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Gendered Citizenships

Transnational Perspectives on Knowledge Production, Political Activism, and Culture

Edited by
Kia Lilly Caldwell, Kathleen Coll, Tracy Fisher, Renya K. Ramirez, and Lok Siu

Gendered Citizenships

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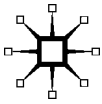

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To our families, with love and appreciation

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Series Editor's Foreword

The Comparative Feminist Studies (CFS) series foregrounds writing, organizing, and reflection on feminist trajectories across the historical and cultural borders of nation-states. It takes up fundamental analytic and political issues involved in the cross-cultural production of knowledge about women and feminism, examining the politics of scholarship and knowledge in relation to feminist organizing and social justice movements. Drawing on feminist thinking in a number of fields, the CFS series targets innovative, comparative feminist scholarship, pedagogical and curricular strategies, and community organizing and political education. It explores a comparative feminist praxis that addresses some of the most urgent questions facing progressive critical thinkers and activists today. *Gendered Citizenships: Transnational Perspectives on Knowledge Production, Political Activities, and Culture*, edited by the *Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group* (Caldwell, Coll, Fisher, Ramirez, and Siu) is an excellent example of such comparative feminist praxis. It is located at the intersection of feminist anthropology and ethnography, political theory, studies of citizenship, and discourses of subjectivity and agency anchored in the work of and about women of color in the Global South and North. As such, this collection is unique in terms of both the praxis of collective work that birthed it, and in its collective conceptualization of an "ethnography of intersectionality" anchored in geographically situated questions of experience, subjectivity, and citizenship of marginalized communities of women.

Over the past many decades, feminists across the globe have been variously successful in our search for gender justice—however, we inherit a number of the challenges our mothers and grandmothers faced. But there are also new challenges to face as we attempt to make sense of a world indelibly marked by the failure of postcolonial (and advanced) capitalist and communist nation-states to provide for the social, economic, spiritual, and psychic needs of the majority of the world's population. In the year 2009, globalization has come to represent the interests of corporations and the free market rather than self-determination and freedom from political, cultural, and economic domination for all the world's peoples. The project of U.S. Empire building, alongside the dominance of corporate capitalism, kills,

disenfranchises, and impoverishes women everywhere. Militarization, environmental degradation, heterosexist State practices, religious fundamentalisms, sustained migrations of peoples across the borders of nations and geopolitical regions, and the exploitation of women's labor by capital all pose profound challenges for feminists at this time. Recovering and remembering insurgent histories and seeking new understandings of political subjectivities and citizenship have never been so important at a time marked by social amnesia, global consumer culture, and the worldwide mobilization of fascist notions of "national security." The year 2009 also heralds changes in the political landscapes of many nations, with Barack Obama as the first African American president of the United States, and numerous women heads of State around the world, including Ellen Johnson of Liberia, Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile, Mary McAleese of Ireland, Sheikh Hasina Wajed of Bangladesh, and Angela Merkel of Germany. However, whether these political shifts in governance at the top actually lead to deep and transformative changes in the economic, social, and cultural marginalization faced by communities around the globe and whether the contours of gendered and racialized citizenship change remain to be seen.

> These are some of the very challenges the CFS series is designed to address. The series takes as its fundamental premise the need for feminist engagement with global as well as local ideological, historical, economic, and political processes, and the urgency of transnational dialogue in building an ethical culture capable of withstanding and transforming the commodified and exploitative practices of global governance structures, culture, and economics. Individual volumes in the CFS series provide systemic and challenging interventions into the (still) largely Euro-Western feminist studies knowledge base, while simultaneously highlighting the work that can and needs to be done to envision and enact cross-cultural, multiracial feminist solidarity.

Gendered Citizenships extends, complicates, and pushes the range of scholarship in the CFS series to new levels. The volume is the result of many years of collaboration among the members of the *Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group*. While collaborative scholarship is generally devalued in the academy (except in the sciences), it remains a desired hallmark of feminist praxis committed to the production of knowledge across racial and sexual divides. Collaborative work is difficult, time consuming, and requires emotional labor that often goes unrecognized. In drawing attention to the labor involved in collaboration, and the commitment to struggling across the

borders of identities and scholarship in the production of this book, the *Working Group* provides an important model of ethical, cross-cultural scholarship.

The intellectual project of the book is framed around the crucial question of the global stakes in defining gendered citizenship, both at the level of the experience of citizenship and at the level of discourses of political rights and entitlements. Framing their project in terms of building on feminist and ethnographic approaches to citizenship, the *Working Group* advocates an approach that "places the experiences and analyses of women of color and Third World women at the center of our understanding of citizenship" (Introduction, 3). Drawing on the work of Renato Rosaldo and others, the essays in this volume "conceptualize citizenship as a contingent set of cultural processes and multilayered experiences that are constituted by the intersecting forces of race, gender, class, and transnationalism" (Introduction, 4). Thus, one of the major contributions of the volume is an understanding of citizenship that is grounded in the theorization of intersectional identities and social movements. The chapters are organized around three distinct and expansive axes: activism and organizing; gender, diaspora, and transnationalism; and narratives of belonging.

Gendered Citizenships opens up a number of important theoretical and methodological questions regarding the transnational gendering of citizenship, ethnographies of intersectionality, and collaborative feminist praxis across borders. It is a profoundly respectful engagement with the theoretical contributions of women of color and Third World women. This is the kind of scholarship that can create the ground for cross-racial/cross-national dialogue among and between feminist scholars and activists in regional as well as global contexts. The book will be of interest to a wide range of scholars, ethnographers, cultural critics, and political theorists. It deeply embodies the comparative praxis and vision of transnational knowledge production that is a hallmark of the CFS series.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty

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Preface[1]

Our collaboration as members of the Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group over the past nine years has involved multiple forms of dialogue and interaction, from e-mails to weekend retreats and conference calls. Through countless discussions of issues that were raised in our individual projects, we began to develop a collective conceptualization of gendered citizenships that is centered in the experiences and counter-hegemonic practices of marginalized women from diverse ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds. As cultural anthropologists concerned with a broad array of issues, including gender, race, trans/nationalism, social movements, and citizenship, we share a commitment to retheorizing citizenship from an explicitly feminist ethnographic perspective. We organized a panel at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting in 2000, where the panel's discussant, Rina Benmayor, facilitated our transformation into a feminist working group. With support from The Rockefeller Foundation, we began to meet as a working group during 2001 and organized two symposia on gender and cultural citizenship the following year. This book is the product of our multiyear collaboration and collective thinking about gender and citizenship.

When we began to work together, we were all junior scholars at various stages in our academic careers; one of us was an advanced graduate student, another was a postdoctoral scholar, and the remaining three of us were assistant professors. Given the demands and professional expectations associated with being junior scholars, particularly the emphasis on producing a scholarly monograph, several senior scholars recommended that we focus on our individual books, rather than a collaborative publication. While we each took this advice to heart, we also had a strong commitment to the working group because of the nurturing space that it provided. Through our collaboration, we developed friendships and a feeling of sisterly camaraderie that has sustained us through the joys and challenges of having and raising children, maintaining family relationships, and negotiating the tenure and promotion process.

Although collaborative work is rarely given much value within the academic reward system, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, we have found it to be essential to the development of our

individual projects, as well as to our survival as nontraditional scholars. In many ways, working collectively and collaboratively has provided us with a way to become full citizens in the academy. As women scholars of nondominant racial/ethnic and class backgrounds, we have found our collaboration has provided a safe and nurturing space that has enabled each of us to move forward professionally and pursue projects that go against the grain. In many ways, the working group has served as an intellectual home and lifeline for each of us. Indeed, our involvement in our working group has enabled many of us to finish our own book projects. Two of us now have tenure, and a third is going up for tenure as we write this preface.

Our process has been collaborative at multiple levels. Each of our individual research projects was guided by principles of feminist ethics and involved collaboration with our research "subjects" while in the field. Some of us continued to engage dialogically with the women and organizations we wrote about in the process of elaborating our ethnographic analyses once fieldwork was complete. Though this type of collaboration is increasingly the standard of good practice in feminist and other contemporary ethnographic methods, a distinguishing feature of our working group has been the deep collaboration across projects and among the five of us as anthropologists and writers, which we have worked to develop and sustain.

As we worked together, we began to realize that our joint project had firm roots in feminist anthropology and would be conditioned by our particular subjectivities as well as research interests. We also found models for working together in the Interuniversity Project on Cultural Citizenship and the Latina Feminist Group, both of which Rina Benmayor, a contributor to this book, has been involved with.[2] However, as geographically dispersed, junior scholars, in some cases with young families and insecure academic positions, we also had to chart our own course.

During our retreats, we read and discussed classic and emerging works on citizenship, particularly work on cultural citizenship and feminist theories of citizenship. We also placed these in dialogue with our individual works in progress in order to elaborate our distinctive collective approach. The symposia we organized convened scholars with whom we shared days of intensive engagement and dialogue between their work and our own. We have also provided one another key support to finish our respective individual book projects, out of recognition of the realities of publication demands and institutional pressures framing our early careers. In these ways, both our collective work leading up to this volume and our diverse individual

scholarly projects have been intimately interrelated and mutually influential.

From the inception of our working group, we wanted to create a collegial space that would enable intellectual production and exchange in a respectful, nonhierarchical, and noncompetitive manner.[3] Our interaction with established women of color scholars, such as Rina Benmayor, Patricia Zavella, and Sonia Alvarez, who had experience with collaborative feminist scholarly projects, provided a model for our working group. As we created a scholarly space in and through the working group, we attempted to work together in ways that would enrich our individual projects, while also leading to a collective conceptual intervention in citizenship studies. This has often required that we engage in self-reflection and collective dialogue about dominant ways of being and acting in academia that emphasize the individual over the collective and final products over process. It has also caused us to be aware of the ways in which the system of competition and rewards, which characterizes the U.S. academy, undermine the establishment of vital human connections that are essential to our well-being.

Through our discussions of citizenship, we came to realize that the practice of citizenship within our group would be vital to its success. In other words, we had to live out and practice the things that we were theorizing and writing about. During our meetings, one of our group members often referred to academics as "heads on sticks," which was a powerful reminder of the mind/body split that is often encouraged in the U.S. academy. Through developing and practicing an ethic of care within our working group, we have sought to resist the tendency to reduce ourselves and one another to solely our intellectual capacities. Instead, we have attempted to create a more holistic approach to scholarly life, which has included setting aside time at the beginning of conference calls to enquire about the well-being of colleagues, giving gifts to celebrate special occasions, and early morning jogs together during trips to attend conferences. Our ethic of care for ourselves and for each other has supported our own feelings of self-worth, enabling us to be successful in academic environments, which are too often uncaring and stressful.

A shared interest in exploring the complex relationships among "gender," "culture," and "citizenship" initially brought members of our working group together. In our conversations over the past few years, we have found that traditional conceptions of citizenship take on new meaning and added significance when placed in dialogue with the terms "gender" and U.S. anthropological formulations of "cultural

citizenship." By juxtaposing these terms, we draw on feminist theories of citizenship and ethnographic approaches to cultural citizenship to understand women's (and men's) subjective experiences of citizenship in diverse national and transnational contexts. Our conceptualization of gender and citizenship extends beyond static definitions of rights and entitlements associated with the nation-state that obscure structural inequalities and people's differential access to resources. In contrast, our approach foregrounds how diverse women (and men) assert collective political and cultural rights in contexts where nation-states systematically erode the rights of their second-class citizens, particularly women, people of color, the poor, immigrants, and other disenfranchised groups.[4] Moreover, we advocate a conceptual and methodological approach to gender and citizenship that highlights how people actively and creatively participate in processes of citizenship-making.

Our collective conceptual and theoretical intervention is rooted in ethnographic research with (relatively) disenfranchised communities: Latin American, Caribbean, and African-descended women in Europe and North America, Asian and African diasporic subjects in Central and South America, and Native Americans in the United States. Our methodological strategies involved interviews, collection of oral histories, archival and historical research, and participant observation in projects that concern cultural empowerment and social movements. We worked in urban settings, in some cases as anthropologists in our "home" communities or as members of diasporic communities. We used ethnographic fieldwork to identify and understand people's own categories of analysis relating to activism and empowerment, as well as their critiques of power and social forces. This prompted us to pay closer attention to the vernacular terms, practices, and points of relations that might not have always been clearly related in our own minds as researchers. Hence, both our methodologies and our epistemological commitment to treating our research interlocutors as theorizing agents have led us to a focus on people's subjective experiences and understandings of citizenship.

It is precisely a commitment to building a new episteme for studying and understanding power, gender, agency, and subjectivity that brought members of our working group together and that has undergirded our theoretical and methodological intervention in citizenship studies. While our shared commitment to producing this form of scholarship fundamentally binds us together, we also acknowledge that our varied approaches to gender and citizenship have contributed to the richness of this collective project. Coming from different racial

and ethnic backgrounds and examining diverse social groups and locales, we enter this discussion from a number of perspectives and positionalities. While, in many cases, we have conducted research with communities that are in some way linked to our own "home" communities, including other diasporic and tribal communities, we have practiced the process of cultural translation by exploring similarities and differences in the experiences of our home communities and those that are represented by other group members. Our sustained effort to speak across our differences and to find links and intersections in our work has truly enriched this collective project, as well as our individual ones.

As the coeditors of this volume, we have sought to maintain a spirit of collaboration and collegiality, an effort that has often forced us to challenge dominant practices of academic recognition that promote an individualist ethos that works against and undervalues collaborative endeavors. This book represents a collective effort and, as such, we have attempted to find creative ways to share both the labor and the recognition. Each member of our working group has contributed to the process of conceptualizing this project and carrying out the intellectual and practical labor associated with editing this book. As coeditors, rather than list our names in a hierarchical manner, we decided to list our names in alphabetical order, a decision that we felt would be the most appropriate reflection of our egalitarian and collaborative efforts.

This volume includes essays written by members of our working group and scholars with whom we have been in dialogue in recent years. During 2002, we organized two symposia on gender and cultural citizenship as a way to enlarge the conversation that we were having within the working group and glean new insights from the work of other scholars. The contributors to this volume participated in these symposia, which were held at the University of California, Santa Cruz and New York University. Without such collegial dialogue and support, this anthology would never have come to fruition. We offer this book to the public in the hope that it will enhance how scholars and activists think about gendered citizenship experiences in diverse sites, including geographical sites as well as sites of political, cultural, and intellectual praxis.

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Acknowledgments

We, the Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group, want to sincerely thank the individuals and institutions that have supported the development of this book project and the progress of our working group.[5] We want to express our deep gratitude to Rina Benmayor. Indeed, she was the one who encouraged us to become a Working Group, and discussed the tremendous importance of us, as junior scholars, supporting each other academically, emotionally, and socially, so that we could navigate and become successful in the terrain of academia. Her support has been constant, always underscoring the scholarly importance of our work, providing us with feedback on our projects, and periodically e-mailing us to prod us along. Without her nurturing guidance, this book would never have been published. It was also Rina Benmayor who advised us to apply for funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. At her suggestion, we contacted Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, former associate director of the Arts and Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation. Through his support, we were able to acquire funding for our Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group. We want to thank Tomás Ybarra-Frausto for his willingness to meet with us and for believing in this project. We also thank the Rockefeller Foundation for providing us with the funding support to organize two symposia during 2002, and three writing/discussion retreats for working group members. Without this funding, our goal to be a truly feminist collaborative, sharing the work at each and every stage, could never have been realized.

Renato Rosaldo's scholarship on Latino cultural citizenship provided important inspiration for our project, and we want to thank him for his support and encouragement of our individual projects and of the working group as a collective endeavor. We also want to acknowledge Dhooleka Raj who participated in several working group activities. We appreciate her important scholarly insights.

We held symposia at the University of California-Santa Cruz and New York University (NYU) during 2002. These symposia could not have occurred without the support that we received from faculty and staff at both campuses. We want to thank Patricia Zavella, former

director of the Chicano/Latino Research Center at UC Santa Cruz, and Evelyn Parada, assistant to the director. Along with Sonia Alvarez, both Patricia and Evelyn were instrumental in helping with planning and logistics for the symposium at UC Santa Cruz. Their willingness to help us organize this event will never be forgotten. Indeed, Patricia Zavella has been an amazing mentor, teaching through her example, about how to work collaboratively. At NYU, we must acknowledge the support we received from the Anthropology Department and Asian/Pacific/American studies program. In particular, Jack Tchen, Fred Myers, and Faye Ginsburg deserve special thanks. The staff at A/P/A were amazing; they are the ones who made the symposium run smoothly.

We want to give special thanks to all of the participants of both symposia. In addition to working group members, the UC Santa Cruz symposium participants included Sonia Alvarez, Rina Benmayor, Maylei Blackwell, Dhooleka Raj, Renato Rosaldo, Audra Simpson, Anna Tsing, Nira Yuval-Davis, and Patricia Zavella. The NYU symposium participants included, Asale Ajani, Federico Besserer, Arlene Davila, Carolyn Dinshaw, Paulla Ebron, Faye Ginsburg, Alejandro Lugo, Purnima Mankekar, Toby Miller, Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Mary Louise Pratt, and Renato Rosaldo.

We want to extend our special thanks to the contributors to this anthology, Rina Benmayor, Federico Besserer, Maylei Blackwell, and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas. We deeply appreciate their patience, diligence, and good humor. Their work has enriched and enlarged our own understandings of citizenship. For this, we are extremely grateful.

We sincerely appreciate Piya Chatterjee, who personally spoke to Chandra Mohanty, the special series editor for Palgrave, about the importance of our project. Both of them encouraged us to submit our book manuscript to become part of Palgrave's Comparative Feminist Studies series. We also want to thank our editor, Brigitte Shull, and her assistant, Lee Norton, who patiently and tirelessly worked with us to bring our book to completion. We appreciate Brigitte's willingness to support our commitment to have all members of our working group be recognized as coeditors. We also want to thank Kathy Chetkovich, who read our book introduction and gave us extensive feedback. Also, Carolina Quiroz, an undergraduate research assistant at UC Riverside, compiled our bibliography; we thank her for all her hard work.

Finally, we wish to thank our families who supported us throughout the process of completing this book. Since we formed our

Working Group almost nine years ago, our families have been by our sides providing us with strength, laughter, and inspiration. They have played a crucial role in helping us make this book become a reality.

Notes

1. By The Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group. Members listed in alphabetical order: Kia Lilly Caldwell, Kathleen Coll, Tracy Fisher, Renya Ramirez, and Lok Siu.
2. Both of these groups produced groundbreaking publications. Collaboration by members of the Interuniversity Project resulted in the publication of *Latino Cultural Citizenship* in 1997. The Latina Feminist Group published *Telling to Live* in 2001.
3. We have looked to examples of feminist collaboration, such as The Latina Feminist Group (2001) and team-authors such as Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (1994).
4. See Iris Marion Young (1990).
5. This book has been edited by the members of the Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group.

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Introduction

Collectivity and Comparativity: A Feminist Approach to Citizenship

The Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group[1]

The Shifting Conditions of Citizenship

What exactly has happened to citizenship? Something "flexible," "postnational," or just plain strange? The condition(s) of women in the current historical and political moment—framed as they are by the demands of transnational capital for labor, the realigning of nation-states in the post-Cold War era, deindustrialization, the devolution of welfare-states in the North and the corresponding effects of structural adjustment in the South—calls our attention to the relationship between gender and citizenship, as both a scholarly concern and an issue of social justice. Today, we and our research "subjects" are centrally concerned with and affected by new and reemergent regimes of violence directed against certain citizens: migrants, women, men, people of color, Native people, religious minorities, and progressive social activists. Women stand at the intersection of not only multiple identity categories but in the crosshairs of political and economic policies targeting diverse subjects of globalization and neoliberal policies. This is not a new phenomenon, but rather is central to understanding the dynamics of belonging and entitlement, inclusion and exclusion, enfranchisement and disenfranchisement undergirding modern citizenship. Women's everyday experiences of these processes as well as their organization in response to them are critical to understanding the dynamic, contested, and problematic nature of citizenship in and between diverse states.

In the United States, Native Americans, South Asians, Latinas/os, and Arab Americans have all been subjected to increasingly arbitrary and violent attacks on their personhood, bodies, and rights by

individual citizen-assailants, but also by arms of the state. In the United States, African-American civil rights advocates and scholars have called attention to the increasingly aggressive and institutionalized criminalization of blackness, with the extant "war on drugs" already under way in black and Latino communities now extended and elaborated in a "war on terrorism," thus expanding the realm of those affected by the criminalization of blackness. Contemporary discourses on terrorism and national security are invented by the state and subsequently reproduced and elaborated in the corporate media, where the U.S. military becomes the source and channel for virtually all wartime and foreign policy information that in turn reshapes global political relations. This is particularly, but not exclusively, true for the United States, as it legitimizes its military involvement in the internal politics of nations in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in terms of "terrorism," "global security," and unilateral authority to invade and overthrow (or "liberate") other national governments as it sees fit. Passage of the USA Patriot Act in 2002 constituted a related domestic war on the most basic Constitutional protections on civil rights and civil liberties, resulting in the impoverishment of political citizenship for all those living in or traveling through the United States.

So if citizenship is already so contentious and significant, what in particular is at stake in talking about gender and citizenship? What are the larger global forces defining the terrain on which women's citizenship is experienced and altered at the local level as well as translocally? How should subjective experiences of gender, rights, and belonging figure into our analyses of citizenship? What kinds of theorizing are our "subjects" themselves already engaged in and what happens when we put their analyses in dialogue with popular, as well as academic, discussions of these issues?

Toward a Feminist Conceptualization of Citizenship

Over the past four decades, the intellectual and political work of women scholars and activists has produced a rich body of feminist scholarship and activism. In particular, path-breaking work by and about Third World women and U.S. women of color has foregrounded the intersectional relationship among gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nation (Anzaldúa 1987; The Combahee River Collective 1982; Crenshaw 1991, 1995; Mohanty 1991;

Mohanty and Alexander 1997). These interventions have shifted paradigms in women's studies, ethnic studies, and literary and cultural studies, as well as in history and the social sciences, providing some of the most important scholarly analysis and critique of the past thirty years. By critiquing universalist notions of womanhood and calling attention to the interlocking nature of gender, racial, and economic domination, this work has reshaped feminist epistemologies and politics.

The essays in this volume underscore the ways in which, taken together, feminist conceptualizations of intersectionality, and ethnographic and feminist approaches to citizenship, allow us to reframe our thinking about knowledge production, political activism, and culture. While earlier feminist studies of citizenship (Vogel 1991; Walby 1994; Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999) productively denaturalized masculinist visions of the citizen, and anthropological analyses of citizenship highlighted both the disciplinary forces of institutions (Ong 1999) and creative agency of communities (Flores and Benmayor 1997), none of these approaches has been sufficient to understanding the ethnographic realities we encountered in our field research. In addition, with the notable exception of the Hunter College El Barrio project (Benmayor, Torruellas, and Juarbe 1997) we found that none of the aforementioned approaches to citizenship was directly engaged with the retheorizations of gender, sexuality, and culture by women of color that has taken place in the humanities and ethnic studies in recent decades. Thus, while we build on feminist and ethnographic approaches to citizenship, this volume seeks to move beyond them by advocating a "forward looking, historically rooted" (Brah and Anthias 2004), and ethnographically based consideration of intersectionality. This approach places the experiences and analyses of women of color and Third World women at the center of our understanding of citizenship. In doing so, we insist on the importance of understanding the ways in which locally experienced and subjectively defined notions of belonging and entitlement are shaped by the globalization of racial and ethnic identities, transnational women's movements, and diasporic people and communities, as well as by the disciplinary forces of neoliberal politics and economics. Like a number of other feminist scholars, we argue that global forces are locally experienced through intersectional processes, such as racialization, gendering, and changes in women's relationship to the nation-state in the face of transnational economic transformations (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Yuval-Davis 1999).

Gendered and Ethnographic Approaches to Citizenship

Until recently, citizenship studies have traditionally been the terrain of sociologists and political scientists, who have focused on rights, entitlements, social class, and belonging as defined in the context of the nation-state. In addition, most post-World War II scholarship of citizenship in the United States and Western Europe has focused on the legal-juridical aspects of national membership. The statist theories of sociologists and political scientists have foregrounded issues of exclusion and inclusion, political participation, legal rights, civic obligation, class identities, and social entitlements entailed by citizenship in modern, capitalist nation-states (Marshall 1964). However, such approaches obscure the nuanced and highly personal ways in which many people, and especially members of historically disempowered or politically marginalized groups, experience citizenship in everyday life. They also elide the quotidian experiences that comprise the cultural basis for women's citizenship and political identities in many national contexts.

While recognizing modern and postmodern nation-states' disciplinary power to define citizenship status, we also conceptualize citizenship as a contingent set of cultural processes and multilayered experiences that are constituted by the intersecting forces of race, gender, class, and transnationalism. When we speak of ethnographic approaches to citizenship, we seek to foreground the citizenship work being done by those we study as they define and assert their political, cultural, personal, and collective rights from de facto second-class citizenship positions. Many of the essays included in this volume focus on women's active participation in collective movements and the articulation of new citizenship identities. Some of the essays draw heavily on Latina/o formulations of cultural citizenship that give special regard to the affirmative expressions of identity and entitlement of working people, im/migrants, diasporic and indigenous subjects, and women of color (Hall and Held 1989; Rosaldo 1989, 1994a). The concept of cultural citizenship addresses subordination and resistance at the subjective, as well as collective and institutional, level, thus shifting the focus of citizenship studies to the structural forces disciplining and interpellating citizen-subjects (Ong 1996) as well as to individual and collective practices of innovation and agency (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Rosaldo 1997). Renato Rosaldo's (1997) conceptualization of cultural citizenship is

particularly relevant to our approach to citizenship. In Rosaldo's view,

> Cultural citizenship operates in an uneven field of structural inequalities where the dominant claims of universal citizenship assume a propertied white male subject and usually blind themselves to their exclusions and marginalizations of people who differ in gender, race, sexuality, and age. Cultural citizenship attends, not only to dominant exclusions and marginalizations, but also to subordinate aspirations for and definitions of enfranchisement. (1997, 37)

A broad array of existing work on cultural citizenship offers diverse approaches to understand the relationship between culture and citizenship. This scholarship ranges from analyses of cultural policy (Miller 1993) to aspects of governmentality (Ong 1999, 1996) to institutional forms of balancing individualism and communalism (Kymlicka 2001), and finally, to group assertions of rights and belonging (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Rosaldo 1987). The concept of cultural citizenship developed in work on U.S. Latino/a communities (Flores and Benmayor 1997) was not only built on the political consciousness developed in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and on British analyses of the relationship between class and citizenship status (Hall and Held 1989; Marshall 1964), but was also developed and elaborated in conversation with feminist critiques of citizenship. During the 1980s and early 1990s, feminist scholars of citizenship from political philosophy, history, and sociology highlighted the importance of gender, race, sexuality, and disability as central exclusionary categories in modern political practice and institutions (Dietz 1992; Pateman 1989; Walby 1994; Vogel 1991; Young 1990). These gendered critiques of citizenship suggested that all citizens simultaneously occupy multiple subject positions and engage in social relationships infused with power and exclusionary potential (Mouffe 1992).

Our view of gender and citizenship emerges from an ethnographic perspective that focuses on the roles of intersectional identities and social movements in constructing new citizenship identities (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999). We are also deeply concerned with issues of subjectivity, personal transformation, affect, and other highly charged and gendered domains that are central to women's vernacular notions of citizenship and belonging. A focus on both the subjective and the structural, as well as individual and collective, processes of identity formation and transformation characterizes our ethnographic approach to understand gender and citizenship. We want to avoid reinscribing fixed

identity categories that marginalize the multiply identified (Anzaldúa 1987; Ramirez 2002) without ignoring the powerful potential for social support and political mobilization that identity-based movements offer, and the important role that collective claims for rights and entitlements can play in the assertion of new models of citizenship.

While some contributors to this volume rely on cultural citizenship as their primary conceptual framework, others use alternative conceptual frameworks that are grounded in an ethnographic perspective, such as partial citizenship, diasporic citizenship, and transnational citizenship. Partial citizenship generally refers to the limited integration of migrants into their settler nation-states (see Parreñas, in this volume). A feminist analysis of partial citizenship might include finding out how migrant women are denied their reproductive rights. Scholars of diasporic citizenship, such as Siu (in this volume), challenge the framing of citizenship around a geographically bounded nation-state. A gendered analysis of diasporic citizenship could involve discovering how women are marginalized in diasporic organizations (see Siu in this volume). Although transnational citizenship is usually defined as peoples' relationship to more than one national community (Fox 2005), Renya Ramirez's work (see essay in this volume) demonstrates the value of viewing transnational citizenship through the lens of indigenous women. In this book, transnational citizenship, on the contrary, is viewed through the lens of indigenous women. Transnationalism has been defined as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994, 7). In contrast, others have defined transnationalism by foregrounding Native peoples' insights and experiences and seeing transnationalism as an indigenous process (Ramirez 2007a; Besserer 2002; Speed et al. forthcoming). From this perspective, transnationalism is defined as how indigenous peoples claim a sense of collectivity in the Native diaspora. An indigenous and a feminist view of transnational citizenship, therefore, contributes to understanding how indigenous women activists create transnational hubs that help them claim their voice and rights in sexist environments, as well as support their own sense of indigenous identity while living in the diaspora (Ramirez 2007; Speed et al. 2009).

Nira Yuval-Davis's notion of the *multilayered citizen* highlights the ways in which women's citizenship identities, allegiances, rights, and obligations are defined not solely with respect to the nation-state, but also within and between ethnic, local, religious, diasporic, and other communities and identities (Yuval-Davis 1999). Recognizing citizenship experiences and struggles as multilayered has allowed us

to develop a framework for understanding the "politics of belonging" (Yuval-Davis 2004) and "unbelonging" by exploring diverse women's on-the-ground experiences and narratives within and across national boundaries, as well as within and across boundaries of family, race, ethnicity, community, gender, sexuality, and class. As anthropologists, we seek to understand these on-the-ground experiences in relationship to dynamic, historically constituted, and power-infused symbolic and institutional forces. Attention to the subjective must therefore be contextualized in relationship to an analysis of history and political economy, which locates the source of most inequalities among and between groups in larger institutional structures and forces. Social movements can mobilize common identities or interests, but without attention to the multiple ways in which people share concerns and interests across "difference," the emancipatory potential of coalitions among new citizenship groups will be difficult to achieve.

As a result of this concern with the multiple layers of citizenship, we have often focused on particular gendered expressions of power, agency, and subjectivity that otherwise might be overlooked by a more restrictive notion of the relationship between and among individuals, groups, and the State. Hence, we argue that "engendering" citizenship includes looking for politics and issues of power and inequality in arenas normally considered to be outside of the domain of citizenship, for example, issues of spirituality, emotion, family and kinship, sexuality and intimate relationships, and domestic and sexual violence. Furthermore, we assert that "engendering" citizenship raises the question of how to address citizenship by exploring people's subjective experiences of entitlement and disenfranchisement, emotions and spirituality, as well as politics. We also suggest that a gendered approach to citizenship should include a definition of the political as constituting realms outside the public sphere and incorporate the experiences of both women and men in their families, local and ethnic communities, tribal nations, and diasporic communities, as well as in nation-states.

Feminist Political Theory

We believe that more dynamic and multilayered understandings of citizenship emerge when ethnographic approaches to citizenship are placed in dialogue with critical perspectives on citizenship emerging from feminist political theory. By calling attention to the constructed nature of cultural and social practices, feminist analysis provides key

insights into the normalization of social relations and practices while making masculinist relations of power visible (Landes 1998; Young 1990; Yuval-Davis 1997). The essays in this volume focus on the gendered character of processes of disenfranchisement and marginalization, as well as how marginalized subjects struggle for inclusion and empowerment on overlapping levels and in multiple arenas, from the family to the national to the transnational.

Like many other feminist scholars, we view gender as neither an absolute category nor a bounded cultural field, but rather as a primary analytical tool that complicates issues of culture, power, and authority. Our emphasis on issues of gender inequality and disenfranchisement within nation-states, social movements, and other forms of community is a direct outgrowth of our ethnographic work and analyses of the narratives and social practices of the women (and men) with whom we carried out our research. We take gender both as a fundamental, albeit nonuniversal, set of analytical principles and categories and as a way of understanding the world, including how people relate to one another within and between communities. Gender infuses many cultural and social practices and influences how people are disciplined into different social roles and norms, even when it is not a determining characteristic or feature of a given cultural or social practice.

By denaturalizing narrow, masculinist formulations of "the political" and critiquing the formulation of the white bourgeois male citizen-subject, feminist scholars have sought to redefine citizenship as more than a static bundle of rights and entitlements, while continuing to emphasize the importance of equal formal and substantive rights for all citizen-subjects. Though male experiences are not the primary ethnographic focus in most of our projects, our understanding of gendered citizenship also includes denaturalizing the masculine to disrupt the assumed dichotomy between the public and private in male lives and citizenship practices. Therefore we focus on how diverse collectivities envision and struggle for a more inclusive and just social order, including the redefinition of belonging and entitlement to include such "private" realms as intimate relationships, the body, health, and spirituality as part of the very foundations of citizenship (Young 1989).

Feminist analyses of citizenship also seek to interrogate the gendered nature of diverse forms of political mobilization and organization that occur within and across cultural and national borders. Such forms of political mobilization and organization, as well as feminist analyses of them, challenge existing definitions of "democracy,"

"citizen," and "immigrant" (Mohanty and Alexander 1997, xix). Feminist analyses of citizenship also seek to understand how women engage in diverse forms of political mobilization, both within and across cultural and national borders, and, in so doing, challenge gendered definitions of "democracy," "citizen," and "immigrant." Feminist approaches to citizenship further require that scholars think about women in different geographical and geopolitical contexts and consider the ways in which race, ethnicity, and inequality are experienced in relation to one another (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). Moreover, transnational perspectives on gender and citizenship highlight the interaction between structural inequalities and women's agency and resistance within and across nation-states. Feminist scholarship forces us to seriously question the formation of social and political identities, transformative practices, and experiences of both structural and symbolic domination. Adding a transnational perspective to this feminist framework provides a lens for studying processes of national formation and global change in comparative, relational, and cross-cultural terms.

Intersectional Ethnographies of Citizenship

In the process of our collaboration as a working group, we discovered that our shared interest in exploring how marginalized women conceptualize their status as citizen-subjects was rooted in the work of women of color and Third World feminist theorists that explores the significance of culture, power, and history in the construction of gender and women's identities. By foregrounding the contingent and relational manner in which race, class, nationalism, gender, and sexuality intersect in everyday life, scholars who are women of color have elaborated complex formulations of subjectivity that broaden traditional definitions of what constitutes "social theory" and expand what is considered legitimate knowledge and intellectual production (Alarcón 1990; Anzaldúa 1987, 1990; Collins 2000; Davis 1981; hooks 1984; Lorde 1984; Sandoval 1991).

Much of our individual and collective work has been influenced by Patricia Hill Collins' rearticulation of standpoint theory and her recognition of everyday black women as social theorists (Collins 2000). Collins' notion of black women as the "outsider-within" is particularly useful for understanding the ways in which the standpoints of marginalized communities can provide "new angles of vision" on

social realities (Collins 2000, 11). Collins' work further provides a useful blueprint for the ways in which alternate ways of knowing and nontraditional forms of knowledge production can inform ethnographic practice. In our own work, therefore, we seek to engage our research participants as producers and collaborators in the production of social analysis and criticism. We also seek to understand the significance of hegemonic and counterhegemonic formulations of citizenship from the vantage point of the women with whom we conducted our research.

This volume seeks to make analysis of intersectional social identities central to ethnographic research on citizenship. The concept of intersectionality provides a unique lens for viewing the ways in which women are positioned within interlocking webs of power and inequality. Intersectional analysis also highlights the shortcomings of political and scholarly approaches that fail to account for the mutually constitutive nature of race, gender, class, and sexuality (Anzaldúa 1987; Crenshaw 1991, 1995; Sandoval 1991). Our view of intersectionality underscores the relationship among women's multiple, overlapping social identities, their citizenship experiences, and structural inequalities in local and global contexts. As Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix have noted, the concept of intersectionality signifies "the complex, irreducible, varied and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis of differentiation—economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential—intersect in historically specific contexts. The concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands" (2004, 76).

An ethnography of intersectionality is both the analytical tool and methodological common ground for the research presented in this book. Ethnographic analysis of citizenship experiences of marginalized women underscores the relationship between their intersecting social identities and processes of social inclusion and belonging. Much of the "data" that is presented and analyzed in subsequent chapters was accessible only through ethnography. As marginalized subjects, most of our research participants' experiences and reflections are undocumented or peripheral to much contemporary political and social theory. We found ethnographic methods to be particularly useful, since they provided access to our interviewees' individual and collective expressions of belonging and un-belonging, in both private and public realms.

The essays in this book may be read against one another in order to advance a methodological rubric for future ethnographic research

on gender and citizenship. Ethnography offers a unique opportunity to examine and understand diverse citizenship practices and what they offer citizenship theory through careful attention to how people express, enact, and analyze their positioning within multiple social and cultural fields, and within webs of power and inequality. This attention to "vernacular" citizenship allows us to broaden our notions of what constitutes an empowered "political actor" and how she understands and experiences her citizenship on the ground in everyday life. Our fieldwork experiences convinced us of the importance of understanding experiences of exclusion and struggles for inclusion, on both individual and collective levels, as themselves constitutive of citizenship for members of marginalized communities. We realize that, just as women and men encounter institutional resistance and discipline from the State and other social forces, they also actively shape the scope and terms of their rights and entitlements in more mundane, but no less significant, ways in the course of their daily existence.

Outline of the Book

Independently, the essays in this volume provide a glimpse into the particular situations that different marginalized women experience in their everyday lives. Collectively, when juxtaposed and put into conversation with one another, the essays offer a comparative analysis of how women—of less privileged backgrounds and in different parts of the world—exercise agency to craft and transform the circumstances in which they live. Even through their particularities, these analyses underscore several salient themes that point to the significance of gendered ethnographic conceptualizations of citizenship. Moreover, when taken together, all of the essays open new lines of inquiry and exciting directions for future research.

Part I: Political Activism and Organizing

Women's activism and community organizing continues to offer space in which women develop political skills, link domestic life with public experiences and analyses, and build solidarity with others. For racialized women, whether diasporic, indigenous, or immigrant, these communities of resistance are also a locus for articulating new notions of the political and of citizenship. The chapters in this section show

how the experience of collective struggle also entails personal and subjective transformation. Such processes in turn expand and challenge traditional notions of what constitutes the political, who is seen as a political agent, and how social change can be effected by women who are excluded, either in fact or by law, from full citizenship due to their race, nationality, or social class.

Kathleen Coll's essay seeks to reconfigure cultural citizenship in feminist terms by analyzing how a group of immigrant Latina activists in late 1990s California came to make claims for political, social, and personal rights. Coll argues that concepts associated with neoliberal agendas, such as *autoestima* ("self-esteem"), played a significant role in women's highly politicized analyses of U.S. society, immigration, and welfare policies. She notes that women's creative redeployment of such terms demands an understanding of the subversive as well as self-conserving dynamic of democratic political practice and discourse in contemporary immigrant rights movements, and of the roots of current activism in long-standing efforts to transform the political subjectivities of marginalized groups in the United States.

Maylei Blackwell's essay is based on ethnographic research with members of *Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas* (CONAMI, National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Women) in Mexico. She examines how these indigenous women have linked their struggle for citizenship to their overall fight for autonomy, thus developing a gendered practice of cultural citizenship. Blackwell argues that the gendered practice of CONAMI moves beyond rights discourse and ultimately challenges neoliberalism, a strategy used by the nation-state to promote self-management and a roll back of state services.

Kia Lilly Caldwell examines how black women negotiate the dynamics of gender, race, and class in Brazil. Caldwell's analysis explores black women's strategies for challenging social discourses and practices that assign low-income black Brazilians to a marginalized citizenship status. As Caldwell notes, despite Brazil's transition to a more inclusive and democratic political system in recent decades, everyday practices of socioeconomic and political exclusion serve to reinforce social hierarchies and normative notions of citizenship that are predicated on racialized and gendered notions of difference. Like Coll, Caldwell calls attention to the significance of *autoestima* (self-esteem) for marginalized women and argues for the importance of viewing women's efforts to achieve positive self-esteem as struggles for full citizenship.

Part II: Gender, Diaspora, and Transnationalism

In recent decades, processes of globalization have shifted relations of power and wealth within and among nations. New configurations of power have an unequal impact within and across both the global North and the global South. Racialized, migrantized, classed, and gendered bodies bear the brunt of these power shifts, oftentimes experiencing these processes in the most deleterious ways. It is these same bodies that experience citizenship as an unequal and exclusionary force. Thus, the intersection of citizenship and globalization studies provides a rich framework with which to understand current manifestations of power.

The chapters in this section address questions on globalization and gender: How has globalization constructed new forms and experiences of citizenship? How are processes of globalization shaped by gender, and what impact do they have on gender dynamics at local, national, and transnational levels? Building on feminist research that establishes feelings as being central to the process of knowing, Federico Besserer asserts that a "regime of feelings" undergirds social inequalities within any system of governance or social relations, whether it be the State, family, or community. Drawing on examples from transnational Mixtec (indigenous) communities in Oaxaca, Mexico, and the United States, Besserer shows how women appropriate hegemonically defined gender "inappropriate" emotions—such as romantic love and anger—to challenge the dominant regime of feelings. Besserer argues that, through a disruption of normative social relations, these women are laying the groundwork for constructing a new transnational citizenship.

Rhacel Salazar Parreñas' essay examines gender, citizenship, and the global division of labor. By using the case of the Filipina migrant domestic workers, she argues that the intersection of citizenship and globalization is highly gendered and disproportionately affects women, because of the ways in which they are differently positioned in relationship to the State, citizenship, and the labor market. Parreñas argues that, due to the forces of globalization, Filipina migrant domestic workers experience "partial citizenship" and calls attention to the ways in which the receiving nations prohibit integration of migrant Filipina workers in order to utilize their cheap labor.

Through ethnographic analysis of a Chinese beauty pageant in Central America, Lok Siu examines how gendered practices of

belonging operate in Chinese diasporic organizations. By discussing how beauty pageant contestants were judged on their fluency in Cantonese and Mandarin, how well they embodied racialized notions of feminine beauty, and their performance of their nationality through Central American dress and dance, Siu explores questions of belonging in regard to the Chinese homeland and the Chinese diaspora. Siu argues for a view of diasporic citizenship that takes into account the gendered ways in which members of the Chinese diaspora negotiate multiple levels of belonging.

Part III: Narratives of Belonging

The final set of chapters discusses how notions of citizenship and belonging are defined and contested not only with respect to one nation-state but also within ethnic communities and tribal nations. Based on extensive interviews with first generation university students of Mexican descent, Rina Benmayor shows how the students construct an "integrated subjectivity" that brings together the different cultural worlds of family, community, and university to assert their right to first-class citizenship in higher education and, by extension, the nation. Benmayor further describes how gender informs these students' aspirations. She notes that, as the first generation to challenge culturally defined gender expectations by attending college, Mexican-origin students are often invested in working against gender subordination as well as other forms of domination.

Renya K. Ramirez's essay examines the activism of Cecelia Fire Thunder, a Lakota woman and former tribal chairwoman of the Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota, and Sarah Deer, a Muscogee lawyer. Ramirez interrogates the ways in which gender, tribal nationhood, and sovereignty were linked together in these two women's activism as part of their fight to build respectful tribal nations where Native women's gendered concerns and rights are taken seriously. Her essay also explores how this linkage engenders cultural citizenship for Native American women in the U.S. context.

Using an intersectional analysis, Tracy Fisher's essay examines the politics of race, gender, and belonging in Britain. The chapter is concerned with how white mothers of interracial (black and white) children understand, negotiate, and contest meanings and practices of race and racism. Fisher is interested in the processes of challenging racial hierarchies—the kinds of relationships that the white mothers

make in the larger society, how they encourage community building with black women, and the ways they engage in knowledge production on behalf of their mixed race families.

Notes

We want to thank Rina Benmayor and Kathy Chetkovich for providing useful feedback on earlier versions of this essay.

1. Kia Lilly Caldwell, Kathleen Coll, Tracy Fisher, Renya K. Ramirez, and Lok Siu are the Working group members. Names are listed in alphabetical order.

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Part I

Political Activism and Organizing

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Chapter One

Autoestima in Immigrant Latina Community Organizing: Politicizing Self-Esteem, Personalizing Politics

Kathleen Coll

The weather was unusually warm and sunny on May 1, 2006 as tens of thousands of white-shirted demonstrators filled the streets of San Francisco's Financial District.[1] This year's International Day of the Worker had been recast as "The Great American Boycott," in support of immigrant rights. Ignoring calls for "business as usual" by more conservative pro-immigrant leaders and institutions, young students, workers, public school parents, and grassroots activists instead led the largest coordinated student strike, work stoppage, and economic boycott in U.S. history. Red, white, and blue signs insisted, "AMERICA, we are YOUR people!" Media pundits spun the day as another generation of U.S. immigrants wielded their demographic power for influence in electoral politics, just as others had done before them. But is the contemporary immigrant rights movement just about "getting a piece of the American pie?" Does American citizenship mean the same thing at all when the subject demanding equal rights and democratic protections is socially marginalized or legally excised from the body politic? How does a person subject to such exclusion make claims for legitimacy, rights, and recognition without assimilation?

While media coverage of the events that day focused on the phenomenon of a sudden and spontaneous mobilization of millions of immigrants around the country, a better explanation for this political capacity includes an appreciation of the transformations in political subjectivity at the grassroots level that characterize U.S. immigrant rights organizing over the past two decades. Much of this work dates back to the community-based legalization and refugee-services efforts of the 1980s (Coutin 2000; Mahler 1995; Menjívar 2000), but it also builds upon lessons from previous civil rights and feminist organizing

efforts in order to promote the political participation of previous excluded citizen-subjects. Being rather a new, spontaneous, or "post-9/11," phenomenon, immigrant rights activism is an expression of ongoing, complex, and often contradictory processes of transformation in political subjectivity and, in turn, what it means to belong and be entitled in the United States.

Latina/o scholars of cultural citizenship have shown how the process of claiming equal rights along with recognition of difference characterizes contemporary Latina/o efforts for full enfranchisement, dignity, and respect in the United States (Rosaldo 1994a; 1994b; Flores 1997). Without downplaying the role the state plays in both de jure exclusion of some persons from citizenship and the reproduction of de facto inequalities amongst citizens, cultural citizenship demands attention to the "dissident traditions" within American citizenship and their contemporary expressions as evidence of the dynamic nature, and potential, of citizenship (Rosaldo 1994b). Recognizing citizenship as a disputed and dynamic cultural terrain (Dagnino 2003) enables feminist analysis of how women's citizenship is constituted not only with respect to a nation-state but also between and across national borders, different levels of state institutions (Yuval-Davis 1997; 1999; 2002), and intimate realms of family, sexuality, and subjectivity (Coll 2005; Lubhéid 2002; 2005). The clearest formulation of this complex understanding of Latina cultural citizenship was offered by the groundbreaking scholar-activist team of the El Barrio Popular Education Program in their study of the effects of literacy and mutual support on the changing subjectivity of Spanish-monolingual women in East Harlem: "It was the affirmation of their identity, strength, and sense of entitlement that we have come to see as expressions of 'cultural citizenship'" (Benmayor, Torruellas and Juarbe 1992).

To understand the processes by which members of subordinated social groups come to see themselves as having "the right to have rights" (Dagnino 2003), we need to look beyond the public realm of demonstrations, such as that of May Day 2006, and narrow definitions offered by the state, and attend to other sites of political contest that are at once public and private, collective and individual, racialized and also gendered. This chapter offers ethnographic evidence of such processes of collective affirmation and transformations in political subjectivity based on research since 1996 with members of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* (United and Active Women, or "MUA"), a community organization in the San Francisco Bay Area.[2] In the late 1990s, MUA was made up of more than 200 primarily working-class

and Spanish-monolingual immigrant women, of whom fifty included the most active core.[3] The group was founded by ten women in 1990 to provide peer support and political education rather than services for social needs. From its inception, the majority of MUA members had children, spoke Spanish exclusively, and had fewer than eight years of formal education. Some women had arrived as recently as a few months prior to our interviews, while others had lived in the United States for more than twenty years. Many of the newest immigrants were undocumented, while longer-term residents who had legalized under the 1986 Immigration Act, popularly known as "the amnesty," had generally not yet naturalized as citizens.[4]

The members of MUA expanded the domain of citizenship in both their discourses and their practice by neither ignoring nor privileging the state in how they envisioned their social roles and rights in the United States. The result was a practice of participatory citizenship that challenged the state to recognize new political actors on their own terms, with their own sets of concerns, issues, and new citizen-subject positions. Key among the concerns articulated by group members, right alongside legal-structural issues of formal immigration status in the United States, were questions about women's changing sense of themselves and dynamics in their intimate relationships. Such attention to subjectivity in citizenship discussions introduces new dimensions that account for the complex, multifaceted, and highly personal ways in which people experience inequalities in substantive as well as formal citizenship rights. This chapter shows that grassroots analyses of experiences of belonging, entitlement, and disenfranchisement offer discursive resources for support and hope for addressing, not just surviving, social inequalities.

Studying with *Mujeres Unidas y Activas*

During the mid-1990s, several California ballot initiatives sought to cut most public services to the undocumented, eliminate bilingual education, and end affirmative action in state institutions.[5] Even women who were not themselves undocumented or on public assistance reported being affected by what one *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* staff member called the "psychological warfare" being waged against immigrants and poor families. This imagery was all the more potent given that she and many group members had lived through the "low-intensity conflict" of U.S.-backed civil war in Central America during the 1970s and 1980s.

The group held regular meetings several times a week at various time of day to accommodate different schedules, with child-care and refreshments provided. Some women attended more than one meeting a week. Practicing what they called *democracia dirigida*—or "guided democracy"—the group's leaders would note issues of concern that members raised individually or collectively, and invite informational speakers on these subjects. The topics of these weekly general meetings ranged from how to get your child into the public school of your choice to aspects of recent legislation important for battered women, such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).[6] An important aspect of their skills development program included training workshops on topics such as child development, youth violence, and immigrant rights. These trainings were conducted in all-day sessions on weekends over the course of six to eight weeks. The participants received small stipends and were required to design and carry out a community campaign relevant to the training's topic after the workshops were completed.

MUA articulated a clear program for empowering immigrant Latin American women and their families seeking to assert their needs and rights. The group's staff-guided priorities emphasized popular political education, organization, and collective action as Latinas and in coalition with other groups and communities. Central to this vision was an emphasis on addressing the emotional and personal issues of its members, which the staff and members saw as critical for each woman's survival as well as necessary for the health of the organization and community. While the staff emphasized the importance of engaging in collective political action in these goals, they also employed a notion of *autoestima* that bridged the divide between individual mental health and community well-being, between individual and collective experiences of citizenship, and between motherhood and womanhood. The balance between the activity-oriented leadership of the staff and the grassroots nature of their member-led meetings created a dynamic dialogue between "big picture" and individual struggles, legislative, electoral, and personal as well as local community-level concerns.

MUA members spoke about the challenges they face in adjusting to life in San Francisco, and how immigration itself forces one to draw upon personal and cultural sources of strength to overcome obstacles facing oneself or one's family. Whether or not an immigrant woman has a community of support and activism such as that which the group provided its members, the day-to-day acts of survival in a new country might provide her a whole new appreciation of her own self-worth. Interpreted through the discourse of *autoestima*, the women

in MUA transformed obstacles created by immigration, class, culture, and language into evidence of the strength by drawing from their individual histories and collective identities to claim a space for themselves both in U.S. society and in their own households. Group members developed a notion of *autoestima* that helped them relate the transformations in their subjectivity, conjugal relationships, and approaches to parenting after immigration to their changing experiences of motherhood, marriage, and citizenship. These categories themselves suggested that tensions and conflicts were also part of the group process (Stephen 2001).[7]

While their individual life histories, family backgrounds, domestic relationships, nationalities, and immigration stories were diverse, many women I interviewed and observed wove discussions of *autoestima* into their narratives of personal transformation and participation in this community group. After paying more careful attention to the contexts and domains to which women were referring when they discussed *autoestima,* I began to see the congruencies and divergences from North American pop psychology or self-help understandings of this term. The translation reflected a very different sense of subjectivity and identity from the self-contained and autonomous subject of liberal "self-esteem" talk (Cruikshank 1999).[8] Women reported the utility of these ideas to their making sustained claims for their position and rights either at home or work. They identified multiple factors such as peer support, information, training as organizers, and collective political action as important in their coming to feel a more affirmative sense of themselves and their rights. Women's collective dialogues as well as their political practice challenged the forces they saw as reducing their personhood to their domestic roles, labor power, or consumer status. The following stories focus on how women came to believe in the potential for community change, valuing their own interests and those of their children over connections to men and other family, gaining trust in others, and overcoming personal and collective obstacles to full participation in American political and social life.

Women's Dialogues about Selfhood and Intersubjectivity

Fifteen women sat in metal folding chairs in a circle, drinking coffee, eating *pan dulce*, and making small talk as we waited for the women's group meeting to begin. Sun streamed in the windows of the old building, through which one could see the neighboring rooftops in the

heart of San Francisco's Mission District. On that fall morning in 1997, the immigrant women's peer support group had no agenda other than to allow those present to talk about issues on their mind and to solicit collective discussion or advice. As other women dropped off their babies and toddlers in the adjacent child-care, women already seated introduced themselves one by one, giving their first name, country of origin, and the number of children they had, both with them in the United States and those left behind in their home country.

In many ways this meeting was typical of what the group's coordinators called *autoestima* meetings, which they alternated weekly with "general meetings" featuring talks by invited guest speakers on a wide range of informational topics. After women went around the circle introducing themselves, the meeting's facilitator met Esperanza Navarro's gaze and asked her if there was anything in particular she wanted to discuss. A tall, physically powerful woman in her early forties, Esperanza had lived in San Francisco since immigrating from Mexico City with her husband and three young sons in 1986. She was usually quiet and somewhat shy in meetings, but that day Esperanza nodded yes, that she needed to talk. As she began to talk, her eyes reddened and her voice shook. This mother of five shared her experiences of physical and emotional abuse by her alcoholic husband, how it felt to have her three teenage sons ignore and disrespect her, and how overwhelmed she felt when her sixteen-year-old son brought his pregnant girlfriend to live with them. The main worry she wanted to share with the group was how she could protect her preschool age daughters and remove herself and them from the household. "I want to break the cycle for them. It's too late for my sons. I need to become independent in order to be able to leave my husband."[9]

Many at the meeting had known Esperanza for over a year and had seen her emotional state rise and fall repeatedly despite peer support, professional mental health intervention, job training, and employment. Mariana, a mother of three in her late twenties from Michoacán, told Esperanza that she had left her husband only two years earlier, at a point when she had no money or work at all. Like Esperanza, Mariana and many of the other discussion participants spoke little English, had completed less than a few years of elementary school in their countries of origin, and were undocumented. They were clear about the structurally disadvantaged positions they occupied and the bankruptcy of American bootstraps notions of the self-sufficient individual, yet they urged Esperanza not to see herself as powerless and to

have confidence in her own ability to survive and raise her daughters. "If I could do it, so can you," said Mariana. At a time when the state was withdrawing support to women in Esperanza's position by cutting welfare and public housing benefits, especially for undocumented women, such peer support would be an important resource if she were to choose to separate from her husband. Whatever her decision, they would provide the support she was asking for.

Two other women present, who were also unhappy with their domestic situation but for a variety of reasons were not planning to leave their partners, spoke of the importance of *autoestima*. They knew that Esperanza was familiar with the public resources and services available to her and her citizen daughters, and that as one of the few homeowners and small businesspeople in the group, she was far better off in material terms than the vast majority of them. Her fragile emotional condition also factored into their resistance to tell her or any other woman that her only good option was to leave her husband. Several spoke up to tell her that she needed to focus on her own *autoestima* in order to make sure her daughters would indeed be able to "break the cycle."

Unlike informational meetings, *autoestima* meetings were without a specific agenda beyond having members raise an issue for discussion, ask the group for advice, or respond to a question posed by the day's facilitator. Discussions ranged from parenting and discipline, in-law relationships, work problems, media and consumer pressures, to specific economic or personal crises. At one such meeting, members critiqued commercial culture or the social messages of *telenovelas* and popular music. At another, they discussed their problems and objections to aspects of their children's experience with school busing and neighborhood versus magnet schools. Another meeting consisted of women's sentimental, ironic, and occasionally ribald reminiscences of how they met their husbands or the fathers of their children. The group's vision of what was encompassed by *autoestima* was much broader than the direct translation of "self-esteem" and could not be appreciated by an analysis that posited women as passive recipients of neoliberal ideals of the self. While clearly deploying something similar to a North American vernacular notion of "self-esteem" as an individualized process of developing a positive self-concept,[10] and operating in North American and Latin American feminist organizing traditions of consciousness-raising and dialogic peer support, *autoestima* encompassed personal transformational processes, a shared identity as immigrant Latinas forged in dialogue and *convivencia* (shared experiences and time together), and worked together

on the community's social and political concerns, from immigration reform to domestic violence.

The women of MUA outlined a notion of *autoestima* tied to peer support and dialogue about social issues and how to address them in collective actions. Talking about one's personal problems in a politicized collective support group helped women locate intimate personal issues in a broader social context. *Autoestima* was dialogic and nurturing of women's individual and collective voices, in contrast to the immigration experiences that many women described as silencing, disempowering, and dehumanizing. Thus, *autoestima* was both a process and an outcome, a means and an end in the ongoing struggle for a richer and more empowered sense of citizenship.

Economic, Social, and Domestic Violence

The impact of different forms of violence was in the foreground of many women's stories and bore directly on their capacity for bodily and emotional integrity and therefore their citizenship practice as well. Tomasa Hernández had lived in San Francisco for twenty-three years when we first spoke at length in 1998. Tomasa was a petite and vivacious woman whose youthful physique and penchant for tight jeans and hip urban sportswear belied her status as a mother of six. She was just a teenager when she migrated to California from Mexico, but after finishing elementary school she had worked for several years to help support her family in her small hometown near the lake called Chapala in Jalisco. Tomasa shook her head and laughed ruefully at her youthful hubris, having jumped a bus with a girlfriend to make their way north. They eventually found work in sweatshops and restaurants in San Francisco and settled there. Tomasa was also one of the ten founding members of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas*.

At the time of our interview, Tomasa was pregnant with her seventh child. She described her boyfriend as a wonderful partner to her and father to her children, even though they were from a previous relationship. She told me a story of personal and political transformation in which she framed herself as formally an emotionally unstable victim of domestic violence whose only interest in participating in the group initially was the two dollars that she received for her attendance. The idea of the stipend was to promote participation among women who would not have enough money for bus fare, but to her

own surprise, when the grant money for the stipends ran out, she continued to attend.

> Although the domestic violence didn't end, I still saw a big change in myself, in my life, and as much for my children as for me. So with all the information I was receiving here, there was such a big change that, although they no longer gave me the two dollars, I continued coming. And first of all I think that what I learn here in the group is to have *autoestima*.[11]

Tomasa understood her problems to be related to her poor *autoestima*, which allowed her to put up with abuse. Tomasa's understanding of *autoestima* was broad enough to allow for structural forces also limiting her options. In her case, her husband played upon her fears and insecurities as an undocumented, monolingual, small-town woman with little education, abusing her emotionally and physically, while abusing himself and her through alcohol.

> It was a fear that I lived with, it was a sadness, a . . . because of everything that happens to a woman, umm, who is suffering from domestic violence, I didn't have interest in anything, in anything. I felt so ugly . . . the father of my children would say to me "it's just that you are so ugly. Who would love you?" . . . He humiliated me in the worst way, in the very worst way. "You are even uglier than one of those women who walks the streets and charges ten dollars!"[12]

In narrating her life and struggles after marriage and bearing children, she deployed the concept of *autoestima* to establish a position from which to defend her interests as an immigrant, a mother, and a woman. Her story incorporated themes of extreme depression, violence, and substance abuse, as well as the power of information, support, and *autoestima*.

> I took a few trainings and learned what *autoestima* means . . . It was here that I learned . . . that one has to value oneself first before, before helping another person . . . I took a training where we talked first about *autoestima*. That training was about migrant rights . . . it was there that I took my first step towards feeling better about myself. Afterwards, I took other trainings, but even though I continued to suffer domestic violence, I already was feeling better. I knew that I was a woman and that I was worth a lot . . . that first came me, and my children, and after came everyone else, and after that, came him. So it was there that my life completely changed . . . And when I took those trainings and I saw more women with problems and I saw that I wasn't the only one

> suffering… So I said, I have to change because this doesn't have to continue like this. So it was like that little plant that when you give it some water, when you water it, you are giving it life, you are giving it the opportunity to flower, to grow, like a guide that keeps growing. So that's how I see my life since I started coming here until now. Because now I am a woman who, with all my problems, has moved forward with my six children. Although we have gone through many things, problems, they have given me trouble and many things have happened, but I think that if I weren't here in the group, if I didn't have all the information that I have now, I think I would be a ruined woman.[13]

Tomasa explained that the women's group's discussions and political work provided her a conceptual framework from which to reevaluate her situation. The way she came to understand her own feelings and social position was neither individualistic nor apolitical, but rather it was in the context of economic and political factors such as discrimination against Latinos and contemporary anti-immigrant sentiment. This perspective also allowed her to analyze her husband's abusive behavior in light of his own difficult life experiences. Though she never excused his abusive behavior, Tomasa spoke with compassion of how difficult it is for men like her husband, with little education or English, to maintain a positive sense of themselves in a society that regards them only as inexpensive laborers. She suggested that economic and psychic stresses on men may drive many to alcohol and substance abuse, with both men and their families suffering from this self-abusing behavior. Tomasa shared the following commentary when we were no longer speaking about her experiences of violence, but rather when I asked about her hopes for her children's futures.

> Hopes? Well, that they go to school, that they have a better future, that they don't go through what I have, or what their father has. Because… that that also leads us, I think, to violence.… I think that economic problems also bring domestic violence into family life, that this desperation, that I think this also influences family disintegration. Because one is already thinking, "Oh, God, I don't have anything to pay the rent. I'll just have another beer to forget." … And I haven't just heard this from myself, but from many other people, that family problems are also rooted in all the laws that we have here now that are attacking us. So I also think that there is a great deal of desperation which they (men) are feeling.[14]

While intimate partner violence occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic sectors of U.S. society, empirical studies appear to bear out the analysis I heard in *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* meetings,

that is, poverty, social isolation, poor extended family supports, discrimination, and substance abuse are all associated with increased risk of domestic violence.[15] The desperation that Tomasa blamed on both political and economic pressures experienced by immigrant Latinos was exemplified by the escalating economic marginalization of immigrant families at the end of the century. One finding of the U.S.-Mexican Binational Study on Migration was that, from 1990 to 1996, the period Tomasa described, the proportion of recent Mexican immigrant families with household incomes under $5,000 actually doubled, from 5.5 percent to 11 percent (Davis 2000).

Tomasa insistently rejected stereotypes of Latino men as macho or violent. Without excusing batterers, she emphasized the economic and social forces that help shape family violence. Such commentaries challenge the conflation of Latin American cultural "traditions" with violence against women. They also engage the broader debate over how to use law, including immigrant and refugee policy, to combat violence against women without invoking racialized stereotypes of hyper-patriarchal "traditional" cultures that ignore geopolitics and other structural conditions in which domestic violence occurs (Ong 2003; Ramos 1987; Razack 1995). Tomasa harnessed empowering aspects of feminist critiques of violence against women, while rejecting universalizing solutions to complex individual situations. Because of their families' structural relationship to the U.S. state, immigrant and undocumented women in MUA were acutely aware of the double-edged potential of engaging state forces to address family violence.

Mujeres Unidas y Activas as an organization recognized that the state was a strategic but not entirely trustworthy ally of immigrant women victims of violence and their families, so often group discussions involved weighing options, evaluating available resources, and "choosing" among unattractive "options."[16] *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* policy was to support the victim of violence and her children, but also to recognize the complexity of every situation. In some cases, women feared reporting husbands with prior criminal records who might then be eligible for deportation, thus losing any hope of future child support. In other cases, women were concerned that reports might lead to investigation of their own immigrant status, or intervention by state Child Protective Services. Some women feared homeward migration more than remaining with their spouse, because in their country of origin they felt they would be unable to support their children, much less have access to adequate legal protection from their husbands.[17] In general, whether they were domestic violence survivors or

not, many of the women I interviewed expressed a desire to return to Mexico at some point in the future to live, but most neither thought this would ever be economically feasible nor believed that their children would be willing to move back with them.[18]

Sally Engle Merry has analyzed the contradictory position in which feminist advocates for domestic violence victims find themselves with respect to the state (Merry 1995). They seek to empower women to change their situation in part by taking legal action against their batterers. Yet in engagement with official discourses on domestic violence, they participate in the construction of certain women as victims who are worthy and rights-bearing subjects seeking the legitimate protection of the state, and certain men as deserving of state surveillance and punishment. Merry argues that the shifting legal discourse on domestic violence reflects increased feminist influence on the state, but it can also be used to blame "poor women for their failure to take responsibility for themselves while ignoring the economic restructuring which displaces both male and female workers, minimizing the government's responsibility to provide these families with a viable mode of livelihood, and legitimating new systems of surveillance and control of working-class and poor men and women" (1995, 69).

Desahogandose: Relieving the Silence after Immigration

Counter to liberal developmentalist propositions that migrant women from the South will experience liberation and progress upon integration into Northern societies, most women I interviewed focused on the isolation and sense of loss after immigration. Having the opportunity to speak freely and dialogue in confidence with peers was a key aspect of building *autoestima*. In recounting her own experience of immigration, Adela Aguirre highlighted her own struggle to regain her self-assurance in the United States. She was still a teenager when she left her small hometown in the highlands of Jalisco to get herself a job and an apartment in Mexico City. She had completed sixth grade and a vocational course in office skills for executive secretaries. Her sister soon joined her and they shared expenses and an unusually independent urban life for young working-class women. "I was always quite a rebel!"[19] she said with a laugh.

When she was twenty years old, Adela met Manuel, who was born and raised in the United States but was visiting relatives in Mexico City when they met and fell in love. He told her he wanted to get

married and return to San Francisco where he had a permanent job, so she agreed to emigrate, but only if he promised that she could go to school to learn English in order to be able to work herself. He agreed, and in May of 1991 they married and moved into the multiunit building where his parents and brothers' families also live in the southeastern section of San Francisco known as Visitation Valley. Adela was still so devoted to her job that she worked right up until the day before they married, and she saw no reason things should be different in San Francisco. She remembers their discussions before getting married with great irony. She related how she would tell him,

> "I am going to go to school to learn English and as soon as I can, I want to work." (He would respond) "Oh, yes, that's perfect. You can do what you want to," oh yeah, you know. According to him, he totally agreed with everything, but when I arrived here, everything was different. Here he only let me go, at the most, one month, and I don't think I had even finished that one month, right after we arrived.[20]

Within three months of marrying Manuel, Adela was pregnant. Her husband refused to let her return to the free ESL classes at the community college, first due to her pregnancy and later because their son was so young. As soon as her son was eight months old, she enrolled again, but almost immediately her husband lost his job and forbade her to return to class. Until she began attending *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* meetings, she felt silenced and isolated.

The opportunity to get outside of one's usually cramped living quarters, to be in the company of supportive women with similar concerns and experiences, and to have the security of trustworthy child-care nearby for their children were reasons women gave for the relief that the women's group provided them. This space and the support of her peers also gave Adela the courage to participate in a leadership training program that MUA organized in 1996. In the course of this series of workshops, women learned about U.S. immigration and labor history, but they also linked their contemporary situation to those of African American and Asian American working-class women in particular. They learned to speak up in the training and practiced their skills at lobbying local officials together, and then they travelled to the state capital to lobby elected officials and mobilize with diverse immigrants from across the state.

> It was really hard for me, but like I told you, I took it and I feel really happy for having taken the training. I feel really happy because I am much braver.... And in that way more than anything it helped our

autoestima. Mine was already a little bit higher (than before) but after this training, it went all the way up! And I say, that's great!

Fear and Power: External and Internalized Obstacles to Women's Organizing

Autoestima was a key discursive tool women used to overcome of the same obstacles that family members created to prevent their participation in popular political organizing (Jelin 1997; Mamdani 2000; Stephen 1998). Beyond bolstering women's self-esteem, group meetings often included discussions of strategies for changing husbands' minds or resisting male control over women's activities outside the home. Women shared their husband's fears and discussed among themselves, and with me in interviews, how they dealt with them. The stories narrated of the first time I came to a group meeting, and tales of what my husband says about/against the group, were a narrative genre in and of themselves. These stories were often accompanied by laughter and/or tears, and understanding smiles and nods from around the room.

It also took a great deal of determination for Adela to participate in the group because her husband so forcefully opposed it. He told her repeatedly that she was just being "brainwashed." "*¿A eso vas? ¡A que te laven el cerebro! ¡Bola de viejas, lesbianas, marimachas!*" ("Is that why you go there? So they can brainwash you? Bunch of old women, lesbians, dykes!"[21]). This issue also came up in other interviews—husbands, neighbors, in-laws had told women at different times that the women-only group housed in a building full of women's organizations was really about promoting lesbian sexuality. "He told me they were going to brainwash me!" was the way one subject described her husband's response to her participation in the group. Such cautionary tales told about women's organizing are as much about controlling women as they are about actual homophobia, which in the end is but one of many possible expressions of female sexual autonomy.[22]

While she dismissed her husband's fears of lesbian influence, Adela herself associated women's political and social solidarity with sexuality and forbidden desire. She spoke of her own initial fears of the support other women might provide her in sexualized terms, but also in more general language of distrust and the need to guard oneself, to protect oneself from betrayals. For Adela, sexual freedom or sexual

citizenship was something she knew as powerful and threatening. She explained this logic:

> (I)f someone cares about you, it's only because they always want to get something from you in return. Because you're always thinking that, right?.... You put up this invisible barrier when what you want is for them to give you a hug.... But then you're left with that you don't want to ask for love like that. The same thing happened at home, in my relationship with my husband. I would say, "Oh no, if I go, and I caress him, he's going to think this, that, and the other, no?" Or if I tell a friend "Oh, give me a hug," she's going to say "She's already gone over to the other side!" There's always that. I don't know, consciously or not, I always put up this barrier... Or also when you want to help someone, simply just giving them some information and they look at you, as if to say, "She must want something" or "She's going to call immigration on me" or I don't know what. This work is pretty hard, but you have to do it and do it now or we're not going to get anywhere. I want to do it because someone did it for me.[23]

Adela connected her ability to trust others with her own trust in herself and a sense of her own power. She gained a sense of security knowing that there really were people of good will interested in helping her without judgment or ulterior motive. This reclaimed self-assurance in turn helped her envision herself as having something to offer others. Adela underlined the hope and sense of knowledge/understanding she drew from being part of a community of values in which an ethic of sharing, trust, and mutual respect constituted a counter-discourse to neoliberal norms of competitive, acquisitive, political, and social relations.

> It was also very important for me to know that there are people who truly give, without any self-interest, that there are people who will help you without criticizing you. That there are people who you can count on one hundred percent. And since you can trust them and they make you feel good, you take this, at least I do personally, I take this so that someone else can really place their trust in me as well—not one, not two, not three thousand, I feel like I have the ability to be able to understand thousands of people.[24]

The shared language of *Mujeres* members both reflected and enabled a multiplicity of subject positions defined with respect to families, nation-states, and identity groups. This process of discursively constituting complex citizen-subjects was neither straightforward nor free of conflict. Group leaders repeatedly articulated a

politics of unity despite differences of nationality, religion, marital and motherhood status, age, immigration status, and sexuality. Yet members' articulation of *autoestima* was usually in relationship to a subject positioned as both heterosexual and a parent. Lesbian members or members without children noted in interviews that they sometimes felt a lack of sympathy or collective support for their own issues of *autoestima*, with this eventually driving some women further from the core of the group's activities. Other terrains of conflict or division were products of group participation itself, with some members gaining more personally and/or economically in terms of skills development or even being hired by the group as staff. Despite the realities and challenges of forging an inclusive group identity and solidarity, what was remarkable was the extent to which these tensions and intra-group differences were neither ignored nor elided in praxis.

Citizenship Talk, Theory, and Practice

As explained by these activists, *autoestima* constituted cultural citizenship on the most intimate levels—between women, among kin, and within the household, especially with husbands and children. Their analyses push citizenship theory to account for transnational migrant women's experiences of solidarity, support, conflict, and violence. In their work together, women integrated their concerns for dignity, voice, positionality, and subjectivity with formal, legal-juridical concerns to model a more dynamic and robust theory and practice of citizenship. In their individual narratives of *autoestima* and their collective activism, members of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* not only linked the intimate and public domains of political subjectivity but also called into question the state-centered nature of much of the scholarship on citizenship. Their work managed to move beyond persistent conceptual barriers between the private and public, domestic and political spheres, in order to confront the multiple ways in which legal and cultural norms of social inclusion/exclusion continue to marginalize so many members of this society. Citizenship, from this perspective, is multilayered and multifaceted, not limited to public acts but also including private worlds and the ability to make a voice and space for oneself within the family, community, and nation. Citizenship processes include the rights claims, collective actions, and grassroots institution-building that MUA referred to with their notion of *autoestima*. Cultural citizenship is not a permanent or inalienable status but rather an ongoing struggle waged at multiple levels and

through complex relationships. In the context of legal, social, and economic forces designed to marginalize and silence these women and their communities, their demands for social and cultural respect along with legal rights challenge us to reconsider not only the scope of citizenship studies but the very nature of citizenship itself.

Notes

1. Media reported from 30,000 to 100,000 participants in this city, with much larger crowds in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.
2. This research is presented in its complete form in Coll (2010).
3. In 2002, MUA was expanded, opening an office in Oakland.
4. Of the thirty women with whom I worked most closely from 1996 to 1999, eight identified themselves as survivors of domestic violence. Given that 21 percent of all U.S. women and 34 percent of immigrant Latinas report having been battered by an intimate relation in their lifetime, their experiences seem far from exceptional. These particular women's stories of suffering, survival, and transformation spoke powerfully to the extent to which violence also shapes women's experiences of family, citizenship, and immigration.
5. Propositions 187, 227, and 209, respectively.
6. In response to lobbying by immigrant rights and domestic violence advocacy groups, VAWA allows battered women married to permanent legal residents (with proof of battery such as medical and police reports) to petition for residency independently of their husbands. Since some batterers also exploit their wives' undocumented status as part of their abuse, this has been an important provision for many women seeking legal status.
7. Women who were not mothers and LGBT members often had to struggle to assert their own contributions in often heteronormative dialogues. Other differences in religion, class, or educational backgrounds also caused tensions, yet these tensions themselves were productive and generative of counter-discourses of citizenship within the group itself. Lynn Stephen credits Latin American notions of motherhood with being more "multidimensional and both public and private" than Anglo American norms, thus leaving room for "(a)lternative cultural discourses of motherhood" (Stephen 2001, 59).
8. Barbara Cruikshank forcefully argues that concepts and terms like "empowerment" and "self-esteem" are "techniques of self-governance" designed specifically to discipline participants in self-help and women's empowerment groups in the logics of neoliberal political subjectivity. Significantly for my own work in San Francisco, she also reveals how the state government of California, influenced by sociological work that blames low self-esteem for social ills, from poverty, to violence, to high-school dropouts, provided grants to community organizations doing

self-esteem work during this period. The power of the state and its disciplinary force seems difficult to resist, making it is hard to recognize that women might still manage to critically remake aspects of such concepts and practices for their own purposes.

9. *"Quiero romper con el ciclo para ellas. Es demasiado tarde para mis hijos. Necesito independentizarme para poder dejar a mi marido."* All interview quotes are author translations from the original Spanish.
10. I refer here to the notion of self-esteem deployed in everyday discourse and popular culture in the United States. Recent feminist and cross-cultural psychology indicates increased critique of such traditional categories and concepts as "self-esteem" (Espín 1997). That the colloquial force of the concept remains powerful is born out by its frequent use without definition, qualification, or deconstruction in even progressive social psychology, social work, and sociological literature (Gutierrez and Lewis 1999).
11. *Aunque la violencia doméstica no se acababa, pero yo miraba un cambio muy grande en mi persona, en mi vida, y tanto para mí que para los niños. Entonces con toda la información que yo recibía aquí, hubo un cambio muy grande entonces aunque no me dieron los dos dólares, yo sola seguía viniendo. Y este primeramente yo pienso que lo que me eseñe aquí en el grupo de Mujeres fue a tener autoestima.*
12. *Era un miedo con el que yo vivía, era una tristeza, un. . . . por todo lo que pasó a la mujer, este, que está sufriendo violencia doméstica, no tenía gustos para nada, para nada. Yo me sentía bien fea. . . . es que el papá de los niños me decía 'si es que túestás bien fea, ¿quién te va a andar queriendo a tí?'. . . . me humillaba de lo peor. De lo más peor. 'Si tú estás más fea que una de las que anden en la calle que cobran diez dólares!'*
13. *Agarré unos entrenamientos y supe que era autoestima. Yo ni sabía que era eso de autoestima. Y aquí fue donde yo aprendí. . . . el autoestima, que uno tiene que valorarse primero antes, antes que ayudar a otra persona, primeramente uno tiene que estar bien de su autoestima, porque si no, uno no hace nada. Y agarré un entrenamento donde hablamos primero de la autoestima. Ese entrenamento fue sobre los derechos de migración. Ese entrenamiento fue bien intenso y allí fue mi primer paso que yo di para yo sentirme bien. Después agarré otros entrenamientos, pero ya, aunque no dejaba de sufrir violencia doméstica, yo me sentía mejor. Yo sabía que yo era mujer y que yo valía mucho. . . que primeramente estaba yo, y mis hijos, después lo demás gente y después él. Entonces allí fue donde cambió completamente mi vida. . . . Y cuando yo agarré estos entrenamientos y que yo miraba a más mujeres con problemas y que yo miraba que yo no era la única que estaba sufriendo. . . . Entonces, yo dije, 'aquí tengo que cambiar porque esto no tiene que continuar así. Entonces fue como esa plantita que le hechas agua, que la estás regando, que la estás dando vida, que la estás dando la oportunidad que florezca, que crezca, como una guía que va creciendo. Entonces así es como yo miro a mi vida desde cuando yo entré*

aquí hasta ahorita. Porque ahorita soy una mujer, que, con problemas y todo, he salido adelante con mis seis niños. Aunque hemos pasado por muchas cosas, problemas, me han dado problemas ellos, muchas cosas han pasado, pero yo pienso que si yo no estaría aquí en este grupo, yo no tuviera toda la información que tengo ahorita, yo pienso que yo fuera una mujer derrotada.

14. *¿Esperanzas? Pos que estudien. Que tengan un mejor futuro. Que no pasen por lo que yo he pasado o por lo que el papá pasó. Porque también eso lleva, yo pienso a esa violencia.... Yo pienso que también los problemas económicos son los que llevan a la vida familiar a esos problemas de violencia doméstica, de desesperación, de que, y yo pienso que también eso influye mucho en que haiga tanta desintegración de familia. Porque ya está uno pensando, 'ay, dios, si no tengo para la renta. Me voy a tomar una cerveza para olvidarme.'... Y no nomas lo he oído en mi, sino en muchas personas, que eso los lleva, los problemas familiares son a bases de tantas leyes también que están aquí de tanto de que nos están atacando aquí. Entonces yo también pienso que eso es una gran desesperación que tiene ellos.*
15. U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) statistics bear out Tomasa's observations about patterns and issues in domestic violence, as well as the definitions of domestic violence deployed by the organization and its members. The DOJ researchers found a consensus among service providing agencies that "battering is a constellation of physical, sexual, and psychological abuses that may include physical violence, intimidation, threats, emotional abuse, isolation, sexual abuse, manipulation, the using of children, economic coercion, and the assertion of male privilege such as making all major family decisions, or expecting the woman to perform all household duties." Of these behaviors, only actual physical and/or sexual assault is illegal, and prior to the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, there was no recognition of the special forms of threats and intimidation batterers use to control immigrant or undocumented partners.
16. Note the difference in approach of the politicized staff and members of this organization of primarily undocumented Latinas to the interventionist social workers described by Ong (2003) in her study of officially recognized Cambodian refugees in San Francisco in the same period.
17. Domestic violence is illegal in Mexico and women have the right to file formal complaints and press charges against their batterers. At the same time, a persistent belief in the corruption of many Mexican government institutions diminished many women's sense of trust or faith in legal protections. However, during my research in Mexico in 1994, I met several women and heard of many others who had filed police reports complaining of their husbands' violence, and they noted that it was much more common to do this in the 1990s than it had been previously.
18. Others have pointed out the gendered differential in male and female attitudes toward return to one's country of origin, with men generally

more likely than women to report a desire to return to their county of origin. *Nosotras* members's dreams of returning home someday reflect the conflicted feelings that many migrants sustain throughout their lives in the United States. See, for example, Goldring (2001).

19. All quotations from Adela in this section are from an interview on September 18, 1996.
20. *'Yo voy a ir a la escuela a aprender el inglés y en cuanto yo pueda, quiero trabajar.' (él decía) 'O, sí, está perfecto. Tú puedes hacer lo que tú quieras' que oo, bueno, tú sabes. Según él, él estaba de acuerdo en todo, pero cuando llegué aquí, la cosa fue bien diferente. Aquí nada más me dejó ir, no te miento, yo creo que cuando much, un mes, y no creo que se ha completado ni el mes que me dejó ir a la escuela, de recién que llegamos.*
21. *Marimacha* can be translated as tomboys, she-men, or dykes. I chose the last term because it best captures what seem to be the political and sexual fears underlying Adela's husband's anxiety about her participation in the women's group.
22. Norma Mogrovejo (1998) describes the divisive power of what she calls "lesbophobia" in the development of the second wave feminist movement in Mexico in the 1970s and 1980s.
23. *(S)i a alguién le importa siempre va a querer sacarte algo a cambio. Porque traes siempre eso, verdad?.... Pones esta barrera invisible cuando lo que quisieras, como de que te dieran un abrazo... Pero entonces ya te quedas así de que no quieres pedir amor asi. Lo mismo me pasó en la casa, en la relación con mi pareja. Decía yo, ay no, si yo voy, y yo lo acaricio a él, él va a pensar 'esta, esto, y aquello', ¿no? O si yo le digo a una amiga, 'Ay, dáme un abrazo,' va a decir '¡Esta ya es del otro lado!' Siempre está eso. No sé, inconciente o concientamente, siempre ponía esta barrera... O también cuando quieres ayudar a alguien, simplemente dando una información y te quedan viendo, como diciendo, 'esta algo va a querer' o 'me va a echar la migra' o no sé. Es un poco duro el trabajo, pero, hay que hacerlo y hay que hacerlo cuando menos o no vamos a obtener nada. Yo quiero hacerlo porque así me lo hicieron a mí.*
24. *Para mi también fue muy importante saber que hay personas que de verdad se dan, sin ningún tipo de interés, que hay personas que te van a ayudar sin censurarte. Que hay personas en que puedes confiar cien porciento. Y como tu puedes confiar en ellas y te hacen sentir bien. Te agarras esos, al menos en mí, en lo personal, yo lo agarro para que deveras en mí puedan confiar, ni uno, ni dos, ni tres, miles. Me siento con esa capacidad de poder intender a miles de personas.*

Chapter Two

Zones of Autonomy: Gendered Cultural Citizenship and Indigenous Women's Organizing in Mexico

Maylei Blackwell

Ignited by the 1994 Zapatista uprising, local indigenous organizations, both existing and new, coalesced into a national indigenous movement that spread throughout Mexico. While centering their demands on indigenous autonomy, a claim that was forged in the formal political sphere, the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) and the national indigenous movement have been at the forefront of recovering indigenous cultural, juridical, and social forms of being and demanding the right to be different. Women have played a vital role in the construction and mobilization of a national indigenous movement in Mexico throughout the 1990s. Indigenous women have not only become important new actors in the indigenous movement, they have effectively expanded indigenous political demands for autonomy by adding their own analyses of how Mexican politics and culture have been organized by gender, indigeneity, and class as vectors of power.

By creating a process and political methodology of consultation that relies on indigenous notions of deliberation and civic participation, the EZLN and the indigenous movement have mobilized and created linkages between indigenous communities and Mexican civil society at large. The mobilization of indigenous women as a movement and the articulation of gender specific demands have been a product of women's mass participation in the process of consultation. Activist women have articulated their demands in relation to the recovery of social, political, and cultural forms of indigenous autonomy. This practice of construction and consultation has sustained the movement beyond the claim for rights in the face of military repression and governmental incalcitrance, represented by the 2001 Indian Rights Bill, which many critics say fails to meet the basic agreements of the San Andres Peace Accords signed by the government in 1996.

These processes of recovery, construction, and revitalization are struggles for cultural citizenship. Latino scholars in the United States have theorized cultural citizenship as an analytical vehicle to better understand community formation and the process by which rights are claimed by subjugated groups (Flores 1997, 262). They have examined how political marginalized communities claim space and create belonging through everyday practices and engage in collective affirmation and empowerment through a broad range of activities (Flores and Benmayor 1997). The Gender and Cultural Citizenship working group expands this notion by adding a gendered analysis of cultural citizenship and bridging both public and private spheres in the creation of belonging and communities of resistance (Gender and Cultural Citizenship Group, this volume; Ramirez, nd). In this essay, I examine how indigenous women in Mexico have taken the indigenous movement's struggle for meaningful citizenship, articulated through the demand for indigenous autonomy, and created a gendered practice of cultural citizenship. I explore how the participation of indigenous women in Mexico's growing civil society mobilization, their demands against the state and economic order, and their insistence on women's human rights within indigenous practices and customs in their own communities have created an alternative practice of cultural citizenship.

Indigenous women's organizing is characterized by the right to "difference" as indigenous people, as well as new claims to rights as gendered citizen subjects that challenge the co-option of the neoliberal state. The indigenous women's movement has supported the juridical, territorial, and cultural claims to autonomy, but it has also expanded the meaning of these claims to include women's bodily, political, and economic autonomy. Expanding the terrain of struggle for indigenous autonomy beyond rights discourse, indigenous women activists have located their own demands in a *practice* of autonomy and work toward transforming the indigenous cultural practices embedded in their daily lives, the social worlds of their communities, and within the structures of governance and jurisprudence (Blackwell 2000, 2004; Forbis 2003; Speed 2008).

My analysis draws upon ethnographic research and oral histories with the members Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas (CONAMI) (National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Women) conducted between 1998 and 2005.[1] Representing the majority of Mexico's fifty-six indigenous pueblos, the CONAMI focuses on indigenous women's human rights, reproductive health, family and military violence, and collective self-education on international and national treaties, pacts, accords, and conventions concerning the rights of indigenous

peoples, specifically indigenous women. They examine how gender and women's rights fit into indigenous legal frameworks and focus on the cultural discourses deployed in the call for indigenous autonomy. They have done innovative work expanding the boundaries of what indigenous autonomy means for women. As indigenous women, they have begun to decolonize knowledge by moving within their own indigenous epistemologies and forms of knowing while engaging and reworking official state discourses as exemplified in the demand for the right to "difference," their call for autonomy, and the rearticulation of themselves as citizen/subjects of the nation. They have called for indigenous autonomy based on traditional *usos y costumbres* (practices and customs), indigenous jurisprudence, and self-governance while at the same time critiquing and transforming those practices in relationship to their own gendered understanding of power. Linking public/private and internal/external struggles for cultural citizenship, this social movement is challenging structures, institutions, and cultural formations that are detrimental to indigenous women and their communities.

Cultural Citizenship and the State

Indigenous women emerged as new political subjects within a larger context of democratization movements that challenge the traditional corrupt channels of political representation in Mexico's corporatist political system and seek to overturn local forms of caciquismo (Hernández Navarro, 1999). The indigenous movement, as with many new social movements in Mexico, has forged new forms of political identity in order to bypass the blockages within formal channels of political representation inherent in a corporatist structure that congealed hegemonic relations of power around those old identities that have been historic clients of the state.[2] The work of indigenous women's organizing has been to articulate claims to political rights and means to social change outside of those corrupted channels of representation through both conventional modes of grassroots political organizing as well as engaging in the cultural work needed to reorient state discourses and practices.

Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Aurturo Escobar suggest that social movements "have struggled to resignify the very meanings of received notions of citizenship, political representation and participation, and as a consequence, democracy itself" (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998, 2). Elaborating on how cultural struggles are

intertwined within political struggles and how a view of these multiple terrains shapes new conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy, they argue:

> An alternative conception of citizenship…would view democratic struggles as encompassing a redefinition not only of the political system but also of economic, social and cultural practices that might engender a democratic ordering for society as a whole. Such a conception calls our attention to a wide array of possible public spheres wherein citizenship might be exercised and societal interests not only represented but also fundamentally re-shaped. The scope of democratizing struggles would be extended to encompass not just the political system but also the future of "development" and the eradication of social inequalities such as those of race and gender, deeply shaped by cultural and social practices. (1998, 2)

New social movements in Mexico have expanded traditional notions of democracy by crosscutting deep social cleavages and politicizing new arenas of struggles. As Renato Rosaldo suggests, they have "…expanded the emphasis on citizen's rights from questions of class to issues of gender, race, sexuality, ecology and age. In effect, new citizens have come into being as new categories of persons who make claims on both their fellow citizens and the state" (Rosaldo 1997, 30). Yet, it is critical to understand that movements for democratization throughout Mexico in the 1990s have also coincided with the raise of this Neoliberal state project. This is what Evelina Dagnino (2005) has called the perverse confluence between a new citizenship claimed by new social actors who have emerged to vindicate their right to have rights during the time when the state has adopted the neoliberal strategy of rolling back its role as the guarantor of those rights.[3]

Struggles for citizenship and democratization then must be understood in terms of a shift in the state's project. Verónica Schild asserts that "state projects are integrative projects and citizenship is…a powerful mechanism of integration" (Schild 1997, 605). The tangible and symbolic benefits of citizenship are key to constructing and maintaining state hegemony. Theorizing Janine Brodie's observation that "different state forms, whether they be laissez-faire, welfare, or Neoliberal, weave different meanings in our everyday life," Schild argues that the contours of citizenship are defined by the kind of regime that holds power and that changes occur within each type of regime over time (Brodie 1995, 27, quoted in Schild 1997, 605). Because the meaning of citizenship has been reoriented through the creation of a neoliberal

state in Mexico, we must view the redefinition of belonging and relations of rule in relation to this new project of political and economic hegemony.

The movement for democratization that challenged the PRI's three-quarter century rule in Mexico coincided with the rise of free trade, illustrated by cross-border trade agreements such as NAFTA as well as a rapid increase in economic globalization. Mexico's would-be democratic transition and challenge of the corporatist system has been largely usurped by the imposition of a neoliberal state project under the Salinas de Gotari and Fox administrations. Notions of citizenship or state integration for indigenous people have historically been characterized by the view of indigenous people as the "backward," stubborn roadblocks to modernization. These terms are being redefined under neoliberalism. As the Zapatista uprising starkly demonstrated, indigenous peoples have been the targets of the state's modernization and development schemes, but the promises of those programs never arrived. The uprising contested Mexico's so-called entrance into the First World and illustrated that for indigenous people "being a citizen guarantees neither full membership in society nor equal rights" (Flores 1997, 255).

The dismantling of the Ejido system under Salinas de Gotari and the end of the collective land tenure system, a hard-won gain of the Mexican Revolution, has undermined indigenous people's ties to land and economic livelihoods. The signing of the ILO Convention 169 lead to the framing of Article 4 of the Constitution, which recognizes the pluriculture nature of Mexico. While this was an important step, it had no enforcement capacity and can be seen as a concession made to the international finance community to make Mexico appear more market friendly. Acknowledging the pluricultural nature of Mexico itself, Article 4 does not recognize indigenous peoples' right to exist as peoples and serves as the window dressing of social inclusion while shrouding deep structural inequalities and persistent institutional racism.

During his presidential campaign, Vicente Fox boasted that he could solve the Zapatista "problem" in twenty minutes. His treatment of indigenous affairs revealed his attitude that 11 percent of the population of Mexico, approximately 12 million people by official count, can be treated as merely roadblocks to the further expansion of free trade agreements (INI, nd). Upon taking office, Fox created a new agency for indigenous affairs led by a handpicked representative, thereby seeming to create a channel of representation for indigenous concerns while sidestepping the indigenous movement itself. After pressure mounted from the historic Zapatista caravan in March

of 2001, which mobilized the national indigenous movement and brought 500 thousand peoples to the Zocalo, the Mexican congress did pass a new Indian Rights Bill. Unfortunately, this piece of legislation undermines the basic agreements of the San Andres Peace Accords signed by the government in 1996. Whereas the past policy of indigenismo was an assimilationist project articulated through Mexican nationalism, recent strategies that included selective co-option of the indigenous movement discourses has served to give the appearance of "rights" without the actual redress. The recent neoliberal state strategy of co-opting selected rights discourses without implementing enforcement mechanisms allows the Mexican government to align itself with supranational controls that make them compliant with international norms (Schild 2000). While the meaning of citizenship is being redefined under a neoliberal state project, both past and present state strategies rely on the ability to represent indigenous peoples while at the same time pursuing the interests of the ruling elite. Given this context of shifting relations of rule, and evidence that fifteen years after the Zapatista uprising the Mexican government seems less and less committed to meeting their basic demands, struggles around cultural citizenship are increasingly more vital as a movement strategy.

Part of why this is true is tied to the state's particularly gendered twist in its resistance to the movement for indigenous autonomy or what I have called the dual logic of racism that hinges precisely on questions of gender. At the onset of the 1994 Zapatista uprising, the state denied that it was an authentically indigenous movement due, in part, to the presence of so many women (comprising nearly 30 percent of the combatants) and the call for women's rights as codified in the Women's Revolutionary Law. On the other hand, calls for indigenous autonomy are denied precisely because the state says that indigenous *usos y costumbres* do not protect women's rights (Blackwell 2000; Forbis 2003). Aihwa Ong's crucial intervention surrounding ideas of cultural citizenship calls us to understand it not as a unilateral practice in which subjects create their own sense of belonging, rather, Ong argues that it is a two-way process of subjectification that includes how subjects come into being through the regulatory discourses of the state (Ong 1996). This essay explores how indigenous women activists came to be able to contest this claim by the state and resist the denial of their rights. It thus illustrates why moving beyond a discourse of rights to the practice of rights is so vital in the context of government recalcitrance and stalemate.

Zones of Autonomy

Describing a broad range of activities, struggles for cultural citizenship coincide with the movement for indigenous autonomy in that they include the cultural work of attaining membership, self-definition, affirmation, and empowerment. Critical to indigenous women's empowerment has been the acknowledgement that gender roles, social expectations, and life chances are culturally constructed and mediated through cultural as well as political formations. While struggles for cultural citizenship do not replace engagement with the state, scholars of cultural citizenship have claimed that the creation and claiming of cultural citizenship in some way precedes the claiming of political rights in the formal political arena (Silvestrini 1997). I argue that it is the cultural realm of everyday life where zones of autonomy or spheres of sovereignty are created.

These zones of autonomy that are constructed outside of the purview of the state are necessary launching pads for indigenous-centered claims to governance, and importantly they create an alternative sense of collective belonging outside of the dominant cultural hegemony. These zones of autonomy are important because it is within these zones of cultural sovereignty that processes of decolonization occur. It is within the zones of autonomy created by the culture of resistance, which precedes and parallels the engagement with the state, that autonomy is enunciated in social, cultural, and political terms (Chatterjee 1993). These cultural citizenship struggles thus do not replace the substantive political right to indigenous autonomy, they precede, parallel, and sustain it.

Outside of the right to exist as native peoples and cultures, autonomy has been a historical condition and a decolonizing process for indigenous peoples in Mexico. Autonomy, asserted as a legal claim of collective group rights, has been intertwined and woven with threads of Mexican nationalism. One of the more subtle and sophisticated discourses of Zapatismo, which has been echoed throughout the indigenous movement, is the way that it poses a challenge to the state while itself remaining grounded historically within the legacy of the Mexican Revolution (Carlson 1999; Stephen 2002). Jeffrey Rubin has demonstrated the importance of local zones of regional autonomy in illustrating his argument that Mexican state hegemony has not been monolithic and that these autonomous regional politics have been crucial in effectively lodging challenges to the state (1997). Indigenous regional autonomy is also the historical product of a colonial relationship—a survival strategy in which cultural forms of self-governance have remained intact and developed over time due to benign neglect or the overt

exclusion by the highly centralized apparatus of governance in Mexico. Following Rubin's study that challenged the notion of a monolithic state hegemony by studying regional movements, we can see how zones of autonomy are both historic to the reality of many indigenous communities as well as critical to the sustained struggle to increase and formalize indigenous political autonomy. Indigenous zones that have declared themselves autonomous indigenous municipalities exist in many states in Mexico, including Guerrero, Chiapas, Michoacan, and Oaxaca, some of which predate the EZLN uprising.

Yet, zones of autonomy are not just geographic zones, or tiers, or layers that coincide with scales of power that are vertically organized or whose struggles are about the externalities of power. The reason the idea of gender and cultural citizenship is key is that indigenous women are not just engaged in the externalities of power, as their organizing strategies include democratizing horizontal layers of power. They engage autonomy within the more intimate hierarchies of power, or what feminist scholars have called the internalities of power within pueblos, communities, families, and organizations (Radcliffe and Westwood 1993, 1–2). Indigenous women have in fact created their own zones of autonomy within the process of mobilization. While they participated in a movement where external rights to autonomy are claimed, that very process of mobilization created a culture of resistance in which indigenous women have called for a transformation of gendered power. They are calling for the right to difference in which formal political rights are demanded but they are also simultaneously calling for the transformation of the entire social life world. These struggles can be characterized as another aspect of cultural citizenship, a process by which communities are revitalized by the act of mobilization. While the external right to autonomy is being claimed in relation to the state, the *process* of mobilization has also created the transformation and revitalization of indigenous cultures in which women have actively participated in reclaiming and democratizing suppressed indigenous cultural formations. Through the process of mobilization, indigenous women have come to demand the right to full participation within community structures as well as the transformation of those *usos y costumbres* that excluded them.

Walking the Path to Autonomy

Indigenous women in Mexico are the new subjects of rights. They are struggling to gain a set of rights that is encompassed in the idea of

indigenous autonomy. Within the mobilization of indigenous communities, activist women have transformed the meaning of autonomy and applied it to their daily-lived experience. In the years since the uprising in Chiapas, the mobilization of indigenous peoples has continued, spread, and coalesced on the national level, and women have made themselves much more visible as actors within this movement by constructing a specific space to articulate their own demands, denunciations, hopes, and projects (Bonfil Sánchez and Marcó del Pont Lalli, 1999).

The struggle for indigenous women's rights began in relation to local and daily-lived experiences from which indigenous women organizers have struggled to become citizen subjects. Indeed, the Women's Revolutionary Law of the EZLN was not a process of feminist infiltration as some critics claimed, but a product of the local processes of resistance and women's mobilization in the EZLN. Although January 1, 1994 will always be inscribed into history as the beginning of the Zapatista uprising, the first uprising, as historicized by subcommandante Marcos, was not on January 1, 1994 but on International Women's Day, March 8, 1993, when the women of the EZLN and their base communities passed the Women's Revolutionary Law. The Revolutionary Women's Law is a product of a grassroots consultation process among indigenous women in Chiapas lead by Comandantes Susana and Ramona (Rovira 1995; Marcos 1994).

Many scholars have contextualized the Women's Revolutionary Law not just within the experience of women in the EZLN and their base communities but within a larger historical context of the shifting meaning of gender, indigenous identity, and politics (Hernández Castillo 1994b). The meaning of gender has been changing under the pressures of economic restructuring causing men and women to leave their communities, to settle in the jungle, to work in cities and areas of oil industries, and even to migrate as farm workers to other parts of Mexico and across the border to the United States (Hernández Castillo 1994a). More than rejecting "traditional" practices, many indigenous women have reinvented these practices under these new historical terms, economic conditions, and processes of social transformation (Hernández Castillo 1998) in ways that link gender justice to cultural citizenship and belonging.

The Chiapas uprising was the result of a long history of indigenous and campesino organizing. In a parallel manner, the deeply layered organizational roots of the indigenous women's movement span back decades and point to the multitude of forces that affect their lives and communities. Because indigenous women in rural Mexico have had very few opportunities and lack access to formal education, the

women active in the CONAMI discuss their prior organizing experiences as rooted within the existing routes and institutions to which they have had access, which include small-scale productive projects, rural and peasant organizations, liberation theology, and early indigenous organizations that became active at the local and regional level. Before working collectively at a national level, members of the CONAMI traveled along these varying routes of resistance, expanding them with their vision of gender. In addition to this deeper, embedded history of survival and resistance, the strength of the women's presence in the EZLN and their call for women's rights was a historic turning point and shift in consciousness that has inspired thousands of other indigenous women to speak out and build a movement.

In the months following the uprising, women met all over the region to discuss women's rights in relation to indigenous culture and autonomy. They discussed the richness of indigenous customs and practices as well as identified those that were detrimental to women's well-being. While considering the proposal for indigenous autonomy, women recognized the many positive forms of self-governance and the importance of indigenous cultural and traditional norms. They also broke with the acritical celebrations of tradition to state that negative customs that violate women's ability to fully participate in community decisions or those that undermine their dignity as women should no longer be recognized as valid cultural practices (Carlsen 1999). This transformative work led to a larger process of reflection and mobilization across the nation and the creation of specific demands for indigenous women in relation to the larger movement as well as to the state. Women and the question of women's rights were central to the San Andres Peace Accords negotiated between the EZLN and the Mexican government (Hernández Castillo and Stephen 1999). "Situation, Rights and Culture of Indigenous Women" was one of the working sessions in the dialogues between the EZLN and the government, which resulted in the acknowledgment by the EZLN of the triple oppression indigenous women face even if there was no formal statute relating to gender discrimination in the Accords.

In the following years, women participated in each of the numerous forums held by the growing indigenous movement, which created vital spaces of dialogue and construction where new proposals and forms of gendered analysis were generated from the perspectives of indigenous women. The sites of convergence and dialogue occurred at the National Democratic Convention (August 6–9, 1994), the National Indigenous Forum, and dozens of regional meetings (Santamaria 1996). Women became visible actors within the growing national

independent indigenous movement through organizations such as the Asamblea Nacional Indígena Plural por la Autonomía (ANIPA) and the founding of the Congreso Indígena Nacional (CNI) (December 16–18, 1994) and became an organized voice by forming their own women's commissions. Two days before the Third Assembly of ANIPA, two hundred and seventy women from different parts of the country and diverse pueblos came together at the Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres de la ANIPA in December 1995 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. The first national Women's Conference of ANIPA helped to shape women's demands within the call for indigenous autonomy. Taking up ANIPA's proposal for Autonomous Pluri-ethnic Regions (RAP), indigenous women organizers demanded a guarantee of women's rights within regional autonomy within the legislative initiative that ANIPA proposed, and the issue of autonomy was debated extensively (Paloma and Lovera 1999). From there, organized women began to convene their own meetings to discuss indigenous women's rights in forums such as the Seminar about Reforms to the Fourth Article of the Constitution, meetings involving in the fourth World Conference On Women in Beijing, and, ultimately, the First National Encuentro of Indigenous Women in Oaxaca in 1997, which was the founding convention of the Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas (CONAMI). Fostering discussion and debate on the customs and practices that govern indigenous women's daily lives with activists from different pueblos and regions helped to forge a shared agenda, thereby facilitating the growth of a national indigenous women's movement in Mexico.

The culmination of this first phase of organizing was the first National Encuentro of Indigenous Women held in Oaxaca in August of 1997. As the largest meeting of indigenous women in the nation's history, with the participation of over 700 women from a majority of the fifty-six Indian pueblos in Mexico, this watershed event was convened under the title "Constructing Our History." The Encuentro (gathering) was a vital step, not only did it bring together indigenous women's organizations and women's commissions within mixed indigenous organizations throughout the country together for the first time as the convening organizations, it served as a national preparatory meeting for Continental Encuentro of Indigenous Women held in Mexico City later in 1997 (Blackwell 2006).

The work of the CONAMI, since its formal founding in 1997, has focused on indigenous women's human rights, reproductive health, preventing family and military violence, and collective self-education on international and national treaties, pacts, accords, and

conventions concerning the rights of indigenous peoples, specifically indigenous women. In order to demand recognition of their rights by the different levels of government, the CONAMI educates other indigenous women on signed governmental accords, the fourth Article of the Constitution, as well as international laws and treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the work of the International Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, the International Labor Organization's Convention 169, and the Convention of Biological Diversity, among others. The organization engages in dialogue through seminars, workshops, and meetings to delineate demands against the state and cultural demands, discuss women's participation in the U.N. Decade of Indigenous Peoples, and to strategize ways of guaranteeing indigenous women's rights in the movement for the Mexican Constitutional Recognition of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CONAMI's work to guarantee indigenous women's human rights focuses on both internal and external levels of indigenous communities or in multiple zones of autonomy. On the internal community level, indigenous women's organizing has included demands for reproductive health, campaigns to prevent violence against women and interfamilial violence, a call for greater participation of women in the decision-making structures of their pueblos, a reconsideration of traditional cultural customs and practices (*usos y costumbres*) so that they do not violate women's human rights, and the right for women to inherit land or access to land in communal structures. The external level includes training and discussion of human, cultural, collective, and territorial rights of pueblos indios, the violence against indigenous women carried out by police and military forces as well as state agencies, international conventions on labor, discrimination against women, intellectual property rights, and biological diversity.

The Practice of Autonomy

Using indigenous autonomy as a shared discursive terrain, indigenous women activists have transformed autonomy into a political tool to democratize and empower indigenous women and their communities. The demand for autonomy is a larger framework comprised of a host of basic rights for indigenous people that include the right to be a pueblo, the right to land and protection of territory, the right to self-determination and autonomy, the right to cultural traditions and forms of political representation and jurisprudence, and the right to protect

and use the natural resources of the land. The indigenous women's movement has supported the juridical, territorial, and cultural claims to autonomy, but it has also expanded the meaning of these claims to include women's bodily, political, and economic autonomy. The result of these grassroots consultations discussed above is that it has expanded the framework of autonomy beyond rights discourse and has instead created a daily-lived *practice* of autonomy that is situated in the multiple spheres of sociality and politics in their communities.

I witnessed this kind of critical remapping of autonomy on August 20–21, 1999 at a national workshop organized by the CONAMI called "Indigenous Women in the Autonomy Process," which was held in Mexico City. Focused on international and national frameworks for indigenous autonomy, the meeting included representatives from Querétaro, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, Michoacán, Jalisco, and Quintana Roo. The first day focused on reviewing where and how indigenous women fit the national and international frameworks for autonomy. In preparation for these discussions, the reforms to Article Four of the Constitution proposed by indigenous women activists to be discussed at the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and copies of the ILO Convention 169 were distributed in multiple indigenous languages. There were critical discussions by women involved in existing autonomous regions such as the Zapatista regions in Chiapas, Rancho Nuevo a la Democracia in Guerrero, and San Miguel de la Laguna in Michoacán to discuss their participation in these forms of regional autonomy. After the presentations, the participants broke into working groups and began to construct a shared understanding of how indigenous women's demand for autonomy multiplies the levels and spaces of their daily lives, what I am exploring as the zones of autonomy in this chapter. Linking claims of indigenous autonomy to women's lived experience served both as the workshop's methodology and reflected a new pedagogy of autonomy that teaches and transforms the meaning of indigenous autonomy by asking women to apply this philosophical concept to their own lives. It has contributed to a new view of indigenous autonomy as a practice within the material conditions of indigenous people's lives, and it critically embeds the desire of indigenous women activists for the respect of women's rights within the revitalization of indigenous communal structures and cultural practices.

The relationship between women's rights and indigenous autonomy was also powerfully articulated at the Second National Gathering of Indigenous Women held in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, in April of 2000. Reflecting how organized indigenous women have critically

analyzed "tradition" and refused the ways in which indigenous cultures have been constructed as static and unchanging at best, or disappearing or dead, at worst, the gathering illustrates how activists have multiplied the spaces where autonomy is practiced and have inflected it with gendered demands and considerations. It illustrates how the organized indigenous women's movement envisions the expansion of zones of autonomy to encompass indigenous women's homes, communities, bodily integrity, and their self-determination of life decisions that complement the conventional modes of autonomy based on pueblos and municipalities.

After the plenary sessions, some of the most vital work of the gathering occurred during the working sessions where I heard small groups of participants discussing the practice of indigenous women's autonomy in arenas ranging from the communal control of environmental resources, to the guarding and renewal of indigenous forms of medicinal knowledge, to their own role as mothers who socialize children, to how questions of autonomy affect child rearing practices, health, and education. The critical understanding that came out of the working groups amplifies the concept of autonomy into a practice of collective self-determination for women encompassing many zones: economic autonomy (the right to land, resources, and livelihood); political autonomy (to have the right to self-governance and representation, and the right for women to participate and take leadership within decision-making bodies); physical autonomy (living without violence, the right to choose a partner, and when and how many children to bear); and social and cultural autonomy (the right to wear traditional dress and the right to reproduce and contribute to their own identities and indigenous cultures, the right to collectively sustain collective or communal structures, and spiritual practices based on their own cosmovisions).

Engendering the "right to have rights" has meant that indigenous women active in political and community organizations are learning that, in addition to the practice of consultation, they must speak out and participate in meetings and community forums. *Dar la palabra* or the practice of giving one's word is an integral practice of autonomy that has lead to transformations in how women experience themselves as community members and political actors, how they participate in community assemblies and political congresses, and how their ideas are heard. In this process of cultural recovery and renewal inherent in the debate surrounding indigenous law, women are practicing traditional customs and practices as well as transforming these practices so they include more gender equity, respect

women's rights, and challenge discrimination against women. For example, while at the Second National Indigenous Women's Gathering, I asked María de Jesús Patricio (Marichuey), a Nahautl community leader from Jalisco and member of the leadership of the Congreso Nacional Indígena, about indigenous autonomy. She told me that although autonomy seems like a new word, indigenous peoples have been practicing and living in autonomy since ancient times. Grounding the claim to rights within a vision of indigenous cultures as millions of years old, she called for the urgent recovery of traditional healing practices and medicinal knowledge, especially as an alternative for those who are rural, indigenous, and poor and therefore largely marginalized by the healthcare system (Forbis 2006). Patricio discussed how her community is working toward that goal, stating:

> We have a capacity-building and recovery project on traditional medicinal practices. We return to recover or revise what exists in these practices and learn what we have to maintain so that they are not lost because there are so many health needs in the communities and some times there is no medicine. There is an urgent need to take back our traditional medicine; it has already been displaced by other medicines. Our goal is to continue recovering this practice that is so important and above all to value our traditional practices and traditional medicines.[4]

As she shifted her sleeping baby to the other side of her body and comforted him, we continued to talk in hushed voice about her views on the debates concerning *usos y costumbres*, which often serve as shorthand for talking about indigenous women's rights in indigenous cultures.

Conclusion: Cultural Citizenship and the Struggle for Self-Representation

The critical work of changing narratives and reorienting cultural formations has been at the center of the struggle for cultural citizenship. Because the ability to have access to representation, especially self-representation, has been denied to indigenous women, there is a lot at stake in shifting the registers of meaning and signification and being able to build their own collective selves, visions, and voice. Organized indigenous women have been successful in shifting these conditions to challenge unequal power relationships within the distinct sites of power that overlap to create a matrix of domination from the home,

to community assemblies, to local forms of caciquismo, to state policies and economic programs, to contesting the identity the state has imposed on them. Shifting the conditions of enunciability that govern the material and subjective conditions of their lives (e.g., from reproductive health to traditional medicine, calls for education to international and national accords on indigenous rights), they have begun a process of cultural and democratic renewal that does not rely solely on the state to make change. Multiplying the zones in which autonomy can be practiced, indigenous women have created their own counterdiscourses and practices, renewing their cultural identities and claims to citizenship in relationship to the question of autonomy and gender.

Notes

1. I dedicate this work to the feminist, afro-indigenous activist Nellys Palomo, who suffered an untimely death in 2009. She served as an early advisor to the CONAMI and her courage and love live on in the hearts of the many she touched. I would like to thank the UC MEXUS for funding part of the fieldwork, on which this essay is based.
2. For theories of new social movements, see Mouffe and Laclau (1985). Drawing from Laclau and Mouffe, Slater's collection theorized new social movements in the context of Latin America, (Slater 1985); and for an important contribution in how movements are theorized in Mexico, see Foweraker and Craig (1990), specifically Knight's essay in that collection on historical and new identities, "Historical Continuities in Social Movements," and Lynn Stephen (1997).
3. The "right to have rights" was invoked in 1994 both by Dagnino (1994) as well as by the Zapatistas (Harvey 1998). For an earlier formulation of the right to have rights, see Arendt (1973).
4. Interview with Maylei Blackwell. Tape Recording. Conducted on April 1, 2000, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico.

Chapter Three

Black Women, Cultural Citizenship, and the Struggle for Social Justice in Brazil

Kia Lilly Caldwell

> Brazil is a democracy of voters, not yet a democracy of citizens.
> —Leslie Bethell (2000, 15)

> I insist on working on the issue of culture in order to show the outside society . . . because our community is marginalized. They think that here in Vera Cruz there are only marginal people, that there are only criminals. So with culture, with dance, *capoeira*,[1] now with the elderly, we are showing that here there are not only marginal elements.
> —Valdete da Silva Cordeiro

Maria Ilma Ricardo's and Valdete da Silva Cordeiro's life experiences and social activism exemplify the multiple levels on which poor black women struggle for full citizenship in Brazil. When I interviewed both women in the city of Belo Horizonte in 1997, they were in their fifties and had dedicated much of their lives to improving the status of poor women and children. At the time of our interview, Maria Ilma had worked in domestic service for over four decades and had been active in the local women's movement, the black movement, and the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Worker's Party, or PT) for several years. Much like Maria Ilma, Valdete was involved in multiple forms of social activism. In addition to serving as a leader in her home community, the favela Alto Vera Cruz, Valdete was also active in the local women's movement, the black movement, and the *Partido Communista do Brasil* (Communist Party of Brazil, or PC do B).

Both women's life experiences provide unique vantage points for understanding the processes of social and political disenfranchisement in contemporary Brazil. This essay examines their personal and political reflections as a basis for exploring Afro-Brazilian women's struggles for social equality and understanding the multilayered nature of citizenship in Brazil (Yuval-Davis 1999). I view their personal

narratives as significant examples of social critique and "theory in the flesh" (Moraga 1983; Moya 1996). My analysis explores the ways in which their life experiences and activism provide strategies for poor, black Brazilian women to gain empowerment and claim full citizenship in work and family relationships, as well as within the larger society.

Cultural Citizenship and New Citizenship

Maria Ilma's and Valdete's narratives highlight the difference between formal political citizenship and the cultural aspects of citizenship in Brazil.[2] Recent conceptualizations of cultural citizenship and new citizenship provide insight into many of the issues addressed in both women's narratives (Benmayor, Torruellas, and Juarbe 1997; Dagnino 1994, 1998).[3] Scholars of gender and cultural citizenship have argued for the importance of understanding vernacular expressions of lived experience in particular historical and structural contexts. As Rina Benmayor, Rosa Torruellas, and Ana Juarbe have noted, "cultural claims for equality need to be appreciated from the perspective of people themselves as social agents" (1997, 154). This view of the cultural dimensions of citizenship also emphasizes the importance of recognizing that "people themselves define their issues in accordance with their own analysis of needs," and "in doing so, people are exercising their own sense of membership and rights" (1997, 196).

Evelina Dagnino's exploration of the Brazilian transition to democracy, since the return to civilian rule in 1985, provides additional insights into the cultural dimensions of citizenship. Dagnino's (1994, 1998) work posits a view of democratization that addresses cultural change within Brazilian society as a whole, not just within the political arena. This broadened view of democratization addresses the "cultural practices embodied in social relations of exclusion and inequality" (1998, 47). Furthermore, as Dagnino notes, "In a society in which inequality is so internalized as to constitute the cultural forms through which people relate to each other in everyday life, the notion of equal rights which characterizes the idea of citizenship has to confront the authoritarian culture which permeates all social relations" (1994, 79).

Dagnino has also posited a conceptualization of new citizenship that goes beyond state-centric or legally based notions of rights. Rather than being limited to legal provisions, this conception of rights includes the "invention and creation of *new* rights, which emerge from specific

struggles and their concrete practices" (Dagnino 1998, 50). A second feature of the new citizenship involves the constitution of active social subjects through their participation in claiming and redefining rights. The new citizenship can also be differentiated from liberal conceptions of citizenship, which focus on gaining access and membership in an already existing political system, by its emphasis on citizens' involvement in defining the type of society of which they want to be members. Finally, the new citizenship is conceptualized as a "*project for a new sociability*: not only an incorporation into the political system in a strict sense, but a more egalitarian format for social relations at all levels, including new rules for living together in society" (Dagnino 1988, 52, emphasis in original). The development of a new sociability deemphasizes the role of the state and the political-judicial system by placing emphasis on the practice of citizenship within civil society.

This essay examines how Maria Ilma's and Valdete's life experiences and social activism challenge practices of social authoritarianism in contemporary Brazil. Evelina Dagnino's (1994) conceptualization of social authoritarianism is especially useful for understanding the ways in which Brazilian social and cultural practices serve to reproduce black women's subordination. As I have argued elsewhere (Caldwell 2007), Brazilian notions of social location or place (*lugar*) have played a central role in maintaining racial and gender domination. As women who have experienced social, political, and economic marginalization because of their gender, race, and class status, Maria Ilma's and Valdete's experiences and reflections provide insight into everyday practices and strategies for claiming citizenship from marginal subject positions. As an *empregada doméstica* (domestic worker) and a *favelada* (female shantytown resident), respectively, Maria Ilma and Valdete both belong to social groups that are commonly regarded as marginal members of Brazilian society. Moreover, Brazilian notions of place have traditionally consigned domésticas and faveladas to a de-facto status of noncitizens.

Maria Ilma

I met Maria Ilma Ricardo, a fifty-four-year-old domestic worker and social activist, several months into my field research during 1997 in the city of Belo Horizonte.[4] Early in my fieldwork, my friend's father suggested that I contact Maria Ilma. He was familiar with her social activism with other domestic workers and her involvement with

the PT. Based on his description, Maria Ilma seemed to be a fascinating person and I hoped to one day interview her. As a lifelong domestic worker and the leader of the local domestic workers' organization, Maria Ilma actively challenged Afro-Brazilian women's economic, political, and social marginalization. In addition to her advocacy of domestic workers' rights, Maria Ilma also attempted to enter the political arena by running for a seat on the Belo Horizonte City Council in 1996, as a candidate for the PT. Although her political bid was unsuccessful, it provided an important challenge to long-standing practices of political exclusion, by showing that a black domestic worker could enter an arena that has traditionally been dominated by elite white males.

Maria Ilma's personal and political struggles shed light on broader issues of citizenship in Brazil. In describing her work with and on behalf of other domestic workers, she highlights the need to forge a new social and political identity for them. When I interviewed Maria Ilma in 1997, she commented on her involvement with the domestic workers' organization in Belo Horizonte, stating:

> We only seek the emancipation of the domestic worker, their professionalization, their valorization. So much so that our work slogan was always "personal and professional valorization." I think that this, in the life of any human being, of any worker, this is fundamental: you first valorize the person. After, the work comes in second place, as a complement.[5]

Maria Ilma went on to describe the involvement of domestic workers and other marginalized social groups in writing the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, stating:

> When it was 1988, we participated in the constitutional process, all of Brazil... It was organized... It was us who wrote it. We gathered all of Brazil. We made our project. So much so that when I say today, that we, the domestic workers, that we have the happiness and satisfaction to say that the new *Magna Carta*, although it is not very respected, unfortunately in Brazil, we as domestic workers, black women and illiterate, *faveladas* (shantytown residents), helped to write [it]... And at the same time we have a lot of sadness from knowing that today we are not respected in terms of our rights, as human persons, or as people who work, as workers, unfortunately.

Maria Ilma's reflections shed light on the significance of political mobilization during Brazil's transition from a military regime to a

representative democracy in the 1970s and 1980s. The Constitutional Convention of 1988 provided a landmark opportunity for Brazilian social activists to influence the political process. Members of marginalized social groups, most notably women, blacks, and the poor, who had long been excluded from political power made demands on the government through their involvement in writing the Constitution (Verucci 1991). Maria Ilma's description of the groups involved in the constitutional process is noteworthy. Her mention of the participation of illiterate persons in the writing of the Constitution underscores the complex dynamics shaping the struggles for full citizenship undertaken by members of marginalized communities. In this case, people who could not read or write asserted their rights to citizenship and national belonging by influencing the creation of an official state document.

Recalling the events of 1988, Maria Ilma proudly describes how organized domestic workers confronted the Brazilian state and contributed to defining new norms for citizenship in the national Constitution. However, she draws a telling distinction between formal citizenship rights, as stated in the Constitution, and everyday practices of social inequality and exclusion. She notes that, despite their contributions to the Constitution, domestic workers continue to be disrespected and to have their rights violated. Perhaps more importantly, she notes that these violations occur against domestic workers on multiple levels, as human beings and as workers. By linking the "personal and professional valorization" of domestic workers with larger struggles for citizenship, Maria Ilma's narrative highlights the importance of exploring the informal and everyday dimensions of citizenship in Brazil.

In her narrative, Maria Ilma describes the status of domesticas and mulheres negras in similar terms. Moreover, while she does not provide an explicit racial description of domesticas, several of her comments indicate that black women and domestics share the same, or at least similar, status. Maria Ilma's description of the shared status of domesticas and black women is borne out by research, which points to the high percentage of black Brazilian women who work in domestic service (Bairros 1991; Bento 1995; Carneiro and Santos 1985; Reichmann 1995).

Maria Ilma's narrative also highlights the links between racial, gender, and class domination that perpetuate the social and political marginalization of black women in Brazil. As she observes: "We have a lot of black women of value that still have not been discovered. They are there in anonymity. No one does anything…I say this even

for myself, I say '*mea culpa*,' '*mea culpa*,' because I, as the leader of a union, I have an obligation, also, to work, to do a specific work with these black women, because we have many women of value there." Maria Ilma stresses the value of black women when reflecting on their subordinated status within Brazilian society. Much like her commentary on domestic workers, this section of her narrative suggests that black women possess an intrinsic value, as human beings, that is routinely overlooked and made invisible by larger structures of domination. This assertion challenges Brazilian practices of racial, gender, and class oppression that sanction and perpetuate the socioeconomic and political marginalization and invisibility of black women.

Maria Ilma's narrative contrasts the type of anonymity and devaluation that she sees shaping black women's lives with a more active personal and political subjectivity. Moreover, her life trajectory and political activism provide important insights into individual and collective strategies for claiming full citizenship. Her narrative demonstrates the importance of exploring domestic workers' experiences as a lens for viewing the multiple levels on which citizenship operates in Brazil. At several points in her narrative, Maria Ilma elaborates on the devalorization of domestic workers and highlights the unequal relationships of exchange that characterize the interaction between domestics and their employers. She notes:

> . . . the domestic still continues to be at the disposition of her employer twenty-four hours a day. Now, those who sleep at work suffer the most with this. Then, the employer knocks on the bedroom door and calls her at whatever hour. Then the person has to come, heat up dinner and stay until eleven o'clock at night serving dinner. Now, if the domestic were alert, she would not do this; because I don't do this, no. I don't do this at all. God gave me the night to rest. Sunday is for me to rest. So, I am not going to work, no, because divine law assures me of this. And . . . even if I don't sleep, I rest. So I think that the domestic has to gain consciousness. That is why when we talk about personal valorization . . . You have to value yourself. Because, if not, you end up entering in this paraphernalia and it damages you. . . . So, I think that the domestic has to have consciousness, including consciousness of organization. We could be in a much better situation if the domestic was organized, but the domestic, unfortunately, exchanges a lot of her value for used shoes, for used clothing, for food, for presents.

In the preceding excerpt, Maria Ilma calls attention to several key issues: first, the lack of autonomy granted to domestic workers;

second, her own strategies for establishing and asserting autonomy in her work relationships; third, the importance of domestic workers gaining consciousness of their subordinated status; and, fourth, how unequal relations of exchange entrap domestic workers. The scenario described by Maria Ilma is not uncommon for live-in domestics in Brazil. In many cases, live-in domestics are required to be on call twenty-four hours a day. In contrast to this type of oppressive living situation, Maria Ilma describes her own strategies for carving out personal space as a domestic worker. She defends her position to establish boundaries in her work relationships by stating that rest, particularly on Sundays, is guaranteed by divine law. Maria Ilma's comments also point to the importance of raising the consciousness of domestic workers regarding their rights. Her description of domestic workers accepting used shoes, used clothing, food, and presents from their employers suggests that their rights are routinely traded for much-needed material goods. As she observes:

> I think this takes a lot of value away from the domestic. I do not allow my employer to pay me less in exchange for old clothing, used clothing…If he is a doctor—in exchange for him taking my [blood] pressure and looking at these things. No, this has nothing to do with it. I think that in your work, you have to have consciousness of this work relationship. Within a house, over there, I am a worker. I am not part of the family, even though it is often said: "Fulana is part of my family." I say "No, I am not part of your family, no. Your family is all blond, with blue eyes. I am black…I am not part of your family, no. I am here to work. Now, I am your friend. You are my friend. My family, no." Because when I get old, my family is going to take care of me…So, this business about being part of the family…The domestic has to gain consciousness that the employer's house never is, never was, and is never going to be our house.

Maria Ilma's reflections resonate with Mary Garcia Castro's (1988) research on domestic workers in Bogotá, Colombia. Castro argues that social institutions committed to maintaining the institution of domestic service, particularly lay-religious centers, promote an ethic of servitude among domestic workers. This ethic of servitude is part of a larger ideological framework that is shared by domestics and their employers and that shapes the social relations that characterize domestic service.[6] Like Maria Ilma, Castro highlights the "ties of dependency" that develop between domestics and their employers (1988, 117). She notes that the provision of a room, clothes, food, and other necessities by employers serves as an in-kind wage, rather than

a salary, which keeps live-in domestics from becoming aware of their class situation.

Castro's work offers an informative and thought-provoking Marxist analysis of domestic service. Much like Maria Ilma, she notes that workers no longer allow themselves to be designated "part of the family" as their class consciousness increases. Castro's analysis also suggests that domestic workers adopt an identity "as a social being endowed with the potential to transform the labor relations as they are immediately experienced" when they identify as a member of the working class (1988, 122). Castro concludes her analysis on a highly suggestive note, by asserting: "What is bought and sold in domestic service is not simply the labor power of an *empleada* (domestic worker) or her productive work and energy; it is her identity as a person" (Castro 1988, 122).

While striking parallels can be made between Maria Ilma's narrative and Castro's research, Maria Ilma's reflections push us beyond Castro's class analysis by indicating that Afro-Brazilian women's struggles for cultural citizenship are embedded in the social and economic relations of domestic service. Drawing from Castro's assertion that domestic workers sell their identity as people in the process of selling their labor, I would argue that Maria Ilma's reflections suggest that domestic workers also sell their identity as citizens when they sell their labor. The authoritarian character of Brazilian social relations is perhaps best exemplified in the relationship between domestic workers and their employers. As a living social and cultural vestige from the slave era, domestic service reenacts and reproduces colonial practices of racial, gender, and class domination in Brazil. The status of domestic workers vis-à-vis their employers also underscores how Afro-Brazilian women's struggles for full citizenship play out in the private sphere of their employers' homes. This suggests that, for Afro-Brazilian women who work in domestic service, claims to cultural citizenship involve an unavoidable overlap between the public and private spheres.

Maria Ilma's personal and political reflections highlight the need to transform Brazilian social relations in fundamental ways in order to fully realize the promise of democracy in the country. The following excerpt from her narrative criticizes the disjuncture between formal political rights and the lack of social and cultural rights for Brazil's popular classes. As she notes:

> I become indignant, when everyone says "Ah, citizenship, citizenship." What citizenship is this? What citizen is this that lives under the

> viaduct, that faces an extremely long line there to have a doctor's visit and gets there [to find out] that they don't have a result and they don't have medicine? What citizenship is this where there are rapists, where there is impunity in everything? What citizenship is this that we are proclaiming there, that we are shouting exists? What democracy is this, where the rich is devouring (*engolindo*) the poor, the father is killing the child, the child is killing the mother, the mother is killing the child? This is what being a citizen is? This is democracy? What democracy, what citizenship is this? I think that a lot of things are still lacking. We have a lot to learn; we have a lot to work on. I think that our load (*fardo*) is very heavy. If we don't unite, we won't be able to carry it. I think that what is missing, principally, is unity. Because the Brazilian does not know what power (*força*) he has. But, we have a lot of power (*força*). Didn't we have power (força) to take [President] Collor out of there? Why can't the people have power (*força*) to do other things? . . . Citizenship! I think it's pretty for you to say . . ., "Being a citizen and whatever else." Everything for citizenship—but, for the love of God, what a lie!

This powerful social commentary by Maria Ilma highlights contemporary realities of social exclusion and inequality in Brazil. While noting the frequent use of the concept of citizenship in Brazilian society, Maria Ilma contrasts everyday practices of discrimination with more formal declarations of citizenship and democracy in the country.[7] Her observations provide concrete evidence of assertions that have been made by scholars regarding the lack of full citizenship rights for large sectors of the Brazilian population.[8] Maria Ilma's comments also resonate with Leslie Bethell's critique of the limits of democracy in Brazil, as he notes: "Can democracy be healthy, can it properly function, can it even survive in the long run, when, as in Brazil, a third of the population (some would put it much higher) live in conditions of extreme poverty, ignorance, and ill health and are treated at best as second-class citizens?" (2000, 15).

While acknowledging the widespread social injustices found in Brazilian society, Maria Ilma also highlights the potential for social change found in collective mobilization. As she notes in the preceding excerpt, Brazilian citizens must unite in order to carry out the tasks of democratizating the country and extending full citizenship rights to everyone. In her view, the ability to undertake this challenge depends upon the Brazilian people realizing the power that they possess. Using the 1992 impeachment of President Collor as an example of the power of collective action, she argues that this same power should be used to accomplish other goals. Maria Ilma's discussion of the importance of

collective action resonates with Evelina Dagnino's (1994) conceptualization of new citizenship. In her research with favela residents in the Brazilian city of Campinas, São Paulo, Dagnino found that collective mobilization led to the invention of new rights, which reflected the needs and experiences of community members. As she notes, "the notion of citizenship is no longer confined to the access to previously defined rights, but it is a historical construction whose specificity arises from struggle itself. Such a citizenship from below is not a strategy of the dominant classes for the gradual political incorporation of social integration. It requires the constituting of active social subjects, defining what they consider to be their rights, and struggling for their recognition" (1994, 75).

Valdete

One of my most poignant memories of Valdete da Silva Cordeiro is from an official commemoration of the International Day Against Racism in March 1997. Valdete and I were both invited speakers at the Belo Horizonte City Council Chambers, and we sat next to one another at the head table for panelists. When her name was called to be seated at the head table, Valdete approached the front of the auditorium with a confident stride. Her arms were held above her head and her fists were clinched in a triumphant posture. The audience applauded loudly as Valdete approached the front and it was clear that she was a well-known and well-regarded member of the community.

While I had met Valdete in her home community of Alto Vera Cruz two days before this event, seeing her within this context shed new light on her role as a community leader. By approaching the front table of the City Council Chambers as an invited speaker, Valdete represented a community that has long been shut out of the halls of power. As a *favela* (shantytown) community, Alto Vera Cruz has traditionally been assigned a marginal role within the life of the city of Belo Horizonte, spatially, economically, and politically. As a community member and leader, Valdete's presence at the City Council Chambers signaled growing hope that the formerly voiceless would begin to be heard by the powers that be.

At the time of our interview in 1997, Valdete was a fifty-six-year-old community organizer. Her life experiences provide insight into the personal and political motivations behind her activism, both within her home community, the favela of Alto Vera Cruz, and beyond.

Born in the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia, Valdete moved to the city of Belo Horizonte at the age of six. Valdete's parents died when she was a young child and she was raised by her white, middle-class godmother. As she observed:

> So, I did not know my father; I did not know my mother; I did not know family; I did not know anyone. I knew the family that raised me (*me criou*)…and, as incredible as it may seem, they never had children and always raised the children of others. But they raised me, in such a way, they did not give me…They did not teach me to read; they did not provide studies for me; they did not give me a profession; they did not give me anything. I was raised! They raised me (*criaram*), you know?[9]

Valdete's reflections on her childhood are best interpreted within the context of Brazilian racial and social dynamics. While the Portuguese verb *criar* can literally be translated as "to raise" in English, it also signifies a relationship of relative dependency in which Afro-Brazilian children are raised by Euro-Brazilian families. The multiple meanings associated with the verb criar, and related terms, such as cria and *criado/a* are illustrated by the fact that the Portuguese term criada is translated as a woman-servant or maidservant in English. The term cria is also defined as "A young Negro, born and reared (criado) in the Big House," a definition that clearly references the slave era roots of this practice (Freyre 1986 [1946], 484).

In many cases, children who are crias are raised with very little access to educational or occupational opportunities; in fact, many crias occupy a semi-enslaved status within the white households in which they are raised. Crias are often required to carry out a large number of household duties in exchange for the room, board, and other necessities that the families who raise them provide. France Winddance Twine has described the contemporary status of crias in the following terms:

> The practice of *criação* (adoption) funnels Afro-Brazilian children, particularly girls, into a life of unpaid servitude. Using Afro-Brazilian children as laborers at a young age also assumes that black children are ideally suited for menial labor rather than education.…Upper-middle-class whites whose families are currently raising Afro-Brazilian girls do not typically send these girls to primary school. They are trained only for domestic service. While their black "children" are required to work in the home, without receiving wages, their white children are sent to school and are not expected to engage in domestic chores. (Twine 1998, 37)

Valdete's godparents sent her to a Catholic orphanage when she was eleven years old. In her personal narrative she notes that, due to a lack of affection in her home, she felt more comfortable at the orphanage. As she reflects, "I lacked affection, I lacked love…I had everything, I had food, I had everything, but something was missing.…They were a different [kind of] family. They were white people. And I was the only *negra* (black female) in the house. Sometimes I heard them say: 'This negra! So on and so forth!' I did not know what was going on, but sometimes I felt it, you know?" In the same section of her narrative, Valdete connects the lack of affection that she experienced as a child with her community work, noting: "It seems to me that this work that I have in the community, was what took away a little of the…lack of affection that I felt." As an orphaned child, Valdete struggled to come to terms with crucial aspects of her identity. During her childhood she neither knew her birth family's last name nor her date of birth. Reflecting on this, she stated: "The couple that raised me (*me criou*), my godmother only knew the year that I was born. The year. Because she remembered that there was a party this year. And I was born during this year, which was 1940. But she did not know the day, she did not know the month when I was born. So, I did not have an identity, I did not have a last name." After attending numerous birthday parties for other children, Valdete decided to choose a date on which to celebrate her own birthday. She notes, "As I was growing, I must have been more or less six years old, I said 'I have to have a birthday! I am going to choose a date for my birthday.' So, I chose September 7. And I had a birthday party. I did it myself." Valdete also created a last name for herself when she registered her identity as a teenager.

Valdete was required to leave the boarding school when she was sixteen years old. Until that time, most of her friends were members of the middle class. However, she began to notice a distinction between herself and her friends once she left the boarding school. Many of her female friends were beginning to enter professional occupations, such as teaching, medicine, and dentistry. Valdete, on the other hand, was functionally illiterate and thus had limited occupational prospects. This caused her to distance herself from her friends and to begin associating with domestic workers. Valdete's friendship with domestics and her decision to begin work in domestic service led to accusations, by the family that raised her, that she was being drawn into prostitution. Such accusations were based on biased views that equated domestic work with prostitution. Like many Afro-Brazilian women, Valdete entered domestic service because she lacked other

occupational opportunities. However, as a girl, she aspired to two different careers, teaching and social work. In her narrative she observed: "I think it is beautiful (*lindo*) to be a social worker. But today, with the way my life is, with the community work that I have, I am the things that I wanted to be. I am also one more: I am also a psychologist."

When I met Valdete in 1997, she had been a resident of Alto Vera Cruz for thirty-one years and had been involved with community work and feminist activism for over two decades. Her first introduction to community organizing resulted from her interaction with members of the *Partido Communista do Brasil* (Communist Party of Brazil, or PC do B) in the late 1970s. A member of the PC do B frequently visited Alto Vera Cruz and spoke to Valdete on numerous occasions about women's rights. Valdete eventually formed a group with several other black women in the community to raise the residents' awareness of social issues. Initially, the group used theater as a means of political *conscientização* (consciousness-raising). The group's theatrical work lasted for several years and touched on relevant social issues, such as the relationship between inflation and poor families' inability to buy beans for meals. Describing Alto Vera Cruz before community residents became politicized, Valdete noted: "When I moved here, our neighborhood did not have anything. It did not have water; it did not have light . . . And with our struggle, today this is a marvelous neighborhood. And we hope that it will continue to get better."

In addition to her leadership and activism in the community at large, Valdete also devoted a great deal of her time and energy to working with senior women who reside in Alto Vera Cruz. I had several opportunities to visit the *grupo da terceira idade* (senior citizen women's group), which Valdete founded and led, during my field work in 1997, as well as during a trip to Belo Horizonte in 2000. The grupo da terceira idade played a vital role in the lives of women who attend the group, by providing a means of valorizing the experiences of poor, elderly Brazilian women who reside in Alto Vera Cruz, many of whom are black or of mixed racial ancestry. In many ways, these women are outcasts in Brazilian society. Their age, socioeconomic status, gender, and racial identity are all regarded as deficits by the Brazilian social structure.

As the leader of the grupo da terceira idade, Valdete continually pushed the limits of what type of behavior is expected of and considered to be acceptable for the group's members, by the larger society, the women's families, and the women themselves. When I visited the

group in 1997, it had been in existence for five years. By this time the group had grown to include thirty-five members who engaged in exercise and literacy classes several times a week. The group formed a chorale in mid-1997, which sang at events in Alto Vera Cruz and throughout the city of Belo Horizonte. The group's positive impact on its members was vividly displayed when I visited Alto Vera Cruz during August 2000. When I arrived at the Cultural Center in Alto Vera Cruz, I found dozens of women excitedly getting dressed in preparation for a performance at the center for a local television news program. The women's brightly colored outfits and makeup contrasted sharply with typical depictions of poor Brazilian women. While I realized that the group played an important role in the members' lives prior to this visit, my observations underscored how women had been motivated to change and take charge of their lives through their participation in the group.

Much of Valdete's effectiveness as a leader can be attributed to her ability to draw on her personal experiences, challenges, and triumphs as sources of inspiration and instruction for others. As was mentioned earlier, my initial contact with Valdete was in the context of her community activism. My observations of her activities within Alto Vera Cruz and my knowledge of her positive reputation outside of the community highlighted her confidence and effective leadership. However, when I had an opportunity to interview her, I was struck by the difficulties she faced as a child, as well as by her resolve to claim autonomy within her domestic relationship with her husband.

Valdete's interaction with members of the grupo da terceira idade often focused on encouraging individual women to develop *autoestima* (self-esteem) and claim rights in the domestic sphere (see Coll, this volume). As senior women, most members of the group had myriad familial responsibilities and obligations that often kept them in their homes, cooking, cleaning and tending to their husbands, children, and grandchildren. Even when women were away from their homes, they often worried about domestic duties that they needed to complete. Prior to entering the group, most women rarely, if ever, prioritized their own desires and needs.

During our interview, Valdete commented on how women's domestic responsibilities affected their participation in the group.[10] As she observed, "They were never able to [participate]: [They would say] 'I don't have time, I can't.' So, it was a big struggle to form this group. There were women who didn't even enjoy being here. They were always running around. When it was time to relax, we would say: 'Now, lay back and relax, close your eyes, think about good things.

Think about flowers, water'... They were not able to. They would get up [and say]: 'Goodness, I was there thinking that I have clothes to wash, my tank is full of clothes." Valdete often responded to the women's concerns about completing their domestic responsibilities by telling them that there was no set day or hour to wash clothes. She encouraged members of the group to complete domestic work in their homes when they were able to, instead of seeing the work as something that had to be done according to a strict schedule. As she noted, "they were not able to leave that work behind, as if they thought, 'I have to wash clothes today'... We tried to pass on to them: You have to forget that you have to wash clothes. The clothes are yours, you are in your house, you wash them when you want to, you are not working... When we work in a family's house [as a domestic worker], we have that schedule, that obligation; but I am in my house! So now, they are more or less learning."

A second area that Valdete identified as being a hindrance to women's participation in the group was their husbands' views of their activities. When the group first began, a number of married women worried that their husbands would object to them participating in outings and activities with the group. Valdete used her experiences with her husband to encourage other women to develop active social lives. In her narrative, Valdete contrasted her husband's acceptance of her work outside of the home with his resistance to her going out for social reasons. On repeated occasions she challenged his resistance to her having a social life. As Valdete notes, "I said, 'I am going to win, one day... I will have my rights!' So, that is to say that I was already conscious of having rights." As part of her resistance, Valdete continued to go out socially. However, her husband often followed her to see where she was going. She often noticed him hidden behind a tree or seated in the back of a bus. After following her on several occasions, Valdete's husband finally seemed to accept the fact that her activities did not pose a danger to him or their relationship.

Over time, members of the grupo da terceira idade also began to socialize more. Several days prior to our interview, Valdete attended a late-night party with several members of the group. As she was leaving her house, her husband remarked that 11:00 PM was a time when older women should be returning home, not going out. He also expressed doubts that other women from the group would actually attend the party and stated that such activities were not appropriate for older women. Valdete responded to her husband by saying, "Old is what you are becoming, *Tchau!* (goodbye)." She left the house laughing and did not return until two o'clock the following morning.

Many of the members of the grupo da terceira idade underwent positive personal transformations as a result of their participation in the group. During our interview, Valdete noted that involvement with physical exercise and recreational activities during the group's meetings had a significant impact on many group members. A number of women stopped using tranquilizers and showed a marked improvement in their mental health as a result of their participation. Several women also began to have more interest and confidence in their personal appearance after joining the group. As Valdete observed, "This is gratifying because the elderly, here in Brazil, do not have value. It is as if the elderly were a lost object, you know? . . . So, I think that what is lacking in the elderly is activity, something that they can do to valorize their lives, to show that they are people."

By promoting the development of self-esteem among poor, elderly faveladas, Valdete contributed to the psychological well-being and personal empowerment of women in her community. Her work with the grupo da terceira idade also highlights the political dimensions of self-esteem for members of marginalized social groups. Given the fact that favela residents have historically been treated as outcasts by Brazilian society, Valdete's efforts are a direct challenge to long-standing practices of social discrimination, which perpetuate a sense of marginalization, (un)belonging, and devaluation amongst the poor, particularly poor, elderly women.

Conclusion: Claiming Autonomy and Citizenship

In many ways, Valdete's attempts to encourage members of the grupo da terceira idade to assert their autonomy in the domestic sphere resonate with Maria Ilma's discussion of domestic workers carving out space for themselves in their work relationships. In both cases, each woman drew on personal experiences of resistance to subordination and used them as examples of strategies that similarly positioned women could use in their everyday lives. These strategies centered on claiming full personhood and citizenship rights in domains that are not usually considered in traditional formulations of citizenship.

As was previously mentioned, Maria Ilma's critique of the absence of full citizenship in Brazil centered on the ways in which large segments of the population continued to have their rights and, indeed, very humanity violated, despite the country's transition from military rule to representative democracy. However, she also calls attention to

possibilities for social change and the claiming of citizenship. Central to her view is the need for marginalized sectors of the Brazilian population to unify in order to collectively contest their subordination and disenfranchisement. Her reflections on the status of domestic workers also emphasize their role in empowering themselves by claiming autonomy in their work relationships. Her comments highlight the fact that full citizenship will only be achieved when those who are marginalized begin to resist their status.

Valdete's narrative highlights strategies for claiming full citizenship by women who are marginalized on the basis of gender, race, class, and age. Her experiences with members of the grupo da terceira idade centered on helping them to develop new ways of seeing themselves and the world around them. These new ways of seeing also led to new ways of being for many of the women. Changes in the group members' self-perceptions were reflected in their participation in the grupo da terceira idade and the chorale, as well in their efforts to claim autonomy in their domestic relationships and with respect to their household responsibilities. Describing some of the main issues that she raised with women in the group, Valdete noted: "This is what I try to pass on to the women.... Because the man, he has his life; yes, whether or not he wants it, he has it. He can stand on the corner and chat with his friends. He stays there. He gets distracted there. He has games, [such as] playing cards to distract him. And the woman? She has nothing! Cooking, washing, ironing, and sitting and watching television; this is not living."

Notes

This essay was previously published in *Negras in Brazil: Re-envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity*, Rutgers University Press, 2007.

I want to thank Renato Rosaldo for comments on an earlier version of this essay.

1. *Capoeira* is an Afro-Brazilian martial art. It was used as a form of physical resistance by enslaved Africans and Afro-Brazilians.
2. While the constitutional process and attempts to redefine political citizenship by Brazilian social movements have received considerable scholarly discussion in recent decades, the social and cultural aspects of citizenship and democracy have rarely been explored. For discussions of the Brazilian transition to democracy, see Alvarez (1990) and Stepan (1989).

3. Struggles for cultural citizenship can include attempts to benefit from legal entitlements, as well as informal and extralegal forms of political and cultural agency. I am grateful to Rina Benmayor for this insight.
4. Belo Horizonte is the capital of the southeastern Brazilian state of Minas Gerais.
5. Maria Ilma Richardo, interview by author, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, September 22, 1997.
6. For a discussion of the social relations of domestic service in the United States, see Romero (1997).
7. As Evelina Dagnino argues, "In recent years the use of the term 'citizenship' has spread increasingly throughout Brazilian society.... The term 'citizenship' also began to be reappropriated by neoliberal sectors and even by conservative traditional politicians, with obviously very different meanings and intentions" (1998, 47).
8. See Bethell (2000) and Dagnino (1994, 1998).
9. Valdete da Silva Cordeiro, interview by author, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, October 17, 1997.
10. Benmayor, Torruelas, and Juarbe also found that women's familial responsibilities affected their ability to participate in the El Barrio Program. As they observe, "In order to get this education, the women had to struggle against structural constraints and change daily life practices.... in their relationship with the family, they had to insist on the space for their education within the daily agenda; and in the personal realm, they had to reorganize their own priorities and time to be able to meet the demands on them as homemakers, mothers, and students" (1997, 176).

Part II

Gender, Diaspora, and Transnationalism

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Chapter Four

Inappropriate/Appropriated Feelings: The Gendered Construction of Transnational Citizenship

Federico Besserer

Convergences of Transnational and Feminist Theory

Transnational analysis has clarified two issues that have troubled migration studies. First, where migration studies attempt to explain the articulation among peoples who are geographically distant, transnational analysis reverses the temporal relation between identity and dispersal. Thus certain social formations, such as diasporas and transnational communities, perceive themselves *first* as "peoples" and *only then* seek out an explanation for the mobility of people and signs (Clifford 1994). Second, where migration studies have generally taken nations and their boundaries as given, transnational analysis has underscored the historic character of the nation, especially in the current world of rearticulation of states and the advent of supranational institutions. Transnational communities may result from changes at the level of the state and the nation that entail *no migration whatsoever*, as when borders shift, national identities are redefined, or new identities and traditions appear—complexities that classic migration studies never contemplated.

Feminist studies are converging with transnational studies on various research agendas, especially the following two. First, feminist studies have revealed the place women occupy in neocolonial discourses, especially with regard to national images that colonize women and their bodies (Grewal et al. 1994). As a result, feminist analysis has explored the place women occupy *as a standpoint* (transnational in this case) that enables them to break with various ways of colonization (Harding 1998; Sikkink and Keck 1999). Second, feminist studies of science have insisted that knowledge cannot be reduced

to objectivity, no more than subjective feelings can be ripped from the body of researchers (Harding 1996). Feminist researchers have demonstrated that *feelings* play a critical role in the *process of knowing* (Fox Keller 1983). Feelings—such as "nostalgia"—have therefore been studied in the practical construction of the representation communities such as diasporas (Stewart 1988).

In the following pages I explore how transnational analysis (depicting the stories of women who live in transnational communities) may intersect with feminist anthropology (in the study of feelings). Basing my approach on the feminist theory, I will argue that the power of the state and the family is nurtured by an *order of feelings* that sustains social inequalities. Such inequalities superimpose and concatenate in the case of women who, in addition to their gendered position of inequality, are indigenous, workers, and transnationals.

As Rosaldo (1995) has indicated, migration studies that sympathize with the oppressed are often written as "dramas," especially when description includes women. In this section I prefer to employ a more picaresque style to depict the lives of young women who live in different geographical locations in the transnational communities and who have taken on the task of changing the social relations of inequality that surround them. Using the life histories of two Mixtec women, I show how a change in their feelings played an important role in the transformation of their communities.

But first I would like to bring two issues into the foreground to avoid misinterpretations. First, we incur risk when we consider female and indigenous peoples in terms of feelings, namely, the androcentric error that indigenous people and women act not according to "reason" but only according to feelings.

I propose that the mixing of feelings and reasoning extends well beyond the experience of subordination by women and Indians. I argue that power structures (whether they flow from state institutions or more "traditional" forms of organization such as families) require a *regime of feelings* (e.g., a regime of terror) to maintain "governability." Even if the modern state presents itself as rational, its legitimization depends upon imposition of an order of feelings. It follows that resistance to power also involves both reason and feeling. In the cases described below, the feelings of the women, which were qualified as *"inappropriate"* from the masculine perspective, resulted from women's *appropriation* of rational thought (through schooling), as well as the feelings linked to rational thought (e.g., romantic love and respect). I will therefore use the dyad *inappropriate/appropriated* to refer to the feelings appropriated by the women, in violation of the

dominating regime of feelings, as part of the social change women sought in resistance to the ruling order.

The second issue needing clarification is that even male-centered regimes of power, within which women live, entail what we could call a "*struggle of feelings*." Yet those who are in power and who claim to rule by reason—asserting an "objective" approach to power—fail to recognize the subjectivity within which their exercise of power is embedded. For some who wield power, feelings are invisible, and they fail to perceive how the struggle of feelings underpins their power. For others, the structure of feelings may be visible yet organized and under control because it is ritualized. In this situation the struggle of feelings is also imperceptible.

Ritualization of power is associated with hegemonic formulas of feelings, sometimes deemed to be "reason," at other times "respect," and so on. "Inappropriate" feelings develop when such hegemonic formulas are contested. When women mobilize feelings that are "inappropriate" within an existing regime of feelings, they engage in a struggle of feelings. In my opinion, such struggle is consubstantial to social change involving both reason and feelings. Women cannot mobilize feelings against hegemonic "reason," in and of itself, because "reason" cannot be differentiated from the regime of feelings in which it is embedded. Therefore, a contest of reasons always entails a struggle of feelings, and the struggle of feelings is always inherent in contestation of structures of power.

Regimes of Feelings and Transnational Citizenship

In Mexico, several feelings have been identified as inhering in the contemporary construction of the nation. The Mexican nation has been said to revolve around melancholia (Bartra 1987). Mexican "modern" national life, family, and femininity have developed around feelings of "love," a trope that mediates between discourses while at the same time articulating them. The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe has been heralded as one of the icons galvanizing love for the nation, inspiring mother-child love, and defining a form of femininity.

Nevertheless, we can state (to paraphrase Bruno Latour) that we have never been "modern." The concept of "modern" nation has never reached completeness in Mexico because so many sectors have been left out of the very definition of what the nation is in the first place, among them (perhaps most notably) indigenous peoples.

"The nation" has been not only left as an unfinished project but may even be unattainable as an enterprise, because by definition the "Mexican nation" has been an excluding formula. This is evident in classic texts that summarize the idea of Mexico as a "Mestizo" nation (e.g., Vasconcelos 1994), to which the indigenous does not pertain except by assimilation. And, as shrewdly observed by Mónica Cinco, some sectors of the Mexican population have been explicitly denied the possibility of *mestizaje*, as in the case of Mexicans of Chinese origin (Cinco 2000).

The ideas linking the nation and romantic love in a sentimental regime thus have not operated everywhere as dominant discourse. In particular, the country's indigenous communities have traditionally placed "respect" above "love" in their sentimental regime.

Meanwhile, indigenous communities have challenged the nation by moving across its borders. Ironically, as one of my cases will illustrate, transnationalization of the Mixtepec community has been nurtured by the emergence of the feeling of romantic love. Love has been the bond of the separated couple, of the family scattered in space, and of the de-territorialized community. The more love permits the community to become de-territorialized, the less national it becomes.

The towns of San Miguel Aguacates and San Juan Mixtepec in Oaxaca have been controlled by a *cacique* system connected with power groups at regional and state level (Besserer 1999). There, in Oaxaca, "respect" was the order of feelings on which the political power of a few was based. But, as mentioned before, the people of San Miguel and San Juan also live and move in other social spaces, such as the San Joaquín Valley counties in California, United States, where they are subject to orders of feelings influenced by a political economy of racism and fear.

In these complex spaces of transnational life, migrant women cross various political systems and their respective orders of feelings, which delimit their political and citizen rights. Immersed in several regimes of respect (or disrespect), of fear, and so on, their citizenship is restricted by their double condition: transmigrant and woman.

Contemporary definitions of citizenship have expanded to embrace new rights and social conditions. Social, political, and cultural citizenship have been embraced by the concept. There is new consideration of the concept of transnational citizenship. Some theorists emphasize the complex cultural condition of migrants and suggest there is a need for a "multicultural citizenship" (Kymlicka 1998). Others argue that the advent of supra- or post-national institutions requires recognition of a nation-transcending citizenship

(Soysal 1998). In the meantime, feminist literature has critiqued the male-centered character of citizenship and the idea of a comprehensive citizenship, proposing a citizenship differentiated by gender (Young 1998).

While analysis of transnational citizenship has emphasized culture, identity, and gender, little attention has been paid to the effect of *feelings* on the construction (and limitation) of citizenship in a transnational context. Here, I intend to explore the relation between transnationality and feelings and, particularly, the role women are playing in the subversion of regimes of feelings. Such subversion is necessary for the construction of a new citizenship, I argue. Thus women's struggles have smoothed the way toward a new transnational citizenship (as I shall illustrate in the two case studies presented below). At the same time, there is risk that the integrationist dynamic of regions of continental scale (e.g., the European Union, NAFTA/TCL, etc.) could subsume or even subvert women's efforts to forge a new transnational order of feelings. Thus, for example, if the Mexican nation begins to consider itself as "diasporic" in the emergent neoliberal order, invoking feelings of "nostalgia" while maintaining emphasis on nationality, such a development could erase the advances transmigrants have struggled for in citizenship and political rights.

The Subversion of the Regime of Feelings

The sentiments of love, respect, and anger are part of the cement binding social institutions through ritual in the communities of San Juan Mixtepec and San Miguel Aguacates (from which the protagonists of my case studies come). Catholicism admonishes the population to attend religious ceremonies for love, and it calls on women to act for love, following the example of the Virgin Mary. Respect binds *compadres* (godfathers) together in all kinds of rituals and is enacted in the *parangón*, a sophisticated discursive formula that prospective *compadres* employ to express mutual respect. Ritual even institutionalizes anger, for example, when *mamalenchas* (male dancers dressed as women who participate in dances) dances in festivals, "or the *chilolo*," in Carnival celebrations so offend one another that they come to blows.

But in considering "love," "respect," and "anger" we must differentiate between a given feeling and its ritualization. Even more, as

noted by Appadurai (1990), the social drama of feelings, and the feelings that people actually experience as actors or spectators of the drama, often do not coincide. Thus the drama of "respect" can include fear on the part of the actor who plays the role of the subordinate. Sometimes the ritual of respect entails humiliation, as when the *parangón* becomes a duel of words between those who are to become *compadres*, leading one of them to humiliate the other.

Analogously, the religious ritualization of Catholic "love" in the celebration of matrimony does not necessarily correspond to the feelings of indigenous women who enter marriage out of respect for the choice of partner made by their elders. Brides often do not even know the man to whom they will be united in a relationship of respect, but not of love.

Furthermore, ritualized "anger" is not always related to "ire" as a feeling. Anger, when lived by women, is sometimes even considered the symptom of an illness. In the case of *coraje* (temper), anger can be interpreted as a feeling of inadequacy and frustration that can cause death.

Therefore, love, anger, and respect as social drama do not always coincide with love, anger, and respect as feelings. Furthermore, the feelings woman experience can be opposed to the ritualized order of feelings, constituting *inappropriate/appropriated* feelings. For example, among Mixtec women it is customary that they be "requested" as future brides at the age of about twelve. Not to accept their parents' advice as to whom to marry can be considered as "lack of respect." When a woman does not act shyly and with respect toward her parents and decides not to marry the man chosen for her and instead decides to *choose* her partner for *love*, then we have an inappropriate/appropriated feeling.

Furthermore, the woman who achieves a feeling of respect from the community toward her breaks the monopoly on respect that men hold in ritualized roles. Such feeling in the community is also inappropriate/appropriated.

Similarly, while men may justify domestic and extra-domestic violence on the basis of "anger," it is not appropriate for women to express anger when they warn their men that anger threatens their health—that *enojo* (anger), *coraje* (temper), and *muina* may cause fits, problems with lactation in nursing mothers, indigestion, and even abortion. But they do so. In other words, as in the mentioned cases, when women evoke the feeling of respect, when they are agents of anger, and when they decide to act for love, their sentiments can subvert the community's order of feelings.

Feelings, Citizenship, and the Transformation of the Transnational Community: Two Case Studies

I present two cases to illustrate how, in the struggle of feelings, two women subverted the order of feelings of their communities. First, I discuss Ana, a teacher, who opposes the male-centered formula of respect with the newly appropriated feeling of "romantic love." In this example, a new linkage of love to democracy flows from assertion of the right to "choose" and therefore to "elect" in a population where, previously, marriage and positions in a cargo system had been "designated" within a "regime of respect."

The second case concerns Teresa, who lives in the United States under a complicated system of oppression of feelings. As a Mixtec woman she was not respected by Mixtec men. She was humiliated by Mexicans and Chicanos, and the regime of feelings imposed by the police as well as the community's chiefs made her live with "shame." Teresa, who (like Ana) opposes domestic violence, gained the respect of her community and helped tie it together with an inappropriate/appropriated feeling of anger.

Ana: Love and Democracy

Ana was born in San Juan Mixtepec. She has always been rebellious, she told me. Since she was little she preferred to eat meat (a food often reserved for men) and she used to beat children at school (a rather masculine practice by the standards of the community). Ana worked as a domestic servant in a home in Guadalajara and later helped organize efforts to build a secondary school in her town. After finishing her secondary school, she was hired as a bilingual teacher in the community and joined a democratic tendency of the teachers union, which is otherwise subordinated to the former official party PRI. Ana has militated in the union's struggle in the state of Oaxaca, and has even participated in union protests in Mexico City. She is married to a migrant but has never traveled to the United States herself.

> My mother does not speak Spanish. She does not write or read; she does not know anything. But my mother understands things better than my father. (…) The things she thinks are real, she says: "that's the way it must be."

> In the past, the authorities said it was mandatory to go to school. My father got defensive and didn't let us [girls] go. He said it was too risky. . . . My father didn't give my mother any money for us to go to school. My mother used to sell eggs and poultry to support us. My father used to treat my mother very badly. He used to beat her when he was drunk.
>
> My parents were furious when I told them I was going to marry the man who is my husband now. I knew him since we were little, from school. He had been in the United States four years. He went there and then came back.
>
> My mother didn't know my father when they were married. My father knew her, but only by sight. He didn't make her fall in love with him. My mother didn't know my father.
>
> It was very difficult to persuade my father [to let me marry]. I told him: "I want him, I really love him."
>
> In the past, women were not allowed to go to the town's general assembly. But now it's different. And if men look at me in a strange way, I don't care, so long as I live happily with my husband; it is not their business.
>
> Since secondary school, we women participate in politics. Here, women are very active. "What the caciques have done to us is too much!"
>
> Here, many couples have broken up. The men go off with the Americans and often they don't come back. . . . How worthless those men are.
>
> "How could you marry such an insect?" I ask some of those women. "Because I didn't know him. My mother and father are responsible for it." They had married without knowing each other.
>
> I have also participated in the teachers' movement. I have attended marches, rallies, hunger strikes, because we want democracy. But sometimes I tell my husband: "Your political work is fine, but what keeps the community together are the things that we have done, not those promises and empty words." I tell him: "If you want democracies, here is our home, here we have to make democracy."

Until about 1970 the most common way of establishing a marriage in San Juan Mixtepec was for parents to arrange the marriage of their children while they were still very young. Girls were delivered to the family of their future husband. Only a few years later would they move into a home of their own.

Many of the life stories I heard in Mixtepec describe women being beaten by their husbands. The topic of domestic violence appears often when the narrative leads to the opening of schools in the municipality—the elementary school in the 1960s or the secondary school in the 1970s. In many cases battered wives were the ones who decided

to send their sons and daughters to school, even against their husbands' wishes.

The opening of the secondary school in the municipality introduced an important change. The story of Ana, who presently works as a teacher in the municipality, clearly shows how *romantic love* arrived on the scene when youth began to militate in defense of the educational project. It was from that time on that boys and girls were able to mingle and to get to know one another. Some, such as Ana, even decided to marry against the wishes of parents who preferred *arranged* marriages.

The young claim to have *chosen* the new way to matrimony because they were *in love*. Thus the feeling of *love* required a new concept of "person" in the community, namely, the person with *choice*. This element, necessary both in *love* and in *democracy*, was not prevalent in the community before 1960. *Love* thus articulates the community of Mixtepec in a new manner. It is part of a new code of feelings that mediates between new persons, the family, and the structures of society.

The controversial David Schneider (1969) proposed that in the United States *love* is the feeling that unites the family and the nation with "diffuse and perdurable solidarity." But in the case of Mixtepec, *love* entails different complexity, being at once a new feeling that unites the family, and the emotional cement that unites the community as it transcends the nation to become transnational.

As it turns out, the construction of the secondary school coincided with a period of increased migration in San Juan Mixtepec due to the closure of the mine that had employed thousands of men in the municipality. As migration to the United States increased, the women who stayed behind began to play a more active role in the municipality's daily life. In this context, Ana describes the ties of the extended community as based on the love relationship of couples who love each other despite their separation as contrasted to the situation of those couples who separate soon after migration because they did not choose each other. Therefore, the love that unites the family also mediates to sustain the community as it surpasses the borders of the modern nation-state.

In Ana's narration, the historic character of the feeling of love is clear. Love seems to compete with respect as mediator between the individual and the community. In the past, *respect* used to be the emotional cement supporting both the selection of people for public office and the articulation of kinship—between parents and children as well as between husband and wife. The 1970s brought on a

struggle of feelings that permeated both the political system and kinship in the community. From then on, love began mediating relations within separated families. And it shared with democracy the principles of choice or selection as the basis for both marriage and political participation in the community.

Teresa: Respect, Gender Violence, Shame, and Anger

Teresa was born in Mexicali, Baja California Norte, one of the many locations of the transnationalized community of San Miguel Aguacates. When she was very young, her family moved to Tijuana where, in the care of her grandmother, she sold chewing gum and begged for money on the streets. Before Teresa was twelve years old, her family moved again and went to Farmersville, California. There she went to school for the first time and learned Spanish and English. She was the first member of the transnational community of San Miguel to finish high school. After finishing school she moved to Los Angeles where she took up work as a secretary in a law firm.

When she was twelve years old, a family from San Miguel living in Farmersville, California, had requested her as bride for their son. "The elders brainwashed me," she said, "because they always call on the elders to advice the young girl." Teresa managed to break off the engagement, but doing so was difficult. She did not want to get married. But how to say no? How could she violate the "respect" she should show her elders? She explained her reasons for not wanting to engage in matrimony as follows:

> I don't mind marrying someone from my community, but I don't want to live such a life. I already suffered as a girl, and going back to suffering is not what I want. Women get up at three or four in the morning, they make lunch to go to work, sometimes their husbands beat them, they begin having children and even go to work pregnant. I did not like that.

Teresa shows us the coexistence of "respect" as a practice toward men, with "abuse" as a practice toward women. Respect in the community does not stop domestic abuse, precisely because "respect" as a ritual does not necessarily imply respect as a feeling. Respect often involves fear and humiliation. "Respect" and abuse do not exclude each other.

Teresa deems as "shame" (vergüenza) the predominant feeling indigenous women experience when they are not being respected. Shame flows from living under constant humiliation. Teresa explains how the Mixtec girl and woman experience the "lack of respect" as a situation that is reinforced and deepened due to their multiple condition of subordination, as women, as Indians, as Mexicans, as part of the rural population, and finally for their poverty. "I began to perceive the humiliation," Teresa said of her early years as a street child, "in the streets of Tijuana where people called me 'Maria' with despise."

When she entered school in Farmersville her Mestizo schoolmates—or "Mexicans" as the Mixtecs say—used to call her "Oaxaquita" scornfully. The Chicanos offended her by calling her "Wetback." After finishing high school, Teresa traveled to Los Angeles and found a job as a secretary.

> Just as some people dream of working in the White House, to me working at McDonald's was like working at the White House. That's what I used to think. Because to me it was like something impossible to achieve…The way I grew up I saw no other option but working in the fields…

Soon she returned to Farmersville in a brand new car, with a well-paid urban job, that is, with those things that would confer respect to any man from other men. And she herself was treated with respect by the men—an inversion of the order in which women must show respect for men.

Although Teresa had won the respect of the men of her community, she soon realized that humiliation did not cease. Teresa described the hierarchy of feelings within the offices in Los Angeles and Farmersville:

> I saw that the executives in Los Angeles felt very important and always tried to trample down the secretaries, as if secretaries were nothing. I didn't like it, and I quit because I didn't want to go through it again. I arrive here (in Farmersville) being a secretary, but even so I am not respected because here they told me "You need a degree to become a receptionist, a bachelor's degree or five years of experience." These people who grow up in Tulare County are still very racist. Therefore I said "No, I better go back to Los Angeles."

On November 5, 1993, the police entered a housing compound in Farmersville on the pretext of following a criminal. It was in fact a

roundup in which the police requested migration papers from the Mixtecs. All those who could not prove they were in the country legally were detained. There was violence during the roundup, and among those arrested where several Mixtec high school students.

Teresa commented that the scene caused her grandmother to wake up suddenly and fall ill with "fright," dying in a hospital a month and a half later. By that time, Teresa had started studying at the California State College in Fresno. She recalled her feelings:

> "We left for Farmersville to see what had happened. We arrived. They had taken away a cousin of mine, and the police took away a boy, a student. I got very angry when I heard he was a student."

With her studies, Teresa had gained the inappropriate feeling of respect from men toward her, transforming the community's order of feelings. This time, her inappropriate/appropriated feeling of anger as an indigenous woman facing institutionalized violence helped her expand the concept of community, challenging the boundaries of ethnicity and nationality that both built on and sustained an order of constant humiliation against her people. She used anger, an inappropriate/appropriated feeling for the Mixtecs in the United States, to challenge what had happened and to form a new community of feelings.

Teresa began her protest by convoking Chicano students organized in MECHA. She also went to *Radio Bilingüe* in Fresno and asked for support. And she went house to house in Farmersville to organize a demonstration against the police. As the demonstration wound down, the police provoked them:

> The police started pushing people. And I said to one (a policeman) "Hey! What are you doing?" And he started threatening me, why I had done that—"You'll see what happens." And that they were going to beat me up, that's what he was saying. And before I got off the bus he called me "wetback." I also called him something, I gave it right back to him.

Teresa was arrested. When she was being taken to the police station the policeman driving the patrol, surprised by Teresa's inappropriate/appropriated behavior and the way she subverted the police's internal order, commented:

> "Is it true that you beat them?" "No," I replied, "Why should I beat the police? He is a liar. I'm a woman. I wouldn't even try" I know that

> that policeman is feeling like a hero. He wants fame, because this all happened in Farmersville.

Although she was set free a few days after her arrest, Teresa's process of appropriating feelings and using them to controvert the existing order continued for several months.

> My generation…We used to be ashamed of being Indians or Oaxaqueños. We felt shame. It was deeply humiliating for us.

But this feeling of humiliation changed. After the demonstration, the Mixtec population of Farmersville mobilized and founded the committee *Unidad y Justicia* (Unity and Justice). Teresa was named president. Immediately, the committee filed a complaint against the county police. *Unidad y Justicia* built upon a new structure of feelings that allowed the community a new expression: anger had taken the place of shame. Respect toward women had opened up the possibility of a new condition of citizenship for the Mixtecs from San Miguel in California.

When her grandmother died, Teresa accompanied her family to San Miguel Aguacates in Oaxaca for the funeral. Teresa told me what she saw there:

> (The women) of my town don't even raise their voice towards their husbands. But some said "Look, my cousin is a cabrona, she fights back." And I heard that many of them support me. And at the same time, what I did is opening doors to other women so that they can continue studying and don't lag behind.

Final Remarks

Transnational Mixtec communities are undergoing change, in which transformation in the order of feelings plays a central part. Romantic love, the anger of women, and the feeling of respect toward women were not part of the hegemonic order of feelings in these communities before the transformation. Women's appropriation of these feelings has brought about political change by linking love to democracy through the practice of choosing/electing. Replacing shame and humiliation, anger has been the trope mediating between the women and their transnational communities, generating new forms of citizenship. Women are participating in public life in Oaxaca and in the larger geography of the community as never before. They are militating

for new rights of transnational citizenship, grounded in an underlying sentimental change.

The change in the sentimental order entails a new definition of what community is. In the past, a male-centered regime articulated the community around a sentimental glue known as "respect," maintaining women's shame and humiliation as necessary and complementary feelings. A new sentimental order is emerging based upon inappropriate/appropriated feelings such as anger and love. This new sentimental glue binds couples, families, and the transnational community however far apart they may be in space.

The change has not been smooth but rather results from contestation at many levels. At the level of rational debate there are intellectual disputes over the direction the community should take, as well as sharp political conflict over how the transnational communities should be organized. But the struggle goes on first at the level of practical knowledges based upon opposing sentiments. Those who see the community as bounded by a feeling of love have come to perceive it differently from those who see it as based upon respect. Their insight flows from their angry rejection of humiliation imposed by a regime of respect. From anger, argument flows into the rational debate for a new order legitimated by choice.

The cases described are just two in the struggle in which many women undermine the silent power of the hegemonic orders of feelings. But these cases exemplify how a new transnational practical knowledge, of what the community is and should be, builds daily upon inappropriate/appropriated feelings such as temper, respect toward women, and love—shaping a necessary step on the road toward a new transnational citizenship.

Chapter Five

Transgressing the Nation-State: The Partial Citizenship and "Imagined (Global) Community" of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers

Rhacel Salazar Parreñas

Dispersed among a multitude of industrialized nations, migrant Filipina domestic workers have come to constitute a diaspora—more precisely, a contemporary female labor diaspora.[1] A particular result of global restructuring, this labor diaspora is a product of the export-led development strategy of the Philippines, the feminization of the international labor force, and the demand for migrant women to fill low-wage service work in many cities throughout the world. As numerous nation-states rely on the Philippines to supply domestic workers and provide care for their populations, the globalization of the market economy constructs the Philippines as a nation gendered female.

Globalization also prompts the denial of these women's full citizenship in their countries of settlement,[2] resulting in the partial citizenship of migrant Filipina domestic workers and other low-wage migrant workers.[3] Partial citizenship broadly refers to the stunted integration of migrants in the receiving nation-states, which in the case of women is demonstrated by discriminatory measures that deny them their reproductive rights. An admittedly extreme case, pregnancy, for instance, is prohibited for migrant Filipina domestic workers under contract in the Middle East and Asia (Alcid 1994; Chin 1998; Lan 1999). In the global economy, the relegation of reproductive labor to an increasing number of migrant women not just from the Philippines but also other traditional sending nations, for instance Mexico, makes partial citizenship quite a paradox for low-wage migrant women workers. These workers reproduce the citizenry of various receiving nations at the cost of the denial of their own reproduction (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1995).

This article examines the contradictory positioning of migrant Filipina domestic workers vis-à-vis the nation-state in globalization. It illustrates the constitution of their partial citizenship and analyzes their negotiation of this subject positioning. "Contradictory regulatory practices" of nation-states constrain the integration of migrants (Alarcón, Kaplan, and Maollem 1999, 11). In the case of migrant Filipina domestic workers, these practices include measures against family reunification, restrictions to live-in domestic work, and the imposition of temporary settlement on overseas labor contracts.[4] For these women, partial citizenship is embodied in the shared experience of extended separations from families left behind in the Philippines, the lack of protection in domestic work, and the insecurity of a "guest worker" status.

My discussion of partial citizenship begins with a discussion of the publication *Tinig Filipino*, which is my primary source of data.[5] I continue with background information on the constitution of the Filipino labor diaspora. Then, I examine how globalization imposes the subject positioning of partial citizenship. Lastly, I analyze the double turn that migrant Filipina domestics take against their experience of partial citizenship—the construction of the Philippines as "home" and the construction of an "imagined (global) community" (Anderson, 1983). In taking this double turn, they emphasize both their nationalist and diasporic identities, thus simultaneously reinforcing and transgressing the nation-state.

Tinig Filipino

Tinig Filipino is a glossy monthly magazine that was once published in Hong Kong and Italy and distributed in more than a dozen countries. While the widespread circulation of *Tinig Filipino*, which is approximately fifty pages in length, points to the existence of the Filipina diaspora, the competition posed by *Diwaliwan*, another glossy monthly multinational magazine, reinforces the established presence of this diaspora. In contrast to *Diwaliwan*, which frequently covers entertainment news in the Philippines, *Tinig Filipino* offers its readers a forum for dialogue, as migrant workers themselves write most of the articles and commentaries in this magazine.

Tinig Filipino is a private enterprise owned by American investors in Hong Kong but run exclusively by its Filipina editor Linda Layosa. Prior to working as an editor, Layosa had been a domestic worker in Hong Kong. She started writing for *Tinig Filipino* in 1990, when she

was invited to write a column based on an article she had submitted for publication. In 1991, with sales down, the owners of *Tinig Filipino* turned to her for help with their fledging year-old publication. Upon being given free reign to run *Tinig Filipino*, Layosa completely restructured the magazine's format and distribution. *Tinig Filipino* does not employ staff writers. Instead, it has an open invitation for Filipino migrants and their families to submit articles, opinion pieces, poetry, and short stories. Domestic workers write most works in *Tinig Filipino*, which indicates that they comprise a large portion of Filipino migrants. Most articles are written in English. Only a very few appear in Tagalog or Tag-lish (a hybrid of English and Tagalog). The dominant use of English is not surprising considering that migrants have a high level of educational attainment. Not financially compensated to write for *Tinig Filipino*, writers, I assume, are motivated by their need to address their experiences and social issues. In fact, *Tinig Filipino* usually has a backlog of submissions. The distribution of *Tinig Filipino* is also community centered and based; individuals work on commission and use their social networks to sell the magazine in migrant communities.

Considering the unique format of *Tinig Filipino*, topics that it regularly covers can arguably be seen to represent the social realities of migrant Filipina domestic workers. Indeed, a close reading of the magazine is a gateway to their world. In *Tinig Filipino*, the most regularly addressed issues concern transnational family life: that is, the difficulty of raising children from a distance; work difficulties pertaining to employers and government regulatory agencies; migration laws; and the general trials of women, particularly with their love life. In doing a close reading of the issues published between October 1994 and May 1996, I often felt as though I was listening to a conversation among migrant Filipina domestic workers, as the magazine regularly features reader responses to previously published articles and commentaries.[6] For instance, there is a continuous debate among readers on whether children who are left behind by migrant mothers are "abused." Most seem to feel that they are. There is also an ongoing consensus among readers that underemployment—that is, their experience of downward mobility from their professional jobs in the Philippines to domestic work—is a painfully excruciating experience.

For this article, I closely read seventeen issues of *Tinig Filipino*. To understand the relationship of migrant Filipina domestic workers to the nation-state, I examine articles and commentaries that express their views on the political economy of their labor and the politics of their settlement. To establish that migrant Filipina domestic workers

address their social issues in *Tinig Filipino*, I also focus my close reading on discussions of the workplace and see whether they extend to the level of the nation-state.

The Filipina Diaspora

The outflow of women from the Philippines represents one of the largest and widest flows of contemporary female migration. As the quintessential service workers of globalization, Filipino women provide entertainment, child care, elderly care, and companionship to men and families around the world. According to nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines, there are approximately 4.5 million Filipino labor migrants, 60 percent of them being women (Rimban 1999, 128).

The Filipino diaspora constitutes two distinct gendered flows. Women migrate to destinations with a greater demand for entertainment and service workers, and men are usually channeled into areas with a greater need for heavy production and construction workers (Tyner 1994). Consequently, the gender makeup of Filipino migrant populations in various nations is highly incongruent: men comprise the majority of Filipino migrants in the Middle East, and women far outnumber men in most other destinations. One survey indicates that in 1996 women comprised 83.3 percent of Filipino migrants in Hong Kong, 77.1 percent in Singapore, and 78.3 percent in Italy (Republic of the Philippines 1999).

In the diaspora, the labor market distribution of Filipina migrant workers varies according to host government policies and level of immigrant integration. Professional women are concentrated in the United States (Pido 1986). Filipino migrant women in most other destinations, such as Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, are segregated in low-wage service work. There is also a concentration of Filipino women in sex industries, for instance in Japan and the Middle East (Sarmiento 1991). A staggering number of Filipino women have also entered Australia and other countries, including Germany, Finland, and Norway, as brides of former "pen pals" (Tolentino 1996).

The Partial Citizenship of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers

With the relocation of manufacturing production to less-developed nations, the demand for low-wage service workers has increased in

both advanced capitalist and newly industrialized countries. In post-industrial nations such as Italy, the growing professional populations in global cities rely on low-wage workers to provide an array of reproductive services such as baby care and domestic work (Sassen 1988). In newly industrialized countries such as Singapore, production activities in these economies subsume the traditional proletariat female workforce who would otherwise perform low-wage service jobs such as domestic work (Chin 1998). A larger number of migrant women have responded to this demand for low-wage service workers.

However, globalization stunts the political, civil, and social incorporation of low-wage labor migrants—that is, both male and female—in as much as it increases the demand for their labor. Receiving nations curb the integration of migrants so as to guarantee their economies a secure source of low-wage labor. By ensuring that the costs associated with reproduction and child rearing are contained within the sending countries, wages of migrant workers can be kept to a minimum; that is, migrants do not have the burden of having to afford the greater costs of raising their families in host societies. Moreover, by restricting the incorporation of migrants, receiving nations can secure their economies a supply of low-wage workers who could easily be repatriated if the economy is slows.

Although globalization imposes partial citizenship on both male and female migrants, this experience is made doubly ironic by the denial of reproductive rights for women, who not only contribute to the economic growth but also perform the labor associated with reproduction and child rearing in the receiving nations. For instance, the contradiction of having the responsibility of caring for class-privileged families and being unable to nurture their own families magnifies the restricted incorporation of migrant domestic workers.

Migrant Filipina domestic workers do indeed share the experience of partial citizenship. In various destinations of the diaspora, they are not protected by labor laws and are left vulnerable to the exploitation of employers, including sexual harassment and abuse, excessive work hours with no overtime pay, and substandard living conditions. For example, the imprisonment and confinement of domestic workers in the home of employers is a common case among those housed in the shelters for migrant Filipina domestic workers in the Middle East and Asia (Alcid 1994). As unwanted citizens, they are also relegated to the status of temporary settlers whose stay is limited to the duration of their labor contracts. Usually, contracts bind them to stay with their sponsoring employer. In Hong Kong, for instance, domestic workers who flee abusive employers automatically face deportation

proceedings due to the stringent legislation imposed for foreign domestic workers in 1987 (Constable 1999). Further sending the message that only the production of their labor is desired and not the reproduction of their lineage, nations such as Singapore prohibit the marriage or cohabitation of migrant Filipina domestic workers with native citizens (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997a). Finally, state policies in various destinations, for example Taiwan, deny entry to the spouses and children of the migrant domestic worker (Lan 1999).

Accounting for the nuances engendered by differences in government policies, partial citizenship comes in different degrees and levels of exclusion. More inclusive than the receiving nations in Asia, Italy allows guest workers to stay for as long as seven years instead of just two years like in countries such as Singapore. Moreover, permits to stay in Italy do not restrict the employment of migrant domestics to the sponsoring employer (Campani 1993). Finally, temporary residents have been eligible for family reunification since 1990. Nonetheless, migrant Filipina domestics are still restricted to the status of "guest workers," like they are in most other countries of Europe. With heightened anti-immigrant sentiments in Italy, the basis of citizenship is unlikely to become more inclusive and allow permanent settlement for this racially distinct group. As a result, most migrant Filipina domestic workers prefer not to petition for the children whom they have left behind in the Philippines.

Eligibility for full citizenship is available in a few receiving nations including Spain, Canada, and the United States. In Spain and Canada, migrant Filipina domestic workers are eligible for full citizenship after two years of legal settlement. Despite the seemingly more liberal and inclusive policies in these nations, political and social inequalities, as Abigail Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (1997a) have pointed out using the case of Canada, still mar the incorporation of migrant Filipina domestic workers. In Canada, the Live-in Caregivers Program requires an initial two years of live-in service before foreign domestics can become eligible for landed immigrant status. At this time, it restricts these workers to the status of temporary visitors, denies the migration of family, and leaves them prone to face abusive working conditions. Without the protection of labor laws granted to native workers, migrant domestic workers in Canada—the majority of whom are Filipinos—have fewer rights than full citizens.

Partial citizenship is also imposed on migrants in the liberal United States, where Filipina migrants, though in a much lesser degree than in other nations, have also been known to enter domestic work (Hogeland and Rosen 1990). While the United States accords full

membership to its legal migrants (e.g., they can eventually gain citizenship and the right to participate in the host polity), the global trend of the renationalization of politics also threatens the integration of migrants in this country. The United States has attempted to enforce stricter regulations on migrants, such as ineligibility for social security to the elderly and the denial of public services to undocumented migrants in California. The belief that migrants burden the economy and drain government services has raised public resentment against migrants (Martin 1995).

By highlighting the shared dislocation of partial citizenship among migrant Filipina domestic workers, I wish to point out that globalization initiates the constitution of parallel realities among them across different settings. I do not intend to suggest that globalization has an overarching effect, but that it impels the confrontation of similar issues of migration among workers in similar economic locations.

The Philippines and its Unprotected Migrant Citizenry

The "opposite turns of nationalism" place poor nations with export-based development strategies in a quandary. On one hand, the "denationalization of economies" compels these nations to provide low-wage labor and extend their range of exports to include workers. On the other hand, they are unable to protect their exported nationals due to the "renationalization of politics." Even so, the labor diaspora is a particular effect of globalization that is promoted by the Philippines despite the growing threat of nonprotection on its migrant citizens. This is because of the economic gains brought by the deployment of labor.

Remittances of deployed workers sustain the Philippine economy with the smooth flow of foreign currency. Without labor migration, the rate of unemployment would increase by 40 percent (Castles and Miller 1998). Remittances amount to the second biggest source of foreign currency, next to electronics manufacturing. As a result of these gains, the government, in a speech given by President Corazon Aquino, has created the iconic representation of its mostly female overseas workers as the "modern-day heroes" of the nation. The construction of the positive imagery of migrant workers as "heroes" without doubt promotes the process of emigration. The iconic representation of overseas migrant workers, however, comes not without other costs for the state. The sovereignty of the Philippines diminishes

with its inability to protect its overseas nationals. For example, the failure of President Ramos to personally convince Singapore's prime minister Goh Chok Tong to reopen the investigation of the case of Flor Contemplacion, who was convicted of murdering another Filipina domestic worker, Delia Maga, and her young ward, did not only cause national embarrassment but also brought to the forefront inequalities underlying the relationship of the sending and receiving nations in globalization: the lesser economic power of the sending nations vis-à-vis that of the receiving nations means lesser political power for the former. Consequently, the sending nations of secondary-tier workers cannot protect their overseas nationals. The Philippine government is caught in a deleterious situation: it deploys workers around the world to generate foreign currency while it simultaneously lacks strength to protect citizens working in richer nations. Though international human rights codes may declare the rights of transnational citizens, the fate of migrant Filipina domestic workers is for the most part dependent on the receiving nation-state.

The Construction of the Philippines as "Home"

Filipina labor migrants consider the Philippines to be "home," the "place where they really belong" (Pelegrin 1994, 7). Just as transmigration scholars have observed of other migrant groups, Filipina domestic workers turn to "home" to negotiate their racially segmented integration (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). But, more generally, they do so to negotiate their experience of partial citizenship. In doing so, they reclaim their Philippine nationalist identity.

In *Tinig Filipino*, the word home has become synonymous with the "Philippines." In fact, *Tinig Filipino* frequently promotes return migration by featuring stories of successful return migrants. The Philippine government and the various nations that receive its migrant workers most likely applaud the promotion of return migration. For the Philippine government, the construction of the Philippines as "home" guarantees the smooth flow of foreign currency on which it depends in the denationalization of economies. For the receiving nations, it supports anti-immigrant sentiments brought on by the renationalization of politics.

Although the Philippines is referred to as "home," new ties to the receiving country undeniably form in migration. A mother who, after four years in Hong Kong, wants to go "home for good" to her husband

and children in the Philippines asks, "But why…is it hard now to leave this land of milk and honey? Am I one of those who fear to go back to our country for good?" (Villaruz 1995, 62). It is not surprising that migrant Filipina domestics do not go home even though they articulate the desire to do so. Many, for instance from Hong Kong, actually renew their overseas contracts multiple times (Constable 1999). Women hesitate to go back home not just because of poverty. Research on various groups of migrant women indicate that women achieve a certain degree of gender liberation upon migration, because of their greater contribution to household income and greater participation in public life (Kibria 1993; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Like other migrant women, Filipina domestics fear that returning home will diminish their advances. As the editor of *Tinig Filipino* observes, many view migration as a "temporary relief" from their marriages.

> In my casual talks with lots of fellow women overseas contract workers especially the married ones, I found out that there seems to be a certain common factor that binds them—that leaving their families for overseas gave them temporary relief from the sacrifices that go with their marriage. Others are blunt enough to share that their main reason for coming abroad is not merely to earn money but to escape from their bitter relationships with their husbands. (Layosa 1995, 7)

Having been "partially liberated from the anguish of their day-to-day existence with their families" (Layosa 1995, 7), women are less pressed to return home than are their male counterparts are, as their status declines upon return (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994).

Though many do not return home, migrant Filipina domestic workers do in fact still view the Philippines as their rightful home. As such, discussions in *Tinig Filipino* about the political economy of their labor solely concern their economic contributions to the Philippines. With very few exceptions, they do not in any way regard their labor market participation as having provided economic benefits to host societies. Ironically, the receiving countries are usually seen as benevolent nations that have provided "blessings" and "opportunities," which are not available in the Philippines and for which they believe they should be grateful. In contrast, critiques of the Philippine government and its economy abound in *Tinig Filipino*, and the recurring discourse regarding home concerns the contradictory relationship that migrants have with the Philippine economy as laborers who are displaced from this same economy that flourishes from their displacement.

The cynicism of Filipino migrants especially shows in critiques of their representation as the "new economic heroes." Articles in *Tinig Filipino* indicate that Filipina domestic workers are aware that they are displaced from an economy that labels them as heroes yet know that they are not rewarded for their heroism. Veronica Plandano, a domestic worker in Hong Kong, states:

> We are called the living heroes or the new heroes. Yet why are we called "heroes" when we are slaves in other countries. Oh, OCWs [overseas contract workers]—the heroes without monuments…Why does the government, instead of supporting our college graduates and youth and pushing them to strive in our country, actually allow them to leave the country yet without any sufficient protection as citizens? Country…When can you finally provide us with a peaceful and simple life. (Plandano 1995, 60)

Disheartened by the inability of the Philippine government to protect its heroic citizens, Plandano asserts that the heroism of migrant Filipina domestic workers comes at the cost of their underemployment and "slavery," an image that conveys their lack of authority in the emotionally demeaning and physically demanding occupation of domestic work.[7]

The agency of migrant Filipina domestic workers emerges in their criticisms of the Philippine government. Not only reflecting their nationalist identity, these critiques indicate that migrant Filipina domestic workers practice their political rights. The sense of entitlement that they have gained from their position as the "economic heroes" of the nation has reinforced their nationalist identity and empowered them to speak for and against their government. However, discussions have yet to acknowledge the fact that the economic woes of the Philippines are situated in a larger global economy. The fact is that most of their remittances goes to cover the $1.8 billion of annual interest on loans accumulated from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Rosca 1995).

An "Imagined (Global) Community" of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers

Many migrant Filipina domestic workers cannot go "home" to end their dislocation of partial citizenship. For one, the dependence of their families on their foreign earnings deters them from going home.

Unable to return home, migrant Filipina domestic workers cope with their partial citizenship by transnationalizing their nationalist identity as migrant Filipina domestic workers and forging the creation of an "imagined (global) community." By constructing a community that transcends the nation-state and at the same time builds from their nationalist-based affiliation with those similarly displaced from their homeland, they foreground the formation of a contemporary female labor diaspora of migrant Filipinas in globalization.

Providing migrant Filipina domestic workers a source of support against their partial citizenship, the existence of an "imagined (global) community," using Benedict Anderson's conceptualization of the nation, reinforces the presence of similarities in their lives. Their imagined global community emerges, in part, from the simultaneity of their similar experiences as domestic workers across geographic territories. A Filipina domestic worker in Rome may imagine the similar conditions faced by her fellow workers in Singapore, London, and Dubai. Migrant Filipina domestic workers are only able to conceive of a global community because of the similar impacts of global processes in their lives. These similar experiences function as the premise of their community from which they carve a symbolic transnational ethnic identity as Filipino diasporic subjects. They are what Stuart Hall refers to as "narratives of displacement," meaning the historically and culturally grounded conjunctures that define the subject's positioning in larger structural processes (1988, 45).

The imagined global community of migrant Filipina domestic workers does not emerge solely from the sharing of experiences or conjunctures such as partial citizenship or the experience of family separation, but it comes from, borrowing the words of Michel de Certeau (1984), the creation of continuously traveled "bridges" across geographic territories ("frontiers") in migration. As Arjun Appadurai (1996) notes, imagination is not a fantasy that can be divorced from actions. This imagined global community is constituted by circuits, like the one identified by Roger Rouse, as tying together the sending and receiving communities of migration into a singular community through the "continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information" (1991, 14).

Migrant Filipina domestic workers maintain transnational projects that connect the Philippines to various geographical locations. As servants of globalization, they perceive their sense of community to envelop the diaspora. Thus, the circuits that tie their community together function multinationally. They are not restricted to a binary flow that is directed solely to and from the Philippines. First,

the circulation of goods occurs in a multinational terrain. In Europe, ethnic goods circulate to connect multiple migrant communities with the shipment of Filipino products from the Philippines to the United Kingdom and only then to other European nations. Moreover, multinational ethnic enclave businesses have sprouted up with franchises of remittance agencies in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America. Philippine bank-sponsored remittance centers such as Far East Bank-SPEED and PCI Bank compete with carriers such as LBC across continents. Although money does not usually circulate between migrant communities, remittance agencies represent collective locations among geographically distanced migrant workers. Second, nonprofit organizations create multinational networks to provide support services for members of the diaspora. For instance, the Kanlungan Center Foundation, a nonprofit service and advocacy organization in Manila, maintains network associations with Abu Dhabi Round Table in the United Arab Emirates and the Asian Migrant Centre in Hong Kong.

In addition, transnational family ties of migrants are not limited to the Philippines. The families of the following women vividly show that migration creates multinational households in various forms. Ruth Mercado works in Rome, while her eldest sister is a barmaid in Switzerland, her brother is a tricycle driver in Manila, and her other sister is a provider of elderly care in Saudi Arabia. Her retired parents stay in the Philippines, where they depend on the remittances sent by their children from three different nations.

Finally, magazines that cater to Filipino labor migrants provide another solid evidence of a circuit that links multiple migrant communities. The distribution of *Diwaliwan* and *Tinig Filipino* in at least a dozen countries around the world signifies the presence of a diasporic community from which these magazines profit, and which in turn is perpetuated by their circulation of information (to say the least) across geographic borders. As print language created the "imagined community" of the nation in the 1800s, it now provides a tangible link connecting migrant Filipina domestic workers in the formation of an imagined global community. A vehicle for creating the notion of a global community and instilling "in the minds of each . . . the image of their communion" (Anderson 1983, 6), the magazine *Tinig Filipino* aptly describes itself as the "Linking Force around the World." Available at the same moment in different national contexts, *Tinig Filipino* circulates throughout the Middle East, Asia, and Europe to tie multiple localized migrant communities of Filipina domestic workers into a singular global community.[8]

Tinig Filipino is arguably a gateway to the world of its primary audience of migrant Filipina domestic workers. Titles of articles reflect some aspects of their social realities. While the title "I Want to Go Home but Where is Home?" suggests the jagged process of settlement in migration, the title "The American Dream" tells of the construction of the United States as the ideal destination of migrant Filipinos, a legacy of the colonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines. Other titles address family and work related issues. For example, the title "Isang Kontrata Na Lang Anak" (One More Contract, My Child) insinuates the recurrence of family separation in migration. The common use of the English language and frequent references to canonical literary figures, such as William Shakespeare and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, reveal readers' high level of education. Imagine my surprise when I encountered a Shakespearean quote, "Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt." Though first surprised, I soon realized that these quotes simply reflected the high level of educational attainment in the diaspora.

The significance of *Tinig Filipino* is that it enables workers—isolated domestic workers—to reach each other cross-nationally and cross-continentally. These workers use *Tinig Filipino* to highlight their collective struggles as transnational laborers. As in any imagined community, differences do exist in the global community of migrant Filipina domestic workers. They, for instance, represent different classes, age groups, and regions in the Philippines. However, in the making of their imagined (global) community, the need to find support in the diaspora transcends these material differences.

The existence of a narrative discourse in *Tinig Filipino* shows us that migrant Filipina domestic workers do have many unifying realities from which they can form their imagined (global) community. It is thus important to emphasize that *Tinig Filipino* is able to circulate not because of the wide dispersal of migrant Filipina domestic workers. Instead, the magazine circulates because these workers have unifying social realities that are engendered by their migration and settlement processes. These social realities are the points of convergence from which migrant Filipina domestic workers are able to conceive of an imagined (global) community. The imagination of this global community is based on a "deep horizontal comradeship" that is grounded on the creation of a "set of shared symbols, common events, and a secular 'cross-time' temporality promoted by a print vernacular" (Bates 1999, 26).

Letters to the editor indicate that reading *Tinig Filipino* creates a sense of camaraderie among geographically separated workers. Julie Lopez, a reader in Hong Kong, writes:

> We are all aware that many of us Filipinos work around the world. With our great efforts, we created and published Tinig Filipino International magazine which makes us aware of the facts of life we don't even know they exist [*sic*]. Through correspondence, we could publish the life experiences of our fellow Filipinos in other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, France, Italy, London [*sic*], and many more. Through this way [*sic*], we are able to unite and educate all Filipinos abroad. (*Tinig Filipino*, July 1995)

Readers of *Tinig Filipino* take credit for its creation and circulation because they themselves write the articles that the magazine publishes. Thus, Lopez, who has written an article for *Tinig Filipino*, can claim that she along with other migrant domestic workers are those who "publish the[ir] life experiences." Lopez recognizes that, without the efforts of migrant Filipina domestic workers, such as herself, to submit articles that speak of their "narratives of displacement," *Tinig Filipino* would not exist. More than a hundred migrant Filipina domestic workers actively participate in the open forum of *Tinig Filipino*. By featuring the life experiences of migrant Filipinos in a multitude of nations, *Tinig Filipino* consequently instills a diasporic consciousness among its readers.

Tinig Filipino represents a transnational site of gathering that forms imaginary, yet at the same time real, allegiances from which migrant Filipina domestic workers may draw support in their everyday struggles in the workplace. For instance, the diasporic consciousness engendered by *Tinig Filipino* affectedly acts on the level of the corporeal. In a letter to the editor, Gina Cortez writes:

> I could say that *TF* [Tinig Filipino] is a magazine that heals because when I read all the contents of this magazine, every thoughts and feedbacks of my compatriots are the same as mine [*sic*]. We are really lucky to have *TF*, which gives knowledge not only academically but also we gain knowledge about the way of life of other compatriots all over the world…During my work routine, I try to glance at it and read it as much as possible so that my fatigue [*sic*] body seems to get relaxed [*sic*]. And when I do this, it seems there's no need for me to apply cream on my aching back. (*Tinig Filipino*, November 1995)

Providing comfort at work, the magazine simulates the imaginary movements of immobile domestic workers across the multiple

confinements imposed on their geographic location, from the walls of private homes to the borders of nations.

The intercontinental dialogue fostered by *Tinig Filipino* strengthens the sense of a multinational community in the Filipina diaspora inasmuch as it functions as a base for emotional support against the isolation of domestic work. For instance, many give credit to this magazine for helping them counter "homesickness" and "loneliness":

> I have read your very interesting magazine…I found out that it can help a lot to those who are fighting homesickness and loneliness like me…(Esther Balanga, Brunei, January 1995)
>
> Being away from our beloved Motherland, [Philippines], is so difficult. We can feel such loneliness and homesickness for our loved ones we left behind. But by having a hobby of reading *TF* Magazine, our loneliness vanished [*sic*]. We feel home…(Ailyn Manaday, Italy, November 1995)

It is striking to observe similar claims among domestic workers in locations as distant as Italy, and Brunei. "Loneliness" and "homesickness" are two central narratives of displacement that are frequently addressed in *Tinig Filipino*. By bringing to the foreground these narratives of displacement, *Tinig Filipino* helps migrant Filipina domestic workers learn of their shared experiences with counterparts in other parts of the world.

A teacher by training and profession in the Philippines, Linda Layosa, the editor of *Tinig Filipino*, sees her job mostly to entail guiding the transnational dialogue among migrant Filipina domestic workers. Describing the philosophy of the magazine, she states:

> It's a reader's magazine. I want everyone to participate…Why not give light reading to the overseas contract workers? At the same time, inform them, entertain them, educate them…I wanted the workers to write the stories themselves. Even the simplest people have stories to tell, stories from the heart. It's important that they are involved, personally involved. I want their lives to be told by them. That's all. I tell them they are the soul and the heart of the magazine. That gives them the pep and inspiration. They are the superstars of the magazine. (Layosa 1996)

Without imagining it as such, perhaps, domestic workers write articles in the spirit of Paulo Freire's concept of "problem-posing education" (1970). In contrast to "banking education," which deposits knowledge to passive recipients, "problem-posing education" enables individuals to "develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world

with which and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (Freire 1970, 71; emphasis in original). Filipina domestic workers, as the oppressed, are conscious beings who cannot be told what problems are important to them as they themselves "inform, entertain and educate" each other of the issues that are relevant in their lives.

One of these issues concerns their workplace struggles. Every issue of the magazine features numerous stories describing experiences of overwork, maltreatment, and inhumane living conditions. One such story is that of Rosalie Vista, who writes:

> My employer's family consists of 11 persons and I served them all. They dictated to me everything that I should do. I had to wash the clothes with my hands twice a day, do all the household chores and I had to look after the baby as well. With all sorts of work for me to do everyday, I had to wake up very early at about 4:30 in the morning. At nighttime, I had to sleep very late…I could not stand the way they treated me…They all easily got angry with the slightest mistakes I did. How they scolded me? Well, they just shouted and insulted me—a very typical way of treating a household helper of long ago. (1995, 30)

Many articles in *Tinig Filipino* establish that migrant Filipina domestic workers are often at the behest of their employers. As such, they are highly prone to an exploitative work environment.

Domestic workers often advise one another to cope with this abuse.[9] Rosalie Vista continues her story:

> With all the things that happened, I just cried out of self-pity but I never uttered any word against them. I gave my respect to them as they were my masters. With all the hardships I encountered working with that family, I still managed to stay with them for three long years. When I left, they told me that they would always remember my kindness and that I was always welcome to work with them. So you see, kindness softens a heartened [*sic*] heart. (1995, 30)

Domestic workers such as Vista usually end stories of abusive working conditions with advice to tolerate them. *Tinig Filipino* however does not condone abuse. Yet such advice does suggest that awareness of abuse does not automatically translate to a consciousness of human rights and does not necessarily invoke agitation, but instead, may generate passivity.[10] As *Tinig Filipino* informs domestic workers of their low employment standards, it also reminds domestic workers of their limited economic and political power. Thus, the passive attitude of

"we know we are abused, but we cannot do much about it" that is found among the writers of *Tinig Filipino* stems from the consciousness of their limited power as isolated migrant domestic workers, who as such have to eventually turn to the imaginary community of the diaspora to find support in the workplace.

This attitude emphasizes the construction of foreign servants as having no rights to complain. Why do they promote such a compliant attitude? First, they consider themselves guests of the state, fortunate enough to be given jobs more financially rewarding than those available in the Philippines. Second, as they see themselves as sojourners, they convince themselves that the conflict that resistance would generate may not be well worth its gains. Third, as readers are always reminded of the difficulties that they have left behind in the Philippines, they concede to the inequalities determining their situation, because they would much prefer to be "transnational actors" rather than be left "immobile" in the Philippines. Thus, tolerance emerges from the fact that their position as low-wage migrant workers reaps benefits that would otherwise be unavailable in the Philippines. Consequently, the political potential generated by the creation of the global platform of *Tinig Filipino* remains a potential at most among these women, who still construct themselves primarily as individuals with minimal resources and support to transform the conditions in the workplace.

Conclusion

Migrant Filipina domestic workers are located in a multitude of industrialized countries around the globe. As such, they have come to represent a diaspora, a contemporary labor diaspora of female migrant workers. In this article, I have shown that members of this diaspora are at most partial citizens of the receiving nations. The need for low-wage labor in more developed nations in the global economy generates this subject positioning. Receiving nations curb the integration of migrant Filipina domestic workers so as to secure a source of low-wage labor. In doing so, they do their part in promoting the continued development and maintenance of the unequal relations between the sending and receiving nations in the global economy. So as to guarantee the smooth flow of foreign currency into its economy, the Philippines also promotes the curbed integration of their migrant workers. This is despite the fact that it cannot offer these workers the rights granted to Philippine citizens.

As partial citizens, migrant Filipina domestic workers have forged the creation of a community that transgresses the nation-state. Their imagined (global) community forges the ground for the transnationalization of their identity as gendered and racialized low-wage migrant workers whose incorporation into any nation-state is stunted by the processes that place them in these nation-states. This diasporic identity is one that builds from their nationalist identity, as it is based on the allegiance that develops from their displacement from "home." Moreover, these two identities are mutually reinforcing, as both underscore this displacement.

The position of partial citizenship, as it is a conjuncture that the structural processes of globalization produced, is not particular to migrant Filipina domestic workers. We can assume that it is shared by other groups of low-wage workers whose migration is similarly demanded in globalization. They include male labor migrants, such as Mexican farm workers in the United States and African day workers in Southern Europe, as well as other female labor migrants, including other groups of domestic workers such as Latinas and Caribbeans in the United States, Sri Lankans in Greece, and Indonesians in other Asian countries. As partial citizenship is a central basis for forging the creation of an imagined (global) community, the sharing of this narrative of displacement leaves the promise of the expansion of this global community to include other groups of secondary-tier migrant workers in the global economy.

Notes

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1. *Diaspora* refers to the dispersal of groups of people from their homeland. The term has come to mean more in recent years. For instance, it also refers to the dual loyalty of migrants to the host society and homeland. Migrant Filipina domestic workers fit both concepts of diaspora.
2. By citizenship, I defer to T. H. Marshall's meaning of " 'full membership in a community,' which encompasses civil, political and social rights and responsibilities" (Yuval-Davis 1991, 59).
3. The first turn—the "denationalization of economies"—refers to the multinational production and circulation of goods, labor, and finance. The second turn—the "renationalization of politics"—refers to increasing sentiments of nationalism.
4. For examples, see discussions of Bakan and Stasiulis (1997a and 1997b) on Canada, Constable (1997) on Hong Kong, and Yeoh, Huang, and Gonzalez (1999) on Singapore.
5. In Tagalog, the word tinig means voice; thus, *Tinig Filipino* translates to *Filipino Voice*.
6. My close reading includes almost all of the issues published from October 1994 to July 1996. A few back-issues prior to May 1995 were unavailable from the publisher.
7. As I noted, the Philippine government attempts to provide migrant workers with support services such as free legal assistance through OWWA. Nonetheless, these workers are still subject to the greater authority of employers and the stringent policies of many host societies.
8. Quarterly publications of nonprofit organizations such as the Kanlungan Foundation Center's *TNT: Trends, News, and Tidbits* also circulate multinationally to various local community advocacy groups in the diaspora.
9. Constable 1997 also observes that the discourse of work in *Tinig Filipino* never transcends the level of the personal responsibility of the domestic worker. Advice to improve work conditions always falls on the shoulders of the domestic worker. As such, Constables sees *Tinig Filipino* as a mechanism of self-discipline.
10. An ironic underside to these stories is that other domestic workers in similar working conditions may be better able to tolerate abusive working conditions due to the emotional support given by the knowledge that they are not the only ones who are exploited at work.

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Chapter Six

Queen of the Chinese Colony: Contesting Nationalism, Engendering Diaspora

Lok Siu

All the beauty contestants had performed their roles brilliantly—parading gracefully across the stage several times, modeling their national[1] dresses and variations of traditional Chinese gowns, and performing their respective national dances. They had introduced themselves in Spanish, and sometimes Cantonese and/or Mandarin. Finally, they had offered their eloquent responses to the questions asked by the master of ceremonies. The audience of diasporic Chinese from Central America and Panama anxiously waited to hear the final decision of the judges.

Half an hour went by, then an hour, then two. The banquet hall by now was only half full, with about one hundred restless people energized by gossip and suspicion. Why were they taking so long? What was the problem? Finally, the MC took the podium and announced: "La Reina de La Colonia China" (The Queen of the Chinese Colony)[2] for 1996 was Miss Honduras. But before Miss Honduras could reach the stage, the vice president of the Convention interjected and announced that there had been a mistake—that, in fact, Miss Costa Rica was the winner, not Miss Honduras.

The audience was confused. They looked around at one another, not knowing how to react, wondering what to make of what had just happened. Judging from the looks on their faces, I could see that this was not a common outcome, that something had clearly gone wrong.

Then, suddenly, out of this confused silence, a man in his sixties angrily marched onto the stage. The contrast of his angrily flushed face with his graying hair and formal dark gray suit attracted the crowd's rapt attention. Without a moment of hesitation, his body rose as if preparing for battle and he passionately unleashed a tirade, denouncing what had just happened: "This event is supposed to be a joyous celebration for all those attending this convention. Why do you newcomers insist on betraying the spirit of this convention and

break the community in this way?" As reflected in this scene, the contest for the "Queen of the Chinese Colony," held each year as part of the Convention of Chinese Associations of Central America and Panama, is not just about beauty, femininity, or friendly competition. The fact that the contest evokes such passionate interest suggests that other issues are at stake. As anthropologists Cohen, Wilk, and Stoeltje have argued, "[b]eauty contests are places where cultural meanings are produced, consumed, and rejected, where local and global, ethnic and national, national and international cultures, and structures of power are engaged in their most trivial but vital aspects" (1996, 8). Richard Wilk proposes that, as sites where multiple struggles for power and representation are publicly debated, beauty contests mediate difference in order to produce a "structure of common difference" (1996). He adds, "the process of judging beauty is always a process of negotiation, a process of reconciling difference or at least accepting the terms of the disagreement" (1996, 117). But what happens when there isn't an agreement or even an acceptance of the terms of disagreement, as in the case I described here? What does the disputed result of this beauty Queen of the Colony tell us about the tensions and contradictions within the Chinese diaspora in Central America and Panama? What does it tell us about the cultural politics of diaspora more generally?

Focusing on the beauty contest and the Convention in which it takes place, this article is drawn from a larger project that examines the diasporic citizenship of Chinese in Panama. During thirteen months of field research in Panama City, Panama, I conducted interviews and life narratives with diasporic Chinese there. I did archival research, participant observation, and followed groups of Chinese as they attended transnational conventions in different cities in the Americas. The convention in which this beauty contest took place was one of them. In August of 1996, shortly after I arrived in Panama, I traveled with eighty-four Panamanian Chinese by plane to San José, Costa Rica, to attend the three-day annual Convention of Chinese Associations of Central America and Panama. Approximately two hundred diasporic Chinese from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama attended. The participants were mostly men and women between the ages of forty and eighty. A few brought their children who were in their teens and twenties; together, the youth consisted of no more than thirty people and was evenly divided by gender. In addition, about thirty embassy officials representing the Republic of China in Taiwan (ROC) were present. Providing a transnational venue for diasporic Chinese and the ROC

officials of this region to reaffirm their ties with one another, the three-day convention, held at a hotel, sponsored official meetings, cultural performances, and a beauty contest. This essay, then, is based on participant observation and interviews I conducted during this three-day convention in San José, Costa Rica.

In this essay, I show that gender is a critical site through which Chinese in Central America and Panama contest, forge, and reaffirm or challenge diasporic identifications. In particular, I examine the convention and the beauty contest as a microcosm of the Chinese diaspora in this region. While I illustrate how gender difference is structured into the convention, I argue that the beauty contest reflects the broader social conflicts and cultural struggles taking place among the diaspora. In making this argument, I show that even though this convention (and along with it, the beauty contest) seeks to establish and renew the dispersed communities' mutual support for one another, it is nonetheless fraught with conflict and power struggles. Indeed, what is at stake in the beauty contest is the struggle for diasporic citizenship, or for full belonging within the diaspora. By mediating debates about diasporic Chinese femininity, the contest seeks to establish the criteria for idealized diasporic subjectivity, criteria against which belonging in the diaspora is measured. In this sense, the contest provides insight into the process of community formation among diasporic Chinese in this region by showing how they negotiate their differences and unequal power relations. By studying the dynamics within and across dispersed communities of diasporic Chinese, this project extends analysis of diaspora beyond the simple binary of "nation of residence" and "homeland." Instead, I underscore the relations among diasporic Chinese across different nation-states as they simultaneously forge a regional Central American collectivity and engage the homeland state. Indeed, the contestants' varied presentations reflect not only the tension between their emplacement in specific national contexts and their ongoing engagement with Chineseness but also the differences within the region of Central America. Overall, their performance helps mediate these different vectors of identification—national, ethnic, and regional—in debates of belonging and cultural identity. My aim in this essay, then, is to illustrate how the Chinese in this region negotiate and struggle to define diasporic citizenship within and through the beauty contest.

In the discussion that follows, I highlight two key interventions of my project—gender and cross-national analysis—to diaspora studies. Then, I offer a brief overview of the Convention of Chinese Associations in Central America and Panama, before I examine in detail the 1996

beauty contest and the two contested queens. The final section turns specifically to Panamanian Chinese and examines their interpretations and responses to these debates.

Beyond the Homeland/Diaspora Binary: Gender and National Difference in Diaspora

In its simplest formulation, diaspora refers to the condition of a people who share a common "homeland," real or imagined, and who, either by force or by choice, are dispersed to at least two different locations. Diaspora most commonly points to "the doubled relationship or dual loyalty…to two places—their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with 'back home'" (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996, 15). It is precisely this dual relationship, this tension between "where you are at" and "where you are from" (Ang 2001; Gilroy 1990; Hall 1990) that constitutes the experience of diaspora and that gives diasporic identifications the potential to be empowering as well as disempowering. In a sense, diaspora embodies a third space where the "here and there," "now and back then" coexist and engage in constant negotiation, and it is within this time-space continuum that diasporic subjects interpret their history, position themselves, and construct their identity.

The Chinese diaspora has its distinct set of histories and complex relations with the Chinese "homeland." Three particular factors—China's immense presence in the global political economy, China's image as the "Other" in the Western imagination, and the symbolic construction of China as the cultural and geographical core of "Chinese identity"—together exercise an extraordinary pull on diasporic Chinese to always look toward China for sources of identification and a sense of belonging (Ang 1994, 2001). While these sources of identification can provide a sense of pride and serve as tools for empowerment, they also can reconfirm the "impurity," the "lack," and/or the "inauthenticity" of diasporic Chinese. Measuring "Chineseness" by one's imagination and romanticization of cultural China and, at the same time, recognizing the cultural difference that is informed by one's current location fuels the questions and debates over what constitutes "Chineseness" in diaspora (Louie 2004; Wang Gungwu 1994; Wang Ling-Chi 1994). The Chinese in Central America and Panama are grappling with these same issues. As we

shall see, the debate about who should be queen captures this ongoing tension.

With few exceptions,[3] most diaspora studies have limited their focus to the dual relations or identifications with the nation of residence and the homeland (Axel 2001; Louie 2004; Raj 2003). In the case of diasporic Chinese, while it is certainly true that both the Chinese homeland and the nation of residence exert tremendous cultural-political influence, it is also important to recognize the interactions and relations within the diaspora, as there are a number of formal and informal channels that facilitate the formation and continuation of transnational ties. What is particularly interesting about the beauty contest and the convention is that it compels an examination of cross-national dynamics within the diaspora. As a site where diasporic Chinese from different nation-states come together, it offers a unique opportunity both to explore the internal workings of a geographically dispersed diaspora and to delineate the differences between these communities. Certainly, diasporic Chinese are not a homogenous or harmonious group (Ong and Nonini 1997; Ong 1999); distinctions in status and influence, not to mention divergent expressions of cultural identity, are evident within the diaspora (Tu 1994).

While this project builds on the work of Paul Gilroy, whose brilliant analysis of the Black Atlantic traces the circulation of expressive culture among blacks in the United States, Britain, and the Caribbean (1993), it also departs from it by focusing on how diasporic subjects actually engage in local negotiations of cultural identity and diasporic belonging. What becomes evident in the beauty contest and the convention in general is that there is tremendous difference and power asymmetry among the Chinese of this region. For instance, Panamanian and Costa Rican Chinese yield more influence and have higher status than the others because of their nation's relative wealth, the size of their Chinese population, and their ability to speak Chinese (Cantonese and/or Mandarin). Jacqueline Brown, in her analysis of black Liverpool and black America, shows a similar dynamic of power asymmetry within the black diaspora; she suggests that unequal power relations between Britain and the United States influence diasporic blacks' translation and utilization of cultural resources from these two locales (1998). While Brown examines how the power imbalance between those two sites influence diasporic blacks' interpolation of their associated cultural resources, my research is concerned with how power difference among the nations of Central America and Panama affect constructions of idealized diasporic

Chinese identity and shape notions of diasporic belonging. Indeed, by shifting focus to the dynamics among diasporic communities located in different nations, this essay makes visible not only the heterogeneity and unevenness within the Chinese diaspora but also the process by which they negotiate and rework their diasporic relations.

By now, critiques of diaspora as being inherently androcentric and hetero-normative have shown that gender is an important site of analysis in the study of diaspora (Brown 1998; Eng 2001; Gopinath 1995; Helmrich 1992). Using gender as a category of analysis (Scott 1999), I will examine the beauty contest and call attention to women's agency in constructing diasporic identifications. Recent studies of women in diaspora have focused on their labor migration and political participation. An excellent example is Rhacel Parreñas's study of Filipina domestic workers, in which she documents the formation of a global diaspora that is driven by women's labor migration (2001). Also, Nina Glick-Schiller and George Fouron's study of Haitian transmigrants in the United States illustrates how gender, implicated in nationalist constructions, influences women's participation in long-distance nationalism (2001). My aim in studying the beauty contest is to show how women exercise agency in less expected places and that even in the most restrictive arenas, such as a beauty contest, women can disrupt and revise dominant notions of femininity (Banet-Weiser 1999; Cohen et al. 1996; Johnson 1997). Significantly, the beauty contest is the only part of the convention in which women are expected to assert their identities and opinions publicly, even as it uses the trope of woman as social and cultural reproducers of the nation/diaspora at the same time that it reifies heterosexuality (Cohen et al. 1996; Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). Though the contestants must work within the structure of the contest, they nonetheless have creative license to shift established norms, offer new versions of what it means to be diasporic Chinese, and provoke discussion about their performances. Judith Butler's formulation of performativity and parodic repetition is particularly useful here in understanding how these contestants—through gestures, subtle movements, and comportment—can both affirm and destabilize dominant constructions of diasporic Chinese femininity and diasporic Chinese identity in general (1990). If, as Butler proposes, identity is normalized through repeated performance, then we can also assume that performance has the power to disrupt and revise identity. According to Butler, this ability to disrupt "depends on context and reception in which subversive confusions can be fostered" (1990, 139). In other words, the potential to disrupt hegemonic constructions of identity lies in the intersubjective space

between performance and reception. Disruption, hence, is highly contingent and relies heavily on audience interpretation. To fully grasp the controversy that erupted in the beauty contest or, put in another way, to understand the specific context in which the performance and the reception fostered "subversive confusion," I suggest that we must examine the debates in relation to the broader concerns of the regional diaspora. In this sense, I approach the beauty contest as both a window onto and a reflection of the anxieties and social conflicts of the diasporic Chinese of Central America and Panama.

Overview of the Convention of Chinese Associations of Central America and Panama

The Convention of Chinese Associations of Central America and Panama (Convención de Asociaciones Chinas de Centroamérica y Panamá) is run by an organization with the same name, and its participants include diasporic Chinese from Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Given the paucity and unevenness of scholarship on the Chinese in the region, it is difficult to provide any substantive comparative analysis. Suffice it to say that these Chinese communities reflect the diversity and complexity of their respective nations. What we know in general is that the Chinese have been in this region since the mid-nineteenth century (Cohen 1971; Huesmann 1991; Siu 2005b), although the specific ebbs and flows of their migration vary from nation to nation and depend on the particular conditions of the time. Also, according to the 1997 Overseas Chinese Economy Yearbook, Panama had the largest community of Chinese, with an estimated population of 103,500. Meanwhile, Costa Rica had 47,000; El Salvador had 18,000; and Guatemala had 16,800. Although no estimates were available for Honduras and Nicaragua, it is safe to assume that the Chinese populations there were much smaller. My own research indicates that in countries where there was prolonged political and economic instability, Chinese emigration was much higher and the flows of immigration, much lower.

This organization of Chinese Associations in Central America and Panama was founded in 1965, amid intensifying regional instability, by the presidents of the six national Chinese Associations of this region. The responsibility of hosting the convention rotates from one national association to another, so the site of the meeting changes

from year to year. For instance, in 1996, it was in Costa Rica; the year before, it was in Panama; and the year after, it was in Nicaragua. A few years after the organization was established, the Association leaders sought financial help from the ROC embassies in order to make it a permanent institution of the diaspora. Since then, the organization has become a joint venture between diasporic Chinese of this region and the ROC government, thereby solidifying both their symbolic and social-political ties.[4] According to the Chinese Panamanian Association President, Alberto Lee, the organization was conceived as an annual meeting that brought together community leaders to discuss and strategize around economic and political issues confronting their communities. Their initial intent was to create a transnational organization that would provide additional resources and support beyond what was available within the borders of their nation-states.

Given that these Central American countries have been relatively poor and—until recently—politically volatile, it was understandable that diasporic Chinese of the region would pool their resources on a transnational scale to form a safety net for themselves. The fact that most Chinese have experienced persecution in Central America (and throughout the world)[5]—and because they could not rely on the Chinese state for protection—motivated the formation of this organization. Their intention was to create an apparatus that would help ensure the safety and survival of diasporic Chinese when and where their nation-states failed to protect them. For instance, during the Sandinista Revolution, when Nicaraguan Chinese who had supported the Somoza regime were being systematically captured and imprisoned, the organization raised funds and lobbied government officials on their behalf. As a result, a number of them were able to escape to other parts of Central America. The organization has also provided relief funds for victims of natural disasters and scholarships for underprivileged Chinese. The organization thus serves as a supranational structure that pools together their collective resources and offers protection and support to all those in the regional diaspora. By participating in it, diasporic Chinese both operate and perceive themselves as part of a larger regional community in addition to their respective national community. The diaspora and the nation-state, hence, do not oppose but in fact reinforce one another. Diasporic Chinese not only are embedded in the system of nation-states but also are constituted partially by the conditions within those nation-states. In other words, the marginalization of diasporic Chinese, manifested in their lack of cultural and legal-political acceptance in Central America and Panama, has everything to do with their desire to maintain ties with

a distinct "homeland" and to form transnational organizations that create "safe spaces" and a sense of cultural and political legitimacy. At the same time, because diasporic Chinese continue to identify strongly with their nation of residence, the framework of the nation-state continues to structure this organization (and others like it).

As the convention evolved, it began to broaden its agenda. In 1971, six years after the founding of the organization, the annual convention was expanded to include women and youth. Alberto Lee explained that one of the main reasons for their inclusion was the leaders' realization that more attention needs to be paid to nurturing the next generation of diasporic Chinese. With the increase of exogamy or interracial marriage and the decrease of Chinese immigration—due both to the closing of Chinese borders after the Chinese Communist Revolution and the region's political and economic instability, Lee and the other leaders were concerned that diasporic youth were losing their sense of cultural distinctiveness and identity. By sponsoring more Chinese cultural performances, initiating the beauty contest, and bringing the youth in contact with others in the region, the leaders of the organization actively encouraged the cultural and social reproduction of the Chinese diaspora. In fact, the convention cultivated generations of diasporic Chinese, facilitated identification with the larger regional community, and enabled the continuation of social and cultural ties across the region. In expanding its political agenda to address the social and cultural concerns of the diaspora, the organization now operates not only as an apparatus that overseas the collectivity's political and economic well-being but also as a mechanism that reproduces the Chinese diaspora in cultural and social terms.

The Beauty Contest: Performing Diasporic Identifications with Ethnicity and Nation

Throughout the convention, the beauty contestants were at their best. They knew all too well that their performance began the moment they arrived and that they were judged not only on their onstage presence but also on their overall demeanor and comportment throughout the convention. Since the beauty contest took place during the last dinner banquet, people by then were already familiar with the contestants, and many had chosen their favorite. What follows is a discussion of the various categories of the beauty context, with a particular focus on the two contested queens, Miss Costa Rica and

Miss Honduras, and their different strengths in the "national dance" and "self-introduction" categories. As the contestants performed, they not only acknowledged the hegemonic constructions of "Central American/Panamanian-ness" and "Chineseness," but they also disrupted them by revealing the tensions and contradictions that are inherent in diasporic subjectivities. Moreover, their very embodiment of difference within the diaspora also provoked discussions of idealized diasporic subjectivity, fostering public debate about competing notions of diasporic citizenship.

The beauty contest was divided into four categories. The contest began with each of the contestants adorned in their respective national dresses. Carrying their respective national flags and marching to their national anthems, the contestants slowly entered the banquet room and walked onto the stage. The reigning Queen, who also happened to be my cousin from Guatemala, marched with the contestants; but instead of wearing her national dress, she wore the traditional Chinese gown, cheongsam (qi pao) and marched to the national anthem of the Republic of China (ROC). The symbolism of her Chinese dress, in contrast to the national dresses worn by the contestants, encapsulates the process by which the winner of the beauty contest shifts from representing the nation to representing the Chinese diaspora (and its connection to the Chinese homeland). The beauty contest, in this sense, serves to abstract the differences between the national communities and reconstitutes them into a queen whose image emphasizes a shared Chinese identity. Once all the contestants and the queen were on stage, the audience applauded, and the two masters of ceremony briefly introduced the contestants in Mandarin and Cantonese.

Following this segment was the dance portion during which contestants took turns performing their respective national dances. While a couple of the national dances used indigenous dance forms popularized as official representations of national culture, the others were drawn from colonial contexts. This category of performance underscored diasporic identification with the nation of residence. Yet, even as the contestants performed these dances, they inherently disrupted the very message they sought to convey—that of homogenizing the nation. Their embodiment of racialized difference articulated their disidentification with the nation. By disidentification,[6] I refer to the dual process by which the contestants exposed the exclusionary practices of the nation and, at the same time, asserted their national belonging by reinscribing their presence back into the nation.

In this category, Miss Honduras definitely outperformed her competitors. In general, the dance routines tended to be rather repetitive,

but Miss Honduras displayed extraordinary originality and poise. Carrying a basket of roses, she sang along with the music as she danced with ease and grace. She pranced around the stage, rippling her dress and tossing roses into the audience, and her supporters responded happily, clapping, chanting her name, and catching the roses she threw to them. Without any sign of exhaustion or tentativeness, she exhibited a playfulness and ease with the dance steps that projected a sense of complete "at-home-ness." Miss Costa Rica, on the other hand, was less adept. With her eyes fixed on her feet, she seemed overly concerned with the dance steps, reflecting a lack of skill and confidence. Her steps seemed more prepared, more tentative, as if she were performing them by rote. Focusing on her dance steps, she was unable to engage the audience, and near the end of her performance, one could see the exhaustion in her face and her relief as the music came to an end. The two performances, juxtaposed against one another, illustrated the contestants' contrasting degrees of expertise and comfort. If this category were meant to establish one's relationship with the nation, then Miss Honduras showed not merely identification with but embodiment of Honduran-ness. As one audience member commented, "She looked comfortable in her skin. She looked as if she owned [the dance]." Miss Costa Rica, on the other hand, showed far less familiarity; her audience took note that "she needed more practice."

The third category, the "self-introductions," featured contestants in their Chinese cheongsam. With Chinese music playing in the background, the contestants glided elegantly across the stage and introduced themselves in whatever languages they chose. Coming after the national dance category, this segment showcased performances of Chineseness. It was the category where diasporic Chinese were expected to perform their Chinese cultural knowledge and identification. Overall, the rhythm and pace were slower; the contestants assumed a more reserved and more subtly coquettish demeanor. In contrast to the dance category, this one focused on overall comportment, gestures, and speech. It was in the stylized movements (the tilt of one's head, the swaying of hips and arms, the poses one strikes) and ways of presenting oneself (dress, hair, makeup, intonations, content and pattern of speech) that people discussed and judged Chineseness. The seemingly simple act of walking across the stage took on immense meaning. According to the reigning queen of 1995, the walk itself required arduous practice. She explained, "I watched videos of Hong Kong pageants to see how the women moved, walked with books on my head to check my balance. And once I learned the actual movements, I had to learn to be natural

doing it." The subtle movements of the arms, hips, hands, and face, along with particular ways of looking and smiling all played a role in presenting a particular style of feminine sexuality. In their introductions, most of the contestants spoke in Spanish and Cantonese, with a couple also speaking Mandarin. The use of different languages and the information they included and excluded all reflect their strategies of self-representation (Besnier 2002).

Miss Costa Rica, dressed in a classic-style cheongsam (*qi pao*), presented an archetypical image of idealized Hong Kong Chinese femininity. Slender, tall, with her hair tied in a bun and a few loose strands playing around her cheeks, she displayed an elegant, classic, and reserved femininity that clearly captured the attention of the immigrant Chinese in the audience. Miss Honduras, with more voluptuous curves and wearing a less popular variation of the Chinese cheongsam (*qi pao*), was less able to reproduce the conventional ideal of Chinese femininity. Despite this disadvantage, her performance was no less powerful.

Most contestants introduced themselves in Spanish and spoke at least a few words in Cantonese. Not surprisingly, since most were Latin American-born and/or raised, all of them spoke perfect Spanish. In the area of Chinese language competency, Miss Costa Rica had an advantage. She spoke fluent Cantonese and Mandarin, while it was clear that the others had learned specific phrases for the purpose of the contest. When introducing herself, Miss Costa Rica spoke in Spanish, then repeated her answer in both Cantonese and Mandarin. She had firm control of all three languages, coming across as truly multilingual. However, while Miss Costa Rica simply stated her name and listed her hobbies, Miss Honduras eloquently welcomed each of the national communities in Spanish by referencing their specific histories and national character. Miss Honduras, who clearly did not speak any Chinese, then proceeded to use her fan as a prop from which she read phonically a few words in Mandarin. As she struggled with pronunciation, audience members reacted with either mocking smiles or enthusiastic applause. A number of her supporters whistled, clapped, and shouted her name in unison. To most Chinese speakers, her attempt was almost indecipherable. To monolingual Spanish speakers, her performance was courageous and commendable. In this intersubjective space between performance and reception, her sincere attempt to speak Chinese was interpreted by some as mimicry—"trying to be but not quite succeeding"—and by others as subversive parody—a critique of the absurd notion that equated being Chinese with speaking Chinese. In speaking with Miss Honduras after the

contest, she commented, "I did what I could, what I was expected to do, but I am who I am, and there is nothing I can do to change that. People will judge me accordingly." Keenly aware of the judges' expectations, Miss Honduras understood not only the possibilities of the performative but, more importantly, its limitations. Her comment indicated that one's socialization, habitus, and embodiment are equally important in the contest.

During my discussion with various informants, I learned that most Chinese of the immigrant generation interpreted her attempt as an honest but failed effort while most Panamanian-born Chinese saw it as a courageous act of subtle resistance. Indeed, Miss Honduras's performance brought into relief a longstanding divide between immigrant Chinese speakers and Latin American-born Spanish speakers. It enabled Latin American-born Spanish speakers to express openly their collective rejection of marginalization based on linguistic ability. As one audience member resentfully remarked, "Immigrant, Chinese-speaking men dominate the leadership of this organization. They are the gatekeepers of the Chinese colony and determine the agendas and set the criteria of belonging in the diaspora. It is time to change that." Clearly, Miss Honduras's insistence on speaking Chinese, however distorted it was, disrupts the dominant and naturalized expectation that all contestants (and more generally, all diasporic Chinese) should speak Chinese with some degree of mastery. Her performance articulated disidentification. It created a break, a rupture, in representations of diasporic Chineseness, thereby allowing non-Chinese-speaking subjects to vocalize and confront the unspoken and unacknowledged marginalizing practices of the diasporic leadership. Indeed, diasporic formations are in part produced in response to the exclusionary practices of nation-states. Yet, in practice, diasporas often generate their own set of exclusions. In this particular case, the close relationship between diasporic Chinese and the ROC government, reflected in their cosponsorship of the convention, undoubtedly shapes the manner in which idealized diasporic subjectivity is formulated and reproduced. In fact, remarkably present throughout the contest, and the convention more generally, is the insistence on strong Chinese identifications, with the ability to speak Chinese as the most critical and significant form of expression. Furthermore, the fact that business meetings in the convention are conducted only in Mandarin and Cantonese substantiates the importance placed on the Chinese language in sustaining this diasporic organization and its relations with the ROC, whose representatives are primarily monolingual Chinese speakers.

The final segment of the pageant featured contestants in Western-style evening gowns, and they were asked one question each, to which they gave impromptu answers. The questions varied: "Who is your female role model?" "What would you say to your fellow contestants if you were to win the contest?" "Which of three—intelligence, wealth, beauty—is the most important to you, and why?" Most of the contestants answered in Spanish only. In 1996, the two dissenters were Miss Costa Rica, who answered first in Cantonese and then in Spanish, and Miss Honduras, who answered in Spanish and then in English. By displaying their ability to speak at least two languages, the contestants performed and simultaneously affirmed the value of biculturalism. While Miss Costa Rica once again replayed her ability to speak Cantonese and Spanish, Miss Honduras surprised the audience with English. When I asked her later why she answered in English, she commented, "I really wanted the judges to hear what I have to say. I know that some of them, especially the Taiwanese representatives, don't speak Spanish, so I thought it would be a good idea for me to answer in English. I know most of them speak at least some English. Also, I wanted to show the judges that I can speak a language other than Spanish. I don't speak Chinese, but English has to count for something. I mean, just because I don't speak Chinese doesn't mean that I am closed-minded or provincial." While knowing that speaking Chinese is a quality valued in this competition, Miss Honduras also understood the significance of communication. She used English not only as a practical means of communicating with the judges,[7] some of whom are diplomatic representatives from the ROC and do not speak Spanish, but also as a performance of cultural openness that goes beyond the restricted formula of speaking Spanish and/or Chinese. Her strategic performance in English, then, offered yet another opening or rupture to interrogate the qualities associated with diasporic Chineseness.

Embodied Difference: Miss Costa Rica and Miss Honduras

The contestants' contrasting strengths in the beauty contest, conveying their degrees of cultural identification with the nation and the homeland, were reinforced by their identity construction. Miss Costa Rica and Miss Honduras exemplified very different ways of being diasporic Chinese. Miss Costa Rica was born in mainland China and immigrated to Costa Rica about ten years ago. Both her parents

are Chinese from Mainland China. She speaks fluent Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish. Given these characteristics, she was considered the "most Chinese," both in racial and cultural terms. Light skinned, svelte, and the tallest of all the contestants, she reminded me of a Hong Kong movie star. Her appearance, gestures, and mannerisms epitomized Chinese cosmopolitanism: her speech pattern and language abilities reflected a sense of worldliness, her choice of contemporary classic styles of dress marked her fashion consciousness, and her subtle yet effective makeup replicated contemporary Hong Kong aesthetics. On stage, her long black hair was always swept up in a bun, with two wavy curls lingering around her face. She projected an aura of refinement and elegance that was reserved and slightly aloof. A few conference participants mentioned that her father has strong ties with the Taiwanese in Costa Rica, and a few people complained that she seemed arrogant because she did not mingle or "hang out" with the other participants of the convention. In her defense, however, another person responded that she has very protective, "traditional" parents and that she is not allowed to go out at night.

Miss Honduras is almost the polar opposite of Miss Costa Rica on the spectrum of Chinese Central Americans. She was born in Honduras and is racially mixed, her father being Chinese and her mother being mestiza Honduran. Her facial features are unmistakably mestiza, and her shoulder-length brown hair is slightly wavy. Her style of dress was distinctively Latin American. Her outfits were vibrant in color and snug fitting so that they accentuated her feminine curves. She exuded a certain sensuality, confidence, and maturity that the other contestants had not yet developed. There was a quality of openness, warmth, and sincerity about her. She spoke neither Cantonese nor Mandarin but was fluent in Spanish and had a firm grasp of English. Furthermore, as reflected in the self-introduction category as well as in casual conversation, she was eloquent, thoughtful, and reflexive. Most of the Chinese youth appreciated her charm and sincerity, describing her as friendly, warm, outgoing, and witty.

With each woman projecting such contrasting identities, one may ask how is it possible that the winner could have been in dispute? Unless, of course, there was little consensus to begin with, and, as a result, the votes were extremely polarized, with one group in favor of Miss Costa Rica and the other group in support of Miss Honduras. Some of the youth participants speculated that the main reason why Miss Honduras did not win was because of her mestiza background. One youth commented, "[Miss Honduras] is definitely the prettiest and the smartest. I think the judges are biased and want a racially

pure Chinese to win." Meanwhile, a senior participant dismissed these charges, stating that "in my opinion, Miss Costa Rica has all the qualities of a queen. She is tall, pretty, thin, and speaks Chinese so well. Nobody comes even close. It isn't because she is the most Chinese. She is really the best candidate."

What is at stake in the beauty contest involves not only who gets to represent the Chinese diaspora, but also what qualities are deemed to be idealized characteristics of that diaspora. Which of the women best embodies Chinese Central American beauty, femininity, and community? What characteristics, standards, and values are being projected, affirmed, and reinforced? That the two winners occupy two extremes of the Chinese diasporic spectrum is hardly accidental. Chineseness, after all, is a homogenizing label whose meanings are multiple and constantly shifting (Ang 1994, 5). To understand the concerns negotiated on stage, I suggest we examine them in relation to the larger debates taking place among diasporic Chinese in this region.

National Differences and Power Asymmetries within the Diaspora

Despite their common colonial histories and geographical proximity, Panama and these Central American countries each confront very different political-economic conditions. Consequently, in spite of their common ethnic status in this region, the Chinese communities have developed in distinctive ways. To a large extent, the beauty contestants reflect the national differences of these communities. Just as Miss Honduras, Miss Nicaragua, and Miss Guatemala were Central American-born, racially mixed, and limited in their Chinese-speaking abilities, so are the majority of Chinese youth in these countries. Chinese immigration to El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala has not been significant in the past decades due to these countries' volatile political and economic situations. Therefore, the Chinese population in these countries has dwindled, with more emigration from, than immigration to, these countries. Furthermore, Chinese cultural practices and institutions such as Chinese language schools, Buddhist temples, and homeland locality associations have become almost obsolete. The leadership of the Chinese Associations of Honduras and Nicaragua is now composed mostly of Spanish-speaking, Central American-born Chinese. In contrast, Chinese immigration to Panama and Costa Rica has increased tremendously in recent decades. While the influx of Chinese immigrants to Costa

Rica has largely been from Taiwan, most of Panama's immigrants are from the southern region of Mainland China.

These differences are not free of power asymmetries. For one thing, all the formal meetings at the convention are held in Mandarin and Cantonese. This is so largely because the ROC delegation from the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office often does not speak Spanish. Also, the immigrant generation generally feels more comfortable speaking Cantonese and Mandarin than Spanish. Hence, while these meetings can be empowering experiences for Chinese immigrants, they often exclude the non-Chinese-speaking population from participating. Let me draw on one ethnographic example to illustrate this point.

The official meetings of the convention I attended were held in the following manner. The presiding officer would read an item of discussion in Mandarin, followed by open discussion in either Mandarin or Cantonese. After these discussions, the membership would vote. Throughout the meeting, the most outspoken members were from Panama, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. The Nicaraguan delegation sat there restlessly, looking around the room as representatives from different countries stood up and offered their opinions. It became clear that none of the Chinese Nicaraguans could understand the discussion. They were completely lost, unable to participate in any real way. The presiding officers, who had known about this problem, chose not to address it. Instead, a trilingual Chinese Panamanian, noticing the situation, walked over to the Chinese Nicaraguans and began translating for them.

The Chinese Nicaraguans' inability to enter into these diasporic conversations depicts the unequal power relations among the different Chinese communities vis-à-vis the larger diasporic Organization and the ROC state. Although Chinese Nicaraguans are part of this network, they by no means participate to the same extent, with as much influence, as Chinese Panamanians or Chinese Costa Ricans who are often bilingual. The beauty contestants confront analogous challenges. It is not surprising, then, that all the contestants attempted to say at least a few\words in Chinese, with, of course, varying degrees of success. Clearly, the ability to speak Chinese is a salient factor in determining their level of participation and influence in this diasporic organization.

Immigration, Race, and Competing Claims of Belonging

Aside from national difference, one of the most pronounced divisions within these communities, especially in Costa Rica and

Panama, is between the recent immigrants, on one hand, and the earlier immigrants and their descendants, on the other. It is important, moreover, to note that the category of "recent immigrants" is different in Costa Rica than in Panama. The controversy over the crowning of the Queen brings these overlapping debates to the surface, as an examination of the Panamanian response to the pageant's outcome makes clear.

Ricardo, a Panamanian-born Chinese in his forties, has been attending these conventions for the past 20 years. He offered this analysis of the 1996 beauty contest: "Everyone wanted Miss Honduras to win. That was the talk around town the next morning. It's not that they felt pity [for her for what had happened], but it was the right thing to do. It has always been that a full Chinese, a Chinese-speaking girl, has the preference. In this case that was Miss Costa Rica. Further[more], the vice-president of the Costa Rican Association, the one who organized the event, is Taiwanese. So to speak, he leaned toward a more traditional Chinese outlook. Behind all this, there is an old infight between the old [immigrants] and the new [immigrants] in Costa Rica, as usual in all [of] Central America. The new are the Taiwanese and the old, well, are the old established [Cantonese] folks. In Panama, the story is different. The new are the newcomers from Mainland China that comprise mostly the people who work at the tienditas (the little stores), while the old are the established old-timers and their Central American-born descendants who are not interested in this kind of infighting. [The old immigrants and their descendants] are the ones who wanted Miss Honduras to win."

Ricardo is careful in pointing out that in Costa Rica the recent immigrants are mostly Taiwanese, while in Panama they are Mainland Chinese who work in the small stores, or own them. However, in the context of this convention, both the Taiwanese and the store-owning mainland Chinese are categorized together as "recent immigrants" and are defined in opposition to the old immigrants and their Central American-born descendants.

A recent wave of Chinese immigrants to Panama in the 1980s has dramatically changed the demography of the Chinese population there, such that the recent immigrants now comprise about half of the total Chinese population in Panama. The two groups are characterized as complete opposites. While the old "Chinese Colony" (which includes the well-established Chinese immigrants and their descendants) is characterized as respectable, educated, and law-abiding citizens of Panama, the recent immigrants are portrayed as poor, uneducated, dirty, untrustworthy, and sometimes even criminal.

These negative images of the recent Chinese immigrant are constructed alongside several other discourses, which may help elucidate how these images come into being and how the divisions between the immigrants and the Chinese colony are actualized and solidified. First, this group of newer arrivals is criminalized by being characterized as illegal immigrants. Shortly after the arrest of Manuel Noriega in 1990, the incoming government publicly announced that Noriega's military regime had sold Panamanian travel visas and passports to these immigrants. This information was then used to criminalize the immigrants, who quickly became scapegoats of Panamanian nationalism after the U.S. invasion. Second, the narrative of the immigrant-as-victim was set against the image of the established-Chinese-as-victimizer. Through a series of sensationalized newspaper articles, journalists showed that many recent immigrants came as either short-term contracted laborers or as wage workers who took on low-paying jobs such as maids, caretakers, and cooks for established Chinese. Immigrants and established Chinese were thus pitted against one another as victims and victimizers. Finally, recent immigrants were distinguished from the "Chinese Colony" along explicitly ideological lines, such that these immigrants were described as "communist Chinese," as if their undesirable behaviors were somehow inherently communist. These "communist Chinese" were deemed "a different breed of Chinese altogether," as I was told repeatedly. The fact that many of the earlier immigrants and their families had been persecuted during the Communist Revolution in China partially contributes to this deep antagonism against the recent immigrants, whom they associate with the communist regime. Another factor has to do with US imperialism in this region and its use of Cold War anticommunist rhetoric to justify its military presence and political repression throughout this region. Although "communism" and the "Cold War" may not exist in those same terms today, in this age of so-called globalization, both the memories of people and the ideological residues of the Cold War discourse are still firmly planted in people's imaginations. Together, the three discursive constructions—the immigrant as criminal, as victim, and as ideological "deviant"—all feed into the formulation of the Chinese immigrant as an undesirable and dangerous subject.

Underlying these distinctions lies a certain fear that these new immigrants are transforming the "old Chinese Colony." According to Ricardo, the leadership of the Chinese Association in Panama is undergoing dramatic transformation. The representatives elected to office by the community are now reflecting the demographic

changes in the Chinese population. More importantly, notions of "Chineseness" are changing faster than ever before. Since the 1980s, a number of new Chinese restaurants have opened, Chinese video rental stores have popped up in several places, cable television has given people easy access to Hong Kong media as well as American media, and Chinese karaoke performances are now being held regularly. In fact, at one of the Chinese Youth Association parties I attended, Chinese karaoke has now replaced salsa dancing, and a growing number of youth are speaking Cantonese with as much ease as Spanish. The members of the Youth Association convey their need to express their cultural pride and to affirm their difference. Salsa dancing no longer serves as a legitimate means of asserting their identity; rather, karaoke is their medium of choice to claim and reaffirm their Chineseness. It does not matter what language they sing in-Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, or English; what is significant is the act of singing karaoke and their participation in these performances. Karaoke has become the signifier of their Chineseness; it is the medium through which their diverse backgrounds and multiple identifications are enunciated. To be sure, this newfound Chinese confidence enacted by the recent immigrants threatens the established habitus of Panamanian Chinese who have survived culturally and economically by assuming a much more reserved and cautious comportment. The "Chinese Colony," overwhelmed by these changes and challenges to their prescribed notions of "Chineseness," feels as though they are losing control, losing their way of life, losing what was once an intimate community where everyone knew everybody else. To the extent that they are able to recreate their social networks and imaginings of a community that is connected by no more than two degrees of separation, the "Chinese Colony" has maintained its distinctive identity. However, even these boundaries are quickly eroding.

The debate over who should be queen embodies these anxieties and tensions. Not only does it articulate divisions within the existing diaspora but also contrasting visions of what the diaspora should be. Discussions of standards of beauty are imbued with discourses of racial-cultural purity versus hybridity, discussions that express two divergent notions of "Chineseness" in diaspora. I draw again from another conversation with Ricardo:

> This year [1998], Miss Nicaragua was the winner, and she was certainly the best fit for the job…It is fair to say that she fits the western standard of beauty, body, intelligence, and grace. Chinese standards are totally different. She has to speak [Chinese], look Chinese, her

> body doesn't matter, and above all [she] should and must be of Chinese [descent]. Costa Rica has always, to the best of my memory, chosen girls who met this Chinese standard. The Taiwanese are almost pure in Costa Rica, or at least . . . they consider themselves as pure.

Here, Ricardo points out there are at least two distinct standards of beauty, claiming that the recent immigrants prefer an aesthetic that is considered racially and culturally "pure" Chinese and that other Central American Chinese do not share this preference but one that fits "Western" standards of beauty. By western, he is referring to the Central American standard of beauty—that of a racially and culturally mixed woman (not the Western or European/North American idealized beauty). By preferring the "Western," Central American standard of beauty himself, he is in a sense reaffirming his own positioning in Central America and Panama. His location in Panama, hence, is what informs his notions of "Chineseness" in the diaspora. In contrast, he would assert that the standards of beauty used by the recent immigrants are drawn from "China," from what he considers to be the repository of "pure" Chineseness. Their notions are informed, as he would suggest, by their strong ties to the "homeland," whether it is Taiwan or Mainland China, not to Central America. Hence, Ricardo's preference for the Central American aesthetic is more than just a subjective reading of beauty. What he makes explicit is the politics of aesthetics in determining what it means to be Chinese and to belong in the diaspora. In stating his preference, he is asserting an ideological position against imposed notions of Chinese purity. What we see in these debates, then, is an ongoing negotiation between the dual identifications of diasporic Chinese: the very common theme that links them together—that of Chineseness and dispersed emplacement—becomes their site of contest and belonging.

In general, notions of Chineseness in diaspora change and evolve differently from those that are generated in China. Moreover, the play of difference among dispersed communities within the diaspora also ranges tremendously, as shown in the beauty contest. In the case of Chinese in Central America and Panama, the debates and contestations over what constitutes diasporic Chineseness are always fueled not only by the shifting power relations within the diaspora, but also by the manner in which each community asserts belonging in relation to the larger diaspora, to their nation of residence, and to the Chinese homeland. The triangulating set of diasporic identifications I have mapped here—the regional, national, and the ethnic—serves as both the reservoir of cultural resources as well as the binding force of this

community. Indeed, at the center of the beauty contest controversy lies the struggle to determine what and who gets to represent diasporic Chineseness in Central America and Panama at a time when the region itself is undergoing rapid transformation.

Conclusion

Initially established as a political-economic organization amongst Chinese in Central America and Panama, the organization of Chinese Associations quickly incorporated an annual beauty contest to encourage multigenerational attendance at its convention and social-cultural interaction across the region. In doing so, the leadership transformed the convention into a project of diasporic reproduction in political, social, and cultural terms. Using gender as a category of analysis, I have shown how the beauty contest offers an opportunity for women to articulate and negotiate the tensions and contradictions within the diaspora. Disguised as a seemingly harmless competition of beauty and femininity, the beauty contest, in actuality, incites and facilitates passionate and highly politicized debates about belonging and the meaning of diasporic Chineseness. Though working within the framework of the contest, the contestants not only reveal and disrupt dominant expectations of diasporic subjectivity, but by embodying and performing divergent ideals of diasporic femininity, the contestants insist on difference and belonging in diaspora. For while the contest seeks to convey the shared triadic identification with the nation of residence, the homeland, and the larger diaspora—identifications that create the parameters of diasporic belonging and citizenship—it also unveils the differences and inequalities within the diaspora. While it attempts to generate "a structure of common difference," the indeterminacy of the 1996 beauty contest reflects the enduring tensions within the diaspora—tensions that arise from a struggle for relatedness based simultaneously on shared identification with the Chinese homeland and the region of Central America/Panama and on difference along national context as well as racial and generational backgrounds. The idealism of diasporic egalitarianism is further fractured by the realism of unequal development, both in terms of the national economy and the size of the Chinese communities. Indeed, their emplacement in specific geopolitical entities matters in diaspora, and this recognition illuminates the complexities of diasporic belonging and brings a comparative dimension to understanding difference within a globally dispersed diaspora.

To fully understand the significance of the beauty contest controversy, one must situate it in the context of recent migrations to Central America and Panama as well as the transformations taking place there. With the new influx of Chinese immigrants and the new technologies of transnationalism enabling different diasporic subjectivities to emerge, notions of Chineseness in diaspora along with the conditions of living in diaspora are being reconfigured. In the past twenty years, Hong Kong movie videos and karaoke discs have found their special niche market in diasporic Chinese communities all over the world, including those in Panama and Central America. Unlike the earlier generations of Chinese immigrants and Panamanian-born Chinese who did not have easy access to these forms of media, the children of recent immigrants today are conversant in Hong Kong popular music and culture. These rapid changes in transnational media distribution have expanded the resources of diasporic identification and complicated the process of identity formation. Hence, what one sees in the Chinese diaspora of Central America and Panama today is not a structure of common difference, but rather, a debate, an ongoing argument about what the structure of common difference is or should be. Furthermore, membership in the Chinese diaspora is not defined by agreeing with this structure, but rather by participating in these debates and feeling that one has a stake in the argument.

Finally, though I did not focus my discussion here on the role of the homeland state, the involvement of Taiwanese officials in transnational organizations such as the one discussed here underscores the ROC's influence in diasporic Chinese formation in this region. Their entrenched entanglement in this convention and others like it illustrates the ROC's profound desire in ensuring the reproduction of both the diaspora and the diaspora's identification with Taiwan. Though this issue is more than I can take up in this essay (I have written about this elsewhere, see Siu 2005b), I nonetheless want to signal the importance of the ROC state in the formation of this Chinese diaspora.

Afterword

At the end of a very long evening, after most of the audience had retired to their hotel rooms, Miss Costa Rica was formally named queen of the Chinese Colony. In front of an almost empty banquet hall, the officials awkwardly presented her with the prize of a thousand dollars and a vacation package for two to Taiwan. The entire scene was somewhat surreal. The stage lights shone brightly on

Miss Costa Rica, but there were only a few people left in the audience to witness her victory. Some people clapped while others simply shuffled out of the banquet hall. With an awkward smile, Miss Costa Rica accepted her prize, as if fulfilling an obligation.

Shortly after my return to Panama, I was told that the leadership of the convention had decided to disqualify the 1996 competition altogether. Perhaps it was an admission of wrongdoing, but ultimately it was the only way to address the pain and hurt that had been inflicted on all those involved. The following year, Miss Costa Rica of 1996 did not attend the convention, and my cousin from Guatemala, the 1995 queen, went to crown the incoming queen. It was as if the 1996 competition had never happened—but of course it had, and the tensions that erupted that night still persist among the Chinese in this region.

Notes

1. The "national" dresses that the contestants wore and the "national" dances that they performed are often drawn from indigenous dress and dance forms that have been popularized as representative of the nation. For instance, Miss Guatemala would perform her nationality through Mayan dress and dance forms.
2. The term "Chinese colony" has been used to refer to Chinese communities throughout Central America and Panama since the late nineteenth century. While it references the Chinese community in general, the term suggests diasporic Chinese as being satellite communities of China rather than a community that is part of Panamanian society. The word remains widely used today.
3. Paul Gilroy (1993), Jacqueline Brown (1998), and Sandhya Shukla (2003) are three exceptions that explore connections amongst diasporic communities.
4. To a large extent, the ROC relies on diasporic Chinese to legitimate its claims to being the Chinese state. Similarly, the Chinese in Central America and Panama benefit from the financial and moral support of the ROC. For a more elaborate discussion of their relationship, please see Siu (2001, 2005).
5. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Chinese communities in diaspora have been subjected to varying degrees of persecution. Anti-Chinese movements were rampant in the United States, Mexico,

Jamaica, Panama, Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia. Many of these movements led not only to mass destruction of private properties but also intense physical violence and death. Communities of Chinese have emigrated from some of these countries, leaving few traces of their historical presence.

6. For a longer discussion of disidentification, see Jose Muñoz (1999).
7. About twelve judges are selected every year. Some are local representatives of diasporic Chinese communities, some are local embassy people, and some are diplomatic visitors from the ROC.

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Part III

Narratives of Belonging

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Chapter Seven

Gender, College, and Cultural Citizenship: A Case Study of Mexican-Heritage Students in Higher Education

Rina Benmayor

In an article titled "Narrating Cultural Citizenship: Oral Histories of First Generation College Students of Mexican Origin" (Benmayor 2002), I argued that higher education is a negotiated cultural space where first generation students of Mexican heritage (FGMH) construct an integrated subjectivity. A space from which, as historical outsiders to higher education, FGMH students strive to integrate their ethnic/racial, familial, generational, and educational worlds, rather than abandon any one of them. I frame this negotiated space as a claim for cultural citizenship (Flores and Benmayor 1997), where FGMH students affirm their collective right to be in the university in significant numbers, with first-class citizen status in the nation-state and in higher education. I base this analysis on three years of oral history and ethnographic research with first generation college students on my own campus. Students in my Oral History and Community Memory course focused on this topic, recording interviews with approximately sixty FGMH students on our campus.[1] Mexican-heritage students, mostly from the Salinas Valley, comprise over 25 percent of our student body. They variously identify as Mexicana/o, Chicana/o, or Mexican American. The majority are daughters and sons of immigrant Mexican farmworkers; others are second or third generation in the United States, and a few have deep ancestral roots in this region.

In "Narrating Cultural Citizenship" I foregrounded race and class as analytical categories. In this essay, however, I turn to gender as an intersecting construct. I explore how gender informs claims for cultural citizenship within the university and within the family and culture, where power relations and traditional expectations impact

students' struggle to forge an integrated and centered subjectivity. FGMH students not only have to claim equality within the university, but they also have to confront prescribed and constraining gender expectations at home. Cultural citizenship, I contend, helps us understand FGMH students' claims for first-class citizenship in institutions of higher education and in the nation-state; the concept also informs an internal gendered negotiation and cultural struggle.

In this essay, I also underscore the ethnographic and storytelling dimension of cultural citizenship studies. Vernacular accounts are key to understanding claims for cultural rights and practices of resistance. They express subjectivity and standpoint, how people envision and position themselves as members of a cultural group in a larger multicultural society. Cultural citizenship narratives are counter-stories to hegemonic master narratives of nation, immigration, assimilation, and belonging. They are oppositional, but they are also propositional. In this essay, I weave together voices and stories of seven interviewees. These students' narratives are oppositional in that they resist and critique existing power arrangements; they are propositional in envisioning more egalitarian, transformed social spaces and ways of thinking and acting.

In this sequel article, I rely on primary source material to illustrate: (1) how claims for cultural citizenship and gender are embedded in these stories; (2) how individual stories construct a larger narrative about gender, education and cultural citizenship; (3) and how these counter-stories disrupt hegemonic master narratives about FGMH students and about gender inside culture. Thus, these stories can be read in two ways, simultaneously: as situated narratives that contest second-class citizenship for Mexican-heritage people and communities in U.S. society; and as narratives that challenge prescribed gender norms and roles within Mexican/Chicano/Mexican American cultures. I begin with a background section on the concept of cultural citizenship and set the context for this current focus on gender, drawing from and synthesizing my previously published article. This is followed by a closer examination, through gender, of the stories of seven male and female FGMH students, stories that are highly representative of the larger data sample.

Concept and Context

Cultural Citizenship refers to "the ways people organize their values, their beliefs about their rights, and their practices based on their sense

of cultural belonging rather than on their formal status as citizens of a nation" (Silvestrini 1997).[2] Claims for cultural citizenship often go beyond those rights already enjoyed by "first-class" citizens. Disenfranchised, racialized, subordinated, and excluded peoples become what Stuart Hall and David Held call "new citizens," creating new rights, often not formally recognized by the law (1990). Based on ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexuality, and other defining social identities and binding solidarities, claims for cultural citizenship question, disrupt, and remap national projects, creating new rights and new ways of practicing citizenship itself.

In his introductory essay to *Latino Cultural Citizenship*, Renato Rosaldo cautions that, "Too often social thought anchors its research in the vantage point of the dominant social group and thus reproduces the dominant ideology by studying subordinated groups as a 'problem' rather than as people with agency—with goals, perceptions, and purposes of their own" (Rosaldo 1997, 37). Cultural citizenship places at the center the ways in which subordinated groups perceive, affirm, and claim their rights and their cultural responsibilities. Drawing on their distinctive cultural assets, subordinated communities struggle to affirm equal inclusion and new rights to reshape civil society in more democratic and creative ways.

Education and language have long been primary sites of cultural contestation and new citizenship for Latinas/os in the United States. Chicana/o scholars have produced considerable research and writing on the experience of Latina/o students in higher education (Olivas 1986; Rendón 1992; Cuádraz 1996; Valdés 1996; Solórzano and Villalpando 1999, among others). Though this body of scholarship does not explicitly use the framework of cultural citizenship, it speaks to the critical importance of cultural standpoint and what Moll and Vélez-Ibáñez call funds of knowledge (1990).[3] Moving beyond old immigrant-based paradigms of assimilation and social integration, this scholarship calls for a consideration of ethnocultural values and practices, racialized histories and experiences, and complex gender roles as critical factors in understanding how minoritized students experience college. Using critical race theory, Solórzano and Villalpando propose, for example, that marginality is not just a site of domination for students of color. They frame marginality as a site of resistance and empowerment (1999, 304). Cultural citizenship captures this nexus, as it describes the cultural dynamics and logics through which subordinated communities construct claims, affirm their sense of rights and entitlements, and act to transform margins into centers. How, then, does cultural

citizenship manifest itself among Mexican-origin students on the CSUMB campus?

At its heart, cultural citizenship gives conceptual voice to belonging, entitlement, and the right to have rights, from the perspective of subordinated groups. Drawing upon their own cultural resources to build their sense of entitlement, first generation students of Mexican heritage expand and transform the public concept of the university. Their testimonies provide deeper insight into how they claim first-class citizenship on campus and negotiate the new experience of college.

In "Narrating Cultural Citizenship" (2002), I detail how students remember the painful disregard and poor academic counseling they received in high school, citing federally funded early outreach programs as the most important force in encouraging and actually helping them to get to college. Once there, they find "familia" on campus, peers and mentors with whom they share cultural understanding. FGMH students from our region often come into contact with white and African American students for the very first time at college. They have to adapt to new discourses, ways of being and knowing, and the intellectual demands of higher learning. They begin to imagine themselves as professionals, leaders, and agents of social change. Along with appreciating the support that they receive on campus from student services, caring faculty, mentors, and programs, students also describe instances of racism on campus and marginalization in the classroom. And yet, first generation students are supposed to be at the center of our campus's Vision Statement, which reads:

> The campus will be distinctive in serving the diverse people of California, especially the working class and historically undereducated and low-income populations.... The identity of the university will be framed by substantive commitment to multilingual, multicultural, gender-equitable learning. (http://csumb.edu/site/x11496.xml)

Cultural values and practices of respect, dignity, reciprocity, and collective responsibility become the basis for claims to cultural citizenship and full membership in the university. Experiencing a disconnect between the espoused Vision Statement and actual practices on the campus, students denounce the university for not living up to its Vision. They challenge the institution to value their cultural commitments, their difference, and to support their cultural funds of knowledge as assets for the entire campus community, rather than framing them in terms of skill deficiencies. Their critiques are, simultaneously, affirmations. FGMH students affirm their bilingual and

cross-cultural expertise as critical twenty-first-century cultural assets from which all can learn. They affirm the importance of a hate-free environment on campus and a multicultural curriculum in which their histories are not marginal. Embedded in their narratives are the concepts of *respeto* (respect), and *dignidad* (dignity), ever-present referents in Latino cultural vernaculars.

While the university is a site of contestation, it is also a transformative space that opens new possibilities for individual growth and collective social advancement. FGMH students often speak about "returning" to their communities as professionals, and they affirm the concept of reciprocity, and responsibility to family and community. They often express the desire to "pay back" their parents, literally, for the financial sacrifice that going to college represents for the family.[4] More commonly, and proudly, they speak about serving as "role models" for younger siblings and upcoming generations, and as "mentors" and peer advisors on campus and in the surrounding high schools. Consequently, an integral part of cultural citizenship is cultural responsibility.

There is no doubt that college is a new and transformative experience for first generation students, particularly for students of color and first generation immigrant students. They begin to expand their horizons, and imagine themselves as university students with future careers and jobs that do not resemble those of their parents. I argue that FGMH students construct and negotiate this new identity and subjectivity through a set of cultural values and resources that are intimately connected with their home culture and their view of their rights and responsibilities as cultural citizens.

Other scholars present a different picture. In an often-cited essay that aims to explore the more "intimate" cultural dynamics of the first generation experience, Howard London (1992) contends that "the cultural challenges faced by first generation students are not limited to the classroom but include the difficulties of redefining relationships and self-identity." Using old separation theory, London argues that "moving up" requires a 'leaving off' and a 'taking on,' the shedding of one social identity and the acquisition of another." He concludes that:

> It is only when we see that negotiating cultural obstacles involves not just gain but loss—most of all the loss of a familiar past, including a past self—that we can begin to understand the attendant periods of confusion, conflict, isolation, and even anguish reported by first-generation students. (1992)

While this analysis accounts for some of the cultural tension that first generation students experience, its framework is fundamentally assimilationist, assuming a linear trajectory of upward mobility—that students will experience a "molting process," and painfully shed their old cultural skins as they gradually achieve social and economic mobility.[5] The language is telling: that college marks a *separation*, a *loss of a familiar past, a loss of a past self, a break* with the past, a *traumatic* period of *confusion, conflict, isolation, anguish* [italics mine].

Drawing from ethnic studies, cultural studies, and critical race theory, Chicana/o scholars offer radically different frameworks of interpretation with regard to Mexican-origin and other students of color (Vélez-IbáñezGreenberg 1990; Rendón 1992; Cuádraz 1996; Valdés 1996; Solórzano and Villalpando 1999). Solórzano and Villalpando suggest that "redefining relationships and self-identity" may not accurately describe or explain the experience of first generation students of color:

> ...the assumption that they [first generation students] succeed largely because of their ability to conform to the dominant cultural norms of a college environment ignores much of their current and historical experiences in higher education.... Some students of color have developed what we call critical resistant navigational skills to succeed in higher education. Many of these skills do not stem from students' conformist or adaptive strategies, but emerge from their resistance to domination and oppression in a system that devalues their ethno- and socio-cultural experiences. (1999)

Instead of measuring the achievement and success of first generation students through a social mobility paradigm, Chicana/o scholarship recognizes the ways in which working-class students of color use their cultural resources—their funds of knowledge—to actively resist that paradigm.

I too argue against London's paradigm and propose that the cultural and political negotiation in which FGMH students engage is integrative and propositional, rather than schismatic. In constructing themselves as cultural citizens in the university, FGMH students are not only claiming rights, they are assuming cultural responsibilities. While students speak about difficulties negotiating college and home life, they do not express a sense of anguish or fragmentation. Instead, they voice a desire to integrate their multiple cultural worlds, aspirations, and responsibilities. Rather than separating from family, they tend to embrace their various positionalities, seeking to become effective students, pathbreakers, family advocates, and community

builders. They articulate a relational, rather than an individualistic intentionality, in which their personal career goals look toward improving the collective welfare and future life chances of family and community, and forthcoming generations.

The question to pose here is how does gender intersect, inform, and complicate this picture? The following two sections comprise close readings of men's and women's testimonies. I begin by looking at issues of responsibility, providership, and reciprocity in stories of three male interviewees, followed by women's stories, that simultaneously challenge constructions of power and privilege within the heritage culture as well as from the hegemonic culture.

"I Am a Person That Wants to Step Up and Have Success in This Life"

The most prominent gender pressure that FGMH male students experience in college derives from the combined responsibility to succeed and to become a family provider. Each is contingent on the other. Negotiating gendered expectations as providers and responding at the same time to cultural and economic subordination within the nation-state, male students such as Pedro González often affirm national consciousness and identity as an outright rejection of legal inclusion. Pedro claims the right to "make it," but on his own cultural terms:

> I have had the chance to become a citizen but I haven't. Because the stuff I have learned here at the university . . . I don't think I want to be a part of the United States, just because of the different stuff that happened. . . . I am aware that Mexico has a dual citizenship policy . . . I know that I lose a lot of rights by not becoming a citizen. I want to be the best I can be without becoming a citizen . . . to demonstrate that us Mexicanos even if we aren't citizens are gonna make it. How often do you see a Mexicano running that department? (Student Audio Interview, González 2000)

For Pedro, "making it" is a collective challenge. He constructs an oppositional narrative about gendered success. This narrative is a counter-story that takes on the normative framework of U.S. citizenship, the adaptive and acculturating enterprise of higher education, and the individualized male mobility paradigm. For Pedro, success in life is a desired goal, but he links this personal goal to providership as

an expression of cultural reciprocity. When asked "What are your goals after college?" he says:

> I am a person that wants to step up and have success in this life. And if it's going to take different tasks all running at the same time I have to accomplish that. I think we have to give back. Us Mexicanos, we have this kind of thought that whoever helped us, you got to treat them nice and go back and help them in some sort of way. For me, that personality comes from my parents. The main reason why I am here [at the university] is they made me be who I am, along with my friends and all the people here, my girlfriend, work, school. Everything just makes my personality in a special way, and sooner or later I will pay them back. I'll save a million for you! [referring to the interviewer who is his friend]. (Student Audio Interview, González 2000)

In linking "success in this life" with economic power, so that he can "pay back," both literally and figuratively, Pedro steps outside the hegemonic male norm, but he still follows the traditional script of the Mexicano male as provider. He affirms and fulfills two cultural commitments at once, that of family breadwinner and that of a collective responsibility and reciprocity.

Similarly, other male interviewees frame their goals and desires through the expectation of financial responsibility toward family. When asked about his career goals, Carlos Armenta admits that money is a strong part of the picture but not the only, or perhaps not even the primary, motivating factor:

> I want to work with, like film, video productions, but I still want to be in music. Maybe what I really might want to do is go into like film scoring.... Stuff like that, you know, visual stuff, work with camera... the creativeness. Because I think that's one of my strong points, like, creativeness.... I play, you know, piano, I play the drums.... So. I think that's more what I want to do... Being creative and go into, the film, for a while and just see what happens there. And definitely have money. It's good to be financially wealthy. So I mean, hopefully that will happen. (Student Audio Interview, Armenta, 2000)

Through the memory of his family's financial struggles, he constructs his education as a collective benefit:

> ...for a while my parents were struggling a lot. My mom at one time had three jobs. My Dad had one main one. He works at a golf course—he's in maintenance, and then had gigs. He was in a band, had gigs on the side just to bring in for the payments, the car payment or the house

> that we had. And then eventually we lost it. We lost the house. My dad had to sell I think a couple of his cars that he had. And then we moved in with my Grandma in Prunedale. So, I mean just seeing that, you know that a college education really does establish *us* [emphasis mine], you know. It's very important. (Student Audio Interview, Armenta, 2000)

Responsibility to family, nevertheless, is not only cast in terms of money. Carlos also sees his educational success as "paying back" his family in a different way:

> I'm like fulfilling one of my mom's dreams, my dad's dreams. My dad dropped out of high school, my brother dropped out of high school, my mom dropped out and then came back to like adult school and got her GED diploma. But . . . in my immediate family, I was the first one to go. So I felt that I was carrying out their dreams by what I'm doing now. . . . My parents were very supportive. They know the importance of college. (Student Audio Interview, Armenta 2000)

Vis-à-vis their cultural commitments to family, gender is not a complicating factor in Pedro or Carlos' equations. Both construct the possibility of fulfilling responsibility and reciprocity to family and their personal career goals within culturally scripted male norms.

Benjamín Jiménez's story speaks to a slightly different construction of the responsibility/providership axis. He emphasizes his responsibility at home not in economic terms but as an educational role model for his younger siblings. "I am a role model at home. I have other brothers and I have a brother who comes here to school now, and he's a role model to my other little brothers. . . . That's a major thing." (Student Interview, Jiménez, 2000). Through his job as a tutor in elementary school, Benjamín reframes his goal for "success in life" from personal prosperity to serving his cultural community as a teacher:

> And then my job you know, I'm mostly with seven and eighth grade, helping the students and stuff. I think that has changed me like all the way. I used to be you know, it [a job] had to pay good, you know, money and stuff. That's how I was thinking, get paid good money. But now, I'd rather help others, I guess, the kids, help them to help themselves and become educated so they can be where I am at now . . . I had been helping one of the students over at El Sausal. His name is Luis. . . . Like the time I spent with him really worked, you know. I was like "Wow!" . . . That's cool stuff . . . It makes you feel like you actually made a difference in this kid's education, you know, opened up like probably a new gate for him. (Student Interview, Jiménez, 2000)

Even when they do not disrupt their culturally scripted gender roles, Pedro, Carlos, and Benjamín do diverge from the individualism of U.S. capitalist culture. None of them constructed higher education as a space of rupture from cultural or class values. On the contrary, they express a commitment to providership, reciprocity, and responsibility to family and community. Pedro says that he wants to

> ...get a career in my major, Art.... I'm not sure what kind of job it will be, but as soon as I get that job I will try to make life easier for my parents. In other words, helping them with their payments. Try to encourage my brothers to keep on going...to University.... My main goal is just helping out my family. That's a big part of my life. They were there when you needed them. They're just there for me and I just want to pay them back. (Student Audio Interview, González 1998)

Together, these testimonies articulate a male-centered affirmation of cultural citizenship. Pedro, Carlos, and Benjamín see themselves as breadwinners and providers to improve the life chances of their families and community. Navigating the multiple worlds of family, culture, mainstream society, and education for most FGMH male students usually means harnessing cultural practices and values to challenge social exclusion and marginalization by the dominant culture. Forging an integrated subjectivity as first generation of Mexican-heritage men means resisting, contesting, and negotiating power in institutions of education and the state. Generally, it does not mean contesting hegemonic gender arrangements within the home culture. Carlos acknowledges other ways in which being at the university has challenged him to think critically about his own situated power:

> I think [college] made me mature.... And I think now being here is recognizing different types of discrimination. One of the Service Learning classes that I took, that still stuck with me, was all about privileges. Like, I think living in society, a lot of men don't know that they just...in comparison to how women always get discriminated, and stuff like that. And, male privileges—oh, wow—just kind of like taking it home—taking what I learned and actually applying it. (Student Audio Interview, Armenta 2000)

Applying it is where FGMH women students take center stage. They voice a more complicated story and complex subjectivity about cultural citizenship, rights, gender, and education.

"As a Woman in My Community . . ."

The gaze of FGMH women students is circular. They level one eye on their condition of subordination within mainstream society and the other on subordination within family and culture. From a female perspective, cultural citizenship—or full and equal belonging in society—cannot be claimed at the expense of women's subordination.

The FGMH women students we interviewed all say that the university represents for them a significant life transformation. It has led them to imagine professional futures, as Mexicana/Chicana/Mexican American women. Mireya Albarrán explains:

> I feel CSUMB [California State University Monterey Bay] has played a big role in my growth. I come from a small community in which ninety-five percent are Chicanos and not knowing any other culture. Coming here has given me the opportunity to learn different cultures. Programs in the summer have given me a lot of opportunity to work with people in my community. I can see my growth when I go back home. I am able to face different issues that we face; I feel like I have grown a lot.
>
> I came in here wanting to learn psychology. Going through Service Learning[6] class, I got to go to communities and see the assets and see what it really needs. I want to get into Art Psychology. Because I see psychology as a power issue where only the privileged get therapy. I really want to work with lower income and middle income and my people and really seek out like the best . . .
>
> Service Learning has really helped me see who I am as a woman in my community and become what I am and what I want to be. Working with Prison Mothers opened up my eyes to analyze myself as a woman. And giving myself that power as a woman, I know it's solving power most of the time. (Student Audio Interview, Albarrán 2000)

At another level, gender intersects class and race in a more pressing way, requiring, as Anzaldúa says (1987), the ability to sustain "a tolerance for ambiguity." For Mireya, that ambiguity means disrupting family expectations and gender roles:

> Really giving myself has been giving me the strength to go and study because I am not supported by my family to be here. Just because I am a woman they don't think I should be studying they do not see the purposes of me studying. Trying to see myself as a person and not categorize myself, this college has really helped me to see this through self-reflection and the community I work with.

> It's probably isolated me from my family but not from my community. I feel like I am stronger here. For my family it's isolated me a lot and it's also very painful. I don't agree with a lot of stuff that was implemented in me but at the same time I have to understand that's their way of knowing and I am learning something different. I don't know. I have to work on that. I don't know what to do with it....
>
> Because my mom sometimes tells me she doesn't know who her daughter is anymore....I am more aggressive, and I was taught to be a sweet little girl. My mom doesn't see that anymore. That is one of my rewards here, actually treating myself as a person and not as a little girl that my mom raised, not to be submissive. (Student Interview, Albarrán 2000)

When asked whether college had strengthened her capacity to reconnect with family and community, she articulates a negotiated position, acknowledging her need to remain connected to her culture but also to firmly resist imposed gender roles within her family. Although, at first glance, Mireya might exemplify London's theory of how first generation students break with home culture (1992), I hear her negotiating an integrated space by resituating herself *inside* community, if not inside family. While she is not ready to return to her hometown, she is in no way cut off from her cultural community. She articulates her advocacy and vision of cultural citizenship, working with women in prison, in Americorps, helping high school students through college recruitment programs in the high schools, and serving as role a role model for her younger brothers:

> I have three younger brothers and one of them is here as a freshman. I feel like I put that seed in his mind. And I know I have done some movement there. Right now one of my challenges is my teenage brother. He is 15 years old and getting into gangs. I really want him to see something else besides Soledad. I know college is not meant for everybody. Also, working with ETS [Educational Talent Search]. Especially the girls and all the emotional hang-ups that your parents tell you about not leaving home and "You can't do this and that." But it is a big challenge because I do not want to be a intruder to their family and take their daughters away. I think it's for the best of them to step out of their zone and see who they are. (Student Interview, Albarrán 2000)

Reciprocity toward family and community is commonly expressed by FGMH women as well as men. Both are equally and heavily involved in programs that mentor and recruit first generation students for college, for example, and both see themselves as path breakers and

models for younger siblings. However, there are important differences. The women interviewees never expressed their future aspirations in terms of "making money." For them, the university signifies the possibility of "making change" in their home communities and in society, as teachers, counselors, community leaders, nonprofit advocates, or in other professional positions. The women's stories are about disrupting entrenched and oppressive ideologies, or as Mireya says, "stepping out of your zone."

Challenging normative expectations and becoming a role model for change requires FGMH women to engage a range of negotiating skills. Lupe Figueroa acknowledges ways in which college has changed her but not alienated her from her family. Her mission is to not only encourage her siblings to think about college but also to transform their ways of thinking:

> I think my ideas have changed in the way that I see things that I didn't see before . . . Like my little sister used to tell me when I go home, "Lupe, I don't know what is happening to you. You're like Lupe but you're not Lupe." . . . So, I think they are seeing that side of me that I am changing. But I am trying to change in a positive way, that I can inform them and educate them just by sharing my experiences [learning] in the classroom . . . Like, don't be racist. Don't criticize people because of the way they look . . . First hear their story and hear what they have to say, and then do [draw] your own conclusion or make your decision. So, in terms of the community, they look at me and I feel like some kind of pressure cause all the time they are like, "Oh, she's going to college. Look at the family. They are not rich but she is in college." . . . So, I am like, "Okay, now I have to make it." . . . because of me but also . . . because of my family, because of my community, cause I do want to help my community. I do want to go back and help and serve, and be like a resource for them. So I want to make the connection between like community and my family, with education, with college life. (Student Audio Interview, Figueroa 2000)

What London (1992) characterizes as a split from home and family, a clash between new and old cultural tastes, practices and class values, is constructed differently by students such as Lupe. Her story illustrates multiple levels of meaning. First, it signals a negotiation of gender expectations, as Mexican-heritage women (particularly those of first and second immigrant generations) are often expected to remain connected to the home until they marry. Lupe negotiates her desire to live on campus by returning home every weekend. She strikes a bargain with her mother. She has a high "tolerance for ambiguity."

Second, she sees herself as deeply connected to her home community, and feels the weight of their expectations for her to succeed. Third, she takes on the responsibility of mentoring her younger siblings, leading and modeling the path to college. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, she constructs role modeling and mentoring as a deeper task of forging ideological change. She models new situated knowledge about social justice that allows her to understand her lived experience within a larger conceptual and historical framework and to develop a praxis of "walking the talk." She forges an integrated subjectivity that ties together her university experience and her cultural commitments and responsibilities. At the same time, she transforms both spaces, the space of the home and her space in the university. At the university, she is known as a peer mentor for other students of color, a social justice activist and advocate, and a model "Vision" student.[7]

Like Lupe, Milagros Pérez also describes her efforts to challenge oppressive ideologies and "educate" her mother around lesbian and gay rights and Proposition twenty-two. While her efforts may not have been successful in the end, she constructs her own new subject position. She states:

> Milagros: I remember my mom went into my room and she looked at the voters guide booklet and she saw the proposition 22 and she said, "Millie you are going to vote Yes?" And I was like "No mom, I am not. I am going to vote No." . . . My mom just totally went off on me. She said "You know Millie I didn't brought you up this way. I guess I have not done my role as a mother. . . ." I am like "Mom, it doesn't have to do with the way you raised me. Its just this is what I feel. This does not affect me. But I just think that other people should have the same rights as we do . . ." And it was funny because my mom was just in shock . . . it made me feel very bad and I started crying. Me dice, "Millie, why do react like that?" Y le dije, "Mom, its because I can now understand those people who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, when they come out of the closet how hard it is for them." . . . But, we just left it there. We never touched the subject again.
>
> José: Let me ask you this. What is the best strategy to change our parents mentality, ways of knowing, if we are growing up in a different generation?
>
> Milagros: I think one of the ways would be to try to expose your family into it. Hmm try to talk to them, and tell them to look at it. Make them think the two perspectives . . . And you know, make them feel in this situation. Hmm, I guess also, coming out to the community. And let them know. I guess let them know this is a different generation than they went through. And it's not wrong . . . So maybe just educate them. Little by little. (Student Interview, Pérez 2000)

Challenging heteronormative regimes of acceptability in the Mexican family is perhaps the most difficult transformational enterprise a FGMH student can undertake. Milagros' story ties sexuality to the broader constructions of difference, social rights, and new citizenship (Hall and Held 1990), demonstrating how claims for cultural citizenship are made not only against the state but within excluded ethnic/racial communities as well.

The struggle for sexual rights is a struggle for cultural citizenship within the family, where control of female sexuality is strong and pervasive. While FGMH female students may not even be claiming the right to sexual orientation, the fact is that physical and geographic separation is frequently framed by parents in terms of sexuality. Thus, the desire for subjecthood is a struggle for rights in the family that requires various strategic modes of negotiation. Miriam Rivera's story about having to return home every single weekend is incredibly common:

> Now, I have class on Saturday and they're really open to it…Now its totally different. It surprises me. Before like, you're gonna be home on Friday and there's no question about it. And I felt like "Oh, I'm off at college and my parents still have this say over me?…I guess they felt they had to have some kind of restrictions on me, so maybe they thought…if they didn't have that, I'd would probably just go crazy and do whatever I wanted and now they see, here I am, my third year, and I'm making it. (Student Interview, M. Rivera 2000)

Similarly, Lupe reflects on the long process of negotiating her autonomy:

> Lupe: Well first, my mom she didn't want me to go to college. Because um, I'm the first person in the family, I'm the second oldest of a family of nine people. I'm a woman, so my mom was like afraid of it cause she didn't have any guidance. She didn't know what [*sic*] to guide me. She was afraid because I was leaving home and that was something that is not right to do like before you get married….I was sixteen years old when I came to California and then, I was like excited about going back to school. My mom, she had to accept it cause that was the law here. I had to go to school cause I was young so she did accept it. But when I did graduate she was expecting me to go, to go to work, like not in the fields cause they work in the fields so obviously she didn't want that for me. But she also didn't want me to be away from home so that was a really complicated experience cause also I didn't know how to explain all these situations to her so she could be aware of the issues going on so.

> Jessica: How were you able to convince her?
>
> Lupe: That was really hard but I just started like filling out applications with them. I didn't really tell her about it until I got accepted at the university. But before um, like when I was in, in high school I went to this program called Yo Puedo. It's held in Santa Cruz, UC Santa Cruz. And I went there for a whole month. So that was like a new experience for my parents having me away from home so I used that. I used that as like a back up for me. Okay, now you have the feeling of it. And then I did talk to some of my professors and I asked them to please help me to inform my parents about what college was about and just like telling them every time like in every little conversation that we have about it, I used to bring it up, like "Mommy, um just remember I want to go to college and I might be like leaving home." So I guess she was getting used to me being out but she thought that this was just kind of like an idea in my mind. So until I was really like making my decision and leaving home was the time that they realized that I was actually leaving. (Student Audio Interview, Figueroa 2000)

All three, Lupe, Milagros, and Miriam deploy traditional strategies of quiet persistence and subtle persuasion—affirming their own goals while being careful not to alienate themselves from family. The struggle for new rights within the family is not confrontational and oppositional. It remains within the framework of *respeto*, in which parents are honored.

Conclusion

The interviews suggest that first generation college students of Mexican heritage on our campus imagine and shape their future goals as college graduates from a relational place of cultural commitment rather than from a sense of dislocation and schism. None of the students we interviewed, male or female, saw herself/himself as severing from culture, family, or community. Some scholars might describe this bicultural reality as one of anomie, of being "caught" between two worlds. I read these testimonies as indicators of skillful and purposeful cross-cultural navigation, negotiation, and translation. Rather than pursuit of the individualistic "American dream" of upward mobility, the narratives of first generation Mexican-heritage students on our campus affirm a continued praxis of relationality vis a vis culture, family, and community.

Similarly, students describe the university as a space for further empowerment, both personal and collective, despite experiences of

racism, marginalization, and exclusion. They not only expect the campus to live up to its Vision but also expect to be architects of that process through their cultural assets and funds of knowledge, moving beyond resistance in a new and often intimidating milieu. Empowerment can mean everything from access to higher education in large numbers, academic persistence and success, to challenging traditional frameworks of knowledge construction and production.

Forging an integrated subjectivity means navigating within and across different cultural terrains and in all of them, becoming agents of change. Here is where cultural citizenship matters. Agency, rights, and belonging are constructed from culturally grounded values and perspectives. FGMH students affirm the right to be in the university *as* FGMH students, not as assimilated Americans. Claims for first-class citizenship in higher education, however, are claims for equal access and support in the present, for all the generations coming up from behind. Consequently, the claim for space and rights is, in a sense, a class-action, a collective claim in which the current actors are protagonists.

Here is where gender, as an analytical framework and subject position, matters. While FGMH male and female students share a common goal of empowering their communities through education, their claims for cultural citizenship are framed in different ways. I've tried to demonstrate, through limited but representative samples of students' testimonies, that the counter-stories of male and female students are different in the ways in which they disrupt, or do not disrupt, master narratives about belonging and equality. Male students affirm a masculinist discourse that, on the one hand, challenges class and cultural subordination in the mainstream, and on the other, fulfills their culturally scripted roles as providers for family and cultural community. Women students speak to a more complex, multilayered, intersected subjectivity that requires them to be multiply situated at all times. They come into a university world as outsiders in multiple ways—as first generation, as students of color, as women, and as women of Mexican heritage. They have to contend with simultaneous pressures of social construction and representation within mainstream society, within their families, and within their own psychic space. As Mexican-heritage women, they are not always authorized to imagine themselves as professionals, as leaders, as intellectuals, or as activists. And yet, the integrated subjectivity they forge and the place from which they claim cultural citizenship, for themselves and their communities, speaks to a complex consciousness and a solidly grounded understanding of the historical importance of their efforts.

Cultural citizenship, then, is multiply inscribed for FGMH women as claims against structures of domination in U.S. society and as claims against cultural frameworks of gender subordination at home. They blaze a trail for younger generations as role models, but they also position themselves as ideological transformers, often using culturally marked strategies as well as new knowledge to instill new forms of consciousness in those they mentor. They set the bar high.

Conceptually, gendering cultural citizenship enriches and deepens its explanatory power. It enables us to see a much deeper structure of transformation under way, one that is not linear but infinitely recursive and multiply layered. Gendered cultural citizenship means forging and claiming identity, space, and rights in multiple, interconnected spheres, where resistance, negotiation, and transformation, in culturally self-defined terms, express an integrated subjectivity and praxis.

Notes

1. I wish to thank and acknowledge all the students who carried out field work with their peers on campus between 1998 and 2003. In the process of learning how to do oral history, they created a lasting archive for research on a topic that is growing in importance in higher education across the country.
2. The term "cultural citizenship" began to appear in anthropological and cultural studies literature in the late 1980s. As most terms, it has varied interpretations. The definition I use was developed collaboratively by a group of Latina/o scholars conducting ethnographic research in Chicana/o, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and mixed Latina/o communities (see Inter-University Program 1988; and Flores and Benmayor 1997). We describe and theorize ways in which Latinas/os across the country have responded to historical marginalization and institutionalized racism.
3. For Luis Moll, Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez, and James Greenberg (1990, 33–40), funds of knowledge are "constituted through the historical experiences and productive activities of families and shared or distributed through the creation of social networks for exchange." They argue that social and intellectual resources that comprise the funds or knowledge in a community can have an impact on education when these are recognized, tapped, and schools and classrooms organized to take advantage of such community knowledge.
4. Most parents work in the agricultural fields, food packing plants, or in the service sector. For poor, working-class families, having a child in college means less income into the family and often an additional financial burden.

5. The contemporary literature on first generation students strongly challenges the attainability of the "American dream." Class stratification and low economic status are widely understood to be significant variables in the persistence and success of first generation college students. Class stratification, the deployment of "cultural capital," and the cultural mediations of "habitus" are seen as intersecting constraints that limit upward mobility and call into question the usefulness of the concept altogether (Walpole 1998; Boatsman 2000).
6. Service Learning is a required curriculum on our campus. In their sophomore year, students take a course called Introduction to Service in Multicultural Communities, where they connect working in an arranged community site with a race/class/gender curriculum in the course. Most FGMH students cite this experience in their interviews as being transformational and a place where they were able to see their own lived experience in a larger historical and theoretical context.
7. Lupe graduated in Spring 2003 with a double major; she was the recipient of the Alumni Vision Award, one of five student awards given each year at Commencement.

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Chapter Eight

Gender, Belonging, and Native American Women: The Activism of Cecelia Fire Thunder and Sarah Deer

Renya K. Ramirez

Indigenous notions of belonging from a gendered perspective considers social belonging, political and social agency in the context of disciplinary forces, as well as in terms of gendered experiences of Native women and men within homes, local and tribal communities, and nation-state(s). However, indigenous women's political activism has been marginalized in dominant society, and in Native American Studies. Indigenous women activists, for example, in Native American Studies have been pressured to stay in solidarity with their men, ignoring widespread sexism. In a patriarchal society, furthermore, women are supposed to be nonpolitical, and confined in the domestic sphere. This essay will consider the relationship among Native Americans, gender, belonging, and tribal sovereignty in Native communities by examining the sexism that indigenous women activists in general often confront. My discussion focuses on the activism of Cecelia Fire Thunder, a Lakota woman and former tribal chairwoman of the Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota, and Sarah Deer, a Muscogee lawyer, whose actions redefine tribal nationalism, sovereignty, and belonging from a Native and gendered lens.

Belonging

The concept of cultural citizenship informs my view of belonging in Native communities. Cultural citizenship, according to Renato Rosaldo, focuses on the experiences of oppressed groups (Rosaldo 1997). The word "cultural" emphasizes the need to find out their own senses of belonging, rights, and entitlement, as well as to highlight their agency. This notion of cultural citizenship is different from legal citizenship, because it is about how everyday experiences give

citizenship meaning and significance (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Ramirez 2004; 2007a). This rethinking of citizenship concentrates on how dominated groups struggle to belong while confronting social, political, and/or cultural disenfranchisement. This notion of cultural citizenship is based on how Latinos fight against oppressive conditions in order to become full members of the United States. It is defined as "the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong, in the sense of participating in the nation-state's democratic processes" (Rosaldo and Flores 1997, 57).

Indigenous experience, however, defies prior ideas of cultural citizenship elaborated by Rina Benmayor, Renato Rosaldo, and William Flores. Unlike Latinos, Native Americans are often asserting their tribally sovereign rights rather than fighting to belong to the U.S. nation-state (Guerrero 1997; Ramirez 2002, 2004, 2007a). Consequently, I expand prior notions of cultural citizenship, since I use this concept in relationship to Native experience. Indeed, I "engender" cultural citizenship from an indigenous point of view. This approach must not only make masculinist power visible, but must also emphasize the social and political agency of Natives, and our struggle to belong in the context of disciplinary forces (Ong 1996)[1] in multiple locations, including homes, communities, tribal nations, and nation-state(s). It should, in addition, incorporate a notion of the political as outside the public sphere, while highlighting the significance of emotions, spirituality, as well as intimate relationships (Gender and Cultural Citizenship Working Group, this volume; Ramirez 2004; 2007a).

Cultural citizenship was founded on the assumption that community activists are intellectuals in their own right, who have their own senses of entitlement, rights, and belonging to narrate to the world. Consequently, community activists' own vernacular notions must be taken as seriously as those discussed by published scholars. In this sense, cultural citizenship is an *autoethnographic* practice. Mary Louise Pratt, a literary theorist, argues that if ethnographic texts have been used by dominant groups to represent the oppressed as part of an imperialist process, then *autoethnographic* texts are those the oppressed construct in dialogue with these dominant representations in order to portray their own versions of the world (Pratt 1992). Cultural citizenship is an *autoethnographic* process or methodology that privileges community activists as intellectuals, whose knowledge should be placed in dialogue with dominant assumptions and theories

that have been used to disenfranchise and marginalize them. In the next section, I will discuss how sexism marginalizes indigenous women activists.

Native Women's Activism

As a Winnebago/Ojibwe woman, I first became interested in Native women's activism when I was very small. My mother, Woesha Cloud North, lived on Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay Area for six months during the Native American occupation. Native activists occupied "the Island" for nineteen months from November 20, 1969 until June 11, 1971. The purpose of the occupation was to awaken the United States public to the struggles and plight of Native Americans and to emphasize the need for our self-determination. As soon as indigenous activists occupied the Island, they created an elected council. Everyone then took responsibility for various tasks and duties, such as security, sanitation, day-care, education, cooking, and laundry (Johnson 1996). My mother volunteered and became a teacher in the school for the children (Ramirez, forthcoming). I used to answer the phone and write down messages from all of her Native women activist friends. She eventually introduced me to Linda Aranaydo, Lou Trudell, Rosalie Willie, and many others, who were all a part of the Alcatraz struggle. These early childhood experiences stimulated my passionate interest in documenting Native women's activist struggles.

In graduate school at Stanford University, I read many texts in Native American Studies with other indigenous women graduate students, including Verna St. Denis, Victoria Bomberry, Mishauna Goeman, and Tina Fragoso. I soon found out, however, that Native women activists' lives were not adequately discussed. For example, in "American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in North America," Annette Jaimes and Theresa Halsey quote Lorelei DeCora Means, a Minneconjou Lakota member of the American Indian Movement, who argues that Native women should stay in solidarity with their men to fight against colonization. She says, "We are American Indian women, in that order. We are oppressed, first and foremost, as American Indians, as peoples colonized by the United States of America, not as women" (Jaimes and Halsey 1992, 314). Thus, in this article, Jaimes and Halsey ignore the importance of focusing on gendered experiences in Native communities by privileging a Native American nationalism that silences gender issues. This is

problematic, since it overlooks indigenous women's activism against an all too common experience with sexism.[2] Furthermore, Paul Smith and Robert Warrior write in *Like a Hurricane* about Native activism at Wounded Knee and the Alcatraz takeover. They, however, do not highlight adequately indigenous women's involvement and their very important intellectual insight about the exciting events that surrounded them (Ramirez 2007a; Smith and Warrior 1996).

In contrast, my mother told me about the Alcatraz occupation from a woman-centered point of view. My mother had been feeling suffocated, having to live in white suburbia away from Native community, since she had married a non-Native. She missed always being surrounded by other Natives, as she grew up at an indigenous college preparatory school, the American Indian Institute in Wichita, Kansas, which was run by her parents, Henry Roe Cloud and Elizabeth Bender Cloud. She was excited to hear about Natives taking over Alcatraz and wanted to join them. I was very young at the time, but felt proud that my mother would go and live there. She stayed there five days of the week, and usually came home on weekends. She described how she slept in a sleeping bag with only a thin foam pad between her and the concrete in one of the prison cells as Alcatraz is the site of a famous prison. She discussed the penetrating damp cold that the wind only intensified, the trips to gather water from the San Francisco Bay in order to flush the toilets, and the indigenous women gathering together to cook meals and tell jokes. At Alcatraz, she felt at home and comfortable, among many Native Americans. She described her experience, teaching the children in the school during the swirling events of the time. She loved working with the children, helping them with schoolwork, as well as encouraging them to do artwork, since she was an artist. She discussed her and other Native women's resurgence of tremendous pride and self-esteem. Their activism and support of each other, she explained, made her finally feel like a full human being. Her personal feelings of increased self-respect and self-esteem encouraged my mother to return to graduate school in her early fifties and follow her lifelong dream to become a professor of Native American Studies (Ramirez, forthcoming). In this way, her experience on Alcatraz shows how emotions, including self-esteem, are involved in Native women's struggles to belong in a world that does not respect them (see Coll, this volume). It also demonstrates how hubs of interaction away from state power can be supportive realms where Native women can gain necessary strength and energy in order to become empowered (Ramirez 2007a; Blackwell this volume).

After these conversations with my mother, I began to understand that Native women activists on "the Island" suffered frustrations related to gender. The media, for example, focused on the activities of the Native American men and left out the hard work and intellectual insight of the indigenous women (Ramirez, forthcoming). I remember how the television cameras and the newspapers at the time seemed always to concentrate on John Trudell and Richard Oakes, two of the male leaders of the Alcatraz occupation. My mother and her female activist friends and their activities teaching the children, cooking, providing health services, and leadership never seemed to be in the media's spotlight.

Similarly, Andrea Smith, an activist and scholar, discusses her own experience with sexism in the media while working with a chapter of Women of All Red Nations (WARN) in Chicago, which she cofounded in the late 1980s. WARN is a Native women's activist organization, which was created by Madonna Thunderhawk and Lorelei Means in 1974, to work on decolonization and land struggles in Native communities (Ramirez, forthcoming). Smith recounts how WARN in Chicago organized many demonstrations, but was rarely credited with coordinating these events. For example, a man from the American Indian Movement (AIM) chapter in Kentucky traveled to Chicago to support their event. Then the media publicized the occasion as organized by AIM not by WARN, even though there was no AIM chapter in Chicago at that time. She cites another example when Roxy Grignon, a Menominee activist, led a struggle to close an open burial mound in Dickson, Illinois. However, the press then decided to credit two men from an AIM chapter with the burial mound's closing, not Roxy Grignon. Smith argues that the media's choice to foreground Native men and not indigenous women was not necessarily the Native men's doing, but demonstrated the media's decision to ignore indigenous women's leadership and activism (Smith 2002). Similarly, Madonna Thunderhawk argues that the media in the dominant society have consistently refused to acknowledge the leadership roles of Native women in the American Indian Movement (Smith 2002).

Andrea Smith notes further that the activism of Native women often goes unrecorded because it is not viewed as dramatic and attention grabbing as the activist roles occupied by men. She argues that Smith and Warrior in *Like a Hurricane* do not discuss much of the critical work done by Native women after the 1960s, because it was not viewed as being as headline-grabbing as occupations and demonstrations of the Wounded Knee era. During this time period, Native women founded WARN and the Indigenous Women's Network (IWN).

These organizations struggled to make sterilization abuse of Native women public; they fought to organize a global indigenous movement, and labored to publicize environmental racism (Smith 2002).

This silencing of Native women's political activism, furthermore, must be placed in the context of a patriarchal society that assumes white men control the public sphere (Ramirez, forthcoming). For example, public/private spheres and political/nonpolitical action influence androcentric models of political organization. These dichotomous relationships assume an opposition between the nonpolitical, domestic woman and the political, public man (Young 1990). Women in this society, who cross the boundary between the private and the public sphere, are often viewed as exceptional or as an anomaly. Indeed, Theda Purdue argues that Native communities learned sexism when the colonists refused to respect and negotiate with the female leadership of tribes (Purdue 1998). Consequently, Native nations began to devalue and not respect their own indigenous women leaders. Thus, focusing and learning from Native women's activism is an important contribution to Native studies conversations.

Cecelia Fire Thunder

Cecelia Fire Thunder became the first woman president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota in 2004. She defeated Russel Means by over 600 votes in her first try to become leader of her tribal nation. Fire Thunder argues that her win shows the increasing power of the women's vote and voice (Editor, *Indian Country Today* 2004). The Lakota women, she explained, have been busy attending school, receiving degrees, and taking care of the family (and winning the election). All of these things have helped, she said, improve the Lakota woman's social position (Editor, *Indian Country Today* 2004). Indeed, Fire Thunder's activism helps return political power to Lakota women that colonizing influences have taken away (Medicine 2001), including federal government boarding schools that inserted Eurocentric gender roles into indigenous communities, empowering Native males and disempowering Native females (Lomawaima 1994).

Fire Thunder has worked most of her adult life to heal the Native American family, such as establishing an organization, Sacred Circle, to address domestic violence. She is also a strong advocate for Lakotas to reclaim their own indigenous language, especially for the younger

generation. She labors to teach her people about Lakota traditions, including promoting gender balance and the sacred importance of elders and children, thereby strengthening her tribal nation from the ground up.

Fire Thunder's activism demonstrates the importance of linking gender, tribal nation, and sovereignty together in order to protect Native women's gendered rights and concerns. When the Governor of South Dakota, Mike Rounds, signed HB 1215 into law on March 6, 2006, it banned virtually all abortions except for ones that were needed to save a woman's life. There, however, were no other exceptions, including ending pregnancies in the case of incest or rape. Fire Thunder, a former nurse, was very angry that a state body, composed mostly of white men, would legislate such a law against women. She responded that this legislation brought up questions of sovereignty, and she would establish a Planned Parenthood clinic on reservation land where the state of South Dakota had no jurisdiction (Giago 2006). Thus, she asserted the political sovereignty of her tribal nation and its right to assert jurisdictional boundaries in order to protect the gendered rights of Lakota women, bringing together gender, tribal nation, and sovereignty.

Fire Thunder was suspended on May 31, 2006 as the tribal president of the Oglala Sioux Nation after her public statement that abortions should be carried out on reservation land even though the state of South Dakota prohibited them (Briggs 2006). The reason for her suspension was the allegation that she asked for donations without the approval of the tribal council for a health clinic, the Sacred Choices Wellness Center, which intended to perform abortions on the reservation. Fire Thunder argues that she never requested these donations. Indeed, these donations very likely came unsolicited (Briggs 2006). The one who voiced the complaints against her was tribal councilman Will Peters, who argued that the central issue was abortion, and that he and others would fight for all Lakotas, including the unborn (Melmer 2006).

Fire Thunder, however, has inserted indigenous woman's perspectives into the hotly contested abortion debate. She argues that a large percentage of women on the Oglala Sioux reservation have been sexually abused, many of them as children. Fire Thunder portrays the incest and molestation of children as sexual deviancy and rape and considers it as the ultimate subjugation, which is too often the result of domestic violence. Indeed, much of the contemporary dysfunction in Native communities can be understood as a result of high rates of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse that were common in federal

boarding schools where Native children were forcibly taken (Smith 2004). In other words, Natives learned this abusive behavior there and then brought it home to their tribal communities. Colonialism, therefore, is the root cause of high rates of sexual violence experienced by indigenous women (Smith 2005). Fire Thunder discusses how women in alcohol and drug treatment reveal terrible things, including male relatives raping them and then being forced to bear their children (Briggs 2006). Consequently, abortion rights, she argues, are absolutely critical and essential for these rape victims. Some, including Fire Thunder, argue that historically Lakota women knew how to carry out abortions. Others disagree, such as language and culture teacher Philomine Lakota, who argues that there is no word in Lakota for the termination of pregnancy. Fire Thunder emphasizes that national-level indigenous leaders must acknowledge this (sexual and domestic) abuse against Native women if tribal nations have to stop it. She asserts the importance of recognizing indigenous women's sovereignty, which includes the right of Native women to make decisions about their own bodies (Briggs 2006). Thus, Fire Thunder expands the notion of political sovereignty to include the bodies of women, thereby bridging the private and public spheres in her activism. Indeed, Fire Thunder fights to support the political sovereignty of the Oglala Lakota Nation to determine abortion law. In this way, she adds a valuable idea to the national abortion debate, which is that traditional Lakota values and perspectives about ending pregnancy should be at the very forefront and foundation of tribal law and policy.

However, not every woman living on the Pine Ridge Reservation believes the same as Fire Thunder; most importantly, the tribal council disagreed with her. Indeed, the tribal council issued a statement prohibiting abortion on reservation land (Briggs 2006). At the same time, female leaders asked for a vote on abortion, asserting that the vote should be restricted to women. They argued that many women would cast their vote in support of Fire Thunder, but would not speak out, because of the intensity of the debate.

Norma Rendon, who is employed by a domestic violence shelter administered by the nonprofit Canleska Inc., spoke angrily about the men for talking about women's concerns, including some tribal council members whose views had been quoted in the newspapers. She described how she had six children and had raised them all by herself without any financial or emotional support. Although she may not be in favor of abortion, Rendon said, she cannot make a woman's personal choice for her (Briggs 2006).

Former tribal council member Deb Rooks-Cook, whose father used to be tribal chairman, discussed asking the tribal council to take a position against sexual violence twenty years ago. She remembered her father telling her not to expect any response, and that she was indeed talking to the perpetrators. Her tribal community is in the middle of a quiet revolution, according to Fire Thunder, and it is incredibly painful (Briggs 2006).

A month after Fire Thunder's suspension, she was impeached on June 29, 2006 and was relieved of her duties as tribal president. A primary reason for her impeachment was the allegation that she organized an abortion clinic beyond her authority as president and did not consult with the tribal council or get their permission (Melmer 2006). Other allegations were that Fire Thunder used the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the U.S. Postal Service, and the media to solicit funds for the clinic. Fire Thunder, however, argues that all funds came unsolicited (Melmer 2006).

Sarah Deer

Sarah Deer, a Muscogee lawyer, is a sexual and domestic violence activist and a scholar. Her activism involves maintaining an e-mail group listserv, "Communities Against Violence Network," which publicizes issues related to violence against Native women, and is very informative. Members of this e-mail community include researchers and practitioners from many disciplines and from around the world, who collaborate about issues regarding violence against indigenous women. Indeed, this activist network is always looking for new members in order to improve their ability to locate cutting-edge information, as well as share resources and knowledge. Her activism also includes traveling around the Indian Country, working with tribes to incorporate domestic and sexual domestic laws into tribal codes.[3] It involves writing numerous articles about violence against Native women. Deer argues that tribal governments must assert their sovereign right to deal with violent crimes against Native women and children. She writes,

> Protecting and supporting the citizenry is a central component of [tribal] sovereignty. It has become clear that Native women cannot depend on external systems of justice to provide justice and accountability for high rates of sexual violence they experience. Therefore, tribal governments must make efforts to restore and strengthen their ability to address these crimes…Part of de-colonizing the mind and

> body is to send a message that as tribal nations we will no longer tolerate the invasion of our communities through the violation of our grandmothers, our clan mothers, our life-givers, our sisters, or our daughters from outsiders or those within our community. As sovereign nations, we must look to our [Indigenous] histories, beliefs, resources, and experiences to reclaim safety and empowerment for all women. (Deer 2004–2005, 143)

Decolonization, according to Deer, is integral to developing a tribal nation that protects as well as empowers Native women. The importance of protecting Native women's bodies, argues Deer, is the central concern for creating respectful tribal nations. Underlying her argument is the need to rely on the tribal rather than the federal justice system, thus linking gender and tribal sovereignty together.[4]

Deer emphasizes the significance of decolonizing tribal nations in the context of an Anglo-American model of justice that has replaced traditional Native justice systems. She discusses that prior to colonization tribal nations had full jurisdiction (legal authority) over all disputes and crimes. Indeed, she argues that most indigenous nations prior to colonization had effective justice systems that deterred crimes against women and children (Deer 2004). Even though these crimes were rare, according to Deer, tribal systems of jurisprudence provided an effective method of checks and balances that encouraged offenders to be made accountable (Deer 2004; Poupart 2003; Allen 1986). Unlike the Anglo-American system, argues Deer, many traditional tribal justice systems were victim-centered. In fact, tribes historically worked to provide victims with emotional and spiritual recovery from violent crime, and compensation. This is very different from the contemporary Anglo-American system, which is adversarial (Deer 2004).

Replacing tribal justice systems with an Anglo-American model, according to Deer, has been devastating for Native women, who are the most victimized population in the United States. The rates of sexual assault and domestic violence against Native women are greater than in any other racial or ethnic group (Deer 2004). Indeed, over one-third of Native American women will experience sexual violence during their lives. Deer argues that the federal government's laws and policies play an important role in this very high rate of victimization, because they have hindered tribal nations' power and ability to deal with sexual violence (Deer 2004).[5]

Deer discusses how, over the last century, United States policies, such as the Major Crimes Act of 1885, have weakened traditional justice approaches. The Major Crimes Act allows for federal prosecution

of serious felony cases, such as murder and rape. Most do not know, according to Deer, that federal law never explicitly took away tribal nations' authority based upon their own inherent tribal sovereignty to prosecute major crimes. Therefore, tribal nations, in principle, she argues, have concurrent jurisdiction over violent crimes, including rape. At the same time, the federal government has been largely responsible for the development of contemporary tribal systems of justice, and, as a result, tribal governments often choose not to exercise their right to concurrent jurisdiction over violent crimes. Therefore, as Deer explains, many tribal nations decide not to take on cases against batterers and rapists or choose to pursue them only when a federal or state prosecutor declines to take the case (Deer 2004).

Deer describes how Public Law 280 has also increased the violence in Native communities. Approximately seventy years after the passage of the Major Crimes Act of 1885, Public Law 280 in 1953 transferred criminal matters to some state governments. Public Law 280 was part of the federal government's effort to "terminate" tribal nations, trying to end federal recognition of indigenous nations, which was later reversed by the federal government's self-determination policy. Deer explains that one legacy of Public Law 280 is that criminal activity and violence fall under state jurisdiction for Native peoples in PL280 states. However, state governments have not provided effective law enforcement for tribal communities, leaving Natives vulnerable to criminal activity. Deer emphasizes that, like the Major Crimes Act, Public Law 280 did not specifically take away tribal governments' right to concurrent jurisdiction over crime (Deer 2004; Song and Jimenez 1998).

Within this context, Deer encourages tribal nations to assert their power of concurrent jurisdiction that is based on their tribally sovereign right to develop their own remedies to combat violence against Native women and children. At the same time, Deer understands that tribal justice systems need additional training and resources to create the needed infrastructure in order to begin responding to this type of violent crime.[6]

Deer has examined how many believe that "peacemaking" approaches often developed by Native men can be used as strategies to combat violence against indigenous women. She argues that many frequently view "peacemaking" as "indigenous," because it relies on talking circles, restorative principles, and family meetings. In contrast, Deer sees many difficulties with the "peacemaking" model when it is used to deal with rape, some of them are: (1) Native women's safety is not emphasized or given priority; (2) survivors might be

compelled to participate, intensifying their trauma; (3) it employs a "traditional" approach for behavior that is not "traditional"; (4) it does not portray sexual violence as a political crime, and; (5) it does not confront or deal with the recidivism common among sex offenders. Instead, Deer argues, Native women rather than men must be at the forefront of creating remedies, which include tribal responses to rape (Deer, undated).[7] In this way, she privileges the knowledge and activism of Native American women to decolonize tribal nations by developing their own tribal solutions to combat sexual violence.

Overall, Deer encourages tribal governments to consider rethinking contemporary responses to sexual violence, including developing comprehensive tribal codes and enforcement practices to protect victims of gendered violence. Reform of current tribal criminal laws regarding sexual violence is especially important, because they are often inextricably linked to Anglo-American jurisprudence. According to Deer, this reform, a decolonization process, should incorporate indigenous cultural knowledges and practices that support women's safety. It must also rely on the experiences of survivors of sexual violence and their supporters (Deer 2003–2004), and the expert knowledge and insight of indigenous women, who should be at the very forefront of developing the necessary remedies for rampant gendered violence, in order to create tribal nations that once again protect and ensure the safety of indigenous women, as they did in the past.

Deer and Fire Thunder: Gender, Tribal Sovereignty, Nationalism, and Belonging

Indeed, both Deer and Fire Thunder emphasize the importance of sovereignty in multiple sites, including women's bodies and tribal nations. These many sites of struggle for sovereignty bridge private and public spheres, and demonstrate how indigenous women assert sovereignty from the ground up in order to protect gendered rights and concerns. Deer and Fire Thunder turn to indigenous frameworks of respectful gender relations rather than sexism to develop a Native nationalism that protects indigenous women's gendered concerns and rights. Thus, in order to combine gender, tribal sovereignty, and nationalism together, indigenous women argue for the need to rely on concrete experiences and Native philosophical values.

Fire Thunder, for example, labors to recover traditional Lakota practices about gender balance, abortion, language, and female leadership and power in order to begin to decolonize her Lakota nation.

She argues that abortion was a traditional practice, and is now an especially important contemporary strategy (that now relies on modern medicine) to deal with the problem of male relatives raping women, and these women being forced to bear unwanted children. Thus, rather than solely recovering traditional practices from the past, she is reinventing them to be relevant for the contemporary situation. Similarly, Deer encourages indigenous men to respect Native women's power, a traditional indigenous concept (Allen 1986; Klein and Ackerman 1995), by following their lead in the creation of remedies for rampant violence against indigenous women. Deer also emphasizes the need for remembering indigenous cultural knowledges that insure the safety of Native women and children as integral to the development of tribal justice practices. At the same time, Deer argues, traditional knowledges must be reinvented from Native women's perspectives and not just followed (such as using traditional strategies in peacemaking approaches) in order to begin dealing with contemporary problems, including rape, which are ultimately not traditional practices. Thus, rather than attempting to rely solely on past notions of traditional cultures, they both argue for the recovery and simultaneous reinvention of these traditional knowledges from women's points of view as ways to start solving the huge problem of violence against Native women.

Deer not only works to recover and reinvent indigenous epistemologies as integral to building respectful tribal nations, but also directly challenges the colonizing power of the federal government, and its many policy and laws, which do not protect indigenous women from violence and can exacerbate this rampant problem. Her writing, for example, contests the very foundation of these laws and policies by arguing that tribal nations ultimately never relinquished their right to concurrent jurisdiction based on their inherent right to tribal sovereignty. Her contestation of power is resolute and courageous. Similarly, Fire Thunder bravely names, confronts, and tries to heal a colonial legacy of dysfunction that creates a dangerous environment for indigenous women. She challenges the South Dakota state legislature, composed mostly of white men, who enacted an antiabortion law, and Native leaders, who are often male, to see the issue of abortion from a gendered and an indigenous perspective.

Indeed, both Deer and Fire Thunder confront colonial/patriarchal power that federal policies, including the boarding schools, have inserted into tribal communities, supporting sexism, misogyny, and violence against indigenous women, as well as huge conflicts. Indeed, male power has become consolidated in tribal nations, because of

colonialism and government policies, such as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, and federal government schools, which empowered Native males and disempowered Native females (Ramirez 2007b; Guerrero 1997). This male power based in patriarchal/colonial ideas of sexism and misogyny encourages tribal council members, who are often men, to turn a blind eye to gendered concerns. At the same time, some Native men in power are also the perpetrators, carrying out violence against indigenous women themselves.

Fire Thunder and Deer have developed antiviolence strategies, including a domestic violence organization, and an e-mail listserv. They are hubs of respectful interaction, which are based in virtual and geographic space (Ramirez 2007a), that provide members with social, intellectual, emotional, and other support so indigenous women can develop the strength and knowledge to challenge the colonial/patriarchal power that supports violence against them. These supportive networks are hubs outside of state power, where gendered notions of tribal sovereignty and autonomy and other empowering ideas can be developed and practiced in order to support a sense of belonging away from dominant cultural hegemony (see Blackwell, this volume; Ramirez 2007a). Thus, these hubs bridge private and public spheres, and enable their members to learn how to contest and create power, so they can challenge dominant forces away from these supportive networks in homes and public arenas.

Moreover, a gendered notion of belonging rather than being divisive has the potential of helping indigenous men and women comprehend the reasons for many difficulties that plague them, such as the large numbers of both Native men and women in prison, excessive male unemployment, and high rates of violence against indigenous women (Ross 1998). Sexism is ultimately one of the underlying causes of these problems. It could, furthermore, encourage both sexes to decolonize their minds of dominant ideas of masculinity and femininity, which could strengthen interpersonal bonds that sexist gender relationships ultimately deteriorate. Most importantly, a gendered notion of belonging could motivate both indigenous men and women to unlearn dominant notions of femininity (which are about compliance and submission) and masculinity (which are about control and power). Indeed, these sexist ideas can often support violence against indigenous women.

Native scholars have privileged race and tribal nation over gender issues, citing the importance of tribal sovereignty (Ramirez 2007b). Jaimes and Halsey (1992), for instance, criticize Native feminists,

arguing they are against tribal sovereignty. In contrast, Sarah Deer and Cecelia Fire Thunder argue for the need to link gender, tribal nationalism, and sovereignty together in order to create a world where we as indigenous women can have our gendered rights and concerns addressed and protected. Tribal sovereignty can no longer simply mean independence and separation, but must also incorporate a feeling of respect involved within one's social relationships (Ramirez 2007b). Indeed, tribal sovereignty should not be described as the right for indigenous men to assert their dominance over Native women. Certainly, both indigenous men and women need to develop a gendered notion of belonging in order to address misogyny and sexism that deeply wounds our indigenous communities.

Gender and Cultural Citizenship: Deer and Fire Thunder

In this final section, I examine how Deer's and Fire Thunder's activism makes one rethink the concept of cultural citizenship. As already discussed, important conceptualizations of cultural citizenship have been based on Latinos' fight to become included as part of the U.S. nation-state (Flores and Benmayor 1997). In contrast, the political and intellectual work of Cecelia Fire Thunder and Sarah Deer extends the concept of cultural citizenship to incorporate the experiences of Native women who focus their struggle not upon belonging to the U.S. nation-state but on creating tribal nations where Native women can become full members. Their political and intellectual labor enlarges cultural citizenship to include those who defy a dominant notion of U.S. nationhood as a stable, geographic category. They expand the notion of cultural citizenship to include indigenous women, who historically were and still are leaders, having power in all spheres of tribal life (Allen 1986; Klein and Ackerman 1995). Indeed, their activism engenders cultural citizenship in multiple ways. First, they bridge private and public spheres by creating hubs of interaction outside of state power and by asserting that Native women's gendered rights must be protected in all spheres, including the home. Second, they challenge the patriarchal assumption that politics is a male activity that occurs in the public sphere. Finally, they recover and reinvent indigenous cultural philosphies and knowledges, challenge colonial/patriarchal power, and bring together gender, tribal nation, and sovereignty in order to create tribal nations where Native women truly belong.

In conclusion, I would argue that Native notions of belonging, from a gendered perspective, involve focusing on our social and political agency in the context of disciplinary power, as well as in regard to gendered experiences in homes, tribal nations, local communities, and nation-state(s). However, indigenous women's political activism has been marginalized in Native American Studies and in the media. Indeed, race and tribal nation have been privileged over gender issues in Native American Studies, ignoring widespread sexism and indigenous women's activism against it. Furthermore, women in a patriarchal society are supposed to be confined in the domestic sphere, and remain nonpolitical. In contrast, the political and intellectual work of Cecelia Fire Thunder and Sarah Deer links tribal nation, gender, and sovereignty together, and bridges private and pubic spheres. It also recovers and reinvents indigenous knowledges, while challenging colonial/patriarchal power. In these ways, their political and intellectual activities are important steps toward making a world where we as indigenous women can one day fully belong in all contexts, without the continual fear of becoming victims of gendered violence.

Notes

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1. Even though I take Ong's contribution seriously, and interrogate how the disciplinary forces impact Native Americans, I choose, however, to highlight indigenous peoples' agency.
2. It is important to note that Annette Jaimes Guerrero (1997) changes her stance in later writings and no longer privileges race and nation over gender issues.
3. Informal conversation with Sarah Deer, April 28, 2006.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

Chapter Nine

Sex in the Nation: White Women, Brown Babies, and the Politics of Belonging

Tracy Fisher

One Friday evening in 1999, while living in London, England, one of my housemates and I were home trying to find something to watch on the television. We finally decided to watch a bit of comedy and settled on a rerun of a show called *Harry Enfield and Chums*, a comedy sketch program that initially aired on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from the mid-1990s to late 1990s.[1] *Harry Enfield and Chums* was enormously popular with skits full of outrageous comedy and political satire. For example, the episode I reference below is listed as number eleven on the BBC 4's fifty Greatest Comedy Sketches.[2] The episode features two of Harry Enfield's "chums" Wayne and Waynetta Slob, also known as "The Slobs."

The following is an excerpt from the episode:

Waynetta:
Frogmella came up to me de [the] other day and said "Why haven't I got a brown sista' like all the other kids?" [audience laughter/laugh track]
Nearly broke my heart…[audience laughter/laugh track]
All the other mums have at least one brown baby and I want one. [audience laughter/laugh track]
And for that I need a big black man and that ain't you, Wayne. [audience laughter/laugh track]
Wayne:
But our kids are brown? [audience laughter/laugh track]
Waynetta:
But that's not the same is it, Wayne?…dat's dirt. [audience laughter/laugh track]
END.[3]

Wayne and Waynetta Slob are fictional characters that reflect a natural part of the comedy sketches in *Harry Enfield and Chums*; and, yet, they also represent in real and imaginative ways a segment of Britain's racialized-gendered poor. As characters they are marked by whiteness and class. They are poor, illiterate, and dirty; they drink lots of alcohol, smoke incessantly, and live on a council housing estate.[4] These characteristics, alongside their strong Cockney-English accents, as strong indicators of their class, distinguish them from representations of more well-heeled English (read as white) folks.

More than this, Wayne and Waynetta as comedic, "over the top" fictional characters represent and also reproduce the images, stereotypes (i.e., uneducated, filthy, poor whites) and all things associated with people who live on council estates in England.[5] Thus, as fictional characters they carry on the belief that people living on council estates are uneducated, reckless, morally irresponsible people; they have either "signed on" or are "living on the dole."[6] It is for these very same reasons that the characters allow me to think through in this essay the racialized-gendered politics of belonging.[7] In the popular British imaginary the image of a white woman living on a council estate, a white, single, low-income, unemployed and/or working-class status white woman who is on some form of public assistance, a white woman with a "brown baby," brings to mind Waynetta Slob. This very influential image eclipses that of a white mother of interracial (black and white) children who builds relationships with black community-based women activists and engages in antiracist labor to create a better world for her children.[8] Thus, to a much lesser extent in the popular imagination do we evoke the image of a white transracial mother that is engaged in antiracist political work on behalf of her children. This image of a transracial mother, one that is involved in women's community-based activism—either as a woman seeking services or as an active participant—defies the stereotypical racialized-gendered representations of low-income people as "thick" (dumb), lazy, or just plain unconcerned about the world around them.[9] Additionally, as these mothers work with other women with whom they can share and communicate issues of race, they are also "working through" and understanding racial hierarchies. These are some of the issues that I explore here. In this chapter, I am interested in the ways in which white mothers of mixed race children demonstrate a keen awareness of how their children are racialized, create a community for their children, and, in the process, negotiate and contest racial hierarchies.

By taking together quotidian understandings and experiences of citizenship and belonging with France Winddance Twine's concept of racial literacy (Twine 1999, 2004; Twine and Steinbugler 2006), this essay is concerned with how white mothers of interracial (black and white) children understand and negotiate meanings and practices of race and racism. I am interested in the relationships they make in the larger society, how they encourage community-building with black women community workers, and the ways they engage in knowledge production on behalf of their mixed race families. The concept of racial literacy as a form of antiracist parental labor is helpful in teasing out the multilayered dimensions of the politics of (un)belonging and community-building in Britain. More than this, the racialized-gendered politics of belonging and community-making as it relates to motherhood and interracial parenting is especially important because ideas about motherhood remain central to constructing ideas about nationhood and citizenship.

While living in London I quickly learned that an overwhelming number of black men have established domestic partnerships, marriages, and intimate relationships with white women. More than this, I saw numerous white women in all areas of London pushing prams (strollers), walking, or shopping with mixed race children. The black man-white woman interracial relation is very prevalent; so much so that many people, white and black alike, as Waynetta above does, refer casually to the children of these interracial relationships as "brown babies." It is a term that was used and applied frequently in Britain to children born of the hotly contested interracial relations between mostly soldiers of African descent and white mothers during the Second World War.[10] I maintain that the expression is fraught, as the phrase "brown baby" echoes Britain's deep anxieties around intimacy and sexual relations between white and black bodies while at the same time it reinforces what constitutes Englishness and Britishness.

During my research on black women's community-based activism and the politics of multiracial blackness in England, comments that referred to interracial relationships between black men and white women, such as, "there's a lot of sex going and many children as a result, but not a lot of marriage," alongside the use of the term "brown baby" in colloquial discourse and in popular culture contributed to my growing interest in sexual and intimate relationships. However, such comments also bring to mind the ways that the politics of belonging is negotiated.

The concerns of this essay are threefold. First, I begin with a discussion of intersectionality, the politics of belonging and citizenship,

as this chapter is developed around these overlapping themes. As an analytical tool, intersectional paradigms provide a unique and much needed lens to understand multiple axes of differentiation (Brah and Phoenix 2004) including the politics of (un)belonging and "on the ground" experiences of citizenship. Then, I use an example from Andrea Levy's novel, *Small Island*, as a way to provide an important interpretive context that illustrates the "multilayered-ness" of citizenship. This reading is also useful as it demonstrates how a racialized-gendered whiteness in this specific historical context shapes the ground upon which belonging is experienced. Finally, drawing from ethnography I deploy and expand the concept of *racial literacy* (Twine 2004; Twine and Steinbugler 2006) to explore the politics of belonging in Britain. I suggest that this kind of antiracist labor is connected to community-building, knowledge production, and everyday experiences of citizenship and (un)belonging. Fundamentally, this antiracist labor provides interracial children with the tools to be "empowered political actors" (Introduction, this volume).

Intersectionality, Citizenship, and the Politics of (Un)Belonging

The politics of belonging is a contested space. It is full of contradictions and struggles, it is imbued with power, and it is often rooted in homogeneous assumptions about gender, race, and nation. Feminist-intersectional approaches underscore the ways in which race, gender, and nation—as interconnecting and mutually constituted frameworks—help us to better understand historical and contemporary politics of belonging in Britain. How does an intersectional analysis, for example, help us reframe our approach to understanding the intersection between racialized-gendered whiteness and belonging in contemporary Britain? In what ways does an intersectional analysis further tease out white women's labor and the politics of belonging as it applies to their interracial children in the British context? Such questions call attention to the concerns of this essay. Intersectional frameworks offer a critical lens to analyze racialized-gendered politics of belonging and reveal the ways certain categories are hierarchically ranked and rewarded based often on race, gender, nation, and sexuality. Ruth Frankenberg's (1994) field-defining feminist-intersectional scholarship in whiteness studies is particularly instructive in this area. Because of work such as hers, we are better able to process the ways in which race and racism shapes white women's

lives. The work pushes us to read or reread actions in a racialized context of "whiteness." Doing this provides a framework for Frankenberg's assertion that it is important to view "certain practices and subject positions as racialized (that is, structured by relations of race, usually alongside other structuring principles)" (1994, 7).

Equally important, U.S. sociologist France Winddance Twine offers the concept of *racial literacy* as "a way to explore micro-cultural social processes in which racial hierarchies are negotiated within multi-racial [heterosexual] families" (2004, 881).[11] By analyzing the quotidian practices of transracial parents—in particular, the labor white people perform as they teach their children to identify with black people and assist them in coping with racial hierarchies—she reveals that white parents of interracial children are actively involved in antiracist work (Twine 2004, 881). In other words, white parents are actively engaged in practices that will teach interracial children how to resist racism in the larger society and also encourage them to gain knowledge about and belong to black British communities.

Despite the emphasis on looking at citizenship beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, the power embedded in the nation, nationalist discourse, and its exclusionary practices make it an important entity—one critical to understanding citizenship and (un)belonging. The nation-state is concerned with defining and delimiting boundaries. Through nationalist discourse the nation-state plays an important role in framing the nation and its membership. Much of how (un) belonging is experienced is shaped by the ways the nation continues to be reframed. The politics of belonging underscores the limits and contradictions of more formal, highly masculinized, legal-juridical rights discourse and calls for closer attention to vernacular and quotidian understandings and practices of citizenship (See Ramirez, this volume; Yuval-Davis 2002, 2004). In other words, the politics of belonging is shaped by and shapes everyday understandings of citizenship, citizenship experiences, and citizenship-making.

British feminist theorist Ruth Lister (1997a, 1997b) has long argued that citizenship is contested and that it lies at the heart of the struggles of those excluded from citizenry rights. The politics of belonging is one such struggle; it is inextricably linked to citizenship. Feminist scholars of citizenship have reframed citizenship studies and made the case that understanding of citizenship as a static bundle of rights and obligations is both an inclusionary and exclusionary mechanism—one that is imbued with power and rooted in masculinity[12] and whiteness.[13]

In everyday life, citizenship intersects with various axes of stratification. Formal, legal-juridical aspects of citizenship often mask, rather

than reveal, people's differential access to resources, their structural inequalities, and the positioning of the people in political-economic, social, and cultural realms. In contrast to legal-juridical aspects of citizenship, feminist analyses of citizenship have pushed us to broaden our understanding of what constitutes citizenship. Some scholars (see Yuval-Davis 1999) have urged us to understand citizenship as a "multilayered construct." In Yuval-Davis's (1999, 119) words,

> one's citizenship in collectivities in the different layers—local, ethnic, national, state, cross-or trans-state and supra-state—is affected and at least partly constructed by the relationships at one's citizenship in different collectivities in the relationships and positionings of each layer in specific historical context.

With this in mind, the concept of citizenship encompasses more than just the right to carry a passport; in reality and in practice it is "a more total relationship, inflected by identities, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging" (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999).

England has a long history of inclusionary and exclusionary practices based on the confluence of race, class, gender, and culture. Such practices have been essential to the country's processes of marginalizing persons and to what I have elsewhere called a *hierarchy of belonging*—a hierarchical ranking of persons or populations based on, for example, race, gender, and class (Fisher 2001). Since the Second World War, for example, "immigrant" had already been constructed as a code for Africans, Asians, and Caribbeans, and it indicated that they were a threat to the supposedly racially pure British nation and culture. Meanwhile, an ambiguous, contradictory and more obscure discourse simultaneously incorporated and differentiated Irish immigrants from other continental European immigrants, and both groups from Africans, Asians, and Caribbeans—all of whom settled in Britain (Brah 1993; Paul 1997). It is here that the discursive constructions of the nation and how people are differentially racialized in relation to Englishness and Britishness can be detected.

White Women, Black Men, and Brown Babies in Britain's Historical Context

During and after the Second World War, British policy, practice, and everyday life located black citizen-subjects outside of the discourses of

belonging and within racist discourses of (un)belonging and exclusion. Couched in the language of culture and foreignness, migration and empire, nationhood and racial impurity, legislation played an important role in defining the boundaries of national belonging for black citizen-subjects.[14] Discourses of belonging and exclusion, however, did not only shape the experiences of black citizen-subjects. Rather, inherent in such discourses were limitations and boundaries that, by definition, also shaped the racialized-gendered experiences of Britain's white citizens.

Andrea Levy's award winning novel, *Small Island* (2005), provides a fertile ground upon which to understand the racialized and gendered politics of belonging and citizenship as "multilayered" (Yuval-Davis 1999). Although the book does not explicitly use the framework of citizenship, it provides a rich landscape that speaks to complexities of belonging and the ways in which socially constructed ideas of gender, whiteness, and racism intersect and shape a white working-class woman's experience in the British nation.

In the closing chapters of *Small Island*, one of the protagonists, Queenie Bligh—a white, working-class, married English woman—gives away her newborn baby to two of her "lodgers" (tenants), Gilbert and Hortense Joseph, a young, newlywed Jamaican couple who have married out of convenience and have migrated to England with great hopes of fulfilling their dreams. The newborn baby is the result of Queenie's brief but passionate and sexually intimate relationship with a Caribbean-Jamaican man named Michael. He was briefly stationed in England while serving for the Royal Air Force (RAF.) during the Second World War and knew neither about the pregnancy nor the birth of his child. During this same period the RAF stationed Queenie's husband, Bernard, in India; it would be several years before his return to London.

As the last scenes quickly unfold, the reader is surprised by an unexpected twist—Queenie gives birth to a baby, an interracial child more commonly known during those years as a "half-caste," "coloured," or "brown baby." She names her son Michael and seems to genuinely love him very much. However, just days after his birth, Queenie comes to a seemingly heart-wrenching decision. She decides that the best situation for her new baby son, born out of wedlock, is to give him to Hortense and Gilbert—people who racially and phenotypically look more like the newborn.

To complicate matters even further, Queenie's recently returned long-lost, traumatized, war veteran husband, Bernard, rejects this idea and asks her how she can even consider giving away her own

child, her own flesh and blood. But she quickly silences him and reminds him that he is not the baby's father. She drives home the fact to Bernard that he may be willing and able to care for Michael now, while he is a baby. But Michael will not be an infant forever; one day he will grow and will ask questions regarding the difference in the color of his skin to that of his parents. To reinforce her point, she poses a set of questions the underlines sexual transgression, community, and belonging. What will happen when one day Bernard gets angry and resents Michael and his blackness? How will Bernard and Queenie explain "all of this" to Michael—his skin color, his race, and the sexual relationship his mother (a white English woman) had with a black man, his biological father? What will the neighbors and other people say and do when they see Bernard parenting a "coloured" child, she asks? Such questions continue to preoccupy Queenie and speak to the intersection of, among other things, whiteness, belonging, and community.

Thus, in Queenie's eyes, giving her child to Hortense and Gilbert is best for baby Michael. It is an alternative to putting him in an orphanage, a place where "coloured ones," she tells us, are not wanted. In her last-ditch effort, she explains to Gilbert and Hortense that, "[i]n the newspaper they said they were going to send all of the half-caste babies that had been born since the war—sons, daughters of coloured GIs mostly—they were going to send them to live in America" (Levy 2005, 432). Thus, reflecting the ways Britain, in effect, upheld and reinforced U.S.-style Jim Crow segregation, racism, and racist practices despite its protests to the contrary (Wynn 2006).

Queenie has already come to terms with the fact that she doesn't have the "guts," "spine," or strength to engage in antiracist struggles throughout Michael's life; in her mind giving the child away is the best option. Throughout Queenie's maternal struggles her actions illustrate the complexities of navigating the gendered relations of belonging and whiteness in mid-twentieth century London. Two overlapping, yet complex, factors should be noted. By giving away baby Michael, Queenie is securing her belonging, her position—her whiteness and her gender—as a white woman in the British nation and in that nation's racial order. But also, Queenie develops a critical racial frame that reflects her understanding of everyday racism and the quotidian racist practices of people during this time period, pre- and post-Second World War Britain. Her thorough consideration and awareness of antiblack racism is revealed. These two factors should not be taken as separate. Rather, they overlap and also intersect, creating a complex scenario in relation to belonging in a specific

context. In what follows, I discuss how white mothers of interracial (black and white) children negotiate the politics of belonging in contemporary London.

(Un)Belonging and Community-Building in Contemporary Britain

As feminist scholars have noted, there are many challenges to working and organizing across race, class, and gender (Naples 1998). It is a constant process that involves negotiation and struggle. It is a process that is also influenced by broader contexts (e.g., political-economic, racialized) that shape the terrain and ground upon which local political activity takes place. More than this, certain linkages and alliances made within, between, and across racial-ethnic, class, and gender do not always "fit" more traditional, often times narrow, conceptualizations of politics, activism, and labor. Nevertheless, by taking into account people's own sense of their social and political worlds, by expanding our thinking and the domain of political struggle, and ultimately by rethinking "the political," we allow ourselves to see the ways that people in their everyday intimate connections engage in discursive forms of politics for social change (see Coll, this volume). I highlight the combined efforts of both community-based workers and white mothers of mixed race children as they attempt to develop a better life and a better world for interracial children.

During my fieldwork in London I was especially interested when some white women in south London, and in particular those with children from interracial relationships, sought services from a black women's organization.[15] The organization welcomed these white women, and it was not simply because the organization was known for not turning any woman away from receiving services. Leaders in the organization indicated that they welcomed these women because they believed that it was helping to fulfill the specific needs of white women with mixed race children. This raises at least two central questions. To what extent can we think about the relationships between white women with interracial children and black women at a black women's community-based, service provisioning organization? And how might we think about these relationships through antiracist labor and community-building? Herein is a potentially rich political site regarding the politics of race, of community-building, and of belonging.

"They Are Perceived as Mixed Race But Treated as Black"—The One Drop Rule in Britain's Racial Imaginary

Much work done within, for, and on behalf of the community is not named as "political," politics, or political activity; rather, it is described as a commonsense extension of what one does for the community at large. This was clearly expressed during my conversation with Angela, a longtime community worker. Her words reflect this and much more. Namely, the ways that black women's organizations, by working together with white transracial parents, are challenging racialized-gendered politics of (un)belonging, and how everyday practices of racism are operating in London. The following is what Angela said to me during our conversation:

> We don't typically work with white women. Well, I mean, we *do* work with them. Most of them aren't members but they do seek services. And, most of the time we are working with white women with mixed race children. We work with *those* white women.... We have to. What I mean is.... What about their mixed race children? This is part of the work we have to do and we're supposed to be here for the community. All of us here know that. Actually, it's not that the English [read white] mothers can't look after their children; I don't mean that. Some people believe that, but we don't. But those children are, really black, you know. You know what I mean? I don't mean it like in America; they're not *legally* defined, as black. But, they are going to be treated *as black* and face the same discrimination and racism that the black British children face.... Maybe even more. And that's reason enough to work with the white mothers. That's not the only reason why we work with them, but it is reason enough. We're here for them. We provide a community for them, too. Because it's not just about being able to manage racism, it's about living with it every day. It's one thing to say you have a black boyfriend or partner and it's another thing to say that you have black children with him. Because the English [read white] family—like, the grandparents—may not accept them [the children]. The great grandparents and the grandparents might stop speaking to the mothers. So they'll face racism in the white British society and from them [family members], too. I mean some of them [family members] do accept them [the children], but many of them don't. Black families are more accepting, I think. (Angela, interview by author, London, England)

Community workers at the South London black women's organization were very astute and well aware of how often mixed race children

are perceived as mixed race but in their everyday experiences are racialized by the larger society and treated as black. Angela's words are worth quoting at length, as they encapsulate the concept of racial literacy as a " '*reading practice*'—a way of perceiving and responding to the racial climate and racial structures individuals encounter" (Twine and Steinbugler 2006, 344). More than this, her words also speak to quotidian and subjective articulations of belonging in contemporary Britain. Thus, if we pay close attention to her own understandings of racialized-gendered dimensions of (un)belonging above (as articulated in the previous statement), we see that she underscores several important points that I briefly summarize below.

For example, in an attempt to clarify and be more specific, she makes a fine distinction with regard to white women. The black women's organization, one that typically serves the needs of black and South Asian communities, recognizes the distinct racial position that white women occupy as mothers of mixed race children. Thus the specificity of whiteness is made explicitly clear. "*Those* white women," Angela points out, are especially important to work with since they have interracial children. The children and the parents face exclusion and racism from the larger society and from family members. Thus, the organization represents an important place for both the mothers and the children as they navigate the lived experiences and reality of racism.

Angela also maintains that the children are *treated* as black, even though they may be *perceived* as mixed race. She invokes the historical legal legacy of the "one drop rule" in the United States as a way to distinguish how being treated as black in Britain differs from being treated as black in the United States.[16] In so doing, she pushes us to think about how everyday discursive practices of racism are at work in Britain. Thus, if many interracial children (those who "look" visibly black) in Britain are being treated as black, one must ask to what extent is the "one drop rule" being played out "on the ground," in everyday life, in the social-cultural and political (but not legal) British context? From Angela's point of view, an inevitable aspect of being treated as black, of signifying blackness—including that which is being inscribed by others, despite one's racial extraction—includes encountering racism. From Angela's perspective, these reasons and more provide the basis to work with white women and their interracial children as they negotiate race and racism. On the whole, Angela provides a critical racial framework that includes analysis of race and racism in the lives of white mothers and their racially mixed children. In doing so, she articulates a strong sense of personal and political

commitment to providing a community for interracial children and their mothers.

During my conversation with Laura, a thirty-four-year-old white English single mother of two interracial children (ages four and nine), she revealed her keen grasp of the racism directed toward herself, her children, and her ex-partner. She is particularly aware of the racism directed toward her children, as they "*look* mixed raced." Thus, similar to Angela above, Laura puts forward the ways in which hypodescent is operating in the British nation. In her words,

> My children *look* mixed race [with emphasis]. I know this doesn't sound very pc [politically correct] but it's true. They may look mixed race, but the reality is that they are treated, *as black*. Take my friend Claire, [for example], her children have very light, white skin. They *look* more white than my kids do, they look much much more like Claire than Michael [their dad, who is Caribbean]. And, that makes a huge difference for the children and, for Claire too. Claire doesn't have to worry about her kids in the same way that I do. People think they are white [only] and her children are treated as white. I don't mean that she doesn't want to teach them about Caribbean culture. I wouldn't trade my kids for anything…I'm going to protect them and also teach them. I learned more about prejudice against black people once I got involved with their father. But even that's different…these are my children and once you have kids, if you love them, you'll say and do anything to protect them. That's how I feel. (London, England)

Laura's blonde hair, pale skin, and blue eyes are in stark contrast to her children's very thick, curly hair, dark eyes, and latte-colored skin. She explained that much of her racial awareness is due to the experiences she and her children have had in comparison to another white woman-friend of Laura's that also has mixed race children. Her friend's children have a much lighter skin complexion and very straight hair—two features that provide them with the ability to blend and "pass" as white even if they are not trying to do so. Instead of being perceived or even treated as black, many people think those children are white and have parents or grandparents who are from continental Europe, Laura tells me. She also clearly communicated that the problem was not that her children are interracial or even "look" mixed race. The problem is society's racism and Britain's racial hierarchy. Thus, because of Britain's racial hierarchy, Laura's emphasis on her children looking mixed race has created qualitatively different lived experiences for her children, as compared to that of her friend, Claire and her very white looking children. Laura's reading of the

experiences that she, her children, and ex-partner have had speaks to her perceptive understanding of how hypodescent is operating in Britain, and also to the larger racialized context.

Not long after the birth of her first son, Laura started to seek services and advice from the black women's organization in south London. Part of this was due to the fact that she didn't really feel that she had a community of people with whom she could communicate issues of race. In the end, not only did the organization serve as a source of support for Laura, it was also a place where her children could learn. During our conversation, Laura stressed the importance of getting to know other black people, particularly black women, not just for her sake but also for the sake of her children's lives. She valued the way the organization created spaces for herself and her children. And as Laura began to create a social network, she felt equipped with the necessary tools to explain racism to her oldest child. Laura also utilized the women's organization as a resource, as she was able to use the black women's organization's crèche (nursery) for her youngest child for just a few hours each week while she searched for employment. In what follows, I provide another example related to school exclusion to underscore the ways in which racism in Britain affects interracial children, but I use it also to bring out the work that goes on against and through such racial practices.

Racialized Spheres of Unbelonging: Mixed Race and Black as Exclusion

Antiracist community-building across racial lines is particularly important in the area of school exclusions, which has been a serious longtime concern of parents of black and interracial children and community-based organizations. Black children, mostly boys, are disproportionately excluded from school. As such, exclusions represent a critical arena of struggle for community organizations and white and black parents of black and/or interracial children. One community worker expressed the following:

> The [mixed race] children are automatically considered black. [I think] it's really difficult for the [interracial] children. Society sees them as mixed race but *treats* them as black. But sometimes they have a hard time understanding that, because they're mixed-race. Do you know what I mean? I'm not talking about the very little ones . . . they have no concept of it, really. They don't see color—but the older ones

> do, and when they start to go to school it's really, really difficult for them. It's even harder for the black boys, [especially] since there are so many exclusions [from school]. So we try to work with the parents (black and white) and help them if their child has been excluded, it's really important for them to know their rights, really. And, for the white parents (mostly mothers, we see), it's just as important to work with them. They really "feel" the racism when their children are excluded.

The comment above from a longtime community worker speaks to the complex racial landscape for interracial children, and it echoes previous narratives. Mixed race children are automatically treated as black despite their interracial extraction. In addition, she talks about how the mothers of the children are perceived in the wider landscape, too. Her comments in reference to school exclusions are especially important, given the excessive numbers of black boys excluded from school. When we take into account the on-ground experiences of interracial children racialized as black, this leads us to rethink the exclusionary practices.

Although the term "exclusion" is used loosely to refer to a wide range of practices barring children from school, exclusion from school ranges in degree and severity. For example, one can be sent home from school for defying school dress codes. In other instances, some children are barred from school for a limited number of days. In far too many instances, young black boys face permanent exclusion for disruptive behavior; and they become labeled as "out of control."[17] It is a widespread belief in black communities that many cases of exclusionary practices against children are due to racism and discrimination.

In 2009, Minister of Parliament Diane Abbott stated that 80 percent of excluded boys are black and that black children are three times more likely to be excluded from schools than white children. In her discussion of this inequity, she quoted the former Director General of the Prison Service, Martin Narey "[t]he 13,000 young people excluded from school each year might as well be given a date by which to join the prison service later down the line."[18] School exclusions give children and teens an overwhelming amount of idle time to do nothing and everything. More than this, in an era of increased surveillance coupled with the dramatic increase in incarceration rates that have disproportionately affected black communities, Martin Narey's words are particularly chilling. For black communities, in particular, and communities of color, in general, there is more than a sense of urgency to end exclusions. Thus, many community organizations have reached out to black and transracial families not only as a preventive measure

but also as a way to meet the needs of those families whose children have been excluded.

Vicky, a married white English part-time worker in her late forties, and mother of two teenaged children, explained to me the importance of recognizing school exclusions as a very serious problem. She demonstrated her racial awareness and knowledge by talking about exclusion as a part of a broader racialized landscape and racial hierarchy in Britain. During the conversation, Vicky told me,

> It's not just about mixed race or black children being excluded [from school] it's also about what happens after that. First it starts with exclusion and then what happens? Society will keep an eye on those young people. Many of the mixed race and black children don't have as many opportunities, if they are poor or working-class it's even harder to move up. But even those that do, there's a lot of racism here in Britain. And people have to fight against it. If people don't see it that way then the problem will still exist. These are sorts of the things that my husband and I have always talked with our children about. We have always wanted them to be aware of society. And, we don't gloss over it either. It's not about scaring them but it's about preparing them for the world. (Conversation with author, London, England).

Even though neither of her teenage children (son and daughter) have ever been excluded from school, Vicky explained that it is very important for white parents of mixed race children to be able to recognize racism as a problem, as something that must be addressed, and as something that will not "just disappear." Vicky suggests above, in her view, it's not solely about black and/or mixed race children being excluded from school. Rather, exclusions are part of broader patterns of racism and racist practices in society that impact the lives of mixed race and black children. Thus, Vicky deploys a critical racial frame or lens with which to make sense of racist practices. In working against racial hierarchies and practices, Vicky and her black British husband have consistently explained to their children about being racialized and about society's racism. Because there are two parents in the household, Vicky also views this as being a much easier but still a challenging task.

In addition, over the years Vicky has established long-term relationships with black women community workers. Even though she has been on a long-term relationship, some years ago she sought out a community of women with whom she could communicate as well as work through issues of race and racism. Vicky finds this to be particularly important, especially since, as a white transracial

parent, she came to a realization that having the confidence to talk to her children about race and racism was as beneficial to herself as well as her children. It is precisely this sort of confidence that she gained through her relationships with black women community workers.

Closing Remarks

I began this essay with Waynetta Slob as a way to enter into a discussion of the racialized-gendered politics of belonging in Britain. I have made the case that everyday understandings and experiences of citizenship and belonging coupled with the concept of racial literacy provide us with a lens in which to comprehend the ways white mothers of interracial children are working against racist practices and racial hierarchies and in the process are negotiating belonging. Unlike the stereotypical image of Waynetta Slob in popular culture, the women whose narratives I draw from in this essay defy such images of white women with "brown babies"; they are working to understand and work against dominant narratives in the British nation. At the same time, the narratives of white mothers of interracial children and black women community workers shed light on a complex set of issues and processes in relation to (un)belonging. Through the combined efforts of both black women community workers and white transracial mothers, we see the ways that they are engaging in antiracist labor and also knowledge production on behalf of interracial children. More than this, by working with black women community-based organizers, white mothers of mixed race children are creating relationships and developing a connection to those with whom they can communicate issues of race. Finally, by developing a critical racial lens, white transracial mothers are providing their children with tools to negotiate race, racism, and racial hierarchies.

Notes

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1. The show was initially called *Harry Enfield*. It was re-titled *Harry Enfield and Chums* due to the popularity and success of other characters and comedians on the program.
2. http://www.channel4.com/entertainment/tv/microsites/G/greatest/comedy_sketches/results.html
3. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnFrIAbcIZs
4. A flat, typically an apartment, is one floor of a building. A council estate is a group or cluster of public, government-owned apartments—more commonly known as council flats. The estates are under the jurisdiction of the residents' borough.
5. Council housing is public, typically government-run housing.
6. These are terms used to describe public welfare assistance.
7. I use the terms, belonging and unbelonging, throughout the essay to denote the struggle to belong as a complex site of negotiation, conflict, and struggle. The use of the term *unbelonging* is important, as the usage *not belonging* does not always bring to mind and/or fully capture the position of not belonging. It is often from the position of the margins or from the position of not belonging or unbelonging that people engage in politics and political activism. My analysis is informed by the work of Nira Yuval-Davis (2002, 2004).
8. I use the terms mixed race, racially mixed and interracial interchangeably throughout the essay to refer to people of two or more different racial backgrounds. I use the range of terms to avoid repetition but also because the terms are used in popular, academic, and colloquial discourse. While the terms mixed race and racially mixed are used frequently in Britain interracial is not; it is used more often in discussions of and about race in the United States. It should be noted that there are many other mixed race children in Britain, for example, South Asian and white, South Asian and black. However, in this essay, unless otherwise indicated, I am referring specifically to mixed race children of European and African descent.
9. I use the terms transracial parent and transracial mother throughout this essay. I also borrow France Winddance Twine's use of the term "transracial mother." A transracial mother, she states, "is a mother that is socially classified as belonging to racial group considered distinct from that of their birth children" (2001, 130). In this chapter, I am referring to white parent(s)—mothers—of interracial children.
10. The term was also used in the United States, since many of the children were born to black American soldiers and white British women.
11. Twine and Steinbugler (2006) redefined racial literacy as a "reading practice"—a way of perceiving and responding to the racial climate and racial structures individuals encounter.
12. See, for example, Lister (1997a, 1997b), Walby (1994), Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999).
13. See, for example, Glenn (2002), Hill Collins (1999), Lowe (1996), Paul (1997).

14. For example, the 1948 British Nationality Act, a complex piece of legislation, emphasized the theoretical notion of universal equality throughout the British Empire: that all British subjects should be treated the same, no matter where they resided in the Empire. Not long after its passage, the state began to implement labor recruitment, migration, and emigration schemes that privileged certain parts of the Empire (Europe and countries with substantial white settlement, e.g., South Africa and New Zealand) and its laborers (white European workers). In the process, Britain strengthened its imperial power geographically, politically, and spatially, thus creating an imagined community of Britishness as white. But when citizen-subjects from the colonies began to arrive, settle, and reside in Britain (as they were legally guaranteed the rights to do under the 1948 British Nationality Act), the racially discriminatory underpinnings of the Act and of the Empire, coupled with the state's various forms of racial hierarchy and subordination, were revealed. Historian Kathleen Paul (1997) gives a penetrating account of these overlapping processes.
15. The now defunct black women's organization with an emphasis on self help and advocacy served the community for nearly twenty years. In this case, service provider means giving advice, information, and service to individuals while at the same time addressing the underlying issues that may cause such problems. A service provider often acts as an advocate, negotiator, or referral, and ensures that the person seeking services understands his/her rights and responsibilities in such areas as immigration, domestic violence, housing, and employment.
16. The "one drop rule" is an expression that refers to the unique classification system that has been applied primarily to people of African Descent the United States. It is a system that dates back to the historical legacy of slavery, and it is the legal practice of classifying a person as black on the basis of one drop of "black blood" in his/her lineage. It is also known as the rule of hypodescent.
17. http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2000/apr/14/schools.comment; accessed March 15, 2009.
    http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/1999/oct/20/adoptionandfostering.guardiansocietysupplement accessed March 15, 2009.
18. http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/feb/05/boris-exclusion-black-pupils accessed March 10, 2009.

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