

Rethinking Gender Relationships in the Workplace & Family

Household Gender Relations in Transition: Women's Decision-making Autonomy in Yoro, Honduras

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Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Rural farming households are characterized by a deeply entrenched gendered division of labour which more or less conforms to the global norms (Sachs 1996). Deere's (1995) and Deere and Leon's (2001) gendered analysis of rural farm households in Latin America make clear that household strategies do not necessarily serve the best interests of the women within them. Understanding the processes of empowerment and marginalization is essential to developing policies and alternatives that will facilitate transitions to an increased well-being.

This presentation addresses the question: what factors affect women's autonomy in making decisions in male-headed households in Yoro, Honduras? Data from the Demographics and Health Survey conducted in Honduras in 2005-2006 are used. Analyses are based on a subsample of rural women, in Yoro, whose partners are considered to be household heads (N = 1220). Ordinary Least Squares Regression was used to test the affect of various demographic and attitudinal variables on women's autonomy in household decision-making.

The results show that as women's wealth, education and age increase so to does their household autonomy. As women's attitudes toward decision-making become more empowered, so does their autonomy in the household. The education level of male heads of households has no significant influence on women's household autonomy in decision-making.

In the process of economic globalization and international development, gender relations are being restructured. Exploring the effect of attitudinal variables on women's autonomy in decision-making sheds light on processes of empowerment for women. In order to develop policies that truly support the needs of Honduran women, these types of variables must be taken into account.

Female Consciousness and Resistance in Rastafari

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Rastafari is an organic, evolutionary philosophy and way of life. It is highly interpretative, yet structured in a way that it borrows from Judeo-Christian orthodoxy but attempts to (re) create an African consciousness and identity around it that was lost due to African enslavement. As Rastafari has struggled to find such a consciousness and identity, the images of women were constructed and imposed. Initially, I thought that the women who adopted Rastafari did so voluntarily, thus embraced and embodied these images. However, as it evolved and as my exposure to the community increased, my awareness of sistren's consciousness and

resistance became clearer.

I suggest that the consciousness and the resistance of women were part of their vision of achieving the utopian, egalitarian world, whether widespread or within the community. These principles have been applied to the family in hopes that children will inherit a different Rastafari that allows greater progression ideologically, philosophically, and spiritually for the people. As many of the tenets were challenged as a beginning process of this social change, these women contributed greatly to the questioning of Rastafari's appropriation of many anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and anti-capitalist structures imposed on them. As a result, I attempt to define what this consciousness is that has mobilized a large group of sistren. In this process, I compare and contrast this consciousness to eco-feminism and Afrocentric Ecowomanism.

Gabriela's sisters: women working in cacao, 1963-1973

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Brazilian feminists (Berta Lutz) used the political opportunity created by the Revolution of 1930 (Getulio Vargas) to win citizenship (the right to vote) and labour rights (equal pay and paid maternity leave). The Estado Novo reasserted the control of patrimony but it also consolidated labour rights in the form of the CLT (1943), although rural workers were excluded from the regime of the CLT until 1963.

Rural women had formal equality under the CLT but were excluded from citizenship and labour rights by structural barriers created by the intersectionality of gender, race and class (patriarchal grower-worker relations and illiteracy). The work of women in agriculture was made invisible and unpaid because of patriarchal family structures which were reproduced in the agrarian structure.

An agrarian social movement used the political opportunity created by the presidency of Joao Goulart to gain labour rights for rural workers (the ETR) and to extend the system of Labour Justice to rural areas, including Ilheus in Bahia's cacao region. This gave women working in cacao both a normative regime and a forum for contention over their labour rights.

Relying on the archives of the Ilheus labour court (Junta) and a case-in-context approach, this paper shows that women in Ilheus gained a legal space to contend for labour rights and that these women used state law to (re)construct the forms of grower-workers relations previously under the exclusive control of the coroneis de cacao (cacao growers).

Women's Activism and Feminism: the Argentinean Movimiento de Mujeres Agropecuarias en Lucha (MML)

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This study examines one innovative women's movement that emerged in Argentina in the mid nineties: the Movimiento de Mujeres Agropecuarias en Lucha (MML). This is a group of wives of highly indebted farmers who, because of hyperinflation and "unfair" interest rates, were at risk of losing their land through state judicial auctions. They developed original strategies to impede the auctions such as singing the national anthem and praying during the auctions. These women, mainly housewives with no previous political experience, assuming the essentializing standpoint of "mothers and wives" and rejecting any connection with feminism, managed to create the first movement of rural women in the history of Argentina.

This study investigates the effects of MML women's activism on the representations of feminine roles and the social relations of gender in rural Argentina. By exploring how to position the MML vis-à-vis feminism it seeks to elucidate the complex and, sometimes, contradictory relationship between women's activism and feminism.

By analyzing secondary data and ten in-depth interviews with MML leaders, I conclude that the participation in the MML has challenged, and to some extent, changed the socially constructed representations of women's roles as being solely those of mothers or wives. I also argue that the relationship between women's activism and feminism is a "dynamic" one: women's movements "despite their goals... are likely to bring their constituents to more explicitly political activities, empower women to challenge limitations on their roles and lives, and create networks among women that enhance their ability to recognize existing gender relations as being oppressive and in need of change" (Ferree, 2006: 8).

Embodied Displacements: Race, masculinity and precarious work after trade zones

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The shift or collapse of labor-intensive export models brings the question of how to understand precarious work and provisional encounters with capitalist production to the surface. In this paper, I draw on postcolonial and feminist theory in geography and critical development studies to consider the experiences of male migrants laid-off from a large export garment firm in Santiago, Dominican Republic, during a period of rapid decline of the apparel sector. These workers migrated from towns and small villages in the surrounding agricultural region called the Cibao in order to work in the trade zones. I consider their narratives and efforts to forge livelihoods after the trade zone's collapse with respect to the racialization of masculine agricultural labor related to the relatively recent integration of Haitians into Cibaeño agriculture. These changes can be contextualized not only through consideration of shifting forms of anti-haitianism but also historical ideologies that construct a double discourse of rural masculine subjects along a racialized binary forged between an industrious,

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productive campesino and a corrupted, itinerant monterero. I argue that migrants' efforts to forge livelihoods at the margins of global production constitute an on-going embodied performance of modern subjectivity conditioned by the struggle of Dominican male workers and agrarian laborers to resist being inscribed as "black." Overall, I advocate a postcolonial feminist approach to studies of precarious work by considering how class is lived through the movement of bodies in sociospatial circuits that are themselves charged with interconnected gender, national, and racial formations. I term this approach "embodied displacements."