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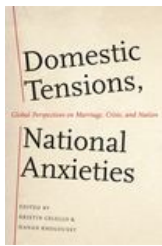
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Domestic Tensions, National Anxieties: Global Perspectives on Marriage, Crisis, and Nation

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Abstract

The introduction argues that studying marriage in times of crisis provides an important lens onto the relationship between the institution and the nation. It explores the metaphorical links between marriage and the nation and the concrete ways in which the modern state has intervened in the private, marital lives of its citizens. The introduction highlights key points of comparison, notably gender, the tension between modernity and tradition, and the line between public and private. It explains why the modern period is a particularly eventful era to examine due to the rise of the modern nation-state, the peak of anticolonial struggles and postcolonial identity formation, and the emergence of media, among other phenomena. The introduction explains the chronological order, and thematic arrangement of the contributions, while providing brief summaries of each one. It concludes by acknowledging the limitations of the volume, while simultaneously proposing additional areas of scholarship.

Keywords: marriage, modernity, nationalism, gender, family, state, interdisciplinary, crisis

Subject: Local and Family History, Modern History (1700 to 1945)

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At the beginning of her wide-ranging account of the history of marriage, Stephanie Coontz notes that, in the early twenty-first century, “Almost everywhere people worry that marriage is in crisis.”¹ These anxieties are important to Coontz because they demonstrate the rapid, far-reaching changes that she contends have revolutionized the institution of marriage in the relatively recent past. Equally intriguing, however, is her deft deconstruction of the current global concerns about marriage, in which the nature and purported sources of each crisis differ drastically, and even contradictorily, in various regional and national settings.² Location, as well as context, clearly matters when it comes to the substance and meaning of any given marriage crisis. But why has marriage, specifically, had the power to generate widespread national concern in so many different places both recently and in the past?

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The goal of *Domestic Tensions, National Anxieties* is to elucidate the interconnected relationships among marriage, crisis, and the nation, by thinking about marriage and its “problems” through a broad interpretative framework.³ If “the nation has invariably been imagined via metaphors of family,” those periods in which familial bonds—marital and generational—seem to be fraying often lead to worries about the stability and future of a nation.⁴ While such metaphors are flawed, based on assumptions of patriarchal benevolence and familial harmony (which the case of marriage crisis belies), the popular notion that marriage is a microcosm of modern society is nevertheless a powerful one. National conversations about the institution are often about more than intimate relationships. Marriage frequently becomes a vehicle for critiquing larger socioeconomic and political changes, for shaping public policy, and for endeavoring to eradicate perceived social ills.⁵ Analyzing the rise, contours, and proposed solutions to marriage crises, therefore, allows for a deeper understanding of the forces shaping these societies.

More concretely, the modern state has played a significant role in the production and promotion of certain kinds of marriage and families, what philosopher Etienne Balibar refers to as the “nationalization of the family.”⁶ Michel Foucault similarly argues that public discourses sought to make the family into a quintessentially “private” space, while simultaneously aiming to ensure that it accepted its responsibilities for securing the “public” objectives of the nation.⁷ The regulation of marriage, together with other “matters of the intimate,” has been an essential tool in nation- and empire-building and in governance.⁸ Indeed, Foucault’s assertion that the regulation of marriage was a major focus of various nineteenth-century European states applies beyond the western context and into the twentieth century.⁹ States around the world, in other words, have sought to produce and promote certain types of marital arrangements, with the goal of maintaining control over their citizens/ subjects. The underlying assumption has been that, without the institution of marriage, men and women would not live and reproduce in legal and socially acceptable ways. From this viewpoint, marriage is essential because it purportedly provides a healthy and secure environment in which citizens and leaders can flourish. It is a defining aspect of belonging to the nation and a fundamental building block thereof. It is easy to see how challenges to, or variations on, the marital status quo could be interpreted as impeding the good of the nation, leading to a sense of impending marital—and perhaps national—doom. The state’s investment in marriage, then, leads it to interpret challenges to the marital status quo as the onset of a crisis.

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While states have offered particular sociopolitical visions of how unions “should be” made and experienced, these directives have not always played out as expected in the lives of married people. Marriage crises, and efforts to alleviate them, frequently reverberate through the lives of everyday men and women, shaping their interactions with one another as well as with the governments under which they live. By fomenting and participating in marriage crises from below, men and women have come to use the “state” of marriage in order to understand their place within the nation. How they marry, whom they marry, or whether they can marry reveals a great deal about people’s socioeconomic circumstances, political and legal rights (or lack thereof), and gendered and national identities. The chapters in this book illuminate how individuals have chosen to structure their intimate lives in times of marriage crisis from late nineteenth-century Brazil, to midcentury France, to twenty-first-century Egypt.

If some of the deepest insights into marriage can be gained by examining the margins of marital life, when a husband and wife are in conflict, it follows that there is much to learn by examining instances in which the institution itself is apparently threatened.¹⁰ But just as each struggling marriage relationship is “unhappy in its own way,” so too is each marriage crisis unique.¹¹ Conjugal crises may be precipitated by changes in marrying and marital behavior, or by the perception of such changes that are not borne out by statistical analyses. They may arise when marriage or divorce rates are increasing, or when they are declining. Alarm bells may ring because the kinds of unions that are taking place, such as interracial, interreligious, child, and same-sex marriages, are judged not to be in the nation’s interest. Some crises are about trying to hold on to “traditional” forms of marriage, while others are about eliminating nuptial traditions in pursuit of

modernity. Furthermore, what constitutes a marriage crisis in one context may pass unnoticed, or even be celebrated, in another.

Rather than attempt a unified definition of crisis, this volume highlights how diverse individuals around the world have used marriage to envision, debate, and propose solutions to dilemmas of national and personal identity. Because marriage is a nearly universal custom, it provides a fruitful point of comparison for studying peoples, their societies, and the difficulties they encounter. While it is essential not to overstate or to oversimplify commonalities across place and time, the recurrence of certain themes in the study of marriage crisis resonates in a comparative context. This volume thus offers a starting point for exploring historian Mytheli Sreenivas's question about what can be gained "not merely by agglomerating various national histories of families, but also by situating them in productive conversation across national borders."¹² This discussion should cross disciplinary, as well as national, boundaries. The volume's contributors use a wide range of methodologies, including archival research, textual analysis, and demography, and a variety of sources, including legal petitions, novels, academic books and journals, newspapers and magazines, laws, court records, interviews, films, and survey data. The diverse set of methodologies and sources used in the following chapters is as important a contribution to the study of the relationship between marriage and nation as the authors' cogent analyses of marriage crises around the world.

p. 4 Marriage, albeit in numerous forms and arrangements, has been practiced throughout the world for millennia, and certain kinds of marriage crises have existed for nearly as long.¹³ This book focuses on the late nineteenth century to the present, examining how particular global phenomena—the birth of the modern nation-state; the peak in anticolonial struggles and postcolonial national identity and state formation; the development of new media and communication networks; the fighting of wars (hot and cold); the rise of rights regimes; and the repercussions of various worldwide economic upheavals—have powerfully shaped marriage crises within numerous colonial and national contexts. As a result of these events, marriage underwent a series of significant changes. The widespread (but not universal) celebration of love and sexual satisfaction as the foundation for companionate relationships, for example, contributed not only to happier unions in some cases, but also to the expansion of access to divorce in others. The increasing availability of birth control gave couples more control over their reproductive choices and, consequently, reshaped the objective of marriage for some couples. The rise of a transnational feminist critique of patriarchal power challenged some women's need for marriage as well as their place within it. The period in question also witnessed, on the one hand, a growing intolerance for relationships that did not fit the heterosexual and monogamous model of the nuclear family, and, on the other, a contemporary inclination in certain societies to challenge this intolerance.¹⁴

In order to reflect the interplay between marriage crises and significant national and international events, the chapters in *Domestic Tensions, National Anxieties* are arranged in a loosely chronological fashion. This is not to suggest a master narrative of marriage crisis, but rather to highlight points of connection throughout these distinct, yet interlocking, national stories.¹⁵ The importance of shifting gender roles and behavior, strains between tradition and modernity, and the porous line between public and private appear and reappear through the chapters, demonstrating the similarities and differences among manifestations of marriage crisis across time and place.

Gender plays a pivotal role in national dialogues about marital troubles, as evidenced by its centrality to each chapter in this book. Marriage is one of the most effective, yet often overlooked, ways of studying gender. As historian Nancy F. Cott, a contributor to this volume, has argued elsewhere: "Turning men and women into husbands and wives, marriage has designated the way both sexes act in the world."¹⁶ The gendering of husbands and wives and the construction of femininity and masculinity within marriage have been equally important in identity formation, especially at the national level. A wife's obligations to her country, in other words, may be quite unlike those of her husband—and in many cases in the not-so-

distant past may have hinged upon whom she married.¹⁷ Even today, access to full citizenship may depend on each spouse's ability to fulfill these duties successfully. Any deviation from these marriage-based gender norms may cause alarm and even portend change on the personal and political level. Another form of perceived troublesome gender behavior comes from those men and women outside of marriage—bachelors and bachelorettes, divorced men and women, and widows and widowers—in the many societies that believe that the responsibilities of marriage are what make boys into men and girls into women. The presence and specter of individuals who do not marry, are forced to delay marriage, or do not stay married (by choice or by circumstance) has often led to responses intended to reinforce marriage-based gender archetypes.¹⁸

Contests over gender, in turn, are part of another larger theme at the heart of marriage crisis: clashes between modernity and traditionalism and the diverse ways in which claims to being modern have been made.¹⁹ People have understood, established, and/or resisted modernity to bolster their calls for breaking with—or returning to—an imagined past. Marriage often serves as an arena where notions of modernity (and modern reincarnations of tradition) are worked out. A key mediating actor in this contest has been the state, many of which have forwarded visions of “modern” marriage as a condition for national progress and/or political independence for various places and their subjects/citizens. Of course, not all countries have agreed on what makes marriage, or the state, modern. The degree to which emerging nations adopted or rejected western models of governance and marriage, in particular, has varied in significant ways. What they share in common, however, is an underlying discomfort with political and cultural experimentations in modernity that often plays out through new marital practices and portrayals.

This tension between modernity and tradition also plays out in the everyday lives of individuals. For many, modern marriage emphasizes having a choice about who and how one marries and believing that love, more than economic or familial considerations, should be the driving force behind marriage. These ideas started to take root in Western Europe and the United States in the eighteenth century and were relatively common throughout the globe by the twentieth.²⁰ This assertion of rights and the celebration of romantic love between spouses, however, challenged longstanding marital traditions, leading to proclamations of marriage crisis on two fronts. First, parents and governments alike often interpreted the act of picking a spouse without parental input as a challenge to patriarchy, especially when daughters boldly married against their fathers' wishes. Second, rising expectations for marriage often went hand-in-hand with increasing rates of separation or divorce.²¹ When a husband or wife fell out of love with a spouse, he or she was likely to feel that it was best to end that unhappy union and seek personal happiness elsewhere. ↪ If paternal power and traditions were destabilized by young men and women asserting their autonomy in the personal realm, and spouses could end marriages at will, many states feared broader assaults on the nation would follow suit. When faced with people fashioning their own kinds of unions from below, policymakers have often passed laws intended to shore up a “traditional” vision of marriage, with varying degrees of success.

But the state does not always use marriage law in a reactionary or conservative manner. In some instances, governments have expanded access to the marital franchise or have sought to overturn longstanding customs (such as child marriage).²² This tendency has been particularly pronounced in nations seeking to present a “modern” face to the rest of the world. Whether the state is interested in portraying modernity or preserving tradition, its intervention in what many believe to be the “private” sphere is another hallmark of marriage crisis. Scholars have long moved past the public/private divide that viewed the family as part of a domain far removed from the arena of state politics to reveal the intrinsic role that women, marriage, and the family have played on state agendas.²³ The institution clearly falls in the public domain, as the subject of regulation and frequently heated political debates. Yet even today, as in the past, many strongly hold that marriage is a private matter.²⁴ Precisely because marriage and its crises unfold somewhere between public and private, any perceived transgressions of the divide can produce impassioned responses by states and citizens alike, as many of the chapters in this volume reveal.

The relationship between declarations of marriage crisis and the fitful advancement of modernity, from the grand contested task of nation-building to the smaller one of constructing new forms of private, intimate relationships, emerges immediately in the book's first chapters. In her essay on late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Russia, Barbara Alpern Engel explores the ramifications of women's legal challenges to involuntary marriages. Imbued with new romantic ideals, these women made the case to the courts that they should have had the right to choose their own spouses. In doing so, they fomented a sense of crisis by directly questioning the patriarchal tradition that required parental permission for marriage. While most of their efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, they were nevertheless noteworthy, not only for the individual women but also as collective acts of resistance. Engel argues that this focus on individual rights within marriage may even have indirectly contributed to the ideological underpinnings of the Russian revolution in 1905.

p. 7 At the same time that Russian women were demanding the privilege of spousal choice, Brazilian women were inciting anxieties in their country by choosing not to get married. As Erica M. Windler demonstrates, Brazilian elites on the eve of the twentieth century were exceedingly worried about what value their fellow citizens placed on marriage. These concerns played a pivotal role in their assessment of the country's domestic and international status during a time of unprecedented growth and change. Windler's essay explores how and why government officials, social science experts, journalists, and novelists championed certain marital and familial norms in Brazil, following the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the establishment of republican governance one year later. Aware that low marriage rates and a high occurrence of illegitimacy made Brazil look "uncivilized" to the outside world, the state sought to correct these problems by becoming increasingly involved in the lives of its citizens, while simultaneously promoting stricter boundaries between public and private. These efforts specifically targeted women with the message that marriage and the fulfillment of domestic obligations that came with it represented the best path to full citizenship. In this manner, the marital choices and familial practices of Brazilian women became a significant factor in their country's path of modernization.

The marital ideals that the elite in Brazil aspired to disseminate, however, were not peculiar to that nation. Nancy Cott argues that American social scientists and social workers in the 1920s endeavored to construct a new form of "modern marriage" to counter emerging trends that threatened its "traditional" counterpart. She argues that emerging trends such as the liberalization of extramarital sex, the growing availability and use of birth control and abortion, and the increasing acceptability of divorce across the nation led many commentators to question the integrity, and even the utility, of marriage. By exposing marriage's contradictions and inequalities, the actions of certain Americans threatened to destabilize the institution. While sociologists, social workers, and others successfully worked to contain the crisis in the short term, they nevertheless made concessions with significant long-term consequences. Because the "modern marriage" centering on sexual fulfillment that experts fashioned was governed by convention rather than an innate sense of morality, they only managed to forestall, rather than solve, the problems caused by its new incongruities.

p. 8 Concentrated attempts to eliminate certain kinds of unions, especially those that state officials or nationalists no longer deemed socially acceptable, also resulted in marriage crisis. Much like in Brazil, a desire to police the boundaries of marriage, with an eye to the perceptions of the larger world, inspired the efforts of Indian legislators and activists to ban child marriage, culminating in the passage of the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) in 1929. In her reinterpretation of the CMRA, Ishita Pande refutes the common perception that the act was a unifying, "nationalist" document and instead highlights the divisions that it engendered. She argues that an examination of the Muslim stance on the CMRA reveals underlying fissures in the building of a postcolonial India. Ironically, Indian Muslims did not widely practice child marriage, nor did Islamic law mandate the custom. Yet many members of this minority group resisted the legislation through acts of civil disobedience, especially in the North West Frontier Provinces. Pande's

chapter reveals that this opposition was neither the same as that of Orthodox Hindus nor reactionary, as opponents claimed, but rather a form of “dissenting nationalism.” Contests over the regulation of marriage and competing visions of the nation, in other words, went hand-in-hand.

Similar concerns about the making of nationhood and preservation of national identity took place in 1930s colonial Burma. In this case, mixed marriages, specifically those between Burmese Buddhist women and Indian Muslim and Hindu men, were the source of widespread anxiety. Tin Tin Htun explores both the historical context and the psychological processes that prompted such fears. At a time in which nationalist leaders were coming of age and the Burmese economy was struggling as a result of the worldwide financial crisis, resentment of Indian men’s status in the colonial regime and access to financial resources ran high. The rapidly expanding press seized hold of this discontent and created a crisis, castigating the Burmese women who were willing to marry these men for sullyng their race and religion. It thus became women’s responsibility to marry the “right” kind of man to guarantee the success of the Burmese national project.

The threads of identity, marital choice, and regulation coalesce in Elke E. Stockreiter’s wide-ranging analysis of a series of crises in the predominantly Muslim British protectorate of Zanzibar during the first half of the twentieth century. Following the abolition of slavery in the late nineteenth century, intermarriage among Arabs and non-Arabs remained rare, thus reinforcing existing social divisions in Zanzibari society. Amidst economic troubles in the late 1940s, men started to protest the “excessive” dowers that they were required to pay their prospective wives’ families. At the same time, women began to demand a voice outside of their traditional roles within the household. In addition, the issue of child marriage brought colonial officials and village elders into conflict. Even as each of these issues was hotly debated, marriage remained a central path to adulthood for virtually all Zanzibaris. Stockreiter argues that the institution provided a powerful metaphor for debating the inequalities and power struggles that beset Zanzibar in this anti-colonial period.

p. 9 Sociopolitical and economic transformations also engendered a perception that marriage was in crisis in post-World War II France. Rebecca J. Pulju argues that, after years of war and economic deprivation, record-setting numbers of young Frenchmen and women turned to marriage and parenting as reassuring sources of fulfillment and stability. They sought to marry for love and, unlike previous generations, did not wait until they were financially secure or emotionally mature to tie the knot. As the age gap between spouses narrowed and women seemingly asserted a greater voice within their relationships, commentators both hailed and fretted over the implications of greater equality in marriage. The problem was that love and egalitarianism appeared to be shaky foundations on which to build lasting unions and a strong nation. They worried that if love faded, divorce and social problems related to broken homes would follow. Experts therefore developed a number of ways for couples to “work” on their relationships, such as through marriage preparation courses and post-marital counseling. Pulju ultimately sees this period as a transitional one for France. Young people embraced marriage, and divorce rates actually remained quite low, but the new ideologies behind the institution held revolutionary potential for individuals and their country.

If marriage grew “more optional and more fragile” in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as Stephanie Coontz has asserted, its importance to national discourses remained intact, as did the presence of marriage crises, as the book’s later chapters make clear.²⁵ Combatting the effects of marital breakdown takes center stage in Ke Li and Sara L. Friedman’s chapter on Chinese marriage law. In China, marriage and family life became an issue of state interest during the Nationalist period (1911–1949), when the government encouraged a nuclear family ideal but failed to implement it because of longstanding patriarchal traditions. After the Communists came to power in 1949, the party’s first piece of national legislation promoted marriage as a means of embodying socialist values, bringing the state more fully into the intimate lives of its citizens. Subsequent revisions to the law in 1980 and 2001 technically broadened access to divorce and looked to solve the property disputes that frequently accompanied marital dissolution.

These changes could be celebrated as a sign of increasing individual freedom, but Li's interviews with unhappily married women and survey of divorce records in Sichuan Province tell a more complicated story. The authors contend that the implementation of divorce law in present-day China is far from egalitarian and, in fact, further promotes gender inequities.

p. 10 The potentially harmful nature of changing marriage laws also drives Nwando Achebe's discussion of the long legal history of marriage in Nigeria. Even though monogamous unions were the norm, precolonial Nigerians also sanctioned a wide range of marital practices, including polygamy, deity-to-human marriages, and woman-to-woman marriages. British colonial officials, as well as the post-independence Nigerian government, however, sought to quash this diversity in favor of a single acceptable model of heterosexual, male-headed unions. Nonetheless, the government refused to enforce laws against child marriage in northern Nigeria. Criticizing these trends, Achebe argues that the contemporary state's "obsession" with regulating marriage, on the one hand, and turning a blind eye to child marriage, on the other, has been detrimental to its female citizens.

Men, as well as women, have been responsible for generating anxieties about marriage. In her chapter on contemporary Iran, Amy Motlagh refutes the common western perception that marriage is in crisis in the twenty-first century because young people cannot afford to tie the knot. The marital problems that do exist, she finds, stem as much, if not more, from the gendered legacy of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988). She argues that the state's subsequent promotion of a normative masculinity connected to men's roles as soldiers/martyrs and as husbands/fathers poses a larger challenge to marriage for both men and women than economic issues. Since the 1990s, however, Iranian filmmakers have exposed inconsistencies in the government's prescribed roles for men, despite the authorities' close supervision of film content. Motlagh's analysis of a range of films from the past two decades demonstrates that marriage, and men's abilities (or lack thereof) to fulfill their assigned roles within the family, have been a major preoccupation of Iranian society for quite some time.

In Japan, the changing demographics and economic troubles that have lingered since the early 1990s have led to real dilemmas for marriages and families on a number of fronts. The extent of this problem, detailed in Jeff Kingston's chapter, has only recently been acknowledged, and solutions have been slow in coming. For much of the twentieth century, the stability of the Japanese family rested on women's willingness to work in the extended household, taking care of all members, from their children to their grandparents. Many government policies continue to assume that this is the case, while the reality is far more complicated. Divorce rates have risen; as a result, many single mothers are now raising their children in poverty. Some young women are opting out of marriage altogether, finding the institution less attractive than pursuing their careers, and fertility rates have fallen. Unless the government and businesses take action to make life in Japan more marriage and family friendly, Kingston warns, there could be even more difficult times ahead.

p. 11 While Kingston uses demographic data to underscore the marriage and familial crisis in modern-day Japan, Rania Salem uses it to prove that marriage remains extremely attainable in Egypt, despite popular perceptions to the contrary. While the local and international press has widely reported that young people are being forced to delay marriage or to abstain from the institution altogether, Salem's analysis proves that this is simply not the case. The cost of marriage, the most frequently cited culprit for endemic bachelorhood, has actually declined over time. While the age of marriage has increased, Salem indicates that this may well be a conscious preference for certain Egyptians, like financially privileged men, rather than something they have been forced into by high matrimonial costs. Digging deeper into these proclamations of crisis, Salem suggests that these anxieties may be more an expression of the public's disquiet over gender relations and modes of family reproduction than over widespread singlehood.

There have unquestionably been marriage crises in countries and at times not featured in this book; complete global coverage in a single volume is simply not possible. There are also a variety of new and potentially anxiety-inducing trends that call for further scholarly attention. In some nations, marriage is no longer the dominant or only socially acceptable way of making families, thus undermining the institution's preeminent status as a foundation of society.²⁶ Yet as the concluding chapters of this volume, as well as the quote that opens this introduction, make clear, marriage appears regularly in newspaper headlines and on national agendas. The case of same-sex marriage is instructive, as LGBT activists in various corners of the globe have made access to the institution a cornerstone of their fight for equal rights. Defenders of "traditional" heterosexual marriage have predictably seen this development as putting marriage in crisis.²⁷ No matter how secular, liberal, religious, or conservative, many men, women, and governments continue to see marriage as the foundation of the modern nation.²⁸ It is the hope of the editors and contributors that this volume furthers an interdisciplinary, even transnational, conversation about marriage, crisis, and the nation, in all their forms and expressions. Future scholarly and popular discussions of marriage crisis should begin by developing a deeper understanding of the people and forces that create them. Only then can we have productive conversations about why they matter and how they shape our lives as individuals and as members of nations.

Notes

1. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 2.
2. *Ibid.*, 3.
3. The scholarship on marriage in various national settings is voluminous. A sample of works that analyze various anxieties about marriage around the globe (although not always with specific reference to "crisis") and that informed our thinking about this volume include Barbara M. Cooper, *Marriage in Maradi: Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900–1989* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997); Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Neil J. Diamant, *Revolutionizing the Family: Politics, Love, and Divorce in Urban and Rural China, 1949–1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Dagmar Herzog, "Desperately Seeking Normality: Sex and Marriage in the Wake of the War," in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*, eds. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2003), 161–192; Brett K. Shadle, *Girl Cases: Marriage and Colonialism in Gusiland, Kenya, 1890–1970* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006); Mark Seymour, *Debating Divorce in Italy: Marriage and the Making of Modern Italians* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Julian B. Carter, *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), chapter 2; Enid Lynette Logan, "The 1899 Cuban Marriage Law Controversy: Church, State, and Empire in the Crucible of the Nation," *Journal of Social History* 42 (Winter 2008): 469–494; Rachel Jean-Baptiste, "These Laws Should Be Made by Us': Customary Marriage Law, Codification and Political Authority in Twentieth-Century Colonial Gabon," *Journal of African History* 49 (July 2008): 217–240; Kristin Celello, *Making Marriage Work: A History of Marriage and Divorce in the Twentieth-Century United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Hanan Kholoussy, *For Better, For Worse: The Marriage Crisis that Made Egypt Modern* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Rebecca L. Davis, *More Perfect Unions: The American Search for Marital Bliss* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Barbara Alpern Engel, *Breaking the Ties That Bind: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).
4. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, "Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation," in *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26. See also Ann Laura Stoler, "Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 16.
5. For some examples in the Southeast Asian context, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Mytheli Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows, and Concubines: The Conjugal*

Family Ideal in Colonial India (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2008); and Rochona Majumdar, *Marriage and Modernity: Family Values in Colonial Bengal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

6. Étienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," in idem and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991), 101, 102.
- p. 13 7. As cited in Nikolas Rose, "Medicine, History, and the Present," in *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body*, eds. Colin Jones and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1994), 65.
8. Stoler, "Intimidations of Empire," 4.
9. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (1990; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 37. On the state and the regulation of sexuality in North America, see Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) and Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
10. Hendrik Hartog, *Man and Wife in America: A History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) and Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
11. This phrasing is borrowed from Tolstoy's frequently cited observation at the beginning of *Anna Karenina*: "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Richard Pavear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 1. An effective analysis of "crisis" in another context is Carrie A. Rentschler and Claudia Mitchell, "A Re-Description of Girls in Crisis," *Girlhood Studies* 7 (Summer 2014): 207.
12. Mytheli Sreenivas, "Family and Modernity: New Perspectives on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Women's History* 24 (Spring 2012): 188–197.
13. See, generally, Coontz, *Marriage*. A recent exploration of a medieval marriage crisis, for instance, is Sara McDougall, *Bigamy and Christian Identity in Late Medieval Champagne* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
14. Useful general overviews of these trends as they relate to marriage and family can be found in Coontz, *Marriage*; Mary Ann Glendon, *The Transformation of Family Law: State, Law, and the Family in the United States and Western Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Roderick Phillips, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Goran Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World 1990–2000* (New York: Routledge, 2004). Another instructive perspective comes from the essays in Jennifer S. Hirsch and Holly Wardlow, eds., *Modern Loves: The Anthropology of Romantic Courtship and Companionate Marriage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).
15. Martha Hodes, "Introduction: Interconnecting and Diverging Narratives," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 1–2.
16. Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3.
- p. 14 17. The Code Napoleon, implemented by many European countries and their colonies, decreed that a woman lost her original nationality upon marriage and acquired her husband's nationality, even if that meant colonial subject status. A woman's political relation to the nation was thus determined through her marital relation to a man. Anne McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender, and Race," in *Becoming National*, eds. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, 262.
18. Historian Elizabeth D. Heineman, for example, has argued that marital status operated as a social marker analogous to class for women in twentieth-century Germany, where state policies reconstituted single women as a distinct socio-legal group that attracted the anxiety of the Nazi, capitalist, and communist regimes. See Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?*
19. Paul Rabinow, *French Modern* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 9. See also Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Marriage of Feminism and Islamism in Egypt: Selective Repudiation as a Dynamic of Postcolonial Cultural Politics," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 7.

20. Coontz, *Marriage*, chapter 9. An intriguing exception can be found in Majumdar, *Marriage and Modernity*.
21. Elaine Tyler May, *Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
22. See, for example, Mrinalini Sinha, "The Lineage of the 'Indian' Modern: Rhetoric, Agency, and the Sarda Act in Late Colonial India," in *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette Burton (London: Routledge, 1999), 207–221 and Judith Stacey, *Unhitched: Love, Marriage, and Family Values from West Hollywood to Western China* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), chapters 3 and 4.
23. Some examples in the Egyptian context include Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 113; Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women*, 126–170; and Hanan Kholoussy, "The Nationalization of Marriage in Monarchical Egypt," *Re-Envisioning Egypt, 1919–1952*, eds. Arthur Goldschmidt et al. (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 317–350.
24. Cott, *Public Vows*.
25. Coontz, *Marriage*, 4.
26. Recent book-length treatments from the US perspective include Paul R. Amato et al., *Alone Together: How Marriage in America Is Changing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) and Andrew J. Cherlin, *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today* (New York: Knopf, 2009).
27. On the fight for same-sex marriage in various global contexts, see George Chauncey, *Why Marriage? The History Shaping Today's Debate over Gay Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); Melanie Judge, Anthony Manion, and Shaun De Waal, eds., *To Have and to Hold: The Making of Same-Sex Marriage in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009); Jens Rydstrom, *Odd Couples: A History of Gay Marriage in Scandinavia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); Jason Pierceson, Adriana Piatti-Crocker, and Shawn Schulenberg, eds., *Same-Sex Marriage in Latin America: Promise and Resistance* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013). Of course, the focus on marriage has been controversial within the LGBT community. See Mary Bernstein and Verta Taylor, eds., *The Marrying Kind?: Debating Same-Sex Marriage in the Lesbian and Gay Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
28. A compelling recent critique is Tamara Metz, *Untying the Knot: Marriage, the State, and the Case for Their Divorce* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).