Approaches to International Migration, Immigrant Women, and Identity

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ABSTRACT
This article attempts to demonstrate that each approach to immigration, immigrant women, and identity that appeared in the British literature from the 1970s through the 1990s was an attempt to create a theory to account for differences and similarities within the diverse immigrant groups in the United Kingdom. However, serious gaps exist in these approaches in that they do not address what constitutes culture for the immigrants themselves or how their construction of culture differs from what they perceive to be the culture of the country to which they migrate. This poses difficulties in understanding the meaning immigrants attribute to their cultural and gender identities and how these identities may evolve in the host country. This article argues that while it is important not to ignore the power of political and economic forces and history as contributors to women's formation of identities, it is at least as important to think about identity as an individual appropriation and a creation of individual meanings. There is a need to understand the intersection between culture, social structure, and biography in order to recognize differences in the shaping of cultural and gender identities.
Keywords: 1. international migration, 2. women's studies, 3. race, 4. post-modernism, 5. United Kingdom.

RESUMEN
Este artículo intenta demostrar que los enfoques sobre la inmigración, las mujeres inmigrantes y la identidad, que aparecieron en la literatura británica entre los años setenta y noventa, fueron un intento de crear una teoría para explicar las diferencias y similitudes entre los diversos grupos inmigrantes en el Reino Unido. Sin embargo, existen huecos importantes en estos enfoques, al no tomar en cuenta lo que constituye la cultura para los inmigrantes mismos, o cómo su construcción de cultura difiere de la que ellos perciben en el país de destino. Esto crea dificultades para entender el significado que los inmigrantes atribuyen a su identidad cultural y de género, y la manera como estas identidades pueden evolucionar en el país receptor. Este artículo argumenta que, mientras es importante no ignorar el poder de las fuerzas políticas y económicas y la historia como factores para la formación de las identidades de la mujeres, también es importante pensar en la identidad como una apropiación y creación individual de significados. Es necesario entender la intersección entre cultura, estructura social y biografía para reconocer diferencias en la formación de identidades culturales y de género.
Palabras clave: 1. migración internacional, 2. estudios sobre la mujer, 3. raza, 4. post-modernismo, 5. Reino Unido.

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Introduction

This article challenges the conceptualizations that the British literature on immigration, immigrant women, and identity presented from the 1970s through the 1990s. The term "ethnic minority" as used in that literature embodies a number of contradictions. Most literature on race and immigration has treated the subject of immigration to Britain as part of the colonial process. The focus has been and still is on race since many British immigrants came from the colonies, and color is an issue in Britain. Thus, research has examined these colonial migrants in terms of their continuity as settled groups, which appear in the literature as ethnic minorities or racial groups. Nevertheless, migrants to the United Kingdom also came from other countries where cultural background and language, rather than color, was the distinguishing trait.

Many analyses of immigration have tended to focus only on the working class, treating it as homogeneous. Other studies have also reduced cultural differences to racial differences, ignoring the features that are specific to each immigrant group and its history. Thus, the literature on international migration has often been reduced to the study of subjects of one class, the working class; or to one color; or to one origin, such as "black-ethnic." Currently, migration studies are focusing on the analysis of the multipurpose category of "the other." This has generated a confusion of terms between culture, color, ethnic origin, and an unclear definition of "other."

The article has two main sections. The first section uses statistical information from British official sources to show the patterns of gendered migration to the UK. The second section will challenge a number of conceptualizations of migrant women. It will deal with the categorization of "immigrant" interlinked with the analytical categories of working class, race, ethnic minority, and the "other," and similar monothematic labels.

Immigration in Britain

In the of post-war reconstruction period, Britain required additional sources of labor, which it sought from its Empire and Commonwealth. When the demand for labor began to decrease at the end of the 1950s, the government started to contemplate the imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement of British subjects from the Empire and Commonwealth. Most sociological research since the mid-1960s has assumed that the post-1945 migration from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent has been either the only immigration that took place or the most important for Britain. This research suggested that before and during the post-war debates about immigration, Britain's policy was already "racialized." The 1962, 1968, 1971, and 1988 Immigration Acts reduced the inflow of

migrants considerably. Consequently, the British colonial situation became widely understood as a "race-relations" issue:

> Those who were colonised were usually understood to be a distinct and inferior "race," a biologically distinct population whose future depended upon their assessed capacity for "civilisation" under the tutelage of the superior "white" British "race" (Miles 1991:527).

However, the 1981 Census revealed that nearly 3.4 million people in Britain were born overseas. Of these, 1.9 million were "white" — 607,000 born in Ireland, 153,000 in the Old Commonwealth (Australia, New Zealand, and Canada), and about 1.13 million in other countries including Western Europe. The remaining 1.41 million were born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan. Another 100,000 "white" people were born in the Indian sub-continent and East Africa while their parents were serving overseas (Holmes 1988).

"During most of the years between 1871 and 1971, the movement of population into Britain was composed mainly by Europeans" (Holmes 1988:277). Nearly half the non-Commonwealth workers who came to Britain on work permits between 1962 and 1972 were women, as were nearly 20 percent of Commonwealth workers (MacDonald and MacDonald 1972:17). Until the 1970s, most women coming to work in Britain were from Southern European countries. In 1970, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish workers and their dependents made up more than a quarter of the 53,000 non-Commonwealth immigrants admitted to the United Kingdom (Home Office 1971). More women than men consistently came from Portugal to work, and until 1965, the same was true for Spain (MacDonald and MacDonald 1972:19). The majority of men were married, and the majority of women were single or widowed. They came to do mainly service jobs: domestic work in homes and hospitals, and work in the hotel and restaurant industries. The 1961 census shows that 75 percent of Spanish women immigrants were employed in domestic service (British Census 1961:208). Southern European immigrants have not always been marked out by "race" or color. However, the degree of prejudice and discrimination they have encountered has been remarkably similar to the experience of "black" and other racialized immigrants in Britain (MacDonald and MacDonald 1972:7; Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social 1986:111).

Theoretical Perspectives

International migration is a particular cultural challenge for the migrants, for the receiving societies and for the researchers. This involves deciding who is a migrant, and whether this is a neutral term. In the 1970s,

mainstream migration research in Europe focused on waged labor and temporary labor migrations (Castells 1975; Castles and Kosack 1973, 1985; Salt 1976; Serrano and Montoya 1965). These studies addressed emigrants as "movements of labor." The authors saw immigrants mainly as workers, although they presented a considerable heterogeneity of work and social situations. It was primarily the industrial and service workers who were established as the norm for the migrant labor force (Böhning 1976:569). This literature scarcely acknowledged social-class differences or the extent to which differences in social class within the immigrant group were relevant.

One debate, which emerged strongly during the 1970s, centered on the interrelation of race and class (Phizacklea and Miles 1980). This was a consequence of the immigrants' gradual trend toward settlement. It was also a consequence of the transformation of labor migration and the modification of the basic features of migratory flows, namely, the presence of family members and the formation and strengthening of networks based on kinship (Böhning 1972; Beyer 1976; Hollingsworth 1976; Sandlund 1976). The literature on immigrant women defined their position in society and in the labor market as one of limited opportunities, at the bottom of the job ladder (Anthias 1982; Morokvasic 1983), vulnerable, subservient, and dependent. Although much evidence supports the claim that these women faced multiple barriers and oppressive relationships, this approach primarily contributed to their social construction as victims. Mirjana Morokvasic criticized the victim approach in her later work:

> Migrant women have access to a very limited number of positions in society and the labor market. The explanation for this situation has too often adopted the "blame the victim" paradigm, which assumes that migrant women's culture of origin and their lack of preparation for life and work in modern, urban societies leads to their situation and lack of choices (Morokvasic 1991:71).

An emphasis on the position of women in migration is a relatively recent development by feminist scholars who were instrumental in changing the definition of women from "immigrants' wives" into "women immigrants." Feminist-oriented studies took up the issue from another angle and pointed to the use of women as source of cheap, flexible labor (low paid or unwaged) within ethnic economies. They criticized gender blindness and stressed women's resourcefulness (Buechler 1975; Buechler and Buechler 1981; Kutluer-Yalim 1981; Morokvasic 1983; Phizacklea 1988; González and McCommon 1989; Anthias 1992; Bhachu 1993; Brah 1993, 1996; Gabaccia 1994).

In the 1980s, the theoretical debate on class and race continued (Phizacklea and Miles 1980; Phizacklea 1983). However, it increasingly emphasized antiracist policies in Britain. This occurred in a climate that

equated race and ethnicity particularly with being black, and being black with being an immigrant (Rex and Mason 1986:77).

Not much attention was given to gender differences, though stereotypical categorization of "traditional" women and "Asian women" was widely used, as Allen illustrated:

> Women emerge in the literature occasionally as wives, and a little more frequently as mothers, [but] as independent actors they are highly invisible. Their invisibility is attributed to their cultural conditioning within traditional Asian societies (Allen 1980:327).

In the 1990s, the equation of race with black-white relations was shown to be inadequate for dealing with the European context. Studies on the construction of whiteness (Frankenberg 1993; Phoenix 1994; Hickman and Walter 1995) demonstrated the restrictive notions of culture and a confusion of terms between color and culture. However, an unstable combination of skin color and distinctive culture was ultimately the criterion that marked off "ethnic minorities" from Britain's majority population (Cohen 1986; Ballard 1992). The literature frequently viewed "ethnic minorities" as having more in common with one another than with the "ethnic majority." The term helped de-emphasize diversity within these groups while exaggerating their differences from the rest of the population. Even the argument that the basis of inclusive designation was a common experience of racism frequently failed to take into account the diverse ways in which racism could be experienced by different groups (Field 1987; Modood 1988, 1992; Ballard 1992) or, within them, by men and women (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Unterhalter 1997).

To label immigrants and ethnic minorities under the category of "race" did not make those arguments necessarily adequate as theoretical explanations of discrimination. However, racial differentiation was thought to be a physical phenotype, something biologically inherited, whereas ethnic differentiation was based on cultural differences, which had to be learned. The attempt to capture the commonalities in experiences of racial and ethnic exclusion led some to argue their preference for a single term that would accurately identify the basis of oppression. Since skin color was a key marker of status in Britain, they argued that "black" was the appropriate term to refer to all those who were victims of the exclusionary practices of white racism (Modood 1988; Mason 1990; Ballard 1992).

Modood epitomizes this position on race:

> Being white or not is the single most crucial factor in determining the sociological profile of any non-white group in contemporary Britain, dwarfing class, employment, capital assets, skills, gender, ethnicity, religion, education, family, geography and so on, all of which will be secondary in the sense of race or each other in

> the total sociological outcome. Hence the sociology of any of the new ethnic minorities flows in its general outlines from this fundamental racial divide (Modood 1992:28).

Public authorities, community policing officials, and the media use terms referring to race, ethnicity, geographical origin, and immigrant status to describe minorities that are perceived as phenomeno-typically different from the "white" majority. These terms exclude immigrant "white" minorities. *The Guardian* newspaper says:

> The official Labour Force Survey paints an up-to-date picture of how Britain's *ethnic minorities* are faring in the labour market. [This is followed by a list of "ethnic minorities" divided by sex]: ... Black Caribbean, Black African, Black other, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, other Asian, *Other* (other refers mainly to North African, Arab, Iranian, or of mixed origin). How this group fares and prospers in the workplace is a crucial question for the future of harmonious race relations in this country. Are they to remain as marginalised as their *immigrant* parents are, or is there evidence for assimilation and improvement? [italics added] (Leslie 1996:18).

This extract by Prof. Derek Leslie in *The Guardian* shows the plethora of terms, some national, some racial, and some cultural, that are used to describe "ethnic minorities," although "white" ethnic minorities are not mentioned. Thus, this article questions the adequacy of the terms "black," "ethnic," or "other" to account for differences and similarities in immigrants in the United Kingdom.

Immigrants as a Working Class

Similarly, this article questions the validity of reducing the identifications of women immigrants to the sole status of "working class." Such an approach has been used to investigate immigrant groups. However, when accounting for the variety of immigrants' identifications in the host country, this approach does not examine immigrants' multiple and varied cultural backgrounds, their multiple and changing social classes, and their educational backgrounds.

In the 1970s, studies on migration (Serrano and Montoya 1965; Castles and Kosack 1973, 1985; Salt 1976) considered migrants to be a uniform working class. José Serrano and Alfredo Montoya (1965) and John Salt (1976) argued that immigrants have a desire for upward mobility (for example, by saving money earned in the host country in order to return home to set up a business). These studies postulated that the native working class established the foreign nationality of the immigrant as a criterion of discrimination. According to these authors, the native working class demanded that

it be given preference in the distribution of employment positions by impeding immigrants' access to the economic status of natives, which would remove, or at least reduce, the threat to the natives' status. Where this solution was put into practice, discrimination occurred against the immigrants. Thus, according to this approach, two classes existed: a native working class and an immigrant underclass. This distinction continued through various forms of discrimination and xenophobic ideologies (Serrano and Montoya 1965:113).

These authors—from the fields of economics and geography—assumed that migration was mainly a reflection of the poor economy of the sending country. Thus, one of the main characteristics and shortcomings of Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack's (1973, 1985) approach was the emphasis on class as a homogeneous analytical category. The authors' notion of migrant labor as a class assumed a unity of working class identity in the sending communities before immigration to northwestern Europe occurred (Castles and Kosack 1973:5).

Castles and Kosack argued that migration to an industrialized, urban society promoted the independence and emancipation of women, particularly when women who had not worked for pay in their home country took paying jobs:

> Migration to Western Europe is certainly an act of emancipation for many people. Such [migrant] family structures are matched by traditionalist social norms, particularly with regard to the position of women. Arrival in Western Europe, where women are expected to dress attractively and where they take an active part in economic and social life can cause considerable difficulties for immigrants, whether men or women (Castles and Kosack 1985:47).

The authors prioritized working-class subordination over other types of subordination rather than exploring power relationships between, for example, men and women. Immigrant women's access to waged work was seen only in terms of an abandonment of an attributed norm of non-employment.

Castles and Kosack identified work with a paid activity, usually performed outside the home, which enjoyed, in general, social recognition. This implied the perception that women who "worked" as housewives or who were not recognized as legal workers did not work. Immigrant women, who "worked" as housewives or "worked" in domestic service but in the informal sector, were subject to pre-capitalist work relationships, since their work did not fall in the category of a commodity, as was the case with paid work. Women became a non-recognized category of worker and, therefore, invisible and more dependent than any other. Castles and Kosack's allusions to women's work were usually located by reference to their families, as the following quotation demonstrates:

> [The migrant man] will find the traditional attitude of the mother of his children one which fails to satisfy him (Castles and Kosack 1973:361).

Women were considered problematic since their inactivity worsened the problems of adaptability to the host country experienced by the family. Castles and Kosack's discussion focused on women's alienation, the divisions that they suffered between themselves and other members of the family, and their lack of understanding of the industrial world in which their husbands lived.

The authors contributed to a widespread assumption about immigrant women as simple followers of men, with inadequate skills and an inadequate knowledge to live in a modern urban environment, and a tendency toward submissiveness rather than resistance. Castles and Kosack studied women as a special category of immigrants who were successful in the process of migration so long as they embraced the host society's "modern and emancipatory" value system. Nevertheless, this perspective did not reveal the complex interactions that developed between family members or between women and the dominant society.

Morokvasic (1983:22) questioned whether it was appropriate to employ the opposition of the "traditional" (the culture of the sending society) and the "modern" (the culture of the receiving society) to describe this change. She indicated that many authors had made gross assumptions about the cultural background of immigrant women. The approach, typified by the work of Castles and Kosack, constructed a picture of rigid societies, which, in reality, were undergoing change. It silenced the distinctions between sending and receiving countries and the diversity within countries. It failed to highlight regional, cultural, class, linguistic, and gender differences. Their perspective rated the emancipation and oppression of women in the host society, as opposed to the home country, based on a belief that in northwestern Europe less oppression exists than in a "traditional" country.

Although women's freedom to take employment may be a necessary prerequisite for economic independence and an "egalitarian" relationship within the family (Delphy and Leonard 1992:52), it is not sufficient. It must be recognized that many immigrant women in Western societies work under conditions that are far from emancipatory in any sense of the word.

Twelve years later, Castles and Kosack (1985) confirmed their views in a postscript to the second edition of their 1973 book:

> Migrants' wives might like the greater freedom which Western women enjoy—many immigrant workers, particularly Muslims do not allow their wives to work or have any contact with the outside world. Men originating from traditional societies observe the increasing independence of women with suspicion and fear (Castles and Kosack 1985:362).

Two assumptions demarcated Castles and Kosack's work: First, "tradition" became an alternative for an analysis of immigrant women's specific sociocultural backgrounds. The authors relied on stereotypes of immigrant women as dependents, migrants' wives or mothers, unproductive, illiterate, isolated, and secluded from the outside world. These characteristics were usually attributed to the women's alleged "cultural background" and labeled as "tradition." Second, the authors did not address gender differences in immigration as a factor worthy of analysis. Thus, Castles and Kosack's stereotype operated for all migrant women irrespective of their specific national and cultural origins. Immigrant women seemed to acquire the right to a sociological existence once they were acknowledged as economically active, as productive.

Morokvasic (1983:23) argued against Castles and Kosack's approach to migration, pointing out that whether the authors concluded that migration emancipated or reinforced the "traditional ties," whether they considered the transition from tradition to modernity to be a linear process or not, their hypothesis remained the same: Paid work, as an attribute of modern society, facilitated the transition to modernity.

These approaches are silent concerning how immigrant women's experiences might differ from those of an ungendered individual or how geographic mobility across national boundaries, and by different social classes, might alter culturally rooted understandings of femininity. Castles and Kosack have barely investigated gendered processes in the construction and maintenance of perceptions of femininity.

Women Migrants as a Racialized Working Class

Another categorization that this article questions is the view of women immigrants as a racialized working class. Robert Miles and Annie Phizacklea's work has sought to prioritize the role that class and production relations played in the reproduction of racism and migration. However, this approach carries problems of economic determinism and theoretical abstraction (Phizacklea and Miles 1980; Miles 1982; Phizacklea 1983; Phizacklea 1984). As Annie Phizacklea illustrated, the issue in the migrant labor approach was not "race," as such, but the racialization of a specific migrant population in the historical context of post-1945 Britain:

> There are important differences between the indigenous and the migrant group, which derive from migrant status. In analysing the effects of migrant status, we are examining the relationship between the ideological and politico-legal factors. The first layer of that relationship is between nations, between the economically dominant capitalist nations (the importers of labour) and the economically dependent "sending" formations ... It needs to be recognised that the ideology of

> racism is not only directed at ex-colonial migrant labour, but all foreign labour. Thus, the second layer of this relationship is between migrant labour and indigenous labour and the deep division this ideology of racism creates between them, resulting in exclusionary practices and the fragmentation of the working class (Phizacklea 1983:6).

The migrant labor approach emphasized the ways in which migrant labor was included or excluded in terms of the relations of production. Miles and Phizacklea argued on the basis of a critical reinterpretation of classical and neo-Marxist theories of class, the state, and ideology. They constructed a theoretical model of racism, which prioritized the political economy of migrant labor as opposed to what they called the "race-relation problematic" (Miles 1982:169). Miles saw "race" itself as an ideological category that required explanation and, therefore, could not be used for either analytical or explanatory purposes (Miles 1982:177). With regard to women migrants, Phizacklea stated:

> Migrant women workers are very much a part of [the] Western European working class, their issues are class issues, and to ignore them is to consciously lend support to those who actively seek to weaken the working class internationally (Phizacklea 1982:112).

Miles and Phizacklea claimed that the concept of race was a social construction, which attributed meanings to certain patterns of phenotypic variation (Miles and Phizacklea 1984:22). This process of attributing meaning to "race" resulted in a reification of real social relations into ideological categories and led to the commonsense acceptance that "race" was an objective determinant of the behavior of black workers or other racially defined social categories (Miles 1982:176). Precisely because they conceptualized "race" as an ideological reification, they suggested that "race" could not be the object of analysis in itself, since it was a social construction.

In rejecting the descriptive or analytical value of "race" as a concept, Miles and Phizacklea insisted on the importance of racism, and the formation of what they called a racialized fraction of the working class and other classes (Phizacklea and Miles 1980:224). However, with the rejection of the category of race, they did not consider the specificity of the ethnic category (Anthias 1990:24). Miles' approach was interpreted as a way of emphasizing the role of class determination as opposed to "race." Miles argued that his model was grounded in the notion that a complex totality of economic, political, and ideological processes shaped internal and external class relations. He distinguished between processes of generation and reproduction of ideologies and pointed out the need to develop a specific analysis of ideologies in particular historical contexts. Miles claimed that production relations provided the historical and structural context within which racialization

occurred. According to Miles, the emphasis on production relations, not the importance of culture, provide the material and political basis for racism within the working class.

The description of "racialized" workers as a class fraction in the United Kingdom did not analyze the heterogeneity of labor categories and the varied employment characteristics of other European migrants. Anthony Cohen underlines the confusion in the terms "racism" and, hence, its derivative "racialization":

> Racism becomes defined in terms of features which are specific to black (or Afro-Caribbean) experience, for example, or to the peculiarities of English history, so that anti-Semitism or the specific articulations of racism which have developed in, say, the Irish or the Scottish contexts or in other European countries are treated as "special cases" because their inclusion would "deconstruct" the ideal type ... But putting these accounts together does not add up to a multidimensional approach that could provide the basis for a general theory; it only amplifies their essentialism (Cohen 1986:84).

Thus, the host society may represent immigrants differently depending on whether immigrants are phenotypically distinctive from the majority of the host group population. Cohen points out that the host society may exhibit discriminatory responses to "white" "ethnic groups" that are different from its discriminatory responses to "black" groups. Therefore, migrants' self-representations must be considered in order to distinguish their experiences from the abstract and amalgamating position of "racialized working class" that emerges from Miles' theorization.

Phizacklea and Miles (1980) and Phizacklea (1983) argued that migration to an industrialized, urban society encouraged women who had not worked for pay in their home country to take jobs. As Phizacklea pointed out:

> For millions of women, the transition from unwaged to waged work has come about through migration ... Wherever a woman comes from, wherever she migrates to, whether or not she works, is married, or has children her primary role in life will be defined not as a waged worker but as a mother and a domestic labourer (Phizacklea 1983:1).

This approach suggested a radical shift of focus from Castles and Kosack's work, which assumed immigrant women's dependence on their husbands and families, to viewing women as waged workers.

However, Phizacklea's work contains two assumptions: First is a gross generalization that immigrant women did not work for pay prior to their arrival in the host country. The research of H.C. Buechler and J.M. Buechler (1981) and Caroline Brettell (1979, 1982) on immigrant women in Europe, and Seller (1994) on immigrant women in the United States demonstrated

that a majority of working-class women immigrants worked for pay in their home country.

Second, Phizacklea's work assumes a homogeneity in the histories of women immigrants and the reasons underlying their decision to emigrate. The assumption is that women emigrated for economic reasons rather than, for example, pressure from family or husbands, or to seek adventure or formal educational opportunities. Phizacklea also fails to address differences, within the working class, among women of varying educational levels. Research in the United States on women immigrants from Asia or South America who had pursued a graduate-school education (Seller 1994) notes that these women work in menial jobs due to their poor English skills and/or their immigrant status. Are women with graduate-school education thus classified as "working class"? "Native" working class women with no education may not share their problems and circumstances.

Furthermore, Phizacklea's focus on a uniform working class erased differences among a wide diversity of socioeconomic and cultural systems. Therefore, the concept of working class needs a more precise definition indicating material and nonmaterial differences, such as formal education.

Threefold-Oppression Model

This article also questions the threefold-oppression model (Anthias 1982; Morokvasic 1983). Floya Anthias opened a chapter of her work summarizing the premises of this model:

> This chapter is concerned with the way in which ethnicity and sexual divisions are used by Greek-Cypriot men for the "management" of ethnic or minority disadvantage and for the achievement of the economistic aims of migration: Cypriot women, we argue, suffer a "triple burden" as women, as migrants, and as workers for migrant men (Anthias 1982:73).

Much of Anthias and Morokvasic's discussion around immigrant women and the labor force was centered on concepts such as the oppression women suffered by virtue of their sex, nationality, and social class. Anthias pointed to the use of women as a source of cheap (low paid or unwaged) labor within ethnic economies. In criticizing the gender blindness of the literature on migration, she addressed a gendered exploitation in kin-type arrangements and reflected a concern for an improvement of the condition of migrant women.

From this point of view, being a woman became one of the criteria in determining the extent of discrimination. This approach claimed that as foreigners, immigrants, and women, they occupied the lowest levels in the labor-force hierarchy, working primarily as poorly paid domestics, cleaners, and waitresses. According to this approach, being foreign-born could also

confer a disadvantage, independent of sex. In such a case, immigrant women could have lower-status occupational positions compared to native-born women of the same socioeconomic background. Morokvasic (1983:27) suggested that for Yugoslav women in Europe, it was their status as foreigners that was most responsible for their low prestige and oppressive situation.

In a later work, Morokvasic (1991:80) criticized her own approach: She had viewed women as passive tools of male networks not as active agents in the complicated dynamics between ethnic networks and labor-market conditions. In other words, while focusing on the usefulness and resourcefulness of ethnic women for the ethnic economy and business formation, the "three-fold-oppression" model did not investigate the question of usefulness and resourcefulness of the ethnic economy for women. Parminder Bhachu argued in this line:

> These models based on the "powerless/passive/static model" fail to take account of the transformative powers of Asian women in generating and in manufacturing their cultural systems. These models deny their roles as the cultural entrepreneurs they are (Bhachu 1993:113).

Inherent in the threefold-oppression model is the risk of concluding that women were but resources for ethnic economies and were a condition for men's access to better paid jobs. According to this model, this led to victimization of women.

While the analysis that women migrants experience a triple discrimination as women, as immigrants, and as workers is true, it represents an oversimplification of a more complex situation. Women immigrants do occupy differentiated positions. However, writers using this model only took into account paid work and, within it, working-class migrant women. It oversimplifies women's experiences and identifications with a working class.

This approach did not attempt to locate and conceptualize agency on the part of the women immigrants. This model, however, is useful since it moves away from the essentialist notions of "race" utilized by Miles and Phizacklea. Thus, by considering women as foreigners, this new identification does not reduce women to ex-colonial or "black" immigrants. However, the "threefold-oppression" model needs an additional perspective, that of the women immigrants themselves: their assessment of their own identifications with social class, and their positions as migrants and women.

Women Immigrants as Waged and as Domestic Workers

A number of authors have pursued the broader implications of immigrant women's paid work by pointing out that this cannot be adequately addressed without a consideration of domestic work within the household (Foner

1979; Dumon 1981; Kutluer-Yalim 1981; Ley 1981). These authors have considered whether migration and women immigrants' employment in the host country led to a change in the distribution of power within the family.

These studies, which have attempted to analyze the relationship between paid work and domestic work of immigrant women, have generally revolved around two issues. On the one hand, these authors were interested in the change in gender relationships within the households in the host society. Therefore, they examined the impact of supposedly new work roles on domestic relationships between husbands and wives and between mothers and children. The focus of these studies varied according to the immigrants' sending countries and their cultural backgrounds. Katharina Ley's study of immigrant women in Switzerland found that new economic and social responsibilities were the bases for a woman's increasing importance within the family (Ley 1981:84). Ozden Kutluer-Yalim's research on Turkish immigrant women in Germany found that women's role in the family was undermined, especially for housewives who were isolated from an extended-family network, and who found themselves increasingly dependent on their children or husband to deal with the outside world, where they did not know the language (Kutluer-Yalim 1981:72).

On the other hand, W. A. Dumon's study (1981) on women immigrants in northwestern Europe pointed out a threefold relationship between the paid employment of working-class women migrants and their work at home: First, the reasons for waged work were often family related, with a woman needing to help the household financially. Second, the content of the paid work was, generally, related to doing household chores. Third, Dumon claimed that paid work affected positively immigrant women's relations with their families in terms of their position within the family (Dumon 1981:36).

Nancy Foner's work on Jamaican women in England viewed an immigrant woman's improved access to and control of economic resources as the basis for enhanced position and power within the family. Foner stated that, regardless of other drawbacks, "residence in England gives Jamaican women the chance to earn a regular wage, which has led to a dramatic improvement in their lives" (Foner 1979:83). Foner took women's work as an instrument for their possible emancipation.

However, this approach assumed that when a woman is actively involved in the production process and has the same power as other productive workers have, the precondition exists for her emancipation. Foner also failed to recognize that immigrant women cannot be considered as one homogeneous group, but that they vary in cultural background, social class, education, and age, among other differentiating factors. A question to explore is whether emancipation is the direct result of having a salary. Remuneration may bring economic independence but does not necessarily bring emancipation.

In the case of domestic work for pay, most women may enjoy the material benefits that come from contributing to the family economy but may not find any psychological reward in the work itself. The social representation of a job, such as cleaner, may influence how women view that job and, in turn, how they view themselves. That is, there may be devaluation of the job and of themselves for doing that job. Thus, the type of job women perform may be important for a sense of empowerment.

Most of these studies adopted the household as a unit of analysis. This model assumed that strategies of migration were based on a deliberate household calculation that led eventually to migration, regardless of whether people migrated as individuals or as family units. Migration was assumed to be one of the many choices available to households. Yet the attribution of individuals' actions to household strategies has generally been assumed, not investigated. What were the social constraints that influenced women's work in the labor market and at home? Diane Wolf noted that proponents of the household-strategies model typically dispense with inquiries into the subjects' viewpoints because those researchers assume that people—especially poor people—cannot explain their own behavior (Wolf 1990:60). If researchers were to listen to the voices of women immigrants, however, the notion that collective calculations or household strategies drive migration might be difficult to sustain.

Generally, social theorists shaped the studies of women immigrants as waged and domestic workers. In an attempt to correct previous views that emphasized the victimization of the powerless and the force of social structure over human agency, these theorists made efforts to rationalize the actions of working people, women, and migrants. However, this model was not created to understand, for example, the migration strategies of middle-class families or gender relationships that these families might perpetuate after migrating.

In addition, this model does not consider other issues, such as the processes that shaped women's representations of themselves, the negotiations women pursued in their gender relationships, and why women had to take work as domestics. Thus, it is necessary to study the broader context of social change in gender relations within the countries of origin, where the decision to emigrate occurred, as well as to explore how different migration experiences mediated women's histories, which in turn shaped women's understanding of themselves.

Working-Class Migrant Women and Language

Other studies are concerned with language difference and its psychological effects on women immigrants. The inclusion of the study of language in the

analysis of migration is an advance in the analysis of the complexity of factors that shape women's identities.

A group of scholars researched the importance of foreign-language learning for working-class migrants' ability to get better positions in the labor market of the host country (Dumon 1981; Kutluer-Yalim 1981; Ley 1981; Andizian 1986; Appleyard and Amera 1986; Boyd 1986; Seller 1994). The relevance of these studies for this article is that these authors focused on women immigrants from non-colonial countries. Moreover, this approach dealt with language training, which was paramount for immigrant women in the labor market, and in personal relationships with the outside world and their families. This literature also looked at feelings of inadequacy and even shame that immigrant women had when their children had to translate for them in public places (Kutluer-Yalim 1981:66). In sum, these studies looked at non-colonial, working-class immigrants, paid work, education, and linguistic difference, with particular attention paid to this last factor's psychological effects on immigrant women.

Some of the authors mentioned in the previous section and other scholars, such as Seller (1994), focused on immigrant women's paid work, and the relation of language training to their upward mobility in the labor market. This body of literature argued that difficulty in gaining access to language- and job-training programs reinforced the socioeconomic stratification that existed among immigrant women, which was closely related to country of origin (Kutluer-Yalim 1981:61; Andezian 1986; Appleyard and Amera 1986:219). This stratification extended into the labor market experiences of immigrant women, where being foreign operated to the disadvantage of some birthplace groups, but not others. In the Canadian context, Monica Boyd (1986:52) demonstrated that some groups were more disadvantaged than others. The least disadvantaged were immigrant women from the United Kingdom and the United States, who came not only with higher educational achievement but also from countries that were close to Canada, both linguistically and culturally.

A number of authors claim that, in the case of Anglo-Saxon countries, knowledge of English was a major factor in the position of immigrant women in the labor market. Not knowing the language of business and social relations meant that many jobs requiring English were unattainable. Consequently, a worker unfamiliar with the official language was more likely to participate in an ethnic-linguistic labor market or to hold menial positions (such as cleaner, chambermaid) in which extensive verbal or written instruction was not needed to accomplish the task. It followed that language acquisition was a key factor in the socioeconomic advancement of immigrants and their integration in the host country (Ley 1981:22).

Seller in her study, based on qualitative data on immigrants to the United States from different parts of the world, confirmed the linkages between language, job skills, and position in the labor market. She claimed that these

links reinforced socioeconomic stratification that already existed by nationality among immigrant women (Seller 1994:129). Women who knew English well were less likely to be limited to employment opportunities in ethnic-linguistic labor markets. However, women who were less educated, who knew little or no English, and who, because of migration policies, were ineligible for additional language- and job- training programs were limited to a set of occupations with lower salaries and less desirable work conditions. Illiteracy and language problems did exist, which in turn caused and perpetuated the isolation of immigrant women and their lack of independence and self-confidence.

Reginald Appleyard and Anna Amera researched a sample of Greek immigrants in Australia (1986). In this study, Greeks described language difficulties as one of the most important differences between Australians and themselves:

> Greeks who tried to obtain employment through official agencies were frustrated by not being able to understand the names nor find the addresses of potential employers because these were written on cards of introduction in English, which they could not read (Appleyard and Amera 1986:219).

Only rarely did the interviewed Greek migrants find it necessary to use more than a few basic words in English. They worked in factories with other Greeks, lived in houses inhabited by other Greeks, and socialized almost exclusively with other Greeks (Appleyard and Amera 1986:222).

Two reasons make language an important identifier when addressing individuals' construction of their cultural identity. First, unfamiliarity with English results in an inability to communicate with the host society and leads to the formation of strong social networks among migrants. Second, some immigrants show concern for what they view as their children's (second-generation migrants') loss of cultural identity when they adopt English as their first language.

The multiplicity of analytical categories these studies utilize makes for a richer picture of women's experiences of migration and representations of themselves. However, this work makes two assumptions: Immigrant women are working class and poorly qualified; and access to better jobs results once women have language training (the second premise may not necessarily hold true). The grouping of all women immigrants under the same rubric—working class—does not account for differences in experiences and self-representations among these women.

Migrant Women as Reproducers of National Ideologies

The work of a group of authors (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Eastmond 1993; Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989) is relevant for this article because it

illuminates how women are, on the one hand, carriers of national ideologies and, on the other, agents in shaping their cultural identifications in the host country.

This work focused its analysis on women in relation to men as honor keepers, or women in relation to the nation as reproducers of national ideologies. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis recognized that the literature on migration had reduced ethnicity and/or race to belonging to minority groups or subordinate groups within a nation-state (1989:3). Women, they claimed, occupied a central place in process of signification embedded in racism and nationalism. Yuval-Davis and Anthias pointed out the relationship between women and nation:

> Women are also controlled in terms of the "proper" way in which they should [...] reproduce the boundaries of the symbolic identity of their group or that of their husbands[...] Women are seen as the "cultural carriers" of the ethnic group (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989:9).

These studies demonstrated how women were crucial to the construction and reproduction of nationalist ideologies. Women could serve as the symbolic figuration of a nation. When represented as guardians of the "ethnic group" and nation, women not only demarcated political and cultural boundaries but also constructed and reproduced particular notions of their specific culture through their involvement in rearing children and in social and religious practices (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989:10).

In these studies, there was a concern for the woman as a reproducer and as an agent in the production of meanings (Buijs 1993:4-6; Eastmond 1993:35). These authors stressed that the processes of ethnic formation were significantly gendered, that women had a different relation to ethnicity compared to men. They claimed that gender was linked to conditions of reproduction of ethnic groups. Women were seen as active agents in the constitution of ethnicity through the creation of the conditions of existence of a group.

However, these authors did not sufficiently consider the dynamics of the family for the construction of women's gendered cultural identity in marriage and in the division of work within the family (Adkins and Leonard 1996:6) nor did they analyze gender relations within the family to underscore how families arrived at particular strategies: Is the process of reproducing national ideologies a smooth one or is there a negotiation between husband and wife? Do women see themselves as representatives of their "nation"?

In the case of kin-work, Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992:124) suggested that ethnicity created variation in the gender division of labor in the household, but they did not give attention to how the social organization of family labor contributed to the formation of ethnicity itself. These authors

focused on the external constitution of ethnicity, that is, the regulation of marriage. Missing was an insight into how ethnicity was constructed within the family household and how the relations between husband and wife and children constituted a sense of belonging to a particular cultural group. Anthias and Davis pointed out that ethnicity created diversity in the family form (1992:115). However, these authors did not address whether the division of work among family members and the (lack of) negotiations that originated that division were themselves factors that constituted a sense of belonging to a particular cultural group.

These authors' work links nation and women as culturally embodied subjects. Thus, it expands theorization on women's construction of national and gender identities. However, two other themes need investigation: the processes by which women take up different identifications and act upon national ideologies, and the representations of femininity by structural forces, such as the government, the church, or the school.

Immigrants as "Others," "Subjectivities," "Hybrids," and "Displaced"

This article also challenges post-structuralist approaches (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Rutherford 1990; Weeks 1990; Ganguly 1992; Hall 1992, 1990; Rattansi and Westwood 1994; Ang-Lygate 1996; Brah 1996; Hall and Gay 1996). All these authors share the notion of subjectivities and displaced and diasporic subjects when referring to migrants. Post-structuralism challenges all previous assumptions of the migrant as classed, worker, victim, or "black." Instead, the authors use new terms, some of them borrowed from biology, such as "hybrid" to emphasize the idea of the migrant as a construction, a "product" and a mixture of sites and positions that the agent actively shapes and chooses according to contexts and audiences. A post-structuralist approach to migration might use terms such as "other(ness)," "marginalization," "narratives of dislocation," "marginality," "diasporic subject," "diasporic context," "hybrid identity," "subaltern communities," and "displaced subject." Post-structuralist studies primarily focus on the construction of cultural identity, or what they call "subjectivity". Subjectivity, they claim, is not essentially given. It is constantly under construction. It is a process in which differentiation from others is a powerful constitutive force (Hall 1990:226; Ganguly 1992:31; Hall 1992:276; Rattansi and Westwood 1994:29). According to Jonathan Rutherford:

> Identity is made out of different elements of experience and subjective position, but in their articulation, they become something more than just the sum of their original elements (Rutherford 1990:19).

These authors argue that binary oppositions, such as culture-nature or rationality-irrationality, permeate the construction of identities in Western

Europe (Rattansi 1994:59). The first term is constructed as superior, and the second poses features that threaten the first. Thus, these authors suggest that power relations construct identities that are always open to dislocation and threatened by the "outside," or the "other," which, in fact, defines the positive elements (Rutherford 1990:19; Rattansi 1994:26). Ali Rattansi attempts to demonstrate a post-structuralist analysis of colonial immigration to Britain:

> Take the stereotypes of British Asians and British Afro-Caribbeans, as part of the cultural repertoire of inferiorization, exclusion, abuse, and discrimination in contemporary Britain. A post-modern framing is alert to significant dislocations in a process often portrayed as all encompassing and monolithic, smoothly reproducing racialist stereotypes and practices of discrimination in institutional sites, such as schools. A post-modern framing requires that we break with reproductive models (Rattansi 1994:60).

As post-structuralist literature has noted, subjectivities have multiple identities as a result of their participation in various contexts and their engagement in numerous projects (Ang-Lygate 1996:152). Some of these identifications may be more durable than others, but none is fixed; they are all subjected to a process of negotiation and re-articulation through various narratives and specific forms of collective action (Rattansi 1994:29). Thus, national identification can no longer be propounded as the dominant identification, that is, the identification that should always override other allegiances in scope and power. Instead, it becomes one identification among many, for the nation is only one of the communities to which individuals happen to belong (Ganguly 1992:31).

Therefore, post-structuralist authors no longer base the concept of community on ascriptive membership (Barth 1969:10), that is, on strong communal attachments or shared values or shared origins (Smith 1986:191). Post-structuralism challenges Barth and Smith's conceptualizations of "community" and claims that ethnic groups are largely constructed entities.

In contrast, this article argues that one may interpret subjective definitions of identity in post-structuralist theories in several ways. From the relativist point of view, which predominates among post-structuralists, subjective constructions of identity do not take into account the experiential facet of identity. In other words, cultural identity requires practical or public demonstration of such features as, for example, language, phenotype, dress code, folklore, dance, cuisine, and mannerisms (gestures), which are shared and are particular to a specific sociocultural setting. The post-structuralist notion of "subjectivity" can simply mean that actors decide and choose their own cultural identity. This position seems reasonable, as it does not deny that tangible factors are involved in the construction of identity. However, post-structuralists still tend to separate the reproduction

of cultural values from the biological reproduction of agents and education of those agents in a specific sociocultural location. The subjectivist representation of ethnicity arises from a false dichotomy between agents' biological origins and their subsequent history in specific cultural groups. In fact, agents only exist as dynamic, historically, and physically situated identities. Likewise, the ethnic group is not only a subjective experience but also something tangible, in both an experiential form and a cultural sense. Examples include corporal expressions that are understood only by somebody who has been raised in or exposed to a particular sociocultural setting: in a Greek context, the lifting of the eyebrows to express "no" or in an Italian context, the movement of the fist with the fingers up to express negative surprise. To underline the importance of the experiential mode in an ethnic group, it is necessary to look at the need for adequate performance in the displaying of the cultural identity (Geis 1993; Shweder 1990).

Adequate performance of cultural identity is rigorously judged within the group more than by outsiders. For the latter, a few tokens of the identity are usually sufficient. At crucial times in a social interaction, a whole body of cultural features and cues figures prominently. Cues that are important in categorization include movement, style, and mannerisms that belong only to that particular cultural group and which the person does not choose but learns. Karmela Liebkind distinguishes between two aspects in cultural identity:

> Ascribed aspects of ethnicity are involuntary, as are sex or skin colour. A person's ethnicity is ascribed in the sense that one cannot choose the ethnic group into which one is born, but it is achieved to the extent that the meaning that it acquires for one's total identity is a matter of choice (Liebkind 1992:149).

Cultural identity is not only a subjective experience. It is also a concrete material certainty in that an individual is raised in a specific sociocultural group and is exposed to and learns social cues in the ethnic-group experience.

Many post-structuralist authors posit the existence of a free-floating creation of identities that does not account for the similarities of traits across sociocultural groups, such as gender inequality. Authors like Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) assert the plural and contingent basis of subjectivity of cultural identity. They are opposed to the "essentialist" view that individuals and classes are coherent, unified subjects whose actions reflect their underlying essence. They argue that it is only in our social relations that we acquire "subject" positions, and that, moreover, such subjective identities are multifaceted and may overlap with one another. Consequently, in this view, no identities can be "privileged," as the salience of particular identities depends on the existence of discursive practices, which make such identities subjectively accessible (Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

This argument points out not only that other identities, apart from "social-class identity" and "racial identity," need to be recognized but also that the elements that constitute the social identity and the racial identity need to be comprehended in terms of their articulation. Recent theoretical emphasis on the subjective and constructed nature of ethnic/racial and national identities (Díaz-Andreu 1996:52) also applies to the relationship between history and ethnic identity. Contrary to ethno-essentialist assertions, these authors argue that ethnic groups and nations do not usually have continuous linear histories incorporating a common origin. Such accounts of group history are constructions in which the past is selectively appropriated, remembered, forgotten, and invented, but, at the same time, reproduced and naturalized in the popular consciousness (Royce 1982; Anderson 1993). Laclau and Mouffe offer a dispersion of subject position:

> The epistemological niche from which the "universal" classes and subjects spoke has been eradicated, and it has been replaced by a polyphony of voices each of which constructs its own irreducible discursive identity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:195).

Laclau and Mouffe have produced a provocative critique of Marxist theory, particularly powerful in the doubts they cast on class as the primary determinant of identity and on socialism and the emancipatory end of politics (Marshall 1994:73). The authors point out the dangers of Marxist structuralism; however, they abandon the sociopolitical power of the critique against social-class conditions or sexism or cultural difference. There remain only a relativistic and atomistic variety of subjects who have the sole power to construct their own discourse. The forces within a historical context that shape each subject are not taken into account nor are the similarities of effects of those forces on a group of subjects. The possibility of revolution or transformation of conditions is nonexistent. Emancipation is not possible. As Marshall points out, "Certain liberatory struggles, such as those on behalf of homosexuals or working mothers, could emerge only once their corresponding subject positions or 'identities' were created" (Marshall 1994:118).

The polyphony of voices, to which Laclau and Mouffe refer, is shaped by a multiplicity of conditions (gender, class, age, color, and cultural and linguistic difference), which do not occur in a vacuum. These conditions and the reflection of subjects' positions within society need to be acknowledged. The "irreducible discursive identity" needs explication as to the process of construction of that identity. As Fraser and Nicholson, who point to the emancipatory claims of feminisms, ask: "How can we speak out against sexism as detrimental to the interests of women if the category is a fiction?" (1990:420). The exclusive focus on either structure or subject does not ex-

amine the subject-structure relationship and, hence, does not claim transformative agency on the part of the subject (Reay 1995).

Conclusion

The article has tried to identify decisions about the conceptualization of international migration, immigrant women, and identity. It has rejected the categorizations of women immigrants as a homogeneous working class. These did not account for differences in the socioeconomic systems in women's countries of origin or for differences in the levels of formal education of women. The literature reduced women's experiences and self-representations in the host country to an experience of a specific social class, or of a race, an ethnic minority, a domestic worker, or a fragmented subjectivity. In so doing, the literature failed to take into account women's agency in the transformative process of migration, and its effects on women's self-representations, which needs to be emphasized.

Most authors discussed in this article, in their enthusiasm to explore social dynamics in migration, have focused on the influence of one social dynamic at a time: class or race or nationality. They have denied that important psychological questions need to be addressed as well. Some sociological approaches disregard immigrants' perceptions of their positions and the negotiations of cultural identities that immigrants endure on a daily basis. The psychological effects of culture shock on immigrants are generally not examined. These approaches have also disregarded how immigrants' interactions with the host country affect their perceptions and representations of the "other." It is the recognition and reclaiming of this tension between subject and society that makes possible a re-conceptualization of gendered, classed, and "foreigned" subjects as it is currently relationally and historically interpreted. Cultural difference, transmitted during primary socialization, is a most pervasive part of identity. Given that gender is deeply implicated in the complex of social processes and institutions devoted to ancestry, sexual coupling, procreation, and care of children, one's gender identity is given particularistic meanings by one's cultural background. Gender identity is fundamental to and intertwined with cultural identity. Differing moral conceptions of gender roles may be located within one single cultural group or contrasted across cultures (Weinreich 1989:57). Breakwell considers the whole dichotomy of cultural and personal identity to be a temporal artifact, as social identity becomes personal across biography (1986:159).

Sociocultural constructions of gender crosscut social practices. Social relations exist as relations of unequal power, which produce recreated social practices. Numerous practices in the realms of labor, education, religion, and language, to name just a few, construct and regulate these relations. Marshall (1994:120) claims that any mode of interpretation through which

identities are constructed is the result of contestation and resistance, with some interpretations allowed and others suppressed.

The meaning that individuals attach to identities includes looking at how far the individual accepts an attributed identity as well as its emotional significance, which has both personal and social facets. The emotional angle together with socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural conditions may explain how women's representations of themselves and others are integrated.

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