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Bridges and Barriers: Some Cartographies of "International" Practice in Gender Studies

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Abstract: This paper addresses three themes related to contemporary challenges for "internationalizing" gender studies. First it examines approaches and potential for working with and creating structures to foster communication and support scholarship on gender. It offers two examples, one dealing with an international disciplinary organization, the other with a bi-national consortium. Next it takes up the complexities of identifying and addressing Anglophone hegemonies in research publications and the significance of language in constructing thought and expressions. Third, it considers approaches in higher education that aim to foster students' understandings of international perspectives and identities via teaching collaborative courses and using technology. In addressing these themes it primarily offers examples from the discipline of geography, one that attends especially to "place" and draws on the authors' sustained experiences of international collaboration.

1 It is now widely recognised that knowledge is "situated", reflecting the "positionalities" of those who create and disseminate it, who bring their personal values and cultural, political, and intellectual contexts to that work. At the same time, we see calls to become more "inclusive" in practice, to recognise more widely work from outside Anglophone realms, and to strive to be "international" in a globalising world. These two perspectives reveal tensions and dilemmas, yet they also offer opportunities to enrich understanding and enhance communication. We write here as geographers, members of a discipline alert to the significance of place and the various ways in which that concept can be understood. For example, we think about the importance of scale: at what level is place being conceptualised, such as the local, the regional, the national, or the transnational? What assumptions underlie common categorisations such as "the West", "the Third World", or the "international"?

2 Elsewhere we have referred to ourselves as women of "the South", a designation we use not in the customary sense (to refer to regions of the world that are among the least economically privileged), but rather as feminists who have been or are located outside politically dominant Anglophone regions and who began their careers in a male-dominated profession. We bring those perspectives to our world views and practice. Maria Dolors is Catalan, from the south of Europe, a region with a minority language within Spain, though she is multilingual. Since the early stages of her career she has studied and collaborated internationally: in the U.S., the U.K. and other regions of Spain and western Europe. In her local setting, she has played host to scholars and students from several continents, initially in order to widen perspectives and practices in Spanish geography and later to promote multinational dialogue. Janice is Australian-born and has retained that citizenship despite working for many years in the U.S., much of that time close to the border with Mexico. The education she received at school and university in Australia offered only British and Eurocentric perspectives. Both Maria Dolors and Janice have long been participants in the Commission on Gender and Geography of the International Geographical Union, have worked together since the 1980s, published in multiple languages (or had our work translated by others), and edited books and journal issues that bring together scholars from many different countries and continents. We have travelled widely personally and professionally. Our histories, contacts, and interests have fostered a long-standing interest in how "place matters" in the creation and

dissemination of scholarship (Garcia-Ramon/Monk 2007; Monk/Garcia-Ramon 1987, 1997; Monk 1994). From these positionalities we reflect on some "bridges" and "barriers" that foster or inhibit "internationalization" in research, teaching and community partnerships in gender studies. We draw on our experiences as geographers, though we also have experiences that cross disciplinary boundaries. Although we see knowledges as "situated" in place, we also recognise that places are connected, that the "West" or the "South" are not homogeneous, and that with changes such as those associated with post-colonialism, post-socialism, neo-liberalism, or the growing international economic prominence of countries such as China, India and Brazil, we live and work in shifting milieus in which it is important to enhance and sustain international dialogue.

3 In this paper we take up three themes of current concerns, approaches, practices, and potential for international communication and action in gender studies. We begin with the theme of creating structures that can support such work. The second section addresses the power of language in shaping ways of thought, and the implications of the dominance of English within international communication and in the publication and dissemination of research, as well as in education and community work. Finally, we note some innovations (not limited to feminist work) that engage with technology to foster international teaching and learning.

1. Creating and Sustaining Collaborations: Some Structural Experiences

4 To explore ways in which international communication and collaborations might be developed and sustained, we offer two case studies: first, an account of the development and ongoing work of the Commission on Gender and Geography of the International Geographical Union (IGU); second, a regional example of a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary bi-national endeavor, the Transborder Consortium for Gender and Health at the Mexico-U.S. Border.

1.1 Opportunities and Limitations of Working with an International Organization

5 The IGU is a forum for international communication among geographers. Founded in 1922, it holds international congresses in a different part of the world on a four-year cycle, with regional meetings in between. It thus attempts to bring researchers into "global" dialogue as well as to serve those who have more capacity to meet within their own region. The IGU currently has 37 topically-based Commissions, of which the Commission on Gender and Geography is one. The Commission's goals, activities, publications, and a detailed history are available on its website (http://igugender.socsci.uva.nl). Its listserv connects over 500 people in at least 35 countries, as well as subscribers to the listservs of the British Women and Geography Study Group and the U.S.-based GEOGFEM (the latter with over 500 subscribers).[1] Even with these wide circulations, problems with access to resources, prevailing differences in accepted paradigms, and acknowledgement of cultural visions of gender and of engagement with feminist politics within the discipline and society make for uneven international participation, with gaps, for example, in the former Soviet Union region and Francophone African nations. The Commission holds sessions at the IGU Congresses and specialised meetings in other locations, usually hosted by members of its international steering committee. To date its events have taken place in more than 20 countries. Work from these has been published in outlets beyond the dominant Anglophone sites in order to reach other audiences and, in some cases, to use languages other than English (for example in the *Journal of Geographical Science* (Taiwan); *Geographie: Anale Universitaţe de vest din Timisoara* (Romania); and Silva and Pinheiro da Silva (2011) (Brazil).

6 How did gender perspectives and a group that has espoused feminist political goals gain entry to an organization that, for much of its history, was gender-blind and male-dominated ? The initial strategy was to offer individual papers or sessions in events sponsored by other Commissions, such as those focusing on geographic education (1978), rural geography (1981) and population (1982). These Commissions were identified by feminist geographers as ones likely to be open at the time to topics of women and gender. We saw them as sites where perspectives on women's lives and cultural, social and political perspectives on gender could be presented as relevant. The women who initiated the programs had previously formed ties with those Commissions. Thus personal networks were important in fostering recognition and visibility for gender studies in geography within the IGU. At the Population Commission event on women and migration held in Sicily, scholars came from Europe, Asia, South America., the U.S. and Australia, with some papers later published in Italian, others in English in an Indian journal. They are generally not mentioned, however, in the most-often cited historical accounts of feminist geography, which tend to draw especially on British sources and on themes such as women's paid and unpaid work in urban settings. Thus we see examples

of the ways in which publishing practices influence the international acknowledgement of scholarly work and of barriers in developing international perspectives.

7 Interest in institutionalization of gender research within the IGU was initiated at the 1984 Congress in Paris. It was a challenge to persuade the Congress organisers—who did not recognise the field—to schedule a session. It was not listed in the program, nor assigned a time or room. Following posting of handwritten notices in the hallways at the Congress, a meeting of about 50 people took place. They agreed that the time was not yet ripe for a formal group devoted to gender studies within the IGU, but that we should create a mailing list of people interested in staying in contact. The example raises questions about the challenges of gaining a voice (and space) but also prompts the question of when it is important to seek official status or instead to continue working informally, or in collaboration with other groups. We view this not as an "either-or" choice, but rather a "both-and" option: developing and supporting international ties in gender studies requires a separate identity that incorporates feminist political perspectives but also involves cooperation with others in order to generate support and disseminate gender perspectives more widely across disciplines.

8 By 1988, at the IGU Congress in Sydney, Australia, it seemed possible to request formal recognition. Visibility was enhanced when the local organisers set up a plenary session with gender as the theme. Lobbying members of the IGU leadership, with whom several of us had ties, led to approval of a Gender Study Group. Having provided evidence of successful work, especially the Study Group's first conference held in the U.K. in 1989 (an event that brought together participants from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America), in 1992 the request to the IGU to raise the Study Group to Commission status met with approval. Since then, practice has shown that both separate Commission events and joint activities with others are valuable. The Commission has regularly organised sessions at IGU Congresses, in addition to its own conferences. It has collaborated in joint programs with other IGU Commissions, such as those in political geography, geographic education, health and development, and economic geography. The advantage of working separately is that in-depth discussions on gender can be pursued, while collaboration makes it possible to bring gender perspectives to other audiences. We see this history and current practice as one element in building and maintaining bridges for internationalization.

9 Commissions are reviewed by the IGU Executive Committee every four years and are led by a Chair, a position normally rotated every four years.[2] The Chairs have been people with recognised professional standing, from countries where they have sufficient infrastructure to support their leadership.[3] Additionally, there is a Steering Committee which has included members from Western and Central Europe, Australasia, South and East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and North America. The Commission has organised programs in conjunction with IGU Regional Congresses and hosted free-standing specialised symposia. Such events have brought established scholars from abroad together with younger scholars and students from the region, including those from related disciplines, who might not otherwise travel to more distant international meetings. Recent programs are listed in Table 1. A number have yielded books, special issues or sections within both feminist and general geography journals.

Year	Location	Meeting name	Annotation
2007	Taipei	Transnational Lives: Feminist Perspectives on Citizenship, Home, and Belonging	
2008	Tunis, Tunisia	Gendered Perspectives: Connecting Across Differences	multiple sessions organised by Commission in the IGU Regional Congress
2009	Szeged, Hungary, Timisoara, Romania	Post-socialism, Neoliberalism: Old and New Gendered Societies and Policies	
2009	New Delhi	Contextualizing Geographical Approaches to Studying Gender in Asia	co-sponsored with Delhi University and Australian National University
2010	Hamilton, New Zealand	Positioning Geography: Strategic Issues in Geographic Education	co-sponsored with IGU Commission on Geographic Education and Commission on Tourism, Leisure and Global Change
2010	Jerusalem,	Bridging Gendered Diversity in a Globalizing	Pre-congress workshop to 2010 IGU

	Israel	World	Regional Congress in Tel Aviv
2011	Singapore	Householding in Transition: Emerging Dynamics in Developing East and South East Asia	with Asia Research Institute
2011	Rio de Janeiro	Space, Gender, and Power	gender, sexuality, and education

Table 1. Recent Regional Meetings Sponsored by the IGU Gender Commission

10 The Commission issues a newsletter twice each year, now sent electronically to the listserv and archived on the Commission's website. It includes a letter from the Chair, announcements of forthcoming meetings, reports on recent meetings, current research and accomplishments of members, as well as an extensive multilingual (though English-language predominant) bibliography of recent books, book chapters, special issues of journals, and journal articles. Provided as a resource for the members of the Commission, the newsletter was originally in English only, but for the last several years it has also been published in French and Spanish.

11 In reflecting on these developments, it is appropriate to try to identify the "bridges" and "barriers" that have had implications for gender work in geography internationally, both in particular places and for international communication that strives to be inclusive. Certainly, the existence of a structure such as the IGU offered an opening, but an important feature has been the relationships fostered among feminist geographers, which have been personal and supportive rather than competitive, especially among those in leadership positions. They take an interest in each other's lives beyond the professional sphere and the workplace, while remaining open to bringing in others, to avoid fostering a "closed" club.

12 We recognise, too, that aspects of local contexts and cultures have been important, offering both "bridges" and "barriers". Comparisons between places are instructive. In post-Franco Spain, for example, universities expanded rapidly, providing opportunities for women to enter faculty positions and in some cases also an openness to curriculum innovation. In such a setting, as a geographer who quite early attained senior rank, Maria Dolors was able to encourage the introduction of ideas from other parts of the world, building on experience she gained during her Master's studies in the U.S., through connections within Europe, and taking advantage of opportunities to bring visiting scholars into her department, thus widening the more traditional conceptions of cultural geography that had been pervasive in Spain. A result has been the engagement of multiple members of the Department of Geography at the Autonomous University of Barcelona in gender research and teaching. They have hosted international programs and participated in international gender conferences over the years. Funding from Spanish governmental agencies has supported gender research and European Union programs have provided opportunities for collaborative research and teaching with other universities.

13 By comparison, following the post-socialist political transitions in Eastern and Central Europe, the growth of gender research and teaching there has been limited (Timar 2007; Voiculescu 2011). Under socialist regimes, geographers emphasised positivist and applied work, designed to serve the state. Attention to social and cultural dimensions of life, such as gender, has been more difficult to introduce within that tradition, while language barriers have continued to limit colleagues' awareness of scholarship beyond their national boundaries.

14 By reflecting on such examples of the development of gender research and teaching, we can thus identify an array of political, economic and historical conditions that have shaped the extent and nature of feminist initiatives and gender scholarship in geography, as well as the extent and nature of international participation in these initiatives. These were the object of analysis at the symposium "Gender and Geography Worldwide: Contesting Anglo-American Hegemony", held in Barcelona in 2006 and reported in a thematic issue of *Belgeo* (2007, No. 3). An earlier series of articles in the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* (2004, Vol. 28, No. 10) offered contextual analyses of the representation of women in academic geography in Catalonia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Singapore, and the U.S., and examined issues facing racial/ethnic minority women geographers in Britain, Canada, and the U.S.. Recently, attention has turned to the implications of contemporary neo-liberal and post-socialist political perspectives and to policies for practicing feminist research and teaching.[4] Such endeavours illustrate the ways in which local contexts—including their histories, academic structures, national economies, and politics—have implications for feminist research and teaching. The work ranges from reflections on the legacies of colonialism, for example in Singapore (Yeoh/Huang 2007) and Ghana (Awumbila 2007), to the extent to which geography as a

discipline is identified as a socio-cultural, economic, or physical science, with specific methodologies (such as quantitative rather than qualitative approaches (Voiculescu 2011)). These have had implications for ties with feminist academics in the social sciences and humanities, and with feminist social movements (see, for example, reflections on the limited development of feminist geography in Brazil and Argentina (Veleda da Silva/Lan 2007) or Turkey (Őzgűç 2007). From India, Anindita Datta (2008) has reported that the customary placement of geography within the natural sciences has often inhibited gender studies, though she notes that that some areas of the discipline, such as those concerned with health, development, disaster management, and policy planning, have been enriched by taking up gender concerns.

15 Still, it is important to recognise that, although different contexts may have similar pasts (as in the introduction and nature of British perspectives into Singapore and Ghana in their colonial periods), they can exhibit different contemporary profiles and opportunities. National ambitions coupled with resources for research have enabled feminist geographers in Singapore to build international reputations and publish extensively (Yeoh/Huang 2007; Yeoh/Huang/Wong 2004). In contrast, the low level of funding available to academics in Ghana, combined with pressures to take up agendas of international development agencies and related consultancies, restrict academic research and teaching on gender and, specifically, on the nature of the differences *among* women that are salient in the contemporary contexts (Awumbila 2007).

1.2 Approaches to Collaboration: Working Bi-Nationally

16 The Transborder Consortium for Gender and Health at the Mexico-U.S. Border offers some approaches to bi-national and multidisciplinary collaboration. This partnership brought together researchers and practitioners under the leadership of the Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) of the University of Arizona in the U.S., El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) and El Colegio de Sonora (COLSON) in North-West Mexico. The Consortium engaged in research, funded community education projects carried out by local non-governmental organizations, offered workshops for academics to enhance gender perspectives in their teaching, and awarded mini-grants to postgraduate students to initiate research. The initiative came from a sociologist at COLEF who was developing a gender program and thought that, in addition to perspectives from feminist scholars elsewhere in Mexico, those from the northern side of the border would be helpful. She connected with SIROW and together they subsequently drew on mutual connections to COLSON. To initiate their effort, they explored literature on collaboration, finding especially useful work by Himmelman (1996) and Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001), who distinguish between cooperation and collaboration and emphasise building trust in relationships. Also valuable was a booklet by the Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries (1998) which outlines eleven principles for research in partnerships with developing countries (see Table 2). The publication includes suggestions and questions to assess whether collaborators are applying these principles in their work together. The Consortium, which lasted for 13 years (until one of the co-directors retired and another moved to another institution), strove to implement the above-mentioned principles in ways we have reported elsewhere (in either English, Spanish, or both: Monk/Manning/Denman 2002; Denman/Monk/Ojeda de la Peňa 2004; Manning/Denman/Monk 2004) and now summarise.

1. Decide on objectives together
2. Build up mutual trust
3. Share information; develop networks
4. Share responsibility
5. Create transparency
6. Monitor and evaluate the collaboration
7. Disseminate the results
8. Apply the results
9. Share profits equitably
10. Increase research capacity
11. Build on the achievements

Table 2. 11 Principles for Research Partnership (Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries 1998)

17 The Consortium was fortunate in gaining grants for planning and, later, multi-year operational awards from private foundations from which its member institutions had previously received grants. It began with meetings at each site, bringing together

researchers and representatives of community agencies from each location. The goals were to explore strengths, assumptions, structural options, and possible activities. The decisions included implementing a shared leadership model, where each partner would assume operational responsibilities for activities in which they had specific experience. Thus COLEF would host larger conferences, COLSON would take leadership in events for community practitioners, and SIROW for the faculty development events. Rather than undertake one large research project, the Consortium would coordinate a series of projects each led by a bi-national team of researchers in collaboration with community partners. In order to underpin community collaboration, a committee was established that included an experienced community representative from each of the three sites. They participated in evaluation of the proposals submitted to the Consortium by research teams, by community agencies for their outreach programs, and so on. The academics retained responsibility for day-to-day management, while the community representatives participated in the Consortium's agenda-setting and evaluation of progress.

18 In selecting an overarching theme, the group decided to focus on a significant regional health issue, but one that would not generate potentially inflammatory politics within communities. It thus chose to work on social aspects of cervical-uterine cancer, a sexually transmitted disease identified as the leading cause of death among Mexican women in their reproductive years and also with high incidence among Mexican-American women. In the planning stages, the group considered how to handle issues of differences in social practices (for example, meeting times, lunch breaks), agreeing to adopt local conventions in each site. Issues included not only the use of Spanish or English but also interpretations of particular vocabulary and concepts. In one planning session, for example, it became apparent that the word "promiscuous" had quite different connotations in Mexican and American contexts. Conversations also focused on negotiating disciplinary methodologies (such as the more positivist traditions of public health research or the ethnographic approaches of the health anthropologists). The discussions proved important and productive in furthering successful collaborations, though periodically challenges emerged within some teams, such as when an institutional reward system created tensions between a researcher and her community partners, or when differences in personalities and political affiliations hampered cooperation in a team.

2. The Power of Language

2.1 Place, Language and the Production of Knowledge

19 Increasingly, geographers outside the Anglophone realm are concerned that Anglophone scholarship is marginalising other traditions which are being impoverished by a growing hegemony that sets the agenda for intellectual debate in many parts of the world. This is all the more incongruous in a period when postmodern perspectives, including those of feminist geography, have focused on questions of exclusion, marginality, periphery, situated knowledge, and the politics of identity and place, yet have failed to scrutinise the ways in which institutionalised discursive and material practices of Anglo-American geographic writing, including those of gender geography, are marginalizing knowledge and practices from other geographical traditions.

20 Certainly, Anglophone work was a key inspiration for gender perspectives in many other places and has become very powerful in their local academic communities. However, it has now constructed a privileged position in which knowledge from other places is seen as divergent and local and, as such, not producing theory but mostly case studies (Berg/Kearns 1998). Thus, Joseli Maria Silva, a Brazilian author, received the following reader's review for a paper submitted to an Anglophone journal:

21 "As such the paper provide[s] important and interesting empirical work, but does not position it in the current literature that a paper seeking publication in [name of journal] would usually target." (Silva 2011: 190)

22 Anglophone writing has become so powerful not only because of its undoubted richness and innovation but also because of the overriding consideration given to so-called "international" publications as a criterion for promotion, even in "peripheral" countries outside Britain and the United States. In this way, many of us become trapped or implicated in this power system. It is thus worth examining whether Anglo-American journals really are international. This question was taken up by Spanish geographers in a well-known article (Gutiérrez/López-Nieva 2001). They concluded that the so-called "international" journals in English were not all *that* international, since articles from the U.S. and the U.K. predominated, comprising almost three quarters of the total number of published articles. Thus, while many of these publications purport to be international, in reality they are at best international *only* within the English-speaking world. Similar conclusions emerged from an analysis in 2006 of the best-known feminist geography

journal, “Gender, Place and Culture” (Garcia-Ramon/Simonsen/Vaiou 2006); a recent update produced similar results (Garcia-Ramon 2011), even though the journal’s editorial board has widened representation to include scholars from Asia, Africa, and non-Anglophone Europe, and editors have included scholars from “peripheral” Anglophone locations (Canada, Singapore, and New Zealand) and one of Caribbean origin in Canada. Abstracts, however, are now offered in Spanish and Mandarin, thus opening at least a synopsis of the research to other language communities.

23 By the early 1990s, the fundamental importance of place in shaping how gender was experienced in different arenas of life was beginning to be recognised. Authors from many different regions addressed this theme (Momsen/Kinnaird 1993) in an initial offering in the series “International Studies of Women and Place” for example. In addition Monk (1994) recorded differential international production and orientations of gender studies in geography. She found that such work had established itself in the U.K., U.S., the Netherlands, Spain, and Anglophone sub-Saharan Africa, yet little had appeared in, for example, Belgium, France, Germany, and Greece (among Western European countries), in the former socialist Central and Eastern European region, in Francophone areas of Africa, and was only marginally present in East Asia, even though interdisciplinary women’s studies programs existed in Japan[5], Korea, and Taiwan. Monk speculated on the ways in which academic structures, historical linkages in educational systems, and local cultural and economic factors had a bearing on the differences noted in engagement with feminist perspectives and in content of research and teaching, affirming the importance of place in the production of knowledge. Today we still see the continuing dominance of Anglo-American writing in feminist geography, as represented in “Gender, Place and Culture”, which was launched in 1994. The majority of contributors are from Anglophone institutions and bring with them the pervasive theoretical elaborations and categories used in examining difference in those settings. This is something of an irony when one considers that the journal emerged during the height of the critique of grand narratives and the so-called “cultural turn” was establishing itself in Anglo-American geography and among feminists. As a product of its time and space, the journal raises important questions about identity and difference, ‘race’, gender, and sexuality; about performativity and negotiations of masculinity and femininity in different spatial contexts, in paradoxical, transitional, and potential spaces; and about queer and (post)colonial discourse/s, (trans)nationalism, and citizenship. However, with its focus on “culture”, themes that are common in Spanish or Latin American gender geography—such as employment/work, globalisation and economic restructuring, violence and grass roots activism—have been accorded relatively little space in the journal (Garcia-Ramon et al. 2006).

2.2 Languages and Asymmetries of Power

24 One dimension for the constitution of this hegemony is the power of language. Language not only reflects the external world, it embodies it. It is much more than a neutral communicative tool for exchanging ideas; it represents a way of thinking and a framework for expressing our experiences and realities. Thus it is very different matter to publish for a local readership (in, for example, Italy or Spain) than for an “international” one. Language is not placeless, it indeed has a geography, so that the ways in which geographies of language structure social relations should be studied more closely, including questions of how different scholarly traditions in the discipline are intertwined with the logics and values of the national or local language. While geographical discourse may have been globalised, that globalization is partial and uneven. Those able to speak and write fluently in English can find an international audience, but for those writing and speaking in other languages access to wider audiences is much more restricted.

25 An excellent example of the boundedness of language is evident in the textbook “Feminist Geographies: Explorations in Diversity and Difference” (Women and Geography Study Group of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers 1997). Its subtitle clearly advocates the recognition of diversity, but the book refers exclusively to Anglo-American geography and the abundant bibliography only includes research published by English and American researchers, with very few references to other research, even if it was published in English, overlooking publications written outside the authors’ milieu (this is very clear in references to the work on Europe, which omit research by gender geographers publishing in Italian, Spanish, Greek, French, etc.). Though there is wide agreement (including among the authors of the text in question) that postmodernity describes knowledge as situated, not only empirically but also theoretically and in the paradigms employed, we would add that it is important to recognise that knowledge is also produced—and situated—outside the dominant regions of the Anglophone world. From that perspective, the book’s subtitle might more accurately have been “Explorations in Diversity and Difference in the Anglo-American World”. This comment could apply equally well to many other books published in Anglo-American geography with general titles such as “Rural Geography” or “History of Geography”.

26 From another perspective, the Spanish geographer Rodríguez-Pose (2006) has argued that English is the only way to preserve geographical diversity because it serves as the *lingua franca* facilitating communication among academics from different traditions. To an extent this is true, but it is not the whole story. Communication is quite difficult when one participant is almost monolingual, and it is particularly a problem in the social sciences (less so in the natural and life sciences) when the context itself and local sources are integral to the research.

2.3 Some Strategies to Foster Inclusive Perspectives and Counterbalance Anglo-American Hegemony

27 Creating knowledge in place and fostering inclusive perspectives are essential for challenging hegemonies in gender and geography and for international enrichment of our work. One important strategy is to diversify contacts and networks and thereby contest uni-directional flows from centre to periphery, facilitated by developing collaborations within international structures. Such "Other" to "Other" communication, exchanges and networking across national boundaries that include not only communication between "cores" and "peripheries" but also between "peripheries" provide a valuable counterbalance to Anglophone dominance. Another strategy is to encourage the creation of gender speciality groups within the national geographical associations, capable of promoting visibility for gender scholars and their work. Outside the Anglophone realm there are few instances of this in feminist geography, exceptions being Italy as well as a recently-created collective in Latin America primarily involving Brazilians (Rede de Estudios de Geografia e Género de América Latina), and the regular newsletter ("Georundbrief"), which links those interested in gender themes in geography in German-speaking countries. Indian geographers also recently (2010) organised a substantial conference "Contextualising Gender in Geography in Asia" and published an anthology of emerging research, co-edited by a geographer in India and an Indian geographer resident in Australia (Raju/Lahiri-Dutt 2011).

28 Anglophone feminist geography has become so powerful not just as a result of its undoubted richness and innovation but also because of the overwhelming weight accorded to "international" publications. We need to take up the challenge of contesting this dominance without reverting to parochialism. Those of us in positions of power have a responsibility to promote alternatives.

29 Another strategy would be to try to create real international writing spaces with refereeing practices more sensitive to differences, with properly international editorial boards in "international" journals (generally in English), by encouraging presentations of works written in other languages, and by opening writing spaces to feminist scholars (for example, encouraging reviews and debates from outside the Anglophone world). Some journals are already publishing in multiple languages (such as the Belgian "Belgeo, Social and Cultural Geography", the Spanish "Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica", and the electronic journals "ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies" (http://www.acme-journal.org) and "Revista Latino-Americano de Geografia e Gĕnero" (http://www.revistas2.uepg.br/index.php/rlagg). Another strategy is to widen the practice of including abstracts in other languages. An interesting venture, designated as an "anti-anthology" (Moss/Falconer Al-Hindi 2008), created an international advisory group to suggest essays to reprint or commission. The result included not only authors from outside Anglo-American institutions but also a chapter in German and one in the constructed language "Hindustani" (a blending of Hindi and Urdu), emanating from a project that bridged the boundaries between academia and women working in a local, non-governmental organization (Nagar 2008; Anupamlata et al. 2008).

30 Interaction can also be reinforced by identifying books in languages other than English for review in Anglophone journals and by increasing the numbers of translations of books and articles. It is no surprise that books originally published in other languages (such as the works of French social theorists) became key references for Anglophone scholars *after* publication in translation, replicating the established practice whereby sustained efforts have been made to translate the most important work in international geography into other national languages. Today we well know that if a book is not written in (or translated into) English, it does not exist for the English-speaking community.

31 It is also important that we explore how concepts of "gender" and "feminism" are represented in different language and cultural settings. In 1988 when the Gender Study Group was established within the IGU (an organization that has as its official languages English and French), the term "gender" was acceptable for English-language documents but not the French, where the words *masculin et féminin* were required. More widely, for many years, French writing favored *rapports sociaux de sexe* though the term *genre* has since come into usage. This example only hints at the need for continuing scrutiny of assumptions if international dialogue is to be strengthened.

3. Bridging Differences in Teaching

32 In order to promote international ties in gender studies it is important to engage with teaching. While individual students, especially those from wealthier countries, may benefit from study abroad programs, we advocate developing approaches that offer face-to-face interactions and those that take advantage of contemporary technologies. Here we first report in some detail on multinational intensive Erasmus courses on gender geography and then offer brief examples of approaches (some of which were not gender-focused) that may stimulate innovations.

33 The Erasmus courses illustrate several benefits of international collaboration in teaching. Between 1990 and 1998 a consortium of six European universities offered intensive short courses in gender and geography for advanced undergraduate and graduate students from the universities of Amsterdam, Autònoma de Barcelona, Durham, National Technical of Athens, Sheffield, and Roskilde, representing Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK and five languages (Danish, Greek, Dutch, Catalan, and English). In the then relatively new field of gender and geography, most of the participating staff were engaged in pioneer teaching in their own departments, often in isolation. Some of the participating universities had full courses on gender, while others did not. The collaboration led to a high-quality advanced course by bringing together an international team of instructors. It was helpful in organizing the content of subsequent courses in the participating departments and brought comparative methods into teaching. The network became a meeting point and a breeding ground for new theoretical insights and empirical knowledge in gender geography.

34 We dared to experiment, collectively rather than in isolation, with combinations of lectures, multinational workshops and project groups, as well as approaches to fieldwork, since successfully introduced into regular courses. The fieldwork was supervised by the staff of the local university, while the lectures and workshops were presented by multinational teams. Students met in multinational discussion- and project groups. The students received credits from their respective universities, since the course complemented their regular programmes (Droogleever Fortuijn 2002).

35 A major benefit was to contribute ideas and approaches for teaching about differences (and not just gender differences) between different regional contexts, building on the academic traditions in geography that both the students and the staff had previously experienced. When teaching in just one country it is hard to get students to see the particularities of their own intellectual context. The intensive course forced students and staff to deal with and learn about differences of approach (methodological as well as theoretical) and to think about why feminist and gender geography had evolved differently in each country. Comparisons of the varying experiences of the north and the south of Europe were extremely enriching, as was exposure to different ways of knowing—for example, the presentation of postmodernist theoretical perspectives by British staff and students and the focus on observational fieldwork by the Dutch and Spanish.

36 For practical reasons, the *lingua franca* of the course was English, although only a minority of the participants were native speakers. This created practical problems but also issues of power and politics. Each year a course book in English was produced collaboratively by the staff. In order to manage the practical language problems in the daily course routine, we applied a variety of teaching methods. Formal lectures were no longer than 30 minutes, supported by written and visual material, with workshops, project groups, informal individual and group presentations, field observations, videos, and visits to women's organizations. Other strategies involved preparing questions and comments in monolingual groups, forming multicultural groups with staff of at least two persons from each language group, and working in small groups instead of plenary sessions. We asked native English speakers to speak slowly, to pronounce clearly, to wait 10 seconds for a reaction, and to avoid slang and regional dialects.

37 It is clear that, for the students, studying gender and geography in another European country and with a range of students from different countries was transformative. They displayed an immense maturing of vision and intellectual grasp which was later transferred, at least in part, to resident students at the respective home universities (the majority of those enrolled in undergraduate studies). It also helped to consolidate the European dimension, especially between south and north, though participating in such an international program also encouraged students to profit from diversity in their personal development, rather than fostering a common European identity. Learning new teaching methods was an important outcome for the staff. The stimulating effect of the course was ongoing, expanding interests in gender and geography across the home departments. At the Autonomous University of Barcelona, for example, the program was an important influence in establishing gender as one of the teaching and research specialities of the department.

38 The Erasmus experience was rich and inspiring for both students and teachers (the latter working together over many years), but it is a model that depends on the capacity to bring people together in a physical setting. With current electronic technologies, initiatives are also being taking to connect students and teachers virtually. A relatively early experiment involved fostering conversations around gender themes between American and Turkish students (both females and males) (Friedensohn/Rubin 2002). The project suffered an array of growing pains, especially as students at the time had less access to technology than most (at least in many regions) do now, but perhaps more because of the relatively unstructured approach that placed the responsibility on students for forging and sustaining relationships and because topics suggested to them—such as "intimate relationships" and "homosexuality"—were potentially too sensitive for initiating conversations with strangers, and sometimes generated cultural stereotypes.

39 More sustained and wide-ranging, though not focused on gender themes, are the online modules of the Association of American Geographers Center for Global Geographic Education (http://globalgeography.aag.org), developed collaboratively by international teams. Most are produced in both English and Spanish, on themes such as national identity, migration, population, and natural resources which offer scope for dialogue around examining differences, (in)equalities, and processes of change. Workshops to create the materials have brought together faculty and student authors in Chile (2007) and Singapore (2010), with dissemination events in an array of other countries in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S., in which students and teachers from a number of different countries have taken part. These examples indicate the potential, but also the limitations (e.g. uneven access to technology[6] and the need to generate external grant funds for development) and the continuing challenges of learning to manage the problems stemming from the diversity of languages and cultures.

4. Looking Back, Moving Forward

40 In this reflection on fostering international dialogue and collaboration in gender/feminist studies, we have drawn primarily on our personal experiences of practices and initiatives in our own discipline and within the institutions with which we have been associated, especially the Commission on Gender and Geography of the International Geographical Union, where our association goes back more than twenty years. We have found it enriching to share insights and develop sustained ties with our colleagues from diverse settings. It has required economic resources, but beyond that we would argue that meaningful international collaboration and striving for diversifying and appreciating multiple perspectives requires that we open our minds and learn to value differences in concerns and approaches. Many challenges remain, but in a globalizing world it is important to continue to pursue the goals, learn from others, and to share experiences.

Notes

1. There is some overlap of subscribers to these lists.
2. The initial chair of the Study Group, Janet Momsen (U.K.), also served a term as Chair of the Commission.
3. Chairs have been based in the U.K., Australia, the Netherlands, Israel and New Zealand.
4. See the themed section on teaching gender in *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 2011, Vol. 20, No. 3.
5. A later study (Murata 2005) pointed out that the limited work on gender in Japanese geography was mostly produced by men.
6. A recent article by Baiio and Ray (2011) addresses challenges they experienced in linking students in Papua-New Guinea with those in the United States. They explore both technologies of communication and aspects of some underlying assumptions of "internationalization" in teaching a module on "Nationalism" to undergraduate students of geography.

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