

Introduction to "Gender, Globalisation and Development"

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This is the first issue of *Atlantis* since the events of September 11th in New York and Washington, and the USA bombing campaign in Afghanistan.

We feel that we cannot fail to make the connections between these horrific and tragic times and the questions that are explored in this special issue on "Gender, Globalisation and Development." Our original call for papers stated that "we are seeing a world that grows smaller all the time, as the massive forces of globalizing capital consolidate their power and implement their policies. We are seeing the intensifying of economic and other inequalities between North and South, rich and poor and between men and women. In the economic sphere we see dramatic rises in female labour force participation rates; intensification of women's responsibilities in the domestic sphere; growing numbers of women in migrant flows to the North. We see women displaced by wars and civil conflicts; women's human rights transgressed, women sexually exploited." At the time, we were thinking more in terms of the impact of globalisation and the actions of transnational corporations, the policies and restrictions imposed by the World Bank and the IMF and the increasing threat posed by trade agreements such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The events of September 11th, and especially the violent response of the USA and its allies, including Canada, have made the issues facing women both more immediate and difficult and less easy to address. To be sure, the upsurge of racism in Canada and other countries of the North has affected the lives of both women and men. At the same time, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty points out in her interview for this volume, it is clear that "representations of gender have been central in this war. This strategy ties into other forms of control,

of global capitalism and racism. This has implications not just for women in Afghanistan, but also women in the West...Sept 11 has intensified various forms of patriarchal control in both Afghanistan as well as in the West."

It is a context in which we can see most starkly the contradiction between what women need and the way those needs are subordinated to the political and economic needs of the powerful. The marginalisation of women is even more visible in times of conflict, but the processes are ever present even when open conflict is not taking place. All too often, projects and programmes do not address the systemic factors underlying women's oppression, but rather are gendered in ways that reinforce and perpetuate the basic structures and mechanisms of exclusion. This is not to say that women are not responding in specific and myriad ways to the conditions facing them. The Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan, for instance, has amply demonstrated the impact the Taliban regime has had on their development, long before the US attacks, and they now see the increasing urgency of the situation of refugee Afghan women in and outside their country. We need to pay attention to these complex forms of resistance, to understand them as local, specific responses that must be placed in a broader, global context.

This special edition gathers together articles dealing with a broad range of issues and places, all of which address from different vantage points both the structures and the ways in which women can and do resist them and try to build their own lives and pursue their own priorities and objectives.

We begin with Leslie Jeffrey's paper entitled "'Because They Want Nice Things': Prostitution, Consumerism and Culture in Thailand." In this article, Jeffrey explores the ways

in which elite women construct rural women's prostitution as a threat to national identity. Poor women from rural villages are condemned for their desire for "nice things," and rather than wanting the same kinds of consumer goods as the Thai middle class, are supposed to represent traditional Thai values and culture, because of "the symbolic role of peasant women in embodying national culture." In such nationalist discourses prostitution is seen as threatening, precisely because it demonstrates rural women's refusal to stay in their prescribed roles. As Jeffrey argues, "While globalisation has led to women's increased economic exploitation, the very critique of globalisation through such discourses as 'consumerism' would deny women political and social agency." The theme of the awkward positioning of middle class or academic women is taken up in the next paper, by Leonora Angeles. Angeles examines how Philippine feminist advocates and scholars understand the gendering of, and nexus between, globalization, development and security. In her critique she provides us with an insight into the uses Philippine scholars have made of western analyses and demonstrates how their work could be strengthened, while at the same time suggesting how the work of Philippine feminists can be used to strengthen feminist work in other geographical contexts. In the following article Lynne Phillips and Susan Ilcan engage in a critique of a different kind of literature. They demonstrate "how certain modes of calculation became integral to the FAO's early concern to gauge gender and rurality," leading to what they call the "numerical techniques of governance." They provide us with a detailed picture of how apparently neutral techniques embody profoundly sexist concepts and gender constructions and lead to policies with specific and deleterious consequences for women.

Paul Eid's article takes up the intersection of nation-building, religion, gender and ethnicity through a discussion of the hijab in the post-colonial Arab world. In recent years there has been increasing discussion about the place of various forms of "veiling" in Islam and in the lives of women. Eid engages post-colonial theory to examine post-marxist and post-structuralist debates on the hijab that emphasise, sometimes in overlapping ways, the restraining effects of power dynamics or the capacity for subversion from within. The main questions that emerge are how

does one offer a feminist critique that does not rehearse Western neo-colonial tropes? How does one resist Western imperialism without becoming an uncritical defender of "tradition"? Eid suggests that Arab feminist reinterpretations of Islam are both timely and necessary interventions into the debate as they hold the potential to engage in an "indigenous" critique of forms of sexism.

At this point, we have inserted our usual "features" - Hot Potato, Women's Studies in Focus, the Interview and Community Voices. We begin with Sedef Arat-Koc, who has contributed a powerful and troubling commentary on feminist theory and practice in a post September 11th world. The aim of the article is "to address whether some dominant and popular strands of global feminism are able to analyze and offer alternatives to an understanding of global relations between women specifically and First World/Third World relations in general." Taking feminist responses in the West to the September 11th events as her point of departure, Arat-Koc discusses the imperializing gestures of a global feminism. Drawing on the work of anti-racist, postcolonial and multicultural feminists and reception theory, she makes a case for an accountable transnational feminist response which critically broadens the terms of the debate.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty co-taught a seminar series on anti-racist feminism in the summer of 2001 at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, and we at *Atlantis* are delighted that she agreed to share some of her thoughts on a number of issues for this special edition. In this wide-ranging and timely interview with Ena Dua and Alissa Trotz, Chandra discusses feminist perspectives on globalization, as well as the aftermath of September 11th. She also reflects on her own involvement in grassroots activism, and takes up key pedagogical questions relating both to feminist activism within the academy as well as to internationalization within women's studies programmes.

Linda Briskin follows with an engaging and informative discussion of her approaches to teaching Women's Studies. She suggests that drawing upon women's organizing as a subject of study provides a unique gateway into complex and frequently inaccessible debates in feminist theorizing. Issues like identity politics, transnational alliances, and strategic relativism are all grounded

in an examination of women "doing political work." Organising also places a privileged focus on women's agency and social change, one which can enable students to see themselves as political actors as well. This article comes with an extensive list of references for developing a course of this kind.

In our Community Voices section, Magaly San Martin and Lorena Gajardo, both members of the Canadian Latin American community, consider how the current global conjuncture is restructuring migration patterns from Latin America to Canada. Not only are patterns of entry gender-differentiated, but Latin American women face specific barriers that lead to invisibility, vulnerability and exploitation. Highlighting the sponsorship programme and the conditions facing sex workers, San Martin and Gajardo argue that in both cases women enter Canada on terms scripted by others, terms that help secure both capitalist reproduction as well as racialised and gendered nation-building projects in the North.

The next article also brings a critical lens to bear on immigration and globalization, and on the linkages across North and South, by focusing on the material and ideological structures that promote the "borderlessness" of transnational capital while at the same time increasingly restricting the mobility and rights of many. Here, Simone Browne examines the case of a Jamaican woman, Mavis Baker, who worked as a live-in domestic in Canada in 1981, and was subjected to a deportation order in 1992. As the article eloquently points out, Baker's case and its representation in the Canadian mainstream press strikingly enact an exclusionary story of Canadian nation-hood. This story is profoundly racialised and gendered, even as it masks the fact that it is the people who are excluded (in this case, immigrant women of colour) whose labour is critical to the construction of Canada.

Lynne Milgram's article is the first of two contributions on the issue of women's access to credit. It critically examines the emerging orthodoxy in international development circles that sees microfinance programmes as the key to alleviating poverty and empowering women. Based on ethnographic research in the Philippines, Milgram argues that such interventions prioritise market-led forces and do not address underlying structures of gender and class inequality. Consequently, rather than promote women's social

and financial autonomy, they in fact exacerbated class polarisation and income differentials among the women. The next piece, by Lotsmart Fonjong, describes the situation in Northwestern Cameroon. In this case, the normal channels of credit and micro credit have failed women, who then turn to the Community Unit Trust. Fonjong shows how this grassroots-based institution provides help and support to women in their economic aspirations but also in their efforts to improve the education and health of their families. However, as women's economic situation improves, the burden on them increases - a contradiction that Fonjong suggests will only be resolved with greater equity between men and women.

A fundamental assumption lying behind this issue is that an insistence on a "First world/Third world," North/South divide masks the polarities within each of these sites and the myriad ways in which global shifts are having commensurate effects on disparately situated women in both the North and South. The final paper in this edition, by Peter Sinclair, brings the discussion "home" by exploring what has happened to women's employment and incomes in a rural area of Newfoundland in the period 1951-1996. Like other articles in this issue, Sinclair paints a complex, and in many ways, contradictory picture of women's situation. He demonstrates that while increasing numbers of women were entering the labour market, and the patterns of their labour force participation became similar to men's, there has not been a commensurate closing of the income gap between men and women. Nor has it freed women from taking the major responsibility for housework and childcare. Nevertheless, Sinclair argues that some opportunities have emerged, and that some Bonavista women do challenge dominant ideas and create better lives for themselves.

For this special issue, many of the contributions have exceeded our normal word limit. We have made a special exception in this case, so future contributors should follow the usual guidelines.