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Gender and geography: World views and practices

Genre et géographie : les points de vue et les pratiques à travers le monde

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Maria Dolores Garcia Ramon and Janice Monk

Introduction

- 1 It is now widely acknowledged that knowledge is “situated”, reflecting its cultural, political and intellectual contexts as well as the personal values of those engaged in its creation. This recognition presents an especially interesting perspective for geographers. How does our “place” connect with the geographies we produce? It is also quite clear that the development of scholarship on gender within the discipline, going back to the 1970s, is primarily the work of women, though this need not be the case, and that the presence of women as geographers in particular contexts has bearing on where and what research and writing has emerged on gender themes. At the same time, there are increasing concerns among geographers outside the Anglophone realm, or more specifically, the Anglo-American realm, that scholarship is marginalizing other geographic traditions and that our discipline is impoverished by a growing hegemony.
- 2 In this journal issue, we bring together papers which address research, teaching, and the institutional presence of geographers who are committed to advancing gender studies in the discipline. Our goals are to further knowledge of where, why, and how that work has developed, its directions and the challenges it faces within its own contexts and within the international community of geography, particularly in relation to Anglophone dominance. We aim to increase the visibility of work by geographers from those parts of the world that have not been widely recognized in the Anglophone literature and to examine the challenges and obstacles that concern them. We hope to foster dialogue, offer support, and challenge hegemonic practices whether these occur at home or internationally. We reflect on possible ways forward to advance this field, motivated by a desire to see a more “inclusive” scholarship, one that recognises the richness of gender perspectives in geography and the value of paying attention to the

social, cultural, and political experiences of gender in relation to place. As editors we also acknowledge that there are challenges in bringing together papers from “marginal” places. Nevertheless, we believe it is an important endeavor in order to promote inclusivity in gender geography.

- 3 The contributors represent a wide range of contexts. While it has not been possible to include all world regions, given both limits of space and also the geography of the production of research on gender, we have aimed to represent the diversity of practices and to include both those where the field is well-established and others in which it still struggles for a footing. The contributions come from countries in East-Central and Western Europe, Southeast Asia, Latin America, North America and Anglophone Africa. Of course, within all of these regions there is diversity, some of which we hope to capture by including in the European case representation of different language groups and geographic traditions. We have also included several examples from this region because we anticipate they will be of particular interest to the readers of a European journal such as *Belgeo*. In addition to reflecting on the work of the authors of these papers, we draw on the insights of discussants from a number of other countries (Greece, India, Israel, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the US) who participated in the symposium “Gender and Geography Worldwide: Contesting Anglo-American Hegemony” held at the Autonomous University of Barcelona in February, 2006 and whose recorded comments we analyzed in preparing this introduction (Round Table Recorded Tapes, 2006).

Contexts

- 4 There is no question that the field of gender research in geography has been created and practiced predominantly by women in academia. Indeed, we know of only one significant exception, and that is the recent development of the field in Japan, substantially by male geographers, though the reasons for this situation have been criticised, as have directions in the work (Murata, 2005). The papers by Buehler & Baechli, Creton, and Diaz, Garcia-Ramon and Ortiz demonstrate the under-representation of women in academic geography in their contexts, though importantly they show how that has varied over time and continues to vary within countries by region and across institutions. Not only is it a question of whether women geographers are present, but an important issue is their status within the discipline, and whether this affords them power or opportunities take up a new (and potentially contentious) area of research and teaching. Despite the difficulties that they report, authors indicate that there are signs of change. Buehler and Baechli identify at least some progress in Switzerland, with a senior appointment that focuses on gender research at the University of Bern, even as gender researchers in German and Austrian departments of geography, where they exist, generally continue to have junior status. Cravey notes the election not only of women to the presidency of the Association of American Geographers, but that some of these women are active in gender research. Creton likewise documents the recent election of women (though in this case not of those doing research on gender) to offices within the Comité National Français de Géographie.
- 5 Within professional associations another marker of the strength of the field or of its marginality is the existence of study groups or organized meeting sessions on gender at

conferences. At the international level, within the International Geographical Union, a Study Group was authorized in 1988 and approved as the Commission on Gender and Geography in 1992¹. It has been highly active since then and regularly renewed for successive periods. Nationally, Cravey reports on the substantial and multifaceted work of the Geographic Perspectives on Women Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers and Little on the contributions and influence of the Women and Geography Study Group of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers). Elsewhere, national (or language-based) organizational recognition is less established, more informal, or periodic, as in the case of the German-speaking geographers (Buehler & Baechli), or the intermittent and small-scale endeavors in Latin America (da Silva & Lan). At the local scale, we see examples of institutionalization in particular cases where strategies have been explicitly developed to enhance the field. This has required having senior leadership and an understanding of institutional structures and politics, as in the case of the development of the Gender Group at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Diaz, Garcia-Ramon & Ortiz), or the Gender and Space initiative at the National Central University of the Province of Buenos Aires which da Silva and Lan identify as a component of the Center for Geographic the Research Program on Territory and Society.

- 6 Despite the gains, the authors of these papers frequently point to the difficulties of establishing gender research and teaching within their national and institutional contexts and of various types of resistance, for example, from journal editors or students. In interpreting this situation, there are numerous discussions of the effects of the isolation of the geography from other social sciences that have been more open to gender research (see, for example, da Silva & Lan; Timár; Creton). Also invoked are the effects of strong traditions in physical geography (a point made in relation to Turkey in remarks by Nazmiye Ozgüc at the Barcelona symposium), of the avoidance of the politically unacceptable themes (Timár) and especially of the orientation of geographers to applied research rather than to conceptual and theoretical questions, a circumstance which often appears to mitigate against attention to cultural issues, including gender formations (da Silva & Lan; Diaz, Garcia-Ramon & Ortiz, Timár). Yet there are also instances where orientation to theory and the pioneering efforts of gender studies in advancing theoretical work (Little) place them in the contemporary mainstream of national trends in geography. Indeed, they have fostered or complemented such developments as, for example, the so-called “cultural turn” and attention to postmodernist perspectives in British geography. Gender scholars were in the vanguard in introducing concepts of social and cultural differences within societies (as opposed to the pervasive focus on male, white, or middle class experiences as normative) and of the importance of the viewpoint of the researcher in identifying questions for research and interpretations of human experiences.
- 7 Finally, but critically, we also draw attention to the implications of larger international and national political and economic contexts for the ways in which gender research has developed (or failed to develop) within geography. Colonial histories are a clear case in point, implicated in the languages and scholarly traditions with which local work is linked. The examples of British colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa and Singapore vis-à-vis the historical French or American connections in other parts South-East Asia give clear evidence of such impact (Awumbila; Yeoh & Huang), as do the ties of Latin American geographers to Spain. More recent political events are also clearly significant, among them the effects of social, economic and political struggles and

transformations in Anglophone Africa and Latin America (Awumbila; da Silva & Lan), which have both inhibited and shaped directions; the push towards international prestige and economic development in Singapore (Yeoh & Huang); and the post-socialist transitions in East-Central Europe (Timár). It is also worth mentioning that international funding, for example, from the European Union or by international development agencies and private foundations, has variously enhanced and/or directed opportunities for international collaborative work, the development of networks, and support for feminist journals (Diaz, Garcia-Ramon & Ortiz; Awumbila; da Silva & Lan). Of course, it is essential to acknowledge the role, character, and timing of national and international women's movements originating in the 1970s as a stimulus for the initiation of gender studies in the discipline. Virtually all the authors engage with this theme.

Directions

- 8 As geographers, as we have noted above, we are interested in differences among places but also in similarities and connections among them as well as the significance of scale and magnitude. In assessing directions within gender scholarship, we reflect these perspectives (Monk, 2007). We also remind readers of the feminist awareness of how the positionality of scholars, including their own interests and values, their power within systems, and the resources available to them, shape and constrain their work. Thus the trends reported in the papers reflect both the experiences and interests of the individual authors in relation to international and national directions. We do not attempt to summarize all the contributions but rather select examples to illustrate several dimensions of the work: its theoretical and conceptual frameworks, empirical emphasis, and methodological approaches. In so doing, we will refer briefly to changes over time as well as space, and make reference to some work that is outside the papers themselves.
- 9 Perhaps it is in British writing that the prioritization of theory has been most pronounced and it is not by chance that Little's paper devotes considerable attention to theoretical developments. As she discusses, these theoretical orientations have been subject to constant questioning and reformulation. They have evolved from an early focus on the inequities experienced by women in relation to spatial constraints connected with their gender roles, to arguments about the causal processes in gender relations and later to more cultural themes of differences among women, the fluidity of gender identities, and on to the questioning of binaries such as mind-body and the associations of sexuality(ies) and gender. Buehler and Baechli also reflect on the evolution of theoretical orientations by applying a schema developed by the German sociologist Maihofer to a bibliometric analysis of theses and journal articles published in the German-language. This schema overlaps with but differs from that outlined by Little, with perspectives identified as women studies, gender relations studies, masculinity studies, and gender studies, the latter reflecting the questioning of binaries and focusing on the construction of gender identities. She too discerns changes over time in geographers' orientations, generally supporting Maihofer's schema, though she reports that the women studies perspective was sustained over the others for a substantial period and that masculinity studies are largely absent. Important caveats are also raised in relation to adopting singular theoretical perspectives. Awumbila

draws attention to the calls of African scholars for creating theories that speak to the region's cultures. They propose the importance of attending to distinctions such as those of age, ethnicity, religion, and region and express concerns about the ways in which biases of Western development studies influence thinking about gender. Cravey reminds us that attention to both material and discursive perspectives and power are necessary if feminist work is to maintain a political edge, while Timár, taking up the complexities confronting gender studies, argues: "Neither equality, nor difference works well without the other, and it follows that if one is achieved, it does not follow that the other is as well".

- 10 We cannot begin to summarize the richness and directions of empirical research that is being done internationally and we acknowledge that the authors of the papers have also been selective in their coverage. Nonetheless, we would like to suggest some interesting distinctions in directions. First we wish to draw attention to examples that illustrate work on such themes as transnationalism (Cravey), colonialism, or "the other". These are discussed but from different perspectives by the authors from regions of the "North" (Cravey; Buehler and Baechli), by the former colonizers (Diaz, Garcia-Ramon and Ortiz; Creton), and by the colonized (Awumbila; Yeoh and Huang). Writing about Latin America, and the strong orientations to class perspectives that have motivated women's movements, da Silva's and Lan's examples of research show an emphasis on issues of material life and women in the work force, especially in urban settings. Awumbila, commenting on directions in South Africa, draws attention to the salience of the intersections of race, apartheid, and post-apartheid politics for the emergence and directions of gender studies by geographers. In the Spanish case, attention to rural studies reflects both the rural traditions of Spanish geographical studies and the crises in the nation's rural economies (Diaz, Garcia-Ramon & Ortiz), whereas Little indicates that she chooses to write on changing approaches to rural studies because of her personal research interests in such contexts.
- 11 Relatively few empirical examples are offered in our papers of research that addresses sexuality and the body, though Little highlights such interests in British research, Diaz, Garcia-Ramon and Ortiz mention this as an innovative area in Spanish geography and Cravey highlights bodily concerns by referring to Silvey's research on the vulnerabilities of migrant Indonesian women to sexual/ physical assault, harassment, and other abuse. Further, we note that body politics are introduced by da Silva and Lan who cite research on coerced sterilizations in Brazil. In reflecting on research on the body it is important to mention the commentary of Timár on Raju's remark made in relation to research in India (2002) that such geography "is an academia luxury that we from the 'Third World' cannot afford"². She speculates whether it might also be applied to East Central Europe, but offers the opinion that, given the history of Romania under the Ceausescu's dictatorship with its laws on abortion and homosexuality, it should not apply. She cites the lone study by Voiculescu of Romania that addresses the body. Nevertheless, she concludes that for the time being, research in the region is likely to be driven by priorities of uneven economic development.
- 12 A hallmark of research on gender has been its interest in methodology, stemming initially from concerns that secondary sources such as censuses masked much of women's lives, especially their unpaid work in the household or family enterprises. As Diaz, Garcia-Ramon and Ortiz discuss in relation to Spanish research, this recognition prompted geographers' greater use of qualitative methods with rural women as they

employed in-depth interviews not only to reveal otherwise hidden activities but to gain insights into the ways the subjects of research interpreted their own lives. The range of approaches has since been expanded to include participant observation and to study diverse groups such as children and immigrant women and men. The feminist methodological literature in geography that addresses approaches to research has become substantial (see, for example, Dyck, 1993; Rose, 1993; Nast, 1994; Prats, 1998; Moss, 2002; Baylina, 2004) raising such additional questions as the nature of relationships between researchers and researched, the influence of the researcher's positionality, and approaches to participatory research methods. Diverse sources of data now characterize research on gender, especially research concerned with cultural representations, including travel writings (Diaz, Garcia-Ramon & Ortiz), popular media such as advertising, films, newspapers, magazines and television programs. A review of almost any issue of the journal *Gender, Place and Culture* will reveal this array of research methods in practice.

- 13 Notwithstanding the significant attention to qualitative methods, gender researchers continue to find value in more traditional quantitative and cartographic approaches, and especially to consider how these might be combined (see, for example, McLafferty, 1995). Here we wish to highlight how the purposes of research as well as accommodating to local research traditions can lead scholars to favour use or integration of quantitative methods, even as they explore new sources of data and modes of representation. Of particular interest has been the production of a range of women's atlases, pioneered by Joni Seager and Ann Olson in *Women in the World: An International Atlas* (1986) which introduced many themes not previously mapped such as domestic violence, marriage and property rights, and includes qualitative sources. By marking areas for which data were not available, they drew attention to the places in which gaps existed in information about women's lives. Subsequent national atlases of women and men have been produced for India (Raju *et al.*, 1999), Switzerland (Buehler, 2001, 2002), Bangladesh (Huq Hussein *et al.*, 2005), and Japan (Takedo *et al.*, 2007) while a project has begun in Spain (International Geographical Union Commission on Gender and Geography, 2006). In undertaking such work, some geographers have argued that it is a way for them to introduce gender as an acceptable topic in contexts where students and colleagues are unfamiliar with the ideas and sceptical that gender is a legitimate theme within geographic research (Voiculescu & Lelea, 2003; Raju, 2006). Such materials are also valued by policy makers and those undertaking applied studies. As Kamiya notes (2006), they can also be of value to community groups seeking to empower women. Through their creation, geographers focusing on gender can enhance their influence with such constituencies. This leads us to comment on a topic not addressed directly by the papers' authors, and that is the role of geographic information technologies (GIS) in gender research. As Diaz, Garcia-Ramon and Ortiz comment, it may be that the representation of women has or will decline in geography because of women's lack of orientation towards technology in some cultures. Yet we also note that geographers have begun to assess how feminist approaches and GIS can be mutually enriching (Kwan, 2002; 2007; see also the theme section of *Gender, Place and Culture*, 9 (3), 2002).

AngloAmerican Hegemony within International Geography: Gender Geography and the Question of Language

- 14 The central theme of the symposium, and above all of its final Round Table, was the growing contemporary hegemony of Anglo-American geography, and specifically of Anglo-American gender geography. Perhaps for the first time in history it is setting the guidelines for intellectual debate in many parts of the world. Since the turn of the century, Anglophone geographical journals have begun debating this issue (Minca, 2000; Short *et al.*, 2001; Gutierrez & López-Nieva, 2001; Zusman, 2002; Garcia-Ramon, 2003; Kitchin, 2005; Paasi, 2005; Desbiens & Ruddick, 2006; Foster *et al.*, 2007), though curiously feminist geographers exploration of such asymmetries of power came a little later (Garcia-Ramon *et al.*, 2006). That different contexts produce different feminist traditions in geography is nothing new (Monk, 1994) but what is new and at issue is the constitution of Anglophone journals as an “international” writing space and the limited acknowledgment of their own locatedness (Gregson *et al.*, 2003). It is quite ironic that when geography, including feminist geography, has focused on ideas about exclusion, marginality, periphery, situated knowledge and the politics of identity and place, it has not systematically turned the gaze on the ways in which institutionalized discursive and material practices of Anglo-American geography marginalize other geographical knowledges and practices from other geographical traditions (Berg & Kerns, 1998; Hancock, 2002). Yet these critiques are just now beginning to be recognized and bear fruit in new practices, notably in the “anti-anthology” edited jointly by a Canadian and an American geographer (Moss & Falconer Al-Hindi (2007). To prepare this collection they sought advice via electronic discussions from over thirty scholars based in almost as many countries and included contributions by non-Anglophone authors including one piece in German, and another in Hindustani, the latter written by a collective of nongovernmental agency workers and an Indian geographer based in the US.
- 15 While not denying the general Anglophone lack of attention to work from elsewhere, many papers point out (among them Buehler & Baechli, Awumbila, Yeoh & Huang, Diaz, Garcia-Ramon & Ortiz) that this work has become very powerful in our local academic communities, and that it was the inspiration for development of gender geography in many places. It is so powerful because of its undoubted richness and innovation, but it is it is also powerful in our local peripheral milieus because of the overwhelming attention paid in them to “international” publications. Anglo-American hegemony is not only produced in the centre but also reproduced in the places that it tends to dominate; in many countries, in order to be promoted in an increasingly competitive environment, it is necessary to publish in such “international” journals; in that way, pressures to publish in English rather than the native language reinforce the Anglophone hegemony so that many of us become trapped or implicated in this power system. It is also argued that Anglo-American geography, and indeed also feminist geography, has constructed a privileged position in which knowledge from other places is constructed as divergent and local and as such not producing theory but only case studies. Nevertheless, we should not forget that to talk about Anglo-American hegemony is not sufficient as some authors argue (Rodriguez-Pose, 2006); the papers reflect a multilayering of hegemonies, many times linked to colonial history as, for example, in Singapore and Southeast Asia or sub-Saharan Africa (Yeoh & Huang,

Awumbila), or reflecting recent history as in the case of the East-Central European countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall where the dominance of West Europe has been imposing not only in geography but also in many other fields (Timár).

- 16 One dimension constituting this hegemony is the power of language (Round Table, 2006). It is much more than a communicative tool for exchanging ideas; it also represents a way of thinking and a framework for expressing our own experiences and realities. It is very different to publish for an internal audience in India, for example, than for an international audience; this is part of the daily experience for those who do not work in Anglo-America. Therefore, the question of the different scholarly traditions in geography (with their distinct ways of approaching the subject, their logic and their values) should always be included in any discussion about languages. Moreover, translation between languages (usually from and into English) is carried out without problematizing the situatedness of languages and ignores that the act of translation is both politically and highly subjective (Müller, 2007). Feminism has taught us that language is not innocent, that apparently neutral and disembodied vocabularies often carry a whole web of power relations. But because English has become our *lingua franca* for communication and exchange, as many papers point out (particularly Timár's and Buehler's), it is playing an important role in the power- knowledge system. Indeed, its influence is very clear in the bibliographic references of the papers of the non-English speaking countries published in this issue. With the exception of the Latin American and French papers, all of them have a good percentage of English language references ranging from 84 per cent in Hungary to 28 per cent in the German-speaking countries and 25 per cent in the Spanish one.
- 17 To break these hegemonies in order to make a more inclusive international gender geography is not an easy task, as was widely discussed in the Round Table. It is difficult to think that any dominant discourse would envisage itself as situated and, in some sense as local, thus to destabilize its dominance. Nevertheless, we have to make an effort to develop a series of strategies to deconstruct hegemonies without reverting to parochialism. If geography really matters, we have good scientific reasons to contest Anglo-American hegemony. The strategies should be internal as well as external or international; at the national level, we do not have to conform by assessing our colleagues for their English publications. This is also true with teaching. In feminist courses, it is not uncommon to overemphasize the importance of Anglophone production to the detriment of local traditions. At the international level, strategies could be developed with more difficulty. One step could be to diversify contacts and networks, and thereby contest unidirectional flows from center to periphery, and to reinforce contacts between the peripheries - from "Other" to "Other". This could be an excellent platform to counterbalance Anglophone dominance. Another should be to try to create real international writing spaces in geography, and indeed in gender geography. As far as academic journals are concerned, it will be important, on the one hand, to open those journals to languages other than English or, alternatively, to bring to non-Anglo academics the facilities having the initial review of their article to be of a version written in their own language; another strategy is to open up the refereeing system and enlarge the pool of referees to include those chosen on the basis of their nationality or the languages that they are able to read. But we should never forget, as Dina Vaiou of Greece commented in the Round Table discussions, that dominance of Anglophone geography and spaces of communication, including feminist ones, are not given by any God. They can be negotiated and contested in many ways, and they have

no more power than we allow them! She pointed out that “Brenda (Yeoh) said in the discussion ‘I speak and dream in English’, and I think that many of us definitely don’t dream in English! We could consciously try not to speak feminist geography only in English” (Round Table, 2006).

Ways Forward

- 18 To conclude our introduction to this issue, we wish to comment briefly on the overarching question of the status and contributions of gender studies in geography across national borders and to suggest some ways in which the work might be advanced, both intellectually and politically. It is clear that space and time do matter. Gender studies have developed unevenly and at different times over the last three decades in different places. Though the early efforts, magnitude, and influence of Anglo-American work are clear, we recognize that the often later developments in other regions represent neither simple spatial diffusion nor independent invention. Rather we highlight the significance of context in shaping the timing, extent, and nature of the work. Nor, despite acknowledging relative absences and the struggles of a small numbers of geographers in the field in some places, should we underestimate the extent to which gender geography has developed as a vibrant field. The sustained level of activity by the Commission on Gender and Geography within the International Geographical Union³, is an important example. It fosters communication and sharing of perspectives across national borders through its meetings and newsletter (Monk, 2007)⁴.
- 19 Despite the challenges of being recognized by “establishments” in some settings, the literature in gender geography has also clearly influenced directions in the discipline, especially through its attention to diversity and power relations within human experience. Gender research has been incorporated, for example, into some national state of the art publications (see, for example, Bosque-Maurel *et al.*, 1992), in international encyclopedias in the social sciences (Smelser & Baltes, 2001) and in the recent compendia of research in various subdisciplines (Agnew *et al.*, 2003; Sheppard & Barnes, 2000; Duncan *et al.*, 2004; Nogué & Romero, 2006) in which additionally an entire volume has been devoted to feminist geography (Nelson & Seager, 2005).
- 20 Challenges for theoretical, conceptual, and empirical advances remain, however, as the authors of our papers point out. Among these we suggest the need for greater pluralism in recounting the histories of the field in ways that are contextually sensitive; for theorizing that in examining “diversity/difference” takes cognizance of categories beyond those commonly cited in Anglo-American work (class, “race”/ethnicity, gender, sexuality) in order to attend to diverse cultural systems and contexts (age, religion, caste, nationality and citizenship status, for example); and for more conceptual and empirical attention to significance of differences in the organization of daily time, demographic structures and cultural constructions of the life course in different settings.
- 21 Several key themes that have both intellectual and political dimensions emerge in the papers and discussions. One concerns whether to mainstream gender research into other areas of the discipline or to seek its advance as a separate sub-field. In our opinion, this should not be thought of as a dichotomous issue. Indeed, consonant with thinking in gender research which has argued that it is inappropriate to think in

dichotomies in relation to “difference”, we see this issue as one that requires a both/and rather than either/or approach. Specialization in gender is required to advance knowledge in the field; mainstreaming is required to have an impact on the wider discipline and in the world beyond academia. We take a similar position with regard to interdisciplinary relations. Discussions at the symposium revealed ways in which those geographers in isolated locations can receive political, moral, and intellectual support from colleagues in other fields while dialogues with others can also advance the value of geographic perspectives beyond our own discipline. Similarly, we see the dichotomy between theoretical and applied work as a complex challenge, one that will vary by place. Whereas in some settings, applied work may have diminished support (or offers prospects for that outcome), in others it can serve as a way to connect to local geographic agendas and traditions, to speak to public policy concerns, and to foster support for and by women’s movements beyond the academy.

- 22 Politically, we reiterate the importance of recognising the implications of hegemonic practices within institutions, locally within departments and national systems, and in the international arena. Publishing is a key political practice and the growing practice in non-Anglophone countries of counting only English publications – and thus reproducing Anglophone dominance – should be contested without reverting to parochialism. Journals that publish in multiple languages (such as *Belgeo*, *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geography*, and *Social and Cultural Geography*) make important statements in that regard. Willingness of Anglophone institutions to value publications in languages other than English as they assess their own colleagues is another political step forward. As strategies for moving ahead we draw attention to the importance of networking across national boundaries that includes not only between “cores” and “peripheries” but among “peripheries” by means of both electronic and in-person communication and by identifying opportunities to support visiting scholars, both junior and established. We are especially concerned to see greater international collaboration in research and teaching, rather than the more traditional practice of those with resources studying the “other” in ways that fail to integrate outsider and insider knowledge, and to have them share findings and resources. In this connection, we note that such an approach requires considerable reflection, time, building of trust, joint formulation of agendas and finding equitable ways to share resources and rewards (Manning *et al.*, 2004; Monk *et al.*, 2002; Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries, 1998⁵) Lastly, we acknowledge the importance of open-minded colleagues, male and female, who create climates for supporting pluralism and are aware of the importance of mentoring and leadership within the discipline and across generations in advancing new directions. We urge that they and gender scholars be flexible in adapting to the contingencies of time and place while keeping the larger goals in the forefront. Gender studies in geography emerged with a commitment to advancing social justice and equity, as well as to valuing difference. As Judit Timár has reminded us, it is important to attend to their balance: “Identity politics by itself is not enough; redistributive politics is also necessary”. Contesting hegemonies and fostering inclusive perspectives are essential for enriching our discipline.

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NOTES

1. Some sessions had been organised at International Geographical meetings prior to this date, including an informal meeting in Paris in 1984 to discuss possible creation of a group and a half-day session at the Regional Congress in Barcelona in 1986 (Monk, 2007).
2. Her comments also related to themes such as reflexivity and representational inadequacies that were being discussed by gender scholars from the Western world.
3. In addition to participating regularly in IGU Congresses, the Commission on Gender and Geography has organized special conferences and workshops in African, Asian, Australasian, European, Middle Eastern and North American settings (Monk, 2007).
4. The newsletter has been published twice each year since 1988. As of January, 2006 it was sent directly to 326 people but also indirectly through other electronic mailing lists (Monk, 2007).
5. Available online in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish : http://www.kfpe.ch/key_activities/publications/index.php

ABSTRACTS

In introducing this theme issue on international directions in gender studies in geography, we take up three cross-cutting issues. First, we examine the importance of context in shaping where, why, how and by whom gender research is carried out, noting the importance of the representation of women in the profession, the place of geography within the social sciences, and the implications of political and economic contexts. Second, we review theoretical and methodological directions and empirical emphases. Third, we take up the politics of Anglo-American and English-language hegemonies in research publications, recognizing that hegemonies are internally as well as externally created. We suggest practices that could foster scholarship that is more inclusive intellectually and politically. We advocate theorizing that interrogates how “diversity” and “difference” are imagined; we argue for promoting both specialist research as well as the “mainstreaming” of gender perspectives; and we suggest ways of challenging the notion that English-language publications are synonymous with international prestige and value.

En introduisant le thème des divergences internationales sur les études de genre en géographie, nous prenons en considération trois points qui se recoupent. Premièrement, nous examinons l'importance du contexte qui explique où, pourquoi, comment et par qui est effectuée la recherche sur les genres. Nous faisons particulièrement attention à l'importance de la représentation des femmes dans la profession, la place de la géographie dans les sciences sociales et les implications des contextes politiques et économiques. Deuxièmement, nous passons en revue les directions théoriques et méthodologiques ainsi que les principales études empiriques. Troisièmement, nous considérons les politiques des hégémonies anglo-américaines et anglophones dans les publications, tout en reconnaissant que ces hégémonies sont créées à la fois intérieurement et extérieurement. Nous proposons ensuite des pratiques qui soutiendraient une connaissance qui soit plus inclusive intellectuellement et politiquement. Nous préconisons une théorisation qui s'interroge sur la manière dont la “diversité” et la “différence” sont imaginées et nous encourageons autant la recherche spécialisée que les perspectives des “courants dominants” sur les études de genres. Enfin, nous soulignons plusieurs points qui défient l'idée que les publications dans des revues de langue anglaise sont synonymes de prestige international et de qualité.

INDEX

Keywords: contexts, gender research, hegemonies, publishing practices

Mots-clés: contextes, recherche sur les genres, hégémonies, méthodes de publication

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