From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration

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Contemporary immigrants can not be characterized as the "uprooted." Many are transmigrants, becoming firmly rooted in their new country but maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland. In the United States anthropologists are engaged in building a transnational anthropology and rethinking their data on immigration. Migration proves to be an important transnational process that reflects and contributes to the current political configurations of the emerging global economy. In this article we use our studies of migration from St. Vincent, Grenada, the Philippines, and Haiti to the U.S. to delineate some of the parameters of an ethnography of transnational migration and explore the reasons for and the implications of transnational migrations. We conclude that the transnational connections of immigrants provide a subtext of the public debates in the U.S. about the merits of immigration. [transnationalism, immigration, nation-state, nationalism, identity]

In the United States several generations of researchers have viewed immigrants as persons who uproot themselves, leave behind home and country, and face the painful process of incorporation into a different society and culture (Handlin 1973[1951]; Takaki 1993). A new concept of transnational migration is emerging, however, that questions this long-held conceptualization of immigrants, suggesting that in both the U.S. and Europe, increasing numbers of immigrants are best understood as "transmigrants." Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state (Glick Schiller et al. 1992a; Basch *et al.* 1994). They are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside. However, at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated.

Transnational migration is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. In identifying a new process of migration, scholars of transnational migration emphasize the ongoing and continuing ways in which current-day immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society. The purpose of this article is to delineate the parameters of an ethnography of transnational migration and use this anthropology to explore the ways in which the current debate on immigration in the U.S. can be read as a nation-state building project that delimits and constrains the allegiances and loyalties of transmigrants. Once we reframe the concept of immigrant and examine the political factors which have shaped the image of immigrants as the uprooted, a whole new approach to understanding immigrants and the current debate about immigration becomes possible.

Three vignettes of discontinuities we have observed between the transnational practices of immigrants and common assumptions about immigrants made by scholars, members of the public, the media and public officials experts illustrate the myopic view of immigrants demonstrated in much public debate. The vignettes point to the need to redefine our terminology and reformulate some of our basic conceptualizations of the current immigrant experience.

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A large number of Filipino households are transnational with individuals, resources, goods, and services moving back and forth between the U.S., the Philippines, and other countries. Decisions that affect the daily lives of household members are made across national borders. Yet Szanton Blanc noted, while participating with census organizers and Filipino immigrants living in New York in discussions that preceded the administration of the 1990 U.S. Census, that census questions about households did not reflect the transnationalism of these populations.[1] The questions assumed that all Filipinos resided in the U.S. permanently, having cut their ties with their countries of origin. The partial character of many of the Filipino households located in the U.S. that participated in the census interview was not recognized. The frequency of travel between the two countries, the ongoing relationships between household members living in both locations marked by a constant exchange of funds and resources, and the organization of activities across borders were not examined. Hence, officials of governmental and civic institutions often formulate policies and programs based on census data that inadequately capture the structure and mode of operation of many contemporary immigrant households.

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At a dinner recently Glick Schiller listened while international development experts debated the degree to which land in the Haitian countryside was cultivated by squatters. These specialists did not consult with the only Haitian at the table. They did not expect him to be familiar with questions of land tenure in Haiti because he was an authority on Haitian cosmology who had been living in the U.S. since he was a teenager. What they did not consider was that the Haitian scholar and his brother owned land in Haiti and that the two brothers had negotiated a working relationship with the squatters who lived on that land. Like so many Haitians in the U.S., the Haitian scholar relates to Haiti through diverse and ongoing social and class relationships that influence his stance towards development in Haiti. Experts on Haiti routinely ignore the impact of transnational migration on all aspects of Haitian society, including Haiti's relationship to the U.S.

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At Expo 1993, a trade and cultural fair in Brooklyn sponsored by the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce that Basch attended, one of the panels explored the extent to which the curriculum in New York City schools gives voice to African-Caribbean and African-American experiences. It soon became clear that many immigrant families opt to send their children to private West Indian schools in New York where the curriculum reflects both Caribbean and U.S. experiences, preparing children to live a transnational existence. Indeed, many West Indian youngsters are sent home to the West Indies for part of their educations. However, public officials engaged in curriculum development often do not recognize that the socialization of many transmigrant children takes place in an interconnected social space encompassing both the immigrants' West Indian home societies and the U.S.

Towards a Transnational Anthropology

In the 1960s the word "transnational" was widely used by students of economic processes to refer to the establishment of corporate structures with established organizational bases in more than one state (Martinelli 1982). In a separate intellectual tradition several generations of scholars had been using the adjective "transnational" to signal an abatement of national boundaries and the development of ideas or political institutions that spanned national borders; it is this usage that can be found in standard dictionaries. For example, Webster's Third New International Dictionary, defining the term as "extending or going beyond national boundaries" (1976: 2430), provides two examples. The first from the *New Republic* magazine speaks of the "abatement of nationalism and the creation of transnational institutions which will render boundaries of minor importance." In the second citation Edward Sapir reports that "by the diffusion of culturally important words transnational vocabularies have grown up."

The recent use of the adjective "transnational" in the social sciences and cultural studies draws together the various meanings of the word so that the restructuring of capital globally is seen as linked to the diminished significance of national boundaries in the production and distribution of objects, ideas, and people. Transnational processes are increasingly seen as part of a broader phenomenon of globalization, marked by the demise of the nation-state and the growth of world cities that serve as key nodes of flexible capital accumulation, communication, and control (Knox 1994; Knight and Gappert 1989). In anthropology[2] there has been a renewed interest in the flows of culture and population across national borders, reviving, in a new global and theoretical context, past interests in cultural diffusion.[3] Many contributors to this scholarly trend see it as part of an effort to reconfigure anthropological thinking so that it will reflect current transformations in the way in which time and space is experienced and represented (Appadurai 1990, 1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Kearney 1991a, 1991b; Hannerz 1989, 1990). Appadurai has stated that ethnography now has the task of determining "the nature of locality, as lived experience, in a globalized, deterritorialized world" (1991: 196). He has further argued that there is a need to reconceptualize the "landscapes of group identity," a need that flows from the current world

conjuncture in which "groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically un-selfconscious, or culturally homogeneous" (p. 191).[4]

Migration is one of the important means through which borders and boundaries are being contested and transgressed (Kearney 1991a; Rouse 1991, 1992). Anthropologists who work with migrants have much to contribute to our understanding of a new paradox: that the growth and intensification of global interconnection of economic processes, people, and ideas is accompanied by a resurgence in the politics of differentiation. When we study migration rather than abstract cultural flows or representations, we see that transnational processes are located within the life experience of individuals and families, making up the warp and woof of daily activities, concerns, fears, and achievements.

Reasons for Transnational Migration

Three conjoining potent forces in the current global economy lead present day immigrants to settle in countries that are centers of global capitalism but to live transnational lives: (1) a global restructuring of capital based on changing forms of capital accumulation has lead to deteriorating social and economic conditions in both labor sending and labor receiving countries with no location a secure terrain of settlement; (2) racism in both the U.S. and Europe contributes to the economic and political insecurity of the newcomers and their descendants; and (3) the nation building projects of both home and host society build political loyalties among immigrants to each nation-state in which they maintain social ties.

Capitalism from its beginnings has been a system of production dependent on global interconnections between the people of the world. Today we are facing a reconstitution of the structure of accumulation so that not only are profits accumulated globally, but all parts of the world have been incorporated into a single system of production, investment, communication, coordination, staffing, production, and distribution (Sassen 1994). In this global context there is less incentive to invest in entire national economies. It has become more profitable to base global operations in certain cities and regions that are emerging as centers of communication and organization (Sassen 1991). Capital is being channeled into key sectors and regions while

the infrastructure of transportation, education, health services are stripped away from those countries, and sections of countries and cities, defined as superfluous to the newly defined circuits of wealth and power. Attacks on the infrastructure take the form of structural adjustment programs in debtor countries and calls for reduced taxes and public spending in capital exporting countries such as the U.S.

The conditions for migration in a myriad of economically peripheral states have been set by the intensive penetration of foreign capital into the economy and political processes of "post-colonial" countries in the 1960s and 1970s, and the subsequent massive growth of indebtedness and economic retrenchment. Faced with wide-spread deterioration in their standards of living, professionals, skilled workers, unskilled workers, merchants, and agricultural producers all have fled to global cities or to countries such as the U.S. that still play central roles in capital accumulation. However, once in these countries, immigrants confront a deepening economic crisis that often limits the economic possibilities and security many are able to obtain. Moreover, those sectors of the current immigrant population who find themselves racialized as "Hispanic," "Asian," or "Black" find that even if they obtain a secure position, they face daily discrimination in the pursuit of their life activities.

Observing the permeability of borders and boundaries signaled by this form of migration, some observers have begun to speak of the demise of the nation-state's ability to form and discipline its subjects (Kearney 1991a). However, the task of creating capitalist subjects, and the task of governing populations who will work in and accept the world of vastly increased inequalities of wealth and power, continues to reside primarily in different and unequal states. Financial interests and transnational conglomerates continue to rely on the legitimacy and legal, fiscal, and policing structures of the nation-state.[5] There are, however, changes precipitated by this emerging form of migration. We are entering an era in which states that can claim dispersed populations construct themselves as "deterritorialized nation-states" (Basch *et al.* 1994); states that continue to be bases of capital rather than the homeland of migrants respond in ways that tighten rather than transgress territorial boundaries. The hegemonic political ethic of the U.S. continues to demand that citizens, both native born and naturalized, swear allegiance only to the

U.S. and define their political identity within its borders. Meanwhile, dominant forces in labor sending states imagine their states to exist wherever their emigrants have been incorporated.

Memories of Things Past: The Issue of History and Memory in Immigration Studies

It is useful to recall the socially and historically constructed nature of the concept of nation-state to understand this aspect of transnational migration. Recent scholarship has made it clear that nation-states are relatively new inventions that can be linked to the development of capitalism and to the type of political and economic loyalties that serve the needs of dominant classes and strata within modern centralized states (Hobsbawm 1990; Gellner 1983). Nation-states were constructed as classes and elite strata, striving to maintain or contend for state power, popularized memories of a shared past and used this historical narrative to authenticate and validate a commonality of purpose and national interests (Anderson 1991[1983]). This process of constructing and shaping collective memories can be called nation-state building. Key to nation-state building as a political process has been the construction of a myth that each nation-state contained within it a single people defined by their residence in a common territory, their undivided loyalty to a common government, and their shared cultural heritage. In the past immigrants were forced to abandon, forget, or deny their ties to home and in subsequent generations memories of transnational connections were erased.

There is evidence that in various ways and to different degrees, dispersed populations whether they were diasporas of Jews (Clifford 1994), Palestinians (Gonzalez 1992), or "old world" immigrants to the U.S. (Portes and Rumbaut 1990), maintained networks of interconnection. Many immigrants from Europe who settled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century maintained family ties, sending both letters and money (Metzker 1971; Thomas and Znaniecki 1927). Italians returned home to land purchased through labor abroad (di Leonardi 1984). The Czechs and Slovacks (Witke 1940), Hungarians (Vassady 1982), and Irish (Higham and Brooks 1978) were among the many immigrating populations who built strong nationalist movements in Europe from a base in the U.S.

These ties were discounted and obscured by the narratives of nation that were prevalent until the current period of globalization. Assumptions about the uprootedness of immigrants filtered the way in which immigrant history was recorded, interpreted, and remembered.[6] At the heart of the metaphor of "America the melting pot" was a model of immigrant settlement in which immigrants eschewed the national identity as well as the customs and language of their birth. However, the rupture of home ties or their transformation into sentiment rather than connection is also a central aspect of pluralist and multicultural imaginings of America in which immigrant groups are encouraged to preserve their culture, custom, and identity yet be fully embedded in an American mosaic (Glazer and Moynihan 1970[1963]; Takaki 1989, 1993). Whether the imagery has been one of assimilation into a newly emergent American culture, or incorporation into a culturally diverse America, in the U.S. the forging of an American nationality has been and continues to be the underlying concern that united all discourse about immigration.[7] What has been uniformly defined as unacceptable was a migration in which immigrants settled permanently in their new country while maintaining ties to countries they still saw as homelands. And yet this is an emerging pattern among many immigrant populations currently settling in the U.S.[8]

A brief recounting of the Americanization studies commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation in 1918 can serve to illustrate both the types of transnational political connections that were maintained by previous generations of immigrants settled in the U.S. and the processes by which these connections were discounted and historically obliterated. The studies were commissioned during World War I because the home ties and political engagement of large numbers of immigrants from Europe raised questions about the allegiance and loyalty of immigrants.[9] Researchers were surrounded by and reported evidence of transnational engagement of immigrants with their home societies. For example, Robert Park, whose name is usually linked to the Carnegie studies, only became head of the entire project when Herbert Adolphus Miller, who had been leading the studies, and who was Chair of the Sociology Department at Oberlin College in Ohio, resigned in order to devote more time to organizing the League of Central European Nations (Rausenbush 1979). Yet transnational ties were only noted in passing and negatively valued in

the published studies. The studies described and assessed the progress made towards incorporating immigrants into U.S. society. These studies contributed to the public perception that such populations were in fact immigrants; meanwhile, the public campaigns to insure that these immigrants were loyal to the U.S. also sought to diminish the continuation of home ties. In subsequent generations these connections generally were not remembered or reported by social science researchers. It is only now, and in the context of the successful incorporation of past generations of immigrants, that a revisionist history in the U.S. is remembering persisting transnational connections of past generations of immigrants. (See, for example, Portes and Rumbaut 1990.)

And yet we argue that the current connections of immigrants are of a different order than past immigrant linkages to home societies. The current processes of restructuring and reconfiguring global capital have affected both international migration and nation-state building in significant ways. The new circuits of capital provide the context in which migrants and the descendants of migrants, often fully incorporated in the countries of settlement such as the U.S., maintain or construct anew transnational interconnections that differ in their intensity and significance from the home ties maintained by past migrations (Basch *et al.* 1994). They also provide the context in which these linkages are again becoming visible. Much research remains to be done, but it would seem that the current forms of capital accumulation and concomitant alterations in the formation of all classes and strata interpenetrate the political and economic processes of nation-states throughout the world. The increase in density, multiplicity, and importance of the transnational interconnections of immigrants is certainly made possible and sustained by transformations in the technologies of transportation and communication. Jet planes, telephones, faxes, and internet certainly facilitate maintaining close and immediate ties to home. However, the tendency of today's transmigrants to maintain, build, and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origin seems to be facilitated rather than produced by the possibility of technologically abridging time and space. Rather, immigrant transnationalism is best understood as a response to the fact that in a global economy contemporary migrants have found full incorporation in the countries within which they resettle either not possible or not desirable. At

the same time parties, factions, and leaders within many countries which can claim dispersed populations have looked to their diasporas as a global resource and constituency. Although they seemingly rupture boundaries and borders, contemporary transnational cultural processes and movements of people, ideas, and capital have been accompanied by an increase in an identity politics that is a celebration of a nation. We are witnessing the simultaneous growth of globalizing processes and the preeminence of exclusive, bounded, essentialized nationalisms (Appadurai 1993; Anderson 1992). This is a moment in which large numbers of people, no longer rooted in a single place, go to great lengths to revitalize, reconstruct, or reinvent not only their traditions but their political claims to territory and histories from which they have been displaced. Moreover these "long distance nationalists" (Anderson 1992: 12) insist that their collective claims to ancestral land bear witness to their identity as ancient, homogenous, peoples. Transnational processes seem to be accompanied by the "re-inscription" of identity onto the territory of the homeland (Gupta 1992). The Portuguese government, for example, has declared Portugal to be a global nation (Feldman-Bianco 1992, 1994). Its emigrants and the descendants of the emigrants are part of Portugal even as they live within other countries. Similarly, Haitians, Vincentians, Grenedians, and Filipinos may reside permanently abroad but be seen as constituents of their home country.

The difference between the relationship of past sending societies towards their diasporas and the current efforts of both immigrants and states with dispersed populations to construct a deterritorialized nation-state that encompasses a diasporic population within its domain can be understood through examining the trajectory of Greek migration. Greece is one of the many cases in which dispersed populations have been engaged in nation-state building over several centuries. Merchants and intellectuals of Greek origin settled in Western Europe were important actors in the political and cultural processes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that resulted in the modern Greek state (Jusdanis 1991).[10] Crucial integrative institutions such as local schools, and libraries, the university, academy, polytechnic, and stadium were built, in large part, by contributions from the diaspora. There is evidence that impoverished, illiterate peasants, as well as wealthy families, contributed

to building national educational institutions (p. 213). However, and the point is critical, although these nation-builders engaged in multiple, overlapping transnational activities in ways that are similar to present-day transmigrants, they did not claim that their settlements abroad were part of Greece. They were deeply committed to the struggle to constitute Greece as a state with its own autonomous territory. This separation of nation-state from emigrant population can still be found in statements of Greek-Americans writing on Greek-American identity: for example, "among those born in this country . . . one's identity is not that of a transplanted Greek, but rather the sensibility of an American ethnic" (Moskos 1989: 146, cited in Jusdanis 1991: 216).

At present, a significant change is underway. Both the Greek government and persons of Greek origins settled in various countries around the world are redefining their relationship to Greece. The direction of the change is signaled by the adoption by the Greek government of the term "*spodemoi*" or "Greeks abroad" for all persons of Greek ancestry. For a sector of these people, "the unifying force of the Hellenic diaspora is no longer a place, the nation-state of Greece, but the imagined transcendental territory of Greekness which groups of individuals may appropriate to suit their own needs and interests" (Jusdanis 1991: 217). It is in this new transnational space that the Greek government is mobilizing popular opinion for its current opposition to the newly independent state of Macedonia. As they participate in the political process of reimagining the history of Northern Greece (Karakasidou 1994; Danforth n.d.), members of these populations, many long settled, are participating in and defining themselves as a part of the Greek polity while they simultaneously remain embedded in the nation-states in which they are settled.

Evidence of Transnational Processes

In the remaining sections of this article we examine some of the similarities that emerge from such comparative study, illustrate them with some of our own field studies, and examine the implications of this anthropology of transnational migration for the debate on the merits of immigration. A large body of ethnographic data on transnational immigrant networks has been produced by researchers working in the Caribbean and Latin America. The richest descriptions of transnational processes are of household and family economies rooted in both sending and receiving societies; fewer descriptions are available of transnational organizations and political processes. Rubenstein (1982) and Thomas-Hope (1985) in the 1980s and more recently Gmelch (1992), in describing return migration from England, Canada, and the U.S. to the island nation-states in the West Indies,[11] have documented the interweave of transnational family relationships and economic transactions that reserved a place for return migrants at home, offsetting their global vulnerability. These connections have enabled immigrants during their years abroad to have children cared for by kin at home, to continue as actors in key family decisions, to visit at regular intervals, and to purchase property and build homes and businesses in their countries of origin, even as they have bought homes and created businesses in their countries of settlement.

Georges (1990) and Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) have noted that individuals and households struggled to maintain their class positions or to secure class mobility in the Dominican Republic by working or setting up businesses in New York. While such sojourns are sometimes temporary, return home is often "fragile" (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991: 86), so that many immigrants end up living a settled existence in the U.S. but investing in property, businesses and social status in the Dominican Republic. Laguerre (1978) and Brown (1991) have described Haitian transnational family networks of urban working-class households. Even though they had not fully developed a concept of transnationalism, a few scholars of migration recognized that the transnational linkages that they were observing had implications for the immigrants and their home and host societies (Chaney 1979). For example, Gonzalez (1988: 10) noted that many Garifuna have "become United States citizens, yet they think of themselves as members of two (or more) societies."[12]

Scholars such as Takaki (1989) and Pido (1986), writing about Asian immigrant populations in the U.S., have been even more focused on the problems of immigrant integration, assimilation, and belonging, than those writing about Latin American and Caribbean immigrants. Nonetheless, recent ethnographic accounts contain some descriptions of immigrants from the Philippines, China, and Korea continuing to maintain ties back home (Pido 1986; Wong 1982; Kim 1987).

Evidence of transnational patterns of interconnection can be found in descriptions of migrations to the U.S. and Western Europe from most regions of the world. Some ethnographers working with recent immigrants in Italy, France, Holland, and Spain have occasionally observed evidence of transnational linkages (Eintziger 1985; Carter 1994; Neveu 1994; Jimenez Romero 1994). "Dollar" houses recently have been noted to transform the landscape and inflate local land values in the Philippines and India as well as in the Caribbean, Latin America, the Pacific, and Africa. However, even when they have documented the circulation of people and remittances (Ballard 1987) or identified the growth of transnational cultural diasporas (Cohen 1994; Hall 1990), a number of scholars working in Europe have yet to recognize the significance of these interconnections for studies in migration and cultural politics. A concept of "transnationalism" would allow researchers to take into account the fact that immigrants live their lives across national borders and respond to the constraints and demands of two or more states.

A Comparative Ethnography of Caribbean and Filipino Transnationalism

Among the Caribbean and Filipino transmigrants with whom we worked, the processes of settlement fostered the development of transnationalism. As they settled in their new homes, members of these populations developed multiple social, economic, and political ties that extended across borders. Incorporation in the U.S. accompanied and contributed to incorporation in the home society. Fundamental to these multiple networks of interconnection are networks of kin who are based in one or more households. Among all classes it takes some resources to migrate and, often, migration and the establishment of transnational networks are strategies to insure that a household is able to retain what it has in terms of resources and social position. Flexible extended family networks have long been used in all these countries to provide access to resources. By stretching, reconfiguring, and activating these networks across national boundaries, families are able to maximize the utilization of labor and resources in multiple settings and survive within situations of economic uncertainty and subordination. These family networks, across political and economic borders, provide the possibility for individual survival and at times social mobility in contexts of vulnerability and subordination to world capitalism both at home and abroad.

These collective transnational family strategies also have important implications for class production and reproduction at both ends of the migration stream. They are helpful in maintaining, and also at times in enhancing, the social and economic positions of transmigrants' families in class structures at home where opportunities are often deteriorating. The Vincentian peasant family of the Carringtons is an apt example of the need to deploy family members in several locations in order to survive as a unit and retain a land base in St Vincent, and the relative advantage that comes from such a strategy. This family owned two acres of land, the produce of which the mother vended in the local market. Household members lived in a simple clapboard house of two rooms, with no indoor plumbing or electricity. Two daughters, who could not find employment in St. Vincent's stagnant economy, despite the country's recent political independence, migrated to the U.S. as domestic workers to gain income that could help support family members in Saint Vincent and contribute to building a cement block family home. Two brothers, who also could not find work locally, migrated to Trinidad as a skilled automobile mechanic and construction worker. The wife of one of the brothers later joined her husband's sisters in New York, where she too became a live-in domestic worker. The mother remained behind in St. Vincent to care for her son's two small children and oversee the construction of the family home. At various moments one of the brothers in Trinidad, when he was laid off from his work in Trinidad, returned to the family home in St. Vincent; it was loans from his sisters in New York that enabled him to return to Trinidad when employment opportunities there increased.

A middle-class Filipino couple, severed from the support of their extended family because of a business misunderstanding, experienced difficulties finding adequate employment and supporting their children in school during the 1980s. Facing the possibility of a reduced class position and social status, they took a calculated risk and migrated (first the wife and then the husband and children) to the U.S., even though they had to leave two children behind to finish school. Following their migration, child rearing decisions have been made by phone and children have moved back and forth between school and business opportunities in different

parts of the U.S. and the Philippines. After the successful wedding of their daughter to a Manila dentist, which was financed by with dollars earned in the U.S., the family is now buying land to build a house in the Philippines; it also is investing U.S. savings in a small business started by one of the sons in Manila. The parents continue to live in a small rented apartment in Queens.

Not everyone within a family network or even within a household may benefit to the same degree and tensions abound as men and women, those at home and those abroad, define their interests and needs differently.[13] For example, a Haitian doctor living in Queens invited his nieces from Haiti into the household. His wife, who found her double burden of work and housework compounded by the presence of her husband's kin, was bitter about the arrangement. Her anger was fueled by the fact that she wanted room for her own siblings' children. In poorer Haitian families transmigrants feel crushed by "bills here and there," while those left at home feel that they are not being adequately reimbursed for the family resources they have invested in sending the migrant abroad. Haitians of peasant backgrounds, illiterate and with little access to phones in Haiti, have developed a rhetoric in the form of songs sent through audio cassettes within which tensions and fissures within transnational households and kin networks are communicated (Richman 1992a). Women, who often shoulder the responsibility for their children's upbringing, face particular pressures to send money back home. A study of Haitian remittances from New York City to Haiti indicated that women sent larger amounts of money than men did, with women who "headed households" sending the greatest amount (DeWind 1987).

Migrants have also created business activities that build upon, and also foster, transnational social relationships. Students of immigration in the U.S. have devoted a great deal of energy to the investigation of enclave economies, postulating that densely settled immigrants are able to generate their own internal market for culturally specific cuisines, products, and objects (Sassen-Koob 1985). However, it is possible to view such commercial transactions as located within a transnational space that spans national borders, rather than as confined to territorially based enclaves.

Sometimes the commercial interconnections are surreptitious or so small scale they are barely visible. This is certainly true of the transnational economic networks maintained by many Haitians who use family visits between Haiti and the U.S. to restock small stores and businesses in Haiti with items brought into Haiti in personal luggage. When she comes for periodic visits to obtain medical treatment through U.S. Medicare to which she is entitled after long years of work in the U.S., as well as through visits to relatives in Montreal, Yolande and her husband restock their small gift shop in Port-au-Prince. Immacula, visiting her sister, brings bleach and other supplies for her sister's funeral parlor. Many *mambos* and *houngon* (priests and priestesses who lead Haitian voodoo gatherings) import ritual objects from Haiti for their ceremonies in the U.S.

Often the most successful migrant businesses arise in the very interstices created by transnationalism—for example, shipping and air cargo companies, import-export firms, labor contractors, and money transfer houses. At the same time the businesses facilitate the deepening of transnational social relations. A shipping company started by two brothers from St. Vincent is such an undertaking. Carl Hilaire, using the savings he accrued from his job as a bank clerk in New York, started a business shipping barrels of goods between migrants in New York and their kin in St. Vincent. His brother in St. Vincent received and delivered the goods as they arrived in St. Vincent. The success of the brothers' shipping company was in part related to their active involvements in social service activities both in St. Vincent and the immigrant community in New York, where each was well known.

Despite the wide use made of this company by transmigrant families and businesses in New York and St. Vincent, the limited capital available in the eastern Caribbean immigrant community has served as a brake on the growth of this company. Employed primarily as clerks and junior level administrators in service sector companies, Vincentian immigrants, including Carl, have limited funds available for investment purposes, and limited connections to people with capital, to enable this business to expand into related activities or to be extended to other West Indian islands.

However, it is possible for businesses that facilitate transnational connections to generate large amounts of capital. When by 1987 annual remittances to Haiti grew to an estimated to be U.S.$99.5 million a year from the New York metropolitan area, Citibank investigated the possibility of competing with the profitable Haitian money

transfer businesses that had developed in the U.S. (DeWind 1987). Because of their larger population size and resource base, Filipinos have been able to develop large scale transmigrant businesses with multiple branches across national borders by using the interstices created by the ongoing transnational lives of the new immigrants. For example, starting with the sale of rice and vegetables to Filipino nurses from a small delivery truck as a second source of income, a Filipino accountant progressively graduated to the bulk air shipment of transmigrants' *balikbayan* ("homecomers") boxes. Ten years later he had offices in New York, Manila, and six other Philippine cities, a fleet of some 100 couriers picking up and delivering the packages door to door, and a special agreement with certain airlines. The once part-time business has become a large investment and a full time occupation for him and other members of his family. The growth of these businesses is a testimony to multiple ties that extend between home and host countries.

Transnational practices extend beyond household and family networks to include organizations that link the home country with one or more societies in which its population has settled. Immigrant "voluntary associations" have often been studied as institutions that assist in the adaptation of newcomers to a new location (Mangin 1965). On the other hand, researchers who have looked for explanations for cultural persistence in the midst of assimilative pressures have argued that immigrants build organizations to preserve their practices and values, even as they assist in adaptation (Jenkins *et al.* 1985). Social programs oriented towards the incorporation of immigrants into their new society often use these organizations as cultural brokers. Most recently in the U.S. immigrant organizations have been seen as representatives of ethnic communities that contribute to a nation's cultural diversity. None of these approaches has examined the contribution these organizations make to the growth of social and political spaces and cultural practices that go beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Also not explored by scholars or policy makers are the implications of transnational organizational connections for programmatic efforts to use immigrant organizations as agents of the social and political incorporation of immigrants into the receiving society.

Each of the four immigrant populations with which we worked had developed organizations that build a dense network of transnational interconnec-

tions. They organized not just nostalgic imaginings of the home country but active relationships with it. These organizational activities provided a base upon which leaders were able to validate or build social and political capital in both societies. Vincentians and Grenadians, given a migration history to the U.S. that spans the twentieth century, and confronting racial barriers both in the past and present that prevented their full incorporation into the social and political life of the nation, have a long history of using organizations to maintain transnational interconnections (Basch 1992; Basch *et al.* 1994; Toney 1986).[14] The increasing transnational activities of Vincentian and Grenadian organizations following 1970 demonstrate the important impact self-rule and political independence in the West Indies. combined with greatly expanded emigration to the U.S., have had on the organizing of a multi-stranded transnational social field.[15]

Filipino transmigrants have built a dense network of linkages with hundreds of organizations that stage religious, cultural, and social events in the Philippines as well as in the U.S. Fiestas, for example, in towns in the Philippines have taken on a grand scale with the participation of Filipino organizations in the U.S. Some of the organizations have developed new forms of Filipino national identity and political action and have mediated relationships between the U.S. and Philippines governments (Basch *et al.* 1994).

A survey of the leaders of Haitian organizations in New York City begun during the Duvalier dictatorship indicated the range of organizational linkages that can grow up, even in a situation where transnational organizations are viewed with suspicion or actively oppressed in the home country.[16] Not all Haitian organizations in New York were transnational but more than forty percent were engaged in activities oriented at least in part to Haiti and sixty percent saw some of their activities in some way contributing to Haiti. The range of organizations that operated in a transnational social field included Protestant and Catholic churches, alumnae organizations from various high schools, hometown associations, Masonic lodges, cultural associations,[17] and organizations that saw themselves as a voice of the "Haitian community in New York." These organizations saw their members as neither solely part of the U.S. nor Haiti but rather as connected simultaneously to both societies. To educate Haitian youth in the U.S. would both contribute to their success as Americans and

assist in the transformation of Haiti. After the fall of the Duvalier regime many of these organizations worked to develop organizational bases in Haiti.

Transmigrants have been partisans and participants in struggles against dictatorships in Haiti, the Philippines, and Grenada and have charged their respective governments to be responsible for making democracy work. Through organizations, as well as on the basis of personal transnational relationships, transmigrants have been able to play a role in political arenas in both the U.S. and their home countries. Key members of the anti-Duvalier movement in the U.S. returned to Haiti in the 1980s and built support for political and social reform from a base both in Haiti and in the U.S. In the years between the fall of the Duvalier regime in 1986 and the election of Aristide in 1990, candidates for the Haitian legislature and Presidency campaigned in the U.S., Canada, and Haiti. Several were long-time residents of the U.S. Taking the stance that they share a single destiny, Haitians demonstrated in New York, Washington, Miami, Boston, Montreal, and Port-au-Prince to demand political change in Haiti, to protest the labeling of Haitians as carriers of AIDS, and for the reinstatement of Aristide as President of Haiti.

Vincentian and Grenadian immigrants, have worked closely with, and sometimes as representatives of, their home governments to obtain U.S. economic support. Grenadian transmigrants, for example, lobbied the U.S. government for economic assistance promised but never delivered after the U.S. invasion of their country and expected through the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Active in efforts to develop agricultural and industrial exports from their home countries, Grenadian and Vincentian migrants have built organizations that have worked closely with their home countries' consulates in New York to obtain more favorable terms of trade for Caribbean agricultural and manufactured products being imported into the U.S. They also have been part of efforts to obtain more lenient immigration quotas.

Filipino transmigrants were a major force in developing opposition to the Marcos government in the wake of deteriorating economic conditions at home and in ensuring U.S. support in toppling Marcos. Through transmigrant organizing, discussion groups, speeches, and media exposure, a new form of nationalism was created and fostered among transmigrants in the U.S. under the leadership of opponents to the Marcos government. This movement took off after the Aquino assassination. It lobbied for a new government and a renewal of democracy in the Philippines and obtained the collaboration of key U.S. Senators and Representatives. Popular outrage in both the U.S. and the Philippines at Marcos' manipulation of the Philippine national elections, confirmed by the personal observations of top U.S. politicians, and accompanied by the intense lobbying of transmigrants, ultimately forced the Reagan government to change its policies towards Marcos and to help overthrow the Marcos regime. The personnel of the Filipino regimes that have followed, beginning with that of Cory Aquino, have been filled with political players whose personal and political networks link them to both the U.S. and the Philippines. In the 1980s and 1990s increased Filipino efforts to lobby the U.S. Congress for assistance for the Philippines reflect a political terrain of dense transnational interconnection.

These activities have all been spearheaded by immigrant leaders in the U.S., acting in concert with political actors in their home nation-states. Lamuel Stanislaus, an informal leader in the West Indian immigrant community in Brooklyn, is an example of how immigrants are able to participate in—and have an impact on—political struggles in both Grenada and the U.S. A dentist to the West Indian and African American populations in Brooklyn, Stanislaus emigrated from Grenada over forty-five years ago to study at Howard University. In the mid-1980s he became a key organizer of a support group comprised of West Indian immigrants in New York to re-elect Mayor Koch. The members of this organization felt that the then-mayor was cognizant of and would be responsive to West Indian interests in New York. Stanislaus had taken part in several meetings with Koch, at which he lobbied for West Indian interests. At the same time Stanislaus, who during the last years of Bishop's government had been vocal in his opposition to what he considered to be that government's antidemocratic practices, headed a support group of Grenadians, located both in New York and Grenada, to elect a successor to Maurice Bishop, after Bishop was murdered and the U.S. invaded Grenada. When Stanislaus' candidate was elected prime minister of Grenada, Stanislaus himself was appointed Grenada's ambassador to the United Nations, although he had not visited Grenada in over forty years.

As we see from these examples, the ability of

these transmigrants to wield political influence in both the U.S. and their home nation-states derives from their political incorporation in both settings. Grassroots organizing linked to new social movements as well as electoral politics take place in the emerging transnational political arenas. While the dominant political ethic of the U.S. continues to demand that citizens, both native born and naturalized, swear allegiance only to the U.S. and define their political identity within its borders, the transnationalism of increasing numbers of its citizens promotes new political constructions in labor-sending states. Facing situations of extreme economic impoverishment and dependency, Caribbean leaders are developing constructions of their nation-states that encompass those residing abroad as part of their body politic. These constructions, which we have labeled "deterritorialized nation-states" (Basch et al. 1994) define state boundaries in social rather than geographic terms. According to this reading of the nation-state, the borders of the state spread globally to encompass all migrants and their descendants wherever they may settle and whatever legal citizenship they may have attained.

Bishop, the prime minister of Grenada during the early 1980s, reflecting the perspective of several West Indian political leaders, underscored the importance of the immigrants to Grenada's nation building by referring to Brooklyn as "Grenada's largest constituency." To assure that the immigrants remain connected and committed to projects at home both ideologically and financially, scores of West Indian political leaders visit their "constituencies" in the diaspora to describe their development initiatives. In so doing they enmesh the transmigrants in the nation-state building processes of West Indian nation-states.

As early as 1973 Philippines President Marcos, and subsequently his successors, developed a program for balikbayan ("homecomers") and began to use the term to refer to Filipino citizens and non-citizens residing overseas. They encouraged migrants to visit home through visa and travel facilitation and allowed for large shipments of personal effects that ultimately fed transnational import-export businesses and they levied taxes on incomes earned abroad. Government officials called upon Filipino transmigrants to fund development projects in the Philippines and to lobby for increased U.S. aid. Filipino senators and congressmen came to the U.S. to campaign for elected office in the Philippines.

This extension of the borders of the nation-state to include transmigrant populations long settled and often legally citizens of other countries was highlighted by the political discourse of President Aristide of Haiti. In 1991 he designated the Haitian diaspora Dizyem-na, the Tenth Department of Haiti. Haiti has nine territorial divisions called departments. By including Haitians in whatever country they have settled as part of the Haitian nation-state Aristide contributed to a new construction of the postcolonial nation-state. In this construction of Haiti as a borderless state, Haitian territory becomes a social space that may exist within the legal boundaries of many nation-states.[18] Haiti now exists wherever in the world Haitians had settled. Speaking of the "bank of the diaspora," he offered the model of Jewish Zionism as evidence of the productivity of this strategy in which, in the Haitian reading, the diaspora stays abroad but provides money and political assistance to the "home" country (Richman 1992b).[19]

Aristide's construction of the Tenth Department recognized, accepted, and made use of the multiple embeddedness of the Haitian transmigrants and their participation in the political life of the U.S. Haitian transnationalism was more than legitimized: it was nationalized. By nationalizing transmigrants, Aristide made Haitian transnationalism a political force that must be figured into the relationship between Haiti and the other nation-states in which Haitians have settled. By theorizing a deterritorialized nation, leaders such as Aristide are defining voting, lobbying, running for office, demonstrating, building public opinion, sending remittances, and maintaining other transnational activities carried out in the U.S. as acts of citizenship and expressions of loyalty to another country.

U.S. hegemonic forces, on the other hand, have reacted to the growing commitment of transmigrants to participate in the political processes of both the U.S. and the "home society" by renewed incorporative efforts. They have insisted that the bottom line loyalties of Caribbean immigrants must be to the U.S. Interviews conducted in 1986 with representatives of fifty-one philanthropies, churches, and state agencies who worked with Haitian immigrant organizations made this clear. Representatives of U.S. organizations were explicit in their insistence that Haitian immigrants become U.S. citizens and give up their allegiance to Haiti. Both implicitly through the money, technical assis-

tance, and political connections they provided to organizations, and explicitly in the course of meetings and conversations with Haitian leaders, these representative sent a consistent message. It was summarized by a representative of the Community Service Society, a large philanthropic organization: "I have problems with dual citizenship; I believe in allegiance to one country."

Implications of Transnationalism for the Debate on Immigration

The paradox of our times, and one that must be central to our understanding of the identities and dilemmas of current day immigrants is that the "age of transnationalism" is a time of continuing and even heightening nation-state building processes. In the current heightening of nationalist sentiment in a globalized economy, transnational migration is playing a complex, significant, yet little noted role (Miles 1993). It lies as a silent subtext that contributes to the actions, motivations, and sensibilities of key players within the political processes and debates of both states that have histories of population dispersal and states that have primarily been and continue to be recipients of population flows. In the U.S. the debates on both immigration and multiculturalism need to be analyzed in relationship to the efforts by dominant forces to reconstruct national consensus and legitimate state structures at the same time that they globalize the national economy. The 1994 passage of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs and California's Proposition 187 that denies vital services to undocumented immigrants are a matched set of policy initiatives. As the national economy is restructured to facilitate higher levels of profit for transnational capital, politicians and the media have projected a bunker mentality, convincing the majority of the population, including people who are themselves immigrants that the national borders have to be defended against the undocumented. Undocumented workers are said to be the cause of the deterioration of the infrastructure and the lack of public services.

The strategy of U.S. hegemonic forces forming a national consensus by depicting immigrants as an enemies of the nation is not new. However, the particular focus on the undocumented is worth examining for several reasons. Certainly the continuing ability of the nation-state to punish violations of law should not be dismissed in debates about the demise of the nation-state. In the realm of the withdrawal of rights to health, education, and peace of mind, the U.S. nation-state is clearly able to enforce a distinction between categories of belonging. However, it should be noted that the political rhetoric and policies such as Proposition 187 delineate legal residents and the undocumented, rather than native born and foreign or citizen and non-citizen. Similarly, the special Federal Commission on Immigration Reform chaired by former U.S. Representative Barbara Jordan does not advocate halting immigration but does propose restricting undocumented immigration.

This particular emphasis on categories of legality has a dual thrust. The debate is as much about confining immigrant loyalties to the U.S. as it is about reducing the flow of immigration. Of course, the current national public discussion about immigration certainly contributes to a broader anti-immigrant hysteria that has racist underpinnings, with all immigrants of color finding their presence and activities under increased scrutiny. Concepts of "America, the white" are reinforced. Yet at the same time, documented immigrants are being drawn into the debate on the side of enforcement, validating their right to belong but differentiating themselves from other immigrants. There is a dialectic between inclusion and exclusion that disciplines transnational migrants by focusing public attention on the degree to which they belong in the U.S. The current debate on immigrants in U.S. will lead not to the effective policing of national borders but to the reinscription of boundaries. It serves to counter transnational identities and loyalties and creates a terrain in which immigrants are drawn into defending whatever they have achieved or obtained by defending it against the undocumented. They are therefore drawn into a discourse of identity that links them to the U.S. nation state as a bounded structure of laws and institutions as well as a defended territory. Yet none of the nation-building processes encompasses fully the complexity and multiple identities which constitute the lives of transmigrants.

NOTES

¹The Filipino immigrants also did not raise the issue of transnationalism. Even while they continue to build their transnational practices and networks, immigrants, very often influenced by the concept of "the immigrant" as uprooted, believe that they must make a choice between their new country and their homeland. Interactions such as these with the census or-

ganizers reinforce their belief that U.S. society wants them to be loyal to only the U.S., so that they do not describe other aspects of their experiences.

[2]"Transnational" appears in the titles of books, dissertations, conferences, and journals (American Academy of Political and Social Science 1986; Georges 1990; Richman 1992a; Rouse 1989; Wakeman 1988). *Diaspora* is "a journal of transnational studies," *Public Culture* has as its subtitle the "Society for Transnational Studies," and the statement of purpose of *Identities* speaks of "transnational movements of population." In 1993 transnational connections became a theme of the annual meetings of the American Ethnological Society, while the Society for Cultural Anthropology called for work on "transnational culture." The 1994 meetings of the American Anthropological Society contained seven sessions devoted to transnational studies.

[3]Sutton and Mackiesky-Barrow (1992[1975]: 114) were among the first to speak of a "transnational sociocultural and political system" in which "political events at home . . . had an impact on the migrant communities abroad while migrant experiences were relayed in the opposite direction." Researchers working with immigrants whose lives defy, sometimes on daily terms, the legal constraints of the Mexican and U.S. border, began to talk of "transnational circuits" (Rouse 1989, 1991) or "transnational communities" (Kearney 1992; Rouse n.d.). Appadurai (1990, 1991) and Gupta (1992), noting the rapid flow of ideas and objects as well as people, began to reimagine the globe as having entered an era of transnationalism, a position also expressed by Rouse and Kearney. In 1989, responding to our call to develop a transnational perspective on migration, seven scholars examined the ramifications of transnational migration to the U.S. from Asia, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Portugal, at a conference at the New York Academy of Sciences (see Charles, Feldman-Bianco, Lessinger, Ong, Rouse, Richman, and Wiltshire in Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992b).

[4]This statement reflects a tendency found in many scholars influenced by postmodernism to imagine a past of unchanging and tightly bounded cultures.

[5]Appadurai (1993) has made a similar point but does not include military and police functions.

[6]Gilroy (1987) has examined the response of black immigrant youth in Britain from a similar perspective.

[7]See Chock (forthcoming) for a critique of the way in which texts such as the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* shaped narratives of immigrant settlement and identity.

[8]The intensity of earlier drives to assimilate immigrants may actually have been a reaction to the fact that immigrants of earlier generations also tended to maintain their home ties. Certainly there are glimpses in the historical record of large scale return migration to Italy (Portes and Rumbaut 1990) and of political movements in Europe, including many national struggles that were transnational in their composition (Higham and Brooks 1978).

[9]Bolsheviks including Trotsky wrote for the immigrant press in New York and then returned to Russia in the course of the revolution to build newspapers in the Soviet Union.

[10]They contributed to the reconceptualization of the Greek-speaking population from a religious millet composed of co-religionists within the Ottoman Empire to a nation with a shared national culture and its own state.

[11]The term "West Indies" is used to describe those countries formed from the Caribbean territories under the control of the British during the colonial period. The term "Caribbean" has a broader connotation, referring to all island states lying in the Caribbean Sea as well as states along the northern rim of South America (See Basch 1987, 1992).

[12]Further work on Garifuna networks that interconnect populations in multiple nation states has been done by Macklin (1992). Macklin identified a pattern in which immigrant networks span so many countries that migrants develop an identity which in some ways is independent of any particular national territory or history.

[13]See Pessar 1991 for an explication of this theme.

[14]These interconnections, which were apparent in the early 1980s, led Basch to design a study to explore the extent and ramifications of these connections. This research was conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and was funded by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the International Development Research Centre (Ottawa, Canada). Rosina Wiltshire, Winston Wiltshire, and Joyce Toney were research collaborators with Basch; their efforts were greatly aided by the research assistance of Colin Robinson, Isa Soto, and Margaret Souza.

[15]The immigration legislation of 1965, and the social and economic relations between the United States and the Caribbean that framed its enactment, greatly liberalized restrictions of West Indian immigration that had been in force since the 1920s. This historic moment (1965 to 1970) was a watershed in the expansion of the West Indian population, of West Indian social, political, and economic activities, and of increasing assertions of a public West Indian identity in New York. Transnational organizations played an important role in fostering these intertwining developments.

[16]The survey, as well as a survey of U.S. organizations that provided support to Haitian ethnic organizing was funded by a grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (#281-40-1145) to Josh DeWind and Nina Glick Schiller. It was developed and administered by a research team that included Marie Lucie Brutus, Carolle Charles, George Fouron, and Antoine Luis Thomas. For a report on some of the findings, see Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992[1987].

[17]In her research with Filipino organizations in New York City Szanton-Blanc found a similar range of organizations with transnational connections.

[18]George Anglade had previously used the term in his writings but Aristide popularized it. The concept of the Tenth Department struck a resonant note among a number of middle-class Haitian immigrants and aspiring political leaders in the U.S., and they proceeded to hold a series of meetings to organize the manner in which they would assist Haiti and to choose official representatives of the Tenth Department.

[19]Aristide also waged a campaign to insure that when transmigrants came home to visit and spend their money, they felt welcome. In the past persons in the diaspora were often devalued as unauthentic opportunists who had jumped ship. "Diaspora" became a somewhat pejorative term. In contrast, Aristide called on the Haitian population to welcome the transmigrants who should return to Haiti not to settle but as "good homegrown Kreyol tourists" (*bon jan pitit kay touris Kreyol*) and to see them not as a threat but a source of assistance for the struggles of the Haitian people (Richman 1992).

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