

"Gender and Transnational Migration"

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Patricia R. Pessar and Sarah J. Mahler

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Arguably, gender is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, forces shaping human life. Gender distinguishes between male and female domains in activities, tasks, spaces, time, dress and so on. People are socialized to view these as natural, inevitable and immutable (see Ferree, Lorber, and Hess 1999; Glenn 1999; Kandiyoti 1988; Lorber 1994), not as human constructs. But conceptualizing gender as a process, as one of several ways humans create and perpetuate social differences, helps to deconstruct this myth (e.g., Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999; Lorber 1994; Ortner 1996). People do “gender work”. Through practices and discourses they negotiate relationships, conflicting interests and hierarchies of power and privilege. Conceptualizing gender as a process yields a more praxis-oriented perspective wherein gender identities, relations and ideologies are fluid, not fixed.

However, gender should also be understood “simultaneously as a structure, that is, a latticework of institutionalized social relationships that, by creating and manipulating the categories of gender, organize and signify power at levels above the individual” (Ferree, Lorber and Hess 1999:xix, emphasis in the original). Recognizing that gender becomes embedded in institutions lays the foundation as well for analyzing the structural factors that condition gender relations in addition to ideological factors. That is, and to repeat a point made above, gender is about power. “[M]ajor areas of life—including sexuality, family, education, economy, and the state—are organized according to gender principles and shot through with conflicting interests and hierarchies of power and privilege” (Glenn 1999:5).

If one agrees with this evaluation of gender, then it is difficult to accept the fact that gender is commonly sidelined in scholarly research on migration, whether it takes a

traditional or transnational perspective. Indeed, the migration literature reveals that both migration and research on migration have been gendered processes. Chronologically, early studies focused almost exclusively on male migrants while women were presumed to play passive roles as companions (a position critiqued by Pessar 1986; and by Brettell and deBerjeois 1992; and exemplified in Piore 1979). Some scholars acknowledged their bias, justifying it in the name of greater simplicity (Berger and Mohr 1975), while for others the exclusion was never addressed (Handlin 1951). Though there were exceptions to this rule (e.g., Warner and Srole 1945), the research bias continued well into the 1980s (e.g., Portes and Bach 1985). In the 1970s and 1980s, however, scholarship with a more feminist angle produced multiple publications that documented the predominance of women in migratory flows (e.g., Donato 1992; Morokvasic 1984; Ong 1991; Pedraza 1991) making the exclusion of women in research on migration untenable.

The initial corrective that was applied, however, simply redressed male bias by adding women as a variable, not by including gender as a central research focus. Moreover, attention to understanding female migrants led to the unfortunate consequence that men's experiences of migration became underresearched. The practice of alternating between exclusion and inclusion proved unsatisfactory leading a few scholars to call for treating gender less as a variable (i.e., sex) and more as a central theoretical concept within the study of migration (e.g., Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Pedraza 1991). In 1994, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo took the issue another step forward by arguing in her book on Mexican migration to the United States that gender organizes migration. By this she means that:

Gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but a set of social relations that

organize immigration patterns. The task, then, is not simply to document or highlight the presence of undocumented women who have settled in the United States, or to ask the same questions of immigrant women that are asked of immigrant men, but to begin with an examination of how gender relations facilitate or constrain both women's *and* men's immigration and settlement... Gender is exercised in relational and dynamic ways, and in this study I examine how the social relations of gender contour women's and men's immigration and settlement experiences (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994:3, emphasis in the original).

Hondagneu-Sotelo's assertion that gender relations prior to migration affect migration, settlement patterns and the ongoing relations between men and women has proven innovative. However, her work does not employ a transnational perspective. The task of bringing gender to a transnational perspective on migration was taken up by us (Patricia Pessar and Sarah Mahler) beginning in 1996 and culminated in a special volume of the journal *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* published in April 2001. We were only partially successful in this endeavor for not all of the papers published truly speak to examples of transnational migration in a strict sense. Rather, we found that several researchers' work related to transnational contexts of which migration was a feature but not necessarily a definitive force behind the conduct of gender relations across borders.

The purpose of this essay is two-fold: to share our theoretical framework of analysis, initially presented in our introduction to the special volume of *Identities*; and to proceed one step beyond that special volume. This will not, however, be an exercise in incorporating new publications which more directly address matters of gender and

transnational migration – for we know of few, if any, that would make such a contribution. Rather we emphasize those areas that merit greater research and contemplation and treat certain works whose approach and findings are amenable to such a future project.

At the outset we want to raise one issue of concern. We are dismayed by the fact that family, household and gender continue to be bundled together and treated as a separate domain from the economic, political, religious, etc. lives of migrants. We are also distressed by the continued practice of assigning these topics to female scholars—the classic gendered distribution of work. We cannot address the breadth of the issues without having male colleagues’ perspectives nor can we come to understand and appreciate the importance of gender, family, household and other “women’s work” until men and boys are treated as full participants in the ongoing performances of gender, family, etc. be they inside a home, on the street, in an airplane, traveling across the internet or at a scholarly conference.

Gendered Geographies of Power in Transnational Spaces

To help us better study gender across transnational space, we have developed a conceptual model we call “gendered geographies of power.” A delineation of this model is best achieved by discussing individually its constituent building blocks. First, we select the spatial term “geographies” to capture our understanding that gender operates simultaneously on multiple *spatial and social* scales (e.g., the body, the family, the state) across transnational terrains. It is both within the context of particular scales as well as between and among them that gender ideologies and relations are reaffirmed, reconfigured or both. This piece of our model we refer to as “geographic scales.” A good example of

how gender operates simultaneously on different geographic scales is found in a recent article by Georges Fouron and Nina Glick Schiller (2001). They find that when Haitian migrant women strive to renegotiate their status transnationally they often buy into and thus reinforce the status system operative in Haiti. This gendered status system is intimately linked to national identity even as it subordinates women. Thus, they find that transnational actions, though often associated with the erosion of the nation-state, can indeed fortify it and in so doing also reaffirm asymmetrical gender relations.

The analytical construct of “social location” is another component of our model. By social location, we refer to persons’ positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors. We underscore “gender” in the framework’s title as gender organizes human actions such as migration yet is frequently ignored. For the most part, people are born into a social location that confers on them certain advantages and disadvantages. For example, Sarah Mahler (2001) shows how migrants from a very remote region of El Salvador must struggle harder than migrants from urban areas to build and sustain transnational ties. Similarly, a typical child born in the U.S. enjoys a birthright quite distinct from a baby born in the Dominican Republic. But hierarchies are not built just at the national or supra-national level. Rather, hierarchies of class, race, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and, of course, gender operate at various levels that affect an individual or group’s social location. In other words, multiple dimensions of identity also shape, discipline, and position people and the ways they think and act. In sum, our model takes as its foundation the obvious but not always stated fact that people – irrespective of their own efforts – are situated within power hierarchies that they have not constructed.

The third step in building our conceptual framework is to examine the types and

degrees of agency people exert given their social locations – hence our focus on gendered geographies of power. For this we turn to the helpful concept of “power geometry” as elaborated by Doreen Massey (1994:149). Massey articulates that the particular conditions of modernity, that have produced time-space compression, have also placed people in very distinct locations regarding access to and power over flows and interconnections between places – similar to our observations above. But she then goes further to foreground agency as people exerting power over these forces and processes as well as being affected by them. Some individuals

initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it...[There are] groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases [such as media moguls and the business elite]...but there are also groups who are also doing a lot of physical moving, but who are not 'in charge' of the process in the same way at all. The refugees from El Salvador or Guatemala [for instance] (Massey 1994:149).

There are also those who do not move at all yet feel the effects of time-space compression and there are others who both contribute to this condition and are imprisoned by it. The latter instance is vividly documented in Denise Brennan's (2001) study of Dominican sex workers who contribute to a German and indeed international sexual aesthetic yet almost never get to see Germany for themselves.

Massey helps us to see not only how people's social locations affect their access to

resources and mobility across transnational spaces but also their agency as initiators, refiners and transformers of these conditions. To her “power geometry” and our “social location” and “geographic scales” we add two final dimensions to complete our particular notion of “gendered geographies of power.” First, we view agency as affected not only by extra-personal factors but also by quintessentially individual characteristics such as initiative. Thus, two people may hail from equally disadvantageous social locations but one – owing to her own resourcefulness – will exert more influence than the other. And second, we argue that the social agency we are interested in must include the role of cognitive processes such as the imagination as well as substantive agency. Much of what people actually do transnationally is foregrounded by imaging, planning and strategizing; these must be valued and factored into people’s agency. However, there are cases where people may not take any transnational actions that can be objectively measured (such as remitting funds, writing letters or joining transnational organizations), yet live their lives in a transnational cognitive space. A concrete example would be youth who envision themselves as becoming migrants to such a degree that they stop attending school, seeing very little utility in education if they become workers overseas. Perhaps they do migrate at a later date, translating their imagination into reality, but even if they never realize their dreams the fact that they leave school cannot be fully understood without reference to their imagined lives as migrants. Thus, we advocate for incorporating cognitive as well as corporal actions in studies that examine transnational agency, though we acknowledge the difficulty in detecting and measuring such intangible efforts.

To summarize, “gendered geographies of power” is a framework for analyzing people’s social agency—corporal and cognitive—given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains.

Though this framework is not only applicable to transnational contexts we feel it is especially useful for analyzing these contexts in light of their complexities. Thus, we can speak of a gendered geography of power that maps the historically particularistic circumstances that a particular group of people experience and be able to analyze them on multiple levels. However, we can also contemplate a less particularistic gendered geography of power wherein different groups are located vis-à-vis macro-level processes such as globalization and trace their efforts and ability at influencing these processes. In short, the framework is intended to aid scholarly analysis of gender across transnational spaces for case studies and comparative investigations.

Advancements to Date and Topics Meriting Further Work

With our framework in mind, we proceed to a discussion of topics and issues meriting greater research and contemplation by scholars interested in engendering the study of transnational migration.

Activities

When gender is viewed as relationships and not as the variable male/female it should affect the way we conduct research, particularly when attempting to examine not just discrete activities but actual processes, such as state building and the negotiation of patriarchy, that are played out across borders. For example, in studying hometown associations, one approach to infusing the scholarship with “gender” would be to document attendance and leadership by sex. This is relatively easy and objective but

where does it get us? If there are few women in attendance then we are likely to go the next step to ask why, but if there are equal numbers of women and men and women appear to be in leadership positions then there is little incentive to take the analysis a step further. But these next steps must be taken regardless of attendance, for they are essential to getting beyond “eventism” toward a more holistic understanding of transnational processes and their effects.

A good example of getting out of the box is Luin Goldring’s essay (Goldring 2001) on gender and citizenship in Mexican-U.S. transnational spaces. She finds that hometown associations’ activities are mediated by the Mexican state which holds the hegemonic notion that citizenship is predominately a male prerogative. Put bluntly, the state favors men. Consequently, despite their essential roles in fundraising, migrant women are often deprived access to the increased power and social capital associated with development projects jointly supported by migrant organizations and government coffers. This transnational exclusion has consequences, she argues; it reinforces some women’s resolve to pursue political rights and entitlements within institutions in the United States. This effect cannot be adequately understood without a gendered and transnational optic but it could easily be overlooked, arguing instead that women just show up in greater numbers or in greater leadership capacity in U.S.-based organizations than in hometown associations.

In light of Goldring’s findings and those of other scholars (e.g., Pessar 1986, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1991), it has been suggested that immigrant women are more likely to develop personal and household strategies consistent with long-term or permanent settlement in the United States, while men pursue a more transnational strategy--in many cases with an eye to an eventual return (Pessar 1999). Using the case of Dominicans in

New York, we want to complicate this notion by adding the social locations of class and age, as well as the element of time to the mix. Consistent with Goldring's findings, over the years, Dominican male entrepreneurs have led the drive for dual nationality and citizenship (Graham 1997; Guarnizo 1996). So too, Dominican immigrant women have proved more inclined to struggle at the local, neighborhood level for pressing matters of family and community survival than to expend their limited resources to make common cause with their compatriots back on the island (Pessar and Graham 2001). There are, however, signs that this may be changing as women grow older and find that meager retirement benefits can be stretched farther in the Dominican Republic or through a strategy of alternating residence between the island and New York (Ibid; Singer and Gilbertson 2000). Whatever the ultimate configuration of political allegiances and practices in the future, it is clear that we must resist premature generalizations about male and female settlement or transnational practice until we possess a larger corpus of immigrant groups (beyond the usual Latin American and Caribbean cases) and are able to conduct studies that follow these processes longitudinally.

Another concern arises with the still often-assumed notion that to be transnational people must physically migrate. In other words, corporal mobility is often presumed to be the defining characteristic of the transnational migrant. What do we learn and what do we overlook if we merely cite statistics of newly arrived legal migrants in different countries; i.e., arguing that women now constitute fifty or more percent of the immigrants to major countries of resettlement? Our framework argues that we must look at people's social locations regardless of whether they are traveling physically or psychologically across transnational spaces. In other words, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, class and sexuality shape and discipline how people think and act. We emphasize but obviously did

not invent the notion that people exert agencies that are constrained to a great degree by hierarchies they themselves have not constructed. Thus, we are not satisfied by merely counting the movers and the stayers; we want to understand how gender constrains options available to individuals and to groups, determining who stays and who moves—how often, when, where and why.

The intersection of gender, sexuality, and nationality is a nexus requiring more attention as we explore how matters of social location influence mobility and immobility. In this regard, we encourage a greater exchange between students of gender and migration and feminist legal scholars, such as those who examine ongoing negotiations over sexual/reproductive rights as human rights. Jacqueline Bhabha (1996), for example, traces alternative ways in which asylum seekers' "intimate" behaviors and violations to their bodies are constituted and contested within that discursive and legal universe pitting universal rights against cultural relativism and state sovereignty. As Bhabha's discussion of the changing fates of Iranian female asylum seekers makes clear, this is a universe in which claims based on violations of sexual and reproductive fall easy prey to restrictionist immigration pressures and partisan foreign policy agendas.

Scholars committed to studying gender and transnational migration are well-positioned to explore how asylees' experiences with distinct refugee regimes and with transnational human rights and feminist organizations are received and recoded among their compatriots both in the host country and the country of origin. In one of the few studies to address such matters, Rachel Silvey (1999) notes that her female Indonesian informants concluded that a narrative of female sexual victimization determined their eligibility for asylum in the United States. Men, on the other hand, found their testimonials of sexual victimization dismissed and were forced to rely on more general

human rights claim. Such dismissal has apparently proved destructive to the solidarity that the women asylees hoped to forge with men around issues of gendered and sexualized violence. This has further impacted the female asylees' ability to rally their male counterparts' in support of the women's struggles to convince activists back in Indonesia to include women's rights and sexual abuse within their human rights platform. This is an uphill battle as most human rights activists in Indonesia counter that the female asylees have been tainted by American gender norms wholly inappropriate to Indonesian society.

As exemplified above, there is a need for more documentation and analysis of the ways in which gender affects how people, who move or stay, conduct their relationships across borders. A further example of these complexities can be found in a paper by Mahler which, although casting women in the “traditional” passive, non-migrant role, should not be stereotyped (Mahler 2001). She studies the wives of Salvadoran migrants who reside in a rural, remote zone of northeastern El Salvador. Owing in large part to gendered processes of war and displacement and, later, to unintended consequences of U.S. immigration legislation that have disproportionately benefitted male Salvadoran refugees, these women remain physically tethered and emotionally, economically and materially dependent upon their mobile husbands. This dependency and their unequal social location is never more apparent than when they attempt calling their husbands abroad, waiting for hours to gain access to the few phones available locally. Once the phone connection to the United States is made, the women often find themselves beseeching financially-scraped, migrant partners first to accept their collect phone calls and then to remain on the line while the women plead for increased levels of remittance support.

An equally sobering case involves male migrants from the Machaze area of

Mozambique who are employed in South Africa (Lubkemann 2000). Before the long Mozambican war men had migrated temporarily to South Africa to help support their families and, sometimes, to accumulate funds to contract a polygynous marriage. The latter enhanced the men's social status back in their home communities and were often endorsed by the first (now senior) wife. As the war wore on and economic opportunities worsened in Mozambique, migrant men came to transform the practice of polygyny. Increasingly, they elected to maintain two or more households in Mozambique and South Africa. This new form of "transnational polygyny" has transformed the very meaning and practice of marriage. According to Stephen Lubkemann, it allows men to reconfigure "their lives in ways premised on the idea that `total social lives' in Machaze and South Africa are not mutually exclusive options" (Ibid:50-51). While transnational polygyny has augmented men's options, it has severely reduced those of their wives residing in Mozambique. These women's mobility is severely constrained by husbands who view a potential relocation as an unwanted drain on their incomes. Indeed the men are quite explicit in stating that "they wanted to keep Machazian women insulated from urban life and anything that might lead them to question their role as subsistence producers" (Ibid: 44). Moreover, owing to men's added domestic obligations and the Machazian wives' lack of physical proximity to their mates, the "stay-at-home wives" generally suffer a marked reduction in their share of migrant husbands' resources. To make matters worse, these Machazian wives are subject to competition for those reduced resources from both co-wives and the husbands' parents (all resident in the home community). The resulting conflict often results in suspicion of witchcraft which, in turn, further exacerbates intra-household hostilities. Although wives are losing their leverage over polygynous migrant husbands' incomes and their willingness to return, the same cannot be said for the spirits of

dead ancestors. To persuade errant men to maintain their ties to their families and home communities, the latter assert moral authority backed by the threat of spiritual retribution. This example underscores the importance (and insufficiently studied role) of religion as an institutional scale relevant to the reaffirmation (or reconfiguration) across transnational space of gender ideologies and relations. In this case, religious beliefs and practices appear to reinforce moral systems based on obligation and reciprocity between the sexes. Moreover, these beliefs and practices serve to perpetuate local identities and transnational ties and practices under conditions which might otherwise threaten their endurance.

The latter two case studies offer apparent examples of how transnational relations reinforce existing patriarchy. Nonetheless, there is also evidence (indeed from Mahler's own field site) that gendered divisions of labor may weaken as non-migrant women and girls assume the tasks usually performed by the now-emigrant men and boys, tasks such as farming, gathering firewood, managing large purchases and corporal discipline, especially of older children (e.g., Baca and Bryan 1985; Ghorayshi 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 1994; Kyle 1995). Similar observations were made much earlier in the foundational work by Ester Boserup (Boserup 1970; Chaney and Lewis 1980; Tanner 1974). Additionally, some have observed that men, who migrate alone and stay abroad for years before their spouses join them, learn domestic tasks by necessity and are more willing to assist their spouses later upon arrival. Conversely, when families migrate as units, the men expect their wives to preserve established gender roles and women generally oblige even when they work outside the home (Goldring 1996; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Ong 1993). While this literature is rich and suggestive, we argue that we are missing an essential piece of the puzzle; viz., the observation of how these relationships are negotiated (see Pessar 1995) instead of merely an assessment of their effects.

We are, of course, mindful of the difficulty inherent in measuring shifts in gender relations. If the point of comparison is "traditional" versus contemporary relations, how is "traditional" defined and how is this baseline established, especially when historical research is lacking or inadequate (see, for example, Mahler 1999)? Additionally, to an important extent assessment lies in the eye of the beholder. Women and men will evaluate change using measures that are most meaningful and germane to their realities, not necessarily adopting a universal gauge of gender parity. In some of these cases, recollection must be validated as an appropriate source of data and not forsaken as hopelessly subjective owing to the "warping" forces of nostalgia (see, Pessar 2001).

Another possible form of appraisal is to measure men's and women's differential access to resources. Pertinent questions raised include: do women and men enjoy similar entrée to structures of power and to mediums of communication and does gender assist in understanding the positions that different sexes occupy and act from? Alternatively, the gauge can be set at parity and gender relations measured along a scale of proximity to parity. This method is also beset by problems, for how would parity be operationalized when there is such diversity in tasks performed by males and females? More importantly to us, setting parity as the barometer dooms measurement of gender to disappointment. We see in our own lives, as in the lives of women and men we have studied, relations that do not approximate parity yet mark real gains (See Pessar 1986,1995,2001; Mahler 1999,2001). As we observe women creatively taking advantage of the uneven opportunities available to them across transnational spaces to negotiate an improvement in their status and in the relationships with their families, we acknowledge that some steps are larger than others. Moreover, it is critical not to attribute to transnational processes any blanket narrative of liberation; nor do we want to fall into that false binarism which

essentializes and privileges the West/first-world as the singular site for women's emancipation. The challenge is to see not only people's "everyday actions as a form of cultural politics embedded in specific power contexts" (Ong 1999:5), but also how these politics/actions can affect those power contexts, i.e., gendered geographies of power. Such a challenge sets out a mode of measurement that does not establish fixed steps or goals but sees empowerment as an ongoing dynamic within the broad context of a power geometry.

Agency

There are many advances to our notion of transnational agency. Some have emerged from the migration literature such as distinguishing between "core" and "expanded" transnationalism (Guarnizo 2000) and examining agency on a variety of geographic and institutional scales from the body to the globe (Mahler and Pessar 2001). We celebrate this progress but in the area of gender we feel there still is a need to push for more attention to certain issues. Among these issues is recognizing the importance of cognitive work as well as substantive agency. To reiterate, we contend that much of what people do transnationally is foregrounded by imaging, planning and strategizing; these must be valued and factored into people's agency.

We require more research on how images, meanings, and values associated with gender, consumption, modernity, place, and "the family" circulate within the global cultural economy (Appadurai 1990; Featherstone 1990; Lipsitz 1994) and how these "ideoscapes" and "mediascapes" are interpreted and appropriated in varied sites by diverse actors in ways that either promote or constrain mobility (Mills 1997). We have already

noted how meanings, norms, and practices regarding sexual violations and sexual rights may be gendered and may, as a consequence, differentially impact women's and men's chances for obtaining asylum. There is also a need to explore how images, cultural representations, and fantasies inflect the transnational practices of immigrants and the second generation. To illustrate, Silvey presents us with yet another twist on gender and sexuality; this time with potential consequences for transnational agency. One of her Indonesian male refugees reported double disappointment. Not only did his fantasies of "free love" in the United States fail to materialize as anticipated, but he also confronted prejudicial American constructions of "Asian" masculinity. He lamented that given his class position his opportunities for sexual conquest were far better, given his class position, back in Indonesia. In Silvey's (1999) words, "In the ethnicized gendering of the transnational field, then, this young man confronts discriminations that encourage him to return to Indonesia" (1999: 28). We need more work to determine both how generalizable this case actually is and how norms of gendered morality and sexuality operate for immigrant and second-generation women. On this latter point, there is some evidence that although immigrant families (from the Philippines, Cambodia, and Indonesia) invest the weight of the ethnic community's morality and social status in their daughters' sexuality (Espiritu 1997; Wolf 1997; Breckon 2000; Silvey 1999), males and their parents continue to look to the "home country" for suitably "chaste" brides (Lydia Breckon, 2000, personal communication).

"Mindwork," as we have seen, is inflected by gender and other forces that sculpt people's social locations. This observation leads us to ask, how do men and women who relate across borders imagine the other? Imagine the other's day, the other's activities, the other's fidelity? How are these imaginings translated into actions and what are their

consequences? There are cases where the non-migrant spouses hear of their partners' infidelity and this motivates them to migrate abroad or insist that the latter to return home. But, going a level deeper, what differences are there between the imagination of those who have migrated and thus have a perspective on life across the transnational social field versus those who have stayed and do not enjoy this comparative perspective – or have a comparative perspective adulterated by the musings and opinions of those who have traveled? To get at these questions we need different sources of data than those we traditionally gather in transnational research; we need letters and phone conversations, and we need to seek out and listen to the often unarticulated thoughts, but how?

Pessar (2001) illustrates yet another role for the imaginary as she traces the illusions and disillusion of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico. Under the tutelage of international NGOs, Guatemalan women in refugee camps in Mexico are exposed to human rights and women's rights discourses such that they come to see themselves and their citizenship claims beyond the nation. Unfortunately, the women become more adept at imagining a more secure and empowered reincorporation in Guatemala than they do in actually negotiating these outcomes. Their transnational dreams are thwarted by an entrenched and state-enforced patriarchy that sidelines them upon return to Guatemala. And when they realize their predicament they find themselves abandoned; the women's desperately-worded faxes and e-mails dispatched to international supporters go unanswered.

Global Capitalism

Much of the literature on contemporary economic globalization perpetuates the

popular notion that major trends in capitalist development are gender-neutral. Among the dissenters are those migration scholars who insist upon the centrality of gender to past and current phases of global capitalism. This scholarship includes pioneering work on women and subsistence agriculture. Such authors as Claude Meillassoux (1981) and Elsa Chaney and Martha Lewis (1980) demonstrate how "stay-at-home" wives help to sustain the dependents of male migrants and stretch their grossly inadequate wages. Later research on deindustrialization and the growth of the service industry in "developed" countries traces the macro-economic processes leading to a decline in the employment of the male labor aristocracy. According to researchers, what has accompanied and abetted this decline is the increasing demand for female--often migrant or immigrant labor--in off-shore production and in that segment of core economies which is de-skilled, subcontracted, and frequently non-unionized. Furthermore, scholars have explored how sites of offshore production constitute new subjectivities, forms of laboring, and means to accumulate social capital. These may, in turn, prompt and facilitate the emigration to first world countries by female members of this new global proletariat (Fernández-Kelly 1983; Sassen 1996).

Saskia Sassen, whose scholarship has long urged us to keep gender central to our work on globalization and on migration, has recently drawn our attention to phenomena which she calls "counter-geographies of globalization" and "the feminization of survival" (2000:1). We suggest that future research on gender and transnational migration would do well to consider certain strategic sites (or "counter-geographies") Sassen associates with the "feminization of survival".

One key site is sex work. Sex work is burgeoning in many developing countries where tourism is embraced to capture much needed foreign exchange in the wake of the

international debt crisis. In the context of national austerity programs, structural adjustment policies, and increased unemployment, many third-world women (typically single mothers or dependent daughters) have been obligated (or forced) to enter into the sex trade to better ensure their households' survival. There is much work to be done in documenting how the global sex trade (including sexual trafficking) creates and reinforces transnational linkages and flows. At a more institutionalized level, we require research on the ways in which matters of local and cross-border recruitment, discipline, and management are handled by state agencies, transnational (and often ethnic) entrepreneurs, and criminal organizations.

We also should explore how sex work emerges out of the interweaving of local and transnational systems of production, circulation, cultural representation, and fantasy. As Brennan's (2001) work on the Dominican sex trade suggests, the global tourist industry as well as Internet sex tourism sites objectify young, third-world, women of color. Through the alchemy of male desire and first-world privilege these women are refashioned as dusky beauties who are welcoming, sultry, and submissive (Mahler and Pessar 2001:450). For their part, poor, single mothers are drawn to the Dominican town of Sosua and its sex industry by fantasies of escape from the limited range of opportunities available to uneducated women and by the hope of acquiring a much coveted visa to join a European or North American "boyfriend" abroad. In practice, Brennan finds that while "sexscapes" like Sosua may facilitate the fulfillment of fantasies of social connection across gendered, national, and racial divides, the ability to actually bridge these divisions and to sustain such contacts over space and time, very much favor first-world, white males.

Although the new class subject of global capitalism tends to be female, a person of

color, and resident in the third world (Breecher and Costello 1998), the institutionalized labor movement (operating both nationally and transnationally) continues to privilege the skilled, male, white labor force both in its systems of representation and in its campaigns for combating the contemporary erosion of labor rights. Yet, as Alicia Schmidt Camacho (forthcoming) shows in an article on transnational labor organizing and the emergence of the AFL-CIO's "New Voice for American Workers" coalition, a more progressive segment within the institutionalized labor movement acknowledges the changing gender, racial, geographic, and legal "locations" of the global proletariat. Basing her analysis largely on those transnational structures of representation characterizing new forms of cross-border solidarity and organizing, Schmidt Camacho laments the continuing use of neo-colonial and development discourses. These portray third-world female and male workers in a unitary and peripheral fashion, as "surplus labor," the "victims of development," and marginal players in a class struggle whose leaders remain predominantly white, male, and first-world subjects. Decrying this depiction and the "traditional" politics it engenders, she argues that:

Full inclusion...[must begin] with an interrogation of how differences of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality are constituted **within** the division of labor, the labor process, and as the effects of capitalist forms of discipline.... "Race" and "gender" are not only signifiers of social stratification, but of differentially captured labor. Thus it is of vital importance that "inclusion" make the differential condition of distinct class subjects' induction into expansionist capitalism part of the agenda for determining the shape of the new labor movement ().

Transnational labor organizing is, we would argue, another important and insufficiently researched site in which to explore the processes and consequences of gender and transnational migration. For example, we ought to analyze the testimonials of immigrant workers for clues to counter-hegemonic discourses which challenge such pacts as those between patriarchy and the labor aristocracy, organized labor and nation-states, and first-world workers and global capitalists (Ibid; Lowe 1996). We also need transnationally-based fieldwork to determine the roles assumed by immigrants and the second-generation in bringing to the workplace a new militancy: one that is sometimes born out of past, or continuing, class struggles in countries of origin. Moreover, we need to interrogate how new cross-border subjectivities, identities, discourses, and social networks (emerging out of commonality and difference) are being forged among, and feed into, new national and transnational labor movements.

Identity

Another area that we identify as needing improvement in the transnational migration literature is identity. Identity is an enormously complicated topic and our intervention here is modest. We want to emphasize the need to do two things better here: first, we encourage a step beyond the conventional bi-local and comparative approach to matters of continuity and change in immigrants' identities (e.g., Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). We require more ambitious research that explores how identities inflect and are inflected by transnational (and global) processes, such as feminism and pan-African racialization, that cannot be tethered to specific locales. Second, we urge scholars to look at gender and other identities in association with one another, not in isolation. There is a

growing literature denoting how gender articulates with race and nation across borders, for example. This is well illustrated in the work of Fouron and Glick Schiller (2001). They examine Haitian migrants, women who become empowered through political and social actualities in both the U.S. and Haiti. They get involved in civil rights, anti-poverty, and women's movements in the U.S. and they organize a grassroots transnational political movement for social and economic justice in Haiti. In so doing, they challenge the established Haitian gender hierarchies in ways that contribute to a new imaginary of the nation. At the same time, many of these women help maintain the oppressive system through their remittances, however unintentionally. They send money to their relatives, but these remittances trickle up to become Haiti's principal source of hard currency. Thus, the monies migrants send to emancipate their families simultaneously serve to sustain the elite and therein the gender hierarchy embedded within the historical nation-state building project.

As we proceed to enrich our understandings of gendered identities within transnational social fields, we should avail ourselves of the scholarship produced by scholars in cultural and ethnic studies who have been successful in articulating gender with other structures of difference (e.g., Anzaldúa 1990; Espiritu 1997; Lowe 1996). This scholarship should also inspire us to operationalize our concept of immigrants' social fields more broadly so as to include more actors, institutions, and cultural representations within the host society. For instance, as we noted above in our discussion of sexuality, the subjectivities, identities, and practices of contemporary immigrants of color are inflected by mutually constitutive relationships between immigrant "others" and majority white American men and women.

The works we have cited in this essay and the concerns we have raised all

underscore the multiple and multi-layered interactions of transnational actions and processes with more localized social relations and institutions. The next generation of transnational researchers need to be better prepared to seek out and analyze these dynamics. We are mindful that the actions and processes are not easy to identify, to map nor to see as inflecting one another even when the focus is kept to one locale in a transnational social field let alone trying to trace them across borders. The challenges to leave an essentially bi-local and comparative approach to transnational research for a more transnational social field approach (where multiple sites are studied more or less simultaneously) are daunting; but we are heading in this direction. Our intention here has been to share some insights and directions for the further study of gender and transnational migration. It is our hope to encourage other scholars to engage and refine these issues in their future work.

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