Gotay (1987) urged an understanding of the revolutionary character of Mary by underlining the Hebrew Christian tradition that she is said to represent. That is, I agree that in Christian tradition this reading of Virgin Mary as giving birth to the nation conferred hopes for the national revolution, but Virgin Mary gave birth to women too. Nationalists, as I have documented, don't seem very worried about "a feminist revolt" and only marginally include women in their dominant discourse of independence nationalism, usually as gender experts and activists. The construction of women in the masculine discourse of independence shaped them as combatants or participants, not as bearers of the nation.

Therefore, Virgin Mary as a cultural icon yielded competing readings and in the context of nationalism's martyrs and icons, the description of Mary echoed the depiction of nationalist martyrs. As martyrs, women have sacrificed their bodies and lives for the nation as "essential" nationalists who have suffered to liberate Puerto Rico from North American oppression. For me, a revolutionary mother in jail can't do very much for "her children" in the nation as their children are often taken from them; and in the meantime, one may ask about the role of the father: "He" is probably "fighting for independence." Given that women have been subjected to violence, what will become of them after years of incarceration, but their symbolism as martyrs can be invoked anywhere as memorials and as icons for the nationalist project of commemoration.

Cultural Representations of Women

Besides the cultural symbolism associated with the figure of Virgin Mary, in media representations of women they appeared in dual roles as paid workers and mothers who embrace a second shift of domestic chores through their functional social status as mothers (Pérez Herranz 1990). These media representations reinforced traditional gender role ideology, regenerating aspects of capitalism and the societal reproduction of society through unpaid work and re-inscribed Mary as the key symbol of the nation.

To remedy this damaging media image, the producers of television programming and the nation of Puerto Rico were urged to recall the symbols and icons of the nation, including Julia de Burgos and Luisa Capetillo among countless others of women. The media critique called on collective action by boycotting products and censoring programs and urged “women” to remember their achievements as women. At the same time, the foreign class of artists and foreign programming was critiqued for corrupting and exploiting the nation for their own gain (Hidalgo 1987). Here the paradigmatic role of Virgin Mary was invoked to “remind” women that they were chosen by “our Señor” (or Lord) to be “his” mother and for such an honor women should show satisfaction for being women (Pérez Hidalgo 1987). It is unclear how the call to remember the religious calling of Virgin Mary to mother the nation can actually transform the negative image of women as sex objects. A religious call cannot solve the problems driven by capitalist production and consumption, and a foreign media that cannot be controlled by women. The representation of women as the mother of “God” was used to blame women for their media image; likewise, the role of producers who are usually men and the representatives

of capital disappeared and legitimized their position to profit from women's media image.

To resolve the negative depiction of women in the media, Diaz (2000) reported on the request made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to grant full editorial rights to women on International Women's Day. The assumption was that women's perspective could bring a different interpretation of reality. While this may bring a gender perspective to the table, structural forces guiding media reporting often required more than "one day" or "one week for women" for such change to occur. Given that women who work in media outlets are part of larger structure of production, the women in the room may act as "representatives of capital" and structural change need not occur as studies of the global media have shown (see Cotto 2000; Dueñas Guzmán 2006; Jarquin 2001). Women may also face the microstructures of power, and in that case, when women have been hired to manage television stations, the male establishment ridiculed women's appointment by suggesting that television channels are stations of "nenas" ("girls"), a derogatory remark that turned women into children, while denigrating the prospects of television *for* women (Franco 2003).

The Key or "La Llave" of Puerto Rican Culture

Besides cultural representations through religion and media, I anticipated that the nationalist discourse would use language as the "key" ("la llave") that signifies the nation (Delgado Cintrón 1993). Language matters because it plays a role in the symbolic ordering of the world by "naming and constructing the nation." Older women are

expected to determine what appropriate behavior for the nation is and as such have gained power in the symbolic sphere of national construction. The exemplary role as the protector of the language was Nilita Vientos Gastón for whom language represented the crux of the cultural dimension of the nationalist project and of Puerto Rican culture. The cultural dimension of nationalism became clear in the invocation of the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, the first Puerto Rican institution that was founded in 1876 and charged with promoting the Spanish language as the vernacular of Puerto Rico.

Following the independence rhetoric, English was denounced as the language of domination, a tool of social control from the moment the U.S. invasion took shape to Americanize the nation. Delgado Cintrón (1993) surmised that the struggle for the Spanish language signified “the key” to Puerto Rican culture. This position on language reflected the independence ideology that language needed to be protected to safeguard the life of the Puerto Rican nation, a perspective that mirrors the contributions of José de Diego, another national patriot that favored independence for Puerto Rico. Language has become a battleground of cultural nationalism, and it is crucial for nationalists and for many Puerto Ricans, I believe, to retain a link with Latin America (Delgado Cintrón 1993).

However, this discourse about language fails to recognize that not all Puerto Ricans speak Spanish. Speaking the vernacular of the nation or “hablando Español” or “speaking Spanish” reproduced cultural boundaries of national membership by excluding the diaspora and by creating border makers about national membership and citizenship. Language ordered reality through classification schemes to name, include and exclude

women by emphasizing “el” Español (“he” or the Spanish and the Spaniard) and by excluding the diaspora, yet political prisoners, rooted in the diaspora of Puerto Rico, are crucial to the discourse of independence nationalism. The denouncement of Spain is also absent for having colonized Puerto Rico.

Clearly, the national language has been structured through androcentric patterns that excluded, alienated, and erased women’s experiences. To remedy the persistence of gender discrimination, educational institutions have developed courses to study how language embodies and creates relations of power and ideology (Valle 1991). Similarly, the extent of discrimination was noted in another instance indicative of the preoccupation with length (besides women’s history month), the definition of man and woman were measured, and men’s definition occupied 23 inches, while women’s definition occupied three inches (see Pérez 2005a, 2005b:17).

Aponte Ramos (1990:20) added a reference to the difficulties of understanding “what women want” or that “*a las mujeres no hay quien las entienda.*” Women have been perfectly proficient of understanding what “men” want because our lives (and that of nationalists) may very well depend on it. For feminists the issue is not a matter of minimizing inequality, but underscoring the presence of inequality in the discourse about women, not in the grammar itself (Hiriart 1991). Redefining “language discourse” is central to name women’s experiences, and the national language requires a non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory language. Guijosa (1989) observed the emergence of a “manual of the patriarch” documenting techniques to disqualify, minimize, exclude, and

invalidate women's discourse or the discourse of any men considered inferior to the hegemonic patriarch.

Puerto Rican intellectuals, especially those born in the Island and some in the diaspora, have been closely involved in writing the national history and struggles. If it is the case that Puerto Rican culture and language were and are under siege, it may not come as a surprise that for *Claridad* as well as for many Puerto Rican intellectuals, defending the nation requires not just armed struggle as often cited or implied in *Claridad*, but it also required the symbolic struggle to defend the language.

Constructing the Nation through Films and Arts

The nationalist project is also constructed through the nascent films and documentaries, and the arts. By reporting film developments from a national and international perspective, the Puerto Rican nation is given voice. Film critic María Cristina (1985) contended that film can one day represent the interests and the history of the Puerto Rican working class, a work closely connected to the nationalist project. By spotlighting and rescuing marginalized groups and the working class, the Puerto Rican Humanities Foundation supported documentaries that offered a visual testimony of our history (Cristina 1985:21). By writing the history of the nation through film, the nation has begun to restore women's history (see Cristina 1994; González Matos 2003). For instance, one of the best known feature films is "*La Guagua Aérea*" (*The Flying Bus*) by Luis Molina Casanova that chronicled the Puerto Rican migration to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s as a reflection on the meaning of migration and the dream of return

to Puerto Rico latent in the Puerto Rican experience of migration (Cristina 1993). From the work Puerto Rican woman humanist, Carmen Eulate de Sanjurjo to other composers, painters, poets and literary women, women have contributed to the arts and humanities and to culture and society (García Ramis 1987; González 1988; Romano 1986; and Fiet 1993).

An underdeveloped area in the newspaper coverage has been the contributions of Puerto Rican black women to society and to the folklore in Puerto Rico (Rayda Cotto 1992). Discrimination against Puerto Rican women who are also black followed an exclusionary pattern of invisibility, degradation and racial framing. A monolithic image of the Puerto Rican women emerged, acknowledging the contributions of the Creole groups into the racial/ethnic hierarchy of Puerto Rico. Media coverage privileged “whiteness,” erasing black women and their contributions to Puerto Rican society (Rayda Cotto 1992). The invisibility of race and racial formations in Puerto Rico remains a project to be constructed as part of the national project.

Activism for Women in the Workplace

Women’s roles in the public realm appeared in the activism for women in the workplace and in higher education. The contemporary experiences of Puerto Rican women at work and in the workplace were not evident, but the histories of women in the tobacco industry, the needle industry, and in laundry services in historical perspective were addressed. Women’s increasing participation in the labor force has been influenced by myths about the meaning and value of women’s work. Often viewed as secondary

wage earners and presumed to be supported by a male family wage. The ideological and theoretical misconceptions disavowed the centrality of women's unpaid and paid work for household survival (Rios Orlandi 1988).

The nationalist discourse linked women's roles in the labor force as activism on behalf of women. For this discourse, the entrance of women into the labor force or their transformation shifted women's labor experiences as a result of colonization. Beginning in 1898 with the military invasion of Puerto Rico by the United States, the local needle industry was changed. Laundry workers also organized, fought against their marginal treatment, and managed to organize in guilds, and they faced discrimination as a result of their social status as mostly black, young and illiterate from marginalized social classes (Merino Falú 1986, 1997a, 1997b).

By the middle of the twentieth century, the global restructuring of capitalist production and the international division of labor incorporated women at the center of capitalist development in Latin America (Rivera-Quintero 1984). Puerto Rican society was incorporated into these transformations through the manufacturing industries in textiles, electronics and pharmaceuticals that recruited women workers as sources of cheap labor. Puerto Rico's economic development has compared with a developing country regardless of an industrialization project by invitation called Operation Bootstrap. This project of economic development constructed Puerto Rico as the "window to the world" or the "K-mart of the Caribbean" (Romany 1991). I now update the metaphor to say that Puerto Rico is a nation with one of the highest rates of consumption in the world that has been updated to what I call the "the 'Wal-mart' and 'Marshalls' of

the Caribbean,” with a rapidly expanding gap between the haves and have-nots. From a lively underground economy to squatter movements, Puerto Ricans continue to survive (Rivera Quintero 1984).

To remedy job loss, Rivera Quintero (1984) reported that the Economic Development Commission of Puerto Rico discussed the possibility of diminishing the minimum wage in order to stimulate production and urged shared domestic work within the family (see Torres 1994). The economic crisis accelerated the exodus of Puerto Rican workers to the mainland, including nurses and for all purposes today, more Puerto Ricans reside in the mainland than in the island of Puerto Rico. Workers have organized in labor unions to weather the economic crisis in Puerto Rico (Mari Mari 1982; “Mujeres Trabajadoras Endosan Sindicalización” 1983). The case of unionization revealed the ambivalent relationship between the nation of Puerto Rico and the colonial status of Puerto Rico. For instance, Mari (1982) reported that unions have supported the minimum wage, whereas private organizations often reject it. Interestingly, it was noted that class interests aligned bosses with opposition to the extension of the federal minimum wage to Puerto Rico, while the same bosses favored U.S. laws that are anti-labor (see “Sindicatos Favorecen Salario Mínimo” in *Claridad* 1987).

Furthermore, when women have entered the labor force, they have endured sexual harassment in the workplace. Again, legislation has proved a useful tool for curtailing sexual harassment in the workplace (*Claridad* 1987 in “*Piden se Apruebe Ley Contra Hostigamiento Sexual*”), and feminists have been instrumental in lobbying for legal remedies embodied in Law 183 that prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace

(Romano 1987). In 1988, the law was passed and became another “feminist triumph” on behalf of women. This “feminist triumph” underscored the multiple ways in which violence enters women’s lives (Rivera Lassén 1988). Feminist organizations such as the Puerto Rican Working Women’s Organization (OPMT) and women’s activism on behalf of women have emerged as prominent strategies for the eradication of gender oppression. The gains made by feminists through legal challenges have further created an ambivalent relationship between the discourses of the independence nationalism and the discourses of feminist nationalism for using the tools of the state. The state and civil society have had emancipatory potential for women and repressive and regressive consequences for both women and as nationalists, and for men.

Building the Nation through Women’s History

The nationalist project has a cultural dimension where women have figured prominently as transmitters of culture. The official history of most nations excluded women’s contributions to society, yet women have been active agents transmitting the symbolic heritage of the nation through educating the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997). This male centered and androcentric paradigm consisted of a one-sided vision of women as shadows of men in the history and life of the nation; the paradigm “menospreciaba” (devalued) the struggles of everyday people (Rivera 1985).

Puerto Rican feminist historians and feminist social scientists have toiled, “to the rescue of the history of those written out of history” and that “siempre estuvimos aquí!” or “women were always here.” Through government funded grants and initiatives and

university research projects at research institutions in Puerto Rican educational reform called for gender equity in education (Concepción Clemente 1993; Rivera Bermúdez 1993; Martínez Ramos 1993; Rivera 1986).

Besides the process of reconstructing women's roles in education, the "feminización del ámbito universitario" (the feminization of university life) exposed the increasing underrepresentation of men as students. In the realm of university teaching the school of architecture had only male faculty until 2003 (Vilches Norat 2005:18). I saw changes in gender participation in higher education as comparable to trends in other industrialized countries, and a rising concern for the declining number of men as a social issue, without answering questions of being problematic for whom!

Women are expected to birth the nation, to be reproducers of the nation, and to be the transmitters of national culture. Participating in the national project as students is an important form of contributing to the nation. Education has likewise delayed the problem of scarce work opportunities, an ironic contradiction. If the university, pondered Vilches Norat (2005), is perhaps the last bastion of male superiority and knowledge, she inquired about the correlates explaining men's "absence" from higher education; the author speculated that "a witch had somehow locked, mutilated and silenced the men of this country." The prospects of locking, mutilating and silencing men reminded me of the consequences suffered by nationalists for their activism.

The Nation without a Family

In search for the nationalist construction of women's roles in the family, I found that the nation does not have a family either because we are orphaned or because the land of the Puerto Rico "belongs to but it is not part," symbolically and materially, to the United States. Family policies are rejected as foreign impositions on the nation. The family is the first social group that situates women's roles in the genealogical dimension of the nationalist project, and family policy frames its encounter with the state. Individual and collective identity are developed through social interaction and social placement based on race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and nation; the imposition of those policies from the outset have not given way to the rise of the family institution. Since the women who have prominence in the *Claridad* nation are women who are already "women worthies," there would not be a need to birth the nation so that the nationalist project can focus on "independence."

While different paradigms of mothering and pregnancy reportedly exist, such as sex workers, mother with AIDS, and single mothers, particularly with a comparative reference to the Dominican Republic (see Hernández 1998), the institution of the family as such was nowhere in sight. Yet Puerto Rican families were said to be victims of violence perpetrated by the U.S. Navy during its military exercises in Vieques (Santana Melecio 2000). However, most of the population of Puerto Rico does not live in that municipality. I saw the claim of violence as part of the discussion of the nationalist aspiration for sovereignty from colonial rule (see Santana Melecio 1991). I argued that violence against the Puerto Rican family is reified through the U.S. Navy as the "manly"

entity responsible for violence against women and against the symbols of the Puerto Rican nation, the “island girl/child” of Vieques. This erasure, I argue, underplays the roles of men as perpetrators of violence, while propping up women as combatants and active participants against colonialism that blames the United States’ military institution for violence in the Puerto Rico.

Besides the symbolism of violence, I also noticed a critique of family policies as “colonial” for failing to take into account the “culture” of Puerto Rico and at the same time, blaming one woman, for the social ills of families. This monolithic cultural definition was attached to the first woman governor of Puerto Rico elected in 2001, Sila María Calderón. The grudge between the commonwealth party that she represents and the rejection of independence by the patriarch of the same party re-emerges through the rejection of family policies because they failed to respond to the Puerto Rican national character, and to the increasing presence of single households in Puerto Rico (see Reyes 2001). These policies operated to regulate poor women and penalized them for their plight. At the same time, the independence project is not taken to task for lacking a detail plan for addressing economic inequality in the context of the discourse of women’s roles in nationalism. Colonial family policies coupled with neoliberal economic policies have transformed the role of the “welfare” state by eliminating and/or privatizing social services, eroding the responsibilities of the national state for supporting families (Reyes 2001).

Although the key issue appears to me to be the issue of economic well-being for women and families and households, yet this is not addressed. The debate of provisioning

for families becomes a discourse about the repression of nationalists in their “home” land. I surmised that the state in both its national and colonial incarnations is the most violent institution encountered by nationalists through the repression of their activism. It was also repressing the family through the symbolic denial of family forms and the hegemonic imposition of “foreign” family policies. Yet activism on behalf of women has not precluded women from participating in the civic function of nationalism. It did not matter that the policies were implemented in Puerto Rico through hegemonic consent through the ruling Puerto Rican party. The party, regardless of who is in power, is responsible for implementing policies as part of its task of governing the Puerto Rican nation. The critique of colonial policies and their negative consequences for women stressed the cultural dimension of the nationalist project, while also reproducing and recreating national, class, and gender boundaries. The absence of men as the primary perpetrators of violence against women placed emphasis on women as the protectors of Vieques, an alternative reading that sees women as protectors of the nation, whereas historically, men have been culturally expected to be the protectors of the “womenandchildren” (Enloe 1990).

Violence and Intimate Partner Violence

Another issue discussed was the widespread problem of intimate partner violence and violence more generally. In my view, the articles on violence summarized the key findings associated with the correlates of violence and offered a critique of reduction of violence as a result of a statistical tool based on “the definition and reporting of violence”

(Franco 2002). Historical factors associated with the process of industrialization and technological innovation resulted in the colonization of Puerto Rico through armed conflict and warfare by the United States. These societal changes had a negative impact on the status of women; religious traditions; cultural production and processes; and the use of violence as a social control mechanism structured by capitalist, patriarchal ideology embedded in family structures (see Fernández Bauzó 1995; Cotto 1999: 9; Servicio Especial IPS 1995). Regardless of social location, the consequences of violence eroded women's life expectancy (García Arroyo 1993). I surmised from this that women have been objectified targets of violence, but also as the targets of research.

Given that intimate partner violence is overwhelmingly violence and aggression directed against women, the newspaper reported the importance of shelters as part of civil society in preventing violence. For example, Romano (1990) suggested that since no woman is safe or exempted from domestic violence, the nation was urged to protect "Julia" (Romano 1990). I concluded that survivors of domestic violence were compared to the national symbols of Julia de Burgos and Luisa Capetillo, inscribing them with the symbolism of the nation. I ascertained that the banality of nationalism is reproduced through the representation of shelters as symbolic memorials and safe-houses to protect women. Even the collective called Luisa Capetillo, urged, especially women, to support "Julia" (see *Claridad* 1984). This call consisted of requesting donations to fund the women's shelter named after the national poet Julia de Burgos.

Besides the symbolism of violence and the importance of shelters, Katherine Angueira (1984), feminist and rape survivor, underscored the double victimization

suffered by women who report rape. Survivors are often second-guessed, expected to defend their survival experience against the word of the perpetrator: “*la palabra del violador contra la mía*” (“my word against the rapist”). Women are also blamed as if “*se la buscó*” (“she asked for it”). In the case of men who are perpetrators of violence, they came from varied social location, believing that the “marriage license” was a sanction to violate the “wife,” a point denounced by Vicente (1985). However, forms of intimate partner violence are also directed against unattached, “single” women, not necessarily married women and sexual minorities. In Puerto Rico, Article 99 of the Penal Code of Puerto Rico criminalized rape within marriage.

Feminist activists and women’s organizations developed strategies for ending all forms of intimate partner violence through networks of women. These networks of organizations are significant because it shows the complexity of the feminist nationalist project. This call is beyond the traditional tension between the public and private spheres, but also adds the realm of civil society that mediates the nationalist project and puts demands on all spheres. Thus, legal changes demanding government accountability have been obtained through networks of feminist organizations such as *Coordinadora de Paz para la Mujer* (Peace for Women Coordinator), the feminist organization *Taller Salud* (Health Workshop), and the prominent contributions of the *Organización Puertorriqueña de la Mujer Trabajadora* (Puerto Rican Working Women’s Association).

Women’s activism lobbied for passage of Law 54 in Puerto Rico, and in 1989, Puerto Rico set a precedent in Latin America for this progressive law on behalf of women. The law stipulated the rights of women, the responsibility of the state and its

representatives, and empowered women in a manner that women no longer had to “beg” for intervention from the state to save their lives nor that of their children (*Coordinadora Paz para la Mujer* 1990). Puerto Rican women activists who had begun commemorating November 25 in 1981 to end intimate partner violence, now had an international network of supporters that beginning in 1999 resulted in the United Nations’ adoption of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Puerto Rican women’s activism on behalf of women had now access to transnational alliances to lobby and organize through the civic dimension of nationalism by crossing national borders. By expanding the reach of women’s networks, women have created a structure to secure physical protection.

The passage of the law has not guaranteed the eradication of violence, but it has given voice to intimate partners’ rights for physical protection. Machismo and sexist stereotypes about women continue to persist (Pérez Rivera 2004; Redacción de *Claridad* 2005). There is also official resistance to implementing Law 54 that favors piecemeal or non-judicial alternatives. Government reports allegedly blamed the victim for the occurrence of domestic violence (Cotto 2005a), linking domestic violence to social-psychological variables associated with poor communication between couples, blaming the law itself, blaming women for establishing relationships with abusive partners, and using women’s cultural “way of life” or “*forma de vida*” as scapegoats. It was also found that the police presumably conducted deficient investigations by avoiding the bureaucratic requirements of filling out reports. As a result, women continued to be persecuted, stalked and chased by men or as Ríos Ramos (1994:35) put it: “*el ser que me*

persigue.” To end violence and secure physical security, the entire nation of Puerto Rico and its social institutions must intervene to prevent and end violence (Shokooh Valle 2000; Cotto 2003).

After presenting and analyzing the crux of the issue surrounding intimate partner violence, I pondered and excavated the significance of violence for the nationalist project. I discovered that there is a link between nationalism and the nationalist project of independence in Puerto Rico that draw them together through violence. Remarkably, I see a devastating link between violence and intimate partner violence and more generally, violence against nationalists. Both women and nationalists have experienced first-hand the essence of violence and are “combatants” or “activists” against violence, sometimes at the symbolic level of family policies as noted before, but more importantly, at the level of physical violence and the threat of death. Women combat violence in the home front, and men and women combat violence in the national front.

Violence against women and nationalists has historically included surveillance, beatings, psychological threats, stalking, and the ultimate form of violence, outright murder. To paraphrase Cordero (1988): “Women [and nationalists] more than any other oppressed group know the essence of violence (P.14).” Women have been followed and persecuted, so have nationalists. The threat of violence and violence as a technique of domination structured women’s lives and the lives of the nation as embodied in women and in the bodies of nationalists in general. The ordinariness of oppression monitors, controls, perpetrates, and symbolically engages in violence and social control, an experience shared by women and nationalists, whether they are feminist or not, or

perhaps both. “Violence against women” is “violence against the nation.” Violence has negative consequences for the genealogical reproduction of the nation and negatively impacts the possibility of reproducing the “genetic pool” that makes the next generation possible. Simultaneously, the genealogical reproduction makes the cultural dimension of symbolic reproduction possible, while the symbolism of the nation ensures the transmission of the nationalist project.

The Politics of National Reproduction

In this section I clarify the link between birth, abortion and reproductive rights as deep-seated elements of feminist politics and nationalism in Puerto Rico. I argue that nation and gender intersected through women’s experience of birth and abortion as socially constructed and organized practices. I also make links between the regulation of women, sexual minorities, and nationalists to show that the social institution of nationalism regulates the bodies of all its potential members. Both the governments of Puerto Rico and the United States have shaped abortion laws. The laws of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico follow U.S. guidelines in effect since the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision. In Puerto Rican society, civil society groups have adopted May 28 as the annual date to commemorate the reproductive rights of women (Arroyo Muñoz 1994), and as such, reproductive rights and abortion are regulated by the state, civil society organizations, and family institutions.

As I have previously stated, following Yuval-Davis’ (1997; 1980) framework, women are not only the bearers, but they are also the reproducers of the nation. Women

play dual roles or have double membership in the nation; thus women are differently regulated and subject to rules that are specific to them as women and as members of the national collectivity. I argue then that women are not passive vessels of nationalism; women are active members in the collectivity, and as such, both nationalist men and nationalist women must be regulated and controlled. Reproductive rights have been one of those central issues that have mobilized women on behalf of the nation. As I indicated in the chapter on women's roles in feminism, women play roles as "gender experts" (Álvarez 1999). Recall that many of these women are also well-educated "women worthies," and that they are not young; they are older women who are empowered to participate in the struggle for women's rights. They have already "birth the nation" and as experts in higher education and work, they fulfill important roles as the cultural reproducers of the nation, and as reproductive rights activists.

The politics of reproduction are also evident in the termination of pregnancy through men's reactions to it. The masculine experience about abortion, Ramirez (2000) observed, is shaped by gender as the announcement of pregnancy symbolized a reaffirmation of men's sense of "manhood." When and if men participate in the experience of induced abortion, Ramirez believed that they also changed their traditional gender roles. By implication, abortion is said to deny men's "masculinity," while women's right to choose celebrated women's agency as national subjects who decide when and if to have children, a central tenet of feminism, but also a prominent role of women in nationalism as the genealogical reproducers of the nation.

I postulate that the preoccupation with abortion as a symbolic indicator of the absence of the “birthing the nation” (Kanaaneh 2002), and perhaps it has little to do with support for “women’s rights,” especially in the context of independence nationalism. I thus analyzed the coverage of the independence discourse that as not focusing explicitly on “birthing of the nation,” but through its absence that emphasized the termination of pregnancy or “aborting the nation.” This debate has been shaped by religious fundamentalism and factions, especially the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico and the so-called “Morality Media,” the Right to Life Foundation from the United States. Interestingly, these organizations have worked to abolish and/or limit abortion rights in Puerto Rico, while reproductive rights groups in Puerto Rico have called for government assistance to support women who have limited economic resources to access abortion (see Arroyo Muñoz 1994). Both tendencies, aborting and birthing, maintain the national debate about reproducing the nation through women’s roles and also mediate and regulate who is a member of the nation and of the collectivity while signifying class boundaries. At the same time, the feminist nationalist discourse stressed the importance of the meaningful control for women over their reproductive potential.

The coverage of abortion, I interpreted as an attempt to regulate births, contraception, and abortions as a social control mechanism that reminds the nation of the historic attempts that have leveraged to eradicate the Puerto Rican nation by foreign invaders. Although Puerto Rican women have also wanted to control their own fertility, for nationalists this has been seen as foreign imposition, yet women want and need meaningful control over their fertility as citizens and as women. Women have demanded

the right to bear or not bear children without limitations. For pursuing the right to bear or not to bear children, women have been badgered or “*asediada*” (besieged) by the religious factions (Cotto 2003). Romano (1989) spoke of women’s rights to an abortion, but not necessarily to abort, describing abortion as a necessary struggle. She foretold that the repression of abortion will result in more deaths as women who will seek abortions legally and/or illegally. Remember that any decision to illegalize abortion in the United States would also invalidate abortion in Puerto Rico, even though in Puerto Rico abortions have had a long trajectory and feminists have not necessarily clarified their position on this matter (Romano 1989; see Briggs 2002). Therefore, colonialism, nationalism, and feminism in its various discourses have probed the birthing and aborting of the nation.

The debate over abortion resonated with the definition of nationalism as a moral force or a school of morality based on the insights of Albizu Campos (Ayroa Santaliz 1983). Nationalist discourse urged Puerto Rican women to assert their reproductive rights by demanding that “men wear condoms” (Rivera Montalvo 1991; 1992a, 1992b). Irrespective of United Nations (UN) initiatives and local legislation in Puerto Rico and in the United States, women continuously defend access to reproductive health including abortion as part of basic human rights. Let us not forget that abortion practices are affected by the legal structures of specific countries or nations; thus abortion is not only a human rights issue, it is a specific national rights issue for women to bear or not to bear the nation. The state, the family institution, and civil society have structured how abortion discourse and its material consequences operate.

In a sneaky move that reminded me of clandestine activism, in a discussion about single mothers, church authority and government institutions were challenged to serve the needs of single mothers rather than demonizing them for their social status. By appealing to governmental institutions, Soberal (1989:41) resorted to speaking for the “unborn” children: “Niños que aún viven en el vientre de las ‘madres solteras’ y de aquellos que aún no tienen voz, pero que ellos mismos claman: “*Quiero nacer, déjame vivir yo también tengo derecho a la vida.*” (“Children still living in the belly of the ‘single mothers’ and those who still have no voice, but that they cry, I want to be born, let me live I have the right to life.”) Religion rejected abortion as a form of murder urging mothers to birth the nation, and by discussing abortion rights and laws, the nationalist projects emphasizes the genealogical dimension of the nation by not talking about birth.

Regulating the “Others” of the Nation

In this section, I will argue that the discourses of nationalism create an institutional definition of nation that requires the normative control of bodies. Specifically, the coverage of sexual minorities relegates them to living in the “twilight zone” (Yuval-Davis (1997:85), outside the “moral community” but inside the “civic nation,” and like women they are in the nation but not part of it. The discourses of nationalism contribute to the regulation of all bodies, including women’s bodies, but also the bodies of “others” who do not fit the dominant criteria for membership.

Indeed, the national rights of lesbians were addressed briefly by the articles, marking an emerging element of the civic dimension of the nationalist project: the

citizenship of sexual minorities. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) movement has taken the national stage demanding human rights and national rights for sexual minorities, lobbying for the repeal of sodomy laws, preventing the criminalization of the lives of sexual minorities (and heterosexuals), and by increasing public awareness. Besides the demands to derogate Article 13, activists also wanted the right to adopt children and the recognition of their intimate relationships. In Puerto Rico, the criminalization of sexual relations among consenting adults of the same sex began in 1902, and Article 103 criminalizes same sex relations with a prison term of ten years (Redacción *Claridad* 2003). The inclusion of sexual minorities demonstrated the expansion of the meaning of national citizenship.

In the realm of health care, lesbians and gays feared reporting their hidden identities to health care professionals, detrimentally impacting access to proper medical care (Orraca Paredes 2002a). Coming out of the closet or “rompiendo el closet” has increased awareness of the sexual health of lesbians and gays, while building alliances with other Puerto Rican organizations. The activism of sexual minorities demonstrated the complexity of the nationalist project and its linkages with civil society, the state, and the family. Cotto (2000) asserted that the rights of gays and lesbians are ignored by the political parties in the island and that LGBT activists have demanded that they be counted and treated with respect following human rights principles.

Through activism, I argued that sexual minority activism is redefining the meaning of who belongs and/or is a citizen, not just in terms of legal rights, and membership, but also demanding “a sense of belonging” of being part of the Puerto Rican

project of national identity. This local and global activism urged the Puerto Rican police to collect and maintain data of hate crimes against sexual minorities. Gay and lesbian groups have also sought mass media support by campaigning and sponsoring radio programs, while acknowledging that coming out of the closet may actually increase homophobia and heterosexism. The role of government to protect the rights of all was underscored, and political parties have leveraged support for sexual minorities to gain political capital, while also supporting legislative bills that prohibit same sex marriages. LBGT activists and supporters have denounced the legislature as the most repressive Puerto Rican social institution, the same institution that feminists have used to generate legal protections for women and the same institution that has persecuted and repressed nationalists.

At the level of interaction with national institutions, when violence between same sex couples was reported, I noticed similar responses from the police as if they were responding to the aid of a heterosexual victim of intimate partner violence. It may also be the case that because homophobia and heterosexism are embedded in the masculine culture of policing and in the pornographic attitude toward lesbian relationships, these cases of intimate partner violence are unreported; this still remains an important empirical question. The police failed to document these acts of violence because of the ambivalent relationship between Law 54 that protects against domestic violence and Article 103 that criminalized same sex relationships.

Additionally, Martinez (2001) contended that a close reading of Law 54 for the prevention of domestic violence could be interpreted to protect the life, security and

dignity of *all*. In 2003, the Puerto Rican legislature considered the eradication of the law that criminalized same sex relations. Following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, the Puerto Rican legislature agreed that criminalizing a relationship against two consenting adults in the privacy of their own homes violated the concept of liberty guaranteed by the U.S. constitution. The Court established that Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the United States that belongs to but is not part of the United States and that the Courts' ruling applied to Puerto Rico. The colonial situation had a positive effect for the rights of sexual minorities and fears that the Puerto Rican legislature may side with religious fundamentalists ended since "the one" with the most power spoke on the matter, the U.S. Supreme Court (*Redacción Claridad* 2003).

To be sure, I want to accentuate that abortion, reproduction, and the rights of sexual minorities exposed areas where women's bodies, the bodies of gays and lesbians and the bodies of nationalists become the contested terrain of the Puerto Rican nation embodied as the masculine state. I argued that there is a crucial and alarming parallel between the rights and bodies of women and sexual minorities in general, and rights and bodies of nationalist leaders and martyrs in particular. Debates about the rights of women and the rights of sexual minorities underscored the citizenship dimension of the nationalist project, clamoring for equal rights under the law, but also for human rights. The tension between human rights and national rights clarified the boundaries of national membership and the prospects of and for an inclusive nationalist project. The relationship between nationalists, women, and sexual minorities leveraged their bodies for the

construction of national politics, while also exposing them to “exile” from full inclusion in the body of the nation.

Indeed, I contend that the strongest intersection resides in the policing, regulation, and surveillance of all bodies. That is, the bodies of sexual minorities, women seeking abortions, and nationalists have been constantly watched and observed by surveillance agents. Through the intersecting power of the institutions of the Puerto Rican government, the United States government, the family, and civil society, surveillance or “la vigilancia” is a mechanism and tactic of social control that has been used against women who want and need abortions, echoing the surveillance experience of the nationalist movement in Puerto Rico for seeking independence for Puerto Rico documented by Ché Paralitici (2004). The struggle for independence can be said to represent, in my view, a “symbolic” abortion from the United States, clearly an element that has been long denied and repressed. Surveillance tactics are strategies to scrutinize and monitor subaltern groups, including women, sexual minorities, and nationalists. Similarly, the diaspora is increasingly scrutinized for speaking a different language.

Collectively, women, nationalists, and sexual minorities struggled and survived: “nuestra centenaria historia de resistencia sobreviviremos” (in our centennial history of resistance [and struggle] we will survive;” see Rodríguez 1993:37). This focus on survival and resilience echoed the nationalist claim that regardless of the violence directed at them, the aspirations to a sovereign Puerto Rico free from colonial domination will continue to guide nationalist efforts for the nation. If records are maintained on intimate partner violence, I also fear that sexual minorities are further stigmatized by the

apparatus of the state. Record keeping would now mark them like nationalists with dossiers, opened for inspection and scrutiny yet dependent like women on the state for protection. This sense of belonging is desired by many, but the rhetoric of nationalist discourse sometimes serves to exclude rather than include those in the diaspora who are often treated as outsiders, or as sexual minorities or women who need to wait until after the independence or the revolution.

Conclusion

This case study of *Claridad* corroborated the findings described about the relegation of women to appendages of nationalism. In the case of the nationalist newspaper where some women have served in the editorial board for many years and have managed the investigative reporting, this study has shown that in principle women are defined as indispensable and essential, but the amount of coverage is still marginal, evidenced by the limited number of page coverage. In this study, I reached similar conclusions, finding that Puerto Rican women are “*casi*” (almost) invisible with only 1.5 percent of the coverage dedicated to women’s roles in nationalism, a point supported by the theory and the empirical data analyzed here. In all, the mass media exclusions and limited inclusion of women mirrored the newspaper coverage under study in this dissertation, further signifying the cultural invisibility of women’s roles in nationalism.

The nationalist construction of women and social issues in institutions was structured by the discourse of independence nationalism, a masculine discourse concern with the threat of violence and social control. At the same time, women’s experiences

with social institutions placed them in a position as bearers of the nation but also reproducers of the nation. Women's roles in institutions were always filtered through the independence rhetoric of national sovereignty. I discovered that women's dual roles in the nation placed them in a double bind of needing protection from the state while also being violently repressed by it. Women have found ways to advocate for their own interests across social institutions through activism in civil society; women are not vessels of nationalism, they are agentic actors in search of citizenship and protection while also securing economic well-being and meaningful control over their reproduction. The state has been the most violent institution encounter by women as members of the nation, as sexual minorities, as members of the diaspora, and as agents seeking abortions. Surveillance have been experienced by women, nationalists, and sexual minorities; yet they have all found ways to organize for their rights even if not always following the general principles of inclusion, democracy, and protection from harm sought by most citizens.

Unsurprisingly, both feminism and nationalism have been concerned with an "essential" version of women, who seem quite "inessential" based on the amount of coverage (1.5 percent) they receive in *Claridad* as I discovered in the present study. Puerto Rican women's roles in their activism in the nation have shown that women are not "an essential" group nor play essential roles, but who through their multiple locations in the hierarchies of social inequality have found creative ways to act as unwavering women!

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

National identity is an important aspect of Puerto Rican society in the island and in the diaspora. Often excluded or ignored from discussions of nations and nationalism and gender and feminism, Puerto Rican women occupy the role of outsider either within traditional Puerto Rican scholarship or as women intellectuals in Puerto Rico investigating the experience of Puerto Rican women across social locations. This apparent essential identity as “Puerto Rican women” is a construct, a gender discourse that facilitates the study of women as objects of social research, but it also represents our experience as real agents, real people in the context of personal biography and history. When orienting one-self toward the study of Puerto Rico as a nation and in the nationalist struggle, Puerto Ricans often look to many places including Latin America, the United States, Europe, Africa or to diasporic experience of different Latino/Latina groups in an effort to see ourselves in such histories. What I often find is that we don’t exist neither in studies of feminism in Latin America nor in U.S. based studies of the feminism in the mainland. Technically, Puerto Ricans have been studied to death, yet we often cannot find ourselves in those areas of research that would provide us with a sense of connection to the society in which we find ourselves or in the region of Latin America and the

Caribbean that we often identify as being in it, yet usually not in it. Nationalism and nation is one of those areas where we can look for answers about the link between women and nation and between gender and nation. By tracing women's roles in nationalism we can understand how societies chronicle the life stories of its members. Particularly, in this study I sought to reveal the ways in which nationalisms are gendered and to excavate women's roles in the nationalist project of the independence struggle. Often nationalism and feminism have been linked through the activism of women on behalf of the nation; once liberation is achieved it is expected that women will enjoy the fruits of the revolution. For that, nationalist movements draw from women's activism, yet these movements suffer from a postponement complex that requires women to wait until after the nation is liberated. Given the many problems faced by women in most societies that are patriarchal and colonial, this call for waiting seems to be a poor strategy to address pressing social issues impacting women in the situated context of Puerto Rican society. Intimate partner violence, criminality, limited employment opportunities, and other social issues demand solutions to the social crises enveloping the island at moment of economic upheaval and limited options in a society with widespread poverty.

Given that for years the independence nationalism in its various currents has often presented itself as the panacea for the solution of social problems in Puerto Rico, I sought to understand what role, if any, women have played in nationalism and what we can learn from that experience to transform society for the expansion of social justice for the island nation. In this final chapter, I attempt to provide some conclusions about the roles of women in independence nationalism and how their cause has not always been heard nor

included given the dominant discourse of independence nationalism as a masculine discourse. Within this discourse, the emphasis has been on a violent masculinity and rhetoric that limits the potential reach of the contributions of women to transform society. At the same time, within the discourses of nationalism, there is a feminist nationalism that calls for social justice, uses the language of “women’s rights,” and runs the risk of being co-opted by the independence project. Indeed, the angle of independence in the newspaper of the nation is axiomatic, and it represents a specific version of nationalism. In these concluding remarks, I present some general conclusions including, an overview of the study and its significance. I then provide remarks about the theory on nations and nationalism and how the present study advances our understanding of women’s roles in nationalism, followed by a discussion of the importance of the interpretive strategy. I contextualize my claims in the context of women’s roles in independence nationalism as unwavering women.

Women’s Roles in Nationalism

This dissertation investigated the construction of women and feminism using as a case study the newspaper *Claridad*. The study grappled with the roles that women play in nationalism during the 1980 to 2006 period. This dissertation relied on newspaper articles, published interviews with public intellectuals, and other materials to reveal the construction of women in nationalism in Puerto Rico. The data consisted of 769 newspaper articles written by what I labeled public intellectuals or the writers of the articles. I supplemented my content analysis with additional historical documents, a

substantive review of the history of Puerto Rico, and a substantive review of the literature on nations and nationalism following the feminist critique of such literature. Several questions guided my inquiry including:

1. How has the discourse of independence nationalism (in *Claridad*) constructed women's roles in that project?
2. How have the discourses of nationalism and feminism (in *Claridad*) constructed the relationship between feminism and nationalism?
3. How have the discourses of nationalism and feminism constructed women in society, that is, in relation to social institutions and social issues?

In the background of these questions, I documented the meaning of independence nationalism, including some of its key tenets, symbolism, and features during the period of 1980 to 2006. I assumed that if this is the newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation, then I would see women's contributions to the life of the nation. These questions were rejoined by examining the newspaper's coverage of women's roles in the independence project. Specifically, the influential work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) guided this inquiry because their framework provided tools to query about the roles or frames or discourses for women in nationalism. The frames or roles or discourses for women in nationalism served as heuristic devices to analyze gender and nationalism in the context of Puerto Rico. Both gender and nation are prominent social relations, but the discourses and knowledge of Puerto Rican feminism and nationalism as ideology and as movements must be understood in the national context of Puerto Rico.

Many studies have been conducted about nationalism and nations in Puerto Rico, but the focus is usually historical by focusing on the deeds of great men such as Pedro Albizu Campos. By focusing on the newspaper that has had a long career in Puerto Rico, I hoped to show that women are central to nationalism and that they have made significant contributions to the movement, while also working in feminist activism that benefits the entire society, not just nationalism. My study specifically examined women's roles in nationalism using the documents of the movement, the newspaper articles, to trace the story and the discourses about women in the nationalist newspaper.

Theorizing Nations and Nationalism

Nations and nationalism have evoked multiple responses among people, including tensions between social solidarity and social conflict, democratic citizenship, and denial of citizenship, and a sense of inclusion and exclusion regarding us and them, whether here or there. Part of the tenacity of nationalism stems from its multiple, benign and/or terrifying forms and the difficulty of pinning down definitions and meanings. Calhoun (1997:3) asserted that "social scientists have sometimes been tempted to try to analyze 'good' nationalism, or patriotism, and 'bad' nationalism, or chauvinism, as though they were completely different social phenomena." Both positive and negative tendencies are dialectically shaped and influenced by nationalism. Nationalism is not a monolithic phenomenon, and it thrives in the complexities of the many ways in which human beings can identify and be national beings, whether they are Puerto Ricans, something else, or

none of the above. This study showed the transnational structure of nationalism through the roles of women in independence nationalism.

Both nationalism and feminism have articulated a critique of universal rights and equality based on binary categories and essentialism. Citizenship and democracy are central features of feminism and of some versions of nationalism. For feminists, citizenship and equality following human rights principles are central and should include women, remedying stratification between women and men. Nationalisms claimed the universal right to *autodeterminación*/self-determination by imagining the nation as sovereign in order to remedy the inequalities between metropolis and colony. Calling for equality for the category woman and/or for the colony, both movements reproduced inequalities while purporting to change unequal power relations for women and for the colony. Feminism and nationalism have sometimes homogenized “women”, and the notion of self-determination erased the complex heterogeneous realities of the groups included in such categorical constructions. Unsurprisingly, both feminism and nationalism have been concerned with an “essential” version of women, who seem quite “inessential” based on the amount of coverage they receive in *Claridad* as I discovered in the present study. Women are multicultural, complex, diverse, and they have experienced and shared oppressive social structures that for some occur in a context of privilege and for others in a context of further disadvantage. The women of *Claridad* are transnational.

Puerto Rican women claim the whole world as their nation and their activism and discourse represented in these documents revealed that women are imagined as transnational actors seeking the liberation of Puerto Rico. Women are exalted in roles that

rendered them transnational women, not necessarily the bearers of the nation in the biological sense, but in the activism and struggle to liberate the nation. Women mediate men's roles in nationalism, and act as "men" through the discourses of independence nationalism. Feminist analysis challenged and undermined the traditional patriarchal nationalist premise that the only political issue is the status of Puerto Rico as a colony. If anything, women want liberation and an end to being "the last colony" (Mies 1998), a status shared with Puerto Rico (Trías Monge 1997). Women's roles in independence nationalism are transnational and global, local and national.

The Interpretive Approach to Methodology

The interpretive approach to methodology was useful for studying the depiction of women and the roles played by women and men in the nation of *Claridad*, a nation that is based on a model of independence nationalism. Women's roles have been shaped by the independence lens of national realities. The independence angle is axiomatic, but it helped me traced Puerto Rican women's contributions to the nation and nationalisms of Puerto Rico. This interpretive account surmised that the newspaper coverage follows an interpretation of gender and nation based on their historical and cultural milieu that reproduces certain ways of speaking about the nation based on assumptions about masculinity. Intellectuals as generic genderless and gendered beings shape the discourses of independence.

The feminist critique of nations and nationalism focusing on the social construction of frames and roles also revealed that there are competing understandings of

the nationalist discourse in Puerto Rico. Nationalisms are plural phenomena. By crossing borders and using an interpretive approach using content analysis, I revealed the line of fault of nationalism centered in the tension between nation and transnationalism. The meaning of the nation is embedded in the writings of intellectuals and the study of those with intellectual power in the broadest sense of being an intellectual is a useful tool for creating new knowledge about society. The experience of women is organized, determined, and generated by the tension between being part of the nation, while at the same time, being transnational women, reported in the print media of a society. My interpretive methodology facilitated my experience of border crossing to see that women's experiences intersect in national, transnational, and across borders, and these borders are not just between sending and receiving societies, but they are dispersed in multiple locations.

By following the roles of women, I was able to reveal that feminist nationalism is also embedded in the coverage. All social categories and frameworks emerge in the construction, production, and reproduction of social reality through writing and publishing. The use of the theoretical model of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) and Yuval-Davis (1997) was useful, but it relied on few empirical examples. The use of articles as data helped me show the roles of women in nationalism in Puerto Rico. Women's roles are *not* just *within* the "nation," women's roles are transnational roles. In independence nationalism, women played roles consistent with the ideology of masculinity whereby women are armed, violent soldiers for the nation. The discourse of

independence framed women's roles as anti-thesis to the privileging of women as "mothers of the nation" advanced by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989).

When Lolita Lebrón died in 2010, the Puerto Rican nation mourned her for her commitment to the nation and for her resilience in fighting for an ideal. The day Lolita died, the nation also died in the sense that she had become the metaphor for woman as the nation, a transnational woman. She became a martyr who self-sacrificed for the nation. With her death, she passed to the hall of key historical figures, a woman worthy, part of the canon of the intellectual history of not only the independence and nationalist movement, but of Puerto Rican history, culture, and society more generally. Her activism on behalf of the nation left a legacy of transnational activism. The activism of women nationalists who are also feminist nationalist has brought to the forefront confrontations between these two movements.

Independence is a collective movement, an ideology and a process that crosses party politics and groups. Puerto Ricans from various independence groups like the rest of the Puerto Rican people have a strong sense of national identity, but transforming the political structure of Puerto Rican society, as advanced by the nationalist project, will demand a structural transformation of the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico that cannot be transformed by "uniting the fragments of the nation."

The Discourses of Nationalism

The discourse of independence nationalism, women's history and women worthies for the commemoration of independence nationalism, the counter-hegemonic

discourse of feminist nationalism, and the nationalist construction of women and social issues in institutions were the key organizing features of the coverage of women's roles in nationalism. For a nationalist rhetoric that calls women "essential" or "imprescindible," it is remarkable that only 1.5 percent of the coverage actually had included women.

The Discourse of Independence Nationalism

The independence project, I found, is characterized by linking the process of colonization to the Shout of *Lares* as the point of departure for the origin of the nation through struggle. This initial point of departure underscored the role of women's roles as seamstress of flags and their forthcoming repression through independence activism. The roles of women combatants for the nation take particular precedence into this representation as embodied in the figures of Blanca Canales Torresola, Lolita Lebrón, and Providencia "Pupa" Traval. Besides these prominent icons, I found that the generation after the 1950s included the Rodríguez sisters – Lucy and Alicia – whose mother, Doña Josefina, worked to obtain their release from prison by seeking international support. The role of women as mother of the nation did not figure prominently in this coverage, a finding contrary to the focus of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989).

The women of *Claridad* nation personified a nation of women who played very masculine roles and that for engaging in such gender transformations, they have endured the ultimate form of social control, incarceration while they themselves engaged in

violent attacks against government institutions in the United States and in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, the roles of political prisoners have made the diaspora visible to all. The diaspora personifies the construction of the nation in struggle; anywhere the nation finds itself, it seeks liberation from the colonial ruler even when living inside the “belly” of the colonizer; now which belly that is remains a matter of debate. Social control can be achieved through hegemony and through outright violence. This representation of the diaspora is limiting as it is a Janus faced description, violent masculinity in the symbolic sense, while also longing to belong and to be part of the nation. Thus the political prisoners and their deeds are key features of the nationalist project for the liberation of Puerto Rico. Both symbolically and in the physicality of violence, armed struggle and violence shapes the notion of liberation from the colonial ruler. These roles for women in independence nationalism are offered as “samples” or “buttons” of the national identity.

When the masculine project of independence is analyzed through the lens of gender and nation, the women of the nation and the men of the nation are combatants, political prisoners who regardless of gender embrace a masculine pose or guise to liberate the nation. By commemorating nationalist events (e.g. the *Ponce* Massacre, the Nationalist Revolts, the Shout of *Lares*), the imagined community described by Benedict Anderson (1983) is posited not as imagined community but a nation as sovereign (Lomnitz 2000; Miller 2006). This desire for “independence” is not unique to men, but it is deployed as the discourse of independence nationalism; thus nationalism reflects men’s desires, aspirations, and definitions of the nation that are consistent with the findings

associated with Enloe (1990) and Nagel (1998). More importantly, the nation is a transnational nation of diasporic women subjects seeking the liberation of the nation.

This particular independence project has been unable to draw support from all the masses in Puerto Rico because it has a narrow and ideological understanding of nations and nationalisms. The use of violence or its representation through masculinity ignores the democratic culture embedded in Puerto Rican society. Additionally, as the discourses of nations and nationalism and its key exponents (Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; and Smith 1986) have articulated, women and gender are marginal to the axis of representation of nationalism in independence the newspaper. However, the critical project that I have undertaken here underscores gender and nation as social relations of domination. Gender and nation are shaped and structured by social institutions, including the newspaper of the nation *Claridad*. The way of speaking about independence nationalism in Puerto Rico encompasses a violent masculinity through the structural support of the newspaper and that for women to participate in that project they must always be ready to be “deployed” as political prisoners and/or representatives of the nation.

The documentation of the contributions of women to independence nationalism is a work in progress, yet to be fully documented and written. By writing women back into history, the independence nationalism of *Claridad* can begin the process of reconstructing the role of the independence movement and its women icons into the collective consciousness of the nation. Social artifacts such as the newspaper have symbolic meaning associated with women’s roles, and these contributions cannot be understated;

cultural artifacts have politics in the sense that they become representations of collective conscience by those who control the ideological apparatus of the independence press. At the same time, these discourses can be turned on their “heads” and be re-appropriated by women to advance social justice.

The story of independence nationalism sheds light on the problems of identity crisis that have long been documented by mass society theorists to reflect the lack of a sense of history when it comes to the history of independence (and for that matter the history of feminism). Lamenting the lack of historical consciousness presents a larger question. Instead of asking the question about the lack of historical consciousness it may very well be about what exactly this “sense of common history and aspirations for the future” really mean given that independence rarely figures in official national histories of Puerto Rico, but for *Claridad*’s project this history is also one-sided. This collective history of the nation entails including Puerto Ricans *aquí y allá*/here and there, men and women, but I don’t know if the prominent feature of the diaspora is necessarily as “political prisoners” as a real testament to the sounds and sights of the nation (Cerulo 1994).

By acknowledging the significance of the discourses of men’s domination of the nation, the feminist critique of this particular form of masculinity in the nationalist project may shed light on contemporary nationalist debates found in *Claridad*, the “newspaper of the Puerto Rican nation.” This feminist critique may also demonstrate that the exclusion of women remains an issue with consequences for the reproduction of social power and gender inequality, and that the rejection of a feminist analysis of nations

and nationalism limits the potential reach of dialogue and transformation for the project of social justice for Puerto Rican women and for Puerto Rico more generally. Gender inequality still marginalizes and excludes women and womanhood from nation and nationhood, but it has also denied access and voice to women and their strategies for transforming exclusionary practices guided by feminist activism in the multicultural nation of Puerto Rico. These women are not generic and Puerto Rico is highly racialized society, but silent about its past regarding the race of the nation. Only recently have historians and social scientists in the island begun to make race visible in their analysis of society and culture. The experience of the diaspora has been instrumental in shaping this prism of analysis because in the diaspora Puerto Ricans encounter the “national question” of are Puerto Ricans a racial/ethnic minority or are Puerto Ricans a nation “on the move” and in the island. This tension between nation and racial/ethnic minority status raises questions about a sense of belonging, membership, citizenship rights, and a host of other concerns.

Commemorating the Nation

In independence nationalism, the discourse of the project defines women’s roles relative to their duties and responsibilities to support the struggle for independence. The role of women is to create the conditions for the liberation of the nation. Because independence nationalism emerged as a hegemonic masculine project where only certain women and certain men fit into the construction, it is questionable why exactly “the nation” actually celebrates women’s history. Indeed, the roles of women are significant

because these frames serve as symbolic material for the commemoration of the nation. These roles ignore the efficacy of women's activism around women's history month in the context of intimate partner violence. I surmised that this coverage co-opted women's history by emphasizing the remembrance of the nation, and debating whether or not it was important to celebrate the occasion with one day or one month. This preoccupation with "length" supported the claims I made regarding the characterization of independence nationalism as a masculine project.

Additionally this independence nationalism covered many known women and some relatively unknown ones to the everyday woman on the street. From the prism of the independence movement, all of the women covered are "women worthies." I defined "women worthies" as those women who through their deeds, duties, and responsibilities have supported the independence project; this pattern was central in their "framing" and "gendering" as "national symbols." One of my findings, in my view, related to the role that women's history and women worthies play for the commemoration of independence. These roles are once more transnational roles for the commemoration of the nation. Additionally, I observed that besides Puerto Rican women worthies, there were international women worthies who for their respective deeds in their countries of origin have made in what way or another contributions to the cause for national liberation worldwide. These international women worthies are constructed as part of the structural support for independence and can be leveraged for the cause of independence nationalism.

From the experiences of women worthies of Puerto Rico and women worthies from the globe, I argued that I saw what I have called the “unfinished feminist nationalist” project that takes independence nationalism to task given its hegemonic undertones. The feminist nationalist project and the coverage of women are indicators that women play a marginal role in the hegemonic form of nationalism, and for that women have not “advanced” the project of independence nationalism. That is, I interpreted this finding as a sign that transforming the hegemonic project does not see “sovereignty” for women as a pressing issue until after independence. Social injustice and gender inequality widely documented in national statistics about intimate partner violence and violence in general should give us pause about whether or not one can wait for “independence” as the panacea for remedying social exploitation and violence.

Similarly, the liberation of the nation will not guarantee, as many other nationalists projects have shown, that women will gain social parity under independence. Thus the nationalist discourse as presently constituted in its hegemonic form privileges the monolithic project of independence nationalism and excludes alternatives to societal transformation through feminist activism. Yet independence nationalism draws from the symbolism of women’s history and women worthies across nation and global location to commemorate their version of independence nationalism.

Critique of Independence Nationalism

The “unfinished project of feminist nationalism” is a counter-hegemonic discourse of nationalism. This critique of the discourse of independence nationalism is

embedded in the newspaper through the analysis of feminism provided by women who have been militant in the feminist movement but also navigated party politics within the socialist movement embodied in the independence rhetoric.

Drawing from the insights of Yuval-Davis (1997) regarding the dimensions of nationalism, specifically the civic dimension of *Staatnation*, feminist nationalism retains certain principles of independence nationalism, but it is grounded in women's activism while it does not entirely reject national liberation from colonial rule, but its activism is located in the hegemonic discourse of independence to expand human rights. This feminism uses all forms of activism on behalf of women. By focusing on legislation, using the language of national rights, human rights, and multicultural rights, this feminist nationalist discourse appears as a remedy to the independence rhetoric. This feminist nationalist discourse is not an alternative to independence nationalism but struggles for a better society focusing on the needs of women especially the issue of intimate partner violence. This discourse marks the most important shift of independence nationalism: the discourse uses the human rights to demand national liberation for the nation of Puerto Rico. The inclusion of women's roles as feminists serves functions for the independence nationalism. Feminist roles are used to show the struggle for independence, what is always latent in the discourse. The national discourse of independence uses the discourse of feminist nationalism to repackage itself as national sovereignty for the twenty-first century – the discourses of independence are the discourses of human rights mediate through women's rights.

The activism for women in nationalist perspective engages with the notion of a civic nation whereby all sectors of society are expected to participate and it uses any means necessary to ensure such participation. To achieve what is always latent or the struggle for independence, the civic dimension is re-inscribed with independence nationalist ideology and the most significant finding here was that the feminist discourse of feminism and the significance of including all sectors of society to achieve a better society, have been adopted, repackaged and co-opted for the rhetoric of independence nationalism. This suggests that the banality of nationalism can be used as a resource anywhere and everywhere – independence nationalism not only critiques nationalism and the colonial project. Independence nationalism appropriates or colonizes the discourse of the policies of the United States using the language of human rights. That is, the critique of neoliberal policies, structural adjustment policies and human rights moves the independence discourse into the global nation. The discourse of independence critiques the colonial project, but this project can now leverage a critique of U.S. foreign policy across boundaries using the human rights mantra. This for me represents the most important shift of the independence project and the most serious given its potential co-optation of women's rights for the agenda of violent masculinity. By using the feminist critique of human rights as women's rights, nationalism now takes a new dress code, the discourse of independence nationalism. The consequences of using women's activism and the discourse of human rights can be devastating – feminists and their critiques of party politics of the independence movement can be used against them as women and

their discourses through the work of feminists renders women as “gender experts” (Álvarez 1999).

The discourse of human rights advanced by the feminist critique of independence nationalism and asks the feminist movement to take a stand against exploitation and justice, equality, peace and across difference, yet the use of this discourse for the liberation of the nation remains embedded in an independence nationalism based on hegemonic assumptions of masculinity. Excavating this counter-hegemonic discourse has raised important questions about how the discourses of human rights can be used to advance the cause for national liberation, whatever that means, and the realities of women’s lives. This strategy of bringing different groups as a coalition may prove useful for the independence movement and the coverage of *Claridad* has begun to take these complex social movements into account. In the case of Puerto Rico, many of the women described as essential in the *Claridad* newspaper have also contributed to the nationalist project through their discourses of liberation, sovereignty, and citizenship rights. Yet even when the coalition of supporters removed the U.S. Navy from Vieques, there is still massive unemployment in the island and there are many issues associated with clean up efforts.

Clearly, feminism is not a foreign import from the United States and neither is the labor movement. Even the labor movement and the intellectual movement from Puerto Rico have actually supported the ideal of women’s equality. Similarly, working class socialist women supported women’s rights, while middle class women supported voting rights for the literate women. In Puerto Rico, as the chapter on the historical context of

nationalism and feminism in Puerto Rico revealed, feminists and men intellectuals have affirmed the human rights of Puerto Rican women and their liberation, but in practice much remains to be done. These roles or frames also impact the construction of women's normative spaces in society by reproducing the tension between the public and private sphere whereby Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) seemed to privilege the private sphere. Later on, Yuval-Davis (1997) fully engages with the multiple dimensions of nationalism to include the dimensions of genealogy, culture, and the civic sphere. Additionally, in the discourses of nations and nationalism the roles of women in the private sphere are constructed as "bearers of collectivities," a central argument put forth by Yuval-Davis (1980). In Puerto Rico, women in nationalism are the producers of the transnational nation in the public sphere as prisoners, combatants, and activists.

Writing Women in Society

The nationalist construction of women and social issues in institutions foretells the role of institutionalized violence in women's lives. This violence has parallels against the civic nation and its multiply located members. I surmised that the social institution of gender (Lorber 1994) has structured the "nation as a social institution." Nationalism has a structure, a set of patterned relationships based on the origin of the nation in *Lares* with features that can be traced back to 1868, but also to 1751 with the rise of Miguel Enríquez, the corsair. Either by protesters or buccaneer, these are both masculine images of the nation with the added knowledge of the corsair's pardo background. One important distinction that remains to be explored in future studies is the race of the nation. Thus,

nationalism as a discourse establishes a sex/gender system for commemoration using women's history month, and women's history creating roles for women in social institutions. This process of commemoration is always already transnational as many of the icons of independence have been central actors in the Puerto Rican diaspora.

From Virgin Mary as the paradigmatic figure of nationalism, women are the reproducers of the nation, but also the bearers of the collectivity (Yuval-Davis 1980). The focus on language also foreshadowed the social construction of the nation as constructed and embodied in language as the key or "llave" of culture, a fact that erases the importance of the diaspora for whom language is multiple.

These institutions then come into view with the rise of violence against women and partners, nationalists, and the politics of national reproduction. This coverage of family policy and violence emphasizes the role of regulation of all those members of society constructed as others, women, nationalists, and sexual minorities. Constructed as others, as part of the nation but not in it, the "others" of the nation are regularly scrutinized and regulated and denied through symbolic violence and outright violence membership in the civic nation advanced by feminist activism. Abortion, reproduction and the rights of sexual minorities exposed areas where women's bodies, the bodies of gays and lesbians, and the bodies of nationalists have been regulated and portrayed as the boundaries of the nation constantly and latently watched by the apparatuses of the state. The threat of repression is always latent, a fact shared across groups unequally situated in relations of power.

This analogous parallel challenges the potential for an inclusive dimension of civic nationalism. The tension between human rights and national rights raises questions about membership in the nation. In this context, I suggested that there is a strong intersection between policing, regulation, and surveillance of all bodies. Surveillance has been an alarming feature experienced by all of those who are labeled outsiders in this struggle for survival. Nations are built through struggle and gender is reproduced everyday through struggle and social interaction. For the nationalist project, institutions are also arenas for the creation of an independent nation. The focus on survival and resilience seems to suggest that struggle. The state has been the most violent institution encountered by women and nationalists as well as for sexual minorities, members of the diaspora, including political prisoners. The roles played by women across these discourses suggest that women are unwavering women who navigate multiple forms of inequality, both symbolic and material, in their efforts to create and support the nation. The importance of the diaspora eventually disappears unless we are discussing the violence of imprisonment and the call for commemoration and celebration of the past deeds.

The Nation of *Claridad*

This study of gender and feminist nationalism in Puerto Rico used social artifacts of the independence movement as exemplified in *Claridad*. However, these artifacts also carry with them the tension between culture and politics and the inclusion and exclusion reproduced through social roles, frames and the sex/gender system. Using the

independence newspaper, *Claridad*, I trace women's roles in the nationalist project and in feminist nationalism in Puerto Rico. Feminist nationalism reconstructs and restores women's contributions to the independence movement, requiring that knowledge be transformed and filtered through the lens of independence. Puerto Rico as a nation is reproduced, transmitted, and actively created through the deeds of women. To tell the story of women's roles in the nation from a nationalist perspective, *Claridad* contextualized women's roles using the past to speak about the present, giving women's roles a temporal depth that facilitated its commemoration.

By framing and reporting Puerto Rican women's roles in history, coverage translated women's contributions to the nation through the rise of women's movements and feminist activism into a nationalist past. Telling the story of women during women's history month facilitated the creation of temporal depth for expanding who is included in the story of the nation. Using a comparative perspective, *Claridad* offered an understanding of women and gender issues in the context of Puerto Rico's colonial legacy stressing women's roles in the independence movement, in feminist activism, and in women's activism in general. The story of women's history month represented a nationalist interpretation of the story. Women's distinctive history presented women through their roles in the nationalist and independence movement. Both the independence movements and feminist movements "have long recognized the power of a good story to move people to action" (Polletta 2009:34). Building a story about women's roles in nationalism and documenting it through research has created the foundation for the claims to a national identity and the commemoration of women's deeds. Therefore, for a

nation to make sense of its identity as a nation, each nation bases its national identity on claims about history and differences from other nations (Puri 2004).

The act of reading *Claridad*, the structural support for the independence movement, imagined and created the Puerto Rican nation, and this process of imagination shaped the recognition of a sense of belonging to a collectivity. For Anderson (1983), argued King (2006), the process of interaction creates the national community through the act of writing the nation in the prose of the paper and by the act of reading by individuals who will never meet yet share the act of creating a national community:

Each morning the members of a nation have opened the same newspapers over their breakfast and this geographically diverse ritual has unified the nation around the key issues which confront it. The newspaper has created common understandings and shared interests which have unified members of a national community even though they have never nor will ever meet. (P. 251)

The newspaper is the mechanism and shared artifact that made the imagining of the community possible. Using the prism of independence writing, the newspaper authors whom I treated as expert informants and public intellectuals built the nation. Although one cannot assume that all readers will construct, identify and/or interpret the nation in the same manner, there is a shared process of interaction and contention through the printing press that does reproduce *Claridad* as the wall of contention of independence nationalism.

Following an independence and nationalist socialist ideology, the newspaper has served an informational function for building community among independence forces, while acknowledging social conflict vis-à-vis the United States as a colonial power that demands unity from the independence forces and the Puerto Rican nation.

Simultaneously, at the local level the nation has fought incursions into Puerto Rican society by colonialism. The newspaper has emerged as a shared resource linking social networks of families, neighbors, professional groups, intellectuals, independence forces, and others (Anderson 1983; King 2006). Interacting with the paper while imagining these social networks of individuals and groups, the symbolic meaning of the nation is contested.

An overlooked category in the imagining of the nation has been women and the roles imagined by them and for them by nationalism. *Claridad's* coverage reiterated the process by which nations emerged via struggle, especially through the construction and commemoration of the nation through the prominent focus on colonization. The commemoration of the nation grappled with the structure of temporal depth and historical events. The nation emerged through constant struggle and resistance, and the past must constantly be commemorated while also imagining a future for the nation and the independence movement. The question about whose nation and whose project we commemorate when we read this paper remain open-ended. Nations and nationalisms, gender and nation, and independence nationalism and feminist nationalism are discourses produced in the specific historical context of society. What those discourses will contain is matter of social location and how these discourses will be used still remains important sociological questions for further analysis.

Consequently, multiple societal factors are likely to impact when, where, how, why, and under what conditions these discourses of feminism and nationalism will converge and/or diverge to construct, define, and provide a more complete explanation of

the status of women (and men) and the permanence or potential eradication of gender inequality and the emancipation, liberation, independence of, for, and by women. The analysis to address these various issues has occurred at both the macro-level of local and national societies (e.g., the state and social movements), and at the micro-level or face-to-face interaction among various actors in their efforts to build nations and to make sense of their identities as gendered, national beings. The discourses of feminist nationalism brought to the forefront the prominence of multiple spheres beyond public and private by bringing forth the sphere of civil society.

Directions for Future Research

Several suggestions can be made for future research. First, Puerto Rican women's roles in nationalism are transnational. Systematic theorizing is needed to address the meaning of transnationalism in the Puerto Rican context. The coverage in the newspaper sometimes made reference to Palestine as a nation without a state and the topic of martyrdom appears an important insight into the process of nation building. An analysis that compares the Puerto Rican experience of nationalism and nation with the experience of Palestine may provide additional insights into national process for liberation.

Second, the Puerto Rican feminist perspective is a prism of inquiry using the transnational as the point of departure to understand women's experiences in society and to imagine a future of social justice and inclusion. The Puerto Rican feminist perspective draws from resources everywhere and anywhere informed by various discourses of women's rights, human rights, and transnational rights of inclusion. By using the

discourse of independence as a heuristic device, one may develop research to map out how the nation is imagined as transnational in other contexts by mapping out the roles played by women as transnational women and of sexual minorities.

Third, the counter-hegemonic discourses of transnational feminisms can be excavated by comparing Puerto Rican nationalism with other national contexts. This strategy would reveal how the discourses of human rights are used to advance the cause for national and transnational liberation informed by the specific social location and historical context of a society.

Fourth, further research is needed to expand on the analysis of intersectionality relative to gender, nation, sexual minorities, and the diaspora. This analysis may shed further light into the manner in which migration process crosses borders to redefine the meaning of national identity for national subjects. The linkages between race, racialization, and nation can be traced by following the life histories and deeds of Manuel Enríquez, the life of Pedro Albizu Campos, Ramón Emeterio Betances, and countless others with a focus on how their activism on behalf of independence was shaped, structured, determined, and transformed by their transnational movements.

Fifth, further research is needed to understand the social construction of political prisoners after they are liberated from jails. The Puerto Rican political prisoners experienced migration and exile at different levels; thus since some of the political prisoners lived in the U.S. and little time in Puerto Rico, research can shed light on how they have been received by Puerto Ricans once they were pardoned and “relocated” to Puerto Rico. The interviews with political prisoners would shed light on their sense of

identity, how women prisoners managed incarceration in U.S. jails, and how the solitude and silence in jail impacted their sense of identity.

Sixth, with the death of Lolita Lebrón and Juan Mari Brás, future research may focus on writing their life histories to chronicle their contributions to Puerto Rican culture, society, and diaspora.

Seventh, the issue of surveillance and social control of women, political prisoners and sexual minorities will continue to play an important part in the collective identity of the nation. A systematic study of the role of surveillance and violence against women and the others of the nation will shed light on how human subjects, as agentic beings, transform oppressive structures.

Eighth, this study examined a pro-independence newspaper. A comparative study with the other newspapers of the nation in the age of the Internet may guide us into the way the nation is imagined by different cultural producers. A study comparing *El Nuevo Día/The New Day* newspaper which usually supports statehood for Puerto Rico and/or a study of the *El Vocero/The Spokeperson* for the masses may provide competing understandings of the nation and of transnationalism in the age of the Internet and Facebook. The study of the documents, music, and cultural and social artifacts of a nation can help us reveal the cultural meaning, institutional constraints, and the social experience of Puerto Rican society across difference.

Finally, future research may also explore the link between gender, age, and nation. The icons of nationalism are elderly women now, and it would be important to study the constructions of age as a central structural element of society structure. By

linking how the nation is imagined as a community, as sovereign, or as transnational with age, insights can be gained about the role that the new generation of independence activists will play in the new independence struggles as age intersects with nation, race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Women have played transnational roles in independence nationalism and their collective deeds have created discourses that demonstrated that women have been prominent contributors to the nationalist cause across national borders. Women's activism on behalf of women and social issues showed that Puerto Rican women played roles in independence nationalism as unwavering women whose nation is the entire world.

APPENDIX A

THE ARTICLES AS DATA

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APPENDIX B

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