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Book Review

Homeland Maternity: US Security Culture and the New Reproductive Regime

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Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz's book, published in the University of Illinois Press's *Feminist Media* Series, combines two fields of inquiry: feminist studies of maternal and reproductive politics, and critical scholarship on homeland security culture. She clarifies *homeland security culture* as 'the state in concert with the felt quality of life in post-9/11 US culture - including the rise of neoconservatism, postfeminist gender politics, as well as heightened nationalism, nativism, and US exceptionalism' (p. 14). Her examination is impressively conceived, theoretically informed, and thorough. Her timely work exemplifies feminist communications scholarship at its best, promising to broaden the standpoints and knowledge of academics, activists, and public policymakers.

Fixmer-Oraiz coins the term *homeland maternity* to refer to 'a significant force within US reproductive regimes of the early twentieth-century – namely, the relationship between motherhood and nation within homeland security' (p. 3). She recognises this relationship as 'deeply enmeshed and mutually constitutive' (p. 3). From an historical perspective, as she points out, national security, (not post-9/11 homeland security), has theorised 'domesticity as a requisite to the future of the nation, which has often meant governing reproduction through the differential surveillance and control of women's bodies and behaviours' (p. 4). Focused on this trend in the present moment, Fixmer-Oraiz's purpose is to 'account for the recent history of US reproductive politics [which is] stubbornly inflected by, but also active in shaping, collective life in the post-9/11 homeland security culture' (p. 5).

Her hope is to intervene in 'the conditions that fuel contemporary forms of reproductive injustice' and to point toward the possibilities of reproductive justice. Fixmer-Oraiz wisely situates her argument within a historical context, noting that 'the cultural alignment of motherhood and nation is evident at several key historical moments in the United States from the colonial era to postwar containment culture and into the present' (p. 4). In her introduction, she briefly but incisively traces how early state formation and colonialism in the United States relied on the regulation of maternal and reproductive labour, thus legitimising hetero-patriarchy and white supremacy. She reminds readers that such regulation ranged from the use of reproductive and sexual violence against enslaved and indigenous women to the conceptualisation of republican motherhood, which made wealthy white women's childrearing abilities a 'national resource' (p. 6). This regulation proceeded with the passages of the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798 to exclusive immigration policies that deterred the formation of Asian immigrant families in 1882, and later after World War I, prevented the entry of pregnant, unmarried, and lesbian women. These exclusionary practices continued onwards into the Progressive Era (1896-1916), implicating the birth control

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movement of the 1920s and 1930s in eugenics and population control, especially of people of colour, and ultimately, in federally funded sterilisation, which was at its peak in the 1970s.

Once she recollects this history, Fixmer-Oraiz clearly foregrounds her methodology, and her commitment to inclusive language, acknowledging also the reproductive experiences of trans and nonbinary people, within her ethic of reproductive justice. As a rhetorical critic, Fixmer-Oraiz collected and analysed for her book a variety of artifacts--newspaper articles, public campaigns, advertisements, popular film and television, legal documents, and advocacy efforts by professional associations and nongovernmental organisations—that 'bear meaningfully on figurations of motherhood and reproduction in homeland security culture' (p. 26).

She aligns her study with reproductive justice rather than USA pro-choice advocacy since the former understands 'reproductive rights as part of a broader human rights and social justice agenda', centring the experiences of women of colour and increasingly, members of trans and nonbinary communities. Through an intersectional lens, she reiterates that 'motherhood is a key site in the production and maintenance of homeland security culture' (p. 14).

In the book, Chapter 1 focuses on post-9/11 pronatalist campaigns that have discursively valorised 'domesticity and motherhood for women of means as a critical dimension of homeland security culture' (p. 27). In particular, these efforts were the so-called 'opt-out' revolution of the early twenty-first century, 'a trend reminiscent of postwar white suburbia but refigured in the context of postfeminist culture,' and 'fertility campaigns that targeted young professional women … encouraging the use of assisted reproductive technologies [egg-freezing] to secure the possibility of pregnancy in life' (p. 27). In Chapter 2, the author considers the opposite trend, how homeland maternity calls attention to the punishment of women of colour and poor women for fertility, as demonstrated in the case of Nadya Suleman, who gave birth to sixteen children via IVF, including a set of octuplets in 2009, and whose physician was ultimately deprived of his medical license. In public discourse, Suleman embodied two contradictory stereotypes: that of "the sympathetic infertile woman and the welfare queen," potentially eroding the distinctions between so-called deserving and undeserving mothers. As anthropologist Dana-Ain Davis, quoted by Fixmer-Oraiz, concludes, Suleman's 'right to reproduce and nurture was denounced because she was single, had no verifiable source of income, and was an inadequate representative of whiteness' (p. 65). Thus, in her analysis, Fixmer-Oraiz points to the 'rhetorics of pathology and risk that marked Suleman as a threat to be contained,' thereby 'policing the borders of maternity and asserting the primacy of medical authority in maintaining these borders' (p. 28). Chapter 3 addresses the public debates in the USA from 2001 to 2006 around the availability of emergency contraception (EC) obtained 'over the counter'. Since EC provided a method of prevention after unprotected sex, it caused 'cultural panics regarding sexual purity and young people's sexual and reproductive decision making' (p. 28). In the discourse on EC, Fixmer-Oraiz illuminates the 'rhetorics of emergency that drew on the ethos of science, and emphasised normative family planning and sexual restraint, and disciplined women differentially according to longstanding (classed, racialised) hierarchies of maternal worth' (p. 28). In Chapter 4, she analyses the rhetorics of crisis operating in the film *Juno* (2007) and the television shows *Glee* (2009-2015), *16 and Pregnant* (2009-2014), and *Teen Mom* (2009-2012) as well as in the evangelical crisis pregnancy centre (CPC) movement. The popular culture narratives 'privilege whiteness and class mobility and promote "good" choice making and motherhood to mitigate the crisis of teen pregnancy (and relatedly, the infertility of elite women' (p. 122). They evade 'the politics of teen pregnancy and its links to racism, sexism, classism, and poverty' (p. 127) while also stigmatising abortion.

For me, Fixmer-Oraiz performs her most brilliant analysis by demonstrating how the emphasis on crisis in media narratives of teen pregnancy 'filter[s] into other aspects of reproductive and maternal politics,' namely, in the CPC movement' (135). She concludes that 'the use of "crisis" in teen pregnancy narratives and by the CPC movement has promoted a narrow vision of motherhood, intensified the policing of young women's lives, and fuelled the colonization of reproductive health clinics across the country' (p. 140).

Fixmer-Oraiz ends her book with hope by suggesting methods of resistance to homeland maternity, including co-optation, subversion, and 'other modes of rhetorical invention and reinvention' (p. 29). To disentangle reproduction and motherhood from service to the nation, Fixmer-Oraiz invites readers to 'rearticulate alignments in ways that make the nation more readily responsive to longstanding forms of injustice that disproportionately impact mothers, parents, and families' (p. 158).

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