Chapter 34

Political Moves: Cultural Geographies of Migration and Difference

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The last two decades have witnessed a burgeoning of cultural-geographic studies of migration. Indeed, in a recent review of migration studies, population geographer Russell King (2012: 143) points out that not only have cultural geographers been major contributors to recent studies of migration, but also "migration geographers . . . [have become] some of the key protagonists of the new cultural geography, and their papers have contributed an ever-increasing share of the contents of the leading journals in human geography since the mid-1990s." This expansion of interest is a response to both empirical changes in global migration and shifts in theoretical priorities in geography and cognate fields. As places and "cultures" have grown increasingly deeply interconnected across space and as growing absolute numbers of migrants have traveled to rising numbers of places in increasingly complex patterns, the migrant has emerged as a key figure embodying, enacting, and representing the fears and hopes attached to globalization. The cultural politics of migration, thus, have required attention not only to the spatial demographies of migration but also to the social processes of meaning-making in relation to citizenship, borders, identities, and labor markets, as well as discourses and histories of racialization and gender relations. Through attention to migrants' lived geographies, recent research brings to life the political dimensions of migrants' cultural geographies. In this chapter, I argue that cultural geography, and in particular feminist cultural geography, offers conceptual tools that have been especially illuminating for the rapidly changing lived politics of migration.

The chapter is organized around three main themes.[1] First, it traces concepts of control and dominance in migration studies, examining cultural-geographic approaches to political-economic structures, state policies, labor markets, and the securitization practices and disciplinary discourses that underpin heightened surveillance and everyday policing of migrants. Second, the chapter focuses on subjectivities and the ways migrants as embodied subjects

work out their social locations in socio-spatial terms – themes I illustrate with examples of migration research on religion and "intimate labor." Third, the chapter explores cultural migration scholarship in terms of geographies of im/migrant justice. Drawing inspiration from the work of migrant-rights activists, it outlines some practices already under way that offer promising directions for future migration research and advocacy. Across these themes, I pay special attention to feminist migration scholarship, which is vital to breaking new ground in the conceptualization of each organizing concept.[2]

Structuring Migration and Controlling Migrants

The majority of Anglophone scholarship on migration is centered on European and North American immigration processes, and, as such, much of it is underpinned, albeit often implicitly, by the view that migration is driven and limited by the imperatives of empire. However, scholarship on migration that starts from postcolonial places, feminist sensibilities, and anti-imperialist agendas challenges the idea that global migration inequalities *originated* in colonial and imperial command centers. Rather, such work finds promise in approaching the "tensions of empire" (Cooper and Stoler 1997) as multi-directional encounters in which colonized actors and places – and, indeed, migrants – play important roles in the making of metropolitan core economies and identities as well as the other way around. Tracing imperial engagements as rooted not only in domination but also in negotiated social relations allows scholars to understand new geographies of migration (e.g., growing South–South global flows or the rising numbers of children of immigrants who return to the "homeland" of their parents). In addition, it shifts attention away from understanding global migration systems as determined entirely by the logics of global capitalism and toward the ways that migrants themselves have forged, countered, adopted, and reworked the meanings and implications of migration at specific historical conjunctures.

Critics of cultural approaches to migration have argued that some work pays inadequate attention to the materiality and inequality of migration systems. While some early work may have been guilty of this charge, most recent studies of cultural migration geographies are emphatically committed to understanding material inequalities as at least one important aspect of migration processes. However, rather than approaching structures of dominance and control as pre-given or unidirectionally imposed, cultural approaches tend to examine inequalities as always-in-the-making and always relationally produced. When oppression is understood as a process and as shifting sets of meanings rather than as predetermined or "natural" social hierarchies, research agendas expand and conclusions may offer surprises (e.g., King 2012; Blunt 2007).

Early feminist migration research tended to examine gender through a critique of patriarchy, which was understood as the general sociocultural privileging of the masculine over the feminine. Attention to patriarchal structures allowed early feminist work to insert questions of power and culture into studies of migration. The earliest feminist migration research understood that patriarchy took different social-geographic forms, yet it also demonstrated that women and men were pushed and pulled into migration in patterns that are gendered. Moreover, gendered inequalities in migration evidenced similar trends across places undergoing similar economic development processes. In some of the first work to parse out gender in relation to the New International Division of Labor, for example, "third world" women's growing rural–urban migration was understood to be prompted by increasing foreign direct investment and light manufacturing in export-processing zones. From this perspective, global

capitalism was understood to work in tandem with patriarchal cultures of labor valuation and discipline to produce the offshoring and feminization of low-wage factory labor. These processes tended to be represented independently of social actors and outside the context of cultural negotiation. For example, work in this area examined gender cultures of women's presumed inherent manual dexterity or docility in terms of the ways these ideas were manipulated and subsumed by global capitalist expansion.

More recent feminist work has examined migrants' gendered and embodied labor and social relationships as operating both in concert and *in tension* with the hegemonic political economic policies and pressures of globalization. Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles, for example, work as "servants of globalization" who both build and respond to global networks of social reproduction (Parreñas 2001).[3] Migrant domestic workers subsidize the social-reproductive needs of the families and nations where they work; and they rely upon other, lower-paid women to take on the reproductive labor loads necessary to sustain their own families back home. Feminist geographers examine these interlocking systems of gendered and racialized labor migration as not only structured by but also necessary for and structuring of processes unfolding at global, national, regional, household, and bodily scales (Mattingly 2001; Mountz and Hyndman 2006). Attention to the interactions of processes across multiple scales that shape migration and to the ways that social differences are reinforced or reworked in these encounters provides a lens onto subjects and scales that until recently have been overlooked or conceived as analytically parenthetical in migration studies (Blunt 2007; Nagar *et al*. 2002). Understanding the household, for example, as a site not just of gender-neutral resource-sharing but also of gendered hierarchies and unequal divisions of resources and labor allows feminists to see intra-household gender divisions of labor and power as worthy of study in themselves and as central to the production of migration inequalities and gendered contestations at broader scales of analysis (Lawson 1998; Lawson and England 2005).

The liberalization of trade barriers and the tightening of controls on labor migration in recent decades have reverberated through gendered and racial/ethnic labor segmentation processes to affect the everyday lives of migrants and their employers. Cultural-geographic attention to these processes asks how a myth such as gender neutrality is maintained, what interests such a myth serves, and how people understand and circulate the myth. Rather than reinforcing, for example, the myth of *homo economicus*, critical migration work insists on examining the economy and its gendered power relations as social processes always under construction and the migrant worker as a gendered subject rather than a universal laboring subject. In global cities, for example, gendered divisions of migrant labor are constitutive of the cosmopolitan urban. As Saskia Sassen (2003: 45) puts it, "In the day-to-day work of the leading service complex dominated by finance in the case of a city like New York, a large share of the jobs are low paid and manual, many held by women and immigrants." Global cities, and the financial service sectors within them, accumulate unforeseen concentrations of wealth, while the lifestyles of urban affluence rely upon the work of low-income immigrants.

Households and cities depend upon the work of migrants, whether as immediate labor or as remittance earners. Immigrant labor markets, and the inequalities that characterize them, are produced through discourses of relative skill, expertise, and entitlement that produce perceived and material valuations attached to particular bodies and work (Hanson and Pratt 1988, 1995). Migration inequality is, thus, structured by the political economy of neoliberal urbanization in connection with the controlling discourses of gender and difference. In this

vein, the "cultures" of migrants tend to be conceived primarily as arenas of exploitation (in Marxist feminist work) and subjection (in Foucauldian feminist work), emphasizing the connections between political-economic structures and discursive pressures. While such perspectives help us understand the controlling discourses and policies that make the conditions under which migrants live their everyday lives, they have done less to contribute to understanding the complexity of the cultural struggles at the heart of how migrants make decisions, choose partners, raise their children, or define their problems and desires.

The Philippine state, perhaps the best studied "labor export state" (Rodriguez 2010), illustrates this last point, as the Philippine government's Overseas Employment Agency is actively involved in the cultural work of recruiting, training, and placing workers abroad. The billions of dollars sent by Filipino migrants each year are hard earned. As a "labor brokerage state" that expects its nationals working abroad to send remittances home, the Philippine government shifts the burden and responsibility of national debt and development away from itself and onto transnational worker-citizens. Such a process requires cultural work on the part of everyone involved. For some workers, a major element of the cultural work of overseas labor migration is the painful, extended family separation it requires. Indeed, even upon reunification, migrants often characterize their family relationships as haunted by the trauma of separation (Pratt 2012). The "labor export state," in the interests of ensuring an energetic labor force with high rates of successful contract completion, trains migrants to manage their sadness about family separation and loneliness. In the process, the state contributes to the discourse of the ideal worker as individualized, hard-working, and accommodating and manipulates ideologies of motherhood in particular to reframe overseas separation as ideal maternal self-sacrifice for the sake of the children and nation. As this case of the Philippines shows, both women and men – whether migrating to new employment opportunities, displaced through land grabs, or immobilized in refugee camps – experience uneven and often contradictory gender consequences of their mobility.

Nation-states implement immigration policies that, like economic policy more generally, smuggle gendered hierarchies into practice. That smuggling, however, is never a neat process. Even when the gender dimensions of nation-building projects are explicit (e.g., in the case of Singapore) (Yeoh and Willis 1999), the cultural practices are messy in practice (e.g., Mills 1999). For instance, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 ostensibly excluded all Chinese people from the United States equally; but when immigration officials implemented the policy, their prejudices came into play:

> What were enforcement officials to do, for example, when confronted with affluent Chinese merchants attempting to bring wives with them to the United States? Or the widows of merchants who had inherited their husbands' businesses? Or the wives of laborers returning from a visit to China? Congress with its preconceptions of Chinese women as prostitutes, who had already been barred by the Page Act had failed to envision any such possibilities. Worse yet, as enforcement personnel struggled to fill the gaps in the 1882 laws, they found themselves permanently lodged between a rock and a hard place, as conflicts among and between patriarchal assumptions about the sacred unity of husband and wife, racist principles of maximum exclusion, and classist notions of merchant superiority, rendered almost every decision a "vexatious" one. (Letter from San Francisco Customs Collector, August 13, 1883, Record Group 85, Entry 134, Box 2, in Calavita 2006: 251)

Such "vexatious" processes reveal more than could simple attention to the law as text. Indeed, Calavita's research on the Chinese Exclusion Act is "fundamentally a study of what

law-in-action – and the unexpected social realities it encountered and the irresolvable dilemmas it confronted – can tell us about the hidden assumptions of the lawmakers' hegemonic worldview and the tangled logics that permeated those assumptions" (p. 253). The meanings of laws over which people struggle in often unanticipated ways are their "cultures," which not only come into conflict through migration and its regulation but also are revealed and produced through these very contestations and the exclusions to citizenship that they bring with them. The sense of white masculine privilege and class entitlement that law-makers carried with them through the Chinese Exclusion Act, thus, came to life in the practical implementation of immigration law.

Feminist migration geographers have taken up similar queries to ask what this grounded, lived complexity of migration politics tells us about how to theorize the state more generally. Within geography, Alison Mountz (2010) centers her recent book on the "geographical margins of sovereign territory: on islands, in airports, at sea, and in offshore detention centers where authorities and migrants encounter each other" (p. xvii). She offers an ethnographic account of geography's intertwining with law to show how bureaucrats actively perform, embody, police, and construct the spaces in which refugees make asylum claims. Her work focuses on places that are "stateless by geographic design" where asylum claimants are stigmatized as "bogus." The book's attention to the everyday intimate encounters between officials and migrants contributes to "seeing the state" and migration as complex social negotiations that are never entirely predetermined yet feed into (re)producing global geopolitical hierarchies. Mountz shows how the Canadian state's regulatory geographies shift in response to events, such as the entry into Canadian territory of unregistered boats filled with migrants smuggled from overseas. State officials frame such entries as crises of sovereignty, and their efforts to "stem the tide" of asylum claimants in Canada reverberates in the daily lives of migrants. In this way, Mountz's work exemplifies the feminist priority to understand migration as shaped by the connections between people's personal, embodied, and intimate lives and the political, abstract, and public realms and forces in which they are entwined.

Paralleling Mountz's emphasis on lived migration politics, Brenda Yeoh and Shirlena Huang (1999) examine the relegation of migrant domestic workers to the margins of "civil society" in Singapore, asking what this position implies for Singapore's nation-building project. Their findings, based on detailed interviews with migrant workers, dovetail with those of many researchers who argue that the exclusion of temporary workers from formal citizenship status intersects with less formal social processes of othering to further stigmatize and ostracize them. Media reports often mention immigrant workers' "cultural difference" as a code for racialization. In Singapore, as elsewhere, racialized migrant workers' "cultures" are denigrated as indolent, immoral, dirty, and disruptive and, as such, deemed threatening to the society's moral order and national security. Contemporary cultural geography examines how this "cultural difference" manifests in practice and how particular invocations of "culture" as an othering device do political work.

The politics of culture also figure prominently in migration research on national securitization campaigns and their increasingly palpable echoes "beyond the border" (Gilbert 2012). Emily Gilbert (2007) has written about the emergent concern with biopolitics at the regional scale in neoliberal times. In a study of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) of North America, signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States in 2005, she argues that the emphasis on *trilateral* "partnership" as a discourse "signals a new political rationality . . . [that] promotes a divisive and striated regional [tri-national] space that will help perpetuate the ongoing tensions around illegal immigrants and undocumented workers in North

America" (p. 77). Gilbert interrogates the political culture that nominally subscribes to the ideals of democracy, freedom, and liberty yet, in practice, contributes to the hardening of borders *around* "Fortress North America" and the differentiation of mobility rights *within* national borders (p. 93). Biometric surveillance techniques launched in the name of regional and national security serve to ease travel restrictions for elites, while making it increasingly difficult for temporary or undocumented migrants to move anywhere or inhabit any space other than workplaces (also see Sparke 2005).

Airports are another key site within which cultural geographies of mobility politics come to life in terms of not only social stratification but also affect more generally. As Peter Adey (2008) has shown, the architecture of airports is designed to control mobility flows and the affect of travelers. He describes an affective climate of fear characterized by official ongoing efforts to calculate risk. An affective climate can overtake real events and have material effects, such as an airport's closure. To make his case, Adey draws on Massumi's (2005: 9, as cited in Adey 2008: 448) observations about the false anthrax alarm at the Montreal Airport in 2005:

> [Q]uick, close the airport! The airport must be closed just in case, to assuage the fear. The closure of the airport induces fear. Men in white decontamination suits descend. Police are brought in for crowd control. Far-flung airports with originating flights due to land are affected. The media amplify the alarm in real-time with live news bulletins. The fear of the disruption has become the disruption.

For Adey (2008: 448–449), this situation suggests that we may need "to consider whether it is at the level of the affective register that new regimes of power are being directed over life on the move." In his view, the affective register is potentially a more important focus for understanding mobility politics than is the body. In contrast, a feminist reading would emphasize the deep imbrication of affect and the body and examine how distinctive embodiments of affect refract the production of racial, national, and gendered differences in migration.

As a whole, recent cultural geographies of migration are characterized by shifting conceptions of domination and control. In particular, early feminist research contributed to understanding migration as shaped not only by capitalism but also by gender. It identified the role of patriarchal power in shaping the control of women's labor in both the home and workplace. Over the years, studies have increasingly come to view gender and power relations more generally as negotiated and contested rather than imposed and have shown power's multi-directional and multi-sited nature. For migration studies, this shift is evident in new approaches to migrants as not only objects of broader processes but also active participants in the making of the landscapes they inhabit and the places through which they travel. The ability of differently positioned subjects to shape or control migration trajectories is increasingly seen as influenced by individual and collective embodiment, invocations of biopolitical power, and the affective registers that animate spaces of im/mobility. As the next section discusses, similar shifts have taken place in the conceptualization of migrant subjectivities.

Migrant Subjectivities

Researchers have long argued that the study of migration should be enriched through deeper engagements with social theory (see, e.g., White and Jackson 1995; Graham and Boyle 2001), and recent years have witnessed an efflorescence of precisely such work. Whereas in 1999,

Victoria Lawson and I (Silvey and Lawson 1999) argued that migration studies needed to move beyond static notions of culture, question the ideological moorings of its theories, and foreground the politics of difference, today, the literature effectively does all of this and more. Indeed, in addition to taking seriously the voices of migrants, cultural geographers have provided critical ethnographies of migration that critique the ethnocentrism, masculinism, and economism that haunts theories of migration. Taking inspiration from poststructural, postcolonial, and feminist theoretical work, there have been vibrant exchanges exploring migration as cultural production (or a "cultural event," as McHugh 2000 would call it) shaped through "alternative modernities," "body politics" (as distinct from Foucauldian biopolitics), the performative production of gender and difference, the politics of intimate labor, and religious subjectivities. This section takes up briefly each of these aspects of cultural production.

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003) argue that circular migrants in some regions of India are participating in global flows of material consumption and capital intensification in ways that contribute to sometimes subtle but nonetheless transformative politics. They argue that people in three relatively globally linked Indian regions have translated "global modernity" into "alternative regional modernities" (p. 186). As "rural" villages have grown increasingly interwoven into "urban" labor markets through circular migration and as modern forms of consumption and desire travel more rapidly and intensively along rural–urban corridors, regions are not simply bulldozed by global capitalism. In fact, in these three regions of India, historically marginalized people have mobilized what Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan call counterhegemonic practices. In the past poor, lower-caste, and tribal people were tied to their villages and dependent on patrons. Through recent circular labor migrations, however, they have forged "regional spaces for cultural assertion," becoming "bearers of 'cosmopolitan' lifestyles" (p. 200). They have changed their "body politics," including their styles of dress, manner of speaking, diet, comportment, and adornment, all in ways the rural elite have interpreted as threats to their dominance. While the authors refuse a naïvely celebratory account of the political potential of such "cultural assertion," they nevertheless see in these migrants' actions a meaningful "reworking of modernity" that classical Marxist and marginalist accounts of migration (and, indeed, Foucauldian biopolitical analyses) would tend to ignore.

Similarly, Jamie Winders (2011) conceptualizes the remaking of migrant geographies as material, discursive, and institutional processes in which migrants themselves play active roles. Latino migration to the American South is a rapidly growing phenomenon with rising numbers of recent immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador building "communities . . . buying homes, and establishing business, social networks, and political groups" (p. 345). Winders views migrants' cultural interpretations of place as a key part of the remaking of the US South, noting that many migrants, though they live side by side with long-term residents, may not experience their new "neighborhoods" as definable, meaningful spaces. Many feel "both placeless and place-bound, unmoored [from Latin America] and tightly bound [to their work and limited daily travel to and from work] – but above all, not part of the local community or neighborhood" (p. 347). Discursively, Winders' work not only calls into question "the neighborhood" as an identifiable scale with shared meanings across groups of residents but also queries the historical legibility of the South as a region. As new residents challenge hegemonic understanding of what "the South" means, "southern geographies and identities are being materially and discursively *re-placed* through immigration and immigration experience" (p. 351, italics mine). Finally, institutionally, she argues,

geographers have much to offer the conversations about immigration to the South precisely because of the discipline's attention to place-making as a dynamic social process.

Place-making is also deeply intertwined with religion and religious subjectivities. Migration research that deals with religion has tended to subscribe to a notion of "culture" as malleable, such that places of worship and religious subjectivities are produced not only by religious institutions but also in relation to fellow co-religionists and diasporic reworkings of religious sensibilities. Migrants' spiritual lives allow them to imagine alternative cartographies of power beyond the material. Indeed, many migrants view their practices of worship as capable of meaningfully transporting them beyond wherever their physical bodies may be. Prayer, as well as fasting, according to one migrant worker I interviewed, allows migrants to imagine that they can "get out of *this place* . . . and get closer to God" (Silvey 2009). Religious co-affiliation can also mean that groups of migrants may feel affinity and provide support for one another, despite differences in status or class backgrounds (Johnson 2010). Of course, religion is also often deployed in ways that deepen divisions between groups; and migrants are not able to harness religion everywhere in the same way. Nonetheless, through religious practice migrants in some instances report achieving subjective transcendence of the everyday, the material, and the embodied nature of their existence.

Cultural geographers have also explored the circuits across space in which migrants' subjectivities are made and communities are produced (McKay 2005). Migrants make meanings across places, and the meanings they ascribe to their destinations are bound up with those they ascribe to "home." Jean-François Bissonnette (2012) studies agricultural laborers who migrate from Java to oil-palm plantations in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The male migrants he interviews narrate notions of idealized masculine strength and tenacity that, he finds, contribute to their willingness to endure harsh working conditions, low wages, and cramped dormitory accommodation in Indonesia. The social reproduction of their labor before and after their stints on the plantation is provided by wives and mothers "back home"; and from the plantations they imagine their origin villages as places of leisure, rest, and rejuvenation. Their romanticized views of their home villages reflect their own gendered positions in both origin and destination sites and are fantasies that emerge *along with and through* their migration away from home.

Migration is, thus, emotionally charged and often brings with it sets of anxieties for migrants and the communities in which they settle. In his detailed research on Indonesia's infamous export-processing island of Batam, Johan Lindquist (2009) takes migrants' (and tourists') emotions as his starting point and, in so doing, opens up distinctive theoretical terrain for understanding the social dynamics at work in such hypercapitalist border zones. His book offers a vivid, textured sense of Batam as a place where people produce and respond to an "emotional economy" that they forge in the context of the dizzying transformations taking place in the political-economic landscape. The book transports readers into the intimate, alienating, dangerous, wishful, and disappointing everyday worlds and lived cultural geographies of residents and visitors in Batam to illustrate how their specific cultural understandings of shame (*malu*), sojourning (*merantau*), and wildness (*liar*) affect their motivations and interpretation of migration and return.

Migrants' own interpretive framings and subjectivities are also important in the growing body of research that grapples with migrants' "intimate labor" (Boris and Parreñas 2010). Intimate labor is "work that involves embodied and affective interactions in the service of social reproduction," including care work, domestic work, sex work, and marriage migration. This labor is valued and coded in geographically specific ways that influence migratory

experiences and the regulation of migration. For feminist and cultural migration scholars, attention to intimate labor provides insight into informal, relational, embodied, and affective dimensions of migration as a process inflected by gender, race, ethnicity, class, and nationality. For example, for migrants from the Philippines settling in rural Japan with their new Japanese husbands, migration involves doing the cultural work of becoming an "ideal traditional Japanese bride and daughter-in-law" (*oyomesan*) (Faier 2009: 161). Such cultural work requires that Filipina migrants adjust not only their language but also their bodily comportment, daily household work habits, and child-raising techniques. Faier finds that Filipina women's desires for mobility, glamor, and financial security come into productive tension with the ambivalence and longing that residents in a low-income, marginalized rural area of Japan (Central Kiso) felt toward the cosmopolitan, wealthy, and modern Japanese nation. When migrants and local residents worked out their desires in their everyday relationships, the meanings of both Japaneseness and Filipinaness changed. The encounters between embodied subjects became key arenas within which migration took on cultural meanings (see also Constable 2007 and Friedman and Mahdavi 2011 on rethinking migration through intimate labor). In the case of Filipinas in Japan, such relationships were shaped by inequalities and compromises; and some Filipinas ran away from their husbands and local communities to escape what they experienced as intolerable situations. Beyond running away, however, as the next section discusses, migrants around the world have developed a wide range of other strategies to confront and hopefully change that which they view as intolerable.

Migrant Activism and Diverse Tactics

In a global context in which the regulatory regimes and surveillance tactics directed at low-income migrants appear ever-strengthening, it is heartening to see migrant-rights advocates working to expand recognition of migrants' entitlement and rights. A volume edited by Monica Varsanyi (2010) focuses on the ways that migrant-rights advocates in the United States have begun to make claims, particularly at the local scale, to oppose employer-sanction laws, to disallow city police from serving as arms of national immigration enforcement, to legalize day-laborer markets, and to resist various other anti-immigrant policies and ordinances. As federal and state immigration governance in the United States is devolved to local and municipal officials, activists have responded by "taking local control" (Varsanyi 2010). Some organizations have demanded that cities and states declare their territories "sanctuaries" for undocumented migrants, marking out spaces where immigration status does not affect access to health care, social services, public education, or employment protections. All of this activism indexes heated cultural/political struggles over who belongs in the nation, what sorts of entitlements and claims are/should be linked to formal citizenship, what constitutes or should constitute citizenship, and which scales of government are responsible for determining or enacting various aspects of service provision or legal regulation tied to immigration.

Cultural geographers have much to add to these conversations about the scales of immigration policy and the possibilities of migrant-rights activism. From a cultural-geographic perspective, political economies and landscapes of rights are socially produced. Citizenship at the national scale is shot through with ethical ambiguities that are lived out and confronted at local scales. For instance, urban activists in the United States organized efforts to create Cities of Refuge in the late 1960s to defend the rights of soldiers unwilling to fight in Vietnam and later to protect Central American refugees in the US from deportation. Most

recently, they have focused on providing sanctuary spaces to undocumented immigrants in the US and Canada. Each of these movements mobilized sanctuary as a form of urban citizenship; and in each case, social movements were at the forefront of reshaping the definition of political membership (Ridgley 2010).

Ridgley's study of sanctuary space refuses to romanticize or overstate the material implications of Cities of Refuge for any of the social groups they intended to protect, defend, and support. Nonetheless, her work makes clear that to make the emergent and hopeful trajectories of sanctuary movements more material, researchers and activists must attend

> not simply to the forms of law and authority that shape immigration policy . . . but the everyday practices [and refusals] of immigration law enforcement . . . If an alternative is to be found that can loosen the hold the legitimacy of migration controls have on our political and geographic imaginations, it may well have to come from the subtle interventions of those who are refusing their everyday enforcement. (2010: 147)

Ridgley attends to insurgent forms of urban citizenship as expressions of emergent political potential rather than completed accomplishments. Her work, thus, provides an important example to help cultural geographers in their efforts to understand both how cultural hegemonies operate and how counterhegemonic cultural forms may take on meaning and power, even if only fleetingly. Indeed, rather than asking only how migrants are controlled by state regulations, border policing, political-economic pressures, or predominant discourses, we must also ask how alternative geographies of migration are being imagined and sometimes practiced. Such counter-mappings offer interventions into the cultural politics of nationalistic and xenophobic hegemony and clues to the development of more hopeful immigration futures.

One activist research project provides especially exciting possibilities for a future of migrant justice. Migrant remittances have become big business in recent decades, in some cases composing a larger percentage of the national income of recipient states than any other form of foreign direct investment (e.g., El Salvador, Philippines). Banks and private wire-transfer companies have cashed in on the bonanza, regularly charging extremely high rates (ranging from 10–20 percent per remittance) for use of their services and annually costing immigrant workers billions of hard-earned dollars worldwide.[4] Like remittance companies, payday loan outlets charge usurious rates for their services, deliberately setting up shop in neighborhoods with high proportions of low-income and immigrant residents. Activists have organized opposition campaigns to fight what they view as predatory lending practices, launching campaigns for "remittance justice" and taking companies such as Western Union to task for unfair banking and business practices.

One such organization, TIGRA (Transnational Institute for Research and Action), has developed a service and an associated technological tool to support remittance justice. As it states on its webpage, "TIGRA connects immigrants with the best ways to send money home. Through our Fair Remittance Standards, we accredit LOW-COST and SOCIALLY-RESPONSIBLE money transfer companies committed to supporting the communities they serve . . . We then use our Remit4Change platform to promote those providers throughout our network of 1400+ immigrant associations" (http://transnationalaction.org/). One scholar involved in this activism/research (Gibson forthcoming) is researching cultures of banking and finance to understand political uses and manipulations of "risk," "liability," and "debt." As she develops a praxis-oriented genealogy of the financial cultures of migrant remittances,

she may be contributing not only to understanding how landscapes of immigrant inequality are socially produced, but also to envisioning and enacting cultural geographies of justice for immigrants.

In similar fashion, activists in four major Canadian cities have developed an organization called "No One is Illegal" in response to their critique of the Canadian nation-state's taken-for-granted authority to determine membership in the nation. Among other things, No One is Illegal demands

> an end to all deportations and detentions; the implementation of a full and inclusive regularization program for all non-status people; access without fear to essential services for all undocumented people; the recognition of indigenous sovereignty; an end to the exploitation of temporary workers; an end to all imperialist wars and occupations; [and] an end to the use of Security Certificates and secret trials. (http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org/demands)

In this way, the group links the injustices directed at undocumented immigrants in Canada to the unjust treatment of First Nations groups and unjustified military interventions around the world, creating what Cindi Katz (2001) calls a countertopography that can point the way to more just futures.

Conclusion

Pointing to connections among disenfranchised groups or even relying on a discourse of rights is not enough to transform the practices of surveillance and policing, the political economies of inequalities, or the historically deep social divisions and stereotypes that contour the daily geographies of migration in which many around the world live their lives. As this chapter has shown, cultural geographies of migration not only reflect but also are embedded in the production of geographies of difference that work across scales from the body to international borders and that are cross-cut by race, class, gender, and other forms of social differentiation. All of these geographies work through and upon political-economic systems that create multi-scalar social, political, and economic inequalities that drive many migration patterns. Nonetheless, the instances of activism discussed in the previous section shape and reshape the places, possibilities, and subjectivities of migrants and those with whom they live, and do so in potentially profound ways.

Cultural geographers are in an ideal position to explore these productions and transformations of place, political and social possibilities, and subjectivities associated with migration. From the ways that migrants make place at scales from the private bedrooms of domestic workers to the transnational and diasporic spaces of community, acts of migration are bound up with cultural geographies of home, neighborhood, city, nation, as well as the spaces in between. From the everyday acts of struggle and resistance of immigrants fighting for fair wages, equal treatment, and the right to be recognized as part of "the public" in their new homes to large-scale political activism of immigrant groups in their receiving and sending communities, migration generates cultural geographies of political possibilities that raise new questions about belonging, borders, the nation, and "the people" across spaces and scales. Finally, from the ways that migration reconfigures gendered, racialized, and classed hierarchies and formations to the ways that migrants themselves change local cultural practices and identities in their new and former abodes, migration and its related processes transform the subjectivities, identities, and senses of self and others for migrants, as well as for those

they join in new places and leave behind, at least temporarily, at home. For all these reasons and in all these ways, migration politics *are* cultural politics and, as such, rich ground for cultural geographers of all stripes.

Notes

1 Of course, none of these organizing concepts is the sole or primary purview of cultural geography as a subfield. Rather, each provides a lens onto the dynamic processes and cultural struggles through which migration takes on specific meanings, patterns, and force.

2 This chapter is a partial, positioned review; so there are undoubtedly important cultural geographies of migration not included here. Equally importantly, although I have organized this review around the themes of control, subjectivity, and activism, these themes interact and overlap across migration geographies and theoretical traditions; and the placement of a particular article or book in a discussion of any one conceptual category is intended to invite readers to think across and beyond this literature, not to delimit the scope of any specific project.

3 Reproductive labor is the work required to create labor power as opposed to commodities or products. It can include education, childcare, biological reproduction, sex work, and domestic work.

4 According to the World Bank (2008), "If the cost of sending money home to your family decreased by 5%, the developing world would have an extra $16 billion per year to spend on sustainable development, infrastructure improvements, education and financial literacy projects."

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