BORDER-CROSSING: THE TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM OF WOMEN IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

by

Noël Patten
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Name: Noël Patten

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Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Mary Lynn Stewart
Professor, Women's Studies and History
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Habiba Zaman, Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor, Women's Studies
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Helen Hok-Sze Leung, Supervisor
Assistant Professor, Women's Studies
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Jennifer Hyndman, External Examiner
Associate Professor, Geography
Simon Fraser University

Sept. 4, 2003
Date

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Author:

Noël Patten

September 4, 2003

ABSTRACT

The importance of women's transnational activism, or activism beyond national borders, has become increasingly relevant as the gendered impact of globalization intensifies. By focusing on the way that globalization affects women's lives, this thesis illuminates the contradictory and complex nature of global processes. An investigation of social movement theory and the "global women's movement" serves to provide the framework for the conditions under which the organizations in this study engage in activism.

Employing institutional ethnography, this study highlights the transnational activism of the Maquila Solidarity Network (Toronto, Ontario) and the Philippine Women Centre (Vancouver, British Columbia) within the context of globalization and the processes of social, political and economic restructuring occurring throughout the world.

The four women interviewed in this thesis shed light on the dynamics of organizing transnationally and illustrate how the activities of the Maquila Solidarity Network and Philippine Women Centre engage women to resist, challenge and shape processes of globalization.

My findings demonstrate that through transnational exchanges and by building alliances, women are questioning the authority and inevitability of globalization. By enacting individual and collective agency at the local, national and global levels, diverse women are mobilizing and acting to address processes of globalization in an effort for positive change.

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For Mom and Dad

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Globalization, known as global economic, political and social restructuring to facilitate the movement of transnational capital and corporations, is associated with neoliberal policies, flexible accumulation strategies, the integration of local and national economies into a global system and the international movement of information, goods and labour (Runyan 1996). Throughout this thesis these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the economic, social and political restructuring occurring throughout the world. Globalization is not purely about economics, although that is the aspect most frequently discussed in globalization debates; it also involves the equally important and interdependent political, socio-cultural, technological and environmental dimensions (Angeles 2002). Processes of globalization have altered many nations and individual lives in the past twenty years and feminists in particular have been quick to emphasize that a gendered analysis of globalization is essential (Bakker 1994 and 1996; Denis 2003; Freeman 2001; Marchand and Runyan 2000). Scholars have also begun to question the portrayal of globalization as an inevitable process with few alternatives (Atasoy and Carroll 2003; Grant and Short 2002; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001; Steger 2002).

Globalization is generally conveyed to society as an unavoidable and irreversible process in which there are no options or alternatives. Widespread adoption of neoliberal ideals, the "rule of the market" and the push for liberalization of Third World economies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank implies globalism is the ultimate path for countries of the world with no other choices. The hegemony of neoliberal policies and practices are prevalent and have an air of unavoidability that

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contain an over-riding message that globalization is the best thing for all (Carroll 2003; Dhruvarajan 2003). Globalization, through neoliberal ideology, is legitimized as a natural and universal part of life and an unavoidable progression for the future. In spite of claims of inevitability by states, international institutions, elites and corporations, groups have been and continue to challenge globalization's primacy. This is evidenced by protests against the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in Vancouver (1997), the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle (1999) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Quebec City (2001) and international gatherings such as the United Nations (UN) Non-governmental Organization (NGO) Forums. These examples indicate that globalization is not inexorable but is receiving increasingly more resistance by social movement groups. People and movements are openly challenging globalization's authority. My research questions the notion of inevitability by showing how women are resisting, challenging and re-shaping processes of globalization[1], therefore bringing into question its necessity and finality. This study also suggests that women are acting to resist claims of inevitability by playing an active role in finding alternatives to globalization. By organizing and acting in solidarity the women's organizations researched in this thesis challenge the certainty of globalization and are therefore taking steps toward reversing the negative consequences of global processes.

Feminists share "a conviction that women can become a strategic group when they enter into a common struggle against class, race and gender hierarchies" (Krause 1996: 234). This becomes increasingly important as regional and national economies become more integrated making communities interdependent. Therefore, changes that occur in one region have the potential to incur change and make an impact on

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communities elsewhere (Kerr 1996). Transnational activism and alliances have the potential to provide women with ways to deal with the consequences of globalization forces by concentrating their efforts and mobilizing various communities who face similar challenges.

The research topic I pursue in this thesis is the transnational activism of Canadian feminist networks or organizations that are concerned primarily with the issues and challenges women around the world face due to globalization, neoliberalism and global economic restructuring. I regard transnational activism as a form of resistance and awareness and an acknowledgement that activism surrounding issues of globalization must be pursued on a global level in order to show support and solidarity to women everywhere. While transnational organizing has existed among feminist groups for many years, "globalization is changing the terms of feminist politics" (Krause 1996: 225) and has brought about the need for Canadian women to form and forge transnational alliances and collectively organize.

I first became interested in globalization during the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle in 1999. While I was not directly involved, I followed the events closely through the media. Since then I have come to more fully understand the debates surrounding globalization and how women are positioned in relation to globalization. Because of economic restructuring, the integration of world economies and the rapid movement of capital the lives and activities of people in the world are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has consequences for women in Canada, the United States and Mexico but in very different ways and at separate stages. Whereas women in Mexico

dealt with harsh structural adjustment programs implemented in the early 1980s, women in Canada didn't confront the realities of economic restructuring until the late 1980s (Cohen 1994; Gabriel and Macdonald 1994 and 1996). Furthermore, women in Canada, especially women in privileged positions, are generally better equipped to deal with the consequences of economic restructuring because of their relative privilege by way of higher economic standards and better social policies (Gabriel and Macdonald 1994). Therefore, it is not productive to separate and isolate women's experiences in the new global economy. When women from different localities, cultures and class positions work together and form strategic groups but also allow for autonomy, individuality, self-expression and an equal sharing of information, they can form powerful alliances that have the potential to bring about social, economic and political change. It is important to note however, that solidarity among diverse women cannot be assumed and there is always the potential that conflict due to differences will emerge.

The literature available on globalization is vast and varied and encompasses a wide range of perspectives and theories (Appadurai 1996; Falk 2000; Meyer and Prügl 1999; Scholte 2000; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Steger 2002; Weiss 1997). Overall, there is a lack of research specifically on women and the gendered nature of globalization and even less information available on the intersection of gender, globalization and transnational activism. Current globalization literature fails to address the agency of women worldwide to resist the challenges and forces of globalization processes (Naples and Desai 2002).

Due to the sheer volume of globalization literature, I have focused my literature review on information specifically related to globalization's effect on women, theories of

resistance and social movements and transnational politics within the past two decades. This scope has enabled me to gain a better understanding of the type of materials that are available related to my topic of research as well as to focus more on relevant existing literature.

Literature on the effects of various global processes on women is available, particularly related to structural adjustment policies in the Third World (Afshar and Dennis 1992; Bakker 1994; Sparr 1994) and economic liberalization and restructuring around the globe (Afshar and Barrientos 1999; Naples and Desai 2002; Rai 2002; Runyan 1996; Wichterich 2000). Within a local context, economic and political restructuring and its influence on Canadian women, especially in regard to NAFTA, has also been analyzed (Bakker 1996; Cohen 1987; Cohen et al. 2002; Gabriel and Macdonald 1994). Studies of local women's movements and resistance within the context of national issues are available (Basu 1995; Morgan 1996) but do not include a discussion of globalization or the transnational activities of women. Scholars have been increasingly documenting worldwide resistance to globalization processes (Brodribb 2002; Marchand and Runyan 2000; Miles 2000; Rowbotham and Linkogle 2001; Rowbotham and Mitter 1994; Ward 1990), but not all analyses necessarily focus on or incorporate or examine transnational resistance related to women's cross border alliances. Furthermore, many of the studies that discuss transnational activism and alliances between women of different localities (Mindry 2001; Sperling et al. 2001) do not outline how women's collective activities have arose out of multiple global processes. There is also a tendency when transnational practices or activism is discussed for scholars to remain purely theoretical (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Kerr 1996; Smith and Guarnizo 1998), therefore

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much of the literature does not look at specific empirical accounts of women's collective activities across national borders.

Some exceptions to this gap in globalization literature include Naples and Desai's edited collection (2002), Clare Weber's PhD dissertation (2001) and Zaman and Tubajon's article (2001). One example from Naples and Desai's *Women's Activism and Globalization* is Mendez's chapter, "Creating Alternatives from a Gender Perspective: Organizing for Maquila Workers' Rights in Central America." The author examines the transnational politics surrounding a network made up of women's organizations from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador who are concerned primarily with improving the lives and working conditions of women maquilas. Her ethnographic research promotes an understanding of how social structures created by globalization shape the organized resistance of marginalized women in Central America.

Weber's dissertation, *Dissident Citizen Diplomacy: Rethinking Transnational Activism in 1990s Nicaragua*, examines how an American based progressive organization, a Nicaraguan feminist non-governmental organization and a Nicaraguan church-based development organization advanced a strategy of exchange and activism within the context of global economic restructuring, grassroots activism and the Central American Peace Movement in Nicaragua.

Zaman and Tubajon's examination of the Philippine Women Centre (PWC) in Vancouver, British Columbia outlines how the organization resists neo-colonialism, imperialism and globalization through local, national and international resistance. The study also examines in detail the efforts of the PWC to advance Filipino women workers'

rights and discusses its transnational links to MIGRANTE International[II] and GABRIELA[III].

The absence of literature on the transnational collective resistance of women within the context of globalization is evident in the Spring/Summer 2002 release of *Canadian Woman Studies*, entitled "Women, Globalization and International Trade." This disparity reflects the need for more research on and attention to transnational feminist activism and the collective action and response of women to globalization. Brodribb in particular has noted this gap by pointing out that, "a critical analysis of how women's transnational networks are organized and function over time is urgently required" and "not enough attention has been paid to how transnational feminist networks and NGOs function and are positioned in relation to globalization and the grassroots" (Brodribb 2002: 140).

My proposed research is an attempt to narrow this gap and will contribute to current literature by providing an analysis and understanding of the challenges Canadian women face when transnationally organizing in the context of globalization. I anticipate my study will provide a clear picture of how transnational organizations function, how they negotiate differences between women and an understanding of the usefulness and practicality of transnational alliances. I hope that my research will provide a framework for future transnational organizations and alliances and that my results will help other NGOs, organizations or networks to understand and participate in transnational activism. The results could provide existing transnational organizations with guidelines to the dilemmas and successes of transnational activism. By examining two Canadian organizations which engage in transnational activism, I have the opportunity to compare

and contrast their activities to better understand how their differences and similarities lead to more successful partnerships. The two feminist organizations studied for this research are the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN), located in Toronto, Ontario and the Philippine Women Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia[IV]. The objective of this study is to explore and analyze the activities and challenges of the Maquila Solidarity Network and the Philippine Women Centre, both of which engage in transnational activism in the context of diverse processes of globalization.

The primary research question I plan to explore in my thesis is: how do Canadian transnational feminist networks/organizations mobilize and act to address processes of globalization? My secondary research questions include: (a) how is the transnational feminist network organized, what are its primary challenges and how does this influence the way in which it functions?; (b) how and to whom is the network beneficial?; (c) how does the network address issues around globalization and how does globalization fit into the network's mandate?; and (d) what motivates a Canadian organization to be concerned with transnational globalization issues?

Transnational feminist activism will hopefully empower women to form their own modes of resistance that will better equip them to resist locally specific and relevant processes of exploitation and domination. Most importantly, transnational feminist activism aspires to challenge traditional hierarchies of gender, race, class and imperialism, and helps reconfigure existing hierarchies of power that prevent women's equality.

Transnational alliances, organizing and resistance are necessary if women want to learn or benefit in the current global system of restructuring, liberalization and

globalization. Without transnational feminist alliances and networks it will be extremely difficult for women in various localities to make progress and resist globalization forces alone. My research is an effort to show how women are confronting globalization and how women of every race, class, ethnicity and locality are active agents and not passive victims in the current global system. Recognition of unique social, political, economic and cultural locations by feminist activists will help enable women maintain more equitable relationships and create more productive partnerships.

The breakdown of chapters in this thesis is as follows: chapter one covers definitions and examples of globalization and transnational activism; chapter two provides a context for women's organizing by considering the concept of global feminism and various social movement theories; chapter three examines the methodological approach of institutional ethnography and the ethical dilemmas within my research; chapters four and five are a document review of the Maquila Solidarity Network and Philippine Women Centre respectively. This includes an analysis of their published and unpublished literature; and lastly, chapter six contains the results of my study, answers to the research questions and concluding remarks.

Globalization

Globalization, a term used to define diverse aspects of global expansion in the past decade (Afshar and Barrientos 1999), involves complex processes which have been analyzed by scholars within a variety of contexts using various theoretical frameworks (Gills 2000; Hamel et al. 2001; Kofman and Youngs 1996; Mackie 2001; Murphy 2002; Scholte 2000). Globalization "relates as much to a way of thinking about the world as it

does to a description of the dynamics of political and economic relations within it" (Kofman and Youngs 1996: 1). By complex, I mean to say that globalization encompasses and engages with various dimensions of society, such as political, social, economic, technological and cultural, all of which have the potential to intersect and overlap.

At this point it is important to note the distinctions between globalization and globalism, which are often confused or conflated. While globalization describes the cross-border flow of goods, information, technology and labour, globalism is an ideology which prescribes the liberalization of national and global markets for the benefit of all based on neoliberal principles. Globalism, as defined by Manfred B. Steger, is a "neoliberal market ideology endowing globalization with certain norms, values and meanings" and attempts to associate the concept of globalization with neoliberal meanings (2002: 13). Globalism's focus on the economic dimension of globalization tends to diminish its multidimensional (i.e., social, cultural, political) character thereby obscuring globalization's reach and ignoring its impact on the diverse ranges of human lives. Throughout this thesis I use globalization as a term to describe the processes of economic, social and political restructuring and the complex of changes produced by the widespread adoption of neoliberal policies and practices around the world. I also use the term globalization with an awareness of its contested nature and constantly attempt to uncover its multidimensional character.

Although globalization is known as a relatively new idea, a global economy has been maturing for approximately 500 years (Grant and Short 2002). What distinguishes the contemporary period of globalization is the speed, intensity and volume of capital

flows since the 1970s and the widespread adoption of neoliberal policies (Grant and Short 2002; Murphy 2002). Neoliberal policies adopted by governments, such as free trade agreements like NAFTA, are defined by and embody various characteristics of neoliberalism. These characteristics include: the primacy of economic growth; the reduction of government regulations; a focus on individual choice; the importance of free trade to encourage growth; and an unrestricted free market (Steger 2002: 9).

At the political level, globalization generally refers to processes of deregulation, liberalization and privatization that have led to an overall decline of state involvement and decrease in state services. Economic globalization is usually associated with increasing economic liberalization and integration that is reflected in policies of free trade and structural adjustment, the flexibility and mobility of transnational corporations and growing internationalization of capital. Technologically; global communication networks; and advances and innovations in rapid transportation, communication and data processing have facilitated globalization. From a socio-cultural perspective, globalization is characterized by the homogenization of consumer wants, global consumption patterns and greater cultural pluralism (Angeles 2002; Scholte 2000).

I would like to point out that globalization cannot be limited to a static set of definitions, rather what I have described provides insight into some of the ways globalization is manifested in various aspects of our lives and supplies a context for my research. Given the multiple processes of globalization, it is important to note its multifaceted, uneven and contradictory nature, especially in relation to globalization's effect on women in all parts of the world.

Many scholars have noted that globalization and economic restructuring, for the most part, has had a negative impact on women's lives and livelihoods, particularly those in the Third World and women of colour[v] in industrialized nations (Afshar and Dennis 1992; Cohen 1994; Federici 2001; Sparr 1994; Wichterich 2000).

Women in all parts of the world are increasingly aware that global processes and restructuring, such as structural adjustment programs (SAPs), free trade zones or export processing zones (EPZs) and liberal trade policies like NAFTA, are having a profound influence on their lives and are detrimental to their political, social and economic position in society.

Structural adjustment programs are the "primary mechanism through which globalization has affected women's daily lives in the South" (Desai 2002: 16). Structural adjustment, implemented by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank since the early 1980s, "refers to the process by which many developing nations are reshaping their economies to be more free market oriented" (Sparr 1994: 1). The intention of these programs is to halt inflation, promote growth by switching resources to production of "tradeables" and increase efficiency of the economy all though the unhindered operation of the market (Afshar and Dennis 1992). In addition, structural adjustment programs promote privatization and production for export over domestic consumption practices. The impact of SAPs on women varies from place to place but due to women's common societal roles, outcomes of these policies are more widely applicable (Stewart 1992). Consequences of SAPs have created an increase in women's unpaid labour, which consequently imposes more demands on their time due to reduced public sector expenditures on health, education and various social programs. Women have also

experienced an increase in their employment in the low paid service sector and the informal sector where there is little or no protection of workers, no benefits and extremely low wages. In addition, the usurping of land for global production purposes is detrimental to women in the Third World, especially considering these women rely more heavily on the land to sustain their livelihoods (Desai 2002).

The importance of a gendered analysis of globalization becomes evident when the impact of SAPs and economic restructuring on women is so apparent. The gender specific impact of structural adjustment becomes more complex when considering issues of class. Due to land reforms and the appropriation of land for cash crops, women–especially those from the poorest households–are more likely to take positions as seasonal, casual or temporary labourers with lower wages than their male counterparts (Sen and Grown 1987). If there is a lack of resources or food within a family it is most often women who attempt to fill this need despite their increasingly long workdays and extra responsibilities both exacerbated by SAPs. Women with particularly low incomes are at even further risk because the poorest groups are often female-headed households (Buvinic 1995; Stewart 1992; Vardhan 1999). In this situation, women alone are often responsible for running and supporting the entire household, therefore they are increasingly vulnerable to any changes and fluctuations brought about by global economic and political restructuring.

As women are drawn into an international division of labour, both in the Third World and industrialized nations, class and race mediate the processes of global restructuring in the sense that corporations seek women of colour and working class women to meet their need for flexible and/or unskilled labour (Mohanty 1997; Ward

1990). Global competition has compelled both local and transnational employers to seek flexible production processes which meet rapid changes in the market and bring about the need for flexible workers. This translates into work that is temporary, casual, part-time, subcontracted or home based (Kerr 1996). These "flexible" or "unskilled" workers are most often women because cultural attitudes combined with social hierarchies result in an ideology that sees women, especially those who are young and poor, as compliant, docile and dextrous workers who will deal with the negative consequences of flexible work (Kerr 1996; Runyan 1996). The fact that women are sought after to fill "unskilled" and "flexible" positions because of their supposed tolerance for this type of work has both racial and gendered implications. These ideas "draw upon stereotypes which infantilize Third World women and initiate a nativist discourse of 'tedium' and 'tolerance' as characteristics of non-Western, primarily agricultural, premodern cultures" (Mohanty 1997: 16).

As with structural adjustment programs implemented in the Third World, global processes of economic and political restructuring also tend to have a disproportionately negative impact on women in industrialized and newly industrialized nations. In Canada, economic policy changes since the mid-1980s resemble structural adjustment initiatives in the Third World (Cohen 1994). These changes are associated with increasing trade liberalization, privatization and export-led growth justified by and used to promote increased international competitiveness.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is one vehicle through which processes of restructuring have accelerated and intensified. Introduced in 1994, NAFTA has many consequences for women in North America, particularly poor and

working class women, women of colour and immigrant and migrant women. As a result of NAFTA, women's position in the labour market has declined with a large drop in manufacturing jobs, particularly in Canada and the United States. NAFTA and related processes of economic restructuring have also caused a shift in jobs and production in Canada and in the United States to the Mexican maquiladoras which directly impacts women's employment in all three countries. Additionally, the intensification and casualization of women's labour consigns women in increasing numbers to part-time and home-based work, which has low wages and virtually no protections (Runyan 1996). NAFTA and related processes of globalization have also brought about a decline in social welfare funding and services which, as in the Third World, leaves women to fill in the gaps of care that the state is no longer willing to provide and allows the state to rely on women's unpaid labour. Overall, women will enter the labour force because the policies of the minimalist state put pressure on middle and lower income families whose unstable economic position will require additional wage-earners (Cohen 1994).

The potential decrease in social welfare programs in industrialized countries has serious gender implications because women are more likely than men to be poor in Canada (Gabriel and Macdonald 1994). This also plays into the politics of race and class. Given the reality that "non-English speaking women, particularly those from visible minority groups, tend to be concentrated at the bottom rungs of most service and manufacturing sectors" (Ng 1990: 107), women of colour and immigrant women are especially vulnerable to processes of economic and political restructuring and are thereby strongly effected by NAFTA because of their unequal social position within society.

Another way in which globalization has influenced women's lives is by bringing about an increase in their transnational migration. Processes of uneven capitalist development around the world have been a major factor in the large-scale migration of people from the Third World (Gabriel and Macdonald 1994). Women's transnational migration, whether it is for work or marriage and arranged independently or by a third party, has become an alternative strategy for women to survive and is propelled by various global economic, social and political factors (Lepp 2002). Third World women are not only drawn into industrialized economies to work in the service and manufacturing sector because of increased demand for their cheap labour but are being trafficked in growing numbers to support the expanding prostitution and sex industry (Rai 2002; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998).

Due to ongoing effects of globalization, Third World women have felt pressure to migrate to find employment partially due to the demand for their sexual, reproductive and domestic services, and because of various economic factors. These economic considerations include the desire to alleviate situations of poverty and indebtedness, secure higher earnings and long-term financial security and send money home to support and improve the lives of their families (Lepp 2002). Economic and political restructuring, in the form of structural adjustment, has also pressured women from Third World countries to emigrate abroad and take up positions as nannies and maids (Bakan and Stasiulis 1996; Giles and Arat-Koc 1994; Pratt 1999). Industrialized nations, such as Canada, have taken advantage of this cheap and exploitable labour force, for example through the Live-in Caregiver Program, which essentially advances their own aims of

economic restructuring by allowing Third World women to perform domestic duties in the form of care giving that the state is subsidizing less and less.

A complete discussion of globalization and its affect on women has to point out its complexity and contradictory nature. Globalization, as I mentioned previously, is multidimensional and multifaceted and has both positive and negative implications for women around the world. As Afshar and Barrientos state, "women have been affected by globalization in the most diverse aspects of their lives and in the furthest reaches of the world…the effects have been multiple and contradictory, inclusionary and exclusionary" (1999: 1).

Overall, women's paid employment worldwide has dramatically increased, from 54 percent in the mid-1950s to just under 70 percent in 2000 (Rai 2002). Further, liberalization offers women more chances of becoming free and independent economically that has the potential to provide women with more freedom and opportunities (Wichterich 2000). In addition, the increasing dependence on women as income-earners helps to raise the status of women (i.e., as breadwinners) thereby possibly creating increased independence and empowerment. In terms of jobs created by the global economy, despite their level of exploitation, some women found them more appealing than the pre-existing options (Fernandez-Kelly and Wolf 2001). In Indonesia, women workers interviewed by Diane Wolf preferred work in global sweatshops to the village rice fields. She points out that their small earnings "allowed them to engage in a new kind of consumption that, to them, represented a new kind of engagement with 'modernity'" (Fernandez-Kelly and Wolf 2001: 1246). Lastly, the technological innovations in the past 20 years have brought about advanced networks and systems of

communication that "allows for diasporic publics to connect with one another and initiates new alliances with people 'outside' any one geographical region" (Eisenstein 1998: 42). This points to the contradictory possibilities and opportunities globalization has created to bring women together as a collective group to organize and resist processes of that very same globalization.

When one solely considers the negative consequences of global economic and political restructuring on women, there is a tendency to regard women as helpless and passive victims. This is not the case and far from the reality of women in the progressively more "global" world. While women are profoundly affected by globalization in various and diverse ways, it is important to note that they are not victims. On the contrary, women are subverting their condition and attempting to change their positions by increasingly involving themselves in collective, feminist or transnational activism and resistance (Afshar and Barrientos 1999; Krause 1996; Miles 2000; Naples 2002; Rowbotham and Mitter 1994; Runyan 1996; Ward 1990). In this sense, globalization is not necessarily inevitable (Atasoy and Carroll 2003; Denis 2003; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001) but has created new opportunities for alliances and partnerships which transcend traditional boundaries and challenge the "new world order."

Transnational Activism

The term "transnational" is a highly contested term and has been defined and conceptualized in many ways within the context of global processes and women's activities. Karen Booth uses the term transnational to refer to "any actor, organization, or issue that could be either international or global in orientation" (1998: 120). Smith and

Guarnizo identify transnational practices as "linked to the processes of mass migration, economic expansion and political organization across national spaces" (1998: 4) that extend beyond two or more territories and "are built within the confines of specific social, economic and political relations which are bound together by perceived shared interest and meaning" (1998: 13). Alternatively, Gabriel and Macdonald point to the concept of a "feminist internationality," borrowed from Vasuki Nesiah (1993), which "refers to a transnational political alliance of women whose differences are 'acknowledged...and are confronted rather than ignored'" (1994: 535). My conceptualization of transnational for the purposes of this thesis resembles Stienstra's use of transnational which is "to refer to those sites of resistance where women cross territorial borders to do their work and where they organize across and challenge other boundaries including identities like 'nationalities' or 'ethnicities'" (2000: 224). Stienstra also points out that transnational organizing includes how women organize to address the way in which their lives are affected by transnational forces like globalization (2000).

Transnational, more so than *international* or *global*, is a better term to describe the potential interaction and connections between women in the sense that it implies an engagement and acknowledgement of crossing traditional boundaries to share resources, information and knowledge. This conceptualization and use of "transnational" creates a more critical awareness around the complexities of the collective activism of women regarding their varied social, racial and class positions.

Recent scholarship has divided the concept of both globalization and transnationalism into two distinct categories of "transnationalism/globalization from above" and "transnationalism/globalization from below" (Brecher et al. 2000; Falk 2000;

Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Globalization from above is often used to refer to current capitalist forces and transnational markets whereas globalization from below indicates forces which are critical of and resistant to globalization often coming from a local or grassroots position. Sarah J. Mahler, in her contribution to Smith and Guarnizo's edited collection, identifies transnationalism from above as,

> multinational corporations, media, commoditization and other macro-level structures and processes that transcend two or more states, are not produced and projected equally in all areas, but are controlled by powerful elites who seek...political, economic and social dominance in the world (Mahler 1998: 67).

Transnational activism from the grassroots, which is also conceptualized as transnationalism from below, "generates multiple and counter hegemonic powers among non elites" and creates "a new social space...that is fundamentally 'grounded in the daily lives, activities and social relationships" of everyday individuals (Mahler 1998: 67). Transnational flow can refer to the contemporary movement of people (i.e., migration), capital and production (i.e., corporations), culture and information that transcend traditional boundaries of the nation state. Current transnational conditions, especially those related to flows of capital and the power of corporations and international institutions, have necessitated a transnational response in the form of grassroots "strategic organizing alliances" that advance the cause of human rights, environmental justice, political democratization and gender and racial equality (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 19). I define transnational activism as the political organization of issue specific actors/groups across national borders who are brought together by shared interests and concerns of international issues. These groups join forces to mobilize and exchange resources,

services and information to resist injustice, create awareness and implement pressure for tangible change.

Women have been forging international connections and organizing on a global level for many years (Mackie 2001; Moghadam 2000; Rupp 1998; Stienstra 1994). Women began to organize across national borders in the late nineteenth century around issues such as slavery, suffrage and peace. Some examples of the organizations these women formed are the International Council of Women (1888), the International Alliance of Women (1904) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (1915). While these organizations claimed to be "international," most of the activities took place between women of European descent and came from countries that were colonial powers. In addition, many of the women occupying leadership roles and general membership were privileged, upper class women of European heritage. These women's groups failed to encourage and enable women from Third World countries to participate in their international gatherings. This was perhaps due in part to the lack of resources available to non-European women who were not in a similar class position and were therefore unable to attend regular meetings. Furthermore, language barriers prevented proper communication as most correspondence and meetings were conducted in German, French or English.

Most international women's groups between the late nineteenth century and the mid-1970s worked through the League of Nations and the United Nations until alternative international feminist networks and global feminist movements developed (Rupp 1998; Stienstra 1994). These became more separated and independent from the

United Nations and coordinated women through networks and conferences (Stienstra 1994).

Changes brought about by global economic and political restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s such as capitalist expansion, growing international division of labour, structural adjustment policies and modes of uneven development, particularly in women's lives, have resulted in growing organization and collaboration between women of diverse localities and backgrounds. Many scholars have suggested that women's activism across national borders is in direct relation and response to the diverse and uneven processes of globalization (Dickinson 2001; Naples and Desai 2002; Robertson 2002; Rowbotham and Linkogle 2001). Women's awareness of the interconnected and interrelated effects of global processes on their lives has spurred them to address feminist agendas beyond national borders and pursue transnational relationships. As Moghadam points out, "in the socio-demographic context of a worldwide growth in the population of educated, employed, mobile and politically-aware women, feminist discourses and networking began to spread and to take on not only an inter-national but a transnational form" (Moghadam 2000: 60).

A site at which women's transnational activism has been facilitated is the various United Nations conferences (Mackie 2001; Moghadam 2000; Murphy 2002; Stienstra 2000). This includes the Conferences on Women in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and in particular, Beijing in 1995, as well as various other conferences and preparatory meeting related to issues of the environment (the Rio Earth Summit), human rights and development. These conferences have brought together women who are active in community based, regional, national and international networks

and organizations and have provided them with an opportunity to condemn states' global restructuring frameworks and practices, and contest the discourses and assumptions on which restructuring is based (Stienstra 2000). UN conferences have enabled women from diverse backgrounds to develop links among specific local struggles, create an aware and well-connected transnational group of activists and establish a wide variety of priorities and goals which can be applied to different women's organizations be they grassroots or international NGOs. The UN conferences have helped women understand that they experience globalization in very different but interconnected ways. By forging transnational links, women can engage in information exchange, mutual support, advocacy and lobbying across borders to extend their reach and access resources that may not regularly be available.

A way in which women organize and mobilize transnationally is through transnational feminist networks/organizations. Women's organizations worldwide "are increasingly networking and coordinating their activities, engaging in dialogue and forms of co-operation, solidarity and mutual support, sending representatives to meetings in other countries and regions, and utilizing a similar vocabulary to describe women's disadvantages and the desired alternatives" (Moghadam 2000: 61).

An example of a transnational feminist network is Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). DAWN is a network of women scholars and activists from the Third World that engages in feminist research and works to develop alternative frameworks and approaches to economic development. The network was formally launched in 1986 in the year following the UN Conference on Women in Nairobi. DAWN works globally and regionally in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and

the Pacific, and is primarily research-based, focusing on the themes of the political

economy of globalization, sexual and reproductive health and rights, political

restructuring and social formation and sustainable livelihoods. DAWN's transnational

activism work involves forming partnerships with other organizations and networks.

Together they work to reform international institutions, ensure governments uphold

commitments made at conferences and mainstream gender in NGO advocacy initiatives

(DAWN 2002). The publication of *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions*, which

outlines DAWN's goals and perspectives on development, recognizes the importance of

analyzing economic development from the "vantage point of poor women" (Sen and

Grown 1987: 23). DAWN remains grassroots and true to its vision by offering analyses

from a Third World feminist perspective that is grounded in women's experiences and

their collective strategies. By acknowledging the multiple oppressions of gender, race,

class and nation, being open and respectful of difference as well as continuing to

physically root the organization in the Third World, DAWN strengthens its ability to

represent a wide range of women. In terms of extending its transnational activities

beyond nations of the Third World, DAWN hopes that "individuals and grassroots groups

in the North can use and develop DAWN's perspectives within their own contexts and

share their insights to enrich the DAWN process" (Sen and Grown 1987: 12). DAWN has

very much responded to adverse global processes and continues to use its transnational

ties with women and women's organizations to realize their goal of equality and

empowerment of women.

Another organization which engages in transnational activism is GABRIELA,

which is a Philippines based radical feminist organization. GABRIELA focuses on issues

such as the effects of militarization on women, IMF and World Bank policies, prostitution and trafficking of women and migration (GABRIELA 1999; PWC 1998; Santiago 1995; Zaman and Tubajon 2001). Its focus represents the impact global processes have had in their country and on Filipino women, and has therefore been instrumental in determining the organization's mandate and activist goals. Part of GABRIELA's principle and task is to strengthen solidarity between women's groups in other countries to resist sexism, imperialism and militarism. In addition they aim to forge international links with women's organizations to foster understanding and solidarity toward the resolution of common problems (GABRIELA 2002). A specific example of an operation, which was facilitated and amplified by transnational activism, is the Purple Rose Campaign. Originally designed by GABRIELA, the Purple Rose Campaign was implemented to create awareness around and to end the trafficking of women. In response, the GABRIELA network in the United States and the Philippine Women Centre in Vancouver joined the campaign in an act of solidarity and in acknowledgment that the trafficking of Filipino women is an issue not just in the Philippines but all over the world. Without GABRIELA's transnational ties and the commitment of its partners and alliances, campaigns such as this one would never move beyond a national context. This is a good example of the potential transnational activism has to mobilize women and educate larger society about the consequences of global processes.

On the whole, as a result of political and economic restructuring and a general decline in the services provided by the state, women in the Third World and industrialized and newly industrialized countries, are finding themselves increasingly filling the gap in social welfare by participating in various forms of feminist activism

(Afshar and Barrientos 1999; Rowbotham and Linkogle; Runyan 1996). While women's activism can be empowering, the added responsibility of political activism to their paid and unpaid work only increases their daily workload and puts more pressure on their time.

Women's transnational activism in response to various aspects of globalization involves deep and complex contradictions. For example, while women collectively resist the consequences of economic restructuring by creating cross-border alliances they usually do so by taking advantage of contemporary modes of telecommunications, communication networks and rapid transportation. In this sense globalization facilitates and enhances women's ability to communicate and meet with one another while at the same time partially creating the conditions necessary for their formation and resistance. Therefore, while women respond to processes of globalization they are concomitantly taking advantage of processes of globalization. In this respect globalization can never be perceived as a linear process, nor can women's response to globalization be static and unchanging. Globalization is neither uniform nor universal (Dickinson 2001) and women's transnational activism is constantly adjusting to these fluctuations and imbalances.

Lastly, I think it is important to acknowledge and ask the question of who can participate in transnational activism? There are many women who potentially do not have the choice to participate in struggles or responses to globalization because their daily survival comes first and/or certain circumstances prevent them from organizing. Putting food on the table or into their own mouths may take priority over any sort of political activism. This brings into question what kind of support mechanisms are available for

different women to help and encourage them to engage in and benefit from activism at the international level. This is an issue that I haven't discussed or explored in detail but one I have kept in mind throughout this study.

ENDNOTES

[1] Within my research I refer to women's resistance to globalization. Given globalization's complex and contradictory nature and its potential to have both positive and negative influences on women, I would like to make explicit which aspects of globalization are in fact being resisted. These include, but are not limited to, free trade policies such as NAFTA, structural adjustment programs, international debt policies, neoliberal ideals which lead to a decline in state services (often labelled as globalism), the demand for flexible and low-cost labour and growing capitalist expansion. Throughout this thesis I address processes of globalization that have a harmful effect on women's livelihoods and impact the quality of their lives.

[II] MIGRANTE International, established in 1995 and based in the Philippines, is an international alliance of Filipino migrant organizations in different countries of the world which aims to strengthen unity among Filipino migrant organizations and uphold and defend Filipino migrants' rights and welfare (MIGRANTE International 2002).

[III] GABRIELA, the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action, is a national alliance of militant women's organizations in the Philippines which was formed in 1984 as a national women's coalition. See p. 24 for a more detailed description.

[IV] Throughout this thesis the MSN and PWC are referred to in alphabetical order which in no way implies an order of importance or primacy.

[V] The terms "Third World women" and "women of colour" are used interchangeably throughout this thesis and "designate a political constituency". As Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes, "what seems to constitute "women of colour" or "third world women" as a viable oppositional alliance is a *common context of struggle* rather than colour or racial identifications" (Mohanty 1991:7).

CHAPTER TWO

The Intersection of Globalization and Transnational Activism

Globalization processes have enhanced transnational activism through increased communication and computer technology and access to transportation, particularly in industrialized nations, while simultaneously creating the conditions necessary for transnational activism through the consequences of phenomenon such as neo-liberal ideologies, structural adjustment programs, trade agreements and transnational corporations. Transnational activism and globalization are mutually reinforcing; indeed, Valentine Moghadam alludes to this when she states that the "proliferation of transnational feminist networks may be regarded as both a reflection of the multi-faceted process of globalization and a response to and criticism of its vagaries" (2000: 62). This is not to suggest that transnational activism has arisen solely out of complex global processes but that it has created current conditions that encourage or make diverse women aware of the potential for resistance on an international level. This chapter provides context within which the Maquila Solidarity Network and Philippine Women Centre organize by analyzing some of the benefits and challenges of women's transnational networking. In addition, I problematize the concept of an "international" or "global" feminist movement and examine aspects of social movement theory. These concepts situate the MSN and PWC's activities within the current era and inform the framework from which I conduct my research.

As global integration continues and nations become more interdependent through economic, information and cultural exchanges, non-state actors will become significant international actors with growing importance (Kriesberg 1997; Smith et al. 1997).

Problems are becoming more transnational, therefore movements for social change are responding by organizing beyond national boundaries (Nepstad 2002). Activists are reaching outside the state to work in solidarity with those individuals or groups in different countries with whom they identify or share common values (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997).

The women's movement, along with human rights, environmental, labour, religious and peace movements, have moved along a global path (Cohen and Rai 2000). Over the past twenty years, women's movements have organized transnationally in response to critical changes in women's lives (Stienstra 2000b). This includes mobilizing around issues such as the gendered international division of labour, sex work, migration, imperialism and militarism, to mention only a few. Women are increasingly applying the work they perform locally and nationally to the transnational field in the form of collective, cross-border mobilizations through networks and organizations as well as regional and international conferences, workshops and informal gatherings. While women are organizing within the context of "women's movements," this term fails to highlight the complexity of women's various social, political and economic positions around the world. The diversity of women transnationally organizing within "women's movements" will be examined more closely later in this chapter.

Sonia Alvarez (2000), in her work on the transnational organizing of women in Latin America, points to two reasons why local movement actors pursue transnational linkages beyond national boundaries. First, local actors use transnational partnerships as a means to "(re)construct or reaffirm subaltern or politically marginalized identities and to establish personal and strategic bonds of solidarity with others who share locally

stigmatized values or identities" (Alvarez 2000: 31). Second, activists organize across borders in attempts to expand formal rights, affect public policy and enhance their local political power via the "boomerang pattern" (Alvarez 2000). The boomerang pattern, a concept borrowed from Keck and Sikkink, refers to a process which occurs when the channels between state and domestic actors are blocked and cause local non-state actors to forge international alliances in an effort to put pressure on their state from outside forces (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Cynthia Cockburn's study (2000) on the international networking of three women's organizations located in Northern Ireland, Israel and Bosnia-Herzegovina within the context of the anti-war movement, points to the benefits of transnational alliances. The mobilization of diverse women in each organization from these three localities enabled the women to emphasize unaccustomed differences as well as differences between countries, national conflicts and women's groups. Highlighting these differences was a way for these women to put in perspective their own local ethno-national tensions, thereby reducing polarization within the transnational alliance (Cockburn 2000). In addition, "the skills required for the detailed, intimate and sustained practice of cross national working across difference," developed by the three women's organizations to deal with internal ethno-national differences, are useful tools when relating across national boundaries (Cockburn 2000: 61). As the author also points out, these skills and awareness of difference not only apply to the anti-war movement. The same attention needs to be applied to women transnationally organizing around different issues and between women of industrialized and Third World countries and between women of the capitalist West and ex-communist East (Cockburn 2000).

Transnational activism between women of varying backgrounds and localities is advantageous because there is the opportunity to share information, strategies and resources. Alliance building and mobilization between women around issue-specific or identity-specific campaigns can enable women to forge and sustain solidarities that advance the status of women. It bears remembering that power differences between women, as well as access to resources, technology and funding must also be addressed in order to maintain equal and balanced partnerships.

While there are many positive aspects of transnational networking among women all over the world, it is important to note the challenges it can present to various women's groups. To begin with, many women's groups have concentrated their efforts at the local level due to the harsh realities of global political and economic restructuring (Stienstra 2000a). Limited resources and time have prevented them from pursuing action at a global level. Being able to participate in transnational organizing and international networking mean having access to funds, technology and structural or organizational foundations that cannot be taken for granted, particularly in the Third World. The social and political location of women in different parts of the globe allows them very different access to resources, knowledge and forms of communication and technology (such as the Internet, phone, fax and rapid transportation). Some scholars have even suggested that Western-funded transnational alliances should not only focus on international networking but that "the effectiveness of Western initiatives might be greater if they placed priority on building domestic coalitions rather than international partnerships" (Hrycak 2002: 78).

Conversely, transnational activists' predominant focus on elites may conflict with local activists who give community activism and grassroots organizing and mobilization

higher priority (Sperling et al. 2001). Many women do not have the time, money or privilege to engage in activities beyond the local or national level.

Amrita Basu echoes these sentiments when she points out that it is within the context of women's movements trying to organize more inclusively to overcome social hierarchies that transnational linkages present the greatest challenge. She too acknowledges that transnational activists' reliance on the Internet, which requires certain skills and technology, only serves to further accentuate class divisions among activists (Basu 2000). The growing divide between those groups and organizations who have access to funding and those who do not, can also create tensions and may cause some activists to become increasingly mobile while others are forced to remain at the local level (Basu 2000).

It is also important to recognize that many organizations/networks/NGOs in industrialized countries provide financial support to Third World organizations with which they engage in activism. The implications of First World organizations supplying funding to Third World organizations should be noted because there is a danger that privileged organizations and feminists will hold an unspoken power over less privileged women and perhaps even feel they have the right or obligation to set the terms of the activist relationship thereby ideologically dominating the partnership. This practice of financial support also brings into question how and to which organizations Western funders decide to provide resources.

Within the context of international gatherings and networking and global feminist organizing, women working transnationally have been quick to point out that the issue of language often presents challenges and barriers to productive partnerships and successful

encounters (Cockburn 2000; Hsiung and Wong 1999). The inability to properly communicate and lack of funding available for interpretation means that women have to rely on skills, however limited, they already have to understand and engage with one another. This can place limitations on the potential for sharing information and knowledge and disrupts clarity on both ends. Even if formal interpretation is available, this doesn't alleviate the meaning that is lost in certain words of certain languages. Although communication is key when it comes to international dialogue between women, it is also important to recognize the cultural and ideological paradigms which underlie language differences (Hsiung and Wong 1999).

These are just some of the challenges which can surface when individuals, groups or organizations engage in the complex arena of transnational activism. I will now shift focus toward women's movements and the concept and growing use of global or international feminism.

Global and International Feminism

The concept of global and/or international feminism in addition to a global women's movement are increasingly referred to in literature on women's movements, globalization and transnational organizing. Global feminism is a contested term but many scholars discuss its implications within the context of difference and diversity among women (Antrobus and Ruffman 1999; Meyer and Prügl 1999 ; Miles 1996; Mohanty 2003; Sen and Grown 1987; Sinha et al. 1999) and acknowledge its potentially homogenizing nature.

The emergence of women's organizations and networks that are responding to various processes of globalization and engaging in transnational activism in both industrialized and Third World countries implies links and alliances that suggest a global women's movement (Moghadam 1999). Women's transnational activism is increasingly understood and conceptualized within the context of social movements that are associated with "global" or "international" feminism. It is important to understand that "the cohesion of women in a worldwide movement cannot be taken for granted" (Cockburn 2000: 46).

With that in mind, Angela Miles calls for the "worldwide development of indigenous feminisms with strong local practices both informed by and informing global perspectives and loyalties to women" (Miles 1996: 99). In addition, she understands global feminism as not only associated with international activity but as strong local activity that has a global awareness (Miles 1996). In this sense, global feminism is not solely about physically engaging in transnational activism but having local actors/activists keeping issues of global concern in mind even when working at the domestic level. This is particularly important for women's organizing efforts, especially in industrialized nations, because it can lead to a greater understanding of the vantage point of women of colour, immigrant and migrant women, poor women and Third World women. Transnational activism becomes most productive when locally based women's movements are grounded in local practice and understand their own context of struggle. An awareness of local politics in combination with a global consciousness can translate into more productive, equal and balanced transnational alliances. Furthermore, exchanges

between women internationally are one of the best ways to develop global *feminisms* (Miles 1996).

The use of the concept "global" or "international" feminism and a global women's movement is not without problems. There is a tendency for these terms to imply a homogenization or universalization of women's experiences and perspectives. Like any kind of feminism (i.e., "Western" feminism or Third World feminism), global feminism cannot be regarded as homogenous or monolithic. Although "feminist identity does not dictate one ideology or political style" (Rupp and Taylor 1999: 366), there has to be a continuous and critical awareness that global or international feminism contains distinct *feminisms*. This must be recognized in order for women to build alliances and strategies across race, class and national boundaries. Feminisms defined locally which are incorporated and then privileged within global organizing contexts are key to successful transnational alliances between women.

Global feminism also brings into question which type of feminism is being referred to when scholars use the term. Given the lead and dominance of First World-based women's movements and their respective organizations and networks, especially at UN conferences, as well as the flow of resources from First World nations to the Third World to support various women's organizing efforts, careful use of global feminism is necessary. Third World feminists have been particularly concerned with the tendency of First World feminist scholarship to view Third World women through a Westernized lens (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Mohanty 1991). Therefore, in order to not reproduce these tendencies between women transnationally organizing in the wake of growing global

feminism, global feminist strategies need to consistently and critically address differences and commonalities.

An option is to look to the term "feminisms." Feminisms came into use in the late 1980s and is "intended to deny the claiming of feminism by any one group of feminists and to signify the multiplicity of ways in which those who share a feminist critique may come together to address issues" (Miller 1999: 225). In the transnational arena, feminisms better capture the diverse positions and perspectives of women.

Perhaps there are also groups of women who do not define themselves as feminist but contribute to the advancement of women. This too needs to be respected; self-definition is important and in order to be inclusive, the women's movement should be open to the diverse positions of women around the world.

With careful consideration of these issues, transnational alliances and solidarity of women across differences of class, race, nationality and culture have great potential. Despite the challenges mentioned, one of the best ways for women to avoid assumptions and homogenization is to speak directly to one another in order that voices are heard and understood. Active dialogue, networking and practice across national boundaries can correct many of the misunderstandings and "speaking-for" that occurs between women. Global feminism, as a heterogeneous movement that addresses and confronts women's varying experiences and social and political locations and the acknowledgement of *feminisms*, will enhance the activism of women on a transnational level.

Social Movements and Women's Movements

Social movement theory is increasingly used to explain why certain non-state actors mobilize and create alliances through issue or identity-specific networks or organizations (see Melucci 1989; Tarrow 1994), particularly in the context of globalization processes and in association with transnational networks (Eschle 2001; Cohen and Rai 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Khagram et al. 2002; Smith et al. 1997; Smith and Johnston 2002).

The growing numbers of diverse women organizing transnationally through organizations and networks and making connections in international conferences and gatherings such as the UN NGO forums alongside the Women's Conferences, imply a global spread of women's movements. I understand social movements as a way to shed light on why women mobilize and around what issues they decide to mobilize. In the current global system of political and economic restructuring, women are increasingly acknowledging that globalization processes affect a great number of women but in very different ways. Women's movements have been organizing transnationally in the past twenty years in response to critical changes in women's lives (Stienstra 2000b).

Social movements are "groups with a self-consciousness or awareness of being a group and with some level of organization" and come about in order to "do politics differently" by providing more opportunities for citizen participation and re-creating political spaces (Stienstra 2000a: 263). Social movements are not limited to organizations but many feminists have pointed out the important role NGOs, networks and organizations play in bringing about change for women on a global level (Miller 2000;

Tinker 2000; Stienstra 2000a). For example, today women's NGOs from all parts of the world, as actors within social movements, "increasingly challenge the power and scope of traditional political institutions within the state and lobby international agencies to reinterpret development policies" (Tinker 2000: 89). Women's work around specific issues such as human rights and lobbying within the UN system in combination with diverse grassroots organizing, has contributed to a growing international women's movement and the need and desire for transnational links. The prevalence of organizations in attendance at the UN NGO forum in Huairou in 1995 and growing numbers of transnational feminist networks and organizations (Moghadam 2000) support this.

New social movement theory can also be applied to explain women's activism within the context of globalization. This theory argues that profound changes in recent activism are both a product of deep structural changes in late modernity and a response to it (Eschle 2001: 2). Although women began to organize across national borders in the late nineteenth century (Rupp 1998), globalization processes have brought about definite changes to the way in which women pursue and engage in transnational activism. As I mentioned in Chapter One, the relationship between global processes and women's transnational activism are complex and each shapes the way in which the other progresses and defines itself.

Cohen and Rai (2000), who recognize the contested nature of new social movements, also point out that innovations such as the Internet and other modes of communication have affected the audience to whom social movements speak. This audience, which for my purposes is women from various localities, is no longer solely a

local or national one—it has become global (Cohen and Rai 2000). Ideally, these new social movements would "attempt to enclose within their message sensitivity to the localized differences among their constituents" (Cohen and Rai 2000: 7). This point would be a necessity in order for a global feminist movement to survive and thrive and address the concerns and goals of a vast and varied population of women.

What new social movement theory assumes is that by being women, and the mere fact of being oppressed as women, is adequate enough to unite women together through their single identity (Cohen and Rai 2000). What this doesn't address is how differently women experience being women dependent upon their geographical location, history, culture, race, class and political location. Cockburn acknowledges that in order for women to organize together as women, they can only do so "by means of conscious and careful processes of boundary-crossing, agenda-setting and alliance building" (Cockburn 2000: 46).

Global social movement theory and transnational social movements may also provide insight into the way in which women organize in a global women's movement. Rupp and Taylor (1999) suggest that collective identity may be necessary for transnational movements and that constructing an international feminist collective identity could lead to overcoming national differences. Borrowing from William Gamson (1991), the authors think of collective identity as three embedded layers of organization, movement and solidarity. This collective identity approach in the context of feminism is useful because it "avoids both a static notion of identity and sheds light on how feminists with conflicting interests and ideas are able to talk across their differences" (Rupp and Taylor 1999: 366). If collective identity is necessary to bring women together to form

solidarities and mobilize across national boundaries, it is also necessary to constantly question and deconstruct the nature of that identity. Social movement theories which advocate a collective identity approach must acknowledge that a common collective identity cannot be assumed. Collective identities and challenges must be situated in the politics of gender, race and class because commonalities between women across borders cannot be taken for granted. Women's transnational organizing and alliance-building based on gender alone will not be successful unless differences between women are acknowledged and privileged. As Cockburn states, "ways of identifying commonalities while taking account of difference and equality…may be necessary for broad-based movements to happen" (Cockburn 2000: 46). This is the challenge for women, particularly those in privileged positions in the industrialized world, who are transnationally organizing within the context of globalization and a global women's movement.

Global Sisterhood and Differences and Diversity

The claims of a global sisterhood (Morgan 1996) in the past is problematic in the same sense that the uncritical use of global feminism is. The use of the term "global sisterhood" fails to highlight the tremendous differences in experience women have around the world. Such a claim universalizes and homogenizes women's lives and implies women globally should or do get along without conflict or tension. While globalization causes women to experience social and economic subordination in all parts of the world, it does not mean that women everywhere have similar experiences of that subordination. Gender, race, class and location have a profound effect on how each

woman experiences oppression, therefore we need to recognize "the material and ideological power differences between women in the North and South as well as between women *within* the North and South" (Gabriel and Macdonald 1994: 539).

Global sisterhood pronouncements also disguise the very real tensions women have faced while engaging in cross-border alliances, networking or gatherings either informally or at events such as UN Conferences (Busheikin 1997; Sperling et al. 2001; Stienstra 2000b). These include anything from the imposition of Western-feminist activist ideologies and practices onto Russian women (Busheikin 1997; Sperling et al. 1997) to arguments between Western-based activist organizations over who will lead and organize the non-governmental presence at the UN conference in Beijing (Stienstra 2000b). These types of tensions expose the necessity of an awareness of difference and the need for women in positions of privilege to constantly be critical of how their own social and political location cannot be pushed onto others if successful exchanges are desired without resentment and regret. With respect to a global sisterhood, like global feminism, the term must be used in a transparent nature in order that it does not imply a presumption of a single, unchanging or static identity and ideology. Its hidden implication of generalizing various women's perspectives is unacceptable and inappropriate within the burgeoning activities between women globally.

As an option to the use of a global sisterhood, it is more advantageous to focus on "imagined communities of women with divergent histories and social locations woven together by *political* threads of opposition to forms of domination" (Mohanty 1991: 4). Imagined communities, a term Mohanty borrows from Benedict Anderson, refers to Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined political community in which the

"nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1991: 7). An imagined community of women is useful in conceptualizing women's transnational activities because it "suggests potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries" (Mohanty 1991: 4). The concept of an imagined community of women, much like Anderson's imagined community of the nation, has the potential to inspire solidarity while at the same time speak to the commonalities and diversity among women. But, as Anderson notes, the nation, much like a community of women, is imagined as limited because even the largest one has finite or elastic boundaries beyond which other nations lie (Anderson 1991: 6). In other words, a single imagined community of women is neither realistic nor practical but a variety could provide women's groups that have similar goals, however distinct, an opportunity to come together in common struggle in spite of differences. An imagined community of women, while still keeping differences in mind, could help the cohesion of diverse women across national boundaries without dividing them. Whether women are organizing within the context of post-Soviet Russia under the demands of recent economic and political restructuring and high unemployment, or under conditions of militarization in, for example, the Philippines or in the midst of war or local conflict in the Middle East or Ireland, women are undeniably facing difficult conditions as women. Even though their organizing environments are very diverse and the politics of race and class will only deepen their divisions, there is still great potential for finding and working within a common context of struggle. Nationalism can be very divisive to women organizing across national borders and could ultimately hinder transnational partnerships due to women's different positions within nations and the challenges that go along with that. As Chow (1991)

states, some women in patriarchal Third World countries "are required to sacrifice and postpone their needs and their rights again and again for the greater cause of nationalism and patriotism" (88). Therefore, without recognition of diverse women's relationship to, and engagement with nationalism in their particular local context, transnational alliances will be difficult and perhaps even unsuccessful.

When engaging in transnational alliances the differences among women should be openly acknowledged and discussed without dividing women, particularly by those in more privileged economic, social and political locations. This is especially important in partnerships between women in the First World and women in the Third World.

In the current period of global economic and political restructuring, there is no question that women in the Third World and women of colour, immigrant and migrant women in the First World are exploited due to their race and class positions. Women of industrialized nations benefit from this exploitation but are increasingly aware that global processes will not leave them untouched. Women in industrialized nations need to "recognize the history of exploitative racist colonial and neo-colonial economic and political relations" that the First World continues to impose on the Third World (Miles 1996: 103) and keep it in mind when forging transnational links and engaging in transnational strategies. As women continue to acknowledge how interconnected their lives and oppression are in the contemporary global economy, more equal and transnational partnerships can be developed. Feminists need to acknowledge the forces that divide women while simultaneously searching for the interests and experiences that connect them as well as the possibilities of building on these (Miles 1996). Women will only be able to expand the reach of the global feminist movement in all its diversity if

they build global solidarity, find common links and interests and collectively resist exploitative, neo-liberal policies and ideals that dominate around the world.

The potential for women organizing across national boundaries is immense and necessary. The sharing of resources, knowledge and strategies while keeping in mind women's differences has many possibilities and provides opportunities for transformation and change. While transnational activism between women still needs considerable attention from scholars, particularly regarding specific empirical cases of transnational partnerships, current alliances have provided much insight into the challenges and advantages of cross-border organizing.

Balance between women's groups, a recognition and acknowledgment of women's individual positions as well as an acceptance and openness to alternative perspectives and practices is key between activists of different localities. I agree with Hsiung and Wong when they state, "to recognize local women's subjectivity and agency, Western feminist and activist groups must go beyond any rigid usage of terminology and most importantly, become open to a paradigm of feminist activism that may be different from their own" (Hsiung and Wong 1999: 130).

In conclusion, women, particularly those in privileged positions in industrialized nations, must challenge all assumptions and preconceived notions around the sameness and difference of women. Direct communication between women in the transnational arena and the ability for women to autonomously define their experiences will hopefully lead to more equal and productive partnerships. In this chapter I am suggesting that both the MSN and PWC are engaging in and are active members of an "international" or "global" feminist movement. Through their local, national and international activities,

both organizations are challenging globalization by participating, as social movement

groups, in transnational activism.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Methodology

The methodological approach I used to conduct my research is feminist in nature and seeks to "support research of value to women, leading to social change or action beneficial to women" (DeVault 1999: 31).

To answer my primary and secondary research questions, I investigated a Canadian network and organization that engage in transnational activism and participate in collective activities between women in different countries. They include the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) located in Toronto, Ontario and the Philippine Women Centre[I] (PWC) in Vancouver, British Columbia. The purpose of this chapter is to outline my methodological approach, as well as highlight the limitations of my study and the ethical safeguards I have taken within my research.

My study employs institutional ethnography, which, like other forms of ethnography, relies on interviewing, observation and documents for data (Campbell 1998). However, unlike many ethnographic approaches, institutional ethnography uses this data "as a way to look beyond the actualities of individual women's lives to the outside forces that structure and regulate local and particular experience" (Jung 2002: 179). This methodology, pioneered by Dorothy E. Smith, asserts that research should begin in the "work and practical reasoning of individuals as the matrix of experience in the everyday world" (Smith 1986: 8). Following Smith's lead my institutional ethnography begins from the standpoint of women–who are working, volunteering or simply members within organizations–to explore how processes of globalization, neo-liberal ideologies, trade agreements and cutbacks in state services influence their daily

activities. The study attempts to highlight the influence of such policies or processes and how they affect and shape women's activism at a local level and their engagement with other women at a national or international level. Therefore, my understanding of institutional ethnography starts with the experience of women acting and involved in feminist organizations that sheds light on and leads to an investigation of the social processes that shape their experience.

In *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research* (1999), Marjorie L. DeVault outlines numerous aims and characteristics of institutional ethnography that are useful in explaining the method and informs my methodological approach. First, the author states, "the aim of institutional ethnography is to discover the social relations that organize a particular setting" and that the researcher then considers how the specific setting of her study has emerged from a particular history (DeVault 1999: 48). My investigation of a transnational network and organization is deeply connected to my interest in how globalization, which includes economic, political and social aspects, (i.e., "social relations" and/or history) affects or inspires transnational activism. Secondly, "institutional ethnography is always concerned with institutional connections, with relations across and among various sites of activity" (DeVault 1999: 49) This ties directly to my research in that I am interested in discovering how the work of a transnational network is connected to greater global processes and events that occur elsewhere in the world. DeVault's point is also linked to the concept of the interdependency of the lives of women in Canada and women in other countries and the importance of their interaction to resist forces of globalization which oppress them. The point of my research is to highlight how and why women transnationally organize in an era of globalization in order that

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more women may potentially learn to mobilize and thereby acknowledge the need to join forces with women of differing backgrounds and locations.

An example of institutional ethnography is Nandita Sharma's study entitled, *On Being Not Canadian: The Social Organization of "Migrant Workers" in Canada* (2000). Sharma employs institutional ethnography to investigate the social organization of people's knowledge around notions of "Canadianness" and non-immigrants or migrant workers. The author examines how Canada's Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP), a larger social process, creates a category of migrant workers for the Canadian labour market. The author conducts a textual analysis of Canadian parliamentary debates that provides background knowledge on state ideological practices regarding migrant workers. Part of my research involves analyzing the publications and documents of the MSN and PWC to provide background information on the organizations and to identify their role and activity in transnational relationships.

Another example of a research project that uses institutional ethnography is Roxana Ng's *The Politics of Community Services* (1996). Ng's empirical study investigates a community employment agency for immigrant women and the effect of state processes on the agency's internal dynamics. Ng identifies various methodological issues faced during her research project. These include the increased tension she experienced as a researcher among staff members who no longer welcomed her as well as various ethical issues. Ng chose to withhold the agency's name and city location as well as counsellors' names and instead used pseudonyms or the individual's title (i.e., "the coordinator"). Unfortunately, due to people's familiarity with the immigrant community, Ng could not guarantee the subjects' anonymity. Lastly, the author points out that "...the

reader should bear in mind that what are being described and analysed here are the social processes which underpinned the life of the employment agency and not the performances or character of individual members" (Ng 1995: 24). Similarly in my study, and in keeping with the institutional ethnographic mode of inquiry, research participants are acting as spokespersons for the organization and should not be judged on their individual opinion and activities. Furthermore, "investigators use informants' accounts not as windows on the informants' inner experience but in order to reveal the 'relations of ruling' that shape local experience" (DeVault and McCoy 2002: 751). Relations of ruling, a term borrowed from Smith, refers to "extralocal" modes of ruling and social processes that organize and influence society (i.e., government, law, business and financial management) (Smith 1987).

My methods differ from Sharma and Ng's because I collected first-hand data from women within each organization through face-to-face and telephone interviews. In addition, unlike Ng, I did not study an organization over an extended period of time, rather, I received a "snapshot" of the activities of both the MSN and PWC.

A general limit of institutional ethnography is that the information and data collected in my study has limited transferability, meaning, results cannot be generalized to all transnational networks/organizations. However, the institutional ethnography does provide a more in-depth understanding of the particular situation and context of my study. Another limitation of this methodology, due to the fact that I am researching organizations and interviewing staff members (i.e., a workplace), is that my participants may be less candid and divulge less information for fear that their job may be in jeopardy. Although I questioned my interview participants about the activities of the

organization and not about their personal feelings, interviewees may nonetheless express dissatisfaction with the organization or be critical of its activities.

Institutional ethnography employs multi-method research and is very useful as it allows the researcher access to various sources of information and can fill in gaps of knowledge that another method has left out. Triangulation, which is the deployment of different methods to verify findings, is a way to confirm my data and secure a more in-depth understanding of my overall research project. This process of using multiple methods to clarify meaning and verify the repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Denzin and Lincoln 2000) allows transparency and thoroughness in my research that is essential and contributes to my understanding and employment of feminist research.

Feminist ethnography, according to Shulamit Reinharz, is consistent with three goals commonly mentioned by feminist researchers that I strived for throughout my research project: "to document the lives and activities of women; to understand the experience of women from their own point of view; to conceptualize women's behaviour as an expression of social contexts" (Reinharz 1992: 51). I aimed to reach these goals and answer my research questions by attaining personal testimonies and organizational documents. This was achieved by performing a document review of the newsletters, annual reports and publications of the two organizations and by interviewing members of the Maquila Solidarity Network and the Philippine Women Centre. I chose to study MSN and PWC because they are both Canadian organizations that deal with women's issues and engage in transnational activism. Both organizations are concerned with issues related to globalization and promote solidarity among specific groups of women. The MSN promotes solidarity between women workers in free trade or export processing

zones as well as between labour and other social movements and the PWC is primarily concerned with issues of migration and domestic work of Filipino women.

I retrieved organizational documents both on-line and directly from the organizations. The MSN makes their current and past newsletters available at their web site as well as various articles and publications. An example of a document that I analyzed is *Women Behind the Labels* which was co-published by STITCH (Support Team International for Textileras) and the Maquila Solidarity Network in September 2000. The booklet is a compilation of worker testimonies from Central America and features the voices of women in interview format who labour in maquiladoras or export processing zones. The PWC has an extensive library in Vancouver where I had access to newsletters, archives and publications for my document review. These documents provided me with background information and highlighted the organization's history, past and present activities, local events and activism and transnational relationships. I conducted the bulk of my document review before interviewing participants. I felt this allowed me a better understanding of the activities and intricacies of the organizations thereby leading to more meaningful and thoughtful interviews.

In addition to examining and analyzing organizational documents, I conducted four interviews. I interviewed two members[11] from each organization. My selection criteria for my interview participants, which were met, include, (1) involvement with or employment at the organization for at least one year. This ensures they have a working knowledge of how the organization functions and what its goals are. (2) Experience with the transnational partnerships/alliances or activism in which the organization participates and (3) direct involvement with transnational activism within the organization. This

means that the participant is in contact with the organization's transnational partners or has travelled to another country for the purpose of sharing and gathering information with other women. These criteria ensured participants were knowledgeable about transnational activism thereby hopefully enhancing the answers to my research and interview questions.

I recruited members and volunteers of the MSN and PWC over the telephone to be interview participants. Initial contact and recruitment of interview participants occurred with ease but what posed the greatest challenge was coordinating schedules in order to choose a precise interview date and time. From initial contact to the actual interview process took anywhere between four and seven weeks. As the interviewer I tried to be as flexible as possible in order to accommodate my participants and ensure the interview was done at their convenience. All interviews lasted approximately fifty minutes with the exception of one that was thirty minutes long due to a participant's work-related time constraints. Although I knew the interview would be very compact, I felt that the time it would take to reschedule the interview and the possible inconvenience to the participant was not worth it and therefore went ahead.

Two of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in Vancouver at the Philippine Women Centre. After briefly discussing the potential location it was decided that meeting at the Centre was easiest for participants (due to their extremely busy schedules) and myself. I had been to the Centre before to use the library and was comfortable at their facility. The other two interviews with MSN participants took place over the phone. This was done for practical reasons, as funding restrictions did not allow me to make the trip to interview in person. While I found I was able to conduct the interviews over the phone

quite efficiently, I didn't feel that I developed a rapport with the phone interviewees as well as I did with interviewees I talked·to in person. I agree that "telephone interviews lack face-to-face non-verbal cues that researchers use to pace their interviews and to determine the direction to move in" (Berg 2001: 82). The interviews conducted over the phone felt very "business-like" and although they were friendly the atmosphere was very formal. It was difficult to take cues from participants because I had to rely solely on audible signals. I found I had to be extremely attentive and concentrated in order to not miss anything and sense when to move onto the next question. I was most comfortable and at ease doing interviews face-to-face simply because of the ability to make eye contact and show my interest through positive body language (i.e., smiling, nodding).

I used a semi-structured interview format, which permitted me to ask specific information pertaining to the mandate and function of the network, but also allowed for open-ended questions. Open-ended questions gave my participants an opportunity to express their interpretation of the organization's work and activities as well as build upon and add to the information already gathered in my document review. I also found that through open-ended questions, participants explored and expressed areas of interest and concern that I did not anticipate. Through open-ended questions and gentle probing, several topics were addressed that I did not specifically allude to in my interview questions. This was both surprising and informative in the sense that I was able to gather data I didn't expect and participants had more freedom to express thoughts about which I may not have directly asked them.

I will now discuss the ethical safeguards in my research project. I received permission from the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board before recruiting research

participants and conducting interviews (see Appendix A). Once I had recruited my participants, I provided them with a brief description of my research project, questions and goals (see Appendix B) as well as a copy of the research questions I intended to ask (see Appendix C). I made clear to all interview participants that the research questions were only a guideline and that studying them in detail before the interview took place was not necessary. This point aside, participants were given the questions in advance in order for them to be more familiar with the information and topics I planned to discuss.

Prior to the start of each interview, participants were asked to fill out an informed consent form (see Appendix D) and were ensured that their confidentiality would be protected and were reminded the interview would be tape-recorded. Once this was completed I began the interview with a short description of my background and research goals. In addition, I attempted to "break the ice" by asking each participant a little about their background and involvement with their respective organization. I felt this approach put us at ease because it allowed both the interviewee and myself to get to know each other informally before diving straight into interview questions. I ended interviews with a quick debriefing which included asking participants if they had any questions for me as well as whether or not it was okay if I contacted them via email if I needed further clarification or to follow-up on a particular topic/question. I took advantage of this with two of my participants for different reasons. In the first case I asked three follow-up questions. Two were in order to understand more clearly what the participant said in the interview and one was for clarification as the recording (for unknown and unavoidable reasons) was full of static and I couldn't discern what was being said. In the second case, due to technical difficulties, half the interview was not recorded therefore the participant

agreed to look over the transcripts and verify any notes I had made and add information as she saw fit. In both cases I chose to follow-up and contact interviewees in an effort to get the most accurate data possible in their own words rather than relying on my own personal skills of recognition to fill in any gaps. I am very appreciative to my participants for their understanding and willingness to spend the time to provide me with more information.

In an effort to be as transparent as possible and maintain accuracy, I offered each participant the opportunity to look over their transcripts and would consider changing them if requested. Only two interview participants asked for copies of their transcripts.

Lastly, because I am identifying the name of the organizations I am studying (i.e., the MSN and PWC), I refer to all my interview participants in my results chapter as "members" so as not to expose their specific position within the organization. This protects my participants from being affected in any way by the information revealed in interviews and helps maintain anonymity. Furthermore, as the researcher I alone was responsible for analyzing the taped interviews and was be sensitive to the way in which I interpreted and presented the data.

There are limitations of my data that represent limitations of my study and are potential threats to the validity of my study. Firstly, transnational partnerships usually involve two or more countries and organizations. I only investigated the Canadian viewpoint therefore obtaining a limited perspective on transnational activism. Ideally I would be able to speak to women on the other side of the transnational relationship or alliance to understand how they benefit from transnational activism and how globalization influences their lives. Secondly, I only investigated two organizations

which engage in transnational activism in Canada. This represents a small and limited sample of the transnational activities of Canadian women. Thirdly, I relied on members of the MSN and PWC to self-report about the activities of their organization. It is possible they will embellish or withhold information for any number of reasons. To a certain degree, I cannot verify the information with which they provided me.

It bears remembering that the purpose of my study is not to generalize my results but rather to show how two specific and distinct organizations engage in transnational activism and can act as a reference point or learning tool for other individuals or organizations who are currently participating or wish to participate in transnational activities and alliances.

The analysis of my interview data began in some form as soon as I completed each interview. I made detailed notes following each interview that included my general feelings about the process as well as the overall response I received from participants. In addition, I copied down major themes which stood out to me. After all interviews were completed they were transcribed and read several times in order to identify themes. These themes were then divided into primary themes and sub-themes and quotes were taken directly from the transcripts in order to support my analysis and act as an example of the central concept that I identified. Themes bring meaning and insight to my interview data and quotes allow women's voices–as representatives of their organizations–to be heard. The number of participants interviewed (four) was not intended to provide a comprehensive survey of transnational organizations engaging in activism in Canada, rather the four interviews provide an idea and highlight common themes of the challenges faced by Canadian networks and organizations engaging in transnational activism. The

voices of the participants are heard in chapters four, five and six to provide a more personal and realistic perspective on the transnational activism of two Canadian organizations.

Throughout my analysis and identification of themes, both the document review and interview data provided me with the answers to my research questions as well as exposed gaps of information. Lastly, I incorporated a comparative analysis of the themes drawn from the two interviews of the members of each organization as well as highlighted the similarities and differences between the two. This enabled me to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each organization as well as understand how different organizations deal with issues in relation to the various processes of globalization and transnational activism.

This chapter serves to outline my research design and provides ground from which I conduct this research. It is my intention in this chapter and throughout this study to make my methods and methodology as transparent as possible in order that the voices of the women interviewed for this research are heard and understood with clarity and precision.

ENDNOTES

[I] The centre refers to their organization as the Philippine *Women* (not *Women's*) Centre, a spelling which I respect and use throughout my thesis.

[II] "Members" is a general term used to refer to any of the following interview participants who are associated with either the Maquila Solidarity Network or the Philippine Women Centre: volunteers, staff or membership holders.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

The Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) is a Canadian-based network in Toronto that was formed in 1995. The MSN promotes solidarity between Canadian labour, women's and social movement groups in Mexico, Central America and Asia to organize and raise standards globally to improve conditions in export processing zones and maquilas. MSN acknowledges that in a global economy it is essential that groups in the North and South work together for employment with dignity, fair wages and working conditions and healthy workplaces and communities (MSN 2003). MSN also pressures local retailers and manufacturers to take responsibility for the conditions under which their products are made and demands retailer accountability and government action. It is through public campaigns exposing sweatshop practices and demanding retailer accountability and government action that MSN is able to support workers' efforts–in Canada and internationally–to both organize and mobilize thereby improving employees' working and living conditions. This aspect of MSN's work is a realization and acceptance that actions in Canada–of businesses and individuals–have an influence on workers' rights in other parts of the world.

This chapter will examine the transnational activities of the MSN through a document review of their newsletters, research projects and reports as well as through the voices of women interviewed. It will also analyze the global and local context within which they organize and promote solidarity.

The MSN's program covers a wide range of activities and includes, but is not limited to: (1) No Sweat Campaign; (2) Corporate Engagement/Solidarity Campaigns; (3)

International Codes and Monitoring Program; (4) Research; (5) Communications and Media; and (6) Education and Action Training (MSN 2002b). Given this extensive range of activities, MSN's priority program areas include research, international codes and monitoring work and the Canadian No Sweat Campaign (MSN 2003).

The structure of the MSN includes four full-time and three part-time staff. This includes a Spanish language translator who works from Argentina. Due to MSN's involvement with groups in Mexico and Central America the majority of their information and resources, both online and published, are available in English and Spanish which provides better access to a wider range of individuals and organizations. MSN also has a large membership to which individuals and organizations can join for a small fee. The network's quarterly newsletter, *Maquila Network Update*, is distributed to all members; currently over 1500 organizations and individuals in Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa receive it. Funding of the network is obtained through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as well as numerous other sources for smaller projects such as private donations and funding from various foundations.

The MSN builds solidarity through corporate campaigns, government lobbying, popular education and international links. It is their "international links" that I am most concerned with for my research as well as the specific activities and concerns of women's groups. It is important to note that the MSN works with not only women's groups but labour, human rights and other social movement groups. However, as Brenda[1], a participant in my study points out, "we are a feminist organization in the sense that we take a feminist analysis in terms of how we build solidarity and organization and the

strategies that we've developed are to build solidarity with groups that is responding to groups' needs as they express them....what we try to do is build the broadest capacity of struggle and support" (Personal Interview April 2003). It is interesting to note that although not all MSN's work is directly with women, they self-define as feminist. Adopting and embracing this perspective helps them stay aware of their position and role as a solidarity network. They offer assistance when needed and let groups define the terms of the transnational relationship. Approaching their activist work with feminism in mind not only entails an awareness of the importance of class, race and gender but an acknowledgment and respect of different groups' varying perspectives, work ethic, strategies and goals. This consciousness strengthens MSN's ability to work across borders because they allow groups they organize with to make their own choices and play an active role in bringing about change.

Although MSN adopts feminist perspectives in their work, forging transnational links continues to pose various difficulties and presents new challenges and dilemmas. The struggle of transnational feminist organizing has been to incorporate and give voice to diverse women, maintain inclusivity and listen to the perspectives of a wide range of women while keeping in mind the specific challenges women's groups face such as racism, classism and nationalism. An acute awareness and knowledge by MSN of the distinct locations and positions of women fosters greater understanding and provides the tools women need to resist oppression in solidarity.

For the purposes of my study and to keep my document review focused and specific, I will concentrate on the MSN's international work with women from different

localities, the context of their struggles and illustrate how interdependent the MSN's local and national work is to their connections and support of women's groups internationally.

Global Context

The MSN promotes solidarity and works with women's, labour and other social movement groups within a very specific context. The MSN's extensive research on NAFTA and concern with WTO policies such as the Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA) is an acknowledgement of how global processes such as trade agreements and multinational corporations influences their members and shapes women's struggles around the world.

Maquilas, a term synonymous with maquiladora and used alongside the terms Free Trade Zones (FTZs) and/or Export Processing Zones (EPZs), began as a border phenomenon in Mexico approximately thirty-five years ago. With the support of the Mexican government, American companies established assembly plants on the Mexican side of the border and imported component parts and raw materials duty-free, which were later re-exported as finished products back to the United States (MSN 2002c). Maquilas are currently located in not only Mexico, but in Central America and Asia. After the signing of NAFTA, maquilas in Mexico were no longer restricted to the border and eventually spread to other areas and became central to Mexico's export-led development strategy (MSN 1995). The globalization of capital and transnational capital accumulation has contributed to the establishment of free trade zones or export processing zones (Mendez 2002). Free trade zones, which operate under similar conditions as maquilas, are established in Third World countries to attract foreign investment and encourage transnational corporations to locate production within their borders (Mendez 2002; MSN

2002c). The lure of FTZs, EPZs and/or maquilas is availability of workers, low wages, lack of environmental and labour laws and low, if any, duties and/or taxes (Gabriel and Macdonald 1994; MSN 2002c). By locating production in EPZs and FTZs, transnational corporations reduce their costs by employing Third World workers whose wages and benefit levels are significantly lower than those in industrialized nations (Tiano 1990).

Third World governments have encouraged foreign investment as a result of neo-liberal ideologies and in an effort to eliminate debt and abide by "development" programs implemented by the World Bank and IMF. The establishment of FTZs is a way for less privileged nations to attract multinational corporations and provide their citizens with desperately needed jobs. Unfortunately, women have borne the brunt of the conditions within maquilas and EPZs because the majority of workers within this industry are female (Kopinak 1995; Mendez 2002; MSN 1995, 2001b, 2002c). In Mexico, 70 per cent of maquila workers are women and in Guatemala women constitute 90 per cent of maquila workers (MSN 1995, 2001a). Increasingly, this workforce attracts women as young as fourteen and employers are constantly in search of cheaper, more docile workers (Gabriel and Macdonald 1994; Mendez 2002; MSN 1995; Tiano 1994). Given the fact that women, especially young women, make up the majority of workers in maquilas and EPZs, they are extremely vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. For example, pregnant women are commonly discriminated against and women are often subjected to forced pregnancy testing (MSN and HLRCTV 2003). In addition, maquila work is repetitive, intensive and often dangerous. Sexual harassment and violence are common in the industry and women lack access or proper representation in unions which

could potentially protect and educate them about their rights (MSN 2001b; MSN and STITCH 2000).

While not all maquilas and EPZs employ women in the apparel or garment industry, MSN focuses on this field of women's work that is linked to and coordinated with their No Sweat Campaign and codes of conduct and monitoring/verification initiatives. Therefore, it is within current global conditions and processes of globalization along with the specific experiences of women workers in Mexico, Central America and Asia that the MSN supports and helps mobilize diverse women's groups in their labour organizing efforts. It is also the framework from which I conduct my analysis.

Local, National and Transnational Activities

The work of MSN is vast and broad and impossible to cover in its entirety in this document review. As a result I will highlight those activities that I feel contribute to and enhance its connections and support for women's groups in Mexico, Central America and Asia.

The MSN is active at the local, national and international level. The network distributes a newsletter four times per year called *Maquila Network Update* that contains information on recent campaigns, worker rights abuses, victories in the garment industry, current publications and research and is published in English and Spanish. The *Update*, which is distributed to over 1500 individuals and organizations, is a way for MSN's members and the public to keep themselves informed about issues around workers' rights while at the same time promotes solidarity between groups across national boundaries. The MSN also releases regular action alerts and updates through their email lists and on

their web site. These alerts and updates inform its members of current worker rights issues such as union-busting and illegal firings occurring in various parts of the world and encourages the public to write to the local/national companies and corporations which are linked to specific maquila factories. A recent example was MSN's alert that worker's rights were being violated in Bangkok, Thailand at the Gina Form factory, which is a lingerie manufacturer contracted by retail chains including Jacob, La Senza, Gap and Victoria's Secret. Workers at this factory were reportedly subjected to unjust lay-offs, firing of union members, intimidation and heavy surveillance aimed at busting the union formed in 1994 (MSN 2003a). This alert provoked an MSN letter-writing campaign and encouraged members and individuals to write to executives of companies such as Jacob and La Senza to admonish retailers and demand that they comply with labour and human rights commissions to end the harassment and intimidation of workers. MSN initiates and organizes this type of action in an effort to show solidarity and ultimately improve the conditions of maquila workers. Actions such as these demonstrate that even though worker rights abuses occur half way across the world, the public can stay informed through the work of networks such as the MSN and corporations will continue to be held accountable.

The network also carries out several campaigns, one of which is the No Sweat Campaign. This involves local labour, faith, non-governmental, student and teacher and community organizations in promoting the adoption of No Sweat (i.e., not made in sweatshops) purchasing policies by public institutions (i.e., universities, school boards, municipal and provincial governments, etc.) (MSN 2003). This campaign also includes discussion and implementation of effective codes of conduct that would allow consumers

to know which corporations follow and support ethical treatment of workers. An effort to get public institutions to adopt No Sweat codes and policies indirectly supports workers in maquilas and EPZs by encouraging various retailers to ensure their products are produced under suitable conditions and workers receive fair wages. The MSN also makes a considerable amount of resources and articles available on their website which, in addition to English, is also accessible in Spanish and French.

Research is a vital part of the MSN's mandate in order to keep the information about garment workers current and spread news about developments in the global garment industry as well as capture the experiences of maquila workers. An example is a research project conducted in Central America on women workers in maquilas and EPZs by the MSN and STITCH–an American network of women community and labour organizers supporting women's organizing in Central America. This research and collaboration produced a document entitled *Women Behind the Labels: Worker Testimonies from Central America* (2000). The document contains eight interviews with women workers and articulates their unique experiences as well as the challenges and dangers they face in their work.

Another example is the publication of *Tehuacan: blue jeans, blue waters and workers rights*[11] by the MSN and The Human and Labour Rights Commission of the Tehuacan Valley (HLRCTV) in 2003. The document, which examines the impact of maquilas on communities and the environment, also contains the testimonies of garment workers. This research project also situates the experiences of maquila workers in Tehuacan within the context of trade liberalization policies and the authority of NAFTA. In its conclusions and recommendations, the project points out that "joint strategies

among local and national Mexican groups and their allies in the United States and Canada are needed to pressure and engage with American retailers and brand merchandisers to address worker rights violations that have not been adequately addressed to date" (MSN and HLRCTV 2003: 55). This particular point and overall research emphasizes the need for organizations and groups in the industrialized world to continue to forge transnational alliances in order to learn from one another and work toward improving conditions brought on by the complex processes of globalization.

Research by MSN on the global framework within which garment workers toil helps the network establish and understand the roots of workers' struggles. This, in combination with research that involves the everyday life experiences of workers, gives women a voice and opportunity to express their concerns and needs. As a result, the MSN and women's groups from Mexico, Central America and Asia, are able to highlight what needs to be done and improved upon to make working conditions sustainable and solidarity links stronger.

Through updates, action alerts, research and information on their website, the MSN provides support to workers in the global garment industry. By coordinating solidarity campaigns and educating and mobilizing the public in multifaceted ways, the MSN displays how interconnected their local, national and international work is. The presence of maquilas and EPZs in Third World countries within the realm of global restructuring provides a basis for organizing and encourages more complex and critical transnational engagements. I will now outline MSN's involvement in the transnational arena and their role in coordinating and maintaining transnational partnerships.

In its 2002 Program Report, MSN states that one of its priorities is to "support worker organizing in maquilas and export processing zones in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and to collaborate with Southern partner groups on corporate campaigns" and "promote greater participation of Southern voices—particularly from Asia and Latin America" (MSN 2002b: 1). The primary venue in which this has been achieved between MSN and women's groups was at three separate stages of the Asia/Latin America Women's Exchanges. The exchanges, titled *Breaking Boundaries, Building Alliances* were initiated by MSN, Asia Monitor Resource Centre (Hong Kong) and Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X (Mexico) and took place between 1999 and 2002. The exchanges were initiated by the three labour rights networks to facilitate dialogue between women organizers and worker rights advocates in Asia, Mexico and Central America. Each exchange brought together women working in solidarity with other women workers in EPZs and maquilas. To promote equal partnerships and ensure women are fully involved in these exchanges Alison, one of my interviewees, states:

> the coordinating committee for both the exchanges that I was involved in MSN was one member but we thought it was really important that the leadership also came from groups that were taking leadership in each of the different regions...those three other groups [Factor X, Asia Monitor Resource Centre and the Movement of Working and Unemployed Women] played a major role in organizing the exchange [Puebla 2002] and setting the agenda and facilitating in both rounds (Personal Interview April 2003).

Her comment indicates MSN's attempt to make certain leadership is taken by women in Mexico, Latin America and/or Asia within exchanges. This displays MSN's effort, as a network promoting solidarity, to support women workers' struggles without defining and dominating the transnational relationship. Women from Asia, Mexico and Central America experience globalization in very distinct ways. This presents challenges to

transnationally organizing because similarities among women cannot be assumed. Their experiences as garment workers are dependent upon a plethora of conditions as well as each individual woman's social, political and cultural location in their particular country. To be able to bring women together in spite of their differences is a challenge for MSN and other organizing bodies at the exchanges. As a member of the organizing committee, MSN has a responsibility to be cognizant of their position of power, especially as a Canadian network working with women from Third World countries. In order to balance any inequities in "North/South" relationships and exchanges, MSN has taken a step back and allowed women a central role by encouraging them to express their different experiences as women workers in relation to globalization. This not only ensures MSN stays aware of its position of power within a globalized context, but also permits Asian, Mexican and Central American women workers to assert agency and share experiences and strategies despite diverse positions and perspectives.

It is clear through Alison's statement that MSN tries to actively encourage different women's groups to equally participate in international gatherings in order that they can set the terms and goals of the exchanges thereby empowering them as active decision makers. This not only strengthens the organizing capacity of women's groups but prevents MSN from taking an overly central role within exchanges. Overall, MSN's acknowledgement and awareness of their position as a solidarity network based in Canada allows for more inclusive and open transnational exchanges.

The first exchange, which took place in July 1999, involved women organizers and advocates from Central America and Mexico travelling to Korea, Hong Kong, China

and Macau to share and contrast their organizing strategies and discuss and debate the strengths and weaknesses of codes of conduct (MSN 1999).

The second exchange, hosted by the Movement of Working and Unemployed Women–Maria Elena Cuadra (MEC), in Managua, Nicaragua took place in February 2001. At this exchange MSN was a co-sponsor and also sat on the coordinating committee, which in preparation for the exchange organized fundraising, identified participants, circulated background materials and prepared the program (MSN 2001a). The objectives of the second exchange was to continue to discuss topics addressed at the first stage as well as compare national, regional and international campaign and advocacy strategies; assess the viability of future collaborations and strengthen the emerging network of women for exchange and solidarity (MSN 2001a). The gathering presented a number of challenges and exposed limitations of organizing in the transnational arena. Many participants had difficulty obtaining visas which delayed their arrival to Managua and took time away from the planned events. Another challenge identified by participants was the complexities created by the different languages women spoke. This was not only a challenge at the exchange but became a barrier for further, ongoing work and prevented informal conversations which are integral to building personal, therefore longer lasting, connections. A limitation of the exchange that participants noted was a lack of discussion with union and other local activists in order to get a broader and more complex picture of the labour movement as a whole. The coordinating committee also recognized limitations and pointed out that their initial desire to focus on strategy was not possible because there was much more basic sharing and learning to do. Many agreed that there wasn't enough time. These challenges and limitations represent and highlight the dilemmas of

transnationally organizing. By vocalizing their concerns and recognizing the limitations of the exchange, the MSN and other organizers are able to make changes and readjust their priorities according to the requests of women in Mexico, Central America and Asia, thereby giving participants more control and power at future exchanges.

The third exchange occurred in Puebla, Mexico in October 2002 and involved thirteen women's movement and labour right's activists from Mexico, Central America and China. Participants included members of the Central American Women's Network in Solidarity with Women Maquila Workers (Nicaragua and Honduras), Mexican women's and worker organizations and the Chinese Working Women's Network. Not only does MSN forge links, coordinate activities and engage women from different localities, they also work in close connection with various women's organizations in the United States, Asia and Latin America such as these. This exchange was unique in that participants took part in and began discussions at the Association for Women's Rights in Development's[III] (AWID) international women's forum in Guadalajara, Mexico called "Re-inventing Globalization" prior to the Puebla Exchange. The AWID forum provided a broader context for women workers and introduced them to key issues discussed in the Puebla seminar. The seminar was organized around three themes including, changes in the global garment industry as a result of the WTO policies, critical engagement with brands and their suppliers and Southern groups' concerns about campaign strategies initiated by Northern groups and networks (MSN 2002a). This last point in particular demonstrates the MSN's concerns about whether or not these transnational exchanges are serving women's groups and their issues as best as possible. Recognition of MSN's privilege as a "Northern" organization which initiates, sponsors and coordinates "Southern" women's

and labour groups is a useful step in making the transnational playing field more even and equally productive and empowering for women.

Given the third theme of the Puebla seminar, participants and the coordinating committee recognized the continued need for dialogue between networks and organizations in industrialized nations and women's groups in Mexico, Central America and Asia. Also acknowledged was the importance of hearing and allowing space for individual women's experiences which MSN articulates in a published report on the seminar: "there is a need for follow-up forums in which monitoring groups and unions, from the North and South, can discuss these issues thoroughly and honestly. Once again, learning from concrete experiences might be the best method of moving these discussions forward" (MSN 2002c: 11). At the end of the seminar participants identified themes and strategies for the future which alluded to increased engagement at the transnational level and recognition of the importance of transnational activism between women specifically to further their goals and rights as workers in the garment industry.

The MSN's role at all three transnational exchanges was as a facilitator and mediator and not as an actual participant. When asked how women have agency and voice within exchanges Alison replied:

> that was one of the motivations for making sure that the events were not just solely planned or carried out by MSN but that we were playing more of a support role and making sure that it happened...taking leadership from women's groups and labour right's groups and women organizers and really creating the agenda to be one of sharing experiences rather than MSN necessarily giving presentations on topics...creating that base for women to come together and then share what it is that we're experiencing, how we are strategizing and finally what are some key themes that we can take out that are common between us (Personal Interview April 2003).

Once again, Alison's comments clearly illustrate MSN's ability to be self-critical and help create an environment within transnational exchanges that is conducive to mutual respect and learning. MSN's desire to listen rather than lead expands its capacity as a network to support workers' dilemmas and struggles. This ensures that the women MSN is networking with have the agency to assert their needs and express their opinions as openly as possible.

MSN works to promote solidarity by coordinating such exchanges and produces reports and facilitates follow-up discussions. Nonetheless, its capacity to organize and help bring diverse women's groups into one setting is essential as long as individual women workers and their respective organizations continue to set the terms of the debates. Indeed, the MSN itself recognizes its unique position and role: "[G]rassroots groups working with maquila workers in Mexico and Central America are not yet familiar with current research on North American trends in the apparel industry...we've seen that MSN can play a valuable role in interpreting, critiquing and popularizing industry analysis of those trends and in collaborations with Southern partners on researching industry trends from a worker's perspective" (MSN 2002c: 5).

To conclude, this chapter outlines that as a network, MSN has a unique role in bringing together women's, labour and other social movement groups to promote solidarity and strengthen the ties among diverse but similarly oriented individuals and organizations. MSN is also acutely aware of how integral their role is as a network and the challenges and complexity involved when organizing women from varying locations. As Brenda points out, "a lot of times if you're a local organizing group, you don't have the time to do networking and so sometimes that work needs to be done by different

organizations and then there is a complex process of negotiation between the group doing organizing and the group doing networking particularly when it crosses North South boundaries" (Personal Interview April 2003). Brenda's statement simultaneously points out the importance of the role of solidarity networks like MSN and the complexity involved by taking on that function. While it fills a position as supporters and coordinators of transnational exchanges it is also continuously questioning and engaging with its task as a solidarity network to evaluate its effectiveness and potential. The recognition by MSN of the intricacies of facilitating and situating itself in transnational activist work highlights both a challenge to the network and one of its accomplishments.

MSN is distinct and makes significant contributions in that it bridges the gap between its international engagements and local/national ones by addressing garment workers rights in the transnational arena and in local communities. By analyzing the global context of garment workers during current economic and political restructuring, the MSN is able to identify challenges to its struggle as well as coordinate and mobilize others in similar situations. Without combining MSN's multidimensional approach and activities at the local/national and international levels, a complex understanding of workers' rights in the garment industry would not be possible. As a network, MSN and all those who affiliate and act in solidarity with it are resisting modes of globalization and challenging it's hegemonic assumptions while simultaneously creating new sites of activism and resistance.

ENDNOTES

[1] All names used in this thesis are not the real names of participants and are pseudonyms.

[II] This research project was made possible through the assistance of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada.

[III] AWID was established in 1982 and informs and mobilizes people and organizations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. Their goal is to promote policy, institutional and individual change that will improve the lives of women and girls all over the world. The association also facilitates debates and engages in networking and outreach for gender justice in the "North" and "South" (AWID 2003).

CHAPTER FIVE

Introduction

The Philippine Women Centre (PWC) began out of the need for an organization to address and improve the lives of Filipino-Canadian women. Conceptualized in 1986 and connected with the British Columbia Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, the PWC was particularly concerned with the growing number of Filipino migrants employed as domestic workers. Very early on the PWC recognized that the migration of Filipino domestic workers was directly tied to political and economic conditions in both the Philippines and Canada. In 1990, the PWC was formally launched and officially registered as a non-profit society in 1991 (PWC 1997).

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the transnational activities of the Philippine Women Centre by examining the historical context of Filipino migrants' experiences and the influence of global processes. Through the voices of interview participants and a document review of several PWC publications such as research projects, *Centre Updates* and various brochures this chapter will shed light on the Centre's transnational connections and engagements.

The structure of the PWC includes one paid staff member, who acts as a coordinator, volunteers, members–who must be women of Filipino descent–and a Board of Directors. Volunteers are an integral part of the PWC as the Centre relies on their commitment to carry out many of the organizations activities. Funding of the PWC is achieved through grants from the British Columbia Ministry of Women's Equality and PWC-organized fundraisers.

The PWC's vision is an empowered community with members who share: (1) a common interest in the issues and problems relating to their reality as marginalized women in Canada; (2) a common desire to preserve and increase awareness of their shared historical, political and cultural roots in a multi-racial society; and (3) a common willingness to uphold the principles of human rights and freedom for all Filipino women, wherever they may be (Alcuitas et al. 1997). The PWC aims to empower Filipino women and understand the roots of their challenges as migrants, immigrants, women of colour and low-income earners, and to collectively assert their struggle for their rights and welfare (PWC 2002). The PWC mobilizes Filipino women around issues of transnational migration and women workers' rights with a focus on educating, organizing and mobilizing Filipino migrant workers and engaging in resistance at the local, national and global level. While my study focuses on transnational links, it is essential to outline all dimensions of the Centre's activism because of their interconnected and interdependent nature.

The Centre's objectives, outlined in a recent research project, include: (1) promote Filipino women's awareness of their common interests, issues and problems as women of colour in Canada; (2) help foster feminist values, emphasizing them from the perspective of Filipino women; (3) encourage inter-cultural understanding with women from other "ethnic" backgrounds; (4) disseminate information about the Filipino community and about events in the Philippines; (5) establish links with groups that share common interests with the PWC; and (6) coordinate and/or work with agencies, associations, groups and individuals for the purpose of achieving the above objectives (PWC 2001).

Historical and Global Context

In order to fully understand the goals and role of the PWC, it is important to understand the historical context within which the Centre organizes and functions. Currently, the Philippines is one of the highest exporters of labour in the world with seven million Filipino migrant workers in over 168 countries (Alcuitas et al. 1997). The root causes of Filipino migration stems from the semi-colonial and semi-feudal character of Philippine society (Alcuitas et al. 1997). In the past, the Philippines was controlled through Spanish and later American colonial rule and became highly affected by the United States' influence over Philippine political and military systems and dictator Ferdinand Marcos' regime (Santiago 1995). These characteristics, along with the globalization of capital and Structural Adjustment Programs, have profoundly shaped contemporary Philippine society. The rise of Filipino migration reflects the growing internationalization of capital and labour markets and continued underdevelopment in the Philippine economy (Bakan and Stasiulis 1996; Urrutia 1997). Therefore, "colonial, post-colonial and imperialist forces in the Philippines combined to establish transnational migration and overseas employment as a viable and attractive option for earning foreign exchange and allowing the repayment of debts" (Zaman and Tubajon 2001: 1114).

Women in particular have constituted the vast majority of Filipino migrants and have come to be identified as "the major export in an export-driven economy" (Santiago 1995: 113). In Canada, the entry of Filipino women was the result of a compromise and agreement struck between the governments of Canada and the Philippines (Daenzer 1997). The Philippine Women Centre emphasizes this reality in a research project and points out that,

the conjoining of the Philippines' Labour Export Policy (LEP) and Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) is not a mere coincidence of two separate policies making a perfect fit. It is in fact, a typical North-South relationship where a poor country of the South supplies cheap labour to a 'rich' country of the North for jobs that people of the North are reluctant to take. This is but another form of the commodification and trafficking of women (Alcuitas et al. 1997: 30).

The migration of Third World women, particularly Filipino women since the early 1980s, was made possible in Canada through the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) in 1981 which is now the LCP, enacted in 1991. Stipulations under the LCP, such as the live-in requirement, and temporary immigration status, makes Filipino domestic workers more susceptible to abuse and creates a situation of indenture (Pratt 1999). This immigration policy, which is administered at the federal level, exempts foreign domestic workers from many regulations of labour legislation that are implemented at the provincial level (Bakan and Stasiulis 1996; Macklin 1994). Therefore, domestic workers are even more vulnerable to exploitation in their jobs as they face long hours of work, low pay and potential abuse by employers.

The LCP and its restrictions highlights how domestic workers are taken advantage of and commodified while filling positions in the Canadian labour market that no one else wants. In addition, the recruitment of Filipino women as domestic workers has led to "de-skilling." The PWC refers to de-skilling as the "systemic process of removing the mastery of a skill or trade from a person...de-skilling also implies a forced removal or imposed loss of skills" (Alcuitas et al. 1997: 20). Many of the members of the PWC are trained professionals (i.e., nurses, teachers) or hold bachelor degrees or higher but are unable to receive recognition for their foreign-obtained education (PWC 1997, 2001). This further marginalizes Filipino women because often they have no other options and

the pressure to continue making money to send home sets in motion a vicious cycle of working as domestic servants.

Due to the economic crisis in the Philippines and multi-processes of globalization including the growing internationalization of capital, the Philippine government has sanctioned the migration of domestic workers through their Labour Export Policy (LEP). This policy is part of Structural Adjustment Programs imposed by the IMF and World Bank and seeks to alleviate the prevalent problems of massive unemployment, trade deficits, foreign debt and social unrest (Alcuitas et al. 1997). In addition, through remittances, Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) contribute billions of dollars to the Philippine economy that helps service Philippine foreign debt and keeps the economy afloat (MIGRANTE International 2002). The PWC also recognizes that women are trafficked globally not only as domestic workers but as mail-order brides, sex workers and entertainers and that the complexities of globalization influence the Centre's existence and activist work.

From a nationalist perspective the Philippine government constructs Filipino women as willing migrant workers with the expectation that they will serve the country and supply, thereby boosting, the Philippine economy with much needed remittances. The assumption that educated Filipino women, as members of the nation, will fill the need for cheap labour in other parts of the world, speaks to an underlying gendered expectation of duty that is embedded in particular meanings of "the nation." What is not considered, or perhaps ignored, is the exploitation and vulnerability Filipino women are exposed to by taking jobs in the international labour market as domestic, migrant and sex

workers. In addition, most of these women are educated as professionals and therefore experience de-skilling that further erodes their value as human beings.

The dynamic between nationalism and feminism constantly informs Filipino women's experiences as migrant workers in Canada and contributes to how they respond and deal with the challenges presented to them. Part of the PWC's work is to incorporate a feminist perspective into political movements in both Canada and the Philippines in order that Filipino women may empower themselves and help others understand their struggles as migrant workers.

It is within this context and careful consideration of the unique experiences of Filipino women as migrant workers and women of colour that the PWC organizes, educates and mobilizes women. I will now outline the specific activities and partnerships the PWC engages in to empower Filipino women at the local, national and international level.

Local, National and Transnational Activities

The PWC is extremely active in the local, national and international community and the activism pursued at each level is intertwined and interdependent. The Centre distributes a newsletter approximately four times per year called the *Centre Update* which contains recent information on events both in Canada and the Philippines. The *Update* promotes awareness and unity by disseminating information on conferences, campaigns and activism occurring around the community. The *Update* consistently contains articles that draw attention to the historical context of Filipino women's struggles as domestic workers and the influence of globalization processes, imperialism

and government policies on immigration and migration. Since its inception, the PWC has

built strong bonds with different local groups as well as helped form and stay connected

to new discussion and activist groups. Two examples are Grassroots Women and Sulong

Itaguyod ang Karapatan ng mga Manggagawang Pilipino sa Labas ng Bansa (Overseas

Filipino Workers Organization) or SIKLAB[I].

Grassroots Women formed in 1995 when the PWC invited a group of

marginalized women to discuss concrete experiences of displacement and forced

migration. The objectives of Grassroots Women are to deepen their understanding of

imperialism, build a grassroots women's movement, join in solidarity with the struggles

of people internationally and conduct campaigns on the issues of working class women

(Grassroots Women 2003). Grassroots Women holds discussion groups, engages in

conferences and puts on regular seminars to inform and educate the community and local

activist groups. Grassroots Women's activist work extends beyond the local as displayed

by a conference they convened in conjunction with GABRIELA[II] in November 2002.

Titled "Towards Our Liberation: an International Women's Conference against

Imperialist War and Plunder," the conference brought together 206 women from 16

different countries to discuss imperialism and it's wars of aggression and the consequent

exploitation of people and nations (Grassroots Women 2003).

SIKLAB, which also formed in 1995 and began within the PWC, is a Filipino

migrant workers group which joined the international alliance of Filipino migrant

organizations in 1996 called MIGRANTE International[III] (Santiago 1997; Zaman and

Tubajon 2001). The creation of and connections PWC has made with different activist

groups locally serves to enhance its reach and spread awareness around the conditions of

Filipino migrant workers and others who experience similar conditions. Each year the PWC also hosts an International Women's Day event that usually involves other women's groups and daylong discussions and seminars covering topics such as globalization, imperialism and trafficking of women. This networking with other local women's groups and awareness and acknowledgment of diverse women's experiences displays the PWC's commitment to exposing the experiences of women in the current world system and use their experiences to educate other women.

The PWC has also produced several community-based research projects that highlight the specific experiences of Filipino women in Canada. The first example is titled *Housing Needs Assessment of Filipina Domestic Workers*[IV] published in 1996. This document outlines the housing needs and issues of fifty Filipino domestic workers in B.C. and the influence of the LCP on their living and working conditions. The report, which drafted recommendations for policy change and community development at both the provincial and federal level, was successful in that the results spurred the PWC and SIKLAB to arrange affordable housing for migrants as an alternative to their current living situation.

The second example is *Trapped: "Holding the Knife's Edge": Economic Violence against Filipino Migrant/Immigrant Women*[V] (1997) and follows a participatory action research model. Through focus groups and individual interviews, the study exposes how the LCP strips women of their skills (i.e., de-skilling) and forces them to take jobs as domestic workers which undermines their education and credentials acquired in the Philippines and their full job potential in Canada. In addition, the report outlines the economic violence Filipino migrants experience as a result of the high costs of

emigrating to Canada and the charges the Philippine government demands of OCWs. Based on the results of the study, the PWC formulated extensive actions for change and recommendations which included further research, removing the two year live-in requirement under the LCP and requesting that both provincial and federal governments credit migrants' prior education obtained in their country of origin.

The third example of PWC conducted research is the 2000 study *Filipino Nurses Doing Domestic Work in Canada: A Stalled Development*[VI]. This research project specifically studies the challenges, experiences and needs of Filipino nurses performing domestic work in Canada. It summarizes how the Canadian government continues to enact policies which disempower women and contribute to poor working conditions of domestic and migrant workers.

The community-based research carried out by the PWC and participated by Filipino women in B.C. serves to inform Filipino women (and other migrant workers) about their rights and position within Canadian society through the unique experiences of individual women's lives. These projects are carried through to empower Filipino women and help them understand the roots of the barriers they face as women of colour, migrants, immigrants and low-income earners (PWC 2002). As Jillian, a participant in my study, emphasizes: "research is very important for us and we have done a lot of research already so I think it's a way for other women in other parts of the world or activists, once they read the work that we're doing, to get in touch with us and we're able to network and exchange information" (Personal Interview April 2003). Research projects described above, as illustrated by Jillian, promote unity and an awareness of PWC members' local situation within a framework of larger global processes. This

information and education at the local level is essential before women can even begin to make connections with other women in the global arena. An understanding of local context and struggle is the basis for successful transnational partnerships, sharing and alliances.

On a global level, the PWC engages in various exchanges to promote international solidarity and spread awareness around issues of Filipino migration and the effects of globalization on their day-to-day experiences. These include conferences, seminars, transnational partnerships with other organizations and local, national and international campaigns. The PWC has been involved in a large number of conferences but for the purposes of my study I will concentrate on and outline in detail three specific and diverse instances.

In June 1997, in response to the upcoming Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) yearly meeting in Vancouver, the PWC participated in a forum called "Women Resist Imperialist Globalization: Women Say No to APEC." This forum, organized by women of the No! to APEC coalition, preceded a larger conference titled "People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization: Continuing the Resistance" to be held simultaneously with APEC's yearly gathering. APEC, which was formed in 1989, now has 21 members (including Canada) and advocates broader economic cooperation through trade and investment liberalization, business facilitation and economic and technical cooperation (Rüland et al. 2002). The women's forum brought grassroots women's groups together and identified how women are negatively impacted by APEC and imperialist globalization. The three day conference allowed women to share their experiences about their daily lives in smaller workshops and analyse how changes in the

past ten years were connected to imperialist globalization (Urrutia 1997). As part of their action plan, conference participants vowed to use the information they learned about global processes such as neo-liberal policies, to educate, organize and mobilize their own communities as a way of continuing to resist and oppose imperialist globalization and give a voice to women's communities thereby empowering individual citizens.

In 1998, GABRIELA hosted the "Women's International Solidarity Affair in the Philippines" (WISAP) in which three members of the PWC participated. The conference, working around the theme of "Building Women's Unity and Solidarity Against Globalization" was designed as a venue for women from different localities to discuss and strategize on issues of common concern and address solidarity links between women inside and outside the Philippines (Diocson 1998; PWC 1998). Conference events included participation in the Philippine Independence Centennial Activity, Plenary discussions and workshops and pre-conference exposure visits to member organizations of GABRIELA in different regions for on-site sharing with local women (PWC 1998). The conference was particularly useful in that it allowed women from diverse localities to participate in and help strengthen women's struggles against imperialism and globalization by listening to and learning from women who carry the burden of globalization. As the PWC stated in the *Update* after the event, "for women from industrialized countries like Canada, the international gathering offers an opportunity to share with, learn from and work towards strategies of resistance with women from underdeveloped countries whose experiences of globalization are acute and whose movements of resistance are distinct" (PWC 1998: 15). This statement reflects PWC's deep respect for women's varying experiences and differing social, economic and

political positions, as well as a genuine desire to learn from other women's experiences, all of which are essential for successful and constructive transnational activism. Although the conference was built around the idea of international solidarity, participants pointed out the need to continue to deepen their understanding around the issue and to further build and strengthen international solidarity (Diocson 1998).

Lastly, the PWC, in March 1999, held the first "Filipino-Canadian Women's National Consultative Forum." Rather than limit this gathering to local and national groups, the forum included 108 participants from five provinces, the United States and the Philippines. Women came from a wide range of sectors and included groups such as MIGRANTE International and GABRIELA–two of PWC's transnational partners. The theme of the forum "Toward Filipino Women's Equality" provoked a statement of unity that declared actions for change at the local and national level as well as attention to specific campaigns on Philippine issues (Alcuitas 1999). Out of this forum came the decision to form a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) to implement the action plans.

All the conferences and gatherings of women discussed here constitute dynamic and complex sites of transnational activism. These sites bring diverse women together from different localities where they directly share experiences and their particular local context of struggle while at the same time recognize commonalities of experience and the interconnectedness of their struggles.

The PWC also forges links with international groups. Two examples are MIGRANTE International and GABRIELA. MIGRANTE International, which began in 1985 and is based in Quezon City in the Philippines, is an alliance of Filipino migrant

organizations in different countries of the world and provides services to migrant Filipinos who seek justice for abuses committed against them. MIGRANTE International, much like the PWC, emphasizes how the political and economic climate in the Philippines as well as neo-colonialism is intricately linked to the migration of Filipinos (MIGRANTE International 2002). SIKLAB, the Filipino migrant workers groups that began within the PWC, joined MIGRANTE International in 1996. Indeed, one of the objectives of MIGRANTE International is to "strengthen cooperation and solidarity with migrant organizations of other nationalities and peoples of host countries" (MIGRANTE International 2002: 1). The pressure and protests of collective migrant organizations such as these have been responsible for protecting the rights of migrant workers to which governments turn a blind eye. The PWC and SIKLAB's association and connections to MIGRANTE International has helped bring attention to the vulnerability of Filipino migrant and domestic workers worldwide and educates members about their basic rights, which ultimately leads to empowerment.

The PWC has close ties to GABRIELA, a national alliance of militant women's organizations in the Philippines. Both MIGRANTE International and GABRIELA engage in activities and continuous dialogue with the PWC through conferences, gatherings and specific campaigns. For example, GABRIELA members were present at the first "Filipino-Canadian National Consultative Forum" (1999), and hosted the "Women's International Solidarity Affair in the Philippines" (1998 and 2000) and with Grassroots Women convened the conference "Towards Our Liberation: an International Conference Against Imperialist War and Plunder" in November 2002 in Vancouver. In addition, the PWC has been involved with the Purple Rose Campaign (PRC) spearheaded

by GABRIELA. The Purple Rose Campaign aims to increase public awareness around the issue of trafficking of women and support research on and documentation of trafficked women (Labrador 2001). When asked about this campaign, Jillian was quick to emphasize the PRC's continued and growing importance to the PWC:

> It's [PRC] a campaign to end trafficking of Filipino women and children. It is also an international campaign that here at the PWC we're trying to advance. This campaign started in 1999 but we continue to do it because globalization is intensifying the trafficking of our women and children. We thought that first we were going to end the campaign but I think, from our assessment, we really need to intensify the campaign because of what's happening in the Philippines. It has changed the consciousness of a lot of women. We're able to build alliances with other women's groups and they're very supportive of our campaign (Personal Interview April 2003).

Jillian is keenly aware of the importance of raising the awareness and consciousness of Filipino women in Canada in order to understand and show their support to other women and children being trafficked. Her acknowledgement of the need to intensify the campaign clearly demonstrates the primacy of solidarity to the organization. Jillian's comment is not only representative of the PWC's commitment to the struggles of Filipino women beyond their local context but is indicative of how outside forces such as globalization continuously motivates the PWC to build and maintain alliances thereby both resisting and challenging their status within society.

The PRC has also facilitated the forging of alliances with various women's groups nationally and internationally thereby creating a common bond enhancing the potential of transnational activism. The PWC's ties to GABRIELA and involvement with the Purple Rose Campaign represents its desire and need to maintain strong solidarity links in order to support and thereby educate, mobilize and organize Filipino migrant and domestic workers. The PWC's commitment to acknowledging the diverse experiences and

struggles of Filipino migrant workers around the world would not be possible without these international connections and local and national activism.

The PWC is active at many levels and at various sites. Its local and national work is deeply connected to and dependent upon its transnational ties and the global context of their struggles. It is impossible to separate the PWC's local and national work from its international engagements. To view one aspect of its work in light of another does not expose the complex dimensions of its activism. The PWC engages in an extensive amount of activities and is a multifaceted and multidimensional organization. The Centre's strength lies in its constant emphasis on the historical and global context in order that members understand the roots of their struggles. The PWC's continual focus on the effects of globalization, imperialism and the social, economic and political conditions in the Philippines highlights a complex history and challenging road to empowerment of Filipino women. On a local level the PWC is aware that empowerment cannot be achieved through women's efforts alone. This is clearly reflected in Jillian's observation:

> We're also able to get support from the men of the community. I think that is a very important contribution of our men and because the women themselves were able to raise the consciousness of our men with regards to the struggles of our women in the community. It's very important that we don't create enemies in our community and especially men. We look at them as our support in our struggle for liberation (Personal Interview April 2003).

Her response identifies the PWC's desire to include both men and women in its struggles for empowerment. Jillian's words indicate that the strength of Filipino women's struggles lies in the full support of all Filipino people—women and men. Her point illustrates that men have a role to play and that their involvement and encouragement are fundamentally linked to eventually overcoming the challenges Filipino women face. The aim for liberation is and should not be the sole responsibility of women, which is particularly key

as the struggle for women's emancipation cannot be achieved without the full support and acknowledgment of men. This applies not only to the struggles of Filipino women as domestic and migrant workers but to the efforts of diverse women for equality all over the world. By garnering the support of men in the community within their struggles, the PWC expands its activist reach and ability to achieve empowerment. By encompassing more broad perspectives and positions the PWC is able to maintain balance and inclusivity that has the potential to lead to more effective change.

When asked what the future looked like for women and transnational alliances at the PWC, Carolyn, one of my participants replied,

> I think for us, given what's really happening right now, there's room – it's ripe to do the work. You cannot just ignore it anymore. I know even here in Canada with all these cutbacks happening, with the recent war in Iraq, you notice there's lots of people that protest...the climate right now will motivate people [and] women to get out there and do something. So now the challenge is coordinating all this action (Personal Interview April 2003).

Carolyn's point makes clear the relevance of activism at this moment in time and the challenge of solidarity for not only the PWC but other social-change organizations. Her recognition of the growing dissatisfaction by the public not only signifies more widespread human discontent about global events but a need and desire to mobilize this action to become a more powerful and unified voice while enacting modes of solidarity. Carolyn's point illustrates that the choice to organize has become a necessity; it is impossible to turn ones back on it. Alliances are and will be of growing importance as individuals and groups continue to object to the inequities in society.

This chapter reveals that while globalization has had devastating effects on members of the PWC, it has concomitantly brought women together. Therefore, not only

is PWC resisting globalization but through its activist work, protests, struggles and publications, it is shaping globalization debates. The PWC's work thereby proves that globalization is neither static nor inevitable (Atasoy and Carroll 2003; Grant and Short 2002; Weiss 1997) but continuously changing and evolving for better or worse.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER SIX

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight in detail the voices of the four women interviewed and present the results of my data through themes, use of quotations, comparative analysis and interpretation. Through these techniques I explore the diverse ways the MSN and PWC participate in transnational activism and the challenges they face in their activist work. The interviewees provide my analysis with rich insights into the realm of transnational activism and demonstrate how their respective organizations engage with and challenge processes of globalization. Their perspectives bring clarity and depth to my research data. By focusing on their individual voices, I attempt to make their experiences within their organizations as explicit as possible. I end my discussion of the results to my study by drawing conclusions and making three recommendations based on consistencies in the data. I also reflect upon the research process throughout this study and touch upon areas for improvement and further research.

The four women interviewed for this study are all deeply involved with their respective organization/network–the Philippine Women Centre and the Maquila Solidarity Network–and possess a great deal of knowledge surrounding women's activism. What became apparent during the research process is that while the MSN and PWC both engage in transnational activism they are very different organizations with diverse and unique practices and goals. Both organizations self-identify as feminist but the PWC is an identity-based organization with a Filipino-only membership and MSN is an issue-based network promoting solidarity with women's, labour and other social movement groups within the garment industry. As an identity-based organization, the

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PWC works around issues of concern specific to Filipino women in Canada and provide services according to their needs. On the other hand, the issue-based MSN addresses the experiences and concerns of women from Asia, Mexico and Central America within the context of the garment industry and labour rights. During the document review and particularly in the interviews, it became evident that while the PWC mobilizes women in Vancouver and other parts of Canada directly with Filipino women elsewhere, the MSN has a different approach. The MSN does not specifically mobilize Canadian women, rather it acts as a facilitator and responds to groups' needs to promote solidarity and support the struggles between women's groups in Asia, Latin America and Mexico. Although mobilizing women in Canada is not MSN's focus, it is aware of this gap. As Brenda states, "unfortunately at the moment, organizing in the garment sector isn't very strong in Canada. There's no organizations–women's organizations–working on labour rights so it could be our limitation and not linking with the right groups or it could be the reality of women's organizing in Canada at the moment" (Personal Interview April 2003). This is not to suggest that the MSN's activist work is lacking in some way but serves to illuminate the varying positions both the MSN and PWC are situated in that creates different approaches to transnational activism and produces different results. Despite these differences, the MSN and PWC are both working within the context of processes of globalization and their distinct location provides my research with a rich and varied perspective on women's transnational activism in and outside of Canada.

I identified five major conceptual themes and eight sub-themes from the interview data. My results are organized around themes to provide organization and focus to the results as well as feature recurring points made by interview participants. The five

primary themes include: (1) the impact/influence of globalization; (2) benefits of transnational activism; (3) strategies for successful transnational activism; (4) barriers; and (5) the interconnection between the "local" and "global." Theme number three, strategies for successful transnational activism, contains four sub-themes: self-awareness; education and research; unity; and democratic process and theme number four, barriers, includes the remaining four: funding and resources; language; time and work constraints; and differing local contexts. These themes became evident in my analysis, not only because they are related to the context of my research and to the questions I posed to my participants, but due to the fact that they were repeatedly mentioned and/or brought up by participants with little or no probing. By interviewing my participants, particularly those I did in person, I felt I was able to sense the importance and urgency of certain pieces of information with which they provided me. It is a combination of all of these factors that led to my selection of the five primary conceptual themes.

Impact and Influence of Globalization

This theme refers to the context within which both the MSN and PWC are organizing and doing solidarity work. I chose this theme because it was clear in the interview data that processes of globalization had an influence on the way in which each organization functioned. There was an awareness by all participants that globalization, whether that translates into economic crises in Canada and the Philippines or the impact of trade agreements, does influence their activities. I chose to name the theme the "impact and influence" of globalization because I felt this label provided a good indication of the relationship between global processes and the MSN's and PWC's activist work.

The impact of globalization on the activities of MSN was expressed in more general terms than the PWC. Alison points out that, "[NAFTA] makes it very clear that there's a common agenda or trend on what the impact these trade deals have for women and then a sort of coming together to mobilize around that in terms of the next round of trade deals that come up" (Personal Interview April 2003). Brenda goes on to explain that since NAFTA, "the way we've started looking and trying to develop solidarity has changed somewhat seeing a clearer role in terms of pressuring corporations and governments in the North" (Personal Interview April 2003). Processes of globalization, such as trade deals like NAFTA, were seen as phenomena that made more clear the role and necessity of MSN to engage in solidarity campaigns. Brenda's comment also points to the responsibility governments and corporations in Canada need to take to ensure workers' rights in maquilas are protected and upheld.

Both participants interviewed from the PWC, on the other hand, linked the impact of globalization on the Centre's activities and members to specific policies in Canada and the Philippines such as the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). As Jillian explains,

> [There are] a lot of challenges we face because globalization is intensifying. It is really affecting a lot of our experiences and reality. For example, when we were organizing domestic workers in our community...they only had high school education and as the years went by there were changes in the programs of domestic workers, like the Live-in Caregiver program–there were more demands. For example, they [federal government] demanded that a domestic worker should have a second year college education which is the equivalent of grade twelve here. So, for a lot of our women they have to have that college education or they have to be professionals in order for them to come to Canada. So immediately there's already that brain drain from the Philippines and also the deskilling when they come to Canada because they can only work as domestic workers. So when you look at this, this is really an impact of globalization (Personal Interview April 2003).

Jillian's comment stresses how intimately globalization and related neo-liberal policies affect individual women's lives and thereby shapes the context within which the PWC is organizing. Not only does globalization create the conditions which brings Filipino women to Canada as domestic workers through international debt politics (Enloe 1989; Runyan 1996) but once in Canada policies like the LCP continue to influence the lives of Filipino domestic workers and their families at home. This situation both informs and strengthens the activist work of the PWC and creates the necessity for activism at the international level. Coming to Canada through the LCP also indicates the dynamic and complex way in which Filipino women are intertwined in global processes. They are simultaneously permitted to enter Canada but not given citizen status and are given employment but not protected by labour laws (Bakan and Stasiulis 1996; Macklin 1994; Momsen 1999; Pratt 1999). Afshar and Barrientos put this position quite succinctly when they state that "the impact of globalization on women has often been complex and contradictory, both in the context of their 'inclusion' and 'exclusion.' To be understood it needs to be analysed not only at the global but also at the local and household levels" (Afshar and Barrientos 1999: 6). Being both "included" in and "excluded" from the complicated processes of globalization, Filipino women are concomitantly presented with new opportunities and are susceptible to exploitation and abuse.

As exhibited later in this chapter, the PWC constantly engages with global and local contexts through its emphasis on the importance of understanding Filipino women's struggles in the Philippines and its relationship to their struggles in Canada. While the MSN conceptualizes the impact of globalization in terms of a force that provides common ground for promoting solidarity and a clearer picture of their role in

international campaigns, the PWC expresses its experience of globalization in more personal and direct ways. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that the PWC works on a daily basis directly with women whereas the MSN promotes solidarity and builds support between women's groups primarily outside of Canada. It is quite clear, for both the MSN and PWC that "the challenges of globalization and neo-liberal economics continues to challenge women's, and especially feminist, organizing" (Stienstra 2000a: 78). Conversely, the PWC fights back by lobbying to make changes to the LCP. This represents an intervention and disruption of globalization's mandate and constitutes a form of resistance. The PWC's actions question the authority and ability of global processes to continue to negatively impact women's lives.

Benefits of Transnational Activism

The second theme I identified in my analysis is the benefits women gained from engaging in transnational alliances. The theme was selected because all women interviewed acknowledged that the activism that occurred between women of varying localities was advantageous but for different reasons. Engaging in transnational partnerships was regarded as beneficial to PWC members–particularly young women. This is evident through Jillian's observation that "GABRIELA is really giving us the opportunity [to make alliances] because they're able to have this conference and for those of us who have not been to the Philippines, especially the young women, it's an opportunity for them to really study where they come from and to integrate with the women [at the conference] and understand them better than what is just being portrayed about us" (Personal Interview April 2003). By forging links with GABRIELA, the

PWC's primary international alliance, Filipino women from Canada are able to expand their understanding of the position and situation of women in the Philippines, which forms the foundation for comprehending the presence of Filipino women as migrant and domestic workers in Canada. This common understanding strengthens solidarity not only among Filipino women in Canada and the Philippines but also among Filipino women within Canada. Jillian goes on to say, "when we come together, when we study what is happening around us and also understand our experiences and realities, then we are able to come up with some discussions–analysis of what our situation is. So I think it is also the beginning of awareness" (Personal Interview April 2003). This emphasizes how making connections and working together with women in the Philippines is beneficial especially when women are consciously aware of both their own and other womens' situation. Jillian's point also demonstrates that through education, activism and awareness the PWC is helping women make the link between their experiences in Canada and the conditions in the Philippines in the hope of empowering and mobilizing them to rally for support and change. Indeed, as Rowbotham and Mitter point out, "women's social integration through the process of globalization has led to the potential for new forms of participation and empowerment. Greater participation by women in the political and social process has helped to raise their awareness and level of activism" (1994: 8).

MSN, though its involvement with and support of transnational exchanges, benefits women by

> being able to play that networking role to play a part in bringing together [women] through this exchange program. A lot of MSN's work, not just internationally but at the national or regional level has been around trying to facilitate funders…and meeting so people can come together and share work that they're doing. The primary benefit would be the back-up from social justice work in Canada to the struggles that these women are carrying out…to

have that kind of solidarity coming through, that pressure on brand name companies–an awareness between people in other countries (Personal Interview April 2003).

Carolyn's words in the above quote clearly indicate that through solidarity exchanges and applying and bringing the knowledge gained from the experiences of women workers in Mexico, Latin America and Asia to Canada, MSN is able to aid women and resist processes of globalization at multiple sites. This speaks to their multidimensional capacities. Not only are they organizing, supporting and involving themselves in transnational exchanges at various locations in the Third World but they are extending their support by placing pressure on local and national retailers and governments as well as mobilizing individuals and groups in Canada through networking and campaigns thereby directly supporting women workers. This multifaceted approach serves to enhance the awareness around women and labour workers' rights and hopefully bring about change which will benefit women's lives and struggles.

Strategies for Successful Transnational Activism

The third theme was named "strategies" because participants identified diverse characteristics that they felt enhanced the mandate of their organization and contributed to their ability to organize with and support women when pursuing exchanges beyond national boundaries. This theme was selected not only because it highlights ways to succeed when engaging in transnational exchanges but is also an indication of the value the MSN and PWC place on certain approaches and practices within their organization and network. Strategies for successful transnational activism is divided into four sub-

themes that include: self-awareness; education and research; unity; and democratic process. Each of these sub-themes is distinct to either the MSN or PWC.

The self-awareness MSN possesses as an organization of its role and goals within solidarity exchanges is not only a strategy to organizing successfully but a recognition of its position and commitment to ensuring women are heard and represented in international gatherings. This was evident when Alison explained discussions at an international exchange, coordinated in part by MSN in Puebla, Mexico in 2002:

> One of the set sections was around solidarity campaigns...it was a space for groups to talk about what was their perspective on solidarity campaigns that often times originated in the North and carried out in the North and what are their negative experiences, what are positive experiences. It was a chance for the different groups that are working on solidarity campaigns to hear from the groups where they think things are problematic and what is supportive, what isn't supportive. It was really important to hear those critiques and come back and make sure that we were applying those. At MSN it has always been a really important thing to continually seek feedback from the way that we do our work (Personal Interview April 2003).

Alison's words clearly reflect the sincere effort by MSN to be transparent in its activities and intentions. In its open reception to criticism, MSN becomes more available and effective to women's groups as a solidarity network. By opening itself up to suggestions on how it conducts its solidarity campaigns, MSN shows it is trying to operate in ways that more fully benefit women and labour rights groups in Mexico, Latin America and Asia. Therefore, the MSN recognizes that the "importance of transnational feminist organizing lies precisely in the fact that imported ideas and practices constructively interact with local contexts and emerge significantly altered" (Sperling et al. 2001: 1159). These altered ideas and practices intensify MSN's ability to maintain connections with women's groups. This type of approach and practice in solidarity campaigns is indicative

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of MSN's awareness of its position as a group based in an industrialized nation and desire to make relationships as equal as possible by strengthening its support through recommendations of women who toil daily in maquilas and EPZs. It is through these attributes that MSN will become a more effective and egalitarian network promoting solidarity and support.

The second sub-theme is education and research that participants of the PWC named as the foundation to understanding and learning more about the positions of Filipino women in Canada. Jillian confirms this when she points out that "education is really the first thing that we have to do. Education is there for our migration–the roots of our migration, the history of our people...we have to be informed of what is happening within the global arena, otherwise we think what is happening to us is pretty normal. For us it is not normal and there's reasons for us to think and study why we're here" (Personal Interview April 2003). Education is an effective strategy in the transnational arena because it helps women understand the context of their struggles that can lead to empowerment and effective partnerships. Also, by educating members of the PWC, women begin to see that there is common ground for organizing and that sharing experiences with other women in similar situations but varying localities can advance and enhance local struggles. Research is important for many of the same reasons and as Carolyn explains, "it is always important to document our experiences because from there you have a strong basis when you go out there [international conferences and gatherings] and discuss all this theory. So, that's why every year there's really a need for us to continue to do research on the issues affecting us globally" (Personal Interview April 2003). Carolyn's response reiterates that understanding women's struggle within

the local context provides the foundation for relating and learning at the international level. If women understand, through research and education, their own position and situation, they can better articulate and comprehend their struggle as Filipino women in Canada. This points to the necessity of research to be utilized to educate women at the local level and the need to continue to do more research because of its usefulness in spotlighting the impact of globalization and why Filipino women experience what they do. Without education or research the grounds for solidarity on a national and international level are not as discernible and the bonds for building partnerships not as strong.

Unity was a recurring topic addressed by the PWC in my data and was chosen as the third sub-theme. When I asked about any political differences between women when engaging in transnational activities, both PWC interviewees spoke to the importance of unity. Carolyn puts it quite simply: "there are always differences but then if you have good unity on the issue you will be able to hurdle the differences because for me it always goes back to your commitment in doing things and willingness to understand" (Personal Interview April 2003). Jillian expresses similar sentiments: "it is always expected [political differences] but we can always have unity…we cannot expect that everyone will have a common or the same perspective but if we have that recognition then we're able to continue to work together…also when you're outside of the country you will feel that solidarity when you come together because the experiences we face every day. The racism we face every day, the exploitation we face every day" (Personal Interview April 2003). Both Carolyn and Jillian's statements imply that regardless there will always be differences between women, therefore one has to work at overcoming

difference by listening to and respecting others and finding common issues to unite on. As Miles observes, "shared identity is a political achievement for these groups, not a given condition" (2001: 149) which is important because this stresses the effort and hard work it takes to build strong and equitable alliances. This is mostly due to the PWC's commitment to the struggles of Filipino women through education, research and national and international alliances. When I asked about how the PWC bridges differences between women, Jillian used a conference in October 2001 to illustrate the PWC's commitment and focus on unity: "despite 9/11 we were able to gather over 200 women in Seattle. Not all of us have the same political perspective but we were united in terms of looking at the many undocumented women in the U.S...at the end of the conference we were able to draw up a good statement of unity and that is a very high level of activism" (Personal Interview April 2003). The ability of the PWC to organize in light of differences between women speaks to the strength of the organization and the tight bonds they have forged and maintained with women across national borders.

The final sub-theme within "strategies" is democratic process. An important principle when engaging in transnational activism is maintaining transparency and inclusivity. In addition, "a democratic polity has to ensure that all voices are heard, that all are given equal weight and that decision-making is fully shared" (Cockburn 2000: 53). This is evident in the way in which the MSN and PWC engage in activism and is a strategy that has the potential to enhance the success of transnational exchanges and partnerships because more women have agency and a voice. When asked how the PWC ensures as many women as possible are participating in exchanges, Jillian responded:

> We always have a democratic process. It's very important in our activities and you can only get people to join if you always observe that principle of

democratic participation. Not everyone will have the chance to speak at any particular time...but we're able to do it in a way that we can break into smaller groups so that people who are·not able to raise it in a bigger groups or panel can raise it when they have their own workshop...but it's always a very important principle that we are even in terms of deciding what would be the program...you're not going to grow as an organization if you don't listen and if you don't encourage participation (Personal Interview April 2003).

Jillian is very aware of the importance of ensuring all women have an opportunity to participate in international exchanges. The extended effort to accommodate and encourage women's voices in smaller groups at various gatherings represents the PWC's desire and willingness to be egalitarian and recognize the diverse contributions women have to make. This lucid self-awareness and unambiguous acknowledgment of the necessity of inclusivity represents a principle of integrity essential to activism of women across difference and national boundaries.

Growing as an organization and encouraging women to take part in alliance building is key, especially as processes of globalization continue to influence women's lives and livelihoods. All of these strategies addressed by participants indicate the very complex realm of transnational activism and represents the unique ways in which the MSN and PWC have attempted to challenge global processes and promote productive and egalitarian relationships with women from various locations.

Barriers to Transnational Activism

The fourth theme chosen from my data is the barriers the MSN and PWC face in their activist work. These barriers somewhat limit both organizations' ability to engage more thoroughly in different forms of activism or further support women's transnational

exchanges. "Barriers" is divided into four sub-themes and include: funding and resources; language; time and work constraints; and differing local contexts.

All four participants regarded funding and resources, or a lack thereof, as a barrier to collectively organizing and engaging in various types of activism. "Resources is definitely a primary restriction" (Personal Interview April 2003), mentions Alison. Carolyn's remarks concur and she adds, "it's really hard to work and come up with amenities, how to finance our [activities]–someone has to be in charge of that. Right now, even with our local work we only have one staff–it's really hard. And then also with these cutbacks right? We have to think of something that will teach us more on how to be self-reliant" (Personal Interview April 2003). Carolyn's point implies that the PWC needs better support mechanisms, both financial and political, to be more self-sufficient and continue to engage in their struggles as Filipino women. Unfortunately, cuts to social services, which reflect an overall state of economic restructuring in Canada, is creating a gap in society which is increasingly filled by women and women's organizations (Rowbotham and Linkogle 2001; Runyan 1996) like the PWC, which adds pressure and stress to an organization already pressed for time.

Jillian acknowledges the complexity and dynamics involved in funding when she points out that the difficulty in obtaining resources is not so simple and that it is "very, very difficult to even get funding. You need to be critical, you need to prove yourself that you're able to do things that the mainstream organizations are doing. You always have to prove yourself. But that is another layer of how they [funders] look at us, as women and also from Third World countries" (Personal Interview April 2003). Her comment is a strong indication of the interplay of race and gender on the politics involved in obtaining

funding and what Deborah Mindry refers to as the "politics of virtue" (Mindry 2001).

The politics of virtue constructs some women as "benevolent providers" of funding and

resources, particularly elites and more privileged women, and others as "deserving

recipients," mainly grassroots groups and women of colour (Mindry 2001: 1189).

Therefore, the PWC's statement reflects a feeling that in order to be "deserving

recipients" they must prove that the work they perform is valuable, which can be

difficult, especially–as Jillian reiterates–when "you belong to a marginalized sector in

Canadian society" (Personal Interview April 2003).

Lack of funding is also a barrier in that it prevents the maintenance of connections

between women. As Brenda explains, there was "such a connection amongst women in

terms of the issues [at Puebla 2002] and yet since then it's been really difficult to

maintain that momentum. There's not enough funding for that and groups just go back to

their own place and they're totally overwhelmed" (Personal Interview April 2003).

Without the funds and resources to maintain those connections women find it difficult to

keep up a continuous exchange of information, which prevents women from continuing

to build solidarity between one another and support each other's struggles.

Overall, the barrier of funding and resources reflects a general lack of political

and economic support for women organizing in Canada or for networks aiming to bring

women together in the international arena. The next two sub-themes are closely related in

their interdependency that became evident in participants' responses and the way in

which they linked the barriers of funding and resources, language and work and time

constraints.

The second sub-theme of language is a barrier that was most relevant to MSN's work. During transnational exchanges, Alison found that "one clear barrier is language. For that exchange [Nicaragua 2001] we had in some cases translation from Thai to English, then English to Spanish–it's just multiple layers of translation. Also, in terms of communication, we obviously need a lot of resources to be able to do that translation" (Personal Interview April 2003). In studies done by Cockburn (2000) and Hsiung and Wong (1999) on transnational exchanges between women of different backgrounds the authors cited language as a clear obstacle to organizing and shared Brenda's observation that "it's difficult to see how to maintain that kind of exchange in a way that could actually be useful and across language" (Personal Interview April 2003). Therefore, both participants of MSN acknowledge that language is not only a barrier at international exchanges when women are trying to connect, interact and listen to one another but also creates problems when women try to continue those relationships once they've returned home.

The third sub-theme, time and work constraints, is a barrier because it adds to the difficulty of coordinating the transnational activism of women. The local conditions and experiences of women provide a challenge to MSN in terms of trying to bring women and labour rights groups together. As Brenda emphasizes, this is due to the fact that "groups that are organizing on the ground, whether it's in Mexico or Central America are so overwhelmed with the work they have in front of them every day" (Personal Interview April 2003). Alison echoes these sentiments: "most groups that have been involved in the network are so stretched and overwhelmed with just their immediate work that they're carrying out on a local level so again, it's about resources and being able to afford the

time to carry out those networks" (Personal Interview April 2003). Although MSN

participants acknowledged that time and work constraints are a barrier for women

organizing on the "ground," Brenda recognizes that this makes it clear what their role is:

> It's really important [transnational activism] but how to do it around what issues; it always takes a groups like ours. Not only our group, but it's just that groups that are working every day in the trenches don't have time to think about networking and facilitation. We have a bit more of that process but that creates certain kinds of tensions and dynamics between North-South groups so it's quite a complex process (Personal Interview April 2003).

Brenda's observation implies that MSN is filling a gap but not without creating new

kinds of barriers and challenges. This illuminates the importance of networking and

solidarity organizations, particularly when they are aware of the complexities of

networking between "North" and "South" and the needs of the groups with which they

connect. This also is a comment on the PWC who coordinates partnerships itself without

the aid of a networking organization. It speaks to the PWC's strength and commitment as

an organization and its ability, despite lack of funding, to forge alliances across national

boundaries. However, it is possible that with the help of a solidarity network like MSN,

the heavy workload of the PWC could be somewhat alleviated.

The last sub-theme is differing local contexts. When organizing within the

international arena, PWC participants emphasized that women's different approaches and

specific local situations posed barriers to organizing and networking effectively

transnationally. These included the different ways women strategize, the lack of good

organizational skills and the distinct local issues women face. In the interview, while

discussing the obstacles of networking, Jillian reminded me, "Even in the U.S., it's so

close to Canada, but they also have their own challenges as Filipino women" (Personal

Interview April 2003). Her words clearly reflect the unavoidable differences between women regardless of geographic proximity. Even Filipino women in the United States, who we might assume to have similar experiences as Filipino-Canadian women, face surprisingly distinct challenges. The underlying observation here is that one can never assume that any group of women experiences life the same way as another. In addition, local context can profoundly influence the way in which Filipino women engage with exploitation and oppression.

Different approaches to strategizing and organizing also varies depending upon location. For example, a lot of the activities and work women do in the Philippines in regard to activism is largely theoretical, which makes organizing with them difficult. The challenge then is to bring the theory and practice together in order that exchanges between the PWC and women in the Philippines are not only productive but useful within a local organizing context. Specific barriers such as these provide a continuous challenge to the PWC when it engages in transnational activism at conferences and various gatherings. These are barriers that have to be worked through at an individual level and really challenge women and organizations to work through their differences in order to reach common ground and unify around common issues.

Interconnection between Local and Global

The fifth and final theme identified in my data is the interconnection between the MSN and PWC's local activities and activism at a global level. All participants commented upon the interdependence of their local and global activism which signifies how related and intertwined this work is.

When asked about the importance of local work compared to global activism, Jillian responded, "you cannot just have one activity and forget the other one...education within our own community and also outside of our community are two very important activities that we do" (Personal Interview April 2003). Her comment indicates the link between local and global activism as well as the importance of educating women to understand how tied their local subjectivities and experiences are to the larger global context. At MSN there was a similar recognition of the relationship between local and global activism but more in terms of "how we as consumers in the North are so connected [to the garment industry] and that there is a role for us to play" (Personal Interview April 2003). Alison goes on to explain that at MSN "the solidarity and campaign work that gets carried out is mainly on a national and then translates down to a provincial or local level, so it's in response to some of the work that is happening globally" (Personal Interview April 2003). MSN not only devotes equal energy and time to local (i.e., No Sweat Campaign) and global (i.e., international exchanges) activism, but acknowledges how ethical purchasing practices in Canada have an influence on women garment workers in other parts of the world. The combination and balance of work that is carried out at the local and global level at both the MSN and PWC shows how global phenomenon, such as processes of globalization like the specific conditions female garment workers and Filipino women face, continuously engage with local activities and experiences. For the MSN and PWC local and global activism cannot be disconnected because without one the other cannot thrive or even exist. To a certain degree, this lack of division makes it difficult to define what is local and what is global. The relationship is complex and as Grewal and Kaplan point out, to separate the "local from the global is difficult to decide

when each thoroughly infiltrates the other" (1994: 11). The solidarity and campaign work done by MSN and the experiences of Filipino women in Canada, who have come here primarily as migrant, domestic or sex workers because of policies of economic restructuring in both the Philippines and Canada, shows how global processes manifest themselves at the local level and create the conditions under which the MSN and PWC organize and carry out their work to support the struggles of women against oppression and exploitation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

My research highlights the diverse ways women are resisting processes of globalization. Both the MSN and PWC use multifaceted approaches and techniques to empower women and respond to the complex and contradictory nature of global phenomena. Unlike much of the literature on globalization, women's activism and particularly the work of the MSN and PWC illuminates the positive ways in which globalization has shaped and changed women's lives through collective activism and partnerships. Through campaign work, local activities and various national and international conferences, these organizations have mobilized and educated women and promoted new and critical ways to resist the forces which exploit and oppress them. Through their activism MSN and PWC are taking responsibility for enacting change and awareness in women's lives by pursuing and coordinating links with women from varying locations. From this aspect it is clear that women are active agents and not passive victims in the global system. This chapter, particularly through the voices of my four participants, demonstrates that resistance to globalization by means of collective

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activism of groups like the MSN and PWC, has the potential to challenge the portrayal of globalization as an inevitable process with no alternatives. The women of MSN and PWC are building alliances which are crossing movements and borders to challenge globalization and question its authority and tendency to negatively impact and shape women's lives. It is important to note the MSN and PWC go beyond just resisting globalization processes and also enact strategies that attempt to redefine their position in society through their own definitions and agency. Utilizing globalization's multifaceted and multidimensional nature, women of the MSN and PWC are shaping and moulding new paths through innovative and distinct global activism and transnational partnerships. Furthermore, my research shows that women's "agency in this era of globalization challenges the dominant framing of globalization and opens up new directions for both feminist theorizing and activism" (Desai 2002: 16).

This study also sheds light on how hard the PWC and MSN work considering their limited access to funding and resources. Their ability to engage with and support the struggles of women in other countries speaks to their commitment, strength and organization. Although differences and divisions will always exist between women, whether that is in terms of race, class, geography or ideology, "global processes can and do create the conditions for transnational political alliances which in turn affect both social and economic change" (Krause 1996: 232).

The overall conclusion I drew from my research is the importance of integrating global and local activism and engaging in international feminist networking in order to create awareness about the experiences women have due to globalization. If the local is in fact infused with global influences (Basu 2000; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Wells 2002)

one of the best ways to address this is to educate women at both levels and understand how location shapes the way in which women experience global processes. To understand the bigger picture (i.e., globalization) women and organizations must look beyond their own particular context. An integration, and not exclusive separation of the local and global, can only serve to enhance women's abilities to resist and come together to promote solidarity and collective action. In addition, "dialogues with feminists from the South is one of the best and most demanding ways for North American feminists to increase their understanding of global issues" (Miles 1996: 105).

In reflecting upon the results of this study, I would like to make three recommendations: two at the level of government and policy and one for organizations or networks that are engaged or wish to engage in productive and effective activism. My first recommendation is a call for increased support to women's grassroots organizing efforts both financially, politically and structurally. Both the MSN and PWC expressed that resources were a primary concern and implied that the lack of funding posed serious challenges to their ability to engage in efficient and ongoing activism. An increase in funding and acknowledgement of their struggles by governing bodies could help alleviate some of the barriers both organizations expressed. For example, funding would relieve time and work constraints by allowing the hiring of more staff (particularly at the PWC) and would allow for better organizing and planning. Funding could also ease, to some degree, the issue of language expressed by the MSN. Money is never the answer to all problems and challenges faced by an organization but would certainly help both the MSN and PWC strengthen existing transnational partnerships and forge new ones.

My second recommendation is a plea for changes in policy. This recommendation is primarily with the PWC in mind because, as Jillian stresses, "I think we have done our share of raising this consciousness of trafficking but in terms of greater or larger society and especially in terms of policy–it happens not very much. We have policies but policies are quite flawed, so there is a need for those policies to be enhanced and developed for the benefit of the women" (Personal Interview April 2003). Changes in policy to adjust programs such as the Live-in Caregiver Program to be less oppressive and restrictive to Filipino women would be one way that the Canadian government could help improve the conditions under which women from the Philippines work as migrant and domestic workers in Canada. The LCP, which operates as a form of economic restructuring, profoundly shapes the way Filipino women experience globalization both in the Philippines where they're recruited and in Canada where they must live by its rules.

My final recommendation is to feminist organizations or networks that are or wish to partake in transnational activism and alliances. I make this recommendation from the challenges and successes the MSN and PWC experience. For those aiming to engage in transnational activism, it is important to remain continuously aware of their position– politically, economically and socially. Both the MSN and PWC have proven that being critical, democratic and open to suggestions for change ensures growth and more even and balanced partnerships. Through the recognition and privileging of difference, unity can be achieved, and as the PWC confirms, unity is key to finding common ground and maintaining open communication and connections. This is not an easy task, nor will it guarantee success or be undertaken by all, but I think it is essential if women on all sides of a partnership wish to benefit, play an active role and have a voice.

Conclusion

This research process was one of continuous learning and I was constantly challenged by the new ideas presented to me in my study. My greatest challenge was the interview process which surprised me because I expected it to happen with a certain degree of comfort and ease. This was not the case, as I soon learned that interviewing–scheduling, re-scheduling, coordinating and then performing–takes a lot more time than I had initially anticipated. I was also surprised by the depth and richness of the data my participants provided me with. Although I asked the questions, I didn't realize how intriguing it would be to hear the women speak of their experiences. I am in awe of the extent and depth of the work that they do on a daily basis.

I would like to speak briefly about the implication of nationalism to my study. Throughout my research I became aware that nationalism plays an important role in women's movements, particularly for Third World women and within the context of a growing international feminist movement. Women from different parts of the world at times are faced with engaging in nationalist and feminist ideologies while participating in transnational activism. Many women, especially like the individuals at the PWC who resist imperialist forces and assert their rights as female migrant workers, are increasingly faced with the complexities of nationalism and feminism, which are significant to their connections and alliances with other women around the world. Given the hierarchical relationship of feminism to nationalism (Heng 1997) and the development of feminism in the Third World in concordance with nationalist movements (Heng 1997; Jayawardena 1986), when organizing transnationally, groups must consider–as with globalization–the

varying contexts within which women are mobilizing and understand the challenges they may face due to nationalist struggles. The challenge then lies in the fact that "as movements become more international, activists will undoubtedly face potential contradictions between their identity as activists and as citizens of particular nations" (Nepstad 2002: 135). The links between nationalism, women's struggles with nationalist movements and feminist international activism is an area of further study which is of interest to me and would provide another complex dimension of analysis to the arena of transnational activism.

Lastly I want to point out how my study could have been improved or enhanced. Transnational activism most often involves two or more countries or organizations. Due to the fact that I have only investigated the Canadian viewpoint through the MSN and PWC and not the women with whom they make alliances, I have obtained a somewhat limited perspective on transnational activism. Ideally I would have spoken to women in the Philippines, Mexico or Latin America to discover their experiences of transnational activism and the benefits they reap from forming partnerships with the MSN and PWC. Unfortunately travelling to these locations was impossible due to lack of funds and time constraints but is an area I would be keen on exploring for a future research project. Hearing women on both sides of a transnational relationship would provide an even more rich and dynamic outlook on how women collectively resist processes of globalization.

APPENDIX A

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA V5A 1S6
Telephone: 604-291-3447
FAX: 604-268-6785

April 17, 2003

Ms. Noel Patten
Graduate Student
Women's Studies
Simon Fraser University

Dear Ms. Patten:

Re: Border-Crossing the Transnational Activism of Women in an Era of Globalization

The above-titled ethics application has been granted approval by the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board, at its meeting on March 17, 2003 in accordance with Policy R 20.01, "Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Subjects".

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director
Office of Research Ethics

APPENDIX B

Description of Research Project

Thesis Title:
Border-Crossing: The Transnational Activism of Women in an Era of Globalization

My proposed research will contribute to current literature by providing an analysis and understanding of the challenges Canadian women face when transnationally organizing in the context of globalization. I anticipate my study will provide a clear picture of how transnational organizations function, how they negotiate differences between women and an understanding of the usefulness and practicality of transnational alliances. I hope that my research will provide a framework for future transnational organizations and alliances and that my results will help other NGOs, organizations or networks understand and participate in transnational activism. The results could provide other existing transnational organizations with guidelines to the dilemmas and successes of transnational activism.

The objective of this study is to explore and analyse the activities and challenges of two Canadian organizations that engage in the transnational activism of women in the context of globalization.

The primary research question I plan to explore in my thesis is: how do Canadian transnational feminist networks/organizations mobilize and act to address processes of globalization? My secondary research questions include: (a) how is the transnational feminist network organized, what are its primary challenges and how does this influence the way in which it functions?; (b) how and to whom is the network beneficial?; (c) how does the network address issues around globalization and how does globalization fit into the network's mandate?; and (d) what motivates a Canadian organization to be concerned with transnational globalization issues?

Transnational feminist activism will hopefully empower women to form their own modes of resistance that will better equip them to resist locally specific and relevant processes of exploitation and domination. Most importantly, transnational feminist activism aspires to challenge traditional hierarchies of gender, race, class and imperialism and helps reconfigure existing hierarchies of power that prevent women's equality.

My research is an effort to show how women are confronting globalization and how women of every race, class, ethnicity and locality are active agents and not passive victims in the current global system. Recognition of unique social, political, economic and cultural locations by feminist activists will help enable women more equitable relationships and create more productive partnerships.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Background Information

1. Why and how did this network/organization form?
2. What is the mandate of the network/organization?
3. What type of activities (awareness, protest, financial aid) does your network/organization partake in to promote solidarity with women from other countries?
4. How important is activism on a global level to this network/organization compared to local and national activism? Which level of activism does the network devote more time to?

Globalization

1. How does globalization influence your network/organization's regular activities and activist work?
2. How do globalization and international agreements/organizations affect the political and social cohesion of women who organize transnationally?
3. How does the collective work of women in Canada and women in Mexico/Central America/Asia resist modes of globalization?
4. How important is it for women to collectively resist and respond to processes of globalization?

Transnational Activism

1. What characteristics make a transnational alliance between women successful?
2. What are the challenges and/or obstacles of entering into the transnational political arena?
3. What are the tensions that you experience when forming and maintaining transnational relationships?
4. Have your campaigns regarding women workers ever produced any important social, political or cultural changes? Do you attribute this to the activism of the network/organization or the strength and activism of the women you have partnerships with?
5. How do you want individual women and collective women's groups in other localities to benefit from their relationship with your network/organization?
6. As a network do you experience political differences from women in Mexico/Central America/Asia which make it more difficult to transnationally organize?

7. What does your network need to improve upon to make transnational relationships and partnerships between women more widespread and successful?

8. Shared interests and strategies between women in Canada and women in Mexico/Central America/Asia cannot be assumed because of differing class, race, ethnic, historical and geographic positions, therefore, how do you make sure that all women have agency and a voice when transnationally organizing?

   - The success of transnational activism has a lot to do with a network/organization's ability to identify commonalities and differences between women. How does your network/organization deal with these issues?

9. What is the future for women and transnational activism? Does your network/organization plan to increase their engagement in transnational activities?

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent By Participants In a Research Project or Experiment

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the project or experiment, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project or experiment.

Title: Border-crossing: the Transnational Activism of Women in an Era of Globalization
Investigator Name: Noël Patten
Investigator Department: Women's Studies

Having been asked to participate in a research project or experiment, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the information documents, describing the project or experiment. I understand the procedures to be used in this experiment and the personal risks to me in taking part in the project or experiment, as stated below:

Risks and Benefits:
A possible risk associated with this research is that participants may fear that the

information they reveal in the interview could affect their job or position within the organization.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics or the researcher named above or with the Chair, Director or Dean of the Department, School or Faculty as shown below.

Department, School or Faculty:	Chair, Director or Dean:	Director of Research or Ethics:
Women's Studies	Dr. Susan Wendell	H. Weinberg

8888 University Way, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6, Canada

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting: Noël Patten email: npatten@sfu.ca phone: 604-630-6106

I have been informed that the research will be confidential.

I understand that: this interview will be audio-taped; materials related to this interview will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed after the completion of the study; the interviewer will gladly consider changing the transcripts once they have been written; this interview contributes to work which may be published.

I understand that my supervisor or employer may require me to obtain his or her permission prior to my participation in a study of this kind.

What The Subject is Required to Do:
Participants will be asked to attend an interview and answer questions related to the mandate, function and transnational activities of their organization. Interviews will last between 1 and 1.5 hours. Participants will act as spokespersons for the organization and will not be judged on their individual opinion and activities.

( ) I would like a copy of the transcript of my interview
( ) I would like a copy of the results of this study

My choice of pseudonym is: _____

If you have no preference, please leave the space blank and a pseudonym will be chosen for you.

Mailing or Email Address: _____
_____

The subject and witness shall fill in this box. (Please Print Legibly)

Subject Last Name: Subject First Name:

Subject Contact Information:

Subject Signature: Witness:

Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY):

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