

Introduction: Bridging Gendered Diversity in a Globalizing World

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On July, 8-10, 2010 we, fifty men and women from fourteen countries around the world, assembled, in the monastery of the Sisters of Zion in the village of Ein Karem, in Jerusalem, for a scholarly meeting of the International Geographical Union Commission of Gender and Geography . The papers presented in this special issue of *Hagar* were first presented and discussed during this three-days' meeting and the following main conference of the International Geographical Union in Tel-Aviv.

In organizing the sessions of this pre-meeting our main purpose was to provide geographers from different countries and cultures an arena to introduce their emerging researches related to the topic of the pre-conference: '*Bridging Gendered Diversity in a Globalizing World*'. Our point of departure has been that gender is a well known excuse for structuring hierarchical categorizations. Because often gender is fractured at the intersection with other components of identity, it is critically used to challenge the modern notion of universal participation. Thus, the meetings focused on concepts of diversity and multiculturalism as to refrain from the reduction of differences to merely demographic categories of analysis. Rather, we aimed to criticize the universal principles typical of modernity, and uncover the processes of differential inclusion of national, social and cultural groups. The forty papers presented in these sessions related to topics such as: Gendered borders and barriers; National, citizenship, ethnic, religious, class, age, gendered and sexual diversities; Locations of diversity and diversified locations in a global world; Space, place, intersectionality and institutions and how they include/exclude gender. .

At the end of each day we had a few discussion groups. The beautiful and relaxed gardens of the Sisters of Zion Monastery offered a tranquility that facilitates such discussions where the participants could talk about and contemplate the issues raised earlier the day. During the meeting in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv we also organized a few field trips. Most exciting were the Ein-Karem neighborhood tour - which focused

on the local history of women - and the tour to the city center of Tel-Aviv that portrayed the spatialized history of the LGBT community of the city.

The editors of *Hagar* who took part in the gathering in Ein Karem invited us to serve as guest editors of a special issue of the journal that will highlight some of the themes that were raised and discussed in the meeting. Since most papers in the meetings presented challenging research and were excellent and, interesting the choice was hard and constraints also by the available space and the deadlines along the way. Finally, this volume offers nine papers that impart new perspectives on some relevant issues for feminist and gender geographies..

Apart from the articles described below five books pertinent for gender geography are reviewed: **Janice Monk** reviews Dorothy Moss' book *"Gender, Space and Time: Women and Higher Education"*; **Leah Shakdiel** writes about *"Women, Religion, and Space; Global Perspectives on Gender and Faith"* a volume edited by Karen M. Morin and Jeanne Kay Guelke; **Efrat Eizenberg** offers her impression on Edna Gorney's *"Exploited and Protected: Ecofeminist Theory of Nature, Culture and Society in Israel"*; the report of **Inbal Wilamowski** discusses Teresa Gómez Reus, Aránzazu Usandizaga's book *"Inside Out: Women Negotiating, Subverting, Appropriating Public and Private"*; and last, **Chen Misgav** reviews Phil Hubbard's book *"Cities and Sexualities"*.

In the articles section **Linda Johnston and Robyne Longhurst** write about *"Mixed feelings: migrant women's experiences of food, eating and home in Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand"*. They study the ways in which food, culture, and home are paradoxical. Their article investigates the relationship between food, eating and home for a group of eleven migrant women from different countries, currently living in Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand. Interviews and cooking sessions with these women prompted mixed feelings in these migrant women recognizing their new and old homes. They discuss the numerous ways food and cultural traditions are blended, and how these women often feel included and excluded at the same time in relation to the New Zealand hosting society. By focusing on the meaningful co-production of feelings, emotions, food and eating for migrant women, Johnston and Longhurst pays theoretical attention to embodied, emotional, and affective geographies focusing on the connection between geography and migration studies.

In "*Researching the urban reflexively: feminist methodological issues*" **Elena Vaccelli**, offers a feminist research methodology and presents a critically reflexive approach for conducting geographical research with feminist activists in Milan. The article addresses embodied methodologies in geographical research and draws on reflexivity as a specifically feminist methodology for explaining the relations among the 'objects' of research. Focusing on Italian-Milanese feminism, Vaccelli claims that separatist practices and consciousness-raising have been a poignant example for using the body as a vector of knowledge. A materiality of research stems from intercorporeal embodied methodologies and it is addressed by drawing on both methods and objects of research to mobilize knowledge.

Tovi Fenster in her paper *Bodies and Places in Jerusalem: Gendered Feelings and Urban Policies* shows how women's bodies are differently contextualized in various urban places depending on the ethno-national or religious cultural contexts. But these different women's bodies contextualization results with similar experience of alienation; fear; dis-comfort and dis-belonging. This bodily contextualization is usually supported by urban policies that perpetuate situations of physical degradation or religious restrictions and by that bring back patriarchal norms to public life. Women usually react in either avoidance of these locations or their temporary appropriation. Fenster claims that if these feelings –as local knowledge – would have been taken more seriously our cities can become better places for all.

Two articles shed light on the feminist- spatial perspectives of work, its relation to women, identity and place, in particular in rural Europe. In the first, **Joos Droogleever Fortuijn and Frans Thissen** analyze the changes in civic engagement and paid work of women in north Netherlands. Inspired by Robert Putnam (1995) arguments about the decline in civic engagement in the United States, their article "*The changing relationship between civic engagement and paid work of women in a rural area in the Netherlands between 1993 and 2007*" shows the links between the dramatic rise in women's labour force participation and the decrease in their engagement in civic life in their rural communities. The negative impact of women's paid work on their civic activities is in accordance with Putnam's time availability hypothesis (1995).

In the second article, "*Women's ventures in a rural context: livelihood and identity*", **Mònica Carbó, Mireia Baylina, and Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon** take

us to a rural area in Catalonia (Spain) . Social and economic crises that have eroded traditional structures of agriculture communities and caused many to out-migrate and pushed other to look for alternative ways to support themselves.s. Their study focuses on the complex motivation of women of different ages who initiated vital business ventures . In addition to their need for economic resources symbolic and ideological components that reinforce rural identity and attachment to their place are found to be important incentives. However, their determination as well as their economic success were largely shaped by their gender identity.

The home space and the domestic arena are the pivot of two more articles. **Robyn Longhurst's** research, "*Stretching-mothering: gender, space and information communication technologies*" reports on the use New Zealand mothers make of information communication technologies (ICTs). She elaborates on the emotional links of the mothers with their children and identifies how the gendered spaces of mothering are now being stretched beyond the home space. Cell phones, Skype (software application used to make voice and video calls), Facebook (social networking site) and email were among the most common ICTs mothers recognized as influential on their relationship with children, those living at home and those living elsewhere.

In "*The Little Kingdom over Which God Made You Queen*": *The Gendered Reorganization of a "Modern" Arab Home in Turn-of-the-Century Beirut*", **Sharon Halevi and Fruma Zachs** take us to a different times and place . They examine the spatial implementation of an emerging modern Arab discourse of domesticity in the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie homes in Beirut. They pay close attention to , the emerging contours of the home, the rearrangement and decorations of rooms, the introducing of new consumer items and the resulting psychological impact of these changes generated in the residents of these modernized homes. At the same time they discuss the role of wives and mothers who are in charge of this process of reorganizing the home, the.

The meaning of home and domesticity is illuminated also in the closing and opening items of the articles' section. This special issue opens up with **Orna Blumen, Tovi Fenster and Chen Misgav** considering "*The Body within Home and Domesticity – Gendered Diversity* ". They review and discuss some recent developments in the research on home and domesticity from a feminist and gendered

perspectives, focusing on the self and the body from a gendered and feminist perspectives as to provides a conceptual view for most of the research this volume contains. The last piece that close this section is a research observation by **Keichi Kumagai**, who draws our attention to recent changes in Japanese masculinity and its diversification. In "*Floating young men: Globalization and the crisis of masculinity in Japan*" the author shows how economic changes undermines the breadwinner role as the prime source of masculinity and how this yielded changes in home as a concept of multiple layers from the place of individual dwelling to the territory of the entire nation.